

**“THE GEOGRAPHICAL COMPASS”: HISTORY, AUTHORITY AND UTILITY IN  
THE ENGLISH VOYAGE ACCOUNT, 1660-1730**

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of

The Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

University of Pittsburgh

2012

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH  
KENNETH P. DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

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The late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries saw a dramatic increase in the publication of accounts of voyages on the London book market. These publications ranged from brief extracts of romantic narratives involving shipwrecks in the East Indies to multi-volume compilations of voyages to all parts of the world, printed in folio and containing numerous maps and engravings. Existing scholarship often views such accounts as entertainment destined for a popular audience. This dissertation shows how the voyage account was used in multiple genres and multiple intellectual contexts, finding its way into debates about natural philosophy, religion, and history, and playing as important a role in the work of the Royal Society as it did in the literary practices of the period.

By investigating these books as key texts in a changing intellectual and cultural climate, and understanding their relationships with other genres, “The Geographical Compass” offers a reader’s view of empire and the world in England between 1660 and 1730. This project analyses the interaction between the narrative and paratextual elements of accounts of long-range voyages of discovery in the early-modern era, in order to investigate how ideas about the New World found their way into political, scientific and cultural spheres in seventeenth-century Europe. I argue that we can understand how the commercial market shaped knowledge of the New World by considering these books *as books* – written, published, bought and sold for a reading public, subject to commercial pressures and prone to failure. Focussing mainly but not exclusively on

voyages to the New World, this dissertation uses Samuel Purchas' metaphor – the voyage account as a compass – to discuss these texts in their scientific, religious, literary and political contexts. As the cartographers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used the geometrical compass to shape their maps, and seamen used the magnetic compass to find their direction in the expanse of the sea, so I use the compass as a way of understanding texts that are composite, multi-layered, and were produced in multiple, overlapping contexts.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank my dissertation committee: Jonathan Scott, Pinar Emiralioglu, Seymour Drescher, Johnny Twyning and Peter Machamer, all of whom provided guidance as I ventured into unfamiliar historiographical waters. Particular thanks to Jonathan, who remained committed to the project despite moving halfway across the world just as it began. This dissertation bears his stamp as advisor, mentor and friend.

I am grateful to the University of Pittsburgh for its generous financial support, in the form of an Arts and Sciences P&BC Fellowship in my first year, and two Andrew Mellon Predoctoral Fellowships which allowed me to research and write this dissertation. The Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh also provided funding for travel and language study, and the European Studies Center provided generous funding that allowed me to write the second chapter of this dissertation in summer 2010. In July 2011, while in the final stages of revising this dissertation, I attended the National Endowment for the Humanities for the Summer Seminar English Encounters with the Americas, 1550–1610: Sources and Methods, at MIT. I am grateful to the NEH and MIT for their generous support of this event, and especially to Mary Fuller and the other seminar participants, whose wide-ranging interests and perspectives were invaluable in helping me think through the problems of early modern travel writing in an interdisciplinary environment. The Department of History at the University of Auckland provided office space and library access on my occasional visits, and I would like to thank Malcolm Campbell for

facilitating that. I would also like to thank Caroline Daley and Joe Zizek. Joe was not just an early intellectual role model but also a sterling cycling buddy. I am grateful to the librarians and archivists at the Alexander Turnbull Library, the National Maritime Museum, the Royal Society, and the British Library.

In addition to my committee, many of my colleagues in the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh have been influential both on this dissertation and my development as a scholar. Particular thanks go to Matt Casey, Bill Chase, Roland Clark, Niklas Frykman, Alejandro de la Fuente, Van Beck Hall, Pat Manning, Ted Muller, Kavin Paulraj, Katie Phelps, Lara Putnam, Evelyn Rawski, Marcus Rediker, Alyssa Ribeiro, Oscar de la Torre, Madalina Veres and Bruce Venarde, I would also like to thank Molly Dennis-Estes, whose assistance I appreciate. Katie Parker was an enthusiastic reader (and critiquer) of drafts of this dissertation, and her own work informed mine, and provided references for which I am grateful. Catherine Ballériaux and Isaac Curtis have been both friends and intellectual partners in crime. Outside of the Department, Andrew Hearin provided insights into the craft and science of brewing beer that proved invaluable when considering the early modern diet. In Auckland, Steven Parfitt insisted on nuance at crucial moments.

While researching in London, I stayed with Lesley, Mark and Otis Adams, who were warm and inviting, and whose dog Joey was spectacularly sedentary. I am also grateful to Richard Bell, Cesare Cuttica, Kelly Feinstein-Johnson, Matthew Growhoski, Julian Hoppitt, Dave Magliocco, Noah Millstone, Jason Peacey, and those other members of the circle of early modern scholars who are based in or pass through London, and who directly and indirectly influenced my thinking, especially about the first chapter of this dissertation.

Hannah Gerrard has my deepest thanks as both my partner and a brilliant scholar. Her love and laughter made so many things easy, and her love and support made the hard things less hard. My thanks also go to my family, who have supported my studies and tolerated my prolonged absences: Helen Martin and Keith Knewstubb, Hugh Pollock, Seth, Reuben, Victoria and Baby Joe-Pollock, as well as Dave and Liam Gerrard, and Philippa, whom I miss dearly. I would also like to thank Mabel Pollock, who was raised in a lighthouse, and lived her life by the sea.

## INTRODUCTION

### SAMUEL PURCHAS, THE VOYAGE ACCOUNT, AND “GEOGRAPHICALL COMPASSING”

In 1624 Samuel Purchas concluded his twenty-volume compilation of travel narratives with a sentiment that placed the text firmly at the center of an English vision of early Empire. Purchas compiled his account in the context of a fast developing global trading system, in which maritime competition between early European empires was exacerbated by intra-European warfare shaped by Reformation and Counter Reformation politics. Two centuries of European maritime activity had seen the development of seaborne trade routes between Europe and Asia, via the coasts of Africa, and the discovery and subsequent plantation throughout the Americas. As commercial, military, and other imperatives continued to make clear the importance of the English going to the world, for Purchas, his *Pilgrimes* were a way of bringing the world to the English. His words described a kind of device that took the form of a book. This device would allow the reader to experience the world outside of English shores through a large-scale compilation of voyage accounts that would subsume the individual writer into a mass of voices. Together, these voices would recreate the world for the reader. He wrote that

We have now compassed the World in the Courses of so many Planets, every of which had a peculiar wandering, and yet none erring from the publike benefit of the Universe. And as in Geometricall compasses one foote is fixed in the Centre, while the other mooveth in the Circumference, so it is with Purchas and his Pilgrimes, in this

Geographicall compassing: they have their owne motions, but ordered in this Circumference, from, for, and by him which abideth at home in his Centre, and never travelled two hundred miles from Thaxted in Essex . . . where hee was borne. All their lines tend to this Centre, and this Centre to the Basis and Ground thereof, that is to his Countrey, to the honour and benefit wherof, he and all his are due. All Nations dance in this Round to doe the English service, and English Travellers here enjoy the Mayne, others the By, to attend, and with their Travels to perfect the English, at lest the knowledge of the World to the English.<sup>1</sup>

At the center of the center, Purchas wished to place Queen Elizabeth, in whose absence was substituted King James, so that “those auspicious Names, as the faire Starres in the Constellations of both Poles, our Pilgrimes beganne their Progresse; by the Light of those two Eyes of Great Britaine, they have taken view of the World, and therefore heere wee end in our Pilgrimage with those two auspicious names.”<sup>2</sup> Purchas then lauded James’ achievements in combining a “Trinitie of Kingdomes into an Unitie . . . ma[king] the Ocean the Wall to his Inheritance . . . root[ing] out the wonted barbarisme of Borderers, of Scottish fewds, of English Duells, of Irish Bogges . . .”<sup>3</sup> before moving on to a celebration of the “New Britaines being bred in another world” of Virginia and New England.<sup>4</sup> Here, Purchas lauded a monarchical Britain that at once celebrated the English nation and its inchoate empire. As David Armitage argues, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes* was one of a series of texts in which Purchas parsed the complexities of commercial, political and religious imperatives, in order “to provide a theologically informed, politically nuanced and constantly revised vision of Britain, its overseas possessions, and the wider context of sacred and secular time within which they operated.”<sup>5</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel Purchas, *Hakluytus Posthumus, or, Purchas His Pilgrimes In Twenty Volumes*, (Glasgow, 1905-7 [1625 facsim.]), vol. 20, 130.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, 20, 130-1.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*, 20, 131.

<sup>5</sup> David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*, (Cambridge, 2000), 89. See Purchas, 20, 134 for a sense of the theological possibilities Purchas saw in Virginia and New England “build[ing] the house of Israel, that

dimension that Armitage does not mention in this analysis is the bibliographical. For Purchas, the book itself was a key to navigating this religious, political and imperial context.

The vast number of accounts collated in *Hakluytus Posthumus* served as a compendium of not just English but European experience in travel. Historians have sometimes judged Purchas' work harshly, as "gargantuan collections ... unwieldy, indigestible and archaic,"<sup>6</sup> but Purchas justified the scope of his work by clarifying his lofty ambitions:

Intending to present the World to the World in the most certaine view, I thought a world of Authors fitter for that purpose, then any One Author writing of the World: Whose discourse might haply bee more even, facile, methodicall, and contracted to a more compendious forme; but could not avoid to be dispendious (if I may so speake) in the matter, and to suspend the Readers judgement for the authoritie.<sup>7</sup>

Through numerous eyes, and through numerous pens, Purchas set out to create a text that offered a view that was global in scope. Purchas had already established this theme in his introduction, noting that "what a World of Travellers have by their owne eyes is here ... delivered, not by one professing Methodically to deliver the Historie of Nature according to the rules of Art, nor Philosophically to discusse and dispute; but as in way of Discourse, by each Traveller relating what in that kind he hath seen."<sup>8</sup> Through the text itself, Purchas thought it possible to encompass the globe through the eyes of many travellers. Nevertheless, Purchas has been taken to task by posterity. This criticism began with John Green in 1717, who, in criticizing collections of travel accounts in general, singled out Purchas in particular for abridging accounts and removing crucial details, "so that there is no depending on him where he does not give the Authors entire ...," rendering the collections "but superfluties, fit only to be put among the

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they may multiply into thousands, and there inlarge the Israel of God, and the Churches Catholicke confines, doing worthily in America, and being famous in Great Britain."

<sup>6</sup> Armitage, 82.

<sup>7</sup> Purchas, 1, 1.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 1, xl.

Charters, Letter-Patents, &c., which make up the useless Part of his Volumes.”<sup>9</sup> Similar criticisms of Purchas’ editorial style have persisted into the modern era.<sup>10</sup> In the context of what Purchas was trying to achieve with his *Pilgrimes*, however, it seems that Green, and those that followed him in their criticism, somewhat missed the point. The history of why Green missed the point is, in part, the subject of this dissertation.

Purchas ostensibly wrote *Hakluytus Posthumus* as a follow-up to Richard Hakluyt’s *Principal Navigations of the English Nation*. Published in two editions, *Principal Navigations* contained every English travel narrative available to Hakluyt through its various incarnations, and formed the bibliographical foundation of accounts of English expansion, alongside his unpublished “Discourse on Western Planting.”<sup>11</sup> Richard Helgerson regards *Principal Navigations* as “part of the larger generation project [of the Elizabethan era] . . . the articulation of England itself,” in which “insistence on the nation as the ultimate actor . . . distinguishes [*Principal Navigations*] from its continental counterparts.”<sup>12</sup> For Helgerson, the travel narratives of Hakluyt’s opus were the nation in action, so that nationalism and overseas expansion were born in the same ideological moment. Anna Suranyi makes a similar argument, saying “without having specific geographical intentions, the English thought of Britain as the foundation of an empire . . . For many English, viewing themselves as members of a nascent imperial power was

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<sup>9</sup> John Green, *The Construction of Maps and Globes ... To which is added, an appendix, wherein the present state of geography is consider’d, etc* (London, 1717), 203-4.

<sup>10</sup> Carol Urness, “Purchas as Editor,” in Pennington, 1, 121-144. Urness enumerates the criticisms of Purchas, while summarising his defenders, before concluding that, whereas Purchas “has been pictured, unjustly, as an editor who carelessly mutilated his texts without reason,” closer examination shows that Purchas was a careful editor who “often state[d] his principles for abridging texts,” even if Urness herself did not agree with them. Urness, 144.

<sup>11</sup> See Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation in Twelve Volumes*, (New York, 1965 [1598 facsim.]). See also Hakluyt, *The Principall Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries of the English Nation in Two Volumes*, (Cambridge, 1965 [1589 facsim.]) and Hakluyt, *Divers Voyages Touching the Discovery of America and the Islands Adjacent*, (London, 1850 [1582 facsim.]).

<sup>12</sup> Richard Helgerson, *Forms of Nationhood: the Elizabethan Writing of England*, (Chicago, 1992), 152.

even more important than their religious identity as Protestants in shaping national identity.”<sup>13</sup> Following authors such as Edward Said and Mary Louise Pratt, Suranyi argues that, through the encounter with the exotic “other,” travel narratives legitimated colonial domination and constituted national difference, influencing “the emergence of colonial ideologies and conceptions of English national identity” in the early modern period.<sup>14</sup>

Armitage is skeptical of these claims, noting that although Hakluyt’s aim was to chronicle only English voyages, an aim at which he failed, “this in itself did not necessarily make him an English nationalist, and there is no evidence in his writings that he believed England to be the elect nation.”<sup>15</sup> By setting both Purchas and Hakluyt in a wider intellectual framework, Armitage casts considerable doubt on arguments that take the formal resemblances between Hakluyt, Purchas, and other types of travel writing to be structural. Armitage argues that “for all their superficial similarities as memorialists of English overseas enterprise, and in spite of Purchas’ acknowledged debt to his predecessor, their conceptions of Britain, of empire, of history and time distinguished Hakluyt and Purchas sharply from one another.”<sup>16</sup> The wider context in which Armitage sets Hakluyt and Purchas demonstrates the danger inherent in making too easy a link between the “English nation” and the “British empire,” and also reveals the significance of the religious dimensions of Hakluyt and Purchas, of which Suranyi is dismissive and Helgerson, at best, neglectful. It is no accident that Purchas’ *Pilgrimes* began with the importance of King Solomon’s contribution to the history of navigation and travel, and proceeded in a chronologically- and geographically-organised fashion to arrive, at last, with the

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<sup>13</sup> Anna Suranyi, *The Genius of the English Nation: Travel Writing and National Identity in Early Modern England*, (Newark, 2008), 17-8.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, 20.

<sup>15</sup> Armitage, 80.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, 81.



achievements of King James and the multiple monarchy. In encompassing the world, Purchas situated that world in a sacred history of anti-Popery and cosmopolitan Protestantism. As Armitage argues, “unlike Hakluyt, who had no conception of the supposed place of England in the scheme of divine election, Purchas identified it as a chosen nation, though not a uniquely chosen one, for it was only one component of ‘*this Israel* of Great Britaine’, the Stuart multiple monarchy.”<sup>17</sup>

Thus, the passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter should not be read as a simple endorsement of the view of scholars such as Helgerson and Suranyi that travel writing (and large-scale compilations thereof) in the early modern era can be taken as expressions of a national or proto-national English identity without serious caveats, and without fleshing out the multiple contexts in which we might understand the idea of the nation. Likewise, it is important to recognize not only the political and confessional contexts of these texts, but also the bibliographical ones.

In *Enlightenment Geography*, Robert Mayhew outlines the parameters of different forms of early modern geography.<sup>18</sup> Mayhew’s book is an attempt to rescue the history of geography from its historians, for whom “the drive is to chronicle geography’s emergence as a scientifically ‘respectable’ subject, thereby justifying its status as an independent discipline in the modern division of knowledge.”<sup>19</sup> For Mayhew, such histories “have, paradoxically, effaced geography’s history,”<sup>20</sup> because the modern, disciplinary division of knowledge, and the necessarily “whiggish” model of history that such narratives employ cannot account for the multi-genred and

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<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Mayhew, *Enlightenment Geography: The Political Languages of British Geography, 1650-1850*, (London, 2000). The descriptions of the different genres can be found from pp. 26-28.

<sup>19</sup> Mayhew, 12.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, 13.

overtly political geographies written prior to the nineteenth century. Mayhew argues that “just as the links between theology, history and politics differed in the early modern era from today, so the nature of geographical texts differed from present generic expectations, as did the relationship between geography proper and allied realms of geographical knowledge.”<sup>21</sup> As with the relationship between Hakluyt, Purchas, religion and the nation, to understand geography historically is to understand it in its historical contexts of politics and religion, and production and genre.

This context also includes a relationship with travel writing. Mayhew explains that the

[early modern] view of geography as scientific because of its coherent organisation of information helps to explain the relationship between geography and travel writing as a form of geographical knowledge which a number of standard geography texts disclose, and which ... travellers endorsed. Travel writing was anecdotal and lacked the organisational control of geography, such that: “as for other Narrative relating either to Countries themselves, or their Inhabitants, and which commonly swell up Geographical Tracts, we reckon them ... rather the Fringes of Geography, than its real or essential Parts.”<sup>22</sup>

Nevertheless, travel writing could be organized into compendiums, and placed in chronological, historical and various kinds of historical relationships with one another. Even if the accounts themselves contained the incidental experiences of the traveller rather than the evened-out perspective of the geographer, they could be organized in ways that outlined political, religious or philosophical positions, as Armitage demonstrates when discussing Purchas and Hakluyt.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, Mayhew points out that “one way in which geography and travel writing were related

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, 25.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, 30. The quote is from Patrick Gordon, *Geography Anatomiz'd: or, the Geographical Grammar*, 7<sup>th</sup> edn. (London, 1716), 3.

<sup>23</sup> See Purchas, 1, xlv-xlvii for a description of the logic by which *Hakluytus Posthumus* is organized.

was that they both encoded political positions.”<sup>24</sup> They also sometimes shared the use of narrative in order to provide textual access to the world.

As Mayhew notes, geography writing in the early modern era was multi-faceted, and one of the forms it took was “chorography.” Just one of numerous sub-genres, which included “cosmography,” a description of the world in general, including astronomical observations, and “topography,” the description of a region on a sub-national level, chorography focused on the description of a country, focusing on its natural and built environments. With few exceptions, as Helgerson points out, chorographies

are narratives. They tell the story of a voyage through the territory they describe. But they are weak narratives. The voyages they recount have no immediacy. The chorographic traveller never encounters bad weather, impassable road, or poor fare. His trip is rather an expository device (though an expository device laden with ideological significance) than a historical event. In this, chorographies differ from ... the overseas voyage.<sup>25</sup>

Although the style of the narrative is different, one coming from an apparently “scientific” impulse designed to describe a kind of objective world, the other from the quotidian and often uncomfortable experiences of real travel, chorography and the travel account had narrative of one kind or another in common. Despite the travel account existing at the “fringes” of geography, travel writing shared a central feature with one important genre of geographical writing in the early modern era.

In this case, it is important to note that the travel writing sources that Mayhew uses to demonstrate this point come from the eighteenth century, and Purchas, for example, may not have been so clear on the distinction between the “scientific” and other aspects of geography, or at least not necessarily have seen the “anecdotal” nature of travel writing as a flaw. Indeed, the

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<sup>24</sup> Mayhew, 141.

<sup>25</sup> Helgerson, 151.

extracts from Purchas quoted above suggest the opposite. In order to “present the World to the World,” a poly-vocal work was necessary, both to aim at completeness (despite Green’s later criticisms of Purchas’ editing practices) and to establish the authority of an eyewitness, for “I had rather heare the meanest of Ulysses his followers relating his wanderings, then wander from the certaintie with Homer after all his readings and conjectures.”<sup>26</sup> The emphasis was not on the new sciences expounded by Sir Francis Bacon, but on the experiences of classical figures, as if they could be known from a point beyond the literature in which they are found. Authority rested neither in the modern sciences, nor in the authors of classical literature, but in the experience of the individual traveller as it could be related through their account. It is the compounded effect of these eyewitness accounts that made up the “geographical compassing” – not a work of geography per se, but a tool through which one can know the world all the same.

Purchas’ compendium of travel narratives should thus be looked on neither as a literary achievement in a modern sense, nor a text on the fringes of the geographical canon, but rather as an attempt to “compass” the world, both in the sense of providing a tool for navigation and in the sense of encompassing it, containing the world within its volumes. It is from this perspective that we can begin to look at the genre of travel writing in the early modern era.

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<sup>26</sup> Purchas, 1, 2.

## THE VOYAGE NARRATIVE AND THE BOOK IN ENGLAND, 1660-1730

Using Purchas' layered metaphor of the compass to orient the study, this dissertation focuses on accounts of long-range voyages that were published in London in the second half of the seventeenth century and the first third of the eighteenth. These books are of striking interest for a number of reasons, but primarily because they were produced in a historical context of exploration and a nascent sea-borne Empire: plantations in North America and the Caribbean were being established, but the plantation agriculture of the eighteenth century had not yet begun in earnest; the Pacific had not yet been fully explored, and thus the existence of *Terra Australis Incognita* remained a possibility; the search for Northwest and Northeast Passages to China and Japan continued; companies were developing trading factories in Africa; and debates continued over the structure of the British navy, and its relationship to state formation, especially in the context of ongoing European warfare.<sup>27</sup>

These specifically maritime concerns were supplemented and exacerbated by cultural, political, and intellectual ones: encounters in the New World presented ongoing epistemological challenges to Europeans, as a world unknown to the ancient authorities was revealed to them,<sup>28</sup> and the later Stuart period saw scientific developments in most branches of what were to become the modern sciences, including cartography and navigation. "Geographical compassing" took

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<sup>27</sup> Derek Howse, ed., *Background to Discovery: Pacific Exploration from Dampier to Cook* (Berkeley, 1990); N.A.M. Rodger, *The Safeguard of the Sea: A Naval History of Britain, 660—1649* (New York, 1998) and *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649—1815* (New York, 2006); see also J.D. Davies, *Gentlemen and Tarpaulins: The Officers and Men of the Restoration Navy* (New York, 1992) and Jonathan Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britannia: Geography and Political Identities, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 2011), especially chapters three to six, for competing accounts of the influence of political thought on naval structures.

<sup>28</sup> See Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: The Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992); Anthony Pagden, *European Encounters with the New World: From Renaissance to Romanticism* (New Haven, 1993).

place in a context of a changing intellectual, political, and economic land- (and sea-) scape, within which travel writing must be understood.

As is suggested by the discussion of Purchas above, there is an extensive secondary literature about early modern travel. Often, this scholarship is focused on the literary dimensions of travel writing. Mary Louise Pratt, for example, is concerned with the encounter with the exotic ‘Other’, and the representational strategies by which Western authors encode difference and hierarchies of being through their descriptions of encounters.<sup>29</sup> Jonathan Lamb discusses long-range voyages and the exotic, arguing that such encounters led to the destabilization of an only recently constructed political self, which need to be variously preserved and reconstructed outside of Europe.<sup>30</sup> Neil Rennie takes a long view of writing about the South Seas, drawing a line from the ancient Greeks, through the early modern era, and into twentieth century tourism. In doing so, he demonstrates the ways in which writing about the South Pacific followed mythical and literary commonplaces that were shifted from one distant location to the next as the borders of European knowledge expanded.<sup>31</sup> The insights offered by these studies and those like them are invaluable to our thinking about the European colonial project, and the ways in which European knowledge was projected onto the world beyond European shores, constructing difference and channeling dynamics of power into forms of knowledge.

For the entire period during which early modern voyages of discovery took place, this knowledge was disseminated through specific textual practices. Stephen Greenblatt argues that it is possible to describe a European (rather than specifically and exclusively French, English,

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<sup>29</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, (London, 1992).

<sup>30</sup> Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840*, (Chicago, 2001). See also

<sup>31</sup> Neil Rennie, *Far-Fetched Facts: The Literature of Travel and the Idea of the South Seas* (Oxford, 1995). See also Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the English Renaissance, 1545-1625* (New York, 1998).

Dutch or Spanish or, conversely, Protestant and Catholic) way of viewing these encounters because “European mimetic capital, though diverse and internally competitive, easily crossed the boundaries of nation and creed ... Certainly, the age’s greatest technological device for the circulation of mimetic capital, the printing press, was no respecter of national or doctrinal borders.”<sup>32</sup> More than providing space in his analysis for a cohesive ‘European’ writing, however, Greenblatt argues that the fact of literacy provided a basis of European feelings of superiority. Greenblatt notes the existence of what Purchas called “‘the literall advantage’ – the advantage, that is, of writing ... those who wrote books – those therefore with whose testimony we are left – saw writing as a decisive mark of superiority.” Just as man’s superiority over animals flowed from the capacity to reason and make speech, so the civilized are distinguished from the barbaric by the “Use of letters and Writing, which others wanting are esteemed Brutish, Savage, Barbarous.”<sup>33</sup> Greenblatt’s argument focuses on the problem of representation of the New World for Europeans, noting that despite their elevation of literacy in the scale of civilization, those who visited the Americas were nevertheless afflicted by problems of language on the one hand, and inveterate liars on the other.<sup>34</sup> For Greenblatt, the epistemological challenges of encounters in the New World produced a sense of wonder, and the marvelous, “a lumbering, jerry-built, but immensely powerful mimetic machinery, the inescapable mediating agent not only of possession but of simple contact with the other. For this reason, the early modern discourse of discovery ... is a superbly powerful register of the characteristic claims and limits of European representational practice.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World*, (Chicago, 1991), 8.

<sup>33</sup> Purchas, 1, 486, quoted in Greenblatt, 10.

<sup>34</sup> Greenblatt, 86-118, and 7.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, 23.

Literacy and the printing press were undoubtedly a part of the hierarchy of difference within the British Empire from the beginning, and played a crucial role until well into the nineteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, to the modern eyes many of the claims in travel literature of the period, concerning seven and a half foot tall Indians whose skin could withstand the blow of a cutlass, and who could swim “a good English mile” with their arms pinioned, for instance, seem unlikely to bear a close relationship with reality.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, these two aspects of Greenblatt’s analysis could be better reconciled. Jonathan P. A. Sell defends the integrity of “traveller-writers” from accusations of mendacity, arguing that the writer was not alone in creating these fictions, and that “the paradox is that early modern traveller-writers and their readers were participating in a discursive system; rhetoric, whose ultimate goal was persuasion and which recognized that intelligible lies were more effective in achieving that goal than unintelligible truths.”<sup>38</sup> As Sell argues, the “traveller-writer” wrote for a skeptical audience from across an “experiential gap ... [that] critically determin[ed] the contextual disparity which obtains between the traveller-writer and his reader. To bridge the gap, the traveller-writer must use a series of resources held in common with his reader, resources which effectively identify himself and his reader as members of the same discourse community or sociocultural grouping and which make meaning-making possible.”<sup>39</sup>

The fantastical Indians might have been not a product of the encounter with “the Other,” but rather the product of a relationship between the writer and the reader in which the writer

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<sup>36</sup> See, for instance, D. F. McKenzie, ‘Oral Culture, Literacy, and Print in Early New Zealand’, in *Bibliography and the Sociology of Texts*, (Cambridge, 1999), 79-130; Tony Ballantyne, *Orientalism and Race: Aryanism in the British Empire*, (New York, 2002), Mary C. Fuller, *Remembering the Early Modern Voyage: English Narratives of European Expansion* (New York, 2008).

<sup>37</sup> ‘Cowley’s Voyage Round the GLOBE’, in Capt. William Hacke, *A Collection of Original Voyages*, (London, 1699).

<sup>38</sup> Jonathan P. A. Sell, *Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing, 1560-1613* (Aldershot, 2006), 25.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, 27.



appealed to his audience by meeting their expectations of an exotic encounter.<sup>40</sup> Sell argues that “their reading of literature had furnished them with a store of cognitive resources and mental representations which they had in common with their readers and had learned how to use in the course of their education ... plausibility depended not on the plot itself, but on the extent to which it tied in with preconceived mental ideas” that were shared by reader and writer. Thus, “it follows that any reading of those representations should lead us to explore the contents of the reader's mind as much as to contemplate the shape and form of new realities.”<sup>41</sup> The travel account provided access not only to the traveler negotiating an exotic experience through a representative medium, but also to the shared rhetorical world of the reader and writer.

The relationship between reader and writer was more than rhetorical, however. It was also material. One of the crucial contexts for the dissemination of material about the New World in the seventeenth century, to which Greenblatt alludes in the quote above, was the development of a pan-European market for printed books. This context goes beyond a justification for talking about a “European” approach to writing the New World. The book market itself was a historical phenomenon that, rather than distributing objects that conveyed a fixed meaning bound more or less within the confines of authorial intention, were instead subject to multiple processes of production, censorship and various kinds of editorial control. As D.F. McKenzie argues, the physical production of texts can impart meanings to the reader of both the past and the present. McKenzie notes that the multiple historical meanings of a text are bound up in its physical

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<sup>40</sup> Neil Whitehead offers an alternative explanation for the phenomenon of fantastical beings in the literature of New World, arguing that Sir Walter Raleigh’s descriptions of Amazons, Acephali and Cannibals, for instance, were ethnographic. He argues that “if those elements of European anticipation of projection are carefully delineated then it can be seen that Raleigh records novel elements and additional information derived from observation and interrogation of native people in Orinoco, by himself and others. Moreover, Raleigh engages in the collection of reports of these marvels with a firm scepticism as to their literal existence but a definite appreciation of the importance of establishing the bounds of the possible.” Neil L Whitehead, introduction to *The Discoverie of the Large, Rich, and Bewtiful Empyre of Guiana* by Sir Walter Raleigh (Norman, OK, 1998), 91.

<sup>41</sup> Sell, 27.

forms, so that “each reading is peculiar to its occasion, each can be at least partially recovered from the physical forms of the text, and the differences in readings constitute an informative history.”<sup>42</sup> That is to say that careful attention to the books as physical objects, the details of their production, as well as their distribution throughout the book market should be a part of understanding their “meaning,” in a broadly construed, historical sense.<sup>43</sup>

This is especially important because, in the early modern era, authority was not invested in a text for the simple fact of its having been published. Rather, “a central element in the reading of a printed word was likely to be a critical appraisal of its identity and its credit.”<sup>44</sup> This question of credit was brought to bear not only on the individual authors, relating, in the case of travel accounts, encounters with the exotic, but in the processes of production and the individual booksellers and printers involved in the production and distribution of texts.<sup>45</sup> Rather than a fixed and reliable object, the book in seventeenth century London was understood as a bearer of knowledge whose reliability had to be established through extra-textual means.

This was especially the case with writing about distant lands that the vast majority of readers would never visit. As James Delbourgo notes, descriptions of such phenomena had to take place through intermediaries – various kinds of texts that included voyage accounts, but also wonder-cabinets and botanical gardens – whose meanings were “dependent on the webs of

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<sup>42</sup> Mckenzie, 19.

<sup>43</sup> Fuller has examined the printed accounts of the voyages to America of the sixteenth century, and demonstrated how the defence of the colonial project and the defence of individual failures were made together through the printed word. See Fuller, *Voyages in Print: English Travel to America, 1576—1624* (Cambridge, 1995). Philip Edwards has discussed the printed accounts from the eighteenth century. However, in insisting on the voyage account as predicated upon “the indissoluble and unstable link between the writer, the world and the work,” Edwards misses out on the broader frameworks both of the intellectual consequences and the dynamics of readership and the market in which the texts were published in ways that will be examined throughout this dissertation. See Edwards, Philip, *The Story of the Voyage: Sea-Narratives in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994). The quote is from page 6.

<sup>44</sup> Adrian Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making*, (Chicago, 1998), 31.

<sup>45</sup> For a fascinating discussion of the problems faced when trying to recover the “authentic” voyage account, see J.C. Beaglehole, *Some Problems of Editing Cook’s Journals* (Melbourne, 1957).

spoken and written testimony in which they were embedded.”<sup>46</sup> In the case of voyage accounts, these webs of testimony were especially problematic, because their primary authors were invariably sailors, whose labor and working conditions made them marginal to English society. In a book market predicated on trust and authority, sailors were necessarily compromised witnesses. Readers, publishers and authors adopted various strategies to overcome this obstacle. The veracity of these accounts had to be determined by their readers, and there is evidence that each new narrative had to be subjected to scrutiny in the coffeehouses of London.<sup>47</sup> As this dissertation will show, the instability of these various kinds of authority, credit and trust – in the author, the text, and the market itself – resulted in a fascinating array of strategies for determining knowledge, which reached its apex with the publication of Dampier’s account, and the emergence of the sailor-as-author and the concomitant explosion of popular travel writing in the first third of the eighteenth century. Thus, the travel narrative is best understood within the broad contexts of intellectual, religious and political currents, and also within their own material histories of circulation and reception in a turbulent market where readers, publishers and writers were collaborating on the production of textual meaning and authority.

This dissertation will explore the parameters and modes of “geographicall compassing” as a textual practice within the London book market from 1660-1730. I aim to analyze the interaction between the narrative and paratextual elements of accounts of long-range voyages in the early modern era, in order to investigate how ideas about the New World found their way into political, scientific and cultural spheres in seventeenth-century Europe. My contention is that by understanding the material history of the books that bore news and knowledge of the world

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<sup>46</sup> James Delbourgo, “Science,” in David Armitage Michael J. Braddick, eds, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, 2nd edn (New York, 2009), 93.

<sup>47</sup> Gaby Mahlberg, ‘Republicanism as anti-patriarchalism in Henry Neville’s *The Isle of Pines*’, John Morrow, and Jonathan Scott (eds), *Liberty, Authority, Formality: Political Ideas and Culture, 1600-1900* (Exeter, 2008).

outside Europe, we can better understand how the commercial market shaped knowledge of that world, and how readers might have encountered these texts. In this manner, we can work towards establishing a reader-centered view of empire in the seventeenth century. Partly because it is necessary to limit the scope of any academic project, and partly because I wish to emphasize the sea-borne dimension of the reader's empire, I will focus mainly on "voyages" rather than "peregrinations;" that is, on travel accounts that mostly involved travel by sail, and particularly, though not exclusively, on accounts of voyages towards the "New World," which in this period remained a fluid entity whose geographical dimensions and philosophical implications were still being established.

This period is particularly fruitful for this kind of research. In many ways, the second half of the seventeenth century has been something of a lacuna in studies in travel writing. It follows the earlier voyages of Columbus, Raleigh, and Drake, as well as the major published compilations of voyage accounts. The accounts published in this period followed in the long wake of Hakluyt and Purchas, and were composed in a conscious bibliographical tradition that looked back at the great editors as much as it did the explorers, as we shall see in chapter one. Its mid-point also saw the publication of Dampier's *New Voyage 'Round the World*, the success of which not only invigorated the popular market for travel writing – a fact commonly acknowledged in the secondary literature – but also reinvented the idea of the voyage account and the possibilities of the sailor as author, as I argue in chapter four. The first three decades of the eighteenth century saw the proliferation not only of accounts of actual voyages but, also of the fictional accounts by Daniel Defoe and Jonathan Swift, amongst others.<sup>48</sup> As this dissertation

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<sup>48</sup> William Dampier, *A New Voyage round the World*, (London, 1697), [Daniel Defoe], *The life and surprising adventures, of that renowned hero, Robinson Crusoe who lived twenty-eight years on an uninhabited island, which he afterwards colonised* (Coventry, 1719) and [Jonathan Swift], *Gulliver's Travels: A Facsimile Reproduction of a*

shows, the voyage accounts published prior to and immediately after Dampier were geared towards different kinds of markets, that included the gentlemen scholars of the Royal Society and the class of professionals and merchants that had arisen around the Atlantic trading networks.

Indeed, there was considerable overlap between the two, and it was in the second half of the seventeenth century that the interests of both groups began to coalesce. Hans Sloane, physician, botanist, author of a voyage account, and secretary of the Royal Society, was also the first to import chocolate from Jamaica to England. In this period the mercantile class began to assert a strong claim on English identity.<sup>49</sup> In 1660, the Royal Society was founded, and began to develop English intellectual practices outside of the traditional institutions of the universities.<sup>50</sup> As this dissertation will show, the Royal Society and the practices developed by its members were especially influential on the publication of voyage accounts in the decades following its founding. Numerous scholars have noted the influence of, for instance, the instructions to sailors issued by various members of the Royal Society during the second half of the seventeenth century, or their role in specific publications. This dissertation will elaborate more fully on those efforts in order to elucidate their full intellectual contexts and their relationships with the

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*Large-Paper Copy of the First Edition*, [Gulliver, Leumuel, *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World*, (London, 1726)] (ed) Colin McKelvie (New York, 1976). See Thomas More, *Utopia*, George M. Logan and Robert M. Adams, eds, (Cambridge, 1999). See also Carlo Ginzburg, *No Island is an Island: four glances at English literature in a world perspective*, John Tedeschi, trans., (New York: 2000). See also Henry Neville, *Isle of Pines, Or, The Late Discovery of a fourth ISLAND in Terra Australis Incognita* (London, 1668) and Ebenezer Cooke, *The sot-weed factor: or, a voyage to Maryland. A satyr* (London, 1708) for further examples.

<sup>49</sup> See David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge, 2003).

<sup>50</sup> See, for instance, Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994); Lisa Jardine, *Ingenious Pursuits: Building the Scientific Revolution* (New York, 1999); Michael Hunter, *Science and the Shape of Orthodoxy: Intellectual Change in the Late Seventeenth Century*, (Rochester, NY, 1995); Robert K. Merton, *Science, Technology and Society in Seventeenth Century England* (New York, 1970).

readership within England.<sup>51</sup> The commercial and scientific interest of accounts of voyages was key to the work of the Royal Society during this period, and indeed its members were often travellers themselves. Even if they did not venture to the New World, they would often embark on a Grand Tour of continental Europe, where keeping journals of their travels was part of the experience, engaging in ethnographical observation as well as maintain communication with their peers in England.<sup>52</sup>

The intersections of these markets, audiences, and interests, alert us to another significant context for the publication of these texts: London itself. It was between 1660 and 1730 that London emerged as Europe's most populous city, and became a cosmopolitan, mercantile metropolis. The books printed at this time were thus published into a milieu of newfound metropolitan dominance, as well as self-confidence, not only in relation to empire, but also to the rest of Europe. The book market matched the vibrancy of the city, and the voyage accounts published in this period are evidence of a cosmopolitan, mercantile readership engaged with the problems of empire, commerce, and with other European nations as well as the New World.

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<sup>51</sup> Indeed, the relationship between sailors and members of the Royal Society during this period was discussed extensively by R.W. Frantz in 1934. His analysis, however, idealizes the sailors' responses to the Royal Society's requests, and his celebration of the "voyager-scientist" and the "Religion of Reason" neglect both the demands of the reader and the more eccentric ideas that made it into print. For example, his claim that "objective fact, shorn of personal bias and prejudice, was an aim fundamental in the thinking of the Restoration voyager" seems at odds with the patterns of colonial superiority and descriptions of marvels seen in much of the primary material, as well as the debates about the Biblical deluge, the life at center of the earth, and the consumption of bread that are discussed in this dissertation. See R.W. Frantz, *The English Traveller and the Movement of Ideas, 1660-1732* (New York, 1968 [1934]). The quote is from page 31.

<sup>52</sup> See Judith Adler, "Origins of Sightseeing" in *Annals of Tourism Research*, vol. 16, (1989), 7-29. See also Jeremy Black, *The British Abroad: The Grand Tour in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1992).

## THE GEOGRAPHICALL COMPASS

Just as the cartographers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries used the geometrical compass to shape their maps, and seamen used the magnetic compass to find their direction in the expanse of the sea, so I use the compass as a way of giving shape to and understanding texts that are composite, multi-layered, and were produced in overlapping contexts. In doing so, my analysis circulates around a number of key texts, teasing out themes and offering multiple perspectives on the publication history and the intellectual contexts in which they were deployed. Although this dissertation draws upon texts that were published from 1660 until the mid-eighteenth century, the key period is from 1686, when Hans Sloane made his voyage to Jamaica, until the 1720s, when the fictional sailors of Swift and Defoe began to appear in print. Around these moments, for which Dampier acts as a kind of fulcrum, the themes of this dissertation are organized.

Chapter One, “To Compass,” details the activities of three members of the Royal Society in the 1680s and ‘90s. It demonstrates how the compilations of voyage accounts published by Hans Sloane, Tancred Robinson, and John Ray, were created in full consciousness not only of the history of the voyages themselves, but also of the publications that proceeded them. I argue that, alongside the world being described, these accounts also create a self-conscious textual realm that was designed to encompass the world as much as the voyagers “compassed” it.<sup>53</sup> Sloane, Robinson and Ray published their compilations in a context in which authority, and not authorship, was key in determining the value of a text. “To Compass” examines the methods used to establish such authority in the voyagers who wrote the texts in question, and draws

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<sup>53</sup> This argument owes an obvious debt to Mark Edward Lewis’ work, *Writing and Authority in Early China* (Albany, 1999).

connections between this form of authority and the Republic of Letters – the network of gentlemen scholars who circulated letters, manuscripts and printed books, discussing a vast range of intellectual problems of which the voyage formed but a part.<sup>54</sup> In parsing debates about the dissolution of the world since the biblical Flood, and showing how Sloane, Ray and Robinson organized one of their key publications so as to emphasize specific forms of observation and recording at sea, I argue that members of the Royal Society sought to transfer the Republic of Learning into an “Empire of Knowledge” at the end of the seventeenth century.

Chapter Two, “The History of the Compass,” examines two large compilations of voyage accounts in the first decade of the eighteenth century. It begins by tracing the publication history as both were compiled and printed in the same three-year period with a half a square mile of one another in London. It shows how the advertising material shifted from emphases on originality, entertainment and instruction as the calls for subscribers went out. It then examines the subscription lists in order to determine whether or not they were geared toward a wealthy, mercantile elite and away from the gentleman scholar of the previous decade, as has been assumed by historians in the twentieth century. I find that although a significant portion of merchants did subscribe to the compilations in the early eighteenth century, many of them had antiquarian, geographical, or other interests that preclude the dismissal they have received at the hands of recent scholarship. This is significant because, as I argue, the introductions and other paratextual material of these compilations describe histories of navigation that tie English identity to the ancient empire, not of Rome or Athens, but Carthage. The anonymous authors of these introductions joined into debates over the ancients and moderns, the invention of the compass, and the population of the New World following the recession of the Flood, and in

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<sup>54</sup> Grafton, *Worlds Made By Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, MA, 2009).



doing so struggled over England's historical identity. The "geographicall compass" did not just cover the surface of the world, but also its past.

The third chapter, "The Variation of the Compass," turns back towards the work of the Royal Society by revisiting a question that puzzled natural philosophers and sailors alike for centuries of sea voyaging. The problem of magnetic variation, where the compass needle does not point to true north to a degree that varies over time and space, exercised the minds of individuals like Edmund Halley, who devoted much time to understanding the phenomenon. It also concerned sailors, whose accounts not only consistently record the degree of variation, but also record their puzzlement that it should occur at all. I argue in this chapter that in many ways the variation of the compass was a bigger challenge natural philosophers and navigators at the end of the seventeenth century than the discovery of longitude at sea. The latter was a technical problem to be solved. The former was a philosophical problem that led Halley to speculate on the internal structures of the world, and the utility of the objects he believed were at the center of the earth.

The final chapter returns to the question of authorship and authority with "The Seaman's Compass." In this chapter, I discuss the moments in which the common sailor emerges within the voyage account, and argue that he is most visible when issues of food, disease and hunger are raised. The sailor's diet and health was a crucial problem for any voyage, as providing enough food for long distances with little chance of resupply and within limited spaces was a logistical challenge and a great expense. I demonstrate how this logistical and economic problem was connected to the sailor's diet and early modern theories of the body, and argue that the sailor was made marginal through the connection between diet and labor, even as he traversed the margins of empire. As a marginal figure, the sailor was an untrustworthy observer, and thus did not have

the authority to keep journals that a captain had. However, with the publication of Dampier's account, this barrier was broken, and the idea of authorship and authority became detached from the actual authority onboard ships. This, coupled with the influence of Dutch and French accounts in providing biographies of seamen at the beginning of their accounts, led to the emergence of the sailor-as-author, and the category of "travel literature" that rose alongside the novel in the eighteenth century.

By and large, this dissertation sets aside the exotic to focus on the esoteric. By examining the paratextual dimensions of these voyage accounts – the introductions, dedications, tables of contents, and organization – it shows how the books functioned as books. Designed for and published in a commercial and tempestuous market, for an audience that was discerning and engaged in textual production, these books told of the world at large but were written with a specific group in mind. This dissertation demonstrates the scope and dimensions of "geographicall compassing" as a textual practice situated in a print culture that was characterized by a fluid approaches to genre and authority. By understanding travel narratives as texts with bibliographical histories, this dissertation sketches out a reader's view of the early Empire in England. It does so by exploring debates, histories, and ideas that often seem foreign and even bizarre to the modern reader, but were nevertheless of vital importance those who wrote and read about them. In doing so, it reveals a world of knowledge that was already disappearing under the weight of these discoveries.

## CHAPTER ONE: TO COMPASS

### TANCRED ROBINSON'S LETTER

In early December 1687, Tancred Robinson took the unusual step of writing a letter to Hans Sloane. Robinson and Sloane were friends; they had travelled together in France, attending lectures in Paris and spending time together in Montpellier, where Sloane had studied in 1683.<sup>55</sup> Neither were strangers to writing, as the numerous volumes of Sloane's correspondence held in the British Library, and Robinson's own publications in the *Philosophical Transactions* attest. Yet, despite the vastness of the Sloane archive, and the decades-long friendship between the two, only a handful of letters from to Sloane from Robinson exist, and only two of those are of substantive length.<sup>56</sup> Given that both Sloane and Robinson spent most of their lives working together in London and regularly conversing at meetings of the Royal Society, it is perhaps unsurprising that such little personal correspondence exists between the two. Nevertheless, the letter that Robinson wrote in that December, along with that written the following April, has

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<sup>55</sup> Robinson's earliest publication in the *Philosophical Transactions* concerns a day trip he took from Montpellier, accompanied by Sloane and another naturalist, to investigate a "boyling fountain." See Tancred Robinson, "Some Observations on Boyling Fountains, and Subterraneous Steams: by Dr. Tancred Robinson, Fellow of the R. S.," *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society (Phil. Trans.)*, vol. 15 (1685), pp. 922-925.

<sup>56</sup> Of those not discussed in this chapter, BL Sloane 4038 f. 192, is a note to the effect that Robinson stopped by Sloane's house while he was out. BL Sloane 4060 f. 190 indicates both Robinson's flamboyant nature and his affection for Sloane in a two-sentence note suggesting a time the following afternoon during which Robinson can pay his "Adoration" to his "young Pliny." BL Sloane 4060 f. 188 sees Robinson asking to be excused from his obligations to the college, on account of news of serious injury to his son in Paris.

much to tell us about the context in which books about travel came to print in the late-seventeenth century.

It was Sloane's voyage to Jamaica that occasioned Robinson's writing. Sloane had gone that year to serve as Governor Christopher Monck, Duke of Abemarle's personal physician.<sup>57</sup> Monck died less than a year later, in October 1688, and Sloane departed Jamaica for London on March 16, 1689, having spent just 18 months in the West Indies.<sup>58</sup> Within those 18 months, Sloane collected numerous specimens of New World flora and fauna, which he catalogued and described in books published in the following decades.<sup>59</sup> Although these two works are the only ones directly attributed to Sloane to have derived from his journey, his time in Jamaica and his subsequent research upon his return was productive of several more books. Between his return and the publication of his *Voyage to Jamaica* nearly twenty years later, Sloane, Robinson, and their colleague, fellow botanist and friend John Ray, were to become instrumental in the publication of accounts of voyages both contemporary and historical. In doing so, they would reposition the voyage account within the context of natural philosophy and the work of the Royal Society. This chapter will argue for a view of at least some of the voyage accounts that were published in the late-seventeenth century as being produced not just from the journals of sailors and other travelers writing outside the British Isles, but also from a self-conscious world of textual production, both print and manuscript, within England. The accounts published under the

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<sup>57</sup> Kay Dian Kriz, "Curiosities, Commodities, and Transplanted Bodies in Hans Sloane's 'Natural History of Jamaica,'" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, vol. 57, no. 1 (Jan 2000), 35.

<sup>58</sup> Arthur MacGregor, "Sloane, Sir Hans, baronet (1660–1753)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25730>, accessed 7 Sept 2011].

<sup>59</sup> Hans Sloane, *Catalogus Plantarum quæ in Insula Jamaica sponte proveniunt, ... cum earundem synonymis et locis natalibus; adjectis aliis quibusdam quæ in Insulis Maderæ, Barbados, ... et Sancti Christophori nascuntur. Seu Prodromi historię naturalis Jamaicae pars prima* (London, 1696); and *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers, and Jamaica, with the natural history of the last of those islands, to which is prefixed an introduction wherein is an account of the inhabitants, trade etc.*, (London, 1707). The latter is usually referred to as *Voyage to Jamaica* here and elsewhere.

aegis of Sloane, Robinson and Ray are a study in how navigation could be a textual practice as much as a technical, maritime one. When they compiled these accounts, they did so with the aim of mapping out botanical and other phenomena, and publishing new information about the natural world; they also, however, sought to reshape the ways in which the world would be understood through the travel account, and used the form of the account to not only convey information, but to suggest methods for recording that information, to transform their Republic of Letters into an “Empire of Learning,” and to compass the world within the text.

This textual production took place in post-Glorious Revolution London, (indeed, it was William’s accession that delayed Sloane’s return to England),<sup>60</sup> and in an intellectual context that, as Adrian Johns argues, saw the ongoing development of strategies for establishing the veracity of printed knowledge, even as key developments in the “scientific revolution” took place.<sup>61</sup> Johns argues that one could not necessarily trust the book to be what it purported to be; that determination had to be made on a case-by-case basis. It depended on knowledge of “the purposes, status, and reliability of printed materials in general,” as well as “assessments of the people involved in the making, distribution, and reception of books.”<sup>62</sup> As Johns notes, these combined questions of who and what to credit were in part addressed by the dependence on intersubjective trust described by Steven Shapin. The gentleman scholar of the seventeenth century was perfectly placed to represent truthful claims about natural history precisely because he enjoyed credibility that derived from gentlemanly manners.<sup>63</sup> Sloane, Robinson and Ray were beneficiaries of and instruments in this system of credibility that encircled both the readers and

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<sup>60</sup> Macgregor.

<sup>61</sup> Johns, (1998).

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.*, 31-2.

<sup>63</sup> Steven Shapin, *A Social History of Truth: Civility and Science in Seventeenth-Century England* (Chicago, 1994), 42. See Julia Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630* (Cranbury, NJ, 2011) for an analysis of credibility in travel accounts before the establishment of the Royal Society.

producers (who were often, in fact, the same people) of books, as well as the books themselves. Indeed, these three to varying degrees built successful careers and garnered the esteem of their peers for their work not only in medicine and botany, but also in the publication of voyage accounts.<sup>64</sup>

When it came to voyage accounts, however, there was a further complicating factor in determining the credibility of the text. Although they all went through editorial processes prior to publication, the author of the original account was, almost invariably, a sailor. In chapter four of this dissertation, I will argue that the common sailor, unlike the gentleman, was as far outside of this system of intersubjective trust as it was possible to get. Where, as Shapin argues, trust, and thus belief in truth-telling, was built on an order of civility, sailors were outside of civil society figuratively and literally, as their voyages took them to far-flung places in conditions that, according to the logic of seventeenth century economic and humoral theory, rendered them marginal geographically and socially. That they were describing experiences in places that the vast majority of their readers would never see, and about which conflicting and often fabulous reports existed, made their reportage all the more dubious. Part of the work of compassing the world through the voyage account lay in overcoming this problem.

One answer was to print the accounts largely written by the officers such as Sir John Narborough and Dutch explorer Abel Tasman, who, with the exception of the period of the English Republic, were drawn from the ranks of gentlemen and were thus part of the system of civility that Shapin argues served as the epistemological basis for phenomenological studies. We shall see examples of this below. If the gentlemanly connection was not so obvious, there were other methods by which such trust could be established. Indeed, Shapin's example of Robert

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<sup>64</sup> As we shall see below, Robinson also earned himself some infamy.

Boyle's study of icebergs demonstrates exactly that: One of Boyle's sources was the *Strange and Dangerous Voyage* of Captain Thomas James, whose words were to be credited because they had been judged reliable by trustworthy sources, especially Charles I, who had ordered the publication of his travels, and because his university education (he had studied at the Inner Temple) marked him out as more knowledgeable than the ordinary seaman.<sup>65</sup> Not all voyage accounts were so apparently credible, however, and, as I shall show, the publications of Sloane, Ray and Robinson to some extent broached this problem through direct appeals to the character of the author, or, more comprehensively, through the creation of a textual world, a bibliographical realm not only of voyage accounts, but also the works related to them which possessed epistemological authority and, therefore, through which the world could be known.

The institutional context for this bibliographical production was the Royal Society, to which Robinson and Sloane had recently been elected.<sup>66</sup> In 1693, the year of publication for the first of the travel accounts that Robinson and Sloane would publish along with Ray, Sloane would become secretary, as well as editor of the *Philosophical Transactions*, a role in which he would continue for 20 years. Members of the Royal Society took a special interest in accounts of far-off places, as the publications discussed in this chapter attest, and those working in natural and moral history, as well as natural philosophy, used voyage accounts as source material for their studies. Over the period of the Royal Society's existence, its members intervened in and sought to shape the kinds of information gathered by sailors. As I will argue in this chapter, the publications of Ray, Robinson and Sloane extended credibility to accounts through the imprint of

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<sup>65</sup> Shapin, 250. See Michael Hunter, *Boyle: Between God and Science* (New Haven, 2009), esp 118-119, for a discussion of the relationship between observation and experimentation in Boyle's scientific practice.

<sup>66</sup> Robinson was elected in 1684, Sloane in 1685. See G. S. Boulger, 'Robinson, Sir Tancred (1657/8-1748)', rev. Kaye Bagshaw, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2010 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23873>, accessed 14 Sept 2011] and Arthur MacGregor, "The Life, Character and Career of Sir Hans Sloane" in MacGregor, ed, *Sir Hans Sloane: Collector, Scientist, Antiquary, Founding Father of the British Museum* (London, 1994), 18.

the Royal Society, and also argued for particular methods of gathering information on voyages that would to some extent mitigate the problems of the unreliable sailor by displacing him as the primary witness. The methods they argued for were not adopted as naval policy until decades later, most famously in the inclusion of Joseph Banks and a contingent of artists on Cook's voyages into the Pacific.<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless, Robinson, Sloane and Ray well understood the questions of credibility that destabilized the textual world that their publications were part of, and argued, both through the paratextual material, such as introductions and dedications, as well as through the organization of texts themselves, for strategies to resolve these problems.

Robinson's letter, and that which followed it in April, was thus written in a context in which voyaging was associated with an acquisition of knowledge of a particular kind, and with the desire to represent that knowledge within stable frameworks. The credibility that could be ascribed to a text depended in large part on a determination made by its readers, not of the text itself, but of its provenance, both in the form of its publication imprint and the reputation of those who wrote or otherwise lent their names to it. Credibility depended, in other words, on the manner of its circulation within a community of readers. It was not just published material that was circulating within these communities, however, especially when it came to the work of the Royal Society. Indeed, the work of the Royal Society was not simply, or even mainly, done in printed form. Many of the articles published in *Philosophical Transactions* were first heard as oral presentations, for instance, and, as evidenced by the sheer scale of the Sloane Archive in the British Library, the scientific enquiry in London at the end of the seventeenth century was

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<sup>67</sup> See John Hawkesworth, *An account of the voyages undertaken by the order of His present Majesty for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour: drawn up from the journals which were kept by the several commanders, and from the papers of Joseph Banks, esq* (London, 1773); Banks' journal was reconstructed by J.C. Beaglehole in *Joseph Banks, The Endeavour journal of Joseph Banks, 1768-1771*. Edited by J.C. Beaglehole (Sydney, 1962). See also J.C. Beaglehole, *Some Problems of Editing Cook's Journals* (Melbourne, 1957).



predicated on a network of letter-writers who circulated texts, edited works for publication, and discussed problems in a mode governed by gentlemanly politeness.<sup>68</sup> This was as true of voyage accounts as it was of any other branch of the work of the Royal Society, and the Sloane Archive features countless examples of accounts of voyages and notes on travel both long and short. This network of letter writers was international, and its members travelled a great deal, both within England and Britain, to other European and Mediterranean nations, and to the New World.

### THE REPUBLIC OF LETTERS

That Sloane was one of those that travelled, we already know. As Robinson's letters demonstrate, despite his travels he remained part of the network of correspondents that together made up a Republic of Letters.<sup>69</sup> After reporting news that Sloane had been taken by pirates, Robinson invoked the public spaces of London's intellectual culture, informing Sloane that "your friends at Dicks and Bettys were mo[u]rning for you, but I comforted them with Cordiall and Alexipharmick draughts, they are all well and are like to continue so if they hear often from you, for without your frequent proscription wee can neither have health or so much as life."<sup>70</sup> The remainder of the letter reads as a combination of gossip and news on publications, and included the promise to send a copy of the newly published second volume of Ray's *History of*

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<sup>68</sup> See Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford, 2006).

<sup>69</sup> See Anthony Grafton, *What Was History?: The Art of History in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2007) and *Worlds Made By Words: Scholarship and Community in the Modern West* (Cambridge, Mass, 2009) for studies that invoke the Republic of Learning as a transnational, European phenomenon.

<sup>70</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 30 Letter from Tancred Robinson to Hans Sloane, December 6, 1687.

*Plants*. Sloane's absence from London by no means meant exile from the Republic, which, in this period, extended beyond Europe to the imperial possessions of the West Indies.<sup>71</sup>

Robinson's second letter reiterated the importance of the communities of Dick's and Betty's in supporting Sloane's voyage, informing him that "wee are all overjoyed to understand by yours to me ... that you weatherd your voyage so courageously, and was [sic] in such good health under a fiery sun, and new Climate."<sup>72</sup> The letter also makes clear the ways in which a branch of Republic of Letters was becoming seaborne, as Robinson informed Sloane that he had sent the second volume of Ray's *Historia Plantarum*, published too late to include any "communications and discoveries" that Sloane might have sent from Jamaica.<sup>73</sup> Ray continued gathering material, however, and Robinson saw Sloane as an important source for a future appendix, suggesting that if he furnished "dryd Samples, Seeds, or written observations," Ray might print them in Sloane's name – "a return suitable to so great a kindness."

As Robinson's letter suggested, the work of the Royal Society was as much collaborative as competitive, especially when it came to Sloane and Ray, whose botanical studies were the result of frequent review and revision over the course of the next two decades. More importantly, the idea of shared authorship did not in this case appear to be a matter of proper attribution in the modern sense. Instead, it was a suitable return; that is, an acknowledgement of kindnesses

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<sup>71</sup> See James Delbourgo, "Science," in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, eds, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, 2nd edn (New York, 2009), 101-2, for a discussion of Sloane's career in connection with the West Indies, as well as the Republic of Letters in the Anglo-Atlantic.

<sup>72</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 32 Letter from Tancred Robinson to Hans Sloane, April 6, 1688. Robinson and his friends were right to fear for Sloane's life. Throughout the following century, the death rate in Jamaica would exceed 10% per year. In the first half of the eighteenth century white settlers died at such a rate that 50,000 new immigrants were required to increase the population by 5,000. See Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: 2008), 14 and 17.

<sup>73</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 32. See also John Ray, *Historia plantarum: species hactenus editas aliasque insuper multas noviter inventas & descriptas complectens: in qua agitur primò de plantis in genere, earumque partibus, accidentibus & differentiis: deinde genera omnia tum summa tum subalterna ad species usque infimas, notis suis certis & characteristicis definita, methodo naturæ vestigiis insistente disponuntur: species singulæ accurate describuntur, obscura illustrantur, omissa suppletur, superflua resecantur, synonyma necessaria adjiciuntur: vires denique & usus recepti compendiò traduntur* (London, 1686). The second volume was published in January, 1688.

suitable to the gentlemanly scholar that was part and parcel of the intersubjective relationships outlined by Shapin. This relationship between Sloane and Ray would continue until Ray's death, and was characterized by exchanges of various kinds. Many of them were intellectual, as books and specimens were sent back and forth, and appraisals of books written in exchanges that were productive of new texts. Others were exchanges of gifts. In 1692, in a letter that also encouraged Sloane to publish his "Discoveries in ye History of Nature," Ray thanked Sloane for a present of sugar to his wife, a gift "too great & inadequate to any merit of mine to be received without some shame."<sup>74</sup> Sugar had been the great commodity of the West Indian trade for half a century, and Sloane's gift – "the quality as quantity concurring to render it valuable" – at once affirmed his personal ties with Ray,<sup>75</sup> and underscored his connections with the Atlantic trade that was transforming English society economically. As Kay Dian Kriz points out, these ties were financial as well as scientific – Sloane became an importer of drinking chocolate to England, and in 1695 would become an absentee landlord through marriage – and yet the sugar that Sloane gifted to Ray would not feature prominently in the *Voyage to Jamaica* that he would publish in 1704, despite its importance to the English economy and Sloane's own fortunes.<sup>76</sup> The significance of the gift-as-commodity should not be overstated in this instance. Instead, it is enough to note that the acknowledgment of authorship that Ray offered Sloane through Robinson was part of a much broader economy of exchange that connected the gentleman scholar both to collaborative scientific projects in one sphere, and to plantation agriculture in another. Of course, these spheres were not even separate, as both the sugar and the specimens that were exchanged originated in in the West Indies. It is in a sense coincidence that the gift of attribution in question

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<sup>74</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 123 Letter from John Ray to Hans Sloane, May 25, 1692.

<sup>75</sup> For a discussion of the role of food in gift-giving, see Felicity Heal, "Food Gifts, the Household and the Politics of Exchange in Early Modern England," *Past and Present* (2008) 199 (1):41-70.

<sup>76</sup> Kriz, 39 and 68.

was likewise connected to Jamaica, in that it was a regular part of practices of civility amongst scholars. Nevertheless, in viewing the relationship between authorial attribution, gift-exchange, and civility in its connection to the New World and the Atlantic economy, we can begin to imagine ways in which the idea of authority and authorship might have been understood in a context different to our own. Attribution-as-gift formed part of that of that context. Another was the relationship between authority, author, and captain, the complexities of which will be addressed in this chapter, and revisited again in chapter four of this dissertation.

The relationship between authority, authorship and civility amongst members of the Royal Society was tied to a broader world of publication, in which Robinson, Ray and Sloane were active consumers and participants. Robinson's letter illustrates as much, as he followed his request on behalf of Ray with a list of books of travel and natural histories of exotic places that were soon to be published, informing Sloane that

Wee expect many discoveries of North America from Mr Banister by the next shipping: Van Kheeden van Drakensteen and Dr Claudius are expected from the East Indies this summer, they have been visiting all the Dutch plantations and Colonies in those parts. Dr Claudius is skillfull in naturall knowledge, designs, and paints exactly, so they promise a great Treasure, and might volumes of that Science. Dr Claudius hath spent 10 years in the Asiatick Countries, hath travell'd China, Japan, Mogulls, Java, and 600 miles from the Cape of Good Hope up the terra firma of Africk, observing every thing very nicely, collecting, and designing all. Dr Herman is labouring hard upon the Naturall History of Ceylon, and promises to publish it next winter.<sup>77</sup>

For Robinson, part of Sloane's task was to match these natural histories and books of travel to the East Indies with a natural history of the West Indies. He wrote with his customary flamboyance that "Now the hot part of the West Indies being before your eyes I do not question but you can and will compose an accurate history thereof, as they of the East Indies; I will never let you rest till you do it. Oviedo, Marggrave, Piso, Rockfort, Hughs etc. are so far from

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<sup>77</sup> BL 4036 f. 32 Letter from Tancred Robinson to Hans Sloane, April 6, 1688.

satisfying mee that they starve mee; I shall pine away unless you feed and fatten my longing desires.<sup>78</sup> Sloane's voyage to Jamaica was in large part valued for the publications that might come of it, and those then hypothetical publications were in turn part of a realm of texts which could encompass the world. These texts would bring not just knowledge of geography, but also botany, climate, and light. In doing so, it would bring the world beyond Europe into the Republic of Letters in order to satisfying the cravings for knowledge felt by its citizens.

In letters written prior to Sloane's voyage, Ray expressed similar desires, though in restrained terms more befitting his character. In April, 1687, he wrote that "Were it not for the danger & hazard of so long a voyage I could heartily wish such a person as your self might travel to Jamayca, & search out and examine thoroughly the naturall varieties of that island. Much light might be given to ye History of the American plant, by and so well prepared for such an undertaking by a comprehensive knowledge of the European. Nay (wch is more) that History, we might justly expect, would not onely be illustrated but much improved and advanced."<sup>79</sup> At the end of June, when the decision on Sloane's September departure was closer to being made, Ray wrote again, detailing particular questions he wanted Sloane to answer:

If you go to Jamayca I pray you a safe and prosperous voyage. We expect gre[a]t things from you, no less than the resolving all our doubts about the names, we meet with of Plants in that part of America, as the Dildou, Mammoo, Mangrove, Manchinelle, Avellanae purgatrcees, the Sower-sop, & Custard apple, most of all though I am pretty well informed, & satisfied by Dr Robinson, yet I shall be glad to be either confirmed, or better informed by so knowing and curious an observer as your self. I should be glad to know what manner of fruit ye Mandioca bears, for (whatever some have written) that it is not without, I am confident. You may also please to observe whether there be any Species of plants common to America and Europe, & whether Ambergrise be the juice of any sort of Rold or Aloe dropt in by ye Sea, as Trapham would have it. What kind of Arundo it is the same Author calls the dumb cane, as also what his animal Seeds may be. The shining barks of trees he mentions deserve observation, because I find nothing of them in other writers. I shall not instance in more particulars I wish your voyage had so

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<sup>78</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> BL 4036 f. 27. Letter from John Ray to Hans Sloane, April 1, 1687.

long prevented the publication of my History that I might have been satisfied & informed by you of those & a thousand other particulars had so great an occasion of new & non-descript species, as your inquisitions & observations would enrich it withall.<sup>80</sup>

Ray had hoped that Sloane's studies on his voyage would contribute to his own work, and, like Robinson, explicitly connected the voyage with the publications that might come of it. In Ray's case, his concerns as expressed in the letters were exclusively botanical, which, given that he was working on the publication of his *Historia plantarum* is unsurprising. Robinson was similarly concerned with the botanical aspect of Sloane's voyage, and in his letter emphasized the natural knowledge and skills in collection and observation of the non-English travellers to the East Indies whom he hoped Sloane would complement in the future with a history of the West.<sup>81</sup>

## THE EMPIRE OF KNOWLEDGE

It was far from unusual for voyages to distant places to be the subject of letters that circulated amongst the learned Republic. Indeed, over last decades of the seventeenth century and the first of the eighteenth, members of the Royal Society – not least Sloane himself – amassed a substantial collection of accounts. The manuscripts took a number of different forms, from the brief letter written aboard a ship in the East Indies, to the elaborately laid-out and hand illustrated journals that were sometimes subsequently printed.<sup>82</sup> It was more unusual that the voyager in

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<sup>80</sup> BL 4036 f. 28. Letter from John Ray to Hans Sloane, June 28, 1687.

<sup>81</sup> See Richard Drayton, *Nature's Government: Science, Imperial Britain, and the 'Improvement' of the World* (New Haven, 2000) for a compelling analysis of the connection between botanical thought and imperial practices.

<sup>82</sup> See, for instance, BL Sloane, 4038, f. 144. Letter from Jezrell Jones, March 15 1700/1. Jones gives a brief account of the political and religious strife he encountered upon his arrival in Cadiz; BL Sloane 4060. f. 130. Letter from Magnus Prince, n.d. Prince describes his nephew's troubles as a sailor with the East India Company, and asks Sloane's assistance in placing him with another company; There are numerous examples of fine copy manuscripts. Two are BL Sloane 2034 Hunt, J: A Voyage to Tangier etc., 1679 and BL Add. 30,368 E. Halley Voyages 1698-99,

question be a pivotal figure in production and circulation of texts. As noted above, with Ray and Robinson's encouragement Sloane would go on to publish two major works based on the specimens he collected and the observations he made in the West Indies. Before either of these books were published, however, Sloane, Robinson and Ray would collaborate on the publication of two other major accounts of travels. Like many of the books featuring accounts of voyages published until that point, both were compilations of accounts by different authors, and featured editorial interventions including introductions and prefaces, as well as appendices to provide supplemental information to the reader.

In 1693, Sloane sent a new translation of late-sixteenth century botanist Dr Leonhart Rauwolf's account of his travels in the Levant to Ray for comments and annotations. The account was published later that year as *A Collection of Curious Voyages & Travels*.<sup>83</sup> It is likely that Sloane came upon Rauwolf's account as part of his research in composing the *Catalogus Plantarum*. When Ray wrote to him upon the publication of the *Catalogus* in 1696, he admired Sloane's "industry & patience in reading and comparing such a multitude of Relations and Accounts of Voyages, & referring to its proper place what you found therein relating to your Subject, & that with so much circumspection and judgement."<sup>84</sup> William Wotton was more specific about some of the voyage accounts that lay within the bibliographical tradition in which Sloane's botanical work was published, telling Sloane that "I have with infinite pleasure been

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1701. Examples of journeys to the Persia and India can be found in BL Sloane 1910 *Voyages and Travels etc.*, XVIIth Century. Amongst Halley's papers in the Royal Society archives, there are copies of a journal kept by Richard Williams on Narborough's voyage to the Straits of Magellan, as well as the extract of Abel Tasman's journal that was published by Sloane, Ray and Robinson in *An Account of Several Late Voyages to the South and North* in 1694. The publication of *An Account of Several Late Voyages* and its reception is the main theme of this chapter, but for now it is enough to note that both manuscripts appear to be in the same hand, probably Halley's. See Royal Society Cl.P/7i/38 MS Extract from Tasman's Journal; Royal Society Cl.P/7i/32 MS "Journal of Narborough's Voyage by Richard Williams;" and *An Account of Several Late Voyages to the South and North* (London, 1694).

<sup>83</sup> John Ray, ed., *A Collection of Curious Voyages & Travels*, 2 vols (London, 1693).

<sup>84</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 238. Letter from John Ray, June 23, 1696.

reviewing abundance of blunders wch. I had unavoidably made in Purchas, & Hakluyt, wñ I formerly read them.”<sup>85</sup> Sloane’s botanical research was grounded in and reflected upon voyage accounts, and it resulted in the publication of further accounts. The new translation of the *Rauwolff* thus came to print through the botanical research of Sloane, and although John Ray’s name appears on the title page, its publication was a collaborative effort. In a letter to Sloane sent in April, Ray congratulated him on procuring the manuscript, and noted that Staphorst’s translation out of Dutch was done “as well as could be expected from a foraigner.”<sup>86</sup> Ray thus made corrections to the translation to render it into more idiomatic English, and “to the words approved now by use among ye learned & civil part of the nation.”<sup>87</sup> Ray also drew up the catalogues of plants that were appended to the collection. In his letter, he described the need for annotation, “either in parallell or additional out of other writers, or corrective, or significative of the partial alterations of customes, & manners, since Rauwolfs time, wch as Captain Hatton suggested to me well, must in all likelyhood, have happened in the space of above one hundred years.”<sup>88</sup> Due to constraints on his own time, Ray gave that task to Robinson, who he hoped “would perform it well.” *Rauwolff*’s account, adorned with Ray’s name, was thus a collaborative effort that involved botanical research by Sloane, translation by Staphorst, and editorial intervention by Robinson.

Robinson’s intervention did not take the form of annotations, but a second tome, comprised of other accounts of voyages to the Levant written by those who had travelled there since. In the bookseller’s introduction, the authors – presumably Ray, Robinson, Sloane, or a

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<sup>85</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 242. Letter from William Wotton, July 1, 1696. The blunders Wotton described were brought about by inaccurate or incorrect descriptions in earlier, canonical accounts. Tellingly, Wotton did not ascribe the blunders to Hakluyt and Purchas, or the authors of the accounts they edited, but to himself.

<sup>86</sup> BL Sloane 4036 f. 141. Letter from John Ray, April 10, 1693.

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*



combination of all three – wrote that “because some might think that the aforementioned Journey of *Dr. Leonhart Rauwolff* was confined to too narrow a compass of Ground, and to some Countries not much frequented ... we therefore consulted a Friend, how to render the Piece more useful to the Publick, who advised us to extend it to many other places of the Levant, where *Rauwolff* never travell’d . . . This being thought most serviceable to the Republick of Learning.”<sup>89</sup>

The intended audience of the *Collection* was citizens of the Republic of Learning, and the authors whose accounts made up the second tome were equally cosmopolitan. It featured accounts drawn from Clusius, Ramusio, Hakluyt, Purchas and Thevenot, as well as extracts from the Royal Society’s *Philosophical Transactions* and the work of various Catholic missionaries who “setting aside the busineß of their Calling and Mission, are not only worthy of entring the List of Gentlemen Travellers, and Virtuoso’s, but of appearing in a Protestant Kingdom.”<sup>90</sup> The value of these texts transcended the confessional politics of the Reformation, and even the “Republick of Learning,” as the authors of the booksellers preface concluded with the hope that the *Collection* would “prove beneficial and grateful to the Publick, seeing as we had no other design in it, than purely that of pleasing and instructing, as well as enlarging the Empire of Knowledge.” The religious conflict that had consumed European politics for nearly two centuries was subsumed into the systematic and broadly construed new empire, which, in this preface at least, found a new source of knowledge not in the classical world, but to the East of it, in the world in which the Christian religion was founded. Through the travel account, history was being reformulated even as a textual empire was being conceived in the reading public of London. The

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<sup>89</sup> “The Booksellers to the Reader,” in John Ray, ed., *A Collection of Curious Travels and Voyages In Two Tomes* (London, 1693).

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.*

“Empire of Knowledge” was an empire that would compass the world, and contain within it knowledge useful to the scientific and commercial interests of the gentlemen of the Royal Society and the public that had formed around them.

That this “Empire of Knowledge,” made up of a membership of a Republic of Letters that transcended not only national but also, and more importantly, religious boundaries, was the logical extension of the Royal Society’s mission as described by Thomas Sprat in his 1666 *History of the Royal Society*. Sprat wrote that

whoever shall soberly profess to be willing to put their shoulders under the burden of so great an enterprise so as to represent to mankind the whole fabrick, the parts, the causes, the effects of nature: ought to have their eyes in all parts, and to receive information from every quarter of the earth: they ought to have a constant universal intelligence.<sup>91</sup>

Accounts of travels to foreign lands, whether to the New World or the Old, were to provide the raw material for the work of the Royal Society. That work was, in theory at least, to incorporate the whole of nature, and in doing so it was to draw in the “every quarter of the earth.” In the case of the *Collection of Curious Travels and Voyages*, the primary interest was botanical, yet the compilation was made with all members of the Republic of Learning in mind, at the same time as it was made up of the work of the Republic, both in the collaborative efforts of Sloane, Ray and Robinson, and in the cosmopolitan group of travelers whose writings Robinson drew from in the second tome. Even as Sloane was cataloguing the flora he found in the West Indies and writing a *History of Jamaica* that would depend on and describe the commercial facets of the early British Empire, he and his colleagues were self-consciously constructing a textual empire within the learned Republic.

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<sup>91</sup> Thomas Sprat, *The History of the Royal-Society of London, for the improving of Natural Knowledge* (London, 1667), 20. I am grateful to Katie Parker for the reference.

Before Rauwolf's travels could be seen fit for publication in English after such a long absence from the market, his credibility as an observer and author needed to be restored. For his references to Mandeville and other of the more outlandish claims of previous travelers, Rauwolf had been discredited in this new age of travel writing. Nevertheless, in the bookseller's preface, Rauwolf was defended on the grounds that

tho' some perhaps may give a slight Character of him, for a Mistake or two about Prester John and the Unicorn, yet if they consider, that he only relates what he accidentally heard of them from others, they ought to take that part only as a Story told him upon the Road, as he himself indeed delivers it. But this may very truly be said of Rauwolff, that whatever he writes upon his own Observation or Knowledge is most faithful and sincere, therefore it was not without Reason, that Carolus Clusius and the two Bauhines (all very good judges) depended so much upon him, and made such frequent and honourable mention of this Itinerary.<sup>92</sup>

The reformulation of travel writing's role in commercial expansion and scientific discourse, and ongoing contact with the East had discredited Mandeville's travels. Through his repetition of some of Mandeville's more fanciful claims, Rauwolf was also tainted. Rauwolf's credit was to be restored, and thus the republication of his account justified, through a combination of ascribing his own errors to an understandable reliance on hearsay, and through an appeal to authority. Where Rauwolf made his own observations he was to be trusted, and trusted not for his own sake, but especially because he was useful and well-regarded by three fifteenth-century European botanists; Carolus Clusius and the Dutch brothers Johann and Caspar Bauhin.<sup>93</sup> Indeed, Rauwolf's purpose in travel was to collect samples of plants, and that collection takes up a great deal of his account. Ray, Sloane and Robinson's botanical practice relied on the new method of description that Rauwolf, Clusius and the Bauhin brothers were all involved in developing over a

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<sup>92</sup> 'The Booksellers to the Readers, in Ray.

<sup>93</sup> See Brian W. Ogilvie, *The Science of Describing: Natural History in Renaissance Europe*, (Chicago, 2006), 43, 172-3, for references to the relationship between Clusius and Rauwolf. See also Florike Egmond, Paul Hoftijzer and Robert Visser, (eds), *Carolus Clusius: Towards a Cultural History of a Renaissance Naturalist*, (Amsterdam, 2007).

century earlier. Thus, despite travelling to an ancient land, the appeal to authority was not to the ancients. Instead, it was to the new authorities of modern natural philosophy.

In addition to these authorities, Rauwolf's own skills in observation were integral to the value of the text. The account of the *Collection* published in *Philosophical Transactions* emphasized not only the range of places and things described, but the quality of Rauwolf's descriptions. The author of the account, who deemed the *Collection* "the most Judicious and Choicest ... that ever was yet publish'd of the *Levant*, and some adjacent Countries,"<sup>94</sup> consistently praised Rauwolf's skill in observation of the urban spaces and botanical products of the region. He noted that Rauwolf

describes with great exactness the City of *Tripoli* . . . he is very particular in his Account of the stately *Bagnio*'s ... He tells us the ways how the *Turks* prepare their *Rusma*, their Soap and Pot-ashes, and afterwards enumerates the Trees, Shrubs and Herbs growing in the adjacent Countrey: He doth not omit the common Observations of other Travellers relating to Offices, Employments, Manners, Customs, Habits, Religions, Diet, &c.

From *Tripoli* he proceeds to *Aleppo*, the greatest *Emporium* of all the East, laying down very minutely the *Rout* he took. I need only take notice here, that the Author shews the same Exactness and Diligence in describing *Aleppo* as he did before in *Tripoli*; but the Traffick here being much more considerable, he therefore is the more industrious about the Drugs and Merchandize.<sup>95</sup>

The account emphasized not only the geographical and places and products that one could read about in Rauwolf's account, but the precision and detail of his observations. This continued for three paragraphs, and each location was met with a note about the quality of these observations, noting, for instance, that "he gives us a most accurate Account of *Mount Libanus*, which he survey'd with that diligence, as never any Traveller did before him."<sup>96</sup> This emphasis on the quality of Rauwolf's observational skills was part of the argument for his credibility. It was not

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<sup>94</sup> "An Account of Books" in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 17 (1693), 768.

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.*, 769.

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.*, 770.

only the places that were being described that were important for readers, but the degree of accuracy and reliability of the descriptions. If Rauwolf had been discredited for repeating hearsay, the accuracy of his own observations was a key part of restoring his credibility for his late-seventeenth century reader.

The republication of Rauwolf's account needed to be justified for the reasons outlined above. When it was originally published, Rauwolf himself justified writing his own work on the basis that

he that by daily experience observeth how Wars, Plagues, Distempers, and other Accidents, may and do mightily alter Kingdoms, Countries, Cities, and Towns, so that what was praised formerly as glorious and beautiful, lyeth now desolate and in Ashes, and what then was accounted barren and waste, may be now become fruitful and glorious; he will confess, that still in our times a great many things remain to be search'd and enquir'd into, which others before us never did nor could observe, treat of, or publish.<sup>97</sup>

Which is to say that the Levant, of significance because of its religious and classical history, its longstanding significance as a source of rich trade goods, and, for Rauwolf and Ray especially, its natural history in the form of exotic flora, was still subject to historical change through destructive revolution. Old lands could be made new, and authority could be derived from practitioners of new forms of natural philosophy. Nevertheless, in his letter to Sloane, Ray noted that the justification for including the annotations that became the second tome was not simply completeness, as it is described in the bookseller's preface, but as a corrective to Rauwolff's ethnography. This corrective was necessary not because of Rauwolff's lack of credibility, but because of the inevitable changes that came with the passage of time. The "Empire of Knowledge" demanded not just geographical reach, but a consciousness of historical change.

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<sup>97</sup> Leonhart Rauwolf, 'To His Honoured Cousins', in Ray, 9-10.

The following year, Sloane, Ray and Robinson collaborated on the publication of another compilation of accounts of travel. *An Account of Several Late Voyages to the South and North* featured four accounts of voyages made in the past half century. Despite being edited by the same people and published by the same printers, there were, outwardly at least, significant differences between the *Collection of Curious Voyages & Travels* and *An Account of Several Late Voyages*. To begin with, while the former was made up of journeys in the Levant and surrounding areas mostly involving overland travel and descriptions of terrestrial spaces of the Old World, the accounts of the latter involved maritime voyages to disparate parts of the New World. Additionally, while the chief account of the *Collection* was historical, having been published in the sixteenth century and widely disseminated, the oldest of the accounts in *An Account of Several Late Voyages* was an extract Abel Tasman's 1642 voyage in the South Pacific, which chiefly featured his fateful encounter with Māori warriors in what is now Golden Bay, at the top of the South Island of New Zealand. *An Account of Several Late Voyages* also featured the first published version of John Narborough's voyage to the Straits of Magellan, which lasted from 1669 to 1671, as well as John Wood's failed attempt to find a Northeastern Passage in 1676. The final account was Frederick Marten's passage on a whaling ship to Spitsbergen and the seas of the arctic where Wood had hoped to find passage to Japan, also published in English for the first time and, according to the review in *Philosophical Transactions*, written on a voyage Marten undertook "to satisfie the Commendable Curiosity of the *Royal Society*, which he has done with admirable Diligence."<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>98</sup> "An Account of Books" in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 18 (1694), 168. In his private correspondence, Ray was less impressed with Marten's account. He told Sloane in an undated letter that he had read the account with "great pleasure & satisfaction," and praised him for being "very diligent in observing, & no lesse true & faithfull in relating and setting own his Observations." Ray used those observations to deduce that there was not much difference "in the nature and temper of the Sea & Lands from thence to ye Pole it self" (BL Sloane 4060 f. 161

Thus, rather than being republications of older accounts in a new edition, *An Account of Several Late Voyages* was a compilation of accounts that were previously unavailable if not unknown to the English reading public. The geographical orientation towards the New World also set *An Account* apart from the *Collection*'s focus on the Levant.<sup>99</sup> Nevertheless, both texts shared a thematic concern with history, upheaval and revolution. The invocation of war and revolution that provides the justification for publishing a new edition of Rauwolf was echoed in Smith and Walford's Epistle Dedicatory to *An Account of Several Late Voyages*. In addressing one-time Secretary of the Admiralty Samuel Pepys, Smith and Walford (or, more likely, Robinson or Sloane) announced that

the Design of this Dedication is neither to flatter, nor to beg; but barely to present you with a simple and hearty Acknowledgment of your Kindness and Generosity to the Publick . . . in advancing the Progress of Useful Knowledge, and encouraging Men of Letters, or Invention: which Noble Endowments of Mind render'd you most Worthy of those High Stations, wherein you have been Eminent . . . and the same will preserve through all Ages in the good Esteem of the best part of Mankind. No Revolution, no Storm, no Time, can shake such Foundations.<sup>100</sup>

For the printers to the Royal Society, these books of travel were both tools to create something lasting following a century of England's troubles, and to aid in the reestablishment of a learned society in the age of Restoration and of the Glorious Revolution. This was especially significant in the case of Pepys, whose loyalty to James II had made life difficult in the wake of 1688. In the

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undated letter from John Ray to Hans Sloane). In a letter to Tancred Robinson, however, he was not nearly as enthusiastic, noting merely that "I have also skim'd over the Spitzberg voyages, contained in ye parcell: neither doth there occur much new there. If his descriptions be exact some new species of Birds there are; of wch I shall give as good an Account as I find." (RS EL/R1/19 Letter from John Ray to Tancred Robinson, August 21, 1693.) Although Sloane commissioned the translation, the suggestion that the voyages themselves were undertaken at the request of members of the Royal Society is not substantiated in the primary literature. See G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels, 1625-1846', in Edward Lynham, ed., *Richard Hakluyt & His Successors: A Volume Issued to Commemorate the Centenary of the Hakluyt Society*, (London, 1946), footnote, 71.

<sup>99</sup> As I will show below, the "New World" in question was itself geographically divisible, and the "South" and "North" of the title had specific geographical and geopolitical implications for readers.

<sup>100</sup> Samuel Smith and Benjamin Walsford, 'Epistle Dedicatory', in *An Account of Several Late Voyages*.

early 1690s he was arrested on a number of occasions, and had begun a withdrawal from public life until his political rehabilitation in 1694, the same year *Several Late Voyages* was published.<sup>101</sup> Through the voyage account and the learning and discoveries that could be found in them, ancient lands could be viewed anew, and England's recent, turbulent history could be laid to rest. Where the previous year's publication of the *Collection* was predicated on political turbulence in the Levant, the dedication of the *Account* celebrated Pepys' eminence and reputation enduring through similar turbulence in England. This eminence and its endurance stemmed from Pepys' contribution to the Republic of Learning, a republic which, it seems, had a much more solid foundation than the monarchy, if the events of the preceding century were anything to go by.

The simultaneous acknowledgement and repudiation of forces of transformative change in the epistle dedicatory was just one instance in which historical consciousness influenced the structure of *An Account of Several Late Voyages*. The second, more profound invocation of history came in the introduction, written by but not attributed to Tancred Robinson, in the form of a history of voyages that doubled as a bibliography. For the members of the Royal Society, who were clearly conscious of the efforts of Hakluyt and Purchas the bibliographical context of publication was key in framing the text and alerting readers to the significance of the work as well as the credibility of its author. At least until Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World*, which was to be published three years later, no one account was enough to compass the world in and of itself, and thus the histories of publication and the voyages they related were carefully laid out and rehearsed within the texts. The review of *An Account of Several Late Voyages* in *Philosophical Transactions* began with its bibliographical context, noting that

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<sup>101</sup> Claire Tomalin, *Samuel Pepys: The Unequalled Self* (London, 2002), esp. 345-8, 355.



About 14 Months ago these Booksellers published a Curious Collection of Travels into the *Levant*, and other adjacent Countries, by *Rawolf, Belon, Greaves &c.* Of which the *Transactions* take Notice, No. 200 p. 768. And having received Encouragement, do here proceed with the like Design upon other Parts of the World, in order to improve and compleat Geography from Original Authentick Records, and Memoirs of Eye-Witnesses.<sup>102</sup>

In addition to providing these memoirs of eyewitnesses, the preface was concerned with situating the compilation within its bibliographical history. Thus, it gave, according to the *Philosophical Transactions*, “a Compendious Chronological Account of *Navigations* and *Voyages* to those Remote Parts, of which the Body of the Book treats, together with some new Reflections in *Geography, Hydrography, and Natural History.*”<sup>103</sup> Robinson began his introduction not with the voyages, but with specific reference to the textualization of voyages, declaring that

the Advantages of taking judicious and accurate journals in *Voyages* and *Itineraries*, are so great and many, as the Improvements of *Geography, Hydrography, Astronomy, Natural and Moral History, Antiquity, Merchandise, Trade, Empire, &c.* that few Books can compare with them either for profit or pleasure. Therefore *Ramusio, the De Brys, Hackluit, Purchas, John de Laet, Thevenot, &c.* have begun a very commendable Design, and their Works are like to be always useful.<sup>104</sup>

For Robinson, the bibliographical context of the travel account was crucial. In order to participate in the widening of so many spheres of knowledge, Robinson found it “necessary to premise in general, what other Navigators have gone before to those parts, and what additional Knowledge may be reap’d from the *ensuing Work*; in doing which, we shall observe Order of *Place* and *Time.*” Thus, the introduction is a history of significant voyages organized first geographically, then chronologically. The logic behind the geographical organization mirrors the

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<sup>102</sup> “An Account of Books” in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 18, (1694), 166-7.

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.*, 167.

<sup>104</sup> [Sir Tancred Robinson], ‘The Bookseller’s Preface, or Introduction’, in *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, v. For the sake of readability, I have reversed the pattern of italicisation in this and other quotations from the introduction.

structure of the book itself, so that the voyages to the Straits of Magellan and beyond came first, just as Sir Narborough and Abel Tasman's voyage came first in the book that follows. Robinson began with the Straits of Magellan and Magellan's voyage, and continued through a number of voyages including Francis Drake's, up to Narborough's in 1669 and then Captain Sharp's in 1680-1, whose voyage into the South Sea led him to conclude that "the Land in the Streight of *Le Maire*, and in *Brewer's Passage*, must be *Islands*, and not join'd to any great *Southern Continent*, as suppos'd by some."<sup>105</sup> Robinson also included detailed descriptions of exotic plants, animals and people seen on these journeys, and, in one case, alluded to the intertextual nature of the journals produced on these travels that was geared particularly towards botany, noting that "this *Sebald de Wert* gave *Clusius* a description of the Winter-bark-Tree growing up and down *Patagonia*."<sup>106</sup> Robinson, and those others involved in the editorial decisions in the composition of *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, was conscious of the text participating in a history both of the voyages and the accounts of the voyages. They drew connections between the two, and appear to have thought very carefully about how the latter could influence the former.

Robinson continued to detail the history of northern exploration, all the time interlacing it with the history of the texts. The first voyage he mentioned, that of Nicolo and Antonio Zeni, Venetian brothers whose voyage from Gibraltar to Flanders and England was driven off course by storms, can be found in Hakluyt and Purchas, for instance.<sup>107</sup> Indeed, of the thirty voyages mentioned in this section of Robinson's introduction, about two thirds make mention of published or manuscript accounts of the voyages, or of some other related texts. Robinson noted that Robert Boyle used Thomas James' 1631 attempt on the North-West Passage mentioned

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<sup>105</sup> *ibid.*, xiii

<sup>106</sup> *ibid.*, ix.

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.*

above as a source for his *History of Cold*.<sup>108</sup> Likewise, a digression into the typology of whales concludes with a reference to an article in the *Philosophical Transactions*.<sup>109</sup> The bibliographical dimension of the history of European voyages was not limited to a bibliography of voyages themselves, but instead demonstrated the influence of voyages on works of natural philosophy.

Robinson's history was not just a history of voyages, but a textual history, in which the voyages and the texts that came out of them were mutually productive — of course, one could know little of these voyages if nothing was written down of them, and thus their reproduction in textual form is crucial to Robinson's history. Nevertheless, his textual history goes beyond an acknowledgement of the sources into a system of reference. Robinson's history engages not just the voyages themselves, but also a textual realm, forming and participating in a canon of navigational tracts. Hackluyt and Purchas sat at the core of this canon at this stage (we shall see that they were to become sidelined only a decade later), but with a range of other texts, valued for their accuracy and their completeness. The reader was not only informed of the texts' existence, but directed to them, in order to satisfy curiosity and broaden one's knowledge; to aim, in other words, for a complete knowledge of both the textual realm of these books, and an accurate and fuller knowledge of the world they describe. Book connected to book just as sea joined to sea, so that in the accounts of sea voyages a world of knowledge can be found along with knowledge of the world.

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.*, xxv. See also Robert Boyle, *New Experiments and Observations Touching Cold, or, An Experimental History of Cold*, (London, 1683).

<sup>109</sup> Robinson, xxiii

## TANCRED ROBINSON, THE “BEAST L.P.,” AND THE DISSOLUTION OF THE EARTH

Despite not putting his name to the bookseller’s preface, we know of Robinson’s involvement in *Several Late Voyages* because of a controversy that unfolded in print in the years following its publication. In 1695, one L.P. published *Two Essays sent in a Letter from Oxford to a Nobleman in London*.<sup>110</sup> In his essays, L.P. used evidence from the discovery of the New World to argue that the Great Deluge of the Old Testament must have been confined to the Near East. L.P. opened with imagery that suggested the influence of recent sea-voyages on his thinking, noting in his Apology that “the universal disposition of this Age is bent upon a Rational Religion; the fierceness of Bigotry is in good measure calm’d and allay’d; therefore I venture out upon this Pacifick Sea, hoping to reach my Port without any storm or hardship.”<sup>111</sup> Allusions and analogies to the New World in the Apology abounded: “Things are denominated *Heresie* and *Atheism*, not by any certain Rules of Truth, or Falshood, but according to the Caprice, or Interests of Sects and Parties: So the *Christians* were called *Athei* by the *Pagans*, because they did not Sacrifice, nor consult Oracles, nor Worship Images: So one Nation calls another Barbarous, because different in Habit, Manners, Diets, and Ceremonies.”<sup>112</sup> The Apology mixed allusions to classical history and religious doctrine with allusions to the people of the New World in a manner that underscored the epistemological challenge the New World presented to European learning.

Indeed, this is the theme of the essays, the first of which was concerned specifically with distribution of solid materials such as shells and metals in the layers of the earth following the

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<sup>110</sup> L.P., *Two Essays sent in a Letter from Oxford to a Nobleman in London* (London, 1695).

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*, no page number

<sup>112</sup> *ibid.*

Universal Deluge. L.P. argued that “’tis hard to conceive how Leaves, and light Shells should fall in *Æquilibrio* with much heavier parts of *Marbles*, *Minerals*, and other *Fossils*, and be embodied with them in the same Beds, Layers, or *Strata*, by the Principles of the same specifick *Gravity*, whose *Laws* are certain and constant,”<sup>113</sup> and drew from this that the Universal Deluge did not, as others had suggested, dissolve and then remake the world, before affirming his Platonic leanings in suggesting that the shells and other detritus found in the layers of the earth grew there independently.<sup>114</sup> L.P. went on to argue that the lack of common languages and species, and the impossibility of traveling from Asia or Europe to the Americas let alone the recently discovered islands of the South Seas in an age before navigation, meant that the people of the world did not spring from the same source. The consequence of this was that the world could not have been populated through a dispersal following the biblical deluge. L.P. declared that he saw “no way at present to solve this new face of *Nature* by old Arguments fetch’d from *Eastern* Rubbis, or Rabinical Weeds, unless some *New Philosopher* starts up with a fresh System; in the meant time let them all be *Aborigines*.”<sup>115</sup> Like the shells and fossils found in the earth, the people of the world were products of spontaneous, independent development, and not a post-flood migration. The means by which this spontaneous, “plastick” generation occurred, in plants and shells if not humans, was elaborated in the postscript. As we shall see in the following chapter, the problem of the peopling of the New World in the antediluvian era was one that

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<sup>113</sup> *ibid.*, 6.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 10. See also Rhoda Rappaport, “Questions of Evidence: An Anonymous Tract Attributed to John Toland,” in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 58, 2, (1997), 345. Rappaport notes that Cambridge philosophers feared that natural philosophy was veering dangerously towards atheism in its description of a mechanistic universe, and posited a “plastic power” that functioned as a creative force between God and the physical world. This neo-Platonic idea was also useful in explaining postdiluvian dispersal of life, as the plastic power could produce organisms *in situ*, rather than having them moved by the Flood itself. Rappaport’s examination of both the text itself as well as the historiography suggests that the attribution to Toland, though possible, is based on feeble evidence, and that the tract remains anonymous.

<sup>115</sup> L.P., 23.

compilers of voyage accounts edited. L.P. was unusual in denying the possibility of migration and arguing instead for spontaneous generation. Other authors would perceive this as a historical question, to be answered through studies of the development of navigation. L.P.'s interest in the generation of life, and not what the living did, seems to have precluded such historicity.

Crucially for Robinson, and for this discussion of the function of published voyage accounts in the late-seventeenth century, L.P. based his argument on observations made at sea. Specifically, in order to demonstrate the phenomena, L.P. cited Sir John Narborough, who "in his *Voyage to Chili*, observ'd in several Cliffs and Hills on the Coasts of *Patagonia*, lumps of *Oyster Shells* buried up and down at Land; yet he could never find any *Oysters* in those Seas, though he had Sounded most of the *Ports of Southern America*."<sup>116</sup> The account of Narborough's voyage was the only primary evidence that L.P. offered in his argument, which drew on new observations to engage in ancient arguments, and placed the experience of sailors at the centre of a debate about the structure and history of the globe.<sup>117</sup>

L.P.'s argument did not go unnoticed. Two years later, Royal Society Fellow John Harris published an excoriating response, attacking the arguments and impugning the author's motives in anonymity.<sup>118</sup> Harris' polemic was mainly concerned with defending the reputation of Dr. John Woodward, whose *Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth* had inspired L.P.'s own comments on the deluge, as well a number of dismissive remarks from Thomas Robinson, a

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid.*, 45.

<sup>117</sup> See Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: the Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass, 1992).

<sup>118</sup> John Harris, *Remarks on some Late Papers, Relating to the Universal Deluge: And to the Natural History of the Earth* (London, 1697). The accusations amounted to an attack on the anonymous author's credibility that, whilst not relevant to this discussion, are worth thinking about in the context of Adrian Johns' arguments. See Harris, pp. 1-2 and Johns, *The Nature of the Book: Print and Knowledge in the Making* (Chicago, 1998).

rector from Cumberland.<sup>119</sup> Harris, in his response to L.P., picked up on the image of argument as voyage, retorting that he wished L.P. had “understood his *Compass* better, and had a little more *Balast* before [he] venture that little tottering *Cock-boat* ... to the Waves.”<sup>120</sup> Harris continued his taunt by extending the metaphor further into the realm of learning: “For from the *right Course of a Rational Religion*, he is got into the *New Latitude of Liberty and Natural Philosophy* already; & is falling foul on the Rocks of *Copernicus, Galileo, Campanella, Mersennus, Gassendus, Cartesius, &c.* and what is worst of all, doth not perceive any danger neither!”<sup>121</sup> As Harris turned L.P.’s metaphor against him, the voyage was lifted out of the pages of the *Two Essays* and placed in a hydroscape, where modern authors were the hazards that gave a dangerous shape to the once “Pacifick Sea.”

This intriguing repurposing of L.P.’s metaphor aside, Harris made two other uses of the voyage that are pertinent to this discussion. Harris referred specifically to *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, and insinuated that the author of the still anonymous booksellers’ preface and L.P. were one and the same. Harris drew this inference from L.P.’s conclusion that

the present *Age* affords so much real Knowledge, and will not endure empty Notions, and vain Speculations, which had so long amus’d and vapoured the *World*: We presently call for clear Proof, Fact, or ocular Demonstration: What Improvements in all the parts of Life might not be expected from such sound *Principles*, if we had a *Richelieu* or a *Colbert* to put the Springs and Wheels in motion? For want of such a fund, the *True Philosophy* begins to degenerate and dwindle in *Gossiping*, into *Tale-telling*, into *Jests*, into *Romantick Hypotheses*, and idle *Whimsies*.<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>119</sup> John Woodward, *Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth* (London, 1695). In his dedication to William Nicholson, Arch-Deacon of Carlisle, Thomas Robinson wrote that Woodward’s argument was “very ill-grounded; [his] Notions being inconsistent with common Sense and Experience, with Scripture and Reason ... and in some Particulars, Dr. Woodward seems inconsistent with himself.” Thomas Robinson, *New Observations on the Natural History of this World of Matter, and this World of Life: In Two Parts* (London, 1696), dedication.

<sup>120</sup> Harris., 4

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.*, 5.

<sup>122</sup> L.P., 38-9

Harris responded that, in arguing this, L.P. “as Scandalously abuses the whole nation, as a Certain Gentleman (whom perhaps L.P. may know a little of) hath done Our Ministers of State: who, in the Introduction to Sr. *John Narborough’s Voyage*, which he *humbly condescended to scribe* for the *Bookseller* [sic], saith, *that the Promoting of Arts and Sciences, with Treasure, is a Secret, which some Ministers think not fit to practise, or perhaps may be insensible of, for want of Penetration.*”<sup>123</sup> It was here that Tancred Robinson was brought into the debate.

At the conclusion of his booksellers’ preface, Robinson had indeed made this comment. The context was a lament that “the *English Nation* have not sent along with their *Navigators* some skilful *Painters* [sic], *Naturalists*, and *Mechanists*, under publick *Stipends* and *Encouragement*,” snidely noting that the English were “apt to imitate a certain Prince in every thing, except in the most glorious and best Part of him.”<sup>124</sup> The “certain Prince” was Louis XIV of France. In the context of contemporary European war, Robinson was arguing for a concerted, state-funded effort to improve methods of observation and reportage from the voyages that would finally come into its own during the voyages of Captain Cook.<sup>125</sup> For Robinson, the benefits of such a project were demonstrated by the final account in *Several Late Voyages*, Frederick Marten’s voyage to the North East which “being the last and best was much desired here, it being full of *Draughts* and curious *Remarks*.”<sup>126</sup> Marten’s account contained numerous detailed pictures of flora, fauna and seascapes, many of which include explanatory keys that

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<sup>123</sup> Harris, 8.

<sup>124</sup> Tancred Robinson, xxix.

<sup>125</sup> Bernard William Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific, 1768-1850: A Study in the History of Arts and Ideas* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1989). The arguments for government involvement in scientific endeavors went back to Sir Francis Bacon. See John Gascoigne, *Science in the Service of Empire: Joseph Banks, the British State and the Uses of Science in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge, 1998), 17-18.

<sup>126</sup> Sir Tancred Robinson, xxvii.



answered Tancred Robinson's appeal to include artists on voyages. Robinson's appeal was one in a line made by members of the Royal Society that extended back to at least 1662, when John Hoskins wrote his "Enquiries of some things in Island." Hoskins' manuscript included questions about Iceland's minerals, geothermal activity, "whether it be trye yt they sell winds or converse wth spirits or often see them," and "what is sayd concerning raining mice."<sup>127</sup> Henry Oldenburg's enquiries posed similar questions, many of which were concerned with the effect of cold and other aspects of the climate.<sup>128</sup> These inquiries were not limited to the Arctic North, but included other parts of the world.<sup>129</sup> As well as enquiries about specific locations, Oldenburg wrote "Directions For Sea-men, bound for far voyages," a list of general instructions for keeping records, making observations, and conducting experiments at sea.<sup>130</sup> These instructions and inquiries are nevertheless limited to written records made by sailors, rather than image, observations and records and made by specialists that Robinson advocated.

It is perhaps ironic Woodward – in whose defense Harris launched his invective – had himself authored just such a set of instructions. An anonymous 20-page pamphlet, entitled *Brief Instructions for Making Observations in all Parts of the World*,<sup>131</sup> appeared as the controversy over Woodward's *Essay toward the Natural History of the Earth* was beginning to heat up. Although the *Brief Instructions* were published anonymously, Harris identified Woodward as its

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<sup>127</sup> RSS Cl.P/19/1 Johns Hoskins, FRS, 'Enquires of some things in Island, Dec 24, 1662.

<sup>128</sup> RSS Cl.P/19/58 Henry Oldenburgh, 'Enquiries for Island', n.d.

<sup>129</sup> See, for instance, RSS Cl.P/19/4 D. Colwell FRS, "Inquiries Concerning ye East Indies," n.d., and RSS Cl.P/19/15 Henry Oldenburgh, Sec RS "A Memoriall for Sr. Robert Southwell in Portugall," London, Sept 20 1665. The latter instructions are concerned with purchasing books of voyages and finding a correspondent with which the Royal Society fellows could communicate.

<sup>130</sup> RSS Cl.P/19/7 Henry Oldenburgh, 'Directions for Sea-men, bound for far Voyages', n.d. These instructions were reproduced in fair copy, registered and credited to Robert Hooke. See RSS RBO/1/33 Robert Hooke, 'Directions for Sea-Men bound for farre-voyages', n.d. They also appear in John and Awnsam Churchill's *Collection of Curious Voyage and Travels*, (London, 1704), lxiii-lxvii.

<sup>131</sup> [Sir John Woodward] *Brief Instructions for Making Observations in all Parts of the World: As Also For Collecting, Preserving, and Sending over NATURAL THINGS* (London, 1696).

author in his defense of Woodward against Thomas Robinson, who, Harris believed was in league with L.P.<sup>132</sup> Harris argued that in *Brief Instructions*

the Doctor fairly submits to the Test all that he hath set forth in his Book: he appeals to the Scrutiny and Examination of Mankind, whether things be so, as he hath represented them, or not: He requests to all Persons, who have the Curiosity and Opportunity, to make diligent search where ever they come, and then justly to report what they observe: he puts these Instructions into the hands of Persons that go abroad, and Travel to all parts of Asia, Africa, and America, as well as of Europe, and the nearer parts of the World, intreating that they would carefully observe whether things stand in those remote Counties, as they do here at home, and as he hath set forth, or not; than which nothing can be more equitable and fair. And by this also, it may appear with what Diligence and Application he prosecutes his Larger Work; he endeavouring that all places of the Earth may be duly Searched and Examine, that so that Work may be the more perfect and compleat, and less subject to Errors and Mistakes.<sup>133</sup>

In Harris' view, Woodward was using the observations of the world to perfect the text, rather than to perfect knowledge about the world. Travel, for Harris, was a supplement to philosophical enquiry, in which the observations made under instruction by sailors would aid in understanding the natural history and structure of the world, and through that, the moral history and historical facts of the biblical flood. The participants in this argument "discussed the formation of matter, the creation of the universe, and of the earth within it, and the origins of life," and thus were not exactly precursors to modern geology.<sup>134</sup> Despite framing their

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<sup>132</sup> In his *Remarks on Some Late Papers*, Harris claimed that L.P. was the author of the "Additional Remarks" that appear in Thomas Robinson's *New Observations*, the author of which notes numerous similarities between Woodward's model of the earth and that of Steno, amongst others. For Harris, this amounted to a scandalous charge that Woodward was a "plagiary." The charge invited a lengthy and rigorous defense. See Harrison, esp. 1-2, 157-258 and Thomas Robinson, "Additional Remarks." John Arbuthnot's more temperate comparison of the works of Woodward and Steno concluded that it was not a case of plagiarism, as did a letter from William Wotton in published along with Arbuthnot's commentary. See John Arbuthnot, *An Examination of Dr. Woodward's Account of the Deluge, &c. With a Comparison between Steno's Philosophy and the Doctor's, in Case of Marine Bodies dug out of the Earth*. (London, 1697).

<sup>133</sup> Harris, preface, no pagination.

<sup>134</sup> Michael Neve and Roy Porter, 'Alexander Catcott: Glory and Geology', in *The British Journal for the History of Science*, 10, 1, March 1977, 39.

arguments as between the ‘Ancients and Moderns’, the debate should not be thought of as part of a linear story in which scientific knowledge or theory supersedes classical or religious learning, but rather, with Anthony Grafton, as the incorporation of knowledge of the New World into Ancient debates.<sup>135</sup>

Sir Tancred admitted his authorship of the bookseller’s preface in a letter written in response to Harris’ tract. While Rappaport believes that Harris was making Thomas Robinson his prime target and merely insinuating that Tancred Robinson “might be in sympathy with the sentiments of free-thinkers,” it is evident that Harris thought that L.P. and the author of the bookseller’s preface to *An Account of Several Late Voyages* were the same person, and that Robinson also drew this implication from Harris’ text, pointing out that “Mr *Harris* in his *Late Remarks*, insinuates in many places, That I am the *Beast L.P.*”<sup>136</sup> Sir Tancred denied the charge in his letter to Wotton, but admitted that he corresponded with L.P. over the parts of his argument concerned with the Americas before reiterating his distaste for L.P.’s essays, “whose Deformities I never did, nor ever shall embrace.”<sup>137</sup> It is here that he confessed to being author of the bookseller’s preface to *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, before assuring the reader that he ‘know[s] nothing of the *Author* of those *Miscellany Letters*, which Mr. *Harris* (like the *Great Leviathan*) sports himself with; indeed my *Namesake* the *Honest Vicar* of *Ousby* did shew

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<sup>135</sup> Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: the Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass, 1992).

<sup>136</sup> See Rappaport, 341, and Tancred Robinson, *A Letter sent to Mr Wotton, B.D., concerning “Some Late Remarks”, &c written by J Harris, AM.*, (London, 1697). Rappaport says that Harris believed that Thomas Robinson and L.P. were the same person. In fact, in a section of his *Late Remarks* Harris argued with some vigor that L.P. was the author of the “Additional Remarks” in Thomas Robinson, but that the two were different people. Rappaport, 340; Harris, 157-8. Indeed, Harris made such insinuations about Tancred Robinson at numerous points outside of his claims regarding the introduction to *An Account of Several Late Voyages*. In a passage dripping with sarcasm, Harris wrote of “a very *Sagacious* Person, though his stile hath a feathish turn with it, and very much like that of a certain pretended *Master of Arts*, that shall now be nameless [On the *Two Letters*, L.P.’s byline included the words “*Master of Arts.*”]. ‘Tis the most Learned Dr. *Tancred Robinson* I mean ...” Harris, 50-1. Harris makes similar implications on 59, 72, and 78-9.

<sup>137</sup> Tancred Robinson, *A Letter sent to Mr Wotton*.

me the *Manuscript* of his *Observations on This World of Matter, &c.* And I remember that I gave him some hasty Annotations off hand ... *Part* whereof I now perceive were Printed in his *Additional Remarks*.<sup>138</sup> Tancred Robinson thus denied authorship of the *Two Letters*, but admitted authorship of both the introduction to *An Account of Several Late Voyages* and the “Additional Remarks” in Thomas Robinson’s *New Observations*, both of which Harris attributed to L.P. As Rappaport argues, the identity of L.P. remains a mystery. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Sir Tancred Robinson took an interest in the issues L.P. raised in his first essay. In a letter written to Sir Tancred in January 1696/7, William Wotton described a bed of “Oyster-Shells wch. are found in so great Numbers upon Range-Well-Hill in ye Parish of Headley.”<sup>139</sup> The brief letter included a description of the soil the shells were found in, and included samples, “full of ye Earth as I found it in ye Hill.”<sup>140</sup> Robinson’s opinion on the shells was “greedily expected.”<sup>141</sup> His correspondence from that period also includes a description of “severall subterraneous trees, dug up at place call’d youse, abt twelve miles below york, upon the river Humber.”<sup>142</sup> Although I do not wish to insinuate along with John Harris that L.P. and Sir Tancred were one and the same, it is worth pointing out that Sir Tancred was not only interested in the geographical and bibliographical arrangement of the world through his history of travel — he also took a direct interest in objects found in the earth itself; objects that, for late-17th century thinkers, had implications for the history and creation of the world. Robinson’s interest in this debate was not purely based on Harris’ accusations. Instead, it appeared to have been part of a broad range of

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<sup>138</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> RSS EL/W3/63 William Wotton to Dr Robinson 27 January 1696.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>141</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>142</sup> RSS EL/R1/53 Part of a letter from Dr Richardson to Tancred Robinson 1697.

interests that included geography, travel, botany, climate, and hydrography, but also, if letters sent to him are any indication, tides, books of birds, and hermaphrodites.<sup>143</sup>

## ANATOMY OF AN ACCOUNT OF SEVERAL LATE VOYAGES

Tancred Robinson's preface to *An Account of Several Late Voyages* provided both substance for and insight into the debate about the history and makeup of the Earth at the end of the seventeenth century. Despite its role in this scholarly debate, *An Account of Several Late Voyages* also, through its structure, appears to have argued for a model of gathering knowledge at sea that satisfied L.P.'s desire for "clear Proof, Fact, or ocular Demonstration." As mentioned above, Robinson lamented the absence of artists on board voyages of discovery in his introduction to *Several Late Voyages*. The final part – Marten's voyage to Spitzberg – satisfied this lament, in that it provided numerous illustrations and descriptions of flora and fauna. This was not, however, the only form of encouragement offered to organizers of expeditions through this volume. Their encouragement also had a geographical component. As G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton note, *Several Late Voyages* was "evidently designed to illustrate current knowledge of the two outstanding geographical mysteries, the northern sea passages to East Asia and the existence of the supposed Southern Continent, and may be regarded as an epitaph to the first and a prologue to the second problem."<sup>144</sup> This insight, coupled with Robinson's imprecations about artists, suggests that *Several Late Voyages* pointed not just in a direction, but also to a

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<sup>143</sup> See RSS EL/R1/19 John Ray, dated at Black Notley, to Tancred Robinson 21 August 1693 and RSS EL/D1/36 Samuel Dale to Tancred Robinson n.d.

<sup>144</sup> Crone and Skelton, 71-2.

methodology of observation. This methodology was hinted at in the appraisal of the book published in *Philosophical Transactions*, whose author noted that

The present collection reaching to the most distant Parts of the *Southern* and *Northern* Regions of the *Globe*, and being performed by *Skilful Navigators*, and *Faithful Observers*, must needs contain many uncommon and useful Things upon most of the Heads of Natural and Mathematical Sciences, as well as Trade and other Profitable Knowledge, which contribute to the enlarging of the Mind and Empire of Man, too much confin'd to the narrow *Spheres* of particular *Countries*, and therefore subjected to great Mistakes, and false *Conceptions*, for want of a large Prospect of *Nature* and *Custom*.<sup>145</sup>

The use of the voyage account as a tool for enlarging the sphere of knowledge in numerous directions was geographical as well as methodological. The goal of broadening of the geographical picture was the expansion of the sphere of knowledge, but it was to do so through the use of observers as well as navigators, for the profit of mathematicians, botanists, and merchants alike. In order to achieve this philosophical expansion, the organization of *An Account of Several Late Voyages* suggested a shift in the manner of observation and reasoning developed through the voyage account.

The accounts themselves were arranged geographically, with Narborough's and Tasman's voyages to the "South" coming first, followed by Wood's and Marten's voyages to the "North."<sup>146</sup> This arrangement, which as Crone and Skelton note placed emphasis on the "south" as a promising region for exploration, also contained a division in the process by which the accounts were created. Captain John Narborough's account, which was first published in *Several Late Voyages*, was a relatively straightforward, though nevertheless abridged account of the

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<sup>145</sup> "An Account of Books" in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 18, (1694), 166.

<sup>146</sup> See Jonathan Scott, *When The Waves Ruled Britannia: Geography and Political Identities, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 2011), 178-9, for a discussion of some of the geographical implications of Narborough and Tasman's voyages.

voyage.<sup>147</sup> It featured a more or less daily journal that described weather conditions, terrain, people and the events of the voyage, some dramatic, others quotidian. The published version emphasized the attempts to establish trade in Patagonia and elided the primary mission, which was to continue on through the Straits of Magellan to discover a Northwestern Passage from the western coast of the North American continent.<sup>148</sup> Most of the text was attributed to Narborough, except for a number of inserted letters, regarding orders to and from Narborough, as well as communications about several seamen and officers captured by the Spanish. The final section was written by Lieutenant Nathaniel Pecket for reasons not disclosed in the text itself.<sup>149</sup> Its composite character was shared by many voyage accounts, most notably in Hakluyt's and Purchas' texts, but nevertheless it was ostensibly centered around an individual, much of whose subsequent fame was predicated on the voyage, and the text that resulted from it.

The second voyage to the "south" was an account of Abel Tasman's voyage of discovery. This version of Tasman's account – which was heavily truncated and numbered only 11 pages – was told from the perspective of a third person, possibly translator Dirk Rembrantse. The account included scant details of most of the voyage, and focused particularly on the encounter at "Murderer's Bay" in New Zealand, where several of Tasman's crew were killed by local Maori. The details that were picked out of Tasman's journal almost entirely involved navigational details and descriptions of the occupants of the islands that Tasman found, reiterating Crone and

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<sup>147</sup> An edited edition with James Wood and Nathaniel Pecket's accounts of the voyage interpolated into the abridged sections appears in James Burney, *A Chronological History of the Discoveries of the South Sea or Pacific Ocean*, 5 vols (London, 1803-1817), 3, 318-76. In addition to the neat division into promising regions for exploration of the "South" and methodologies of observation outlined in the voyages to the "North" that I argue for here, the geographical division into "North" and "South," may have had roots in intellectual currents that were old indeed. See Nicolás Wey-Gómez, *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge, MA, 2008).

<sup>148</sup> *ibid.*, 4, 319.

<sup>149</sup> Another manuscript account of the voyage, not included in the published text, can be found in the Royal Society archives. See RSS Cl.P/7i/32 MS Journal of Narborough's Voyage by Richard Williams.

Skelton's suggestion that the compiling of *Several Late Voyages* was geared toward a specific geographical program of expansion. In both Narborough's and Tasman's accounts, the texts were attributed to individual authors, but were in one case a composite of a number of accounts and letters, and in the other a translation that was heavily excerpted and written as a retelling. In both cases, the "authorship" of these texts was far from straight forward. This problem will be explored in more detail in chapter four of this dissertation, but for now it is enough to say that even if this question of authorship was problematic, it was a problem that was common to accounts of sea voyages during the period. In their forms, neither the account attributed to Narborough nor to Tasman were unusual in and of themselves. Their significance for their readers lay in the geographical region that they treated. Both voyages were into regions previously unknown, especially to English explorers, politicians, and natural philosophers. Where expeditions to the Arctic region had taken place since the sixteenth century, most famously on Frobisher's expedition to Baffin Island,<sup>150</sup> Patagonia and the South Pacific were genuinely new parts of the New World, two hundred years after Columbus' voyage. Regardless of the nationality of the explorers, the voyages themselves pushed beyond the boundaries of the known world, and were thus the first glimpses of new geographical regions for English readers. If *An Account of Several Late Voyages* was to be useful in enlarging the "Empire of Man," it was these first two accounts suggested a place to start at the end of the seventeenth century.

The voyages to the North were more concerned with the 'Empire of Knowledge' than that of man. The first, Captain James Wood's ill-starred search for a Northeastern Passage, was, like Narborough's, made up of multiple documents. Unlike Narborough's, these multiple documents

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<sup>150</sup> See Mary C. Fuller, *Remembering the Early Modern Voyage: English Narratives of European Expansion* (New York, 2008), chapter one, for a discussion of the accounts of Frobisher's voyage.



did not support the basis of the narrative by supplying instructions and communications from within the voyage. Rather, the account began with Wood's arguments for commencing another voyage for the Northeast Passage at all. His arguments were an admixture of history, inductive reasoning, and economic potential. Wood began by describing the history of other such attempts, making reference to Hakluyt and Purchas, but with a desire to emphasize the reasons for the failure of previous expeditions.<sup>151</sup> Wood found hope for the success of a new expedition in other accounts, however. These included suppositions from sailors and the relation of a Dutch castaway in Korea, who observed that "in a Bay on the Coast of *Corea*, there doth at several times drive in dead Whales with *English* and *Dutch* Harping Irons in them, which if true had been a great Argument of a Passage."<sup>152</sup> It also prominently featured advice from a pamphlet published by Joseph Moxon; literally an anecdote about something somebody told him in a pub in Amsterdam 22 years earlier.<sup>153</sup> Wood's primary arguments thus came from accounts of other voyages, or accounts of accounts of other voyages, that had passed into the textual realm in various ways in order to reach him. These arguments were supplemented by further speculation that the North Pole in summer might be warmer than England in Winter, due to a higher angle of the sun, that the presence of fog would mean the absence of wind, which would allow a vessel drift until the fog lifted, and, finally

the Solution of a Doubt that most men had fancied, which was that if one came near the Pole, the Septentennial Declination of the Needle of the Compass should be quite taken away, which would of necessity follow if the Pole of the World, and the Pole of the Magnet were all one; which I am certain is not, but is placed so far off, that one might go under the Pole

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<sup>151</sup> John Wood, 'Relation of a Voyage for the Discovery of a Passage by the North-East, to Japan and China', in *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, 143.

<sup>152</sup> *ibid.*, 147.

<sup>153</sup> *ibid.* See also Joseph Moxon, *A Brief Discourse of a Passage by the North Pole to Japan, China, &c* (London, 1674).

of the World, if Land or Ice did not hinder, with this supposition, that one must know where the Pole Magnetical is, to allow the Variation that will there happen.<sup>154</sup>

Wood's reasoning thus relied on previously published texts — none of which related direct experience of the existence of a passage, but always knowledge that had been passed on to the author by some means — and a series of inductions based on both mathematics and experience.

To this reasoning Wood added the “Advantage to our Nation” that would flow from the discovery of such a passage, in order to shore up financial support for the expedition.<sup>155</sup> These advantages were primarily economic. First, the cold regions of “*Tartaria*” would provide markets for English cloth, and a passage to the North East would circumvent the Russian middlemen. Second, a Northeast Passage would have drastically decreased the time it took to travel from nine months to six weeks and, according to Woods, would not have been any more dangerous given the number of small islands and shoals of Indonesia, and the “perpetual fear of the *Hollanders*, whom if we meet, they do their utmost indeavours to Destroy us.”<sup>156</sup> Such a passage would also have made it possible for the king to send troops to Japan to “force them to Trade.” The long passage around Africa rendered that ambition impossible, given the logistical difficulties in feeding the number of troops that would be required, let alone preventing disease aboard the ships for the duration of the voyage.<sup>157</sup> The Northeast Passage would thus have been to the economic advantage of the English, and would have enabled the projection of imperial military power to the far side of the globe. The “Advantage to our Nation” was not only financial

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<sup>154</sup> Wood, 149-50. The question of magnetic variation and its importance to natural philosophers and sailors in the second half of the seventeenth century will be treated in depth in chapter four of this dissertation.

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.*, 153.

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> This problem and its consequences for the voyage account will be discussed in chapter four of this dissertation.

but imperial, both in terms of English rivalries with other European powers, and the goal of using military power to force others into trading relationships. This English desire to mimic other European maritime powers in developing an overseas empire – as old, at least, as Hakluyt – was expressed almost entirely in the subjunctive however. The Northeast Passage did not exist, and Wood's voyage met with disaster.

After the discourse in which Woods made a post facto argument for the discovery of the Northeastern Passage, there followed two journals. The first was Wood's, which detailed the voyage north, and then the shipwreck on Nova Zembla and its aftermath. The next journal was by William Flawes, who rescued Wood and what remained of his crew, and returned them to England. These journals were followed by a section, presumably by Wood, entitled "Now, after the JOURNAL, I do intent to shew my Conceptions of the said Voyage, and a true Relation of our Miscarriage; with some Observations made in the said Voyage." Mainly a description of the events surrounding the shipwreck, it nevertheless placed some of the blame for the failure of the expedition in the methodology that led to its launch. Wood noted that, on encountering seemingly unending ice, "the Opinion of *William Bartans* was Confuted, and all the rest of the *Dutch* Relations, which certainly are all forged abusive Pamphlets; as also the Relations of our own Countrymen. But certainly, if Men did really consider the many individual dangers and mischiefs that comes upon the broaching of such untruths, they would never do it."<sup>158</sup> Here is an example of a voyage that was not only transformed into a text, but was, in its conception and execution, transformed and inhabited by the texts of others. When those others texts misled Wood into disaster, he complained not that they were erroneous, but that they were forgeries. On the unstable ice of the Arctic, the credibility of the Dutch authors was maligned.

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<sup>158</sup> *ibid.*, 186.

This section was then followed with a description of the land on which the shipwreck took place, which Wood concluded with an apology, saying that “if the Voyage had succeeded, I should, God willing, have given a more full and nice account of all the Experiments I had, and should have made, especially those of the Magnet, which I forbore here to mention, because I intended to Publish them in a Treatise by themselves: so having with the Ship lost all my Papers, and with them all I had in the World beside; I most humbly beg Pardon that I have given no more Ample a Relation.”<sup>159</sup> The loss of the ship and the physical hardships were compounded by and continuous with the destruction of documents. The hazards of relying on unreliable pamphlets and printed rumor over experience and observation were clear – despite their usefulness, words alone could be trusted at one’s peril.

The obvious failure of Wood’s strategies contrast with Marten’s account of a voyage in the North East. As noted above, Marten’s account featured both written description and numerous plates that are illustrations of seascapes as well as careful drawings of plants and animals. The descriptions were less about the details of the sailing as those accounts written by captains and other officers, and much more concerned with observation and description of the environment. The account in *Philosophical Transactions* praised Marten for ‘giving many *Specimens* of the Fertility of his *Genius* in making such considerable Observations in the barren and horrid Climate of *Greenland*, as to the Weather, the Whale-Fishing, the Animals, Plants and other parts of Natural History; as also upon the Physical *Phaenomena* of Snow, Ice, &c.’<sup>160</sup> Robinson’s lament at the conclusion of his introduction was answered by this account, a naturalist and artists view of the voyage: methodical, observational, and thus of great value to the natural philosophers

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<sup>159</sup> *ibid.*, 195-6.

<sup>160</sup> *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 18, (1694), 167.

reading the text. Indeed, most of Marten's account does not resemble "travel writing" at all. Of the 175 pages of Marten's account, only the first 15 are concerned with describing the voyage itself. This "first part of the voyage" was dwarfed by the remaining three. These were, by turns, a geographical description of Spitzberg especially concerned with the effect of cold on the sea and air, a description of the flora of the region, and finally a description of the fauna. Each of these three sections included illustrations marked with keys, which were described in the accompanying text. Rather than narrate the events of the journey, Marten concerned himself almost entirely with scientific observation and recording in exactly the manner that both Tancred Robinson and L.P. advocated. The inclusion of Marten's account in *Several Late Voyages* demonstrated the potential of such artists' work, and despite Ray's reservations must have been especially pleasing its editors, whose botanical interests were met not only by Marten's focus on flora and fauna, but in the style of his illustration. Even if Wood's account stressed the very real dangers of relying to much on the printed word when preparing for long, and dangerous journeys, *An Account of Several Late Voyages* nevertheless demonstrated to its readership the economic and intellectual benefits that could be had from both the empire of man, and the empire of knowledge.

### **WILLIAM DAMPIER AND THE ROYAL SOCIETY**

Despite the fact that it would eclipse both the *Collection of Curious Travels* and *An Account of Several Late Voyages* on the contemporary book market and in historical memory, it was into this context that Dampier's *New Voyage Round the World* was published three years later. G.E. Fogg comments that the "pirate" Dampier's dedicating the *New Voyage Round the World* to

president of the Royal Society Charles Montague may be “eyed askance” before excusing him as an accurate and enquiring observer. Nevertheless, it is Edmund Halley to whom Fogg accords the honour of being the first to cross the equator who could “really be called a ‘scientist.’”<sup>161</sup> In fact, Dampier’s book was well received by the author (possibly John Ray) of the account of *A New Voyage Round the World* for the *Philosophical Transactions*, who provided a detailed description of each chapter, commenting that “as he had the opportunity of visiting many Ports and places, scarcely described in any Voyages, and for the most part unknown to English Navigators, to the East or West Indies; so he was the more diligent in his Observations, and the more particular in his Descriptions of their Situations, Soyls, Products &c.”<sup>162</sup> These observations and descriptions “are made from his own Experience, and the others from particular informations he received from credible and knowing Persons.” Dampier’s account thus fulfilled the criteria for novelty, accurate observation and credibility that made his book “not altogether unuseful to the Publick,” as he suggested in his dedication.<sup>163</sup> It was especially important that his account covered new territory, and thus added to the knowledge of the globe accessible through the book. Indeed, Dampier insisted that his designs in publishing were not storytelling but “he promoting of useful knowledge, and of any thing that may never so remotely tend to my Countries advantage.”<sup>164</sup>

Dampier’s self-professed motivations in publication were in line with the similar books the Royal Society had published in recent years, and despite the success of *A New Voyage Round*

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<sup>161</sup> G.E. Fogg, ‘The Royal Society and the South Seas’, *Notes and Records of the Royal Society of London*, vol. 55, no. 1 (Jan., 2001), 81.

<sup>162</sup> “An Account of a New Voyage Round the World by William Dampier, *Almagestum Botanicum s. Phytographiae Pluc’netianae, Onomasticon, etc.*,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 19 (1695-1697), 426. A manuscript copy, possibly in John Ray’s hand, can be found at BL Sloane 3986, f. 43, *An Account of A New Voyage Round the World* by William Dampier, n.d.

<sup>163</sup> William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*, (London, 1697), dedication.

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.*

*the World* on the market, it does not appear to have been conceived as, and certainly was not published as, a new form of literature. Nevertheless, unlike Ray's and Robinson's collections, Dampier's account was not published by booksellers to the Royal Society Smith and Walford. Instead, publisher James Knapton was quick to realize the commercial potential of Dampier's *Account* and the public appetite for voyage accounts as entertainment, publishing William Hacke's *Collection of Original Voyages* two years later,<sup>165</sup> and continuing to publish material related to travel and geography for the rest of his career.<sup>166</sup> Indeed, such was Knapton's commercial acumen that fellow bookseller John Dunton described him as "a very accomplished Person . . . and shews by his purchasing *Dampier's Voyages*, he knows how to value a good Copy."<sup>167</sup>

The success of Dampier's account thus becomes a problem to be explained, rather than a fact whose meaning can easily be assumed. This problem is the subject of chapter four of this dissertation, but for now what one can say about the *New Voyage Round the World* is that, although it was published with an eye on the community of readers centered on the Royal Society and its pursuits, it became the emblematic text of a popular genre for centuries to come. In 1709, when William King satirized Sloane's *Voyage to Jamaica* in his *Useful Transactions* (itself a short-lived satire on the *Philosophical Transactions*), he noted that despite the fast-shifting fashions of popular literary genres, accounts of travels – Dampier's especially –

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<sup>165</sup> William Hacke, *A Collection of Original Voyages*, (London, 1699).

<sup>166</sup> See, for instance, Nathaniel Cutler, *Atlas maritimus & commercialis: or, a General view of the world, so far as relates to trade and navigation*, (London, 1728); John Green, *The Construction of Maps and Globes in Two Parts*, (London, 1717); John Stevens, *A New Collection of Voyages and Travels: with Historical Accounts of Discoveries and Conquests in all Parts of the World*, (London, 1710) was a monthly publication. Knapton also published another voyage account by one of Dampier's voyaging companions in the same year he published Hacke's account. See Lionel Wafer, *A New Voyage and Description of the Isthmus of America*, (London, 1699). The Wafer text features in an advertisement at the back of Hacke.

<sup>167</sup> John Dunton, *The Life and Errors of John Dunton. Written by Himself in SOLITUDE* (London, 1705). See also Lynham, 74, and Plomer, 185.

maintained popularity from season to season.<sup>168</sup> King's satire of Sloane's voyage reveals more than the popularity of Dampier. It also confirms many of the uses of the voyage account and the concern with authority and veracity that accompanied their publication, targeted as it was at the "Learned World." King asserted that his Dutch stand-in for Sloane, "the accurate *Dr. Jasper Hans Van Slonenbergh*," was "a Person whose Name carries Reputation along with it" – that is to say, a man of credit. King also echoed the needs for observations "rais'd from the Appearances of Things, made as useful as they possibly cou'd be; for it is Truth that natural Philosophers must search after, and not Ornamental Expressions."<sup>169</sup> For King, these observations concerned trivia such as the "*Feeding of Fowl, the Education and Discipline of Swine, the making of Beds, the untying of Breeches, and the loosening of Girdles.*" Nevertheless, those that argued that such knowledge could be had without travelling, or pointed out other flaws in the text,

ought to be quiet, rather than to expose their own ignorance and want of Reading, for they must shew themselves not to have studied any late Transactions of Philosophy, and that they don't know the Methods of gaining a Reputation at present, and carrying the Modern Learning far above any thing that could be pretended to by the Ancients.<sup>170</sup>

King thus underscored the relationship between observation, readership, and credibility that lay behind the publication of voyage accounts at the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth centuries. Knowledge of the world outside was to be acquired through the voyage account, and this knowledge was directly connected with the reputation of the reader, as King well knew. As we shall see in the next chapter, carrying modern learning above the Ancients would be a more drawn out process than King suggested, and it would not be until the middle of

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<sup>168</sup> William King, *Useful Transactions for the Months of May, June, July, August and September, 1709. Containing a Voyage To the Island of Cajamai in America*, (London, 1709), Preface of the Publisher.

<sup>169</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.*



the eighteenth century that the voyage account came to symbolize the superiority of modern over ancient knowledge in moral histories of navigation.

King's satire tracked and lampooned Sloane's *Voyage to Jamaica* closely, its humor relying mainly on a device that at once mocked natural philosophers for elevating the mundane and obvious to the esoteric, and for using their observations to barely conceal a worldview governed by sorcery and witchcraft. As an example of the former, Slonenbergh discussed the origins of Cajamaian fowl with "a Learned *Negro* who practis'd Physick," who insisted that the Turkey Cock was in fact of African origin. Slonenburgh related a narrative which detailed the transition of the Guinea Cock from an African bird to a West Indian one, as it passed through commercial and imperial pathways that included a trade in snow between Russia and Guinea, the Carthaginian and Phoenician trade with Asia, as well as the Assyrian, Scythian, Indian and finally Turkish empires in 1453.<sup>171</sup> Through this history, the Guinea Cock came to be a Turkey, and thus apparently native to the Americas. Slonenbergh took the observation to be new, and hoped "that it may correct the Vulgar Error concerning *Turky Cocks*."<sup>172</sup> King made fun of the obscurantism and absurdity of Sloane and similar natural philosophers, earnestly tracing etymological and biological links to pinpoint knowledge that appeared at best pointless, correcting opinions that did not need correcting. In doing so, he traced a natural history of the world that was inextricably linked to its moral history – to the history of empires and commerce that connected disparate regions and people.

Even in his satirical hyperbole, King highlighted the designs of the natural philosopher's voyage account, and his concern to contain the knowledge of the world within the text, and to turn the text and language to the description of the world, its structure, and its moral and natural

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<sup>171</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>172</sup> *ibid.* 13.

history. The passage on the history of empires and trade quoted above, which focuses particularly on the moral history and the history of empires, leads us into the next chapter, which will discuss in depth how the authors and publishers of voyage accounts viewed human history through the lens of navigation and explained the people encountered in the New World in the context of a human history that began with the end of the Great Deluge. These histories intertwined religious, commercial and imperial histories in ways that placed the voyage at the centre of human experience. They also, in some cases, attempted to locate Britain as a product of imperial history at the inception of its own empire. As the present chapter demonstrates, this imperial history was conceived in the context of a genre that was part of its own textual empire, an empire of knowledge, that despite its satirical critics, sought to compass the world within it, and emulate the biblical passage that Sloane chose as the epigraph for his *Voyage to Jamaica*: “Many Shall Run to and fro [it says], and knowledge shall be increased.”<sup>173</sup>

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<sup>173</sup> Sloane, *Voyage to Jamaica*, title page. The quote is from Daniel 12:4.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE HISTORY OF THE COMPASS

The Royal Society texts discussed in the preceding chapter were compilations of accounts, rather than the single-author narrative that became popular through the work of Dampier, and whose provenance and significance will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In the case of *A Curious Collection of Voyages and Travels* and *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, the composition and compilation of the book had a definite purpose — in the former, to supplement the botanical content of Rauwolf’s journey in the Levant with additional information on the region, and in the latter, to make an argument for the exploration of particular geographical regions and methodological approaches to observation. The audience for these books was clear (although it is difficult to know how far beyond the circles of the Royal Society and its reading public they traveled), and their role in the intellectual dimension of the imperial project was more or less explicit; lying, as they did, at the intersection of scientific and commercial interests.

The role of commercial interest in the publication of voyage accounts was not limited to suggesting territory suitable for exploration, or finding new products for import or new markets for export. Indeed, the voyage account had a part not only in the commercial mentality of *fin de siècle* London — it also featured in the transformation of the English historical imagination. Over the course of three years, two compendiums of voyage accounts that shared profound resemblances were assembled and then printed, and finally released within months of one

another in 1704 and 1705. Both were large and elaborate productions, whose expense made them dependent on subscribers. Thus, over the period of their publication, they competed for space on the London book market. As with the accounts published by the Royal Society in the previous decade, these compendiums were concerned with history. This history went beyond the bibliographical concerns of Tancred Robinson and John Ray, and described a national history of navigation that reconstructed the relationship between the ancient and modern world, placing maritime, imperial history at its center through various means. In doing so, the authors of these histories drew on a recent tradition that imagined Britain's past not as Roman or Greek, as the Christian Humanists and jurists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries did in their arguments over the political and religious structures of England and English Protestantism, but as Phoenician and Carthaginian. By placing a commercial, maritime empire at the center not only of the history of navigation, but of arts, commerce, and the written word, the authors of these histories celebrated a new mercantile imperialism in their own society even as the threat from Rome was implied. This history was far from secular however, and I will argue that, despite the importance of its commercial dimensions in imagining the history of Britain, it nevertheless had clear religious roots, and strong ties to the sacred histories of the seventeenth century.

Just as the histories imagined a British past grounded in commerce, so the books that they appeared in were published on a competitive, commercial book market. Before discussing the histories that feature in the introductions to these works, this chapter will address their marketing strategies as well as analyze their audiences across different editions. I will argue that, despite the mercantile dimensions of the histories themselves, it is a mistake to believe that merchants and landed gentry made up the majority of their readership, and that this readership should make the texts less interesting to scholars, as some historians have implied. Although, as I will show,

factors mitigate against definitive statements about readership, there is evidence to suggest that the subscribers to these texts had a range of occupations from craftsmen and professionals, to divines and merchants and gentry and nobility. Indeed, it appears as if this audience might have changed over the first four decades of the eighteenth century, and that the audience of merchants came later as their importance and wealth grew over the decades following publication.

In addition to the audiences of these texts, I will also examine the advertising material that appeared in London papers in the years leading up to publication, and show how each of the publishers relied on competing strategies that emphasized either novelty or history, and made representations as to the credibility and utility of their publications. The advertising material tells a story of publication on a commercial market, in which competing publishers and editors worked in close proximity to one another, just streets apart in the City of London.

## THE COMPENDIUMS

The first of the compendiums to be published was Awnsham and John Churchill's *Collection of Voyages and Travels*, a four volume folio printed in Paternoster Row, around the corner from St. Paul's Cathedral, the center of the London book trade since the importation of corantos in 1620.<sup>174</sup> The Churchills were booksellers of considerable wealth and reputation, and the following year Awnsham would become M.P. for Dorchester, having been referred to by a

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<sup>174</sup> Awnsham and John Churchill, *A Collection of Voyages and Travels*, 4 vols, (London, 1704).

contemporary as “the greatest bookseller of his time.”<sup>175</sup>

This reputation and wealth might in part explain a feature of the Churchills’ text that is unusual amongst published voyage accounts. The first page of the Churchills’ volume is a Royal Privilege and Licence from William III, issued by C. Hedges in 1700, granting Awnsham Churchill and his brother John, for a fourteen-year period, sole printing and publishing rights to English manuscripts and new translations into English, including voyages to the Levant and North Africa, Greenland, voyages into Eastern Europe, Africa, as well as famous accounts such as Oviedo’s history of the West Indies, Fernan Colon’s account of his father, Christopher Columbus, and Sir William Monson’s voyages.<sup>176</sup> In a marketplace flooded and, as Adrian Johns argues, in many ways structured by practices of piracy,<sup>177</sup> the license made a series of specific restrictions, “forbidding all Our Subjects to reprint or abridg the said Books, or any part of them, or to copy or counterfeit the Sculptures of Maps thereof . . . During the said Term, or to import, buy, vend, utter or distribute any Copies or Exemplars of the same, or any part thereof reprinted beyond the Seas within the said Term.”<sup>178</sup> This protection extended to limitations on booksellers retailing pirated versions of the *Collection* produced in the Dutch, Irish, and other European book trades, and thus hints at a market for these texts beyond London, as well as the extent of the international book trade at the turn of the century, to say nothing of the extent of intra-European print piracy.<sup>179</sup>

Just as importantly, the license suggests two factors that lay behind the protection it

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<sup>175</sup> Quoted in H.R Plomer, H.G. Aldis, G.H. Bushnell, E.R. McC. Dix, A.E. Esdaile, R.B. McKerrow, and others, *Dictionaries of the Printers and Booksellers who were at work in England, Scotland and Ireland 1557-1775* (Yorkshire, 1977), 70.

<sup>176</sup> “Royal Privilege and Licence,” in Churchill.

<sup>177</sup> See Adrian Johns, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago, 2009), esp. Chapters 3, 4 and 7.

<sup>178</sup> “Royal Privilege and Licence,” in Churchill.

<sup>179</sup> See Johns, 48-51.

offered. The first was a connection between civility and credibility. The esteem in which “Trusty and Well-Beloved” Awnsham was held was on display through this license in an epithet bestowed by none other than an agent of the King, which sat in contrast to the litany of nefarious acts of piracy found further down the page. The second was the “Expence and Charge” incurred by the Churchills in collecting the English manuscript material and translating published materials from other European languages. The fourteen-year license was intended to protect the Churchills’ investment. Crucially, this investment was not to be protected simply because it had been made. Rather, William was “graciously inclin’d to encourage an Undertaking of such publick use and benefit,” and commended not only the accounts themselves, but also the “Discourses and Observations thereupon, which may be of great advantage as well to Trade as Navigation.” The protection extended by the Sovereign was not simply a protection of a capital investment and evidence of Awnsham’s political connections, but an investment in the public utility of the compilation of the voyage account. It was thus recognition of the public interest in seaborne commercial enterprise, and the knowledge thereof that could be transmitted through books.

Meanwhile, John Harris, Tancred Robinson’s antagonist of the mid-1690s, was editing a compilation of voyages of his own. *Navigantium Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca: Or, A Compleat COLLECTION of Voyages and Travels*. *Navigantium* was a two-volume work printed by Thomas Bennet and John Midwinter at two different houses in St Paul’s Churchyard, and by John Nicholson five minutes’ walk north, in Little Britain.<sup>180</sup> Like the Churchills’ *Collection*, *Navigantium* was a large, expensive volume, printed in folio. Unlike the Churchills, Harris was unable to rely on new material for his publication and did not have the protection of a royal

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<sup>180</sup> John Harris, (ed.), *Navigantium Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca: Or, A Compleat COLLECTION of Voyages and Travels*, 2 vols, (London, 1705).

license. Instead, he explicitly focused on historical accounts that had previously been published. Rather than emphasizing the credibility bestowed on the printer's material by royal authority, Harris' title page stressed the credibility of the text by declaring the accounts came from "above Four Hundred of the most Authentick Writers." Thus, the title page referred to the canonical compilations, "beginning with *Hackluit, Purchass, &c. In English ; Ramusio in Italian ; Thevenot, &c. In French ; De Bry and Grynæi Novus Orbis in Latin ; the Dutch East-India Company in Dutch.*" It also boasted "HISTORIES, VOYAGES, TRAVELS, or DISCOVERIES . . . RELATING To any Part of ASIA, AFRICA, AMERICA, EUROPE, or the *Islands* thereof," as well as maps, "CUTS of the most Curious Things in all the VOYAGES," tales of shipwrecks and sea battles, and documents relating to the East India trade and the companies. As opposed to the novelty of the Churchills' accounts, Harris emphasized the encyclopedic nature of his compendium, highlighting its completeness in terms of languages, geographic regions, and the mercantile and legal framework in which the voyages took place. He also placed an emphasis on the historical dimension of the voyage accounts: the title alone makes explicit the bibliographic project seen in Robinson's and Ray's much smaller texts of the previous decade, as Harris sought to produce a library of navigations and voyages.

### MARKETING THE COMPENDIUMS

Although the Churchills received their license in December 1700, it was four years before their *Collection* was published. Nevertheless, an advertisement appeared in the *Post Man and the*



*Historical Account* as early as the end of March, 1701.<sup>181</sup> The invitation for subscriptions began with news of the Royal License and claimed the sole right to publication of the collection, and then announced that the proposals were about to be delivered to the stationer's company. Nine days earlier, an advertisement for *Navigantium* had been published in the *London Gazette*. Without the royal license to rely on, this advertisement went into some detail as to which authors would appear in the volume, and the numerous languages from which translations would appear. It also announced the inclusion of an introduction, "being the Navigations of the Ancients, a History of Shipping Antient and Modern, Sea Laws, our Sea Battels, &c."<sup>182</sup> In August, the Churchills repeated their sole rights to publication, and clarified the "Prohibition to all other Persons to Reprint or abridge them."<sup>183</sup> They also invited "all Gentlemen who had any Voyages not yet printed in any Language, that they would be pleased to communicate them to the Undertakers, who would make a grateful acknowledgment."<sup>184</sup> The advertisement set a September 8 deadline both for the submission of manuscripts and for the first payments of the subscription.

Despite this deadline, it was some time before either work was advertised again. In January 1702, the *London Gazette* featured an announcement – otherwise almost identical to the previous one – that the *Bibliotheca* was in press. By October 1703, however, Harris and his publishers decided to change tack. An advertisement in the *Daily Courant* made mention of the introduction, "Being an Account of the Magnet and the Progress of Navigation," and announced — wrongly, as it turned out — that "this Book will be finished before *Christmas* next," the

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<sup>181</sup> *Post Man and the Historical Account*, (London, Saturday March 29, 1701) issue 818.

<sup>182</sup> *London Gazette* (London, Thursday, March 20, 1701) issue 3690.

<sup>183</sup> *Post Man and the Historical Account* (London, Saturday, August 23, 1701) issue 395.

<sup>184</sup> *ibid.*

original proposed content having expanded to include “an Appendix, containing the Spanish Invasion; *Cales, Portugal, Vigo &c. Voyages*; the remarkable Escapes from Slavery, Shipwrack &c. The first and later patents of *East-India, Russia*, and other Companies; the late Agreement of the two East-India Companies, &c.”<sup>185</sup> Perhaps in response to competition from the Churchills, the marketing angle had shifted towards entertainment, rather than the history that was emphasized both in the original advertisement and in the text that would ultimately be published.

In comparison to the elaborated advertisement for Harris, the next advertisement for the Churchills text was relatively laconic, dropping references to the Royal License and announcing 150 more sheets than promised in the original proposal, “for which Subscribers are ask’d no advance.”<sup>186</sup> It was not until March of 1705 that both texts were advertised as being in print. On March 13, the *Daily Courant* carried advertisements for both the *Bibliotecha* and the Churchills’ *Collection*. The announcement for the *Bibliotecha*, which had been published and delivered to subscribers the day before, returned to the more historically focused material, placing the 400 writers in a lineage “beginning with Hackluit, Purchas, &c. And continued down to this present time, comprehending the best Authors that have writ Voyages, Travels or Discoveries in any Language.” This bibliographical tendency, which, like the Churchill text, echoed the work of Robinson and Ray, was prefixed with “a History of the Peopleing of America and other parts of the World, of Shipping from the beginning of this time, and the Improvements of Navigation by the Magnet, &c.”<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> *Daily Courant* (London, Tuesday, October 19, 1703) issue 470.

<sup>186</sup> *Daily Courant* (London, Wednesday November 17, 1703) issue 495. The advertisement was repeated in *Daily Courant* (London, Monday, January 3, 1704) issue 535.

<sup>187</sup> *Daily Courant* (London, Tuesday, March 13, 1705), issue 907.

In the same issue, an advertisement for the Churchill text was similarly expansive, but, in keeping with previous material and the content of the license, was focused on the novelty of the accounts that the *Collection* featured. It repeated the now familiar claim to original material in English and foreign languages, “to which is added some few that have formerly appear’d in English, but did for their Excellency and Scarceness deserve to be reprinted.”<sup>188</sup> Like the *Bibliotecha*, the *Collection* also promised “a General Preface, Giving an Account of the Progress of Navigation, from its first beginning to the Perfection it is now in, &c,” but the focus was nevertheless on the availability of new accounts, and the advertisement concluded with the promise of two further volumes to add to the four already published, containing descriptions of Guinea and its territories, “50 large Sheets of Figures, maps and Cutts, exactly drawn by the Authors. And many other Voyages never before made publick.”<sup>189</sup>

The *Bibliotecha* advertisement was repeated on April 4th, with the added warning that subscribers had until the 12th of the month to collect their books before they would be resold.<sup>190</sup> After this, advertisements for both books ceased to appear in the press. Nevertheless, the simultaneous publication of these two competing texts over a period of four years reveals, through the marketing material, the competing strategies and emphases of the Churchills, and Harris and his printers. The Churchills began by promoting their exclusivity through the Royal License, and continued focusing on the appearance of unpublished accounts and new translations, only once noting the inclusion of their preface, and not mentioning the catalogue of voyage accounts that follows the introduction. This absence is especially notable because, in the early proposals lodged with the Stationers Office, the preface was said to have been written by

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<sup>188</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Daily Courant* (London, Wednesday, April 4, 1705) issue 929.

Edmund Halley.<sup>191</sup> John Locke has also been associated with the Churchills' *Collection*, having been credited with writing the preface at various points, but as with Halley there is little evidence to support this claim, not least that Awnsham Churchill, a close friend of Locke's, is likely to have included his name in the advertising material and in the book itself had he been the author.<sup>192</sup> Despite the ultimately baseless (yet nevertheless persistent) claims of Locke and Halley's involvement in the writing of the prefatory material to the *Collection*, the extent to which it is underplayed in the advertising material is remarkable, given its one-hundred-page length. Instead, the Churchills consistently focused on the novelty of their collection.

As Crone and Skelton note, the Churchills' claim to publication of new texts was far from spurious – in over 1600 folio pages, only a handful of items had already been published for English readers.<sup>193</sup> Harris, on the other hand, was largely involved in republishing texts that were already widely available, or at least widely known. This might have been prompted by his focus on historical and bibliographical completeness, or he might have been making a virtue of necessity in choosing such a focus. In any case, between Harris and the Churchills, these emphases on novelty and historical completeness crystalize the value and appeal of the travel account for the early eighteenth century reader, especially when seen alongside the brief diversion into entertainment that Harris' advertising material made in the face of competition. At a price of £3/10s and 55s respectively, the Churchill and Harris collections also demonstrate the

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<sup>191</sup> See G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, "English Collections of Voyages and Travels, 1625-1846," in Edward Lynham, ed., *Richard Hakluyt & His Successors: A Volume Issued to Commemorate the Centenary of the Hakluyt Society* (London, 1946), 82.

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.*, 83. See also L.E. Pennington, 'Samuel Purchas: His Reputation and the Uses of his Works' in L.E. Pennington, ed., *The Purchas Handbook: Studies of the Life, Times and Writings of Samuel Purchas, 1577-1626*, 16, and David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1600-1625* (London, 1990), 25, for discussion of this attribution. The twentieth-century historiographical response to the Churchills' *Collection* will be discussed at length in Chapter Four of this dissertation.

<sup>193</sup> Crone and Skelton, 85.

existence of a buoyant market of subscribers willing to pay substantial amounts for books of these kinds.

### NAVIGANTIUM ATQUE ITINERANTIUM BIBLIOTECA AND AUDIENCE

Crone and Skelton argue that both the Churchill and Harris texts reflected – in their grandiose scale and elaborate engravings – the tastes of an English landed gentry whose wealth was based on the international mercantile economy.<sup>194</sup> In assessing the value of the Churchills and Harris against Hakluyt, they describe an audience comprised of amateur readers, so that “the lists of subscribers to these collections are filled by the names of the virtuosi ... and of the merchants who, enriched by the rapid expansion of British commerce, now became landed proprietors.”<sup>195</sup> Compared to the compilers of the late-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, who focused single-mindedly on imperial and nationalist expansion, Harris and the Churchills, according to their twentieth century critics, were publishing for a decadent elite, more interested in the appearance of the volumes on their shelves than the actual content. It is difficult to assess the accuracy of this claim, as we cannot finally know if and how these volumes were read. Nevertheless, the 1705 edition of the *Biblioteka* features a list of subscribers that, despite serious lacunae, offers some insight into its readership.

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<sup>194</sup> Crone and Skelton, 78.

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.*, 79.

The Harris subscription list contains 262 names, several of which, according to the list, ordered seven books.<sup>196</sup> Of those, 77 were in the book trade (30%), including 70 booksellers, and three printers, a stationer, a map seller, and an engraver. While it may be tempting to assume that the majority of those who ordered multiple copies were booksellers, it is important to bear in mind the role that gifting books played in the economy of civility during this period, which makes this kind of inference difficult and renders any conclusions about readership that can be drawn from the subscription list provisional at best. Even if we could know who ordered multiple copies of *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, the presence of such a large number of booksellers and the fact that there is no way to know to whom they sold their copies (if they sold them at all) makes quantitative statements about the geographical distribution of the book nearly impossible. However, it is useful to note that of the 70 booksellers, 49 were based in the City of London or Westminster, whilst 20 were elsewhere in England and one, George Harris, has no location. None of the three printers listed a location, and the map seller, Charles Price, was in Wapping. Those located outside of London could be found all over England, as far away as Sheffield and Manchester in the north, Norwich in the east, and Launceston in the south, as well as the counties surrounding London.

Of the remaining 187 names on Harris' subscription list that were not booksellers or involved in the book trade, 82 gave locations. Of those 82, only 28 were located in London. Of these, seven gave an address at Custom House, including two surveyors, one assistant to the surveyor, one land surveyor, and one warehouse keeper.<sup>197</sup> The London occupations included a further three brokers, three merchants, and a factor at Blackwell Hall, and Edward Lloyd, "coffee

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<sup>196</sup> Harris, 1705, 'A List of as many of the NAMES of the Subscribers to *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca* as were given to us.'

<sup>197</sup> I have not counted the two who gave no occupation as involved in the mercantile economy, although it is reasonable to suppose that they were.

man,” proprietor of Lloyd’s Coffeehouse and central figure in London’s merchant community,<sup>198</sup> for a total of 12 directly involved in London’s merchant economy. However, the list of London subscribers also includes professionals, divines and craftsmen. The Reverends Naish and Dr. King ordered copies, as did a medical doctor, two jewelers, a letter founder, a watchmaker, and a spectacle maker (3% of total). Of the remaining five, four provide no other information and one, William Norcliff of the Temple, alone amongst subscribers in London but by no means on the list as a whole, gave the rank of esquire.

Indeed, Crone and Skelton’s suggestion that the subscription list is filled with the names of landed gentry and nobility is borne out. Of the seven names listed as gentlemen, 39 gave the rank of esquire, and a further 11 titles included the Dukes of St. Albans and Beaufort, the Countess of Orrery, Lords Caernarvan and Tracy, two knights, and a handful of Barons and Baronets, for a total of 56, or 22% of the subscribers. However, the presence of numerous gentry and nobility does not necessarily imply the decadent interests that Crone and Skelton ascribe to the readers of the *Bibliotheca*. Sir William Boothby, for instance, would find posthumous fame as a book collector, whose tastes “inclined especially to theology and ecclesiastical debate, but incorporated a wide spectrum of other categories, including literature, politics, science, medicine, history, travel, law, and rhetoric, as well as bibliography itself.”<sup>199</sup> The list also included several names of individuals who had found contemporary renown as scholars, including Thomas Robinson, whose work was a prompt for some of Harris’ animated if confused pamphleteering described in chapter one of this dissertation, as well as Roger Gale, whose few publications

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<sup>198</sup> See Sarah Palmer, ‘Lloyd, Edward (c.1648–1713)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Oct 2007 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16829, accessed 15 Sept 2010]

<sup>199</sup> Peter Beal, ‘Boothby, Sir William, first baronet (bap. 1637, d. 1707)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/68251, accessed 15 Sept 2010]

included an edition of his father's commentary on the British section of Antonine's *Itinerary*, an ancient geography of the Roman Empire. Published four years after the *Bibliotheca*, Roger Gale's own notes on the *Itinerary* "linked the historical text to topographical evidence surviving in the landscape, and provided his contemporaries with a framework within which to conduct their own archaeological researches."<sup>200</sup> Gale continued this work in a thirty-page essay describing the geography of the Roman roads in Britain, in a synthesis of ancient and modern scholarship that amounted to an extended reconstruction of Roman material and linguistic history within the contemporary British land and cityscape.<sup>201</sup> As we will see below, this interest in the links between Britain's ancient history and its present structures was key to both the Churchills' *Collection* and to the *Bibliotheca*; finding these names, as well other natural philosophers and antiquarians including Christopher Rawlinson and physicians Dr. Frederick Slare and Edward Tyson amongst the subscription list to Harris' text suggests that interest in the prefatory material to be discussed below was more than cursory.<sup>202</sup>

Likewise, the titled subscribers who were associated with the military were not necessarily directly connected with mercantile activity in the new world. Sir John Cutts, for example, was Commander-in-Chief in Ireland and thus part of the colonial occupation there when the

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<sup>200</sup> Mary Clapinson, 'Gale, Roger (1672–1744)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/10294>, accessed 15 Sept 2010]; Augustus Antoninus, *Antonini iter Britanniarum commentariis illustratum Thomæ Gale, S. T. P. nuper Decani Ebor. opus posthumum revisit, auxit, edidit R. G.* (London, 1709).

<sup>201</sup> Roger Gale, "An Essay Towards the Recovery of the Courses of the four Great *Roman Ways*" in Thomas Hearne, ed., *The Itinerary of John Leland the Antiquary*, vol. 6 (Oxford, 1711) 93-122. This volume also contains an extensive subscription list which includes not only the names of those who ordered multiple copies, but also those to whom copies were gifted, underscoring the point above about the importance of not assuming that booksellers were ordering multiples.

<sup>202</sup> Lawrence M. Principe, 'Slare, Frederick (1646/7–1727)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/25715>, accessed 15 Sept 2010]; Anita Guerrini, 'Tyson, Edward (1651–1708)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27961>, accessed 15 Sept 2010]. W. W. Wroth, 'Rawlinson, Christopher (1677–1733)', rev. Mary Clapinson, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/23188>, accessed 15 Sept 2010].



*Bibliotheca* was published, but much of his military career was spent fighting in the Netherlands and France. Indeed, Cutts built his career and connections to William III during military service in the Dutch Republic.<sup>203</sup> Francis Nicholson, whose name also appears on the subscription list, fits Crone and Skelton's image of the new imperial reader much better. Like Cutts, Nicholson began his military career in Holland. He then served in Tangier, before spending most of the rest of his career supporting royal authority in the British colonies of North America.<sup>204</sup> Nevertheless, there is some doubt whether the Francis Nicholson Esq. who appeared on the subscription list is the same as Sir Francis Nicholson, given that the list makes no mention of titles that the latter had earned. Sir Hovenden Walker had a similarly transatlantic military career, but as the author of a ballad in Pepys' library, and an account of his disastrous expedition to Quebec in 1711 following his settlement in South Carolina after his ejection from the navy, he was personally involved in the production of voyage writing himself, and thus something more than the imperial amateur that Crone and Skelton describe.<sup>205</sup>

This is not to say that there were not numerous merchants who subscribed to the *Bibliotheca*. In addition to the 12 for whom the list has London locations, there were a further nine who have the occupation of "merchant." One of those was based in Falmouth, a port town in Cornwall, and another in Newcastle. The remainder gave no locations, and may well have been London-based also. Additionally, the Captain Turner on the subscription list, might be Jacob Turner, a merchant whose entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* outlines his

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<sup>203</sup> H. M. Chichester, 'Cutts, John, Baron Cutts of Gowran (1660/61–1707)', rev. John B. Hattendorf, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 ;online edn, May 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/6984, accessed 15 Sept 2010].

<sup>204</sup> Kevin R. Hardwick, 'Nicholson, Sir Francis (1655–1728)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/20130, accessed 15 Sept 2010].

<sup>205</sup> Pepys Library, V:374, "TREACHERY OF THE SPANIARDS OF PORTO RICO/ TO THE/ DARTMOUTH FRIGOT/ AND HER COMPANY [THE]"; Sir Hovenden Walker, *A Journal: or Full Account of the late Expedition to Canada* (London, 1720).

career trading in the Levant.<sup>206</sup> The possibility that another four people described as captains – suggested by Captain Christopher Mordan’s occupation – might have been merchants raises the total number to between 21 and 26, or 8% and 10% of the total number of subscribers.

Despite serious reservations we might have about the actual interests of the gentry and nobility especially, the audience that Crone and Skelton describe makes up a third of the total subscribers, which is significant when considering the contents of the *Bibliotheca*. It is also worth noting that there are a total of 30 (11% of subscribers) divines listed, ranging from rectors and vicars to the Lord Archbishop of York and the Lord Bishop of Sarum. This high proportion might be attributable to Harris’ own life as a divine and thus a reliance on professional connections, but it also underscores a religious dimension to the logic of the *Bibliotheca* that is as yet unaccounted for in contemporary historiography. As I will show in the subsequent pages, this religious content can shed light on the apparently secular and commercial vision of England’s past expressed through the histories of navigation which featured not only in Churchill’s and Harris’ histories, but also in a number of other accounts of this past published during this period. Indeed, the number of divines who subscribed to the *Bibliotheca* exceeded the number that could even generously be described as merchants, which suggests that the audience posited for these compendiums may have been reading the volumes in ways that are unaccounted for in the historiography.

Unfortunately, an analysis of the *Bibliotheca* subscription list raises more questions than it answers. The large number of entries on the subscriber list which have no information other than a name (entries that comprise 16% of the total), and a further 6% which list only a name and location, mean that, along with the 29% of subscribers who were booksellers, more than 50% of

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<sup>206</sup> Jenny Marsh, ‘Turner, Jacob (1643–1709)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/52616>, accessed 15 Sept 2010].

the names on the list tell us precious little. This problem, especially when coupled with the unknown quantity and destination of multiple orders, means that generalizations about audience are virtually impossible.

What we can say — if we exclude the 36% of subscribers who give no location at all — is that the balance between booksellers and other subscribers based in London is almost the inverse of non-London-based booksellers and other subscribers. Booksellers made up 59% of all London-based subscribers, and only 27% of non-London subscribers. This suggests (although it does not confirm) that a significant number of copies of the *Bibliotheca* were ending up not in the hands of landed gentry, but rather in the professional, mercantile and other groups that made up the urban bourgeoisie. London was the center of the book trade, and was also home to every conceivable occupation and social category, and much of the bias towards nobility may be accounted if we assume that a wider range of readers in London were more likely to buy the book off the shelf, rather than subscribe in advance. That all but one of the booksellers gave not just a general location such as “London,” but the specific location where his business could be found, is an indication that these subscriptions were taken with the intention of retailing. It also suggests that London booksellers perceived enough of a market for such a book that they were willing to shoulder some of the risk by subscribing in advance for a costly volume.

Definitive answers are elusive. Nevertheless, Crone and Skelton’s proclamations about the amateurish readership of these collections may be borne out for later editions. While the Churchills’ volumes did not include a list of subscribers to the first edition, one is included for the third edition, which was not published until 1732, four years after the death of Awnsham and

nearly two decades after that of John, who probably died soon after 1714.<sup>207</sup> Insofar as comparison is useful, it reveals a profound shift in the audiences for the travel compilation over the course of the first third of the century.

The subscription list of the 1723 edition of the Churchills' *Collection* includes Sir Tancred Robinson and Sir Hans Sloane, whose role in the dissemination of voyage accounts was long-standing, as we have seen. It also features several names of individuals that had bought the original edition of Harris, including Sir Philip Sydenham, possibly Charles Grimes, and antiquarian Roger Gale, whose work is discussed above. Bookseller Benjamin Motte, whose father (also named Benjamin) subscribed to the *Bibliotecha*, subscribed to the new edition of the Churchills' *Collection*, but interestingly only his name, and not his occupation, is included on the list, despite the fact that other booksellers listed both, along with general locations.

More significant, though, is the expansion of the nobility and gentry in the Churchill list. Where this group numbered 21% of Harris' subscribers in 1705, they made up 56% of the subscribers to the second edition of the Churchill volumes, or 104 out of 185 subscribers. What is more, 83 (80%) of these titled subscribers were esquires, compared to 34 of the 56 (61%) on Harris' subscription list, making esquires alone 45% of all Churchill subscribers in 1732, compared to just 13% of Harris' in 1705. The sample size is small and the comparison is complicated in that the subscription lists are for different books. It is crucial to note that, despite being large compendiums in folio, Churchill cost £1/5s more than Harris in their first editions, a significant difference that may have carried over into the later editions. If we take this change in audience at face value, however, it indicates a move toward the audience that Crone and Skelton describe occurring over the course of the first three decades of the eighteenth century, and not at

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<sup>207</sup> Plomer, 67-70.

its very beginning. This apparent change in the audience is corroborated by the dramatic revision of the dedications from the 1705 to the 1744 editions of the *Bibliotheca*, which will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

This shift toward an audience dominated by a landed elite would also be consistent with a more general shift in reading practices over the first half of the eighteenth century. As James Raven notes, the private library began to be a feature of the gentleman's home from the late seventeenth century, and was well established by the mid-eighteenth.<sup>208</sup> In conjunction with the changes in a subscriber base that are traceable across time, this suggests that the readership of these particular texts was changing as reading practices changed, but that these changes were not necessarily to be found at the beginning of the century when the books were first published – and, in addition, that there might be a greater degree of continuity in audience interests between the work of the Royal Society in the 1690s and the work of the Churchills and Harris in the 1700s than Crone and Skelton and other historians have thus far allowed.

Without more information in the form of testimony from the readers themselves, much must remain supposition. But it is nevertheless important to allow not only for changes in audience across time, but also to consider the possible reading practices that were employed with respect to such large texts. Their size and breadth of coverage suggests extensive as opposed to intensive reading, and that these narratives might have been consulted in a piecemeal and possibly encyclopedic way by their owners. Both texts include extensive tables of contents and indexes for each volume, and it is possible that they were read alongside other books to supplement knowledge. Indeed, the Churchills' preface alluded to these practices, announcing that “we would not assume the Liberty of prescribing to the Publick how much of an Author they

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<sup>208</sup> James Raven, “New Reading Histories, Print Culture and the Identification of Change: The Case of Eighteenth-Century England,” *Social History*, vol. 23, no. 3 (Oct., 1998), 284.

should read, nor determine which Figures are useful, and which superfluous; seeing those who read for their Diversion have different Tastes, and those who read for Instruction have different Views.”<sup>209</sup> This encyclopedic approach is also consistent with another work of Harris’, *Lexicon Technicum*, which was published the year before *Navigantium* and is sometimes described as the first English encyclopedia.<sup>210</sup> The apparent lack of organization in both texts, caused in part by the addition of material over the years that they were in press, may have been compensated for by the paratextual apparatus that served as a guide when reading for information and not entertainment. It is also possible that, as Crone and Skelton hint, many copies of these books simply went unread on the shelves of libraries in country homes.<sup>211</sup>

Despite the uncertainties that surround both the readership as detailed in these subscription lists and the reading practices that were employed, it is useful to look upon these texts with a more charitable eye than twentieth century historians have. While David Quinn concedes that the Churchills’ text in particular was “not without interest as reflecting eighteenth-century taste and knowledge,”<sup>212</sup> it is important to recognize that that taste shifted over the course of the century along with reading practices and broader configurations of the economic and social order. We must also acknowledge the continuities between preceding voyage accounts and the compilations of the first decades of the eighteenth century. The land-owning and mercantile elite readership that Crone and Skelton identify certainly existed, but it is far from certain that this was the predominant readership of the initial editions in the way that it was for later ones. Nevertheless, the histories of navigation and commerce that featured in the introductions to both the Harris and

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<sup>209</sup> Churchill, “The Publishers PREFACE.”

<sup>210</sup> Harris, *Lexicon Technicum: Or, An Universal English Dictionary of Arts and Sciences: Explaining not only the Terms of Art, but the Arts Themselves* (London: 1704).

<sup>211</sup> Raven, 279. See also Crone and Skelton, 81.

<sup>212</sup> David B. Quinn, *Explorers and Colonies: America, 1500-1625* (London, 1990), 25

Churchill texts were undeniably produced out of an imperial and commercial mindset, and involved a reconfiguration of the idea of English history that had antecedents, and was in turn influential for later writers. It is to these earlier histories that this chapter will now turn.

## NATION, EMPIRE, AND HISTORIES OF NAVIGATION

Both the Harris and Churchill compilations featured prefaces that dwelt on the history of navigation. Like *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, these histories included modern explorations and the accounts that were produced from voyages, and the Churchill text especially followed this tradition in publishing a “Catalogue and Character of most Books of Travels,” which detailed publications from the mid-sixteenth until the end of the seventeenth century in Latin, Italian, French, Spanish and English – ignoring Dutch “because they are not very many, and all of them will be found, as they were translated into other Languages.”<sup>213</sup> Harris’ *Bibliotheca*, as an historical project, was organized chronologically as well as geographically as a bibliography of the voyage. Harris and the Churchills expanded their history of the voyage beyond the bibliographical description of modern voyages, however. Both texts feature introductions that elaborated a history of navigation that placed modern navigation in relation to ancient, and reconstructed English history as one of maritime trade and imperial expansion.

These histories were undoubtedly Anglo-centric. In his dedication to Queen Anne, Harris offered the discoveries that had been made of the world’s cultural and political practices as well as products as an “agreeable and useful Entertainment” that would

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<sup>213</sup> “The Catalogue and Character of most Books of Travels” in Churchill, lxxvi-c. The quotation is on xcix.

add to [Her Majesty's] Satisfaction to see, that they have been chiefly made by those of Your *Own Nation*. It hath been thought by some a laudable Reason for sending our Gentlemen Abroad, that they may the better learn to value their Native Country. And this I dare say, That when either a Man hath actually travell'd the whole World over himself, or carefully consider'd the Accounts which those give us that have done so, he will be abundantly convinced, that Our own Religion, Government and Constitution is, in the Main, much preferable to any he shall meet with Abroad.<sup>214</sup>

This dedication recalls the arguments made by Richard Hadfield, amongst others, concerning the relationship between the experience and narration of overseas travel and the formation of English national identity.<sup>215</sup> Whereas David Armitage argues that the relationship between English nationalism and the British empire in Hakluyt and Purchas is tenuous, and configured in ways that conform much more closely to the international Protestantism of the late-sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries than the nationalism of the nineteenth that seems to inform the understanding of many modern scholars, Harris' early-eighteenth century views of the nation were much more bounded, and the "use and entertainment" of the travel narrative lay explicitly in the delineation and celebration of Englishness over and against those encountered in foreign lands.

Thus, the next part of his dedication is telling. Harris praised Anne's "Wisdom and penetrating Judgment [which] disappoints all the Designs of the Enemies of Your Government, and nips them in the Bud." Likewise, her support of the established church "damps all the Hopes of *Faction* and *Fanaticism*," and her "entire Compliance in all Things with Our Laws and Constitutions, Your Lenity, Love of, and Goodness to Your People ... frustrates and blasts all the barbarous Contrivances of those, who would enslave Us to Arbitrary Power, *French* and *Popish*

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<sup>214</sup> Harris, "Dedication" in *Navigantium Atque Biblioteka Itinerantium*.

<sup>215</sup> See the introduction to this dissertation.



Tyranny.”<sup>216</sup> It was the sovereign’s adherence to the religious and legal institutions, and to her subjects, that was England’s defense against the counter-Reformation. This religious and legal unity was also explicitly imperial and positioned England internationally as something that “all the World sees, and justly admires in Your Majesty: *This* makes Your Armies conquer Empires Abroad, and every One call You Blesses, *pray* heartily to GOD for You, and *Bless* GOD for You, at Home.”<sup>217</sup> Harris thus situated religious settlement and England’s security in its reputation as a force able to project military power overseas through its political and religious unity at home. Through Anne’s virtues in creating and adhering to this unity, she would be “the Glorious Instrument of Settling the Peace and Liberty of *Europe* on a safe and lasting Foundation.”<sup>218</sup> Harris’ dedication revealed a vision of England as an imperial power in Europe that was united at home. This is not quite the “British empire” that would come into being later, but it can be viewed as an expression of an English nation that was capable of expansionist imperial power.

This link between nation and empire was made much more clearly in the introductions to both the Churchill and Harris volumes. Both introductions were histories of navigation and trade, and both adopted a vision of ancient history that placed commercial, maritime history at the center of human development. In doing so, they replaced the emphasis on the Greek and Roman empires with the Phoenician and then Carthaginian, and argued for those whose maritime empire was destroyed by the Romans as a model for English society and empire. These histories of navigation and commerce continued and clarified a tradition of history and geography that attempted to explain the role of voyaging and trade in both religious and secular contexts. An

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<sup>216</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>218</sup> *ibid.*

examination of these histories also reveals the surprising extent to which Phoenicians featured in thinking about the so-called Atlantic archipelago's past in relation to Europe. As the English were reconstructing themselves as a commercial, maritime empire, embattled by continental powers whose confessional politics were based in Rome, their historical outlook was shaped by these concerns.

### THOMAS PHILIPOT, JOHN EVELYN, AND SEVENTEENTH CENTURY HISTORIES OF NAVIGATION

The history of navigation and its links to the history of commerce was not a new problem in the early eighteenth century. When Thomas Philipot wrote *An Historical Discourse on the First Invention of Navigation and the Additional Improvements of It* in 1661, he noted that much had already been written on the subject, "which lies disperse'd in the pages of several Authors."<sup>219</sup> Like Purchas, Philipot's history of navigation emerged from sacred history, and so began with the biblical Flood, noting that

it is indisputably true from all the Authority of the Sacred Records, the structure of the Arke ow'd, and entituled its original contexture to the industrious precaution of *Noah*, who by the immediate designation of God himself, brought that wooden Island into shape and order, to rescue some part of Mankind, from the angry Baptisme of a publique Deluge.<sup>220</sup>

For Philipot, the subsidence of the Flood meant the repopulation of the world, which Noah's descendants achieved through "plantations which were contiguous to Mount *Ararat*."<sup>221</sup> These

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<sup>219</sup> Thomas Philipot, *An Historical Discourse of The First Invention of Navigation and The Additional Improvements of It* (London, 1661), 1.

<sup>220</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *ibid.*

planters used the remains of the ark as a model for building ships, “as might make Rivers and more spacious waters obvious to a passage, and maintain such a necessary intercourse, as might improve a commerce between Nation and Nation.”<sup>222</sup> Philipot brought this history into secular time by sketching out a history of navigation and commerce in the ancient world. For Philipot, no one ancient society stood out for its importance in the development of navigation; Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks and Romans all played a role as techniques and building materials spread throughout the Mediterranean. This development eventually led to the settlement of Western Europe and thus the transmission of navigation techniques into France and Spain, but not “*Belgium and Britain*, [as] they were in Ages of an elder inscription very barren and indigent in Shiping; for *Caser*, when he made his eruption on the last, found the *Circumambient Seas* so ill furnish’d, that he was forc’d with the industrious assistance of his soldiery to build and equip a Navy ... to transport his Army into *Albion*.”<sup>223</sup> British navigation nevertheless supplied an innovation to Caesar’s invading Army in the form of “corraghs,” “little Vessel’s cover’d with Leather ... these kind of Boats or Baskets were used by *Julius Caser* to transport his Army over the river *Sicorus* against *Petrei*us ... and he learned the making it seems from the *Britains*, when he was in this Island.”<sup>224</sup> Philipot thought that these vessels resembled similar ones found in Babylon, and suggested that there might have been a transmission of technology between the Britons and the Babylonians. He did not develop the idea much further, however, and instead placed emphasis on development of navigation technology in the Mediterranean, and ended that part of his discussion with a comparison between West Indian, Arabian, Greenland, and ancient

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<sup>222</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>223</sup> *ibid.*, 3

<sup>224</sup> *ibid.*, 5

British naval technology, placing the Britons firmly outside the history of navigational development that led to military strength in the ancient world.

Philipot devoted the remainder of his pamphlet to the compass. He began by addressing a question that would remain central to discussions of the history of navigation: Did the ancients know about the compass? As with those who would follow him, Philipot said that, despite some evidence that the ancients knew about the lodestone, they did not use the compass, and that it was a modern invention, generally attributed to an Italian inventor but possibly brought from China into Italy in the thirteenth century.<sup>225</sup> The rest of the pamphlet was taken up with the problem of magnetic variation, its causes and its solutions. This problem will be discussed in depth in the following chapter, but here it is the template for discussion of the history of navigation that Philipot set up that is important. The relationship between Noah's ark and both the population of the world subsequent to the Flood, the development of navigation in the Mediterranean, and the special role of the compass in marking a distinction between the Ancients and Moderns would continue to inform histories of navigation over the period. These histories would also be marked by an increasing emphasis on the role of the Phoenicians in establishing a commercial empire, and, curiously, on Phoenician commercial expansionism and its role in shaping the history of Britain and of the world beyond Europe.

Thirteen years later, John Evelyn published *Navigation and Commerce, Their Original and Progress*, a tract that expanded considerably on Philipot's history. Written in the context of the third Anglo-Dutch War, Evelyn's tract was an intervention in the debate over the Navigation Act, and particularly the ongoing issue of English dominion of the sea; he argued – in support of John Selden's *Mare Clausum* – that England's sovereignty over its seas was long-standing and

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<sup>225</sup> *ibid.*, 8-10.

indeed ancient, in that it could be traced back at least as far as British trading relationships with the Gauls that preceded Julius Caesar's invasion. Evelyn argued that the "Britains" had asserted their dominion for the purposes of both defense and commerce "from Time immemorial" in a chain of sovereignty only occasionally broken by invasion which nevertheless continued to assert the right of dominion "in Right of *England*."<sup>226</sup>

In parsing the dispute with the Dutch over the existence of territorial waters, especially in the English channel, the bare outlines of Evelyn's argument in *Navigation and Commerce* were unremarkable, in that he asserted a right to sovereignty over commerce and fisheries through claims to an "EMPIRE on the SEA" that had ancient origins.<sup>227</sup> Indeed, Evelyn's argument on the surface appears to be a paraphrase of the second book of *Mare Clausum*, where Selden established an ancient heredity for British dominion of the seas surrounding it.<sup>228</sup> Like Selden, Evelyn spent the first part of his work establishing links between ancient Mediterranean practices and the early-modern ones. For Evelyn, as for Selden, the argument rested on establishing temporal continuity between ancient and early-modern history in order to rebut the claims of those who argued for the *Mare Liberum*.

Evelyn's argument differed from Selden's in one crucial respect, however. Where Selden's argument was legal, in keeping with his work as a jurist, Evelyn's history of the ancients stemmed from a philosophy in which historical development was determined by geography; primarily, by the sea. Evelyn began his history with a rumination on the constitution of the earth, noting that the

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<sup>226</sup> John Evelyn, *Navigation and Commerce, Their Original and Progress* (London, 1774), 66.

<sup>227</sup> *ibid.*, 84.

<sup>228</sup> John Selden ("now perfected and restored by" James Howell), *Mare Clausum: the right and dominion of the sea in two books* (London, 1663). See David J. Padwa, "On the English Translation of John Selden's *Mare Clausum*" in *The American Journal of International Law*, vol. 54, no. 1. (Jan., 1960), 156-9 for a brief discussion of the transformations the English translation of *Mare Clausum* underwent pre- and post-Restoration.

Earth, and every Prospect of her Superficies, presents us with a thousand Objects of Utility and Delight ... when we ag'en behold in what ample Baies, Creeks, trending-Shores, inviting Harbours and Stations, she appears spreading her Arms upon the Bordures of the Ocean . . . Methinks she seems, from the very Beginning, to have been dispos'd for Traffick and Commerce, and even Courts us to visit her most solitary Recesses.<sup>229</sup>

Evelyn was arguing for England's unique "situation" for establishing economic and military might in the form of a maritime empire. While republicans had traditionally used the Netherlands and Venice as model republics,<sup>230</sup> for Evelyn they were examples of small, waterlogged states that were able to take overcome their lack of primary production by developing trading routes and taking advantage of their waterways.<sup>231</sup> Thus, Evelyn envisioned a history in which water was the governing fact of geography, and with the development of navigation and commerce became the connective tissue of mankind. For Evelyn, "the SEA (which covers half the Patrimony of Man, renders the whole World a stranger to it self, and the Inhabitants, for whom 'twas made, as rude as *Cannibals*) becomes but one Family, by the Miracles of Commerce ... it has taught us Religion, Instructed us in Polity, Cultivated our Manners, and Furnish'd us with all the delicacies of Virtuous and happy Living."<sup>232</sup> Water, with the technology that made it navigable, lay at the heart of the distinction between the "barbarous" societies of the New World and civilized European and Mediterranean societies.<sup>233</sup>

For Evelyn it was not the English that were the modern equivalents of the Carthaginians, but their Dutch opponents. The connection between authority and commerce that Evelyn viewed as vital to the success of modern nations was apparent in the Phoenician city of Tyre, "whose

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<sup>229</sup> Evelyn, 2.

<sup>230</sup> Jonathan Scott, *Commonwealth Principles: Republican Writing of the English Revolution* (Cambridge, 2004), 22.

<sup>231</sup> This point had been made in the previous year by William Temple. See William Temple, *Observations on the United Provinces of the Netherlands* (London: 1673), 121. See also Scott, *When the Waves Ruled Britannia: Geography and Political Identities, 1500-1800* (Cambridge, 2011), 104-7.

<sup>232</sup> Evelyn, 10-11.

<sup>233</sup> See Scott, 2011, 106.

*Merchants* are Princes, and whose *Trafickers* the honourable of the Earth.”<sup>234</sup> The water-logged Dutch Republic had made commercial virtue out of geographical necessity, and produced a society which, like Evelyn’s Carthage, elevated its merchants into political power. Evelyn’s Rome, on the other hand, was uninterested in commerce and merchandising, having “esteem’d the gain by Traffick and Commerce incompatible with *Nobleß*,” and a corrupting influence on those engaged in traffic with strangers, “for which reason *Plato* design’d the Towns of his Common-wealth to be built far distant from the Sea; and our *Saviour* scourg’d the Money-Changers out of the Temple.”<sup>235</sup> As it was only over time that Greek and Roman society and philosophy admitted trade as an honorable practice, so too Evelyn saw that early-modern England had to recognize the importance of navigation and commerce. Like Solomon, who would open trade to the south, it was up to Charles II “by whose Influences alone ... such a Trade has been Reviv’d, and Carried on, and such a Fleet, and Strength at Sea to protect it, as never this Nation had a greater, nor any other of the past Ages has approach’d.”<sup>236</sup> In 1673, the Earl of Shaftesbury had made a similar connection in his *Delenda Est Carthago* speeches, when he noted that Charles II “could not be King of *Great Britain* without Securing the Dominion and Property of his own Seas,”<sup>237</sup> and that, in order to achieve this stability, the Carthaginian elements of Dutch political society must be brought down. Shaftesbury saw English opposition to the expansion of Dutch maritime power as a war fought *pro aris et focus*; in order to maintain their freedom, Shaftesbury argued, the English must control the sea and jealously guard it from

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<sup>234</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>235</sup> *ibid.*, 11-12.

<sup>236</sup> *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>237</sup> Anthony Ashely Cooper, Lord Shaftesbury, “A Speech of the Lord Chancellor *Shaftesbury* in Parliament, October 27. 1673, about the *DUTCH War*,” in *Delenda Est Carthago, or the Lord Chancellor Shaftesbury’s Speeches in Parliament About the Second War with the DUTCH In 1672, and 1673* (London, 1712), 11. See also Scott, 2011, 104.

their Dutch neighbours.<sup>238</sup> Evelyn took Shaftesbury's logic one step further in invoking the history of this relationship between a Carthaginian Dutch Republic and a Roman English monarchy in arguing that in order to defeat the Carthage across the channel, the English must become them. If the English were to defeat the Dutch, they must, like the Romans, reform themselves as a commercial, maritime empire.

Evelyn's vision of empire was thus commercial and royalist. It was also expansionist. In what was perhaps the clearest expression of the ends of empire published in the late-seventeenth century, Evelyn outlined the advantages of navigation beyond commerce, declaring that

It enables us likewise with means to defend, what our honest Industry has gotten; and, if necessity, and Justice require; with Inlarging our Dominions too: Vindicating our Rights, Repelling Injuries, Protecting the Oppress'd, and with all the Offices of Humanity, and good Nature; In a word, Justice, and the Right of Nations, are the Objects of Commerce: It maintains Society, disposes to Action, and Communicates the Graces, and Riches which God has Variously imparted: From all which Considerations, 'tis evident; That a Spirit of Commerce, and strength at Sea to protect it, are the most certain marks of the Greatness of Empire, deduced from an undeniable *Sorites*; That whoever Commands the Ocean, Commands the Trade of the World, Commands the Riches of the World, and whoever is Master of That, Commands the World it self.<sup>239</sup>

In a world defined by its seas, navigation and commerce were the keys to security and virtue and thus, for Evelyn, the protection and expansion of English dominion over the sea was a moral right and a practical necessity. Maritime and merchant activity was not to be begrudged, as both Plato and the early Romans of Evelyn's history begrudged it, but instead was to be pursued as the key to economic and military might.

The Phoenicians and later Carthaginians were not the only figures to whom Evelyn credited the invention and development of navigation and commerce. Sacred history re-entered

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<sup>238</sup> Evelyn, 15.

<sup>239</sup> Evelyn, 14-15. The final sentence is a quote from Sir Walter Raleigh, who in turn attributed it to Themistocles. See Scott, 2011, 45.



his narrative through the figure of Solomon, for instance, and the Cretans also enjoyed sovereignty through their expertise in shipping.<sup>240</sup> Nevertheless, it was through the mercantile activity of the Phoenicians that sovereignty and dominion of the sea was established. The history that Evelyn traced from there extended from the activity of a mercantile people in response to a marine environment. Evelyn's argument for *mare clausum* was, like Selden's, based in a claim to the antiquity of occupation and a more or less continuously claimed right, but that right was not so much legal as imperial. That is, it drew on the history of empires and not of laws, and asserted the primacy of commerce into that history. The elevation of the Phoenicians to a key role in the history of navigation and commerce was foundational to arguments for England's imperial right in a mercantile age, even if the Dutch were their foremost contemporary disciples.

#### **AYLETT SAMMES AND THE PHOENICIANS IN ANCIENT BRITAIN**

In 1676 Aylett Sammes was to make the historical connection between the Phoenicians and Britons more explicit. Sammes, a member of the Inner Temple, published the first volume of *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* in folio, and appears to have died before any further volumes made it into print.<sup>241</sup> Sammes' work centered on the history of the British nation, locating that history in ancient records and forgoing the "Modern Chronicles" in which readers sought accounts of "the Battels of Cressy and Agencourt, the differences of the Houses of York and Lancaster, the

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<sup>240</sup> *ibid.*, 24, 26.

<sup>241</sup> Aylett Sammes, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata: Or, The Antiquities of Ancient Britain, Derived from the Phoenicians* (London, 1676).

Insurrections in Kent” and instead seeking the “Antiquity and Original of Kingdoms.”<sup>242</sup> Sammes’ interest lay in locating the origins of British society, and in doing so he deviated from geographer William Camden by suggesting that Ancient Britain’s connections to the Ancient mediterranean cultures began not with the Roman conquest, but through commercial interaction with the Phoenicians.

As Graham Parry points out, Sammes took a cue from Camden by basing his argument on philological evidence. His interpretation, however, took a radically different direction. Sammes linked Phoenician and British place names, and thus deduced the connection from philological evidence — the word Britain derived from “BARAT-NAC, or BRATANAC by the Phoenicians, from the abundance of Tynn, and Lead-Mines, found in them.”<sup>243</sup> It also drew on the work of John Twyne and French antiquarian Samuel Bochart, whose “imaginatively elaborated history of the Phoenicians” described a people whose voyages took them to the New World.<sup>244</sup> The effect of Bochart’s history of the Phoenicians, Parry argues, was “to remind the reader that the Phoenicians ... had their own documented antiquity that reached back to the beginnings of time, and that they were an ancient and honourable nation worthy to plant the world.”<sup>245</sup> This may have been the case, but Bochart’s arguments also had implications for the ways in which English historians thought not of the Phoenicians, but of Britain, and its geographical and historical relationship with Europe. Sammes’ history connected the British Isles to Europe not through the imperial force of Rome but through the commercial industry of the Phoenicians. As the review in

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<sup>242</sup> Sammes, “The Preface to the Reader” in *ibid.*

<sup>243</sup> Sammes, 1. See also Graham Parry, *Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1995), 310.

<sup>244</sup> Parry, 311.

<sup>245</sup> *ibid.*, 313.

*Philosophical Transactions* attributed to Henry Oldenburgh noted,<sup>246</sup> this connection shaped the linguistic as well as religious and other cultural institutions of the Germanic (rather than Gallic) “planters” of Britain. The review went on to argue that the Saxons “that were invited hither after a revolution of so many Ages” since settlement by the *Cimbri* (i.e. Cymri) people, “were a true branch of those very *Cimbri*, that had seated themselves so long ago before them in this Island.” Oldenburgh, who as we saw in chapter one was himself concerned with the scientific and commercial potential of the voyage, viewed Sammes’ connection between the first settlers of Britain and Phoenician traders as part of an historical continuity that joined the ancient British past with the modern English present. This continuity projected the Englishness of the Isles further into the past. It also established cultural links between the speakers of British (i.e. Gaelic and Celtic) languages and the English-speaking descendants of the Saxons. By replacing Camden’s Gauls with the *Cimbri*, Sammes was able to make a historical continuity between the ancients and moderns of Britain that rested on the commercial activity of a sea-going people. Historiographical curio it may be, but, like Evelyn’s tract on navigation and commerce, *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata* formed part of a canon of history that reimagined the ancient past in light of England’s developing commercial empire.

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<sup>246</sup> “An Account of Books” in *Phil Trans.*, vol. 11 (1676), 598. An old edition of the Dictionary of National Biography entry on Sammes attributes the review to Oldenburgh. See Thomas Seccombe, “Aylett Sammes,” in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford, 1897). The current edition casts doubt on Sammes’ authorship of *Britannia Antiqua Illustrata*. See Parry, ‘Sammes, Aylett (c.1636–c.1679)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn, Oxford University Press, Sept 2004 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24591>, accessed 14 Sept 2010]

## THE CHURCHILLS AND THE PHOENICIANS

The histories of navigation and commerce that were published in the half-century before the compendiums of the Churchills and Harris thus relied on a view of the past that emphasized the maritime empires of the Phoenicians and later Carthaginians in the post-diluvian world. In doing so, they alluded to and sometimes directly invoked connections between the Phoenicians and the modern British Isles that promoted the idea that Britain was – or in the case of Evelyn ought to become – a neo-Carthage.

These themes were continued in Harris and the Churchills' collections. Unlike Evelyn, whose history began with the centrality of bodies of water to human history, the author of the Churchills' introduction focused on navigation itself, announcing that "of all the Inventions of Improvements the Wit and Industry of Man has discover'd and brought to perfection, none seems to be so universally useful, profitable and necessary, as the Art of Navigation."<sup>247</sup> For Churchill,<sup>248</sup> this invention was not to be ascribed to God in the design of Noah's Ark, which "had neither Oars, Sails, Masts, Yards, Rudder, or any sort of Rigging whatsoever, being only guided by Divine Providence," and thus lacking the qualities necessary to be described as an "invention." The peopling of the world after the Flood initially required only river crossings, "and those Rivers they pass'd in a hollo'd piece of Timber, no better than a Trough ... being the easiest that occur'd to Invention, and sufficient for their present purpose, which was only to pass on in their way to other Parts, without the prospect of Trade or Commerce."<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> Churchill, ix.

<sup>248</sup> Although it is likely that neither Churchill had a hand in composing the introduction, I have used "Churchill" here for the sake of brevity.

<sup>249</sup> *ibid.*

Rather than in the biblical past, Churchill instead found the origins of navigation in the recorded history of the ancients. Moving on to “Matters of more Certainty and better Authority” by returning to sailors “fam’d in History,” Churchill sought to find the invention of navigation in the commercial relationships that developed in the Mediterranean, especially between Greeks and Phoenicians. The authority he relied on was, once again, Bochart. Churchill wrote that “if we give Credit to Poets and Poetical Writers, we shall find *Neptune* covering the *Mediterranean* Sea with his mighty Fleets,” or find others that “give the honour of inventing of Ships, and steering them, to *Glaucus*, affirming that it was he that built and piloted the Ship *Argo* in *Jason’s* expedition against the *Tyrrhenians*.”<sup>250</sup> The poets were not to be credited however, and like Sammes, the Churchill history drew almost exclusively upon Bochart, repeating the claim that the *Argo* “ought properly to be call’d *Arco*, which in the *Phenician* Tongue signifies *long*, a Name given it because it was the first long Ship built by the *Greeks*, who learn’d it of the *Phenicians*, and call’d it by their Name.”<sup>251</sup> Nevertheless, the Greek *Argonauts* were only “inconsiderable Coasters in the *Mediterranean*, and set out by the Publick to suppress Pirats, tho fabulous *Greece* has extoll’d their Expeditions beyond all measure.”<sup>252</sup> Likewise, the voyages of the Trojan War were “still creeping along the Shores, without daring to venture out of sight of Land” and thus did not achieve the status of true navigation.

That honor went to the Phoenicians, who founded Carthage “which so long contended with *Rome* for the Sovereignty of the World,” settled Spain and the coasts of France, and even discovered “this Island of *Great Britain*, where they afterwards had a settled Trade for Tin, and

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<sup>250</sup> *ibid.* x

<sup>251</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>252</sup> *ibid.*

such other Commodities as the Country then afforded.”<sup>253</sup> These discoveries also extended to Africa, possibly rounding the Cape into the Red Sea, as far north as Iceland, and into the East Indies. Although the author of the history expressed reservation about the true extent of Phoenician voyaging, and denied outright that the Phoenicians made it to the West Indies, he nevertheless placed them at the beginning and apex of navigational development. Indeed, “Mankind is obli’g’d to the *Phenicians* for five things of the greatest use, *viz.* Letters, the knowledg of the Stars, the Art of Navigation, Military Discipline, and the building of Towns.”<sup>254</sup> Greeks and Roman imperial expansion followed from the Carthaginians, who continued to present a naval challenge to Rome until their overthrow in Sicily. Neither the Romans nor the Greeks managed to improve on the developments of the Carthaginians, however, and indeed the history of navigation from the fall of Rome until the discovery of the compass was one of decline into barbarism and a return to coasting, whose practitioners “did not endeavor to add any thing to the Art of Navigation, especially for that they were as then but rude and barbarous, War and Rapine being their only Possession.”<sup>255</sup> It was the “Saracens” and Normans that earned these barbarous descriptions, but Churchill was equally unimpressed with the navigation of the Genoese and Venetians as well as the English, French, Danes and Dutch, who “all in their turns were powerful at Sea, they all ventur’d sometimes far from home, either to rob, conquer, or trade, but all in the same manner creeping along the Shores,” and thus remaining in a navigational dark age which would not be lifted until the invention of the compass.

The schema of histories of navigation discussed thus far appear to conform closely to a self-conscious transformation of English society into a mercantile, commercial and imperial

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<sup>253</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>254</sup> *ibid.*, xi.

<sup>255</sup> *ibid.*, xiv.

power. Narratives by the likes of Philipot, Evelyn and the author of the Churchills' introduction – which began with the world after the Flood and moved rapidly into a secular history in which they emphasized either geographical or technological drivers behind change in history – are consistent with a world in which, as David Ormrod notes, “controlled commercial expansion was closely linked with a growing sense of national identity and assertiveness.”<sup>256</sup> The Phoenicians and their descendants the Carthaginians were lauded for their commercial economies and the discoveries they were reputed to have made through voyaging even as the English economy was in the process of becoming a seaborne empire. This process, as Ormrod argues, was not happening in isolation, but in the context of a “struggle for maritime supremacy, between people whose religious and social lives were marked by similarity rather than difference;”<sup>257</sup> that is, with their Dutch neighbors. Thus Evelyn's invocation of the Carthaginians was especially potent in his argument for English dominion of the seas, in that it brought this ancient history into dialog with a competitor in commerce and opponent in warfare. Sammes' enthusiasm for the Phoenician partial settlement of and commercial interaction with the British Isles likewise took place within this new imperial historiography, but rather than focusing on expansion of English territory, he was concerned with deepening the layers of Englishness and drawing historical links between the Saxon ancestors of the English and the earlier Britons. The effect of this was both to project British presence in the Isles further back in time, and also to make linguistic if not geographical ties with the Ancient cultures of the Mediterranean. As we have seen, the Churchill text relied on these historical perspectives and focused on technological development in its

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<sup>256</sup> David Ormrod, *The Rise of Commercial Empires: England and the Netherlands in the Age of Mercantilism, 1650-1770* (Cambridge, 2003), 3.

<sup>257</sup> *ibid.*, 1.

history of navigation, thus developing a mercantile and imperial vision of British history in which a maritime culture lay at the heart of a militarily and commercially powerful nation.<sup>258</sup>

### JOHN HARRIS AND SACRED GEOGRAPHY

These histories appear to have been part of a more or less secular tradition in the construction of an English and then British identity. Although each of the histories discussed above had their roots in sacred history, they each entailed some form of break with that past in the move from sacred into secular time. Harris' history, on the other hand, was fully sacred, and drew on the descent of man from the sons of Noah, placing the history of the ancient Mediterranean in unbroken continuity with biblical history. While all of the authors discussed above began with the biblical flood, they followed a pattern of acknowledging Noah's ark as the first ship before dismissing its significance in the history of navigation because of its lack of oars, sails, or other equipment necessary to steering a ship. The period following the end of the Flood was one of darkness, of which little could be credibly known because of the lack of reliable authorities. Thus, the difficult questions of how the world was peopled following the Flood tended to be ignored, or glossed over in preference for a focus on the Mediterranean that could be known through the ancient historians and geographers such as Herodotus, Thucydides, Strabo and Procopius.

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<sup>258</sup> The English were not alone in recovering the Carthaginians as ancient models for political structures in a time of crisis. They also enjoyed a revival during the American Revolution. See Caroline Winterer, "Model Empire, Lost City: Ancient Carthage and the Science of Politics in Revolutionary America" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 67, 1, (January 2010), 3-30.



The significance of the Reformation and counter-Reformation in this new historiography is to be inferred from the source material used by each author who wrote about the importance of the Phoenicians, explicitly or not. Bochart's *Geographia Sacra* was part of a canon of scholarly works published in the middle of the seventeenth century that, in the words of Peter Miller, "set out to prove, by the most sophisticated methods available, that sacred history was historical."<sup>259</sup>

It was Harris, the divine, who reproduced most faithfully French Protestant Bochart's arguments. Where other authors glossed over the question of the descent from Noah in favor of discussing the development of navigation and commerce, Harris devoted the first 28 pages of his introduction to the question. This question he answered through Bochart, tracing the sons of Noah across the Mediterranean, into northern Europe and the New World. The

Sacred History of the Bible ... cannot but be lookt upon as the most valuable piece of Antiquity extant in the World. For 'tis plainly to [Moses] only that we are indebted for our Knowledge of the Time and Manner of the Beginning of the World; of the first Parents of Mankind; of the Cause of the Frailty and Depravity of Human Nature, of the Inventors of Arts, the Original of Nations, the first Founders of Empires and Kingdoms, and of the Institutions of Laws and Government.<sup>260</sup>

From this sacred history Harris traced a sacred geography that located Paradise between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in Mesopotamia and located the resting place of the Ark in Parapernisis. From this resting place the descendants of Noah slowly dispersed themselves through "Scath first of all, peopling *Assyria, Babylon, Syria, Egypt* and then *Ethiopia* by degrees," thus tracing a migration from Ararat that would be elaborated throughout the history, confirming and confirmed by the historical truth of the Bible.

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<sup>259</sup> Peter N. Miller, "The Antiquarianization of Biblical Scholarship and the London Polyglot Bible (1653-57)," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 62, no. 3 (Jul. 2001), 464.

<sup>260</sup> Harris, i.

The first part of the introduction presented some difficulties for Harris, in that the biblical and ancient texts often did not provide clear evidence of migratory patterns. Through this migration from Noah, the people of the Mediterranean were made part of sacred history so that, for instance, “the *Phenicians, Syrians, Assyrians, Sienians* or *Tyrians* were descended from the *Canaanites*” and were thus explicitly tied to the Old Testament, as was the case for numerous Mediterranean peoples. The people of Germany, Russia and Muscovy and *India Orientis* presented more of a problem for Harris, who was unable to use biblical evidence in conjunction with ancient histories and geographies, and thus relied on Bochart’s speculations that, in the case of Germany for instance, “the *Egyptian Hercules* might send out Colonies.”<sup>261</sup>

It was in the peopling of the Americas that Harris’ most elaborated his sacred geography, and the history of navigation began to come to the fore. Harris noted that

it being expressly said by *Moses* ... *That the Nations were divided by the Sons of Noah after the Flood:* and ... *That of them the whole World was overspread:* And yet in his Account of the Peopling of the World, there being mention made only of three Parts of it, *viz. Europe, Asia and Africa,* as inhabited and possess’d by the Posterity of *Noah.* This hath induced some Persons to assert, that the vast and populous Tract of *America* did not receive its first Inhabitants from any part of our World, at least not from the descendants of *Noah;* but that either the *Americans* were *Aborigines* after the Deluge, or they had a Beginning since that, or else were not destroyed by the Flood, which consequently could not be universal.<sup>262</sup>

As demonstrated in the first chapter of this dissertation, Harris would brook no argument that the Flood was anything but universal, and could accept no alternative but that the New World was populated by descendants of Noah. In order to bring the New World within his sacred history, he had to determine which of the peoples of the Mediterranean and northern Africa could have peopled it. The absence of Judaism and Christianity discounted numerous candidates, while the

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<sup>261</sup> *ibid.*, vii.

<sup>262</sup> *ibid.*, viii.

Greeks and Romans were disqualified “because they were kept within the *Mediterranean* by the *Carthaginians*, and had no Settlements on the Coasts of the *Atlantick* Ocean, from whence they could get into the New World, if they had Skill in Navigation to attempt Discoveries of that nature, as it does not appear they had.”<sup>263</sup>

That role fell to the Phoenicians, their expulsion from Canaan having forced them into further migration throughout the Mediterranean and North Africa, aided by their “good Ships, [which they] did not use to coast along the Shore only, but ventur’d out far to Sea in the clear and fair time of the Year, guiding their Course by the Sun and Stars.”<sup>264</sup> The evidence that Harris found for three early Phoenician voyages for the plantation of the New World relied on Biblical, classical and philological evidence in a way that was entirely consistent with the sacred histories of the seventeenth-century scholastics. This history of settlement did not end with the Phoenicians, and indeed the New World continued to be settled by Scythians as well as northern European peoples. This close relationship between these waves of settlement according to Harris and the biblical scholarship he drew upon demonstrates the important link between religious histories and the new mercantile historiography that was being expounded in similar texts. The extent to which Harris drew on Bochart in writing his history exposes the confessional undercurrents to the histories of navigation supposedly being written for a mercantile elite.

When Harris revisited the question of the invention of navigation in the second part of his introduction and found, like those before him, that the Phoenicians were the first inventors of that technology, it was in the context of a continuous chain of history from Noah’s Ark. He asserted, unlike others, that navigational technology must have been available to the

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<sup>263</sup> *ibid.*, ix.

<sup>264</sup> *ibid.*, x.

antediluvians even if it was impossible for modern readers to know of it. The elaboration of ancient shipping and navigation technology – which took up 22 pages of the introduction and includes a glossary of Latin and Greek names of ships numbering 87 entries – builds upon the post-diluvian world, but its precedents nevertheless existed before the Flood, so that a historical continuity remained between the antediluvian and ancient navigators.

This continuity meant that the definition of “ancient” needed to expand when Harris’ discussion moved onto the compass itself. While the lodestone was known to the ancients of the Mediterranean, for Harris the compass as a means for finding direction was not. Instead, Harris’ history of the compass looked outside of the ancient Mediterranean to ask “whether there were not some Knowledge of this most useful and excellent Property among the *Chinese, Arabians* and *Africans* before we had made the Discovery of it in *Europe*.” He concluded that its magnetic properties and “its directive Faculty of pointing to the North was known to the *Chineses* 2800 Years ago [sic],” that “the *Saracens* had made use of the Compass in Navigation, for near five hundred Years ago,” and that Vasco de Gama had found that the “*Ethiopians* about *Mozambique* knew the Use of the Compass; and it did not appear from whom they had learnt the Use of it.”<sup>265</sup> For Harris, the question of whether or not the compass was known to the ancients was not restricted to the Greeks and Romans; other “Orientals” had equal claim to “Antient” knowledge. As his history moved towards the present, the compass was brought into the Mediterranean through Naples, until it reached the British Isles. Once again, Harris relied on philological evidence to echo other authors, particularly the recently deceased John Wallis, Sevillian Professor of Geometry at Oxford, in suggesting “for the Honour of our own Nation,” that, “the Mariners Compass was an *English* Invention, from the Word *Compass*, which is almost every where

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<sup>265</sup> *ibid.*, xli.

retained; and is properly an *English* Word, being used in many or our Provincial Parts for a Circle, or exactly round Figure, whose Circumference is every where equally distant from a Point within it, called its Centre.”<sup>266</sup>

Churchill rejected this reasoning, and also denied that the compass was known to the Ancients or in the East. Rather, he affirmed the view that held by Philipot that the compass was invented by John Gioia in Amalfi, and thus a modern European invention.<sup>267</sup> Gioia’s discovery, for Churchill, was a radically modern one that contradicted Solomon’s opinion that there was nothing new under the sun, “whereas this certainly appears, tho so long after him, to be altogether new, and never so much as thought of before, which cannot so plainly be made out of any other of those we look upon as Modern Inventions or Improvements.”<sup>268</sup> While the author of Churchill’s history established ancient precedents for fireships, sea charts and other technologies, the compass was genuinely new, and created a break in the history of mankind’s most useful and profitable art. Harris chose to retain these ancient precedents and thus maintain the historical links with the ancients which led necessarily back to his sacred history. The Churchill history, on the other hand, allowed an unprecedented technological development to progress beyond the Ancients by bringing something new into the world.

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<sup>266</sup> *ibid.*, lxii.

<sup>267</sup> Churchill, xvi.

<sup>268</sup> *ibid.*

## THE MERCHANTS AND THE MODERNS IN 1744

The half-century between Philipot's *First Invention of Navigation* and the compendiums of Churchill and Harris saw the development of a commercial, maritime and imperial historiography. Churchill's and Harris' part in this historiography has been identified with a mercantilist audience, yet we have seen that the nuances of these histories had much in common with religious thought of the seventeenth century. Where Crone and Skelton identify a mercantile elite as the audience for these texts, an analysis both of the subscription lists and the introductions which frame the compendiums reveals that the interaction between mercantile and confessional impulses betokens a greater continuity with earlier publications than other historians have allowed.

These links were not to be maintained far into the new century. In 1726, Daniel Defoe published his *General History of Trade and Improvements*. Like Evelyn, Churchill, and Harris before him, Defoe celebrated Phoenician commercial achievements. Previous authors saw these commercial activities as part of Punick contributions to civilization that included, for instance, the invention of the alphabet, but did not prefigure it. Defoe expressed something of the new mercantile era of the first half of the eighteenth century by making commercial activity not just an adjunct to, but the cause of, human learning. He described the Phoenicians as

great improvers of Art ... as a consequence of their being great improvers of Commerce; for Trade thriving, Arts always flourish; Commerce is a friend to Learning; Trade makes People rich, and their Wealth puts them upon improvement of Arts and Sciences ... Money, where there is a Genius inspires the Mind, and gives pleasing Representations of an encrease of Gain, and especially where Wealth is gotten by Trade, it pushes on the Mind for more Trade.'<sup>269</sup>

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<sup>269</sup> Daniel Defoe, *A General History of Trade and Improvements* (London, 1726), ii, 91.

The connection between commercial and cultural output had been made explicit at the cost of the sacred history of Harris. Defoe's was a history for flourishing mercantile community that had begun to see their activity as an unqualified good. Thus, the destruction of Carthage was not just a loss to navigational practices, but to civilization itself. Following their overthrow by Rome

commerce receiv'd a mortal blow ... the whole World felt the shock; as their Discoveries abroad lately begun, sunk and were destroy'd in the general dissaster ... so Invention, useful Undertakings, Arts, Science ... were likewise overwhelm'd in it ... In a Word, all the trading World felt the blow; and we find nothing considerable done in Manufacture, or Inventions, relating to Trade, after the fall of *Carthage*, for many Ages.<sup>270</sup>

It was no longer England that needed to be secured against the religious and commercial insecurity of the seventeenth century threat from continental popery, but commerce itself that needed to be secured so that arts and sciences may continue to flourish. Commerce was made central to civilization; the English, as practitioners of commerce, were its defenders. Just as their position and wealth were improving over the first half of the eighteenth century, merchants were fast becoming seen as primary agents in historical development.

Defoe was not the only author to elevate commerce to this role. In 1744, nearly forty years after the first edition of *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, a new edition appeared. This edition, still attributed to Harris despite his death decades before, was edited by John Campbell – a subscriber to the 1738 edition of the Churchill collection – and had been “carefully revised ... and Continued down to the Present Time; Including Particular Accounts of the MANUFACTURES and COMMERCE of Each Country.”<sup>271</sup> This brief note on the title page only hinted at the revisions within, which began with the dedication, no longer to Queen Anne, but instead to “the Merchants of Great-Britain.” The new dedication was to “the richest Body of

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<sup>270</sup> *ibid.*, iii, 164-5.

<sup>271</sup> Harris, *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca: Or, A Complete Collection of Voyages and Travels*, John Campbell (ed.) (London, 1744).

Men in this, or perhaps any other Nation ... the greatest and most considerable Body of Men undignified with Titles,”<sup>272</sup> to whom the author felt indebted. The sacred history described by Harris was transformed through this dedication into an explicitly commercial one, and the commercial raised to the level of sacred, when its author wrote that, through Harris’ introduction

we are taught, that the Separation and Dispersion of Mankind over the Earth, was owing to the just Displeasure of their Creator upon their attempting to lay the Foundations of an universal Monarchy ... But Reason and Experience shew, that we owe that Connection, which, at present, reigns between Countries far remote from each other, and that kind of Intercourse subsisting between different and distant Nations, to a Spirit of Commerce. Trade, by the Divine Favour, has effected what Ambition vainly endeavoured; and the Desire of carrying on mutual Traffick has overcome that Evil, which produced the Separation of Mankind; I mean the Confusion of Tongues. The Desire of reciprocally communicating the Fruits of various Soils and different Climates, is that Principle of Unity, which, agreeable to the Will of GOD, makes all the Inhabitants of the several Regions of the Globe, appear in these later Ages, what, in the earliest Times they were, but one People, and of one Language.

The author of this dedication drew links between ancient commerce and plantation, wealth, and, later, liberty. “As Riches and Commerce, [he wrote] so Commerce and Liberty are inseparable,”<sup>273</sup> grounded, as both were, in the attainment of property. Harris’ text had been transformed from a sacred history to a tract that celebrated the merchant class and internalized and announced the values of a globalized capitalist system that this class was in the business of creating.

The new version of the *Bibliotecha* thus expressed the ideological links between commerce and liberty that were joined through the institution of private property, and in doing so erased Harris’ sacred history and replaced it with a fully secular and commercial one. It also wrote over Harris and his contemporaries’ ambivalence about the question of ancient versus modern knowledge. In the new preface that followed the introduction, Campbell noted that the

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<sup>272</sup> “To the MERCHANTS of Great-Britain,” in *ibid.*

<sup>273</sup> *ibid.*



popularity of the voyage account as a “Branch of polite Literature” was due to the “Pleasure and Improvement” it afforded.<sup>274</sup> In particular, it allowed the reader to learn of customs and habits in foreign lands which ran contrary to accepted wisdom, “and thence discover the Folly of that Opinion which so long prevailed”<sup>275</sup> about the uninhabitable region about Hudson Bay, or the “Torrid Zone” of New Spain, for instance. Through the voyage account, “a modern Reader of Travels becomes, without Trouble or Fatigue, better acquainted with the true State of Things, and the real Condition of the Universe, and its Inhabitants, than the wisest of the antient Philosophers with all their Study and Thinking.”<sup>276</sup> Between the editions of Harris, the voyage account had become a literary genre, and the secular, mercantile class with its commercial and imperial ambitions had been recognized as the primary audience this new form of literature, at least as it was published in elaborate and expensive compendiums. Where the authors of histories at the turn of the century recognized a bibliographical tradition in which they wrote, and drew connections between the ancient past and modern present that negotiated the religious and commercial dynamics of English society at the end of the seventeenth century, Campbell remade not only Harris’ *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotecta*, but the entire genre of the voyage account, in the image of the merchant class, and in the image of a globalized commercial system. In doing so, he marked the triumph of modern over ancient knowledge in a manner that his predecessors could not. This triumph was not achieved through the navigational technologies outlined in the histories found in these compilations, but instead in the textual navigation they made possible. It was not, finally, the compass that marked the distinction between the ancients

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<sup>274</sup> Preface in *ibid.*

<sup>275</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>276</sup> *ibid.*

and moderns, but the “geographicall compass,” the textual device that provided the reader with knowledge of the world in the new age of capital.

### CHAPTER THREE: THE VARIATION OF THE COMPASS

The histories of navigation expressed through the compilations of voyage accounts published in the first decade of the eighteenth century were, I have argued, part of a repositioning of English culture as maritime in the wake of the successes of mercantile policy. They also placed an emphasis on the compass both as an important technological innovation and a marker of the superiority of modern over ancient knowledge. This was a superiority that, by 1744, was assumed in the repositioning of John Harris' *Navigantium Atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca* as a text that celebrated the knowledge that would be gained by reading the voyage account over the sum total of all ancient thinking. Harris himself was clearly invested in both ancient and sacred learning, evident in both the arguments he mounted against L.P. that were discussed in chapter one of this dissertation, and in the history of navigation that depended on sacred history discussed in chapter two. It is thus not likely that Harris would have approved of these changes. This in itself signals a profound shift in English and then British historical self-conception, in that the ancient and biblical history that had seemed so important to Harris and his contemporaries was, within the space of a few decades, swept away by the mercantile culture that works like the *Bibliotheca* heralded.

History, however, was not the only philosophical problem surrounding the compass. As fascinating as its past and as symbolic its journey from the ancient into the modern era was to those who wrote about it, it was primarily a tool for sailors and astronomers. But it was a tool

that held mysteries within. First amongst these was the phenomenon of magnetic variation – the difference between magnetic and true north as measured on a compass. Adding to the mystery was the variation of the variation over time and space, as the degree of variation was not constant. This mystery was deeply troubling both to members of the Royal Society and to sailors themselves, as it represented both a philosophical conundrum and a technical problem that, for many, appeared to be greater than that of accurately finding longitude at sea. Despite centuries of popular historical belief about the importance of longitude to British imperial expansion,<sup>277</sup> it was variation that most occupied members of the Royal Society at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

The “variation of the compass” was not solely a technical problem. As this chapter will show, its mysteries pushed sailor and Fellow of the Royal Society Edmund Halley into remarkable thought experiments about the internal structures of the earth, as well as a voyage around the Atlantic on a mission to map the variation and its variation. This phenomenon, which produced so much activity, and was recorded throughout voyage accounts into the nineteenth century, has been more or less elided by or seen as a problem subordinate to the discovery of longitude at sea in historical, as well as geographical and maritime consciousness. As both the work of Halley and the voyage accounts published by his peers demonstrate however, it was a problem in itself. The correlation of the discovery of longitude and the expansion of the British Empire in the second half of the eighteenth century has played no small part in this elision, and it is not my intention to argue that longitude was not a crucial factor in both the commissioning of Cook’s voyages, or in his success in navigating in high latitudes in the Pacific. Nevertheless, in order to understand how magnetic variation was understood (or not) by both members of the

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<sup>277</sup> See, for instance, Derek Howse, *Greenwich Time and the Longitude* (London, 1997) and Dava Sobel, *Longitude: The True Story of a Lone Genius Who Solved the Greatest Scientific Problem of His Time* (New York, 1995).

Royal Society and the sailors that published accounts of their voyages, it will help to look at how their ideas have been treated by historians in the twentieth century.

## THE CHURCHILLS, CRONE AND SKELTON, AND THE UTILITY OF THE VOYAGE ACCOUNT

The advantages to be gained by both navigation and the reading of voyage accounts were outlined in John and Awnsham Churchill's *Collection of Voyages and Travels* in 1704. The introduction, which involves a long history of navigation since the Great Flood, concluded that "After so long a Discourse of Voyages and Discoveries, it may seem superfluous to treat of the Advantages the Publick receives by Navigation."<sup>278</sup> Nevertheless, these advantages were treated, and include the improvements in cosmography, geography, and astronomy, natural and moral history, and of course trade. The introduction concludes that

These and many more are the Advantages drawn from the Labours of those, who expose themselves to the Dangers of the vast Ocean, and of unknown Nations; which those who sit still at home abundantly reap in every kind: and the Relation of one Traveller is an Incentive to stir up another to imitate him, whilst the rest of Mankind, in their accounts without stirring a foot, compass the Earth and Seas, visit all Countries, and converse with all Nations.<sup>279</sup>

The Churchills' *Collection* has been criticised and dismissed by historians eager to celebrate the achievements of Hakluyt over a century earlier. G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, for instance, argue that the audience for travel narratives shifted from the one specifically focused on

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<sup>278</sup> Churchills, i, lxviii. See chapter two of this dissertation for a detailed discussion of the history of the publication of this *Collection*.

<sup>279</sup> *ibid.*

expansion, and addressed by the likes of Hakluyt and Purchas, to a broader, more popular audience made of mostly of landed gentry and merchants, “enriched by the rapid expansion of British commerce, now become landed proprietors.”<sup>280</sup> Crone and Skelton rightly see the publication of Churchill in the context of a burgeoning popular market for travel literature, spurred by the best-selling success of Dampier’s *New Voyage round the World*.<sup>281</sup> For Crone and Skelton, however, this popular taste signified decadence; the shift from the hands of dedicated expansionists into this mercantile elite was deleterious, and “the effect of patronage on the more sumptuous travel literature was not less baleful than on architecture and other arts.”<sup>282</sup> Thus, to this popular taste

must be ascribed the eclecticism and amateurism which vitiate such a collection as Churchill's. Though rich in original material, it is difficult to use and wholly lacks the lucidity and singlemindedness of Hakluyt. One cannot but feel that it is designed rather to entertain the dilettanti than to further knowledge or action and that it has more in common with the miscellanies of the period than with the serious compilations of Hakluyt, Thevenot or even Purchas.<sup>283</sup>

Regardless of the seeming contradiction between praising the work of those focused on the commercial and territorial expansion of the English into the Americas and the East Indies in the Jacobethan period whilst condemning the work aimed at an audience comprised mainly of those who had profited from that expansion a century later, there are crucial facets of the Churchill text which can inform our understanding of the function of travel narratives, and especially the elaborate compilations of this supposedly decadent era.

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<sup>280</sup> G.R. Crone and R.A. Skelton, 'English Collections of Voyages and Travels, 1625-1846', in Lynham, Edward, *Richard Hakluyt & His Successors, A Volume Issued to Commemorate the Centenary of the Hakluyt Society*, (London, 1946), 78.

<sup>281</sup> William Dampier, *A New Voyage round the World*, (London, 1697).

<sup>282</sup> *ibid.*, 79.

<sup>283</sup> *ibid.*

*A Collection of Voyages and Travels* features a two-part introduction, comprised of the history of navigation mentioned above, and a “Catalogue and Character of most Books of Travels.”<sup>284</sup> For some time these tracts were attributed to John Locke and Edmund Halley respectively; Crone and Skelton, however, are convincing when they make the case that neither attribution is correct.<sup>285</sup> As Crone and Skelton point out, the Locke attribution was not made until the publication of the third edition in 1747, and, although Halley’s name appears of in the some advertisements for subscribers published in the three years before publication, it had disappeared from them by 1703, suggesting that, if Halley had been involved at some stage, his writing did not feature in the published text.

The “Catalogue and Character of most Books of Travels” commits the sin of being dismissive of Hakluyt’s work, lamenting that

The Collection is scarce and valuable for the good there is to be pick'd out; but it might be wish'd that the Author had been less voluminous, delivering what was really authentick and useful, and not stuffing his Work with so many Stories taken on trust, so many trading Voyages that have nothing new in them, so many Warlike Exploits not at all pertinent to his Undertaking, and such a multitude of Articles, Charters, Privileges, Letters, Relations, and other things little to the purpose of Travels and Discoveries.<sup>286</sup>

Crone and Skelton and the author of the Churchill catalogue level a similar criticism at their targets – Crone and Skelton at Churchill, Churchill at Hakluyt. In both cases, the critique is based around utility. Churchill is “difficult to use,” and Hakluyt would have been better to include the “really authentick and useful.” In both cases, the charge reveals shifting priorities and expectations amongst readers of travel accounts. For instance, the screeds of charters privileges to be found in Hakluyt were put there in order to make public English claims to overseas

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<sup>284</sup> “An Introductory Discourse, Containing, The whole History of Navigation from its Original to this time” and “A Catalogue and Character of most Books of Travels” in Churchill, ix-lxvii and lxvii-c.

<sup>285</sup> Crone and Skelton, 81-2.

<sup>286</sup> ‘Catalogue and Character of Most Books of Travels’, in Churchill, xvii.

territories. Churchill, on the other hand, was not interested in staking claims to territory but rather mapping out knowledge. It concentrated on the new and “authentick” where Hakluyt included not only accounts of regions that were already known, but also, in the early version of *Principall Navigations*, fanciful and fictional texts such as John Mandeville’s travels.<sup>287</sup> The single-mindedness that Crone and Skelton praise in Hakluyt was never likely to be found in a text like Churchill, which had much more in common with the expansive approach to knowledge of the encyclopedia that was to emerge over the course of the eighteenth century. What was useful for Churchill was new information about the world outside, whereas what was useful for Crone and Skelton was the text that expressed and advocated for English or British nationalism and expansionism. Crone and Skelton, writing in an assessment of Hakluyt’s legacy in the immediate wake of World War Two in a volume designed to celebrate the centenary of the Hakluyt Society, were invested in the vision of Hakluyt as an early English nationalist. This view of Hakluyt, as I note in the introduction to this dissertation, lingers in the historiography, and tends to view the genre of the voyage account within this framework of nationalism and imperialism. Where more recent scholars express their reservations about such a project, Crone and Skelton celebrate and defend it, even against eighteenth century critics. Thus, “the *pièces justificatives* with which Hakluyt supplemented his narratives of travel were to the pure geographer merely padding, whereas to Hakluyt and to us they round out his picture and enable it to be seen as a vital part of the life and history of the English people.” The author of the “Catalogue and Character of Most Books of Travel” failed to recognize the historical

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<sup>287</sup> Richard Hakluyt, ed., *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English nation, made by Sea or ouer Land, to the most remote and farthest distant Quarters of the earth at any time within the compasse of these 1500 yeeeres* (London, 1589), 25-80. The Mandeville travels were not included in the expanded 1599 version. See *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiqves and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea, or ouerland, to the remote and farthest distant quarters of the Earth, at any time with the compass of these 1600 yeeeres* (London, 1599).



significance of Hakluyt's work, and in his failure, according to Crone and Skelton, "his narrowness of outlook and consequent restriction of the field of view characterizes much of the travel literature of the eighteenth and indeed the nineteenth centuries."<sup>288</sup> Rather than view the Churchill text within its own historical context, Crone and Skelton seek to displace it – and indeed much work that followed it – from the canon of travel writing altogether.

Crone and Skelton write as apologists for Hakluyt, and seek to defend his legacy by insisting on the shortcomings of the Churchill text. The catalogue offers more than an interesting insight into eighteenth century tastes – it represents the beginning of the unjust denigration of Hakluyt's reputation. Nevertheless, despite their protestations, their concessions to the eighteenth century context as an explanation for Churchill's perceived shortcomings ring rather hollow.

To use a telling example, Skelton and Crone remark of the introduction that, "the writer, whose prose style is pedestrian, opens with a rambling account of ancient navigation. After referring to the invention of the magnetic compass, he becomes absurdly involved in a discussion of magnetic variation."<sup>289</sup> As the previous chapter of this dissertation has shown, rambling or not, the account of ancient navigation was directly connected to the concerns of its readership; reflective of early eighteenth-century taste but also part of a historiographical tradition that envisioned Britain as maritime and imperial. Likewise, the discussion of magnetic variation was no mere irrelevance. Rather, it was an exploration of an ongoing, perplexing question for members of the Royal Society as well as sailors. The variation of the compass was both a real navigational problem that created real dangers for sailors, and a philosophical mystery, which led thinkers to speculate about the earth and its structure, and the limits of knowledge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

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<sup>288</sup> Crone and Skelton, 79.

<sup>289</sup> *ibid.*, 82.

## THE VARIATION OF THE COMPASS AND THE CENTER OF THE WORLD

Magnetic variation was of course not a new problem in 1704. The phenomenon had been noted amongst European voyagers since the compass came into widespread use centuries earlier. In 1661, Thomas Philipot described the consequences of variation for mariners. He wrote that

The Magnetique Compass does not exactly point to the North in all Meridians, but varies and distorts itself (in some places more, in some less) for the direct posture, configuration, an aspect of the North and South, which multiplies and inforces the Sea-mans distractions, and enwraps him oftentimes in difficult and dangerous errors ... It is an affair of noble and active concernment, to the publique interest of every Nation, to have this invention of the Compass, either improv'd or rectified.<sup>290</sup>

Whilst well known by sailors for a long time, Henry Gellibrand “discovered” variation as a scientific phenomenon at Deptford in 1634.<sup>291</sup> As Stephen Pumfrey notes, it was not identified as a problem until that relatively late stage for a number of reasons. Principally, sailors would adjust their compasses through various methods in order to account for the variation, making systematic measurements of variation impossible. Further, variation was generally conflated in charts, and other measurements were taken as unreliable. According to Pumfrey, “Magnetic philosophy,” as the field was then known, became important in the early Restoration because of its relevance to “improvements in navigation, religio-cosmological arguments, and the ideology of natural knowledge,” all of which made its main practitioners “invest . . . heavily in making their ontology fit.”<sup>292</sup> The arguments, which centered around corpuscular, effluvial and

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<sup>290</sup> Thomas Philipot, *An Historical Discourse of the First Invention of Navigation. And The Additional Improvements of it. With The probable Causes of the Variation of the COMPASSE: And the Variation of the Variation. Likewise, of Admirall. To which is added a Catalogue of those Persons that have been from the first Institution Dignified with that Office*, (London, 1661), 10-11.

<sup>291</sup> Stephen Pumfrey, “O tempora, O magnes! A Sociological Analysis of the Discovery of Secular Magnetic Variation in 1634,” *The British Journal for the History of Science*, vol. 22, no. 2 (July, 1989), 181-214.

<sup>292</sup> Stephen Pumfrey, ‘Mechanizing Magnetism in Restoration England -- the Decline of Magnetic Philosophy’, *Annals of Science*, 44, (1986), 7-8.

mechanist properties in magnetism, declined from 1676, as debate became disordered and confused by numerous variables that led to despair over the possibility of ever finding the cause of variation.

Pumfrey argues that the role of magnets and magnetic variation in the art of navigation went through a similar decline as the abundance of evidence could not be reconciled with the degree of variation.<sup>293</sup> Prominent magnetic philosopher Robert Hooke, along with Edmund Halley, made what Pumfrey sees as last ditch attempts to revive a unified theory in the mid-1680s, but these came to nothing. Halley's published his speculations in *Philosophical Transactions*, in a paper entitled "A Theory of the Variation of the Magnetical COMPASS."<sup>294</sup> In this article, Halley postulated the existence of four magnetic poles, lying roughly north-south and east-west, so that the compass was varied according to its proximity to each pole. For Pumfrey, the last word on the subject came from Hooke, who in an address to Gresham College in 1686 lamented that magnetic variation's causes "are so far remov'd beyond the reach of our Senses, that the greatest part of Philosophers who have indeavour'd to give us an information thereof, have rather made us more sensible of our own Ignorance and Inability to do anything therein . . . [So that] when you come to inquire . . . to the bottom of it you find, that neither they nor we know what is meant, and we do as good as say 'tis so, because it is so . . ."<sup>295</sup>

Despite such despair, and despite Pumfrey finding an end to the practice of magnetic philosophy at that point, the attempts to resolve question nevertheless persisted, albeit in a less systematic fashion. Indeed, Halley published a follow-up to his 1683 paper in 1692. That paper

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<sup>293</sup> Pumfrey, 1986, 17-20.

<sup>294</sup> Edmund Halley, 'A Theory of the Variation of the Magnetical COMPASS', in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 13, (1683), 208-221.

<sup>295</sup> Quoted in Pumfrey, 1986, 21.

was entitled *An Account of the cause of the Change of the Variation of the Magnetic Needle; with an Hypothesis of the Structure of the Internal parts of the Earth*, and, as the title suggests, went considerably beyond the bounds of the 1683 text. As Norman Thrower says, Halley “noted that the alteration is a gradual and regular motion . . . He now suggested that the earth is composed of an outer shell and an inner globe, separated from each other by a fluid medium. The outer shell he postulated as rotating at a slightly greater rate than the nucleus and that both of these parts of the globe possessed two poles each, accounting for the four poles.”<sup>296</sup> Thrower suggests that the added layers of explanation that Halley required to fit his theory to observations brought to mind Ptolemaic astronomy and its increasingly complicated mathematical models needed to explain the geocentric astronomical system.<sup>297</sup>

Thrower is right to suggest that Halley’s model was increasingly complicated, not to say convoluted, but nevertheless he elides the fact that Halley’s model was not mathematical but architectural. Halley pointed out that

it cannot be well supposed that a very great part [of the terraqueous Globe] can move within . . . Without notably changing its Centre of Gravity and the Equilibre of its parts, which would produce very wonderful Effects in changing the Axis of Diurnal Rotation, and occasion strange alterations in the Sea’s Surface, by Inundations and Recesses thereof, such as History never yet mentioned. Besides, the solid parts of the Earth are not granted permeable by any other than fluid Substances, of which we know none that are any ways Magnetical.<sup>298</sup>

As Thrower describes, in order for this movement to take place Halley postulated that the center of Gravity was “fixt and immovable in the same common Centre of the Earth: And yet there is

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<sup>296</sup> Norman J.W. Thrower, ‘Edmond Halley as a Thematic Geo-Cartographer,’ in *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, vol. 59, no. 4 (Dec., 1969), 663.

<sup>297</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>298</sup> Halley, “An Account of the Cause of the Change of the Variation of the Magnetical Needle; With an Hypothesis of the Structure of the Internal Parts of the Earth: As It Was Proposed to the Royal Society in One of Their Late Meetings,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 16 (1692), 567.

required that this moving internal Substance be loose and detached from the external parts of the Earth, whereon we live; for otherwise were it affix'd thereto the whole must necessarily move together.”<sup>299</sup>

Halley's model described two poles fixed in the internal globe, two in the external globe, with the variation of the compass influenced by the fluctuations of their movements relative to one another. His description did not end there, however. He foresaw problems with the model that would need to be resolved in order to make it functional. Following a discussion of the precise geographical location of each pole, and an imprecation for “all Masters of Ship, and . . . Lovers of natural Truths” to make precise observations of magnetic variance,<sup>300</sup> Halley returned to the structural questions. Halley outlined the potential objections to his model:

That there is no instance in Nature of the like thing; That if there was such a middle Globe it would not keep its place in the Centre, but be apt to deviate there-from, and might possibly chock against the concave Shell . . . ; That the Water of the Sea would perpetually leak through, unless we suppose the Cavity full of Water; That were it possible yet it does not appear of what use such an inward Sphere can be of, being shut up in eternal Darkness, and therefore unfit for the Production of Animals or Plants.<sup>301</sup>

Halley answered these objections with a grand architectural vision. To the first, he responded that the rings of Saturn maintain equidistance from their centre without deviation, and a similar force of gravity may work on the inner nucleus. The leaking of water through the shell was resolved through a mechanism inspired by divine wisdom. Halley argued that “no Man can doubt but the Wisdom of the Creator has provided for the Macrocosm by many more ways than I can either imagine or express . . . Can we . . . think it a hard supposition that the Internal parts of this Bubble of Earth should be replete with such Saline and Vitriolick Particles as may contribute to

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<sup>299</sup> *ibid.*, 567-8.

<sup>300</sup> *ibid.*, 571.

<sup>301</sup> *ibid.*, 572.

petrification, and dispose the transnuding Water to shoot and coagulate into Stone, so as continually to fortifie, and if need were to consolidate any breach or flaw in the Concave Surface of the Shell.”<sup>302</sup>

Halley moved on from the sealing of the shell to its structural maintenance. Following Newtown’s *Principia Philosophiae*,<sup>303</sup> he determined that without some sort of internal structure, gravity would cause the shell to collapse over time. The shell was thus supported by arches, coated in magnetic material so that they defied the entropic effect of gravity.

The final objection to which Halley responded was the question of use: a question drawn from the Aristotelian and subsequently Christian belief that “nature made nothing in vain.” As Keith Thomas notes, “it was in the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that these arguments about the perfection of the Creator’s design reached their most fanciful.”<sup>304</sup> Halley’s response to the question of the usefulness of this internal world was fanciful indeed. Halley

allowed, that they can be of very little service to the Inhabitants of this outward World, nor can the Sun be serviceable to them, either with his Light or Heat. But since it is now taken for granted that the Earth is one of the Planets, and they are all with reason supposed Habitable ... and since we see all the parts of the Creation abound with Animate Beings ... all whose ways of living would be to us incredible did not daily Experience teach us. Why then should we think it strange that the prodigious Mass of Matter, whereof this Globe does consist, should be capable of some other improvement than barely to support its Surface?<sup>305</sup>

Halley went on to suggest that, as nothing can live without light, the arches were illuminated by some unknown means — a suggestion that he supported with appeals to the poetry of Virgil and

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<sup>302</sup> *ibid.*, 574.

<sup>303</sup> Isaac Newton, *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (London, 1687).

<sup>304</sup> Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World: A History of Modern Sensibility*, (London, 1983), 20.

<sup>305</sup> Halley, 1692, 575.

Claudian; an appeal “not to be esteemed as an Argument,” he wrote, “yet I may take the liberty I see others do, to quote the Poets when it makes for my purpose.”<sup>306</sup>

Halley’s explanation for the phenomenon of magnetic variation thus drew on an admixture of Newtonian physics and Aristotelian philosophy, underpinned by a religious design. Within these intellectual contexts, as well as a tradition of descriptions of the hollow earth, Halley sought answers to a problem that had both scientific implications and practical consequences for navigators. In doing so, he created a new, internal world of arches, light and subterranean creatures.

#### **MAGNETIC VARIATION AND AN ACCOUNT OF SEVERAL LATE VOYAGES**

This question of magnetic variation found its way into *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, which was published two years after Halley’s speculations appeared in *Philosophical Transactions*. Writing anonymously in its introduction, Tancred Robinson said that, in voyages to the South Seas and through the East Indies, “common things noted in the several Voyages (beside the Winds, Longitudes, Latitudes, Variations of the Compass, Tydes, Soundings &c.) are Flying Fishes, Dolphins, Albacores, Bonito’s, Sharks, Tropick Birds, The Sea Weeds called Saraso and Tromba,” and a list of numerous other flora and fauna.<sup>307</sup> Later, Robinson praised “the ingenious Captain Thomas James,” who was commanded by Charles the First to publish his voyage in 1633, “wherein he gives a very accurate and judicious Account of the hardships both

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<sup>306</sup> *ibid.*, 576.

<sup>307</sup> [Tancred Robinson], “Introduction,” *An Account of Several Late Voyages to the South and North*, (London: 1694) xiii-xiv.

in going, wintering, returning; as also of the Streights, Capes, Bays, Tydes, Soundings, Variation of the Compass, and of the Natural Rarities both Philosophical and Mathematical, together with a Plat or Card, and divers Tables.”<sup>308</sup> As might be expected, the question of magnetic variation was found alongside other standard measurements such as longitude and latitude, and yet it also found company with the mysteries and wonders of the New World, both philosophical and animal.

Robinson offered no further comment on the issue, but magnetic variation nevertheless featured throughout the compilation. Sir John Narborough consistently noted the variation alongside latitude and longitude during his voyage to the Straits of Magellan. Upon arriving at the Straits, four of Narborough’s men were kidnapped by the Spanish and held in their fortifications. Narborough sent them a letter in prison, instructing them to gather intelligence on Spanish fortifications and resources. The Spanish, rather unsportingly, opened it. As this episode unfolded, Narborough interrupted his narrative to ponder the phenomenon of variation.

I do much reason with my self as to the Variation [he wrote], that it differs so much in the same Latitude, between the East and West-side of the Land of *America*: . . . I was of the Opinion that the Variation would have been Westerly on the West-side, it being Easterly on the East-side: but I find the contrary by experience; therefore I believe that the attractive quality is not much in this part of *America*, but in some other part more to the Eastward than I was; . . . This Discourse I leave to a better Understanding; for I am not as yet satisfied what occasioneth the variation and the great difference of it, although I have been on several Voyages, and have made great benefit of the Understanding of the variation of the Compass, in directing of the true Course, &c.<sup>309</sup>

Narborough’s lament ended there, but the theme of variation continued throughout *An Account of Several Late Voyages*. The brief introduction to the reproduction of the part of Abel Tasman’s journal concerned with his encounter at Golden Bay in New Zealand described it as “A Relation

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<sup>308</sup> *ibid.*, xxv.

<sup>309</sup> John Narborough, “Voyage to the Streights of Magellan,” in *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, 105-6.



of a Voyage made towards the South Terra Incognita . . . By which not only a new Passage by Sea to the Southward of Nova Hollandia, Van Diemens Land, &c. is discovered, and a vast space of Land and Sea encompassed and sailed round, but many considerable and instructive Observations concerning the variation of the Magnetical Needle in parts of the Worlds almost Antipodes to us.”<sup>310</sup>

Likewise, in his account of the reasoning that led him to launch his ill-fated expedition in search of a North-East Passage, John Wood described a hypothesis that he had framed

of the motion of the two Magnetical Poles, for two such there be; and by the Observations of all, or most that writ of that Subject, with my own Observation, and costly Experiment upon a great many Places of the Superficies of the Terrestrial Globe; I having found out their Motion very near, and thereby the Inclination of the Magnetical Needle under the Horizon, in all Latitudes, and all Longitudes; and the Variation of the Compass may be found in any place in this World, without assistance of any other Luminary. But not being so fully satisfied as I might be, if I could come so near the Pole as was supposed, it prompted my Inclination, as far as any other Argument whatever, to Attempt this voyage.<sup>311</sup>

The announcement of the publication of *An Account of Several Late Voyages* in *Philosophical Transactions* laconically stated that, “being Wract upon *Nova Zembla* ... [Wood] was discouraged from further inquiries” into the existence of the north-east passage, but nevertheless “gives an Ingenious Description of that Desolate *Land*, and many Instances of his Generous Designs to Improve and Illustrate the dark *Phaenomena* of the *Magnet*.”<sup>312</sup>

Although they were published later and with Halley’s work on magnetic variation in mind, it is worth noting at this point that each of these voyages took place many years before Halley

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<sup>310</sup> *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, 131.

<sup>311</sup> Capt. John Wood, “Relation of a Voyage for the Discover of a Passage by the North-East,” in *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, 151.

<sup>312</sup> “Account of Books: An Account of Several Late Voyages and Discoveries to the South and North towards the Streights of Magellan, the South Seas, the Vast Tracts of Land beyond Hollandia Nova, etc. Also towards Nova Zembla, Greenland or Spitsberg, Groynland or Engronland, etc. by John Narborough ; Jasmien Tasman ; John Wood ; Frederick Marten,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 18 (1694), pp. 168.

imagined his hollow earth. It is nevertheless significant that the editor, reviewer and the authors of these voyage accounts picked out variation for special consideration. Textually, it found a home with the flying fish and other creatures of the exotic, newly discovered world, it was used in several places to recommend the work to an audience, and it was a source of mystery and even bewilderment for sailor, writer and reader.

### MAGNETIC VARIATION AND THE ROCKS OF REPROACH

Five years after the publication of *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, Halley commenced a voyage to the South Atlantic with the purpose of investigating the phenomenon of variation. This voyage has been described as “the first sea journey undertaken for a purely scientific object,”<sup>313</sup> and resulted in a chart that was further developed in a subsequent voyage from 1701.<sup>314</sup> Halley then gave up his naval command to engage in diplomatic missions to various European courts. His occupation in these missions is one reason given in the argument against his authorship of the “Catalogue and Character of most Books of Travels” in the 1704 Churchills text mentioned near the beginning of this chapter.<sup>315</sup>

The evidence for Halley’s non-involvement in the production of Churchills is convincing, but the discussion of the magnetic variation found in the Churchill introduction is far from absurd when considered in the context of the scientific work going on at the time, and the other voyage accounts that were available on the London book market. The anonymous author of the

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<sup>313</sup> S. Chapman "Edmond Halley as Physical Geographer and the Story of his Charts," *Occasional Notes of the Royal Astronomical Society*, no. 9 (1941), footnote 13, 5, quoted in Thrower, 663.

<sup>314</sup> Thrower, 673.

<sup>315</sup> Crone and Skelton, 82.

Churchill's introduction describes magnetic variation as a mystery almost as great as magnetism itself

the cause of this Variation [he wrote] some Philosophers ascribe to Magnetical Mountains, some to the Pole it self, some to the Heavens, and some to a Magnetical Power even beyond the Heavens; but these are all blind Guesses, and fond Ostentations of Learning without any thing in them to convince ones Reason. There is nothing of it certain but the Variation it self. Nor is this Variation alone, there is a Variation of the Variation, a subject to be handled by none but such as have made it a peculiar Study, and which deserving a peculiar Volume is daily expected from a most able Pen.<sup>316</sup>

Though not as technical, nor as wedded to the principles of observing and recording data at sea that were being argued for by the Royal Society in various pamphlets and through books such as *Account of Several Late Voyages*, the treatment of magnetic variation was similar and engaged with scientific discourse: it was, in Churchill, an phenomenon that could not be accounted for, could only be speculated about; bewildering, unknowable, mysterious.

And dangerous.

In 1700 there appeared in *Philosophical Transactions* an "Advertisement Necessary for all Travellers Bound up the English Channel," which warned of the number of ships mistakenly falling to the north of the Isles of Scilly, thus heading up the Bristol Channel or Severn Sea, endangering themselves and in many cases wrecking. The cause, said the advertisement, was the variation of the compass. The latitudes of Scilly and Lizard had been recorded incorrectly in most sea charts, which while the variation was to the east was unimportant. Since it had moved to the west, it needed to be compensated for. The solution was to sail further south and thus compensate for the variation.<sup>317</sup>

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<sup>316</sup> "An Introductory Discourse Containing the whole History of Navigation from its Original to this time," in Churchill, vol 1, xvi-xvii. It is likely that the "most able Pen" was Halley. See Crone and Skelton, 82.

<sup>317</sup> "An Advertisement Necessary for All Navigators Bound up the Channel of England," *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 22 (1700 - 1701), pp. 725-726. The notice was also published by Samuel Smith and Benjamin Walford, presumably in order

This example is significant because, in 1707, the HMS Association wrecked on the Isles of Scilly, sinking in three or four minutes and taking Cloudesly Shovell and 800 of his men with it. Four ships and 2000 men were lost that night, and in 1724 Daniel Defoe, in his fictional *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain*, was to describe the “Rocks of Scilly,” of which, what is most famous, is their Infamy, or Reproach,” and shed a tear for Shovell, “and all the gallant spirits that were with him at one blow, and without a moment’s warning dash’d into a State of Immortality.”<sup>318</sup> In the mean time, the Scilly naval disaster “was to dramatically emphasize the necessity of finding a means of determining longitude at sea.”<sup>319</sup> Indeed, the standard explanation for the 1707 disaster in modern historiography maps neatly onto the problems attributed to magnetic variation in the *Advertisement*, with the only difference being that longitude, not variation, caused the initial mistake.<sup>320</sup> Nevertheless, just seven years before this incident, the question of wrecking at Scilly, when it arose, was put down to magnetic variation. Longitude was not mentioned. Indeed, the problem of finding longitude was still subordinate to the question of variation for Halley in 1715, despite the passing of the Longitude Act in the previous year. His “Remarks on the Variations of the Magnetical Compass Published in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences” took pride in the French Royal Academy’s affirmation of his 1701 chart. He saw no reason to amend his four-polar, hollow earth, and

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to reach those sailors that did not subscribe to the *Philosophical Transactions*. See *An Advertisement Necessary for All Navigators Bound up the Channel of England. Communicated by a Fellow of the Royal Society* (London, 1701),

<sup>318</sup> Daniel Defoe, *Tour Thro' the Whole Island of Great Britain* (London, 1724), 118-119. For Defoe, Scilly represented the “*Excessences of the Island*.” The large number of shipwrecks had, according to Defoe, meant that the people had turned towards beachcombing for profit, as the remains of shipwrecks, from casks to dead bodies, washed up onto the shore with the tide. This grim practice had created “a fierce and ravenous People; for they are so greedy, and eager for the Prey, that they are charg’d with strange, bloody, and cruel Dealings, even sometimes with one another; but especially with poor distress’d Seamen when they on Shore by force of a Tempest, and seek help for their Lives, and where they find the Rocks themselves not more merciless than the People who range about them for their Prey.” Defoe, 118, 120.

<sup>319</sup> Thrower, 664.

<sup>320</sup> See, for instance, N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649—1815* (New York, 2006), 173.

expressed hopes that he had “laid the foundation for the Future Discovery of an Invention, that will be of wonderful Use to Mankind when perfected; I mean that of the Law or Rule by which the said Variations change, in Appearance regularly, all the World over.”<sup>321</sup> Halley then went on to argue his case for those points at which the French had taken issue with his measurements for variation, and ended with a discussion of the longitude of the entry to the Magellan Straits. He drew his evidence for his location from the journals of Narborough and Wood, who had been with Narborough on the voyage to Patagonia before making his own to the northeast. Although Halley’s argument reveals the difficulty of confirming any location with geographical precision in the early-eighteenth century, the latter parts concerned with longitude were far from his focus, and his hopes were pinned on a method for predicting variation, not finding longitude. This remained a concern as charts and observations regarding variation continued to be published in *Philosophical Transactions*. It was over the course of the 1720s that articles establishing longitude at various locations around the globe began to supplant variation in prominence.<sup>322</sup>

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<sup>321</sup> Edmond Halley, “Some Remarks on the Variations of the Magnetical Compass Published in the Memoirs of the Royal Academy of Sciences, with Regard to the General Chart of Those Variations Made by E. Halley; As Also concerning the True Longitude of the Magellan Streights,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 29 (1714-1716), 165.

<sup>322</sup> See, for instance, Edmund Halley and Pere Feuillée, *The Longitude of Buenos Aires, Determin'd from an Observation Made There by Pere Feuillée*. By Edm. Halley LL. D. Astronomer Royal, and F. R. S., *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 32 (1722 - 1723), pp. 2-4; Edmund Halley, “Observations on the Eclipse of the Moon, June 18, 1722. and the Longitude of Port Royal in Jamaica Determined Thereby. By Dr. Halley, Astronomer Royal, F.R.S.” in *ibid.*, 235-236; Edmund Halley, “The Longitude of Carthagenia in America. By the Same,” in *ibid.*, 237-238; James Bradley, “The Longitude of Lisbon, and the Fort of New York, from Wansted and London, Determin'd by Eclipses of the First Satellite of Jupiter. By the Reverend Mr. James Bradley, M. A. Astron. Prof. Savil. R. S. S.” in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 34 (1726 - 1727), 85-90; George Lynn, “A Method for Determining the Geographical Longitude of Places, from the Appearance of the Common Meteors, Called Falling Stars, Proposed by George Lynn, Esq; of Southwick, Northampton-Shire, in a Letter to Dr. Jurin, R. S. & Coll. Med. Soc,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 35 (1727 - 1728), pp. 351-353; and Edmund Halley, “A Proposal of a Method for Finding the Longitude at Sea within a Degree, or Twenty Leagues. By Dr. Edmund Halley, Astr. Reg. Vice-President of the Royal Society. With an Account of the Progress He Hath Made Therein, by a Continued Series of Accurate Observations of the Moon, Taken by Himself at the Royal Observatory at Greenwich,” in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 37, (1731-1732), pp. 185-195. Despite this increased focus on longitude, magnetic variation remained a problem, and publications continued. See, for instance, Christopher Middleton, *A New and Exact Table, Collected from Several Observations, Taken in Four Voyages to Hudson's Bay in North America from London: Shewing the Variation of the Magnetical Needle, or Sea Compass, in the Path-Way to the Said Bay, According to the Several Latitudes and Longitudes, from the Year 1721, to 1725* By Mr. Christopher Middleton” in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 34 (1726-1727), pp. 73-76; William Sanderson and Capt. Soame,

Far from being viewed as a potential tool for helping to find longitude at sea, the variation of the compass was a problem in and of itself, and the source of a great deal of anxiety and speculation for scholars, sailors and readers of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. The evidence for this is to be found both in the work of the natural philosophers of the Royal Society as well as the books that brought news of the world and of English voyages to the reading public. Although longitude plays a key role in the narrative of English imperialism, it is worth pausing to consider one of the problems that has fallen by the wayside, yet was of considerable significance at a key moment in the history of voyaging. Finding longitude at sea was a technical problem to be solved; the variation of the compass was both a practical question with serious consequences and a philosophical one that made its way into the early literature of the empire, and invited speculation about the physical structure of the world, the role of God in it, and often ended in acknowledgment of man's incapacity to solve the mystery.<sup>323</sup>

The mystery has since been eclipsed in the historical imagination by the solving of longitude at sea, which coincided with British expansion into the Pacific and the ascent of the British Empire.<sup>324</sup> Nevertheless, by reviving magnetic variation as a problem to be taken seriously, we can gain insights into the questions that preoccupied Halley, and, through those questions, the thought processes of a sailor and natural philosopher concerned both with

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"Observations upon the Variation of the Needle Made in the Baltick, Anno 1720. By Mr. William Sanderson. Communicated by Capt. Soame," in *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 31 (1720-1721), p. 120.

<sup>323</sup> This argument echoes that of Nicolás Wey-Gómez, who in his discussion of the geographical thought that lay behind Columbus' voyages of 1492, notes that "we tend to construe the problem of Columbus' latitudes as a technical one involving the *art* of navigation rather than as a philosophical problem involving the *sciences* that came to surround the concept of latitude during the late medieval and early modern periods." As with Columbus' voyage to the south and its implications for theories of human development and cosmography, so with the technical problem of longitude and the philosophical problem of magnetic variation. See Wey-Gómez, Nicolás, *The Tropics of Empire: Why Columbus Sailed South to the Indies* (Cambridge, MA, 2008), 44.

<sup>324</sup> See Daniel A. Baugh, "Seapower and Science: The Motives for Exploration" in Howse, ed., *Background to Discovery: Pacific Exploration from Dampier to Cook* (Berkeley, 1990). Baugh argues that the 120-year gap between Tasman's Cook's voyages of exploration is to be explained not by technological deficiency, but by the declining interest in maritime expansion on the part of the Spanish and Dutch.

maritime safety and the structures of the earth. As with Harris' attempts to think through the migration from Mount Ararat to the New World following the subsidence of the Flood, which seemed quixotic even to the editor of the posthumous edition of his compendium of voyage accounts, Halley's model of the internal structure of the earth is a window into a worldview that is lost in the historiography surrounding the "race for longitude." This worldview emphasized the utility of all things, and in doing so drew on ancient thought as it sought to resolve the very modern problem of expansion into the New World. The voyage account, as the "geographical compass," not only supplied some of the raw material for Halley's quest to resolve this mystery, it also shed some light on how officers aboard ships perceived magnetic variation, and connected the voyages over the surface of the earth to the mysteries within.

## CHAPTER FOUR: THE SEAMAN'S COMPASS

As the previous chapter has argued, The significance of magnetic variation as a philosophical and practical difficulty in early modern navigation should not be ignored, especially for what it can tell us about the preoccupations of the Royal Society and their real links with seafarers. It was, of course, far from the only practical difficulty in long-range navigation. In order to sail a ship, one required sailors, and those sailors required food. Supplying and storing that food was an expensive prospect; as N.A.M Rodger notes, “of all the administrative difficulties of getting a fleet to sea, [victualing] was probably the most intractable.”<sup>325</sup> The expense of supplying the food required to keep sailors alive through constant physical labor was complicated by the difficulties of preserving food for long periods of time. The bodies of sailors were a problem.

This problem notwithstanding, for the Royal Navy as well as private merchants, sailors were largely invisible to the society whose wellbeing their labor supplied. Rodger argues that throughout history “seamen ... dwelt on the fringes of society.” Despite their familiarity with sailors in towns, Englishmen in the eighteenth century knew little of their working practices or of their lives aboard the “wooden world” of the ship.<sup>326</sup> It was these working lives and the extraordinary physical labor their jobs required that made victualing their ships an especially

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<sup>325</sup> N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Great Britain, 1996), 82.

<sup>326</sup> *ibid.*, 15.



awesome challenge, but this labor happened offshore, in the regions that were geographically marginal to English society. As Rodger notes, “the shipboard world was probably less well-known to men of education than the remote countries described in the travel books then so popular, or the remote ages on whose history they were brought up.”<sup>327</sup> Rodger is talking about the period of the Seven Years War, which took place soon after the end point of this dissertation; nevertheless, his comments apply as much to the beginning of the eighteenth century as the middle. Even if, as he suggests, the cultures of the navy may have been very different between the 1690s and the 1750s,<sup>328</sup> the relative invisibility of sailors within English society was constant. This chapter will turn to the contemporary role of sailors in the voyage account, and ask in what circumstances sailors were visible figures within the texts, and what kinds of knowledge of their lives circulated amongst the readers of these accounts.

Rodger notes the apparent disjunction between the invisibility of the sailors’ working lives and the popularity of travel books in the eighteenth century. There was one notable exception to this, however: the sailor-as-author. Over the first half of the eighteenth century, the sailor-as-author of the account developed into a kind of literary celebrity that became especially marked in satires and other fictional accounts. Before the likes of Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe made literary mileage out of fictional travels, however, this role was taken up and in important ways invented by William Dampier. Indeed, the emergence of the sailor-as-author is exemplified by the best-selling success of Dampier. As noted in the introduction to this dissertation, Philip Edwards takes Dampier as the founder of a popular, best-selling genre concerned with the

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<sup>327</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>328</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

“indissoluble and unstable link between the writer, the world, and the work.”<sup>329</sup> As the previous chapters have shown, prior to Dampier the publication and use of voyage accounts was not necessarily based on this particular relationship, but instead it often drew on scientific, religious, and imperial concerns in which the question of who was the “writer” was embedded in early modern conceptions of authority and civility. These concepts underpinned discussions of the reliability of the text as measured in the textual realm; that is, in the comparison between ancient authorities and modern experiences. They also underpinned the question of who could write an account of a voyage, and led their readers to ask: could the common sailor speak? The question was a multifaceted one, and, as I shall argue in this chapter, the key assumptions that lay behind it underwent a profound shift over the first three decades of the eighteenth century. The voyage account was a key genre in which this shift took place as, especially in the English texts, the sailor emerged as a distinct kind of literary figure, whose relationship to English society helped develop a particular kind of literary voice. This relationship was marginal.<sup>330</sup> The sailor, through his relationship to the labor systems of the early modern European, Atlantic, and global economies, his experiences at the margins of Empire, and most especially through the food he consumed, was, in the 1690s, an outsider to the norms of authority and civility that governed early modern reading practices. By the mid-1720s, however, the sailor had emerged both as a

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<sup>329</sup> Philip Edwards, *The Story of the Voyage: Sea-Narratives in Eighteenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1994), 6.

<sup>330</sup> The subject of selfhood at sea is treated extensively by Jonathan Lamb in *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840*. Although his sweeping analysis is in many ways compelling, the conflation of real and fictional accounts, the lack of distinction between the officers who were for the most part writing the early accounts and the common sailors being discussed in this chapter, and the lack of concern for the nature and structure of the book market on which these accounts were sold in favor of the generalized market in which all commodities circulated leaves space for a more precise analysis of the literary conditions through which sailors became known to readers. This leads to conclusions that are in many ways at odds with his arguments for the destabilizing effect of voyaging on the self. Additionally, his invoking of John Locke as the author of the introduction to the Churchills *Collection*, as well as his emphasis on the shift toward scientific enquiry on voyages at the time of James Cook and Philip Carteret rather than the post-Restoration, suggest other grounds for revision. See Jonathan Lamb, *Preserving the Self in the South Seas, 1680-1840* (Chicago, 2001), esp. Chapters 2 and 3.

figure with a biographical history, and a literary style that asserted the veracity of his words because of, rather than in spite of, his marginal existence. Through the intersection of naval policy documents, medical literature, and close reading of the accounts themselves, this chapter will show how the “geographical compass” became also the seaman’s compass.

### THE PROBLEM OF CIRCUMNAVIGATION: MAGELLAN AND HIS MEN

The discussion of the relationship between the account, the sailor and the author begins with the first circumnavigation. It was usually the case that in geographical and navigational tracts, as well as in voyage accounts, Ferdinand Magellan’s navigation of the globe was recognized as the first during the second half of the seventeenth century. Robert Hues’ *Learned Treatise of Globes* (1659) briefly relates the voyage of “the Ship called *Victory*, wherein *Ferdinand Magellan*, losing from *Spaine*, and directing his course towards the South-West parts, passed through the Straights, called since by his name, and so touching upon the *Cape of good hope*, haveing compassed the whole World about, returned again into *Spain*.”<sup>331</sup> The apparent subject of this brief narrative is the *Victoria*, but the construction of the sentences that followed confused the *Victoria* with Magellan himself. One could be forgiven for thinking, having read these sentences, that Magellan himself returned to Spain. This impression was also given in Joseph Glanville’s *Plus Ultra*. Glanville mentioned, in the course of criticizing the Ancients’ geographical knowledge of the world beyond the Mediterranean, that “the *Earth* hath been *rounded* by

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<sup>331</sup> Robert Hues, *A Learned Treatise of Globes: Both Coelestiall and Terrestriall: with their several uses* (London, 1659), preface.

*Magellan, Drake, and Candish.*”<sup>332</sup> Likewise, the booksellers’ preface to *An Account of Several Late Voyages* noted that Magellan “was the first that passed from the *Atlantick* into the *Pacifick Ocean*, and so round the Globe home again by the *Molucco’s* and *Cape of Good Hope*, having spent above three years in this Circumnavigation.”<sup>333</sup>

As John Evelyn noted, however, Magellan did not circumnavigate the globe. He pointed out in *Navigation and Commerce* that Drake was “the First of any Mortal, to whom God vouchsafed the stupendious Atchievement of Encompassing, not this *New-World* alone, but *New and Old* together ... for *Magellan* being slain at the *Manilias*, was interrupted in his intended Course, and left the Exploit to *Sebastian Camus* his Collegue.”<sup>334</sup> Between Hues and Evelyn we get an interesting glimpse into the relationship between the voyage and the author, which should more accurately be described as the relationship between the voyage and its authority. For Hues, Magellan was the first to circumnavigate the globe because his ship, the *Victoria*, was the first. Magellan’s death is irrelevant. The conflation of captain and ship is evident in the confusion of subjects, so that in the passage quoted above it is unclear if it was Magellan or his ship that achieved the circumnavigation. Neither Glanville nor Robinson ventured an opinion on the question, except to state that Magellan rounded the globe, and that, for Robinson, he was first. For Evelyn, the question was clear-cut. Magellan did not survive the circumnavigation, therefore Drake was the first. Amid his national pride, the idea that there were eighteen men on the *Victoria* that did survive the voyage and thus circumnavigated the globe does not appear to have

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<sup>332</sup> Joseph Glanville, *Plus Ultra: Or, the Progress and Advancement of KNOWLEDGE Since the Days of Aristotle. In an Account of some of the most Remarkable LATE IMPROVEMENTS OF Practical, Useful Learning: To Encourage Philosophical Endeavours. Occasioned By a Conference with one of the NOTIONAL Way* (London, 1668), 49.

<sup>333</sup> [Sir Tancred Robinson, (ed.)], *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, vi.

<sup>334</sup> John Evelyn, *Navigation and Commerce, Their Original and Progress* (London, 1674), 57-8. See also Jonathan Scott, 2011, 33-34, for a discussion of the relationship between Drake’s voyage and the paucity of England’s sea power in the sixteenth century.

entered into Evelyn's thinking. Instead, "Sebastian Camus," whom we know as Juan Sebastián Elcano, along with other seventeen survivors, was discounted from this achievement. Harris, in his account of Magellan's circumnavigation in *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, likewise concluded that "thus have we seen the *Spanish Ships* putting a Girdle half round the Globe; we shall now see our *English* ones finish what they had begun, making both Ends of it perfectly meet together."<sup>335</sup> These examples suggest that there was, in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, a relationship between the sailor, the ship, the voyage, and the account, in which each was easily conflated with the other. When Evelyn considered the first navigation, the honor of being first belonged only to the captain. The voyage was conflated with the captain, who was both the authority on board the ship, and the authority that gave the voyage credibility to its readers. The continuity with John Narborough's account in the first chapter is clear. Where the multiple authors of Narborough's account were conflated into the authority figure of Narborough himself, so Magellan's voyage was conflated under his name. He did not survive the circumnavigation, and so none of his men were credited with it. Drake did, and so, for Evelyn, he was the first.

The experience of Magellan demonstrated the practical difficulties of voyaging, as well as the problems of authority and authorship that underpinned the account of the voyage. In addition to an ambiguous claim to being "first" to circumnavigate the globe, Magellan's voyage was famous for the hardships endured by its crew, and the hunger and sickness they suffered. In many accounts of the voyage, it was in the throes of this suffering that Magellan's crew was able to exercise agency outside of the hierarchal authority structure of the ship. In *Navigantium*, for

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<sup>335</sup> John Harris, 'The Voyage of Ferdinandus Magliances, the first Compleat Circum-navigator, and Discoverer of the Straits, (from him called Magellanick.) Taken from Antony Pigasetta, an Italian of Vicenza, and one that assisted in this Voyage,' in *Navigantium atque Itinerantium Bibliotheca*, (1705) 1, 19.

instance, Harris began with a short biography of Magellan, who, in being spurned by the Portuguese king, “gave himself up wholly to be guided by his own revengeful discontented Thoughts.”<sup>336</sup> After offering his services to Charles V of Spain, Magellan proposed a “New Method of Discovery,” and took charge of a fleet of five ships.<sup>337</sup> From the commencement of the voyage, Harris conflated Magellan and his crew into one collective pronoun: “They” set sail,<sup>338</sup> “they” encountered a Patagonian giant;<sup>339</sup> “they staid” in Port St. Julian;<sup>340</sup> This collective pronoun was disrupted when Magellan briefly re-entered the narrative as “they light upon the entrance into the *Streights*.”<sup>341</sup> Here, Magellan was “surpriz’d with a Joy that exceeded all common bounds and measures, for this was the thing he look’d for.”<sup>342</sup> Harris took this moment where Magellan’s authority was once again separated from the collective of the fleet as humorous. Magellan named the entrance to the Streights “*Cape Desiderato*; but it seems ‘twas not so desirable to all the rest of the company, for here one of the Ships stole away and sail’d homewards by her self.”<sup>343</sup>

This amounted to a disruption of the collective, first where Magellan once again assumed a character and then when one of the ships abandoned the fleet. Its reformation was accompanied by the first instance of hunger. “They” sailed in the “wide rambling Ocean” of the Pacific for three months and 20 days:

The miseries they endured for want of Provision, a good part of this time, were such as are seldom heard of. The fresh Water they had aboard stunk and was very loathsome; all their Bread was gone, and nothing left to eat but Skins and pieces of hard Leather. Nature will

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<sup>336</sup> *ibid.*, 12.

<sup>337</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>338</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>339</sup> *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>340</sup> *ibid.*, 14.

<sup>341</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>342</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>343</sup> *ibid.*

make any shift, tho' ever so hard and poor, to bear her self out in a distress, when 'tis possible to be done; and the poor Seamen here, rather than starve, fell very greedily to work upon those dry tough pieces of Leather that were folded about the Ropes of their Ships. But it being impossible to eat them till they were some way soften'd and fitted for chewing, they laid them asleep in Salt Water for some days, and then made the best of them as long as they lasted. But then again, what with this impure sort of feeding, which was short and scanty too, and the daily impoverishment of their Spirits wanting better Recruits, their numbers lessened apace: some died outright, others fell into pining Sickness, others had their Gums that grew quite over their Teeth on every side; by which means, being totally unable to manage those tough solids they were forc'd to feed upon, they were past all help, and so miserably starved to death.<sup>344</sup>

Here, the collective pronoun of the fleet broke down, and “they” became “seamen,” suffering collective and individual miseries and indignities as their wooden world was consumed by a famine brought on by the vastness of the “Pacifick Sea.” The collective was soon restored to the fleet, and only broke down again towards the end of the narrative, when Magellan was killed. At the same time “8 or 9 of his Men were slain ... but *Maglianes's* Body could not be redeem'd at any rate,” and “*Odoardo Barbosa a Portugueze, and Johannes Serrano*” were appointed to succeed him.<sup>345</sup> Following the death of Magellan and the last leg toward the Molucca's, the crew stayed at another island for “40 days caulking their Ships, and furnishing them with fresh Water and Fuel; they were forc'd to Work barefoot, their Shooes being quite worn out [sic].”<sup>346</sup> In resupplying the ship, the crew foraged for food, and it was at this moment that Antony Pigassetta, the author of the account that Harris was paraphrasing in *Navigantium*, was named individually as he discovered an animal that resembled a mulberry leaf. As with a few scattered incidences where Magellan was singled out as “the Admiral” when he named a landmark, Pigassetta was identified in the moment of discovery — in this instance, this moment of discovery of an exotic

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<sup>344</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>345</sup> *ibid.*, 17.

<sup>346</sup> *ibid.*

creature was closely linked with the search for food. The paragraph concluded with a description of the edible animals to be found on that particular island.

The circumnavigation ended with yet more suffering for lack of food, and yet more breaking down of the collective “they” of what remained of the crew of the *Victory*. Passing the Cape of Good Hope, the sailors found themselves “smartly pinch’d with Hunger, and Sick too, some of them were for putting in at *Mozambique*, for a little Refreshment; but the major part of the *Company* concluding, that the *Portuguese*, who were there, wou’d prove but untoward Physicians for their Distempers, they resolv’d to sail homewards.”<sup>347</sup> After the loss of a further 21 of the crew, “they were forc’d to throw themselves upon the Mercy of the *Portuguese*: For in the Ship was Famine, and certain Death; and tho’ ashoar there were armed Enemies, yet here they had a Chance for their Lives, which in other Circumstance they had not.”<sup>348</sup>

Following the return of the remaining crew members to Spain, the Magellan Straits were named after their discoverer, and “John Sebastian Cabot” was singled out in the account and rewarded by the emperor for commanding the ship on its return from the Moluccas.<sup>349</sup> Harris’ recounting of Magellan’s voyage thus continued its practice of individualizing its actors at moments of discovery or heroism. For the purposes of this argument, it is those other moments, noted above, where the collective of the crew was broken down, not necessary into individuals, but at least into different parts, which held different opinions or suffered different kinds of deaths, that are important. The crew entered into Harris version of events as subjects — rather than a collective that leaves, stays, arrives, and sees — at moments in which food, and the lack of it, was foremost in the narrative. The detailed and gruesome account of starvation in the Pacific

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<sup>347</sup> *ibid.*, 18.

<sup>348</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>349</sup> *ibid.*, 17-18.



Ocean underscored the dangers of voyaging great distances by not just describing its effects but also by invoking the lives of the sailors in ways that most of the narrative did not. This account of the circumnavigation demonstrates the literary link between sailors and their food, and does so through a well-known narrative in which the question of “whose voyage” it was already complicated by the death of the captain.

### **THE BREED OF SEAMEN: VICTUALS, BODIES, AND LABOR**

Accounts of voyages, such as Harris’ version of Magellan’s circumnavigation, underscored the importance of victualing and the difficulties faced by sailors on long-range voyages. This problem weighed heavily on maritime policy; as Charles Davenant noted in 1699, victualing ships was the most expensive part of any voyage. This expense was a result of taxation: he argued that “the Excises and Duty upon Malt, without doubt, make Drink sufficiently dear to the Freighter. And the Duty upon salt makes Victualling a very heavy Burthen upon him, all which must end in lessening our Navigation from time to time” as foreign merchants used their own shipping rather than pay the higher costs associated with English trade.<sup>350</sup> Davenant argued that the costs of victualing in England were so high that it was cheaper for an English merchant to go to Ireland to purchase salt, beef, and pork for a long-range voyage. For the merchant to do so was damaging to the “Landed Interest” of England; to not do so would raise the cost of freight, the

Consequences of which will be, That the Body of our Merchants must lie under a General Discouragement; They will neglect looking after National Gain, which *English* Merchants have perhaps heretofore as much consider’d in their Dealings, as any Trading Men in the

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<sup>350</sup> Charles Davenant, *An Essay upon the Probable Methods of Making a People Gainers in the Ballance of Trade* (London, 1699), 152.

whole Commercial World; They will have an Eye to nothing but their own temporary Profit, and suffer Strangers to go away with those Gains which *England* was wont to make by Freight; from whence it will follow, That we must decay our Stock of Shipping, and decrease every Year in the breed of Seamen; and when this happened, we must no more pretend to such a Naval Strength as has hitherto made us terrible to all our Neighbours.<sup>351</sup>

Davenant based his argument for an exemption of ships' victuals from excise taxes. He argued that such an exemption was in the national interest, as England relied on an international balance of maritime power for its stability. As David Armitage notes, Davenant's vision was of a maritime trading empire that would lead to liberty and greatness.<sup>352</sup> Trade was in itself detrimental to the moral health of the nation, encouraging "Fraud and Avarice" and "extinguish[ing] Virtue and Simplicity of Manners."<sup>353</sup> Nevertheless, it was necessary in providing for English defense in encouraging the "increase in Shipping and in the Breed of Seamen."<sup>354</sup> National interest therefore necessitated a practice with moral consequences, but any duties that burdened this practice were themselves pernicious. For Davenant, English liberty was predicated on the encouragement of a "necessary Evil."<sup>355</sup>

Davenant's argument drew on the logic of the market and history of English vulnerability at sea. It also invoked the imagery of bodies. Merchants formed a "body," which could turn its eye towards long-term national interest or their own short-term ones — Davenant was writing long before a time when the two were seen as inseparable. As with the bodies of Magellan's men, shipping was subject to worrisome decay should it not be supplied with the necessary trade, and, most importantly and the crux of Davenant's argument, the "breed" of seamen was also vulnerable to a decline which would leave the nation vulnerable to its neighbors. Similarly, an

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<sup>351</sup> *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>352</sup> David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000), 142.

<sup>353</sup> Davenant, 154.

<sup>354</sup> *ibid.*, 155.

<sup>355</sup> *ibid.*

anonymously written pamphlet from earlier in the decade, in criticizing the Navigation Act, argued that the Act's exclusion of foreigners from English trade had "given the Nation the Rickets, the Head too big and over-grown, and the Body too lean and starving."<sup>356</sup> The language of trade and national interest was in part the language of bodies.<sup>357</sup> In Davenant's case, these figurative bodies arose through a discussion of the economic difficulties of feeding the real bodies of the sailors who were called upon to supply both the labor of trade and the labor of naval force, both of which were necessary to the liberty of the maritime empire.

The link between sailor's bodies, victuals and economics had its own history. A 1676, an English translation of German theologian, jurist, and physician Henry Cornelius Agrippa's 1526 satire, *The Vanity of Arts and Sciences*, was published. Agrippa argued, under the heading "Of Oeconomy in General," that "Carters, Mariners, and Victuallers are commonly said to be very great Lyars and Tale-bearers, as likewise are Barbers and Bakers."<sup>358</sup> Amongst numerous arts given to the "Craft of Cunning," the

Life of the Mariner, as it is the most unhappy for hardship, so is it the most vitious and dishonest, who always live as it were in Prison, feeding hard and slovenly, their Apparel Nasty, unprovided of all sorts of Conveniences, perpetual Exiles and Vagabonds, never at rest, tost with uncertain Waves and rage of Winds, lyable to all the hazards of Summer, Cold, Storms, Thunder, Hunger, Drowth and Diseases; to these we may add the dangers of Rocks, those Insects of the Seas, and Hurricans; not omitting Tempests, than which there is nothing more dreadful or horrible: which makes it seem more strange, that as Mariners are the most unhappy of men, and always in most dangers, so they are the most wicked and desperate.<sup>359</sup>

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<sup>356</sup> Anon, *A Short View, of the Act of Navigation* (London, 1691), 38.

<sup>357</sup> The body, and other organic imagery, had been part of English political discourse more generally since at least James Harrington's *Oceania* and Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan*. See, for instance, I. Bernard Cohen, "Harrington and Harvey: A Theory of the State Based on the New Physiology," *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 55, no. 2 (Apr., 1994), 187-210; Derek Hirst, "Bodies and Interests: Toleration and the Political Imagination in the Later Seventeenth Century," *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 3 (September 2007), 401-426.

<sup>358</sup> Henry Cornelius Agrippa, *The Vanity of Arts and Sciences* (London, 1676), 217.

<sup>359</sup> *ibid.*, 217-18.

Satire it may have been, but Agrippa's caricature underscored well the hardships endured by sailors. These dismal living and working conditions shaped sailors' character traits in entirely negative ways. In the early modern imagination, the conditions of sailors' working lives made them wicked, desperate, and, above all, dishonest.

John Flamsteed expressed doubts about the sailor's character that suggest that Agrippa's satirical aspersions were to some extent shared by those who shaped English naval policy in the 1690s. In a letter to Samuel Pepys, Flamsteed complained that "tis in vain to Expect that so long as our Navys are supplyd only with Unthrifts, or Ungovernable Spirits the Science of Navigation should improve it will decay & impair if you bring not youth better Educated than our Common Saylor's Usually are, into your Fleets."<sup>360</sup> Flamsteed was not arguing for a better food supply, but instead for the value of educating the sailors in mathematics and other navigational sciences. "Learning," Flamsteed wrote, "opens and enlarges the mind, suggests possible & laudable Designs, teaches to manage them with Discretion, keeping a Man from running into Vice for want of Employment, Molify's Mens Manners, preserves them from Brutishness (the Common fault of the Sailors)."<sup>361</sup> While not as harsh a condemnation as Agrippa's, Flamsteed echoed some of his sentiments. Rather than making the explicit connection to his material conditions, Flamsteed connected the sailor's "Brutishness" with his lack of education. The educated seaman, on the other hand, was less likely to fall into indolence both for the skills and habits of thoughts imparted by the training that might be offered to him. The risk, instead, was that a sailor that was "carry'd a great way off from their Native Country, into Climates where their Health is much

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<sup>360</sup> BL Add 30221, f. 94, Extract of a Letter written by Mr. Flamsteed to Sam: Pepys Esq: April 21 1697.

<sup>361</sup> *ibid.*, f. 95.

more in danger than at Home” might escape into other employment.<sup>362</sup> The investment the English nation had made in the education of this sailor would thus be lost, even if his body survived the deprivations of a voyage to the East Indies.

These sentiments had consequences for the reporting of experience at sea. As we have seen in previous chapters of this dissertation, the value of an early modern text was determined by the authority and credibility that could be derived from its author, and the circles of publication and circulation through which it was channeled. In the case of an account written by a sailor, whose working conditions necessitated the sort of marginal existence satirized by Agrippa and characterized by him as dishonest, he was a compromised witness. Flamsteed’s letter shows that this problem might be resolved through the education of the seaman, which would not only assist him in recording information accurately, it would also teach discipline, and thus overcome the conditions that made sailors dishonest and unreliable. Nevertheless, the reliance on the account of the captain, and the attribution of the voyage to the captain, no matter who wrote the accounts, was clearly informed by the problem of authority. This authority was not only bestowed on the captain, however. It was undermined in the common sailors both by their rank, and, crucially, by the perceived consequences of the material hardships that they suffered, particularly when it came to food.

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<sup>362</sup> *ibid.*, f. 96.

## DIGESTION AND NUTRITION

The sailor's diet not only marginalized him in the minds of those who wrote naval policy, mercantile tracts, and satire; it also linked him to his labor practices on a biological level. The relationship between sailor's labor, his body, and the victuals that sustained both, was recognized in medical literature. William Cockburn, a physician with the Royal Navy, published a medical treatise on disease amongst sailors in the Royal Navy, in which he sought to distinguish not only between sickness on sea and land, but also between sickness "*as may be peculiar to people that use our narrow Seas; to distinguish them from those that may be got nearer, or under, the line.*"<sup>363</sup> In order to make these distinctions, Cockburn found it necessary "first to describe *the particular way of their living*, that from this we may see evidence and deduce as naturally, as is possible, those infirmities, that most especially follow thereupon; and this we shall do, first by considering *their victuals allowed them for their daily sustenance; their way of living; and lastly their life*, as to their *temperance and debauché.*"<sup>364</sup> Although he acknowledged the importance of the "temper and constitution of the *air*, they live in,"<sup>365</sup> especially in determining the differences between sickness on land and at sea, for Cockburn, the crucial relationships that determined the wellbeing of the sailor were between his labor and his diet.

Given the difficulties of measuring variations in the air at sea, Cockburn concentrated his attention on victuals. He detailed the victuals allowed in the Royal Navy, which he described as "a great deal better, and his allowance larger, than in any *Navy or Merchant-ships* in the

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<sup>363</sup> William Cockburn, *An Account of the Nature, Causes, Symptoms and Cure of the Distempers That are incident to Seafaring People. With Observations on the Diet of the Sea-men in his Majesty's Navy* (London, 1696), 3.

<sup>364</sup> *ibid.*, 4.

<sup>365</sup> *ibid.*

world.”<sup>366</sup> According to Cockburn, daily allowance was “*Pork and Pease on Sundays and Thursdays; on Mondays Oatmel (Burgoo) Butter and Cheese; on Tuesdays and Saturdays Beef and Pudding, or all Beef, which they please; on Wednesdays and Fridays Butter and Cheese, or Oatmeal and Pease, and with all these an abundance of Bread.*”<sup>367</sup> Cockburn argued that this diet was the best possible for the health of the sailors, especially given the size of the navy and the distances the ships had to travel. Despite the heavy salt content of this diet, which, “by the laws of *Perspiration* ... must be concluded to contain the grossest juices and the worst nourishment,”

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<sup>366</sup> *ibid.*, 5-6.

<sup>367</sup> *ibid.*, 5. This correlates precisely with the victuals issued by the Royal Navy as described by Rodger. Rodger, 83. In 1757, the Navy added to the rations portable soup -- a broth that had been dried into a hard substance. Literally, it was portable, and was described as such not just in naval tracts, but also in domestic recipes. The soup was made by boiling large chunks of meat – legs of veal (and two dozen chickens feet) and beef in the recipes available to ladies on the London book market, but naval treatises seemed recommended offcuts from beef that was being salted. According to Susannah Carter's *The Frugal Housewife* (London, 1800), the basic method was to boil large chunks of flesh that had had the fat removed, reducing them for seven or eight hours until they formed a jelly. Once cold, the jelly was then strained, transferred into smaller vessels which were then put in a pan (in the same way that one melts chocolate), and again reduced until it had a glue-like consistency. Several hours were then spent drying it on flannel until desiccated; “keep them in as dry a place as you can, and in a little time they will be so hard, that you may carry them in your pocket, without the least convenience,” Carter, 87. To turn the dried broth into soup, it was boiled in water. Carter had both a veal and a beef version – the beef was quite heavily seasoned with onions, herbs and spices, the veal wasn't. Catharine Brooks' *Complete English Cook* (London, c. 1767) provided similar though less detailed instructions, and said that the soup will keep dried for at least twelve months, Brooks, 72. The practice of making portable soup appears to have been imported from France. In 1738, it made an appearance in Robert Dodsely's play, *Sir John Cockle at Court* (London, 1738), where the French cook informed Sir John that “O, me can make you one hundred Dish de *Englis* know noting of; me can make you de portable Soup to put in your Pocket; me can dress you de Fowl *a-la Marli, en Galantine, a-la Montmorancy* ...” Its continental origins were confirmed by James Lind, who in 1757 published *An Essay on the Most Effectual Means of Preserving the Health of Seamen in the Royal Navy*. Lind recommended reducing the amount of salted fresh meats in the sailor's ration to prevent illness from eating putrefied flesh, but also noted the French and Spanish practice of administering meat-based broths and bread to the sick, which the English didn't. He said that, should such “flesh soup” be required, it could be made of a portable soup, “which the Shins, the Neck, Hearts, and other Offal of the Cattle, killed at the Victualling-Office, might supply.” Lind, 29. The benefits of administering such soups were not only medicinal – they would keep sailors alive longer and thus render them more profitable, and would be good for morale. Portable soup also could also be prepared with salt water and remain palatable. In his preface, Lind noted “with no little Satisfaction ... that, since the ensuing Sheets were sent to the Press, the Government has purposed to introduce in the Royal Navy an Allowance of portable Soup; an Institution, on which the Service may be truly congratulated; nor, is it less laudable, than advantageous to the Public, and deserving from our Seamen, the warmest Gratitude.” Lind, xiv. Portable soup was an important part of the diet of James Cook and his men. To take just one instance, when in Queen Charlotte Sound in New Zealand they “received considerable advantage from the natives coming to live with us; for, every day, some of them were occupied in catching fish, a good share of which we generally procured by exchanges. Besides fish, we had other refreshments in abundance. Scurvy-grass, celery, and portable soup were boiled every day with the wheat and pease; and we had spruce beer for our drink. Such a regimen soon removed all seeds of the scurvy from our people, if any of them had contracted it.” James Cook, *A voyage to the Pacific Ocean; undertaken by command of his Majesty, for making discoveries in the northern hemisphere* 4 vols, (London, 1784), vol 4, 62-63.

Cockburn argued that “the bodies of such working people, not only make the best of such *solid* food; but this, ev’n, seems necessary for those who are oblig’d to undergo such great labour.”<sup>368</sup> Cockburn’s theory was based around the passage of chyle — the white, milky, lacteal fluid whose role in the digestion system was the subject of experimentation by the Royal Society<sup>369</sup> — through the body. According to Cockburn, where sailors were able to transform such heavy foods into chyle due to the amount of physical labor they performed, those who exercised much less were not. Thus, the chyle would “scarcely be able to perform its first *voyage* thro the lacteal vessels ... and disposes such people to *Dropsies*, the *Jaundice*, and other *Cachectical* diseases.” Sailors, strengthened by the constant use of their whole bodies in their labor, were able to digest such foods and break down the chyle they produced.<sup>370</sup> For Cockburn, the sailor’s diet was explicitly connected on a biological level to the class and type of labor he performed. His theory of the body perceived a relationship between social station and diet in which, ideally, the two were balanced, so that seamen’s “digestion and nutrition not only go as well with them in this diet, as the most delicate food with Ladies; but this sort of victuals is, even necessary for their toyl and labour, and that which is easily digested, would not prove of long enough continuance for their work.”<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>368</sup> Cockburn., 6-7.

<sup>369</sup> See, for instance, William Cowper, “An Account of Chylification, by Mr. William Cowper,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 19 (1695–1697), 231-238; Martin Lister, “An Extract of a Letter, Relating an Experiment Made for Altering the Colour of the Chyle in the Lacteal Veins, by Martin Lister Esq.,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 13 (1683), 6-9; Martin Lister, “Some Probable Thoughts of the White Ness of the Chyle, and what It is after It is Conveyed within the Arteries. By the Learned Martin Lister Esq.,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 13 (1683), 242-244.

<sup>370</sup> It is possible that this partially mechanistic model in which food operated as a kind of fuel that needed to be in balance with the work being performed drew on the work of Joan Baptista Van Helmont. Although Helmont was seldom cited by name, his work was profoundly influential in the seventeenth century, and it is possible that Cockburn’s application of mechanistic principles to organic bodies was derived from him. See William R. Newman and Lawrence M. Principe, *Alchemy Tried in the Fire: Starkey, Boyle, and the fate of Helmontian chymistry* (Chicago, 2002), esp. 62-4. I am grateful to Simon Thode for the suggestion.

<sup>371</sup> Cockburn., 8.



This balance needed to be struck carefully, for if the amount of work a sailor performed were to be reduced, the diet would begin to have negative effects on his body. The Boatswain's favorites, Cockburn argued, were "very fit Theaters for this Tragedy ... the Seamen, whom the Boatswain turns out to their watch, and who have the fatigue of the Ship, are in perfect health, while his Favourites are over-run with the *Scurvy*."<sup>372</sup> Cockburn went on to describe the symptoms of scurvy, and its degenerative effects on the body. These effects were largely caused by the large amounts of salt in the sailor's diet. Cockburn argued that salt increased the amount of heat in the body, which in turn increased the velocity of the blood, breaking down its molecules and expanding the space it took up in the capillary vessels. This expansion caused an irregular heartbeat, making the blood "viscid and rarify'd, and apt to stagnate in the capillary vessels,"<sup>373</sup> resulting in a chain of stagnation with the blood that was to follow it. The stagnation of expanded, viscous blood was what caused the swelling of the gums, as well as "*ulcerat[ion]* and "*stink*; for the stagnating liquors are entirely corrupted and become too sharp and weighty for their channels, and so break thro as in ulcers."<sup>374</sup> For Cockburn, the causes of sickness at sea were primarily based on the ways in which the body processed food. The process outlined above could be avoided through vigorous exercise, which would take advantage of the thickened blood and allow the body to work harder. The survival of the sailor at sea and the prevention of scurvy and other diseases was necessary in order to ensure the success of the voyage and provide the

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<sup>372</sup> *ibid.*, 9.

<sup>373</sup> *ibid.*, 15.

<sup>374</sup> *ibid.*, 16. Although, as noted above, Cockburn acknowledged the role of the "air," he felt it was not something he could control. It was not until the mid- to late-eighteenth century that transformations in medical theory at sea would begin to resolve the problem of scurvy at sea. The resolution came not only through doses of lemon juice, but also through transformations in disciplining and ordering both the crew, and the environment of the ship. See Christopher Lawrence, "Disciplining disease: scurvy, the navy, and imperial expansion, 1750-1825," in Miller, David Phillip, and Peter Hans Reill, *Visions of Empire: Voyages, botany, and representations of Nature* (Cambridge, 1996), 81-106.

labor of the ship. Medical theory suggested that the survival of his body was itself dependent on that labor.

### **BREAD, PEAS, AND CIVILIZATION**

Food, and the lack of it, was thus crucial to understanding the sailor, his corporeal relationship to English society, and his work at sea. This relationship was described in a general sense, as we have seen in the writings of Agrippa, Flamsteed, and Harris' account of Magellan's voyage. It was also described in the specific mechanisms of the digestive system, as outlined by Cockburn. Cockburn acknowledged that the "moderate eating of bread has, in all ages, been esteemed to contribute very much to the preservation of our health."<sup>375</sup> Without bread, he argued, the body would be deprived of chyle, which would impede the digestive system. Even the bread that was provided in the naval victuals was so tough that it was "not fine enough to produce those subtile animal spirits, that make people so easily to advert to, and apprehend at sight, whatever is proposed; and so, not fit to make Wits: but by the grossness of their humours, the Seamen are dispos'd to most Chronical Diseases, so soon as they are in the least overcome with idleness and laziness," from which sickness would soon follow.<sup>376</sup>

A naval physician, Cockburn drew these conclusions from his observations and treatment of sailors, but the concerns over victualling in general and bread specifically was a common thread throughout the voyage accounts of the era. In a tract on victualling the navy written for Samuel Pepys in 1686, for instance, Richard Gibson wrote that "if there be a great difference

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<sup>375</sup> Cockburn, 20-1.

<sup>376</sup> *ibid.*, 23.

between meal and bran to suck or drink up water in its kneeding into bisket, and bread is called the staff of life, not only for its nutritive, but cleansing Quality, what must follow to the poor Sea-men but Sickness, when the bisket he eats shall not do the Office (i.e. Drink up the superfluous humors of ye Body) for wch it was intended.”<sup>377</sup> The sailor’s diet was part of what made him. The techniques that were used to preserve it, its physical substance, and the ways it was thought to interact with the human body, marked the sailor as a laborer. It was, in a very real sense, a marker of occupation. The medical properties of bread, which, as Gibson’s letter shows us and Cockburn’s writing confirms, were specific to its ingredients and its structure, were coupled with its economic importance. In an undated letter, Magnus Prince wrote to Hans Sloane of his nephew, a sailor whose capture in Campeche meant he was passed over for promotion. Prince asked Sloane to exercise his influence with the trading companies to put “one into a way of bread who has been unfortunate not by his own fault.”<sup>378</sup> Employing a metaphor that survives to this day, Prince invoked bread not for its spiritual or nutritional qualities, but as a metonym for economic sustenance provided by promotion and regular income. This relationship was nowhere more evident than in the treatment of bread in voyage accounts and naval policy discussions.

Thus, when John Narborough discussed his efforts to keep his men healthy during their voyage to the Magellan Straights, he made special mention of the role of bread in their diets. “My company are all in good health,” he wrote, “but some of a puny Race grow weak in being so long on Shipboard ... I order’d every man to wash his Mouth, Face and Hands before he receive his daily Allowance of Bread, and appointed one Man to see it performed; if any neglected it, the Steward kept their Allowance for one day.”<sup>379</sup> When trading with the Spanish

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<sup>377</sup> NMM Rec 6/12, Mr. Gibson to Mr. Pepys upon the present method of victualing the Navy, 1686, f.164-5.

<sup>378</sup> BL Sloane 4060 f. 130, letter from Magnus Prince, n.d.

<sup>379</sup> Narborough, 20.

at a fortress in Chile, he noted that “the *Spaniards* bought several things of my Boats Crew: and paid for what things they bought in good Pillar pieces of Eight; they would not part from any Gold, although my Men were desirous to have some rather than Silver for their Goods: neither would they part from any Bread in payment, pretending that they should have Bread to morrow from Baldavia [i.e. Valdivia].”<sup>380</sup> Previously, Narborough noted that, for the Spanish in Chile, “*plata no vallanada mucho in terra.*”<sup>381</sup>

Narborough’s account thus underscored the corporeal and economic importance of bread at sea. It was, for him, associated with the ritualization of cleanliness, and was used as leverage in his disciplinary efforts. Where Narborough withheld bread from his men for disciplinary reasons, the Spanish withheld it for economic ones. This refusal to trade bread took on an ironic dimension, given the location in which it took place. For its abundance of fruit, the “*Spaniards* report [Chile] to be the finest Country in the whole World, and that the People live with the greatest Luxury of any on the Earth; they enjoy their Health with so much delight, and have so much Wealth and Felicity, that they compare the Land to *Paradise*, abounding above other Countries with all Delights of Mankind.”<sup>382</sup> In this paradise, where the value of silver had been debased, bread was worth as much as gold, and the Spanish would not trade it for anything.

As Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher argue, bread played an important role in early modern understandings of the social value of those that consumed it.<sup>383</sup> Given its role in the corporeal wellbeing of the early modern sailor, and its real and figurative economic value, these substitutions were noted in numerous voyage accounts. Narborough remarked on this in his

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<sup>380</sup> *ibid.*, 97.

<sup>381</sup> “Silver isn’t worth anything. There’s much gold in land.” *ibid.*, 89.

<sup>382</sup> *ibid.*, 96.

<sup>383</sup> Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt, “The Potato in the Materialist Imagination,” in *Practicing New Historicism*, (Chicago, 2000), 124-5.

November 30 entry, writing that “This Day all the Bread in the Ship is expended: all the Company of the Ship, my self as well as any other, eat Pease in lieu of Bread.”<sup>384</sup> For his part, Cockburn simply noted that peas “in their own nature are more temperate than Oatmeal, since they are esteem’d by Physicians ... A sort of medium between things of good and bad nourishment.”<sup>385</sup> It is perhaps unsurprising then that this substitution left Narborough’s men “indifferent well in health,” yet it was nevertheless remarkable enough to be noted in the table of contents to *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, where the heading for the ship *The Sweepstakes* reads “Sweepstakes, her Burthen, how Mann’d, Victuall’d, &c. p. 1. Her Cargo, p. 2. Crew reduc’d to eat Pease instead of Bread, p. 83.”<sup>386</sup> This incident took its place amongst references to geographical descriptions, descriptions of available resources, and references to penguins, seals, and other exotic fauna. Its significance was enough that Tancred Robinson and John Ray brought it to the attention of their readers the compilation by extracting it from the body of the account; the substitution was an event, and the diets of the sailors were of interest to readers.

As it happened, Narborough’s substitution of bread with peas was a relatively tame iteration of a common practice. Indeed, these substitutions often took place in the Americas. At the beginning of his journey over the Isthmus of Darien (i.e. Panama), William Dampier and his company “supped plentifully on Fowls, and Pecary; a sort of wild Hogs which we bought of the *Indians*; Yams, Potatoes, and Plantains served us for Bread, whereof we had enough.”<sup>387</sup> The substitution of American vegetables for European bread was sufficient for Dampier. Others were not so lucky. In one of two accounts by Glanius, a sailor with the Dutch East Indies Company, that were published in 1682, the search for food became central following a shipwreck off the

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<sup>384</sup> Narborough, 83.

<sup>385</sup> Cockburn, 25-6.

<sup>386</sup> *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, “The Contents.” The modern reader would recognize this as an index.

<sup>387</sup> William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (London, 1697), 12.

coast of Bengal. Suffering from “extream hunger,” the ship’s surgeon “bethought himself, as he walkt along to taste the Leaves of the Trees.” Having found them good, the rest of the crew “followed his example. We chewed ‘em, at first, a great while, before we swallowed ‘em: but at length found ‘em so delicate, that we never tasted bread in our lives, that relisht half so well.”<sup>388</sup> Despite their relish, the leaves provided little nourishment, and, when one of the company found some beans, “never was any thing eaten with a better appetite, nor found to be of better taste ... we exhorted one another to repose our selves under the Divine Providence.”<sup>389</sup> Their repose was short-lived, however, “for an hour after we had eaten them, we felt such pangs, as made us believe they were mortal.”<sup>390</sup> The spell of food poisoning was brief, but nevertheless “this mishap was attended by a Disgust to the Leaves which we heretofore found so good, but now could eat no longer of ‘em.”<sup>391</sup> Under the inducement of hunger, and however briefly, the leaves became better than bread to the Protestant Dutch sailors.

Bread was a staple more generally in the economic imagination of early modern Europeans; where bread was absent, so was civilization. In his *Observations Concerning the Dominion & Sovereignty of the Seas*, Sir Philip Meadows described “the Primitive and Natural State of Things ... [where] the whole Earth was common and undivided unto all Mankind; but then, as it was common, so it was without culture, Men living upon the spontaneous Productions of it, in an easy and innocent, but rude and simple manner. Their Dwellings were Tents; their Drink, Water; their Bread, Roots and Nuts; their Clothing, the Bark of Trees, or Skins of

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<sup>388</sup> Glanius, *A Relation of an Unfortunate Voyage to the Kingdom of Bengala. Describing the deplorable condition, and dismal accidents, attending those therein concerned* (London, 1682), 40. See also Glanius, *A New Voyage to the East-Indies: Containing An Account of several of those Rich Countries, and more particularly of the Kingdome of Bantam* (London, 1682).

<sup>389</sup> Glanius, *Relation*, 42-3.

<sup>390</sup> *ibid.*, 43.

<sup>391</sup> *ibid.*

Beasts.”<sup>392</sup> Cultivation was the driving force of civilization, and the uncultivated food was thus part of the undivided state of nature. Beyond the medical, this was the implication of the diets of Glanius, Dampier, and Narborough’s men. As they got further away from Europe, and their victuals dwindled, or, as in the case of Glanius, they were subject to disastrous shipwreck and the loss of their worldly possessions along with their “wooden world,” their consumption of the cultivated produce of Europe also ended. It was replaced at best with vegetables, and at worst with leaves, lacking in all nutrition, and inspiring illness in their consumers. As hunger took hold, sailors relapsed into the uncivilized and uncultivated world.

There were those who were already in that world. In the supplement to *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, the inhabitants of Greenland were described as “true Barbarians, never omitting any opportunity of fulfilling their Desires,” which often took the form of theft and violence.<sup>393</sup> When some of them were taken to Denmark, “the King commanded great care should be taken of them, appointed certain persons to attend them ... so as they prevented their escape. No Necessary or Convenience was wanting; their Food such as they could eat, Milk, Butter, Cheese, Flesh, and Fish, but raw. They could eat no Bread, nor boil’d Meat.”<sup>394</sup> The Greenlander’s raw diet marked them as outsiders to the civilized court of the Danish king, and their lives there were consumed by the “Melancholy and Chagrin which they continually lived in for the want of their beloved Country.”<sup>395</sup> Beginning with their diets, and continuing in their inability to learn Danish or convert to Christianity, the Greenlanders who moved from their homes to the kingdoms of Europe suffered despair, and often death. The melancholy inspired by

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<sup>392</sup> Sir Philip Meadows, *Observations Concerning the Dominion and Sovereignty of the Seas: Being An Abstract of the Marine Affairs of England*, (London, 1694), 1.

<sup>393</sup> “A Supplement to the North-east Voyages” in *An Account of Several Late Voyages to the South and North*, 201.

<sup>394</sup> *ibid.*, 196.

<sup>395</sup> *ibid.*

their estrangement from their “savage” lands was manifested in and exemplified by their refusal of bread, the basic marker of cultivated existence to early modern European eyes.

Robert Boyle, in the posthumous *General Heads for the Natural History of a Country*, asked, amongst his queries regarding Guinea, “Whether the Palm affords them Wine, Oyl, Vinegar, Soap, and Bread; and whether out of the Leaves they pick Threds, making thereof very curious Works.”<sup>396</sup> Two decades earlier, the author of the *Golden Coast* described two kinds of corn that were used to make bread, one “wholsome and sweet,” the other able to “last three or four months.”<sup>397</sup> *The Golden Coast* thus described an economic system in which the inhabitants of Guinea grew wheat in order to pay tribute to their king — a system in which “no man claimeth any Land to himself; the King keeping all the Woods, Fields, and Land in his hands; so that they neither Sow nor Plant therein, but by his consent and licence.”<sup>398</sup> This feudal structure stood in contrast to the expression of imperial power at the beginning of the text, where the author described a Britain “commanding the commerce of all Nations; our *Negotiations* being not limited in a narrower compasse than the whole Earth, and our dealing knowing no bounds but those of the world.”<sup>399</sup> Armitage notes that it was after the Restoration that the “British Empire” was first described in terms of its overseas settlements and factories, and that *The Golden Coast* was one of the texts in which this description as to be found.<sup>400</sup> For the author of the *Golden Coast*, the expanded empire was dependent on the mutually beneficial relationship between the sovereign and his subjects. “It is his care that wee may have *power*,” he wrote, “its

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<sup>396</sup> Robert Boyle, *General Heads for the Natural History of a Country, Great or Small; Drawn out for the use of Travellers and Navigators* (London, 1692), 73-4.

<sup>397</sup> *The Golden Coast, or a Description of Guinney* (London, 1664). The quotes are on 14 and 15 respectively.

<sup>398</sup> *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>399</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>400</sup> David Armitage, “Literature and Empire,” in Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire* (New York, 1998), 113.



ours that wee have *skill* to traffique over the *World*.”<sup>401</sup> Sovereignty was not challenged, but nor was it absolutist, and it was this relationship that fostered commercial success and “improvement.”<sup>402</sup> The bread of Guinea, on the other hand, was produced in a system in which produce was appropriated by the sovereign through tribute. This lack of division did not render the Guineans savages, but nevertheless their economic system was, in the eyes of the author, a kind of stunted parody of the British empire, “the ambition of those people being rather height than bredth, rather to be Chief of a little place with authority, than grasped at much with uncertainty ... the old Kings aimed at the vastness, the new ones only at the Honour of Empire.”<sup>403</sup> Rather than expansion based on mutual benefit, the Guinean kingdoms were limited by the ambitions of their sovereigns and their undivided system of production. The production and distribution of bread that took place in this system, for the Restoration author, was yet more evidence of the superiority of British trade.

It is small wonder then that when Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* set about reconstructing domestic English life on a desert island,<sup>404</sup> he devoted so much time to bread; to growing, harvesting and milling corn, to building an oven, and finally, to successfully baking his first loaf. After all this work, he did not attribute his success to his own labor, but to God, and concluded that

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<sup>401</sup> *The Golden Coast*, 1.

<sup>402</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>403</sup> *ibid.*, 3-4.

<sup>404</sup> As Jonathan Scott notes, part of *Robinson Crusoe*’s success depended on that fact that, “for all of its drama and exotic locations, it offered familiarity, domesticity and routine.” Scott, 2011, 144. Terry Eagleton expands on the point, describing a *Crusoe* who “potters around like a Home Counties gardener tending his flower-beds. We half expect him to open a greengrocer’s. The novel is a commonsensical approach to English rationality, which looks all the more impressive and unflappable when up against such outlandish conditions. It’s nice to see a desert island looking a little like Dorking. There is something both admirable and absurd about *Crusoe*’s petit bourgeois approach to his new home – for example, when he rigs up an umbrella for himself. He distils the true spirit of a nation of shopkeepers.” Terry Eagleton, “*Moll’s Footwear*,” in *London Review of Books*, 33, 21, 3 November 2011, 23.

I ought never more to repine at my Condition, but to rejoice, and to give daily Thanks for that daily Bread which nothing but a Croud of Wonders could have brought. That I ought to consider I had been fed even by a Miracle, even as great as that of feeding *Elijah* by Ravens; nay, by a long Series of Miracles, and that I could hardly have nam'd a Place in the uninhabitable Part of the World, where I could have been cast more to my Advantage.<sup>405</sup>

Dampier described the shipwreck of a French fleet in 1682, where many of those that did not die at sea and got to an island “for want of being accustomed to such hardships, died like rotten sheep.”<sup>406</sup> It was the privateers who survived by remaining together and gathering the victuals yielded up by the wreckage. According to Dampier, they spent three weeks marooned on the island, “in all which time they were never without 2 or 3 Hogsheads of Wine and Brandy in their Tents, and Barrels of Beef and Pork; which they could live on without Bread well enough, tho the new-comers out of *France* could not.”<sup>407</sup> The privateers’ ability to survive was dependent on their capacity to act together quickly to recover victuals. This capacity was itself borne out of their long experience in the dangerous waters of the New World, and in their willingness to seize the opportunities yielded up by the Atlantic economic system. Privateers, at once marginal to and spearheads of the Atlantic empires, were opportunists of the first order. This dual-role on the outer-rim of empire meant that bread, the staff of life, signifier of economic development, and digestive aide, was no longer necessary for their survival; for those only recently departed from Europe, it was. Bread, once again, signified a proximity to the European empires, shaped by economic relationships, manifested in the body. In this case, ones survival was dependent on ones marginalization, and to remain too much within the realm of the civilized was to risk starvation.

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<sup>405</sup> [Daniel Defoe], *The Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner* (London, 1719), 156.

<sup>406</sup> Dampier, 50.

<sup>407</sup> *ibid.*, 51.

## CAPTAINS AND AUTHORS

As we have seen, the sailor's relationship with food, as described through the voyage accounts of the 1690s and 1700s, described his role within the economic, biological, and imperial matrix of early modern thought. In Harris' account of Magellan's voyage the expression of this relationship between the sailor and his victuals was at its most vivid when it was most tenuous. In its absence, food marked the sailor's affective experience in the voyage account in a way that rarely occurred elsewhere within these texts. Desperation, induced by hunger, was the key expression of the sailor's individuality in a social and occupational system that was hierarchal and collective. On the ship, the division of labor was such that, within the textual representation of the voyage at least, the men were an undifferentiated mass. They became individuals when, through disastrous shipwreck or a dreadful dwindling of supplies, the food ran out. This also marked a boundary of civilization, where to survive it one had to cross over, and either transform the exotic foods of the New World into the nutritional and moral staples of the Old, or to abandon the Old altogether, at least for the duration.

The common sailor appeared in the text, it seems, where "civilization" broke down. This was equally a marker of the sailor's marginal working life. As Agrippa's satire and Flamsteed's letter on naval policy show, the difficulties of the sailor's life rendered him brutish, prone to crime and loutishness. The deprivations of the sailor's life made him visible to the reader of the voyage account. They also made him an unreliable witness, uncouth, and dishonest. In a reading culture where so much depended on the matrices of credibility and authority, the common sailor was compromised as a witness to the events of the voyage. The credit that could be extended to the

account depended on the authority it brought with it, and thus the sailor could not also be an author.

Instead, the idea of authorship and authority was located within the authority figure of the voyage. The account of the voyage was conflated in the textual realm with the voyage itself, and both were attributed to the captain. As we have seen at the beginning of this chapter, accounts of Magellan's voyage often failed to make a distinction between the captain and the voyage, so that – for some authors at least – Magellan's death meant that circumnavigation was not achieved. This conflation of voyage and captain also occurred in accounts of more contemporary English voyages, where the question of national boosterism was less present in making this distinction. While Evelyn, for instance, may have wished to diminish Magellan's circumnavigation in order to elevate Drake's in his celebration of navigation as the driving force of human history, there was no such motive for Sir Tancred Robinson, and his printers Smith and Walford, to describe an account of several late voyages "By Sir John Narborough, Captain Jasmen Tasman, Captain John Wood, and Frederick Marten of *Hamburgh*." While to a modern reader, the word "by" in the context of a title page denotes authorship of the text, the accounts in *Several Late Voyages* were composites and heavily abridged translations. Narborough's account, for instance, interpolated numerous other texts; these included not only letters and orders, but, from the end of Narborough's manuscript on page 121 until the end of the account on 129, Lieutenant Nathaniel Peckett's diary. Wood's account of his shipwreck likewise included William Flawes' account of the journey from "Nova Zembla" to England following the rescue of Wood and his men. Although this additional journal was noted in the contents, there was no indication of it on the title page itself — the account is of "Wood's voyage." Likewise, "Tasman's voyage" was described as a "relation," and in *Several Late Voyages* was indeed related in the third person

through Dirk Rembrandtse' translation, so that "In the year 1642. Aug. 14. He set sail with two Ships from *Batavia*." He, of course, was Abel Tasman, and this was his voyage, but not his account. The question of the authorship of the text was not pertinent; the captaincy of the voyage was.

Thus, when William Hacke compiled and James Knapton published *A Collection of Original Voyages* in the wake of the success of Dampier's *New Voyage*, James Wood's account of the voyage to the Straits of Magellan, which he undertook with Narborough in 1669, was attributed to Captain James Wood, despite Wood being mate, and not captain on that particular voyage. As James Burney notes, the retroactive promotion of Wood to Captain during Narborough's voyage was a marketing ploy, as Captain Wood was already known through *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, and retaining his rank in an account of an earlier voyage would help increase name recognition.<sup>408</sup> The retention of this rank in the title of the account created confusion, however, so that for a long time readers believed that Narborough and Wood had made separate and unrelated voyages to the Straits.<sup>409</sup> It is tempting to see this confusion as arising merely from a printer and editor playing fast and loose with the truth in order to take advantage of the success both of Dampier's account and the publications of the Royal Society in the context of a piratical print culture where this kind of sleight of hand would barely raise an eyebrow.<sup>410</sup> Nevertheless, as the example of *An Account of Several Late Voyages*, the relationship between the captain and the author was far from straightforward; Wood's textual

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<sup>408</sup> James Burney, *A Chronological History of the Discoveries in the South Sea or Pacific Ocean*, 4 vols. (London, 1803-1817), 3, 317.

<sup>409</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>410</sup> See Adrian Johns, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago, 2009), esp. Chapters Two and Three.

promotion may have had more to do with the context of authorship and authority than with print and piracy.

The question of the sailor's authority was easily resolved in the case of a Captain, whose rank conferred not only authority within the "wooden world" of the ship, but in the textual realm as well. For others, it was the subject of some discussion. As Philip Edwards notes, there was suspicion that Dampier had some assistance in writing his account. Dampier conceded that, indeed, he had had some help from friends in editing and correcting his work, but as we have seen in chapter one of this dissertation that was a far from uncommon practice in the 1690s. He also acknowledged in his preface that his detractors "taxed me with borrowing from other Men's Journals; and with Insufficiency, as if I was not the author of what I write, but published Things digested and drawn up by others."<sup>411</sup> Dampier responded that, where he did use others' descriptions, he acknowledged them, "except some very few Relations and particular Observations received from credible Persons who desired not to be named."<sup>412</sup> Nevertheless, Dampier's defense rested on a relationship between authorship and authority, as he first insisted on his own authorship of the text and his eyewitness observations, and then extended this authority to other unnamed observers, describing them as "credible Persons." Edwards may or may not be correct in describing Dampier as the founder of a genre of travel writing, concerned with the connection between the writer, the text, and the world; what does appear to be the case is that Dampier himself was writing in a context where the author was bound up in the matrix of credibility and authority in which texts were published and circulated.

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<sup>411</sup> Quoted in Edwards, 21. The quote is from William Dampier, *A Voyage to New Holland &c. In the year 1699* (London, 1703), preface.

<sup>412</sup> *ibid.*

Despite his insistence on his own credibility and authority, Dampier was in a difficult position within this matrix. The manuscript version of Dampier's *New Voyage* held in the Sloane archive of the British Library concludes with one and a half pages that do not appear in the printed version. Edwards describes these pages in Dampier's hand as an "angry, paranoid, sometimes incoherent apologia,"<sup>413</sup> responding to the challenge: "How can a person who is not in charge of a ship or conducting an expedition claim to be making discoveries of his own?"<sup>414</sup> Edwards argues that Dampier's response reflected the enigmatic and contradictory persona that emerged within his text. That may be true, but it also evoked the relationship between the author of the text and the authority of the captain in responsibility for the voyage and the subsequent account of it. Dampier was not only responding to challenges about his making discoveries, but also to his authority over the voyage itself. It is thus worth reproducing the text in full:

It may be demanded by som why I took these voyages & Discoverys of mine seing I was neither master nor mate of any of the ships; to such demands I answer that I might have been master of the first I went out in if I would haue accepted it for it was known to most men that were in the seas that I kept a Journall & all that knew me well did ever judg my accounts were kept as exact as any mans besides most if not all that kept Journalls either lodged them [when they] gott to Europe or ellse are not yet returned nor euer likely to come home[;] therefore I think I may most justly challenge as a right to those dyscoveryes then other man yet I can plainly see that some men are not soe well pleased as if it came from any of the commanders that were in the south seas though most off them I think all besides Captain Swan were wholly incapable of keeping a sea journall & took noe account of any actions neither did they make any obseruations in those partes yet such is the opinion of most men that nothing pleaseth them but what comes from the highest hand though from men of the meanest capacitys. But I feare I am to prolex in this Discurse I am only to answer for myself & if I haue not giuen a Dyscription of those places to the satisfaction of my frinds I must beg pardon & disire them to [blame] the defects they finde in these my writings on the meanes of my information and not in me whoe haue ben faithfull as to what is written of my own knowledg or in getteing the best information I could.<sup>415</sup>

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<sup>413</sup> Edwards, 23.

<sup>414</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> BL Sloane 3236 f. 233 r and v., quoted in Edwards, 23-4.

As Edwards notes, Dampier's argument hinged on the "right to discoveries." This right, however, was justified through his keeping of journals. Against the charge that he was neither master nor mate, he responded that he could have been master because it was well known that he kept exact journals. Captaincy, for Dampier, was predicated on one's skill and reliability in keeping the textual record. Others, who were either incapable of keeping a journal or neglectful in lodging their journal on their return did not deserve credit for the voyage itself. Edwards' judgments on his character notwithstanding, Dampier's reasoning appears to have been perfectly coherent within a frame of reference where authorship and authority were based in the figure of the captain, and the figure of the captain was sustained as much by his capacity and credibility in keeping journals as his ability in commanding a ship. To a readership more concerned with the rank of the author than the contents of the work itself, Dampier's response was to at once attack this attitude and, in his assertion that he could have been captain had he chosen, affirm it.

Dampier's subsequent literary celebrity is in part what severed this connection between the captain and the author, and, in this unpublished manuscript at least, he worked towards this severance. If, as Edwards insists, Dampier's voyages were the foundational text in a genre of travel-writing, it is only in the sense that, through Dampier, the writer entered the text both as a celebrity and a sailor separated from the hierarchical organization of the ship, and of society. However, even though Dampier argued to alter the relationship between the captain and the writer, and in doing so instituted the concept of the sailor-as-author that has remained with us in the secondary literature, he did not see himself as engaged in this project. Indeed, he saw his journal as directly connected to the activities of the Royal Society outlined in chapter one of this dissertation, and members of the Royal Society thought much the same thing. Dampier dedicated his account to Charles Montague, President of the Royal Society and Councilor of the



Exchequer. In his dedication, he praised Montague for his “General Worth, so especially to that Zeal for the advancement of Knowledge, and the interest of your Country.”<sup>416</sup> Dampier then downplayed his own role within the text, arguing that he had “not so much the vanity of a Traveller, as to be fond of telling stories, especially of this kind.”<sup>417</sup> Instead, Dampier insisted he was, like Montague, possessed of a “hearty Zeal for the promotion of useful knowledge, and of anything that may never so remotely tend to my Countrys advantage.”<sup>418</sup> “This hath been my design in this Publication,” he wrote “being desirous to bring in my Gleanings here and there in remote regions, to that general Magazine, of the knowledge of Foreign Parts, which the *Royal Society* thought you most worthy the Custody of.”<sup>419</sup>

The account of *New Voyage Round the World* published in *Philosophical Transactions* was likewise concerned almost entirely with the descriptions and observations, only briefly mentioning his “Intelligible and Expressive” style and dedicating the remaining six pages to relating the animals, plants and people that can be read about in each chapter.<sup>420</sup> Other members of the Royal Society likewise saw Dampier as part of their republic of learning, rather than as an author of “literature.” In 1707, William Sherard wrote to Hans Sloane from Smyrna. Amongst discussion of barometers, botany, and, most importantly, the books that Sherard had been shipping to and from Britain through his role as a kind of private node in the circulation of texts, he mentioned that he was “sorry for Capt. Dampier's loss; I was in hopes of seeing speedily an acct. of his voyage which woud have been very diverting & instructive.”<sup>421</sup> Sherard's expectations placed Dampier within the sphere of humanist practice, where the purpose of texts

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<sup>416</sup> Dampier, 1697, dedication.

<sup>417</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>418</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>419</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>420</sup> “An Account of a New Voyage Round the World by William Dampier,” *Phil. Trans.*, vol. 19 (1695 - 1697), 426.

<sup>421</sup> BL Sloane 4041 f. 66 Letter from William Sherard, Nov. 15, 1707.

was to “delight and instruct,” rather than the self-promotion that Edwards detects. Regardless of whether his dedication is to be taken at face value, Dampier at least professed to see himself as part of a broader scientific project, and his accounts of his travels were not promoted through his authorial voice, but through their utility in scientific and national advancement. Edwards is probably right that editorial interventions were made to make Dampier look better to his readers, but if Dampier did represent the emergence of a new genre in the way that Edwards suggests, it was almost certainly not his expectation. Instead, Dampier wrote and published in continuity and dialogue with members of the Royal Society, and avowedly regarded himself as part of their project of establishing an empire of knowledge.

### THE SEAMAN’S CHARACTER, THE SAILOR’S TONGUE

Regardless of his intentions, Dampier began to undo the relationship between the writer and the captain as his account achieved unparalleled popularity. James Knapton, Dampier’s publisher, rushed to publish Hacke’s compilation of accounts discussed above, and continued to publish voyage accounts for many years as he expanded into the popular market. While John Harris and the Churchill brothers were marketing their elaborate, expensive volumes to a wealthy audience, Knapton was selling John Stevens’s compilation in monthly installments for 1s.<sup>422</sup> Meanwhile, as more accounts of voyages — whether real or fictional — continued to appear on the market, the

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<sup>422</sup> Lynham, 78. See also *Daily Courant*, London, February 21, 1709, issue 2285, and *Post Man and the Historical Account*, London, Thursday March 3, 1709, issue 1714, for advertisements of the publication of instalments. The collection was also published in compiled volumes in 1711, see John Stevens, ed., *A new collection of voyages and travels, into several parts of the world, none of them ever before printed in English. Containing, 1. The description, &c. of the Molucco and Philippine Islands, by L. de Argensola, 2. A new Account of Carolina, by Mr. Lawson. 3. The Travels of P. de Cieza, in Peru. 4. The Travels of the Jesuits in Ethiopia. 5. The Captivity of the Sieur Mouette in Fez and Morocco. 6. The Travels of P. Teixeira from India to the Low-Countries by Land. 7. A voyage to Madagascar by the Sieur Cauche. In two volumes, illustrated with several maps and cuts.* 2 vols. (London, 1711).

character of the author began to become part of the narrative. By 1727, the author of *A Voyage to Cacklogallina* began his satirical voyage to a Caribbean Island populated by six foot tall, talking chickens, by wryly commenting that “nothing is more common than a Traveller’s beginning the Account of his Voyages with one of his own Family; in which, if he can’t boast Antiquity, he is sure to make it up with the Probity of his Ancestors.”<sup>423</sup> In 1719, *The Life and Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner*,<sup>424</sup> began with such a biography, after a preface celebrated “the wonders of this Man’s Life [which] exceed all that is to be found extant; the Life of one Man being scarce capable of a greater variety.” In 1726, the *Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World* of Lemuel Gulliver began with a similar biography.<sup>425</sup> The publisher of *The Voyages and Adventures of Miles Philips, A West-Country Sailor* added Philips’ origin to the title of the account, and attempted to include a biography in the preface. This biography, perhaps for lack of information, quickly turned into a summary of the text itself, as well as the context of the Reformation that shaped Philips’ fate. Its author soon checked himself, noting that “instead of giving some Account of the Author, I shall seem to be drawing up a Bill of Fare for the whole Book.”<sup>426</sup> Despite being foiled in the attempt, the author of the preface was nevertheless following the practice of supplying a biographical sketch of the traveller; a practice that, according to the *Voyage to Cacklogallina*, was common.

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<sup>423</sup> *A Voyage to Cacklogallina by Capt. Samuel Brunt With a Description of the Religion, Policy, Customs and Manners, of that Country* (London, 1727), 1.

<sup>424</sup> [Daniel Defoe], *Robinson Crusoe*, preface.

<sup>425</sup> [Jonathan Swift], *Travels Into Several Remote Nations of the World, by Lemuel Gulliver, First a Surgeon, then a Captain of Several Ships*, 2 vols, (London, 1726), 1, 1.

<sup>426</sup> Miles Philips, *The Voyages and Adventures of Miles Philips, A West-Country Sailor* (London, 1724), preface. See also Richard Helgerson, “I Miles Philips”: An Elizabethan Seaman Conscripted by History” in *PMLA*, vol. 118, no. 3, Special Topic: Imagining History (May, 2003), pp. 573-580 for a discussion of an earlier kind of selfhood that Helgerson views as connected to Elizabethan Protestant nationalism.

It was less common in the late seventeenth century, however. Where these biographies were to be found in the late-seventeenth century, they are usually seen in texts translated from other European languages. Another edition of Glanius' account was also published in 1682. Unlike the version discussed above, it gave a much fuller account and did not focus on the "unfortunate" shipwreck. The preface to the *Relation of an Unfortunate Voyage to the Kingdom of Bengala* explicitly evoked its use as entertainment, which "cannot but produce in us several delightful, as well as profitable Reflexions"<sup>427</sup> The other version of Glanius, published not by Henry Bonwick, but by H. Rodes, was more complete, and, while the first was published without preface, the second edition's preface was restricted to a description of the places described in the text, and a brief comment on its positive reception amongst its readership.<sup>428</sup> While the *Relation* was clearly sold as entertainment, it was the more sober account that began with a biography of the kind satirized forty-five years later in the *Voyage to Cacklogallina*. In it, Glanius described being "born with a desire of Travelling, yet there was little probability I could pursue my inclination" and instead was put to learning a trade due to his father's lack of wealth.<sup>429</sup> The passion for travel stayed with Glanius, however, and he "never heard the Compass mentioned without feeling an extraordinary joy."<sup>430</sup>

Glanius soon escaped both his trade and his father's opprobrium, joining a merchant ship in Amsterdam as a Boatswain's Mate, "being little concerned at the employ I had in it, or of the place whither I went, provided only that I might travel."<sup>431</sup> Following three letters praising his service, French seaman Raveneau de Lussin's *Journal of a Voyage Made Into The South Sea*

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<sup>427</sup> Glanius, *Relation*, preface.

<sup>428</sup> Glanius, *New Voyage*. The two editions were published in the same year.

<sup>429</sup> Glanius, *New Voyage*, 1.

<sup>430</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

<sup>431</sup> *ibid.*, 3.

begins “it is no very uncommon thing for a Child that is a Native of *Paris*, to go and seek his Fortune abroad, and to entertain a fixed Design of becoming a Man engaged in hazardous Adventures.”<sup>432</sup> Like Glanius, Lussin had “always had a most passionate Disposition for Travel,” so much so that he began to escape from his father’s home when he was seven years old.<sup>433</sup> Lussin’s compatriot, Francois Froger, in his *Relation of a Voyage Made in the Years 1695, 1696, 1697* began the preface with “a passionate Desire to see Foreign Countries,” so that “I was no sooner Master of my own Inclinations, but I made it my Business to attain whatever might contribute to the Employment of an honest Man.”<sup>434</sup> Like Dampier, Froger avowedly kept his journal in order to be useful to his country, and thus studied mathematics and history before he joined a voyage, and “abandon’d the little Experience that an Age of Nineteen Years cou’d supply me with ... and began now to come to the practick Part of what I knew before but in the Theory.”<sup>435</sup> *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis, or the Southern World* by James Sadeur a *French-man*, a fictional voyage by Gabriel de Foigny, echoed this apparently continental practice, beginning with a chapter on Sadeur’s birth and education. The fictional Sadeur was literally born to the sea, “*Conceived in America and brought forth upon the Ocean*, an infallible presage of the miseries which to to attend [him].”<sup>436</sup> Sadeur’s fate was bound up in his birth, his marooning made all the more poignant for its connection to his origins.

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<sup>432</sup> Raveneau de Lussin, *Journal of a Voyage Made Into The South Sea by the Bucaniers or Freebooters of AMERICA; From the Year 1684 to 1689* (London, 1698).

<sup>433</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>434</sup> Francois Froger, *A Relation of a Voyage Made in the Years 1695, 1696, 1697. on the Coasts of Africa, Streights of Magellan, Brasil, Cayenna, and the Antilles, by a Squadron of French Men of War, under the Command of M. De Gennes* (London, 1698), preface.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>436</sup> [Gabriel de Foigny]. *A New Discovery of Terra Incognita Australis, or the Southern World* by James Sadeur a *French-man* (London, 1693), 1.

In accounts written by English voyagers, the biographical dimension of the texts that located the author in time, place, and lineage, common in the 1720s, were virtually absent in the 1690s. Absent too was the identification of the desire to travel, which would later construct a sense of the author as a self. Rather, these English accounts usually began with the voyage, and did little to develop the idea of the author-as-selfhood. Narborough and Woods' accounts in *Several Late Voyages* begin, in the former, with the commencement of the voyage, and in the latter with the logic behind the new search for a Northern passage described in chapter one of this dissertation. The four journals collected by William Hacke and published by James Knapton in the wake of Dampier's success likewise began with the commencement of each voyage, and feature no reference either to their authors' lineage, or their reasons for going to sea.<sup>437</sup> T.C., author of *The New Atlas: Or, Travels and Voyages in Europe, Asia, Africa and America* discussed the "desire to travel, and voyage to distant lands," but rather than locate it within the individual author, instead saw it as a general desire, "Natural to an Active Genius," and tending to the improvement of anyone who took the opportunity.<sup>438</sup> Unlike the privateers of the accounts in Hacke, T.C. did briefly discuss his reasons for travel at the beginning of the text, which, similar to the French and Dutch accounts described above, were located in an "eager Inclination and restless Desire ... to be an Eye-witness of those things I had often heard, though imperfectly, in Relation to what they have since appear'd."<sup>439</sup> Also unlike in Hacke, T.C. was no sailor, but rather a gentleman on what amounted to an extended grand tour, and was thus writing within a

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<sup>437</sup> Hacke.

<sup>438</sup> T.C., *The New Atlas: Or, Travels and Voyages in Europe, Asia, Africa and America, Thro' the most Renowned Parts of the World ... Performed by an English Gentleman in Nine Years Travel and Voyages, more exact than Ever* (London, 1698), preface.

<sup>439</sup> *ibid.*, 2.

different framework of authority, and with a much greater degree of individual autonomy in deciding where his travels would take him.

Regardless, the difference between those accounts written by English travelers in the late-seventeenth century, and those published in French and Dutch and translated into English during the same period, was marked. The French and Dutch accounts often featured the brief biographies in which the author fashioned an individual desire to go to sea, despite their humble beginnings. English accounts almost exclusively began at the moment the ship cast off, already bound for faraway lands. It was not until much later that the individual, self-fashioned traveler began to appear consistently in these accounts. Despite his apparent role in bringing forth the voyage account into popular literature, Dampier was no exception, as he began his account on the ship, bound for Jamaica.<sup>440</sup> Instead of constructing the personal identity of the writer, his preface was concerned with a description of the contents of the book, and, as discussed above, its usefulness to the English nation and specifically to the community of natural philosophers who he imagined was his primary audience. Thus, his protestations of authorship took place within the context of authority that remained important to the Royal Society, even if his popular success brought about a new era of literary celebrity. If Dampier is now seen as an “author” of “travel literature,” it is not in a capacity that he would have recognized.

The authorship that eventually emerged from authority did so as a result not only of Dampier’s popularity, but also through the influence of translations of foreign accounts. These translations, which outnumbered English accounts published in the 1680s and ’90s by a considerable margin, seem to have introduced one of the major tropes of “travel literature” into

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<sup>440</sup> Dampier, 1697, 1.

what is sometimes seen as a quintessentially British genre. In beginning with their personal histories, the likes of Swift and Defoe were not following Dampier and Narborough, but Glanville and Foigny. This is not to say, however, that the seaman was entirely absent from the authorship of his own account. In one important sense, the reader's attention was consistently drawn to the "writerly" practices of the seaman in authoring the account. Just as the sailor's body marked both his class and his relationship with civilization, so too his language was a marker of his relationship to civil society through his class. References to the sailors' language abound in English accounts published from the 1690s on. These references had the effect of establishing a relationship between the writing seaman and the reader in England. This relationship at once reinforced class hierarchies and established an air of authenticity that ran counter to the traditional methods through which authority was derived. Where, for the readers of the Royal Society, authority came from a relationship both to the classical texts and to other members of the Republic of Letters, the "sailor's tongue" asserted another form of authority through an ironic invocation of his relationship to civil society. Through his position at the margins of civil society, and his consequent lack of politeness, the sailor became an authority of his own.

The sailor-writer did this through asserting his relationship both to the community of sailors, and to the community of readers. In his analysis of sailors' linguistic communities and its role in class formation, Marcus Rediker briefly discusses the "condescending sea captain," Nathaniel Uring.<sup>441</sup> As Rediker notes, Uring described the body of sailors who he commanded and amongst whom he lived as "the most unconversable Part of Mankind."<sup>442</sup> Here, however, Rediker omits both key words in the sentence, as well as the context in which Uring's comments

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<sup>441</sup> Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (Cambridge, 1987), 154.

<sup>442</sup> *ibid.*



were made. The full quote, which appeared in the “Advertisement To the Reader,” in fact refers to the “most unconversable and unpolite Part of Mankind.” It comes at the end of a paragraph that complained of the “Falsities and Inventions that are too often found in Books of this kind, (particularly the many Voyages and Travels lately published by Persons unknown, which are all made Stories, on purpose to impose on the World, and to get Money).”<sup>443</sup> Uring, by his own testimony at least, wrote in order to appease friends that wished to see a truthful account published. His “condescension” was in fact a not very subtly masked assertion of the veracity of his own account: “As to any Inaccuracy in the Stile,” he wrote, “I believe it will be readily excused, when it is consider’d, what various Changes and Scenes of Life have attended me, among the most unconversable and unpolite Part of Mankind.”<sup>444</sup> Unlike the words of Agrippa, who saw the hardships of the mariner’s life as cause to view him as dishonest and criminal, Uring used seafaring culture, manifested in his writing style, as the backdrop to and grounds for the reliability of his account. In playing upon the reader’s undoubted prejudice against sailors and their uncivil, impolite lives, he asserted his own honesty.

In doing so, he was far from alone. In the preface to his collection, for instance, Hacke commented on the “simplicity and brevity” of Cowley’s descriptions, and described Roberts’ account as done “with a Seamans bluntness, but with a great Faithfullness.”<sup>445</sup> Likewise, the same preface that turned a biography of Miles Philips into a description of the historical context in which he wrote, and a narrative of the process by which the account came to print, ended with a lengthy disquisition on Philips’ prose style. On reading the manuscript for the first time, the author of the preface found that

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<sup>443</sup> Uring, advertisement to the reader.

<sup>444</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> Hacke, preface.

The story was so well told, that there wanted no Reviser. An Air of ingenuous Sincerity shines through the whole Relation, and the Style is so natural and plain, that it even speaks it self the unadorn'd Product of an artless Sailor.

For this Reason I rather chose to let it make its own *Eclat* of Reputaion, than to pain that Beauty which is so conspicuous in its own natural Colours. The honest Bluntness of the Sailor forces a Prepossession in Favour of the Writer, and Truth comes always unsuspected from the Mouth of one who knows not how to *feign*. And, without fore-stalling the Judgment of the candid Reader, I will venture to pronounce it as my Opinion, that if a *more artful Story* may be presented to the World, I do not think that a *truer* can.<sup>446</sup>

The author of the preface transformed the sailor's language — blunt, uncivil, and outside the bounds of what should pass for authoritative discourse — into an argument for the veracity of the account. This argument rested on the very grounds by which a sailor could not be trusted. The nature of his labor and the food that he ate placed him at the outer reaches of British society, even as he traversed the geographical margins of empire. In response to this marginalization, a convention developed in which plain speaking was equated with truth telling, and authority was derived from the authorial practices of the sailor, rather than his status as a participant in the Republic of Letters. Through this convention, the sailor and his culture became legible within the literature of empire.

The sailor thus emerged as a literary figure within the voyage account, not through his relationship with the ship and the sea, but through and despite his relationship with his labor, his victuals, and the assumptions of early modern reading culture. Within the text, the sailor existed primarily at the juncture of theories of the body, of labor, and the boundaries of civilization. In the English accounts at least, there was little sense of the sailor as a character within the text until the 1720s, when he emerged through what amounts to a major shift in attitudes towards the idea of a writer. In the late-seventeenth century, authorship was bound up with authority, so that the

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<sup>446</sup> Philips, preface.

distinction between the captain, the author, and the crew, was never clear in either the paratextual dimensions – where authorship of accounts appears to have been assigned to captains with little care for who actually wrote them – or in the close textual construction, where captains, crews and voyages were conflated. The sailor, as a separate entity from the captain, was as an untrustworthy and uncivil figure due to his body’s relationship with diet and labor. Through a combination of the popularity of Dampier’s work, which troubled the relationship between textual authority and captaincy even as Dampier affirmed it, and the influence of foreign accounts, the sailor came to be seen as an individual figure, with a history and character outside of the hierarchy of the wooden world. Key to this was the rhetorical challenge the sailor posed; in asserting the veracity of the account not in spite of its blunt and impolite language, but because of it, the sailor’s language became a form of authority that proclaimed the selfhood of the speaker within the text, and made the sailor into a character in the voyage account. The appearance of this character in the 1720s coincided with the publication of the fictional accounts of Defoe and Swift, which we recognize today as literature, and through which, perhaps, we have retroactively invented the category of “travel literature.” The voyage account oriented the reader not only to the world beyond European shores, or towards new visions of Britain’s imperial past, but also to a new understanding of the relationship between the writer and the text. Over time, the “seaman’s compass” reoriented the reader’s perception of the sailor, the text, and the relationship between the two.

## CONCLUSION: THE GEOGRAPHICAL COMPASS

In 1774, Philip Carteret, contemporary of James Cook and discoverer of Pitcairn Island, complained pernicious effects of the editing and publication of voyage accounts on their authors. He asserted the primacy of the sailor as the principal authority in the voyage account, and railed against the interventions of John Hawkesworth, who had edited a three volume edition of voyages to the Pacific that included accounts by Carteret, Cook, and Commodore John Byron and Captain Samuel Wallis.<sup>447</sup> Carteret complained that

When a man's voyage is printed, not only in his Life time, but also to his Face and in the place where he is resident it must certainly be imagined that there is nothing either omitted or added by the publisher that is contrary to the wish or desire of the writer and that the whole is strictly in his hands. But as this is unfortunately not the case with respect to an account of a voyage I made around the globe in his Majesty's Ship the Swallow which has been lately given to the publick by Dr. H. I find myself under the disagreeable necessity lest my silence should be construed into consent and approbation of publishing it myself not only in Justice to my character that the whole of my voyage should appear together; but for the good of the Service, and the Security of future navigators that they may have all the observations I made, many of which have been omitted.<sup>448</sup>

Carteret argued for an unedited version of the text for two reasons: His own reputation, and the safety of the sailors that would follow his wake into the South Pacific. The problems of

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<sup>447</sup> John Hawkesworth, ed, *An account of the voyages undertaken by the order of His present Majesty for making discoveries in the Southern Hemisphere, and successively performed by Commodore Byron, Captain Wallis, Captain Carteret, and Captain Cook, in the Dolphin, the Swallow, and the Endeavour: drawn up from the journals which were kept by the several commanders, and from the papers of Joseph Banks, esq* (London, 1773).

<sup>448</sup> Alexander Turnbull Library, MS Papers 797, Philip Carteret, "Copy of note presumably by Carteret, in Carteret MS in possession of Sir William Dixon."

credibility thus remained, but rather than establishing his credibility in order to legitimate the text for its audience, Carteret sought to maintain his own reputation in the face of editorial interventions. Likewise, he saw utility in the publication of the account, but it was the knowledge that could be gained by other sailors, rather than the knowledge that could be gained by gentlemen scholars, that was foremost in Carteret's mind. In his complaint, he asserted a version of authorship and a domain over textual production that was unavailable to sailors in the seventeenth century. Carteret's sailor-author was a well-established figure, with a good reputation that could be degraded by the work of the editor, rather than a marginal figure whose reliability needed to be established through the editor's textual work. Over the course of the eighteenth century, something had changed. The efforts of Dampier, and those who followed him, remade the role of the sailor as a producer of knowledge by locating the credibility of the text within the individual author.

In this, the voyage account tracked with and in some ways spearheaded an ongoing, fundamental shift in ways in which authority and authorship were understood in English society. As Mary Carruthers argues, in medieval views of textual authority, "*auctores* were texts, not people."<sup>449</sup> Textual authority derived from God, not men, and the creation of "new" knowledge was actually an act of composition and arrangement through elaborate structures of memory. These acts of composition drew on repositories of ancient and sacred texts – the act of rumination and arrangement was not, in the medieval era, a creative one of authorship. Instead, the figure composing the text conferred his authority upon it post-composition. The reliance on classical and biblical literature in medieval and Renaissance scholarship was profoundly attached to the dissociation between authorship and authority described in detail by Carruthers. This

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<sup>449</sup> Mary J. Carruthers, *The Book of Memory: A Study in Memory in Medieval Culture* (Cambridge, 1990), 190.

dissociation was very different to what we recognize today. Anthony Grafton argues that Columbus' accidental discovery of the Americas profoundly disrupted this epistemology, as the ancient sources were found to be inadequate – the ancients did not know of the New World.<sup>450</sup> Grafton tracks the ways in which ancient texts were recontextualized and revived as legitimate sources of knowledge that could explain the New World even through their silence on the matter – a later strand of this practice is studied in chapter two of this dissertation. As I argue in “The History of the Compass,” over the first half of the eighteenth century the histories that connected British to ancient and sacred history both gave way to a mercantile culture in which they were regarded not as inaccurate, but irrelevant. It is probably no coincidence that this profound shift away from ancient historiography was accompanied by the emergence of the sailor-as-author. From the 1660s, members of the Royal Society advocated the use of sailors as instruments of science and observation. Despite their marginality in the worlds of authority and credibility, they were the necessary eyewitnesses to the far reaches of the world. Thus, they needed to be trained as observers, and methods needed to be established that could extend credibility to the sailors through the textual framework in which their observations were presented to readers.

This transformation of the sailor into the author by the latter half of the eighteenth century was in some ways reflected in the visual arts produced by the artists who now joined voyages into the Pacific. As Bernard William Smith famously argues, the influence of scientific methods of observation and categorization on the neo-classically trained artists who accompanied Cook into the South Pacific was profound. Scientific observation tended to render the world “as a world of disparate things” that contrasted with the imperative to find unity in

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<sup>450</sup> Anthony Grafton, *New Worlds, Ancient Texts: the Power of Tradition and the Shock of Discovery* (Cambridge, Mass, 1992).

mood and expression in landscape art.<sup>451</sup> In breaking down the cosmological order expressed in such neo-classical unity, these artists made way for new conceptions of nature based in ecological relationships, rather than the great chain of being. The experience of voyaging into the Pacific in the second half of the eighteenth century was thus profoundly influential on European conceptions of both art and nature, and it was the influence of scientific practice on these artists that produced ruptures in European ways of seeing when they gazed upon paintings of the Pacific Islands.

Although the kinds of changes wrought by published voyage accounts were quite different, they nevertheless had an epistemological effect. Beyond the important work of bringing information about the New World to European readers, voyage accounts also brought marginal voices into popular discourse, and allowed credibility to be at least partially located in those marginal individuals. Although the wide range of knowledge that the “geographical compass” pointed to narrowed, and questions about the internal structures of the earth, its dissolution in the flood, and the migration to the New World following its recession could no longer be answered with recourse to the voyage account, the account was nevertheless part of a long arc of change in the European understanding of textual authority – from the medieval *auctore* to the modern author. David Armitage has convincingly argued that, the category of “English literature” is a modern projection onto the early modern world, and that prior to its invention the mid-eighteenth century, the English arts and letters only engaged sporadically and often critically with “empire.”<sup>452</sup> Contrary to postcolonial critics who argue that the idea of English literature was a creation of the British Empire, Armitage argues that, in the early modern

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<sup>451</sup> Bernard William Smith, *European Vision in the South Pacific* (2nd edn, Oxford, 1989), 3.

<sup>452</sup> David Armitage, “Literature and Empire,” in Nicholas Canny, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire: The Origins of Empire* (New York, 1998), 121.

era, “Empire followed Art, and not vice versa.”<sup>453</sup> Nevertheless, the success of Dampier’s accounts, and the orientation of the voyage accounts away from authority imbued through the structures of English society and the textual realm as imagined by the Royal Society, and towards the sailor-author, suggest that the voyage accounts published in the eighteenth century were at least in part responsible for the creation of a new kind of authorial voice. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the figure of the sailor-author was thrust to the center, in the form of Dampier and later Cook, but also in fictional and satirical incarnations such as Lemuel Gulliver and Robinson Crusoe. These are all texts that we view as literary today (even as, in the case of Cook, Hawkesworth’s editorial practices were famously heavy-handed),<sup>454</sup> and yet they emerged out of a milieu in which the voyage account was part of a very different category of textual practice.

This is not to say that the author was created on the decks of the ships – rather, the accounts of voyages were acutely problematic in a world of publishing in which knowledge and authenticity were always and necessarily unstable. The popularity of the voyage account, arising as it did out of reading culture shaped by the interests a mercantilist society, displaced those concerns. It was the specific context of the London book market that these changes took place. As this dissertation has shown, these voyage accounts were published into a context in which credibility and civility were key factors in knowledge production. Members of the Royal Society not only provided instructions to sailors for making observations at sea; they also conferred their own credibility onto sailors’ accounts through editorial interventions, introductions and dedications, and other paratextual material that scholars of travel writing tend to ignore. It was

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<sup>453</sup> *ibid.*, 122.

<sup>454</sup> J.C Beaglehole, *Some Problems of Editing Cook’s Journals* (Melbourne, 1957); and Beaglehole, *Cook the Writer* (Sydney, 1970).



through this paratextual material that members of the Royal Society brought the marginalized figure of the sailor into civil discourse – once there, and over time, the sailor became an author.

The interventions of the gentlemen scholars of the Royal Society in producing these accounts also required a readership willing to participate, both as a market that would make publication economically viable, and an audience interested in the ideas that Royal Society members were developing. They found this readership in a society increasingly convinced of its mercantile nature, ready to take advantage of economic opportunities overseas at the same time as they reimagined their past as imperial and commercial. At the end of the seventeenth century, this readership embraced Dampier, despite Dampier's own problematic relationship with the realms of authority and credibility in which his work was published. Even if, as Armitage argues, "literature" was not a creation of empire, the emergence of the sailor as an authorial voice in the eighteenth century was undeniably part of broader story of the origins of the British Empire. It is, however, one that needs to be told through the vicissitudes of the book market, and not through ahistorical assumptions about what "literature" is.

We are accustomed to assuming that "travel literature" was a coherent genre that brought knowledge of the world beyond the shores of Europe to Europeans before, during and following the great ages of exploration that from the mid-fifteenth until and late-eighteenth centuries. For scholars, this vast body of writing provides fodder for understanding European attitudes towards other cultures and societies, as well as European selfhood as expressed through ongoing first person narrations of at once quotidian and extraordinary experience. "The Geographical Compass" demonstrates that, far from being a coherent body of "literature" as we might understand it today, the voyage account of the late-seventeenth century came to print in a book market in which authority, and not the author, was the chief means by which a text was assessed,

and in which “literature” as we understand it was a concept that was yet to be invented. In order to appreciate the multifaceted nature of the voyage account, it is crucial to think of these texts not as “travel literature,” abstracted from their physical contexts, and read only for the experiences of their purported authors. Instead, we ought to think of these books *as* books; compiled, edited, and published with specific aims that often went beyond financial profit, and marketed for a discerning readership that was participating in the transformation of English society into a British Empire. In doing so, we can be attentive to the “author” of the text – who may never have thought of himself as an author, and whose work was transcribed, circulated, discussed and edited by a group of people he may never have met – and the society in which he wrote, but also to the problems created by print itself. These problems, especially those of authority and credibility, structured these texts as much as the experience of the individual sailor. This problem gives rise to other possibilities. For instance, there is almost certainly room to follow Adrian Johns’ other important lead, into an investigation of piracy in the world of print during the golden age of piracy in the Caribbean, and ask how the piratical printing that Johns outlines might have shaped English perceptions of buccaneers, privateers, and pirates beyond the line.<sup>455</sup>

In considering the role of the book market in the history of empire, science, and travel, studies of the early empire in the European imagination can take the intellectual concerns of the metropolis more seriously than they have in recent years, and reveal them to be concerned not only with imperial expansion and hegemony, but with questions that have vanished under the weight of discoveries that were to follow. Many of the problems that the subjects of this dissertation wrestled with in the late seventeenth century seem bizarre to modern eyes, and yet they were of vital importance to the sailors and natural philosophers that wrote of them. In our studies of the

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<sup>455</sup> Johns, Adrian, *Piracy: The Intellectual Property Wars from Gutenberg to Gates* (Chicago, 2009).

experience and writing of travel, we cannot afford to bypass those problems due to our preoccupation with modern concerns, if our goal is historical understanding.

The “Geographicall Compass” did, as Purchas wrote, present the world to the world, or at least to a small world of largely London-based readers in the later-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. As I have shown in this dissertation, the world it presented was not simply the geographical expanse that was becoming known to Europeans through mercantile and imperial expansion. In compassing the world through the written accounts that appeared on the market during this period, readers engaged not just with far off places, but also with problems of history, religion, philosophy and science. The publication and reception of voyage accounts was embedded in a reading culture that considered the history of the world in its sacred and secular dimensions, and was engaged in debate over methods of observation, recording, and experimentation, as much as reproducing the ancient tropes of mythological travel. The crucial context for this readership was as much cosmopolitan and mercantile as it was nationalistic. Indeed, as this dissertation shows, many of the important facets of voyage accounts that have been ignored by scholars intent on making the case for “travel writing” as a nationalist enterprise are far better explained by a mercantile and cosmopolitan cultural milieu. Similarly, although encounters with non-European people have rightly been of long-lasting interest to scholars, especially given the world historical ramifications of those early experiences, these encounters were but part of a matrix of questions that English readers hoped to answer through their extensive reading of books of travel.

When read with an eye towards the tensions between natural, moral and sacred history, the sometimes esoteric concerns of natural philosophers, and the practical problems of sailors, merchants, and developers of maritime policy, the voyage accounts of the late seventeenth and

early eighteenth centuries become prism for the intellectual concerns of the era. What this prism reveals is a milieu in which knowledge was being rapidly revised in order to account for new information, and that, *qua* Grafton, new information was being used to reformulate old ideas. Most striking is that these ideas vanished so rapidly. The internal structures of the world that Edmund Halley imagined in his quest to understand magnetic variation, the arguments between John Harris, Thomas Robinson, and the “beast L.P.” regarding the dissolution of the world during the biblical deluge, and the rise of the Phoenicians in English imperial historiography are notable as much for their disappearance from scholarly discourse over the course of the eighteenth century as their importance to those that wrote of them. John Harrison’s invention of a method of finding longitude at sea in 1773, for instance, led to a historical narrative in which longitude was the barrier to imperial expansion. The philosophical problems of magnetic variation were rendered moot, even as Halley continued his quest to measure and understand variation long after the establishment of the Board of Longitude in 1714.

The vanishing of the problem of magnetic variation from historical memory, in favor of teleological narratives of imperial success through technological innovation, is in itself emblematic of the treatment voyage accounts have received at the hands of many modern scholars. In taking the empire, the book market, and “literature” for granted, scholars are in danger of reading early modern accounts through modern frameworks, projecting assumptions that developed over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries back onto the seventeenth. As this dissertation shows, the late seventeenth century was characterized by problems and methodologies that were changing rapidly. By the time Cook’s voyages were published, “The Geographical Compass” had vanished, along with a world of knowledge that was no longer useful in the new and modern Empire.

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