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PAUL WITTEK AND RICHARD HAKLUYT
A TALE OF TWO EMPIRES*

John Wansbrough

I.

In the 16th century annals of the moribund Hanseatic League, amongst allusions to intrepid Dutch fleets in the North and Baltic seas, and to traders in Nuremberg who had found overland routes to Danzig and Novgorod, there are dispersed references to a company of Englishmen entitled «Merchant Adventurers for the Discovery of New Trades» (first charter 1407). That was the original style of the chartered monopolies for promotion of commerce into foreign parts. Opportunities must have seemed virtually unlimited, and in the event it was not only the Muscovy Company (charter 1555) and the Northeast passage by which Anthony Jenkinson reached Russia, Persia and Central Asia, but several other voyages as well into the Old and New Worlds that made possible the remarkable expansion of Elizabethan enterprise and prosperity. Indeed, by 1598 and official closure of the Hansa Steelyard (*Stallhof=fondaco*) just upstream from London Bridge, the merchants' adventures were well underway, and that meticulous regulation of trade upon which the wealth of Lübeck was founded had become quite obsolete.

Synchronous with the mid-century initiatives was the birth of Richard Hakluyt (c. 1552-1616), called «the younger» in deference

* This paper was read at a Symposium on the historical work of Paul Wittek, held in the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, on the 25th of June 1984. I am grateful to its organizer, my colleague Professor Malcolm Yapp, for permission to include it in this Festschrift for one of Wittek's most distinguished students.

to his cousin and namesake (c. 1530-91), whose chief merit it was to have introduced the Westminster scholar to the subject of cosmography and the world of commerce. The fateful encounter is retailed in his Epistle Dedicatory to the first edition of «The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English Nation», addressed to Sir Francis Walsingham and dated 17 November 1589¹ :

«Right Honorable, I do remember that being a youth, and one of her Majesties scholars at Westminster that fruitfull nurserie, it was my happe to visit the chamber of M. Richard Hakluyt my cosin, a Gentleman of the Middle Temple, well known unto you, at a time when I found lying open upon his boord certain bookes of Cosmographie, with an universall Mapped : he seeing me somewhat curious in the view thereof, began to instruct my ignorance, by shewing me the division of the earth into three parts after the olde account, and then according to the latter, & better distribution, into more : he pointed with his want to all the knowen Seas, Gulfs, Bayes, Straights, Capes, Rivers, Empires, Kingdomes, Dukedomes, and Territories of ech part, with declaration also of their speciall commodities, & particular wants, which by the benefit of traffike, & entercourse of merchants, are plentifully supplied. From the Mapped he brought me to the Bible, and turning to the 107 Psalme, directed mee to the 23 & 24 verses, where I read, that they which go downe to the sea in ships, and occupy by the great waters, they see the works of the Lord, and his woonders in the deepe, etc. Which words of the Prophet together with my cousins discourse (things of high and rare delight to my yong nature) tooke in me so deepe an impression, that I constantly resolved, if ever I were preferred to the University, where better time, and more convenient place might be ministred for these studies, I would by Gods assistance prosecute that knowledge and kinde of literature, the doores whereof (after a sort) were so happily opened before me.....»

Of the Herefordshire gentry and possibly of Welsh origin, the Hakluyts are attested as early as the 13th century, again with

¹ Apud E.G.R. Taylor (ed), *The Original Writings & Correspondence of the two Richard Hakluyts*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1935, no: 65.

Henry at Agincourt, and as having a seat at Eyton near Leominster. In the London circle of Hakluyt the lawyer, who after 1557 became legal guardian to the child Richard and his siblings, were such figures as Adrian and Humphrey Gilbert, John Dee and John Ashley, with contacts further afield, to Ortelius and Mercator in Flanders. By 1580 (a watershed, both in the life of Hakluyt and in Elizabethan travel literature)² the young man, equipped now with two Oxford degrees and Holy Orders, was himself a member of this company. In April of that year he had initiated correspondence with Mercator, then at Duisburg, touching upon the Northeast passage to Cathay³; and in June published an introduction to John Florio's translation from Cartier's exploration of the Northwest passage⁴. Florio was an Oxford friend and the work commissioned by Hakluyt, whose comment merits quotation :

«To all Gentlemen, Merchants and Pilots..... For here is the Description of a Country no less fruitful and pleasant in all respects than is England, Fraunce or Germany, the people, though simple and rude in manners, and destitute of the knowledge of God or any good lawes, yet of nature gentle and tractable, and most apt to receive the Christian Religion, and to subject themselves to some good government : the commodities of the Country not inferior to the Marchandize of Moscovy, Danske, or many other frequented Trades : the voyage very shorte, being but three weekes sayling from Bristowe, Plymouth, or any commodious Porte of the Weast Countrey, with a direct course to the coast of Newfoundland. At which oportunities besides manye others, mighte suffice to induce oure Englishmen, not onely to fall to some traffique wyth the Inhabitants, but also to plant a Colonie in some convenient place, and so to possesse the Country, without the gainsaying of any man.....»

His vision was omnivorous and his concept of the new venture quite explicit. Two years later (1582) the project was elaborated in the first of Hakluyt's three major works : «Divers Voyages touching

2 See John Parker, *Books to Build an Empire*, N. Israel, Amsterdam, 1965, pp. 102ff.

3 Taylor, op. cit., no. 26.

4 Ibid. no. 29.

the Discovery of America»⁵. This was published in aid of Humphrey Gilbert's expedition to Newfoundland, in the event frustrated by shipwreck one year afterwards.

The vision was not thereby impaired. In 1584, having been posted by his patron Walsingham to the embassy in Paris (from 1583 to 1588 : ambassador Sir Edward Stafford), Hakluyt produced a second version of the American project, this time in concert with Sir Walter Raleigh. The document, entitled «Discourse of Western Planting», was drafted as a state paper and received by the Queen (but not in fact printed until 1877)⁶. That in the end she elected not to act is of course significant, but perhaps less so than that she should have been addressed at all. We know today that involvement of the monarchy in such projects was a matter pursued with some delicacy and considerable subterfuge, so graphically illustrated by the subtle complexity of negotiation that led to the Ottoman commercial privileges of 1580⁷. Hakluyt's arguments (Discourse, esp. chs. 5-8) included not only colonization and conversion of the natives to Protestant Christianity, but also crippling the Spanish dominion in those parts. Unemployment at home was to be relieved by emigration, but also by conscription for increased military and naval forces; wealth was to be augmented by appropriation of raw materials at source and the creation of a market for English manufactures; and finally, the Northwest passage to Cathay would be secured. The programme was audacious and comprehensive. Fear of confrontation with Spain, at least before 1588, may well account for royal approval withheld, but the author had been adamant : in ch. 17 he adduced the advice of Giambattista Ramusio⁸ :

«Why doo not the princes which are to deale in these affairs sende furthe twoo or three Colonies to inhabite the Contrie and to reduce this savage nation to more civillitie?»

⁵ Ibid. nos. 32-35.

⁶ Ibid. no. 46.

⁷ See S. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey 1578-1582*, The British Academy, Oxford University Press, 1977; cf. V.L. Ménage, 'The English capitulation of 1580 : a review article', *IJMES* 12, 1980, pp. 373-83.

⁸ Taylor, op. cit., no. 46 : pp. 288-89.

Ramusio (1485-1557), Venetian geographer and statesman, had devoted over thirty years to collecting and publishing a series of travel accounts and documents, entitled «Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi» in three volumes: Africa (1550), Asia (1559), America (1557); certainly an inspiration if not a precise model for the project of the younger English scholar. It must seem, at least to us, that Ramusio's challenge, even were it so addressed, could hardly have elicited response from a Venetian doge in the mid-16th century. Not that Venice had failed to grasp the concept of commercial expansion by colonial outpost: her policy in the Aegean and Levant from the beginning of the 13th century is sufficient evidence to the contrary⁹. But it was specifically Mediterranean trade that was so anchored, and by the decade 1550-60 when Ramusio was publishing, global circumnavigation was the achievement or at least the project of others.

An historically documented «design for empire» is the legacy of Richard Eden (c. 1521-76) and the property of Richard Hakluyt¹⁰. The first edition of «The Principall Navigations», from which I have cited the address to Secretary of State Walsingham, appeared in 1589: 825 pages in three parts treating respectively of the Southeast, Northeast and Northwest passages. By 1598-1600 and the second edition, the three parts had become three volumes, containing approximately two and a half times the amount of material in the original (from 700,000 to 1,700,000 words) and embellished with fresh dedications, addressed to Lord Charles Howard (Lord High Admiral) and to Sir Robert Cecil (Secretary of State), with a new Preface to the Reader¹¹. Unlike Ramusio, Hakluyt is thought to have refrained from extensive editorial intrusion into his assembly of sources for the maritime history of Elizabethan England. But that claim betrays a somewhat ingenuous notion of the historian's work, and I think it would not be an error to assert that Hakluyt's collection is indelibly traced with his own personality. He was, of course, responsible for the selection and sequence of his

⁹ See E.A. Zachariadou, *Trade and Crusade: Venetian Crete and the Emirates of Menteshe and Aydın (1300-1415)*, Library of the Hellenic Institute of Byzantine and Post-Byzantine Studies, No. 11, Venice, 1983, pp. 90-104.

¹⁰ Parker, op. cit., ch. 2.

¹¹ Taylor, op. cit., nos. 73, 76, 79, 74, resp.

documents, for omissions (e.g. Mandeville and Dallam) and for abridgements (e.g. Fenton). Some accounts of voyages were solicited, as from Robert Dudley of his expedition to the West Indies (1586), or recorded by Hakluyt himself in interview, as in the case of James Lancaster (via Edmund Barker of Ipswich) upon his return from the East Indies (1594). He also served as consultant to publishers and as recruiter of appropriate translators, for Linschoten's *East India Voyages* and Pigafetta's *Relation of the Congo*, or translated himself from the original, as for Galvano's *Discoveries of the World* (1601, from Portuguese). In his capacity as adviser to some at least of the chartered companies, e.g. East India (charter 1600), Virginia (charter 1606), and Northwest Passage (1612), he had not merely access to the most recent accounts of nautical enterprise, but also occasionally a hand in their literary expression, e.g. Josias Logan's letters from Siberia (1611) and report of the discovery of Hudson Bay (1612). In a related but different genre, he was also responsible for the English translation of Hugo Grotius' *Mare Liberum* (1609).

Now, from the evidence of all that activity, it may seem that Hakluyt was not much concerned with the Levant. It is, indeed, commonly thought and frequently said that of the three global passages encompassed in his «Navigations», the Southeast received only more or less perfunctory attention¹². Reasons adduced include the observation that Mediterranean voyages as such were not ones of discovery nor really in any way pioneer expeditions, and hence could not have been expected to add to the sum of ancient and medieval writers, whose staple they had after all been. That may account for his omission of early English pilgrimages to the Holy Land and adjacent territories, some of which were accessible in manuscript (e.g. Willibald and Saewulf)¹³. Much of Hakluyt's documentation appears to have been practical: thus the abundance of letters and treaties, company charters and instructions to agents,

12 See, apud D.B. Quinin (ed), *The Hakluyt Handbook*, The Hakluyt Society, London, 1974, the studies of G.B. Parks and C.F. Beckingham, pp. 97-132 and 176-89, resp.

13 Cf. statistics apud Parks (preceding note), and for the publication of this literature, see Parker, op. cit., pp. 131-39 and 157-63.

account books and tax returns, ships' logs and inventories, though even these for the Levant were far from complete. It might be supposed that after 1600 and the East India Company charter, when Levant trade (Turkey Company charter 1581; Levant Company 1592) had developed a further dimension, the Mediterranean must attract renewed attention. But the addenda in Purchas derived from Hakluyt's estate do not really support that hypothesis¹⁴. It has also been noticed that books published in England between 1603 and 1620 describe East Indian trade via the Cape route, not the Mediterranean¹⁵. Barbary traffic was similarly underplayed, despite plentiful documentation and charter of the Company in 1585¹⁶. The extent which censorship may have contributed to this relative paucity is difficult to assess. By 1598-1600 (second edition), even by 1589 (first edition) secrecy in the matter of competition with Spain/Portugal cannot have been all that important, as it had been, for example, in 1580 when Drake's circumnavigation was not publicised¹⁷. In the trade with Turkey, English breaching of the French-Venetian monopoly had certainly by 1600 become public knowledge.

Of Hakluyt's interest in eastern geographical lore, which would not be expected to have found a place in «The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the *English Nation*», there is some evidence. A letter of 1583 addressed to him from John Newbery at Aleppo records the latter's effort to locate a copy of Abu'l-Fida's *Taqwīm al-Buldān*¹⁸ :

«Some say that possibly it may be had in Persia, but notwithstanding I will not faile to make inquirie for it,

14 See, on the matter of Purchas, the contribution of C.R. Steele to *The Hakluyt Handbook* (note 12 above), pp. 74-96.

15 Parker, op. cit., pp. 184-85.

16 See, on the matter of West Africa and the Atlantic islands, the chapter by P.E.H. Hair, in *The Hakluyt Handbook* pp. 190-96 : the date of the Senegal Company charter was 1588.

17 Parker, op. cit., pp. 104-07.

18 Volume V of the MacLehose edition, Glasgow, 1904 p. 452, dated 28 May; a Latin translation of this work, whose author died in 1331, was made by John Greaves in London, 1650.

both in Babylon, and in Balsara, and if I can finde it in any of these places, I wil send it you from thence».

That was a matter reiterated as late as 25 November 1588 and apparently unresolved¹⁹. Of his acquaintance with Idrisi's *Nuzhat al-Mushṭāq*, parts of which had been translated into Italian and Latin, there is no trace²⁰; but in 1600 he published a prefatory note to John Pory's English translation of Leo Africanus, made from the Latin and French versions at his own instigation²¹. For work of this kind, Hakluyt's resources were indeed limited.

II

When, some three and a half centuries later, a selection of Hakluyt's documents attracted the attention of Paul Wittek, it may be supposed they had a significance quite different from that for which their original editor assembled them. By 1940, historian of Monteshe and the Rum Seljuks, analyst of Ottoman origins, student of Turkish architecture and epigrapher of Anatolian inscriptions, erstwhile member of the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut in Istanbul and of the Institut de Philologie et d'Histoire Orientales in Brussels, born a subject of the Habsburg Empire and now a fugitive from the Third Reich, Wittek had survived more than one imperial experience. As Austrian ally of the Ottomans, he had earlier served in the Balkans, Anatolia, Palestine and the Alto Adige. After the First World War both Habsburg and Ottoman were relegated to archival status, and for a young scholar of philological and historical training the possibilities will have been obvious²². Twenty years later, safe and nearly secure in the

19 Cf. D.B. & A.M. Quinn, in *The Hakluyt Handbook* p. 300: letter from Abraham Ortelius to William Camden.

20 Cf. C.F. Beckingham, in *The Hakluyt Handbook* p. 186; the author died in 1166, the unpublished Italian translation was made by Baldi in 1600, and the Latin, by Gabriel Sionita, was published in Paris, 1619.

21 See F.M. Rogers, in *The Hakluyt Handbook* p. 41; and Taylor, *op. cit.*, no. 80 sub 15 January 1601; Leo Africanus died in 1526, the Latin was published in Antwerp, 1556, and the French in Lyons the same year.

22 A selective list of Wittek's publications: *WZKM* 68, 1976, pp. 1-7.

British Empire (as it then was), his perusal of Hakluyt must appear to have been, at the very least, ominous. The pioneering study, well known to all, is «The Turkish documents in Hakluyt's 'Voyages'»²³. It was conceived as prelude to a monograph entitled «Turkish documents concerning the beginning of Anglo-Turkish relations (1553-1601)» and to be published by the Royal Asiatic Society, a project never realized. Instead, the assembled material became the substance of a seminar offered in the last years (1957-61) of his appointment as Professor of Turkish at SOAS. It was to a member of the seminar that Wittek, five years after retirement (1966), entrusted the unfinished project: the late Dr. Susan Skilliter of Cambridge University, whose fine monograph «William Harborne and the Trade with Turkey (1578-82)» was printed by Oxford University Press for the British Academy in 1977. In his intended Preface Wittek had alluded to the two topics that in his view delimited and justified the project²⁴:

«This subject, the establishment of commercial and political relations with the Ottoman Porte, is one of the great achievements of the Elizabethan age, an outstanding event in English history, if only for the fact that it opened the way to India ... For those willing to study Ottoman diplomatic for its own sake an immense and promising field lies ahead: the almost untouched and all but inexhaustible material preserved in the archives of Turkey ... the chief importance of (which) is, however, that study of it promises to yield the most comprehensive insight into the inner life and structure of the last great Oriental empire in world history, an empire in many respects the heir of the time-honoured traditions of its predecessors.»

A polarity of imperial structures was thus postulated, as befitted a scholar whose own formation was very much a product of the same tradition.

²³ Printed in the *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* XIX/57, University of London, for 1942, but issued 1944, pp. 121-39.

²⁴ Apud Skilliter, *op. cit.*, pp. xvi-xvii; cf. Wittek, *loc. cit.*, p. 131 n. 1.

The optic exhibited in Wittek's appropriation of Hakluyt must reflect a substantial share of the history of Oriental studies in Europe. To the chronological span between the two authors corresponds a development of the field ranging from establishment of the Medici Press in Rome (1584) to the numinous figure of Louis Massignon (d. 1962). In recent years it has become fashionable to call this field «Orientalism» and to scrutinize the credentials of its practitioners²⁵. Not merely their competence, but also their good faith, has been called into question by critics, some of long acquaintance with the object of their analyses, others newly recruited to a campaign of invective that in some quarters has generated an almost independent career structure. The charges are by now familiar: (1) Orientalism is the handmaiden of imperialism/colonialism/Zionism; (2) Orientalists are hostile to Islam and to Muslims; (3) Orientalist studies are markedly ethnocentric and assess Orientals as passive and immutable objects of clinical investigation. It is not my intention here to dispute these allegations, nor even to dwell upon their occasionally contradictory character, but rather, to indicate one unquestionable benefit (there may be more) to be derived from the scandal. That, of course, is the examination of method now accepted, indeed urged, in all quarters, especially perhaps by those students of the Orient anxious not to be tarred with the brush of «Orientalism», but also by representatives of that traditional combination of philology and history in large part responsible for the legacy under attack. While the social scientists might regard themselves as more or less unscathed, the philologists and historians have been compelled to consider not merely their motives but also the precise nature of their claims to expertise.

Now, a sermon on methodological self-consciousness is not to be lightly dismissed, and we have had a fair share of them in the past decade. Foremost amongst the preachers of redemption is, of course, Edward Said, whose self-appointed role as custodian of our studies is hardly less than astonishing. But, despite the bizarre juxtapositions, curious omissions and outrageous distortions with

25 Cf. e.g. D.P. Little, 'Three Arab critiques of Orientalism', *MW* LXIX, 1979, pp. 110-31, on A.L. Tibawi, Anwar Abdel-Malek, and Edward Said.

which his portrait of «Orientalism» is so liberally strewn, he has reminded us of the role played in scholarship by such basic concepts as myth, paradigm, and discourse²⁶. I stress «remind», since it is scarcely conceivable that any «Orientalist» worthy of the name has not, at one time or another in his research and publication considered these matters. I am not, however, certain that such reflection has produced, or could produce, much in the way of consensus.

It would, I think, be fair to say that for Paul Wittek the roles of philologist and historian were indetical. His strength lay in the establishment and analysis of texts, and in that he belonged to the tradition of Classical Philology (*Altertumskunde*) especially as practiced in 19th century German scholarship. The technique is exhibited clearly in his papers on «Monemvasia = Menekshe» and «The Christian Turks of the Dobruja», in which historiographical data are dissected and scrutinized in aid of historical reconstruction²⁷. The view that synthesis was the logical complement of analysis, that fragments and lines of cleavage, evidence of ideological and other preoccupation, once exposed could be rectified and recast to produce a picture (more or less) of «the way things were» (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*), appears to have been axiomatic, or at least, if questioned earlier on, no longer prey to doubt in the period of his mature productivity. Wittek was an etymologist and believed, like all such, that once the root was laid bare its unembellished facticity would be self-evident (*res ipsa loquitur*). Recently, his celebrated theory of the «ghazi origins» of the Ottoman state has attracted critical reassessment in the light of modern ethnography²⁸. For Wittek, unsuspecting heir to his own exposure of official Ottoman genealogies, the «tribe» had to be

26 Invective adumbrated in the New York Times Book Review of 31 October 1976, and properly launched with *Orientalism*, London, 1978.

27 In full: 'Yazınoğlu 'Ali on the Christian Turks of the Dobruja', *BSOAS* XIV, 1952, pp. 639-68; 'The Castle of Violets: from Greek Monemvasia to Turkish Menekshe', *BSOAS* XX, 1957, pp. 601-13.

28 See R.P. Lindner, *Nomads and Ottomans in Medieval Anatolia*, Indiana University Uralic and Altaic Series, Volume 144, Bloomington, 1983; and C. Imber, 'Paul Wittek's «De la défaite d'Ankara à la prise de Constantinople»', *Osmanlı Araştırmaları* V, 1986, pp. 65-81.

monolithic, based on exclusive kinship and incapable of concerted political action. Redefinition of that entity as inclusive, ad hoc, and based on shared interests must appear to comprehend, inter alios, also the «people of Osman». His Ottoman lectures were delivered in 1937 and printed in 1938²⁹. By 1952 and the Dobruja essay, he recognised that the «people of Kaikaus» (Gagauz), whose membership fluctuated according to political opportunity and confessional status, were in fact described in Turkish sources as a nomadic tribe (*göçer el*)³⁰.

Be that as it may, I am inclined to suspect that however ready to reexamine his sources and to acknowledge there the role of imagery and other rhetorical device (e.g. his discovery that Tk. *anaqapısı* = Gk. *anacapsi* and recognition of the Karaferia story thereby generated apud Yazıjioghlu 'Alī')³¹, Wittek might not have thought the modern historian susceptible to similar impulses. It is, indeed, unlikely that he would have suffered gladly such gimmickry as semiotics, structuralism or hermeneutics. That historical discourse, like other varieties, might be a narrative form dependent upon the competence of language as a medium, the relation between signifier and signified, and above all, the creative participation of the narrator, is not evident in Wittek's work. There one detects a sovereign confidence in language to re-create verbally a model of the historical process³². He wrote, and was reasonably fluent in three languages. His long scholarly occupation with yet three others did not, I think, provoke reflection upon the nature of language as such. Nor did he dwell more than casually upon the nature of historical enquiry. For the philologist, language was adequately representative of its referent and history was the discovery of a pre-existing state of affairs. That did not, of course, preclude an ability to distinguish between the «course of events»

29 *The Rise of the Ottoman Empire*; Royal Asiatic Society Monographs XXIII, London, 1938 (revised 1958, reprinted 1963 and 1965).

30 Art. cit. (note 27 above), p. 649 n. 2.

31 Ibid. pp. 655-56.

32 Cf. e.g. Hayden White, *Metahistory: the historical imagination in nineteenth century Europe*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1973, esp. pp. 30-33, 274; and Roland Barthes, 'Historical discourse', apud M. Lane (ed), *Structuralism: a reader*, London, 1970, pp. 145-55.

and the «record of those (same) events», but it did imply that both were recoverable.

Armed with such epistemological conviction, the traditional «Orientalist» was not likely to come adrift. And yet, the life of the scholar was also more : existence in time and in several places. The course of Wittek's middle years had been arduous and, as is customary, allusion to these increased with age. In conversation the Ottoman Empire yielded gradually to reminiscence of the Habsburgs, the exotica of the Muslim world to the more familiar ambience of Central Europe. A good deal of early family experience came to light, together with the not quite alarming admission that the only dates (sic!) of Ottoman history he could ever really remember were those he had learnt at school in Vienna. But that was just a memory, and had to be accommodated to his curious life in exile and comparative solitude, apparently self-imposed but somehow also inevitable. In any case, the longest and most prosperous association of his life was with England.

III

Now, by the act itself of their removal from Hakluyt's collection Wittek's seventeen «Turkish documents» acquired a new lease of life. From a context of recent Mediterranean events, depicting inter alia the loss of Rhodes (1522) and Belgrad (1526) to the cruel Turk (Hakluyt V 1-60 : Dockwray), recording the epitaph of Peter Read in Norwich, knighted by Charles V for his role in the reconquest of Tunis (1538) (ibid 69-70), and an account of the pilgrimage to Mecca from Alexandria (ibid 329-65), these diverse papers (ibid 109-328) became the collective object of scrutiny into Ottoman chancery practice. It was Wittek's purpose in his preliminary study to demonstrate the authenticity of those documents by comparing their Latin and English versions with what was known of Turkish diplomatic instruments. He was, moreover, familiar with the originals of three of them (nos. 3, 9 & 10) and could postulate the same for others. Though to an extent speculative (e.g. Wittek pp. 122-23 n. 4 : BM Cotton MS Nero B XI f. 377

is not the sultan's letter of 1590, but another copy of that of Sinān Pasha)³³, the method has been vindicated in the subsequent work of Dr Skilliter (Wittek nos. 1,2 & 3 = Harborne pp. 6-9, no. 6, no. 14; Wittek no. 17 = DIC pp. 119-57)³⁴. Wittek was also aware of development internal to the Hakluyt collection (Wittek pp. 123-30): that of the seventeen documents only six (nos. 1-5 & 14) had been included in the edition of 1589, the others appearing for the first time in 1599 (vol. II of the second edition), and that three further specimens found in Harborne's papers were first published by Samuel Purchas in 1625 (Wittek p. 127 n. 1 = Hakluytus Posthumus IX pp. 501-02). Thus, into the torso exhumed from Hakluyt was breathed new vitality, which may have contributed, at least in a minor key, to the long-term and largescale project begun with formation of the Hakluyt Society in 1846 and issuing in the valuable Handbook of 1974.

Amongst the addenda in the second edition is a block of eight documents, thought by Wittek (p. 126) to belong to the period of Harborne's embassy (1583-88) but brought to London too late for inclusion in the first edition. These (Wittek nos. 6-13 = Hakluyt V pp. 285-91) consist entirely of what might be called «directives», that is, instructions from the Porte to Ottoman officials for the safe passage and fair regulation of English merchants and their property. Some undated and exhibiting only traces of chancery protocol, five of the documents are printed in English translation (nos. 6, 10-13) and three in Latin (nos. 7, 8 & 9). For two (nos. 9 & 10) Wittek was able to locate the Turkish originals, and from these to identify the type as *firmān/hukum*. From discovery of one of these Turkish texts in this country (no. 9 = Oxford Bodleian MS Turk R (a)) and from a phrase appearing in two of them (nos. 6 & 12): «having read this commandement, give it to them againe», it may be inferred that further examples of the Turkish versions must eventually turn up. On the other hand, I have found in the matter of Venetian commerce with Egypt and Syria

33 Cf. C.F. Beckingham, in *The Hakluyt Handbook* p. 185 n. 2.

34 S. Skilliter, op. cit. (note 7 above); and 'The letters from the Ottoman «Sultana» Şāfiye to Queen Elizabeth I', apud S.M. Stern (ed), *Documents from Islamic Chanceries*, Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1965.

of an earlier period that «directives» of this sort were translated into Arabic from Italian originals (perhaps in the form of a petition), and that it was the Italian version which was carried by the merchant or merchants in question and which served as a «working copy». The Arabic version would then be a formality, and might as easily be found amongst a merchant's private papers (and eventually a private library) as officially registered in an archive of state³⁵. In some cases they have not been found at all.

Be that as it may, Wittek's treatment of the Latin and English versions of these Ottoman documents was conceived as a contribution to Turkish diplomatic. For Hakluyt they had been merely additional evidence of English enterprise in the Middle East, itself predominantly exemplified by reports of travel and diplomacy, the major literary form in his work. When Purchas twenty-five years later printed three further examples of Ottoman *firmāns* (re consular representation in Egypt), these were only token acknowledgement of a legacy («Harborne's papers») that he neither understood nor need have included in his «historico-religious gazeteer»³⁶. A further view of the same material may have been sensed by both Hakluyt and Wittek, but is nowhere quite explicit in their writings: recourse to the Ottoman sultan in matters of even minor dispute and petty litigation along the eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean was an innovation, certainly for the English, but surely also for other trading nations in that part of the world. There is a shift in the concept of authority: from bilateral negotiation between maritime city-states of circumscribed jurisdiction to the unilateral grant of privileges by an imperial power whose bureaucratic tentacles comprehended vast areas. A most vivid contrast is there exhibited between «Hanseatic» regulation of commerce in the northern seas to which English merchants were before 1550 accustomed, and the world which after that date they encountered in the Ot-

35 See J. Wansbrough, 'A Mamlūk Commercial Treaty concluded with the Republic of Florence 894/1489', apud Stern (preceding note), esp. pp. 45-50; and 'Venice and Florence in the Mamluk commercial privileges' *BSOAS* XXVIII, 1965, esp. pp. 486-87, 494 n. 35; and 'The safe-conduct in Muslim chancery practice', *BSOAS* XXXIV, 1971, esp. pp. 30-32.

36 Cf. C.R. Steele, in *The Hakluyt Handbook* p. 75.

toman domain. To that altered situation I am even inclined to attribute the absence of an oath in the much discussed *'ahdnāme* of 1580, as also the gradual disappearance in 16th century Ottoman treaties of a clause specifying sojourn for European merchants and/or their representatives, the consuls³⁷. A precursor, and possible precedent (sic!) of such change might be seen in the earlier Mamluk capitulations, innocent of oath as well as of sojourn clause³⁸. The legacy bequeathed to Selīm I in Egypt seems obvious, at least to me³⁹. However that may be, there is an interesting contrast (probably unintended) in Hakluyt's collection itself: in May 1581 the Englishman Laurence Aldersey in Venice described the utter dependence of the Doge upon consensus of the Signoria (Hakluyt V, 202-14, esp. p. 205), remarkably reminiscent of the complex deliberations in the Diet at Lübeck. In comparison, the distribution of Murād's *firmāns* across the North African littoral must exhibit a novel expression of power.

That for Wittek this model of sovereign disposition exuded a degree of charm cannot, I think, be denied. It was the metaphor that generated his organization of the field⁴⁰: his sources were selected and interpreted to illustrate a quite extraordinary phenomenon, as he put it: «the inner life and structure of the last great Oriental empire in world history». Fortunate, indeed, to have survived his own troubled times, he wrote those words in London, capital of the last great Occidental empire in world history.

37 Matters recently examined by V.L. Ménage (note 7 above) ad Skilliter, pp. 102-03.

38 Cf. J. Wansbrough, 'Safe-conduct', loc. cit., but also 'A Mamluk ambassador to Venice in 913/1507', *BSOAS* XXVI, 1963, esp. pp. 519-21.

39 See J. Wansbrough, 'Diplomatica Siciliana', *BSOAS* XLVII, 1984, esp. pp. 17-18 and n. 28 on the three instruments attesting to the transaction of 1517.

40 The imagery is Hayden White's (note 32 above), but see also R.S. Humphreys, 'The historian, his documents, and the elementary modes of historical thought', *History and Theory* 19, 1980, pp. 1-20. The historian's selection of materials and of models for their interpretation may be sequential, but just possibly simultaneous. The logic of such selection is likely to be a post facto construct, and persuasive in direct ratio to felicity of expression. In that respect, as in others, Wittek's appropriation of Hakluyt must be deemed a success.