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# Mapping Principal Navigations in the Levant

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## Mapping Principal Navigations in the Levant

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### ABSTRACT

Richard Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* is a seminal work in the historical narrative of English exploration and colonisation, but not an unbiased one. By comparing social network maps of the contemporary Anglo-Levant community with textual analysis of *Principal Navigations*, this article will demonstrate the ways in which editorial practices reinforced Hakluyt's personal biases in the text's portrayal of the Levant and eastern Mediterranean, how this bias has resonated in the following centuries to colour conceptions of the late sixteenth century English-Levant relationship, and suggest avenues for the study of unexplored perspectives on this history.

### KEYWORDS

Travel; Richard Hakluyt;  
social networks

Elizabeth I began the 1592 letters patent which established the Levant Company by thanking three men who in 'sundry late yeeres travelled and caused travell to be taken [...] by secrete and good meanes as by daungerous wayes and passages'. They had, according to her, 'set open a trade [...] not before that time in the memorie of any man now living knowen to be commonly used and frequented by way of marchandize by any the marchantes or other subiectes of us or our progenitors'.<sup>1</sup> It was a radical claim which framed these three – Edward Osborne, Richard Staper and William Harborne – as the masterminds of a new stream of economic potential. Osborne, Staper and Harborne, the letters implied, were solely responsible for the steady stream of Levantine goods arriving in London. They, along with the other merchants named on the charter, were granted free licence to 'trade and trafficke by and through the [...] Levant seas into and from all and every'. It was a hugely important moment for the Anglo-Levant relationship, and the result of over a decade's worth of diplomatic work.

Three years before these letters patent were issued Richard Hakluyt published the first edition of his magnum opus, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*. *Principal Navigations* aimed to describe the history of English travel, detailing for its readers the events which, in Hakluyt's telling, had left much of the world either dependent on trade with England or eager to begin it. In 1598 he began publishing the second edition: the scale was such that it took three years to print across three volumes. Since its publication *Principal Navigations* has been an invaluable source for the study of English travel and trade in the sixteenth century. Structured as a compilation of individual texts brought together by one editor, the processes behind its creation have at times been critically obscured, with individual documents considered in

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isolation and removed from the overarching editorial narrative. This article will examine these editorial processes and their effects on the Anglo-Levant material in *Principal Navigations* to both broaden our understanding of Hakluyt's work, and highlight which narratives were prioritised – and have therefore remained visible within critical history – and which were minimised. This analysis indicates that the perspectives of Levant merchants connected both to the cloth trade and personally to Hakluyt were editorially privileged, their histories and experiences were given editorial preference and, as a result, recorded as objective.

'Levant' was a flexible term for sixteenth century English writers. Though within mainland European contexts the term referred predominantly to the Eastern Mediterranean, Hakluyt also used it in reference to the wider Ottoman empire, and as such its application within *Principal Navigations* extended further west to cover modern-day Algeria and Tunisia. Hakluyt's use of the term was closely connected to trade, with 'the Levant' a simple way to conjure up images of luxurious riches. Levantine goods such as carpets, currants and wine were a major form of engagement with the Eastern Mediterranean for his readers, and their status as luxury goods in the sixteenth century was partly the result of historical geo-political limitations.

During the first half of the sixteenth century English access to the Levant was limited, largely controlled by Italian states with the Venetian Republic acting as proto-middlemen alongside a fleet of Flanders galleys.<sup>2</sup> The journeys these goods undertook to reach England raised their prices and, accordingly, their social cachet. In following decades the established balance of power in the Mediterranean began to shift, threatening established Venetian trade routes and increasing the need for a direct Anglo-Levant passage. In 1553 Anthony Jenkinson, an English merchant, was granted special licence from Süleyman I to trade in the Ottoman empire.<sup>3</sup> At this point Jenkinson was still an anomaly within the wider context of English merchants, but his journey to Aleppo and the Levant is commonly viewed as the beginning of the direct Anglo-Ottoman relationship. Hakluyt would treat Jenkinson's licence as such a starting gun when compiling the Levantine material in *Principal Navigations* thirty years later.<sup>4</sup>

The shifting availability of Levantine goods is reflected in the treatment of the region in contemporary literature. While there were references to Turkey and the Levant in English printed material between 1500 and 1550, the majority came from texts printed in other European countries and then translated into English. This pattern reflects the contemporary state of the Anglo-Levant relationship: dependent on middlemen, either mercantile or linguistic, with knowledge mediated through continental agents.<sup>5</sup> While the first half of the sixteenth century saw a growing demand for Levantine goods, their price meant that they remained primarily within elite markets.<sup>6</sup> Carpets are a particularly illustrative example of these contemporary associations, as they regularly feature in portraiture of the period: here, they served as a base on which to display items of wealth and status, including royal bodies themselves. Henry VIII was a great fan of such 'Turkey carpets', travelling with around sixty-five in tow.<sup>7</sup>

This pattern changed along with the shifting political tensions in the Mediterranean. There was a substantial raise in the number of references to the Levant and Turkey in works printed between 1560 and 1580, indicating a growing cultural awareness of the Levant trade in England sparked by Jenkinson's licence. The trade's growing

importance is also indicated with increasing linguistic specificity: whereas earlier references primarily focused on historical knowledge of the Levant, references from 1560 onwards shifted their focus to tradable goods. Readers could have encountered the Levant in references ranging from 'Turkey gownes with sleeves', 'stately tapissarie of Turkey' and 'Turkey palfreis' to 'Turkey hennes'.<sup>8</sup> Shakespeare's later casual domestic references to Turkish cushions and tapestries indicate an assumed level of familiarity amongst his audience; these references pre-date his by at least twenty years, signalling that such familiarity had a long history.<sup>9</sup>

These texts belong to genres stereotypically associated with women, indicating the significance of the Levant to this demographic group as an imaginative space.<sup>10</sup> Such display was not limited to fictional works: the central aisle of St Paul's Cathedral was contemporarily nicknamed 'the Mediterraneo' thanks to its role as a gathering place where imported goods, especially silk and other fine clothing, could be 'conspicuously displayed and discussed' by merchants and their wives.<sup>11</sup> The London centred nature of Levant trade and literature corresponded with a strong theatrical presence: by Jerry Brotton's calculations, more than sixty plays were performed which featured Turks, Moors or Persians between 1570 and 1603.<sup>12</sup> Information about the Levant was thus available to both the literate and non-literate public, especially in London. By the time Hakluyt began his work on *Principal Navigations* in the 1580s the region was a well-established and developed English imaginative space.

This development was the result of years of diplomatic and mercantile work. In the decade following Jenkinson's licence, three separate joint stock companies had been formed focusing on the trade: the Spanish Company in 1577, the Turkey Company in 1581, and the Venice Company in 1583.<sup>13</sup> Their membership forms the basis of the mercantile networks surrounding the Anglo-Levant trade in the late sixteenth century. Historically, the Turkey Company has been viewed as an early incarnation of the Levant Company thanks to the explicit namechecking of Staper, Osborne and Harborne in the 1592 Letters Patent, as quoted at the beginning of this article. However, analysing the composition of this network suggests that this focus is partly the result of Hakluyt's later editorial approaches.

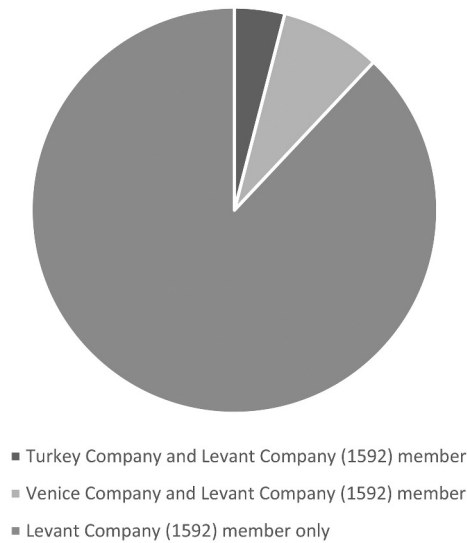
The earliest of these companies – the Spanish Company – included prominent London merchants such as Richard Saltonstall, Edward Osborne and William Hewett, all of whom would play significant roles in the later Levant Company. The worsening political relationship between England and Spain quickly endangered their routes however, and by 1586 it had largely ceased to function.<sup>14</sup> The Venice Company was chartered to monopolise English trade in and around Venice and its Mediterranean colonies, focusing primarily on the trade of currants and spices. The licence for this trade in England had initially been given by Elizabeth to Acerbo Velutelli in 1575. With the worsening Anglo-Spanish relationship more merchants began to join the trade, and in 1583 Elizabeth recalled Velutelli's licence, creating the Venice Company and granting a group of English merchants the privilege to trade in Venice for six years.<sup>15</sup> It was a mercantile Elizabethan heavyweight: though detailed records have been lost, they are recorded as owning 14 ships with a total of 2,550 tons burden, exporting cloth and kerseys as well as lucrative currants.<sup>16</sup>

While the founding of these two companies was largely the result of mercantile opportunism, the Turkey Company's charter was the result of years of diplomatic work. Edward Osborne sent his factor William Harborne to Istanbul in 1578, where Harborne spent the next three years building diplomatic networks before being appointed Elizabeth's ambassador in 1580.<sup>17</sup> The letters patent of September 1581 which established the Turkey Company were issued to Staper, Osborne, Thomas Smythe and William Garrett, all four bound to give notice of the number of ships they sent out and the number of men in them.<sup>18</sup> The letters patent were also significantly restrictive, with the Company not permitted to exceed 12 members.<sup>19</sup> Like the Venice Company they traded in cloth, kersies, and currants as well as 'tin, lead, indigo, raw silk, wines of Candia, cotton' and 'divers other things': across their first nine years the Company employed 19 ships and made a total of 27 voyages.<sup>20</sup> These joint stock companies existed both as individual bodies and as collected corporations of members: in this, they formally echo Hakluyt's own text.<sup>21</sup>

Richard Hakluyt's first connection to these Companies came through his work with the Worshipful Company of Clothworkers, whose membership overlapped with that of the Turkey Company. Staper and Osborne were both freemen of the Clothworkers, and Staper was appointed one of its wardens in August 1576.<sup>22</sup> This appointment coincided with a moment of tension. Traditionally, the Clothworkers supported a student at Oxford, but in late 1577 they discovered their student had resigned his fellowship two years previously without informing them. This left space for a new scholar to receive their patronage and in August the role was taken by a young Richard Hakluyt. There has been speculation about whose recommendation it was that convinced the Clothworkers to pay the relatively unknown student, but G. D. Ramsay makes a convincing case for it being the work of Richard Staper. The short gap between his appointment and Hakluyt's, as well as the later reference to Staper in Hakluyt's preface to *Principal Navigations*, all suggest it was he who put Hakluyt's name forward in 1577.<sup>23</sup> Hakluyt's connection to the Turkey Company through this link would prove essential in his later work on the Levantine material in *Principal Navigations*, and has undoubtedly helped to create the historical belief that the Turkey Company was the most important founding member of the later Levant Company. Analysing the composition of the 1592 Company, however, suggests that this was not straightforwardly the case.

Figure 1 shows the composition of the 1592 Levant Company, based on data gathered from sources including *Principal Navigations* and the State Papers. Particularly notable is the number of men involved in 1592 who had not previously signed either the Turkey or Venice Company charters: 66 in total. Only three members of the Levant Company had previously been members of the Turkey Company and of those, Edward Osborne would be dead by the end of the year, while eight members of the original Venice Company would go on to become members of the Levant Company.<sup>24</sup> Of course, a chart like this by necessity simplifies the relationships between members in flattening them down to one dimensional data points and does not reflect Staper and Osborne's wealth and influence in the mercantile communities of London. Structurally speaking, however, the process of data collection that underpins this chart reflects what was archivally preserved – the skeleton of the Company, its members names – and in the significant proportion who had not previously been members, shows its rapid growth.

## Levant Company Members and Associates, 1592



**Figure 1.** Pie chart of the Company membership.

Building on this dataset using other sources such as wills, letters and printed work, I created a dataset detailing the social relationships within the Anglo-Levant community between 1550 and 1600.<sup>25</sup> Though it is extensive, containing almost 2,500 relationships, it is important to note that it is – almost by nature – incomplete. The lives of many people have not been archivally preserved and with such a significant temporal distance, it is likely that material which might have provided more detail has been lost. A single social network map cannot model the full sixteenth century Anglo-Levant community but could be more accurately described as representing those parts of it which have been archivally preserved. This is particularly useful when using one for analysis of texts such as *Principal Navigations*, which were created through engagement with such bodies of material. For the purposes of this article, I will focus on Hakluyt’s connections within the community, and examine what these may signify about his editorial choices.

Every individual in this network appears as a circle, or node, while the relationships between them are depicted as lines, or edges. While the edges have been weighted equally, appearing the same size, the nodes have been sized according to their degree. This is the sum of edges a node has, a rough measure of its connectedness. The structure of the network is determined by the ForceAtlas2 layout algorithm, which simulates a physical system to spatialise a network.<sup>26</sup> Following this, Gephi’s modularity algorithm was applied: this extracts the community structure, which describes how the network is compartmentalised into sub-networks.<sup>27</sup> The results of this algorithm are displayed on the network map through colour coding with each sub-network coloured differently. These three factors – node weighting, spatial visualisation and modularity – are used in combination to make the network’s internal structure visible and highlight its most significant figures.



The majority of the Levant Company's members fall into one of the three sub-networks created by the modularity algorithm: one connected to Staper which includes Edward Osborne and a number of aldermen; one which includes Cordell, Holmeden and Banning, and one largely focused on Elizabeth I. This split indicates the lasting importance of the previous companies to the social composition of the Levant Company. The structure of these sub-networks is a result of the Company's history, reinforced by the social dynamics of the community and its archival preservation. Even within these sub-networks, however, individual issues could cause further fragmentation. A notable issue was that of membership. Detailed in the 'Objections against the Tripoli merchants, addressed to Lord [Burghley]' written in July 1591, an anonymous writer noted that:

The traders are divided into three factions: Aldermen Spencer, Bayning and Hamden woulde have no man to be admitted. Mr Stapers and some other with him are contented to accept of some four persons. Mr Cordell and his companye (who is knowne for a merchante and respects the credit of his country) woulde that anie man that is desirous shoulde come in uppon some reasonable allowance.<sup>28</sup>

The writer continued that there are only 'some [14] traders [who] enioe Turkey and all the trade within the Venicyan dominion', though failed to name them. They also noted that certain members 'will trayne uppe [few men], the rather to drawe that trade to themselves and their children': this appears to have been Staper's aim. Family ties were clearly important to the development of the Company: of the 76 men connected to the Levant Company in 1592, only 58 of them had unique surnames. Ultimately, there were clearly more than fourteen men named in the 1592 charter, suggesting that Cordell's faction was successful in the debates. Despite this widening of the trade, however, familial connections remained tantamount for members.

Even though he had been overruled in the debate over how many members to admit to the Company, Richard Staper used the opportunity to widen his family's influence over the trade. As well as one of his sons, three other members newly named in 1592 were related to him: Philip Grimes, Nicholas Lete and Robert Sandy. Staper was well connected in London thanks to his years of mercantile experience and wealth, but his status was also partly due to the size of his family. In particular, his daughters' importance as social agents within the contemporary Anglo-Levant community has been largely overlooked, and delving into their histories shows one example of a Levantine perspective which was not recorded in *Principal Navigations*. Richard Staper married one Dionis Hewitt and had six children: Hewett, named after his mother's family, Rowland, named after his father's father, Richard, Mary, Joan and Elizabeth. The importance of these familial connections to Staper is evident in the names of his eldest sons. The Hewitts were an important family: Sir William Hewitt, Dionis' uncle, had served as mayor of London, and through his daughter Anne was Edward Osborne's father-in-law, making the partnership between Osborne and Staper both a family and business one.<sup>29</sup>

While few details of Elizabeth or Mary Staper's lives are known apart from their marriages, those of Joan's are more readily available. She was born in London on 24 November 1570, married the Levant merchant Nicholas Lete around 1590, and went on to have ten children, dying sometime before 1631. During the course of Joan's marriage to Lete she made regular visits to Simon Forman and Richard Napier, asking them to consult the stars for the answers to various questions. Their casebooks have been



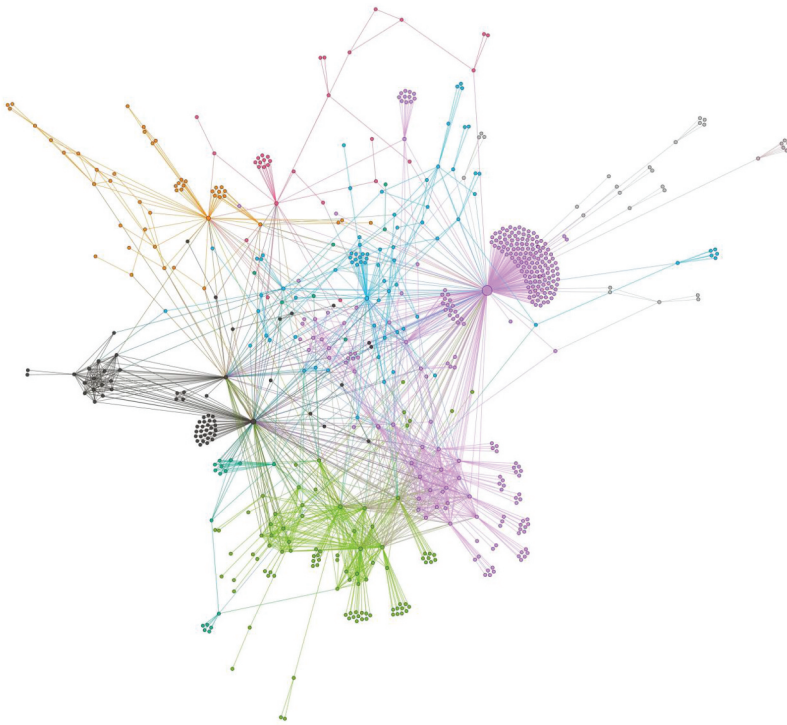
preserved in 66 volumes currently held at the Bodleian Library and digitised as part of the Casebooks Project, making the details of Joan's life and concerns readily available.<sup>30</sup> The Letes were closely connected to Napier: in 1602 he recorded a visit from 'Mr Althem & his wife & his 2 men Mr leate & his wife my brother Sandy & his wife [...]'.<sup>31</sup> 'Mr Althem' is likely James Altham and his wife Mary Staper, Joan's sister, while 'my brother Sandy' is the Staper sisters' former brother in law.

Joan Lete's first recorded visit was in February 1597, where she asked a question relating to her pregnancy.<sup>32</sup> Future visits included queries such as the gender of her unborn baby; requesting 'helpe prayers & consell' for Denise, who was 'myndeth [...] not' to marry; asking where her lost wedding ring had gone, and querying what would be an auspicious day for Denise's eventual wedding.<sup>33</sup> While she consulted Napier primarily on questions regarding her family, Nicholas Lete asked about the locations of his ships, making in total 12 such visits between 1599 and 1603.<sup>34</sup> Joan and Nicholas ultimately used such advice for the same ends: increasing their family's wealth and status. The Levant trade is ever present in the records of these quotidian interactions. Joan sent Napier gifts of 'succet & a night cap of silke' and '2 bottles of white & browne muskadyne', and Nicholas gave him a carpet in 1604, assumedly sourced from a returning ship.<sup>35</sup> These records are invaluable insights into the everyday lives of the community and their account of this gift giving highlights how integral the trade was to the lives of merchants and their families.

Hakluyt's association with the community, however, did not result from either marriage or membership, and his position within the network map as seen in [Figure 3](#) shows the structural effect of this difference.

While the mercantile sub-networks appear as clusters because of their multiple points of connection – familial and professional – Hakluyt's sub-networks are more spread out. This spatial representation is the result of his methods of information collection and dissemination, as well as our archival records of this process. Hakluyt's importance to the Anglo-Levant community and his archival preservation was through his work as a preserver of texts and epistolary correspondent. Because we do not have the records of the correspondence between many of these figures and other members of the Anglo-Levant community, they are distanced from the remainder of the map, connected to it through Hakluyt. In turn, Hakluyt's relative distance from the centre of the network suggests the importance of his connection to Staper, and in turn indicates whose perspectives and experiences would be accessible and thus privileged in his editorial work: members of the Levant Company connected to Staper.<sup>36</sup>

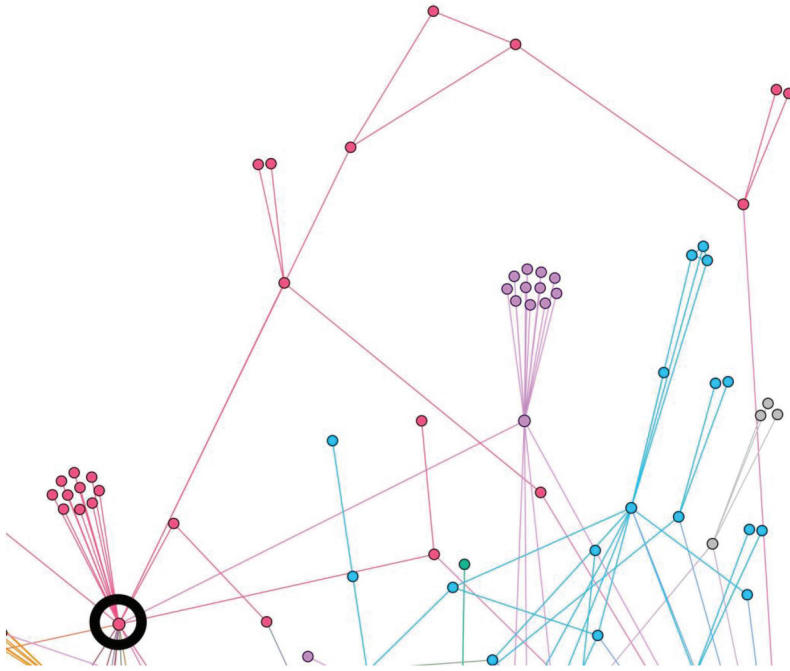
That Hakluyt used *Principal Navigations* to prioritise certain narratives is encoded even within its physical qualities, and is well-established within criticism.. Reading the work is a significant venture: a reader would have been confronted with pages densely packed with text even before the material was expanded. It is also worth noting that someone faced with so apparently comprehensive a work would have no reason to suspect, as G. B Parks notes, that the picture it painted was anything less than complete.<sup>37</sup> The scale of Hakluyt's material and its physical presence effectively communicated the importance of his task as well as its contents. The history of the Anglo-Levant trade was carefully delineated in both editions: Anthony Jenkinson appears to have passed a great deal of his manuscript material to Hakluyt, who preserved it in *Principal Navigations*.<sup>38</sup> This connection would be important for other geographic regions too:



**Figure 2.** Network map representing the Anglo-Levant community, created using data collected from 1550–1600.

Jenkinson was involved in the establishment of English diplomatic relations with Russia, and appointed Ambassador to Russia in 1571.<sup>39</sup> Quinn notes in *The Hakluyt Handbook* that his material was either given by Jenkinson to Hakluyt or sourced from the Muscovy Company archives, but considering Jenkinson's recurring role in multiple geographic regions of Hakluyt's text, the former seems more likely.<sup>40</sup> For the reader, Jenkinson's narrative 'The manner of the entering of Soleyman the Great Turke with his armie into Aleppo [...] 1553' was the first introduction of a roughly contemporary Ottoman figure.<sup>41</sup> 1553 was a key date for *Principal Navigations*: it also marked the onset of trade with Russia (in volume one of the second edition) and West Africa (in volume two).

In the 1589 edition this narrative follows a description of 'The Ambassage which King John the Second, King of Portugall sent [...] [in] 1481', and in the 1599 edition it follows 'A letter of Henry the eight [...] to John the third King of Portugale [...] anno 1531'.<sup>42</sup> The effect, stronger in the early edition, is to mark 1553 as a starting point for the contemporary Anglo-Levant relationship, implying that nothing of record happened between either those years and 1553, increasing the importance of Jenkinson's account within the work's wider narrative. The account depicts an empire preoccupied with displaying two things: military strength and cloth. The text is structured around these points, with descriptions of fabrics including 'yellow velvet', 'crimson velvet', 'violet silk', 'white velvet', 'cloth of golde', 'cloth of silver', 'callicut cloth' and 'a robe of Dollymant crimson' interspersed between an army of '6,000 [...] light horsemen', '10,000 men called Nortans', 'four Captains [...] every one having under his banner twelve thousand men



**Figure 3.** Extract from figure 2 of Hakluyt's sub-network; the node representing Hakluyt is circled.

of armes well-armed', '16,000 Janisaries', '1,000 pages of honore' and 'a companie of horsemen [...] to the number of foure thousand'.<sup>43</sup> This description served to remind the reader of the Ottoman military strength, while the rich fabrics recalled for London readers the 'Mediterraneo' of St. Paul's.

The focus on cloth wealth evident in this opening account continued through *Principal Navigation's* Levant material, which moved from a list of goods noting that 'the especial value [...] was in numbered pieces of cloth'; a narrative description of a procession to Mecca describing 'Camels [...] all adorned with cloth of golde' carrying a 'chest during their voyage [...] covered with Silke' which upon 'entring into Mecca is all covered with cloth of golde adorned with jewels', to a letter sent from the merchants John Newberry to Leonard Poore where Newberry notes 'I thinke cloth [...] [has] never bene here at so low prices'.<sup>44</sup> Across both editions Hakluyt consistently reminded the reader of the importance of cloth within Levantine trade through the steady inclusion of such documents, making them the primary textual focus of the Anglo-Levant trade. Cloth was a family concern: Richard Hakluyt the Elder, Hakluyt's cousin, had noted the importance of this trade in his 'briefe Remembrance of things to be indevoured at Constantinople, and in other places in Turkie, touching our Clothing and our Dying', written in 1582.<sup>45</sup> There, he instructed that learning the practices of their cloth making and producing would be an 'infinite benefite to our Clothing trade'.

The cloth focused documents in *Principal Navigations* included narratives, lists of goods, and letters. Of these, letters are particularly interesting to examine because of the intensely personal and potentially transitory nature of their form. Most, if not all, began

as manuscripts, and while some were copied and circulated in print, others remained in manuscript form, travelling with their owner. Letters, whether kept in manuscript or intended for public and printed dispersal, represent multiple levels of negotiation between form, content and purpose.<sup>46</sup> Levantine letters were particularly subject to these negotiations, and the letters between Elizabeth and Murad III the Ottoman Sultan give a particular insight into their ‘contrasting conceptions of authority’.<sup>47</sup> According to Ottoman custom, the Sultan was unable to engage in diplomatic relations on equal terms, which required Elizabeth and her advisors to devise and negotiate diplomatic strategies, altering the stylistic and formal presentation of her letters to overcome these barriers. Within his Levantine material, Hakluyt included letters from royalty, ambassadors, imperilled sailors and commercial agents. Longer letters were often inserted to stand alone in the text as narratives, eliding their subjective history to transform them into objective texts. Shorter letters, especially those where Hakluyt had access to both sides of the correspondence, were often paired to create a call and response effect. Reading these letters in sequence gave the reader the impression of a functioning Anglo-Ottoman epistolary relationship which could be relied upon to transmit information, provide safety and answer queries with little delay. This, of course, was not necessarily the case.

A prime example of this technique in action, and the difficulties it was used to hide, is the retelling of the *Jesus* saga in *Principal Navigations*. The *Jesus* was a ship belonging to the Turkey Company, whose sailors were imprisoned in 1583 when the local authorities in Libya (called Tripoli in the text) decided that a factor aboard the ship owed a local merchant 450 crowns. They promptly seized the *Jesus* and confiscated its goods, hanging the master and one of the crew before imprisoning the rest as slaves. Thomas Saunders’ letter to his father, smuggled from Libya to Tavistock, alerted the Turkey Company merchants to the situation and set the diplomatic wheels in motion for their rescue.<sup>48</sup> In order to tell the ship’s story Hakluyt included four separate documents in both editions of the text: a narrative written by Saunders lifted from his printed version, a letter by Elizabeth I to Murad III explaining the situation, Murad III’s apologetic reply, and William Harborne’s letter requesting their release. The retelling of this complex diplomatic incident, a major and successful stress test of Harborne’s diplomatic status, was greatly simplified in *Principal Navigations*. Though the horrors the crew of the *Jesus* suffered were not excised, the structure of the material negated any uncertainty of rescue and collapses the temporal distance between events. While Saunders’ narrative itself was largely unchanged from the original sources, Hakluyt’s editorial role allowed him to put it to new ideological use.

Saunders’ meta-textual additions in his original printed work emphasised his eyewitness credibility and duty to the state that rescued him. These marginal notes were cut by 60 per cent in Hakluyt’s edited version of the narrative.<sup>49</sup> Julia Schleck’s analysis of Hakluyt’s editorial work on this document posits that it was done with the aim of shifting the key relationship of the text from subject/monarch to monarch/monarch. This shift in dynamic correlates with Hakluyt’s approach to representing epistolary relationships within his text: his removal of Saunders’ meta-textual structure reframed the narrative as a forerunner to the epistolary exchange between Elizabeth and Murad III, placing the focus on the two monarchs. Following this regal exchange, Harborne was able to enforce her will in Libya from his ‘mansion in [Pega]’, demonstrating to the reader the global

reach of Elizabethan power.<sup>50</sup> Monarchs could quickly fix any problems which arose for English traders, the narrative implied, but in the Levant the Turkey Company would be its ultimate enforcers.

One document in the Levant material does serve to draw the reader's attention to the limitations and dangers of the epistolary form: a letter written from William Harborne to Mustapha Beg, a diplomatic translator and envoy who had worked alongside Harborne since 1578.<sup>51</sup> Titled 'A letter of M. Harborne to Mustapha, challenging him for his dishonest dealing in translating of three of the Grand Signior his commandements', Harborne describes the translations as 'male scripta, plus damni, quam utilitatis adferant [badly written, bringing more harm than good]'.<sup>52</sup> Rather than revealing the lived experience of the Levant trade to the reader, the inclusion of this letter highlights Harborne's diplomatic skill and knowledge. In it, he challenges an inaccurate translation of a Royal letter with the aim of retrieving its 'true' meaning. Hakluyt's inclusion of Harborne's critique may serve to signal to the reader his editorial belief that letters, a highly subjective form, could be used to demonstrate objective truth – though the fact that it remained untranslated from Latin would have kept it behind an educational barrier.<sup>53</sup> There were other cases of judicious omission in the Levantine material: notably the gun trade between England and the Ottoman empire, a point of contention between Elizabeth and European monarchs, which was completely excised.<sup>54</sup> Susan Skilliter, in her documentary study of Harborne's Levantine work, notes this tendency of Hakluyt's, writing that 'our lack of information on the subject now [may be] [...] partly due to Hakluyt's policy of not putting before the public facts which might shed light on policies followed by the government but not generally approved of'.<sup>55</sup>

Though his work had been vital, Harborne's role in establishing the diplomatic relationship was, in fact, almost entirely left out of the 1589 edition of *Principal Navigations*. He first appears in 'The Queenes letter to the Great Turke 1582, written in commendation of M. Harebrowne when he was sent ambassador'.<sup>56</sup> The passive construction of 'when he was sent' masks the near decade of diplomatic work which preceded Harborne's appointment. Hakluyt also did not include Harborne's letters, saving them for the second expanded edition. Harborne's omission from the 1589 edition is glaring in the context of the 1592 letters patent three years later, where he would be explicitly namechecked by Elizabeth I. Susan Skilliter assumed that Harborne's manuscript material was passed to Hakluyt only after his return in late 1588.<sup>57</sup> This would have left little time for the material to be edited for inclusion in *Principal Navigations*, which is a possible explanation for its absence, but not a greatly plausible one. Hakluyt and Staper had a well-established relationship of over a decade, while plenty of the Harborne material published in the 1598–1600 edition pre-dated 1589 and Staper – and likely Hakluyt – would have been aware of its existence before late 1588.<sup>58</sup> It seems unlikely, then, that awareness of or access to the material would have been an insurmountable issue. It may also have been a case of scale, with the printers perhaps unwilling to print a longer book but considering the importance of Harborne's material, this too seems a less convincing reason.

In keeping these materials private for a decade, Hakluyt protected the trade secrets of the Turkey Company. By embargoing information which could have lost the Turkey Company their advantage within the region, *Principal Navigations* continued to

support Staper and Osborne's work, but failed to give a full picture of the Anglo-Levant trade. This lack of detail is particularly visible when contrasted with material depicting the Anglo-Russian trade: there, Hakluyt even included poetic letters from George Turberville describing daily life in Russia. For daily life in Istanbul, there is no such information. This lack of detail continued across into Hakluyt's editorial treatment of material. A number of words across *Principal Navigations* are glossed, implying that the reader was not expected to be familiar with them. In the Levantine material fewer words are glossed than in other sections, and while a number are immediately obvious through context, many are not. Listing these words indicates a consistent pattern: they are the names of luxury tradable goods. Such un-glossed lists of goods were more useful for merchants using the text than for the casual reader. For such readers, unable to access the precise meanings of these terms and understand the mercantile nuances: they instead served an evocative purpose, reminding them of the Levantine goods that could be found filling herbals and romances.

A notable example of these terms is 'The money and measures of Babylon, Balsara and the Indies, with the customes etc written from Aleppo in Syria anno 1584 by Mr William Barret'.<sup>59</sup> This document begins with various currency conversions and ends with a long list of goods. In this seemingly exhaustive list Barrett lists five separate name variants of ginger, none of which have modern equivalents, as well as a number of trading goods with names derived from transliterations of their Arabic, Portuguese or Latin names such as 'Dente d'Abolio [Elephant's teeth]' and 'Sanguis Draconis [Dragon's Blood]'. Hakluyt failed to gloss these items, giving no more information than name and the locations where they can be sourced. If a reader was unclear as to the use or composition of an item, they had no easy recourse in the text to clarify it. By failing to gloss these goods Hakluyt created a linguistic sub-community within the text's readers of those who understand the mercantile dimensions of the names, and those who did not. Though the list's indecipherability to modern readers can be attributed partly to temporal distance, several of the terms are not recorded in other contemporary English works, implying that they represent a unique dialect of the Levant traders. *Principal Navigations* in theory laid out the history of English travel to its readers, but those reading the Levant material could have been in no doubt about the private nature of the trade. It is an example of what the linguist M. A. K Halliday terms an 'anti-language': a language generated by a society within a society which has the 'same grammar [but] different vocabulary in certain areas, typically those that are central to the activities of the subculture', where such words cannot be translated back into the language of society without losing meaning. It is a language both 'relexicalized' and 'overlexicalised' which enables its speakers to create and maintain a 'subjective reality' through shared use of the language.<sup>60</sup> Halliday uses the example of Elizabethan vagabond counterculture as a prime example of an 'anti-language'. This is not the only case in Hakluyt's work where such a 'anti-language' appears, and in each case it signals a divide between the levels of information readers are able to access. Hakluyt's use of mercantile language in *Principal Navigations* in this case reinforces the limited nature of the trade's membership.

These examples each demonstrate Hakluyt's editorial approach in effect, privileging certain viewpoints and giving his readers an image of the Levant filtered through the lens of the trade and his own relationships. *Principal Navigations*, rather than giving an



objective overview of the Anglo-Levant relationship, was carefully selected and selectively edited to promote the interests of a sub-group within the larger community: those merchants connected to the cloth trade who he knew personally. Establishing this fact through a range of analytical approaches, such as those used here, opens up both avenues for future consideration and further questions. How might the Levantine section of *Principal Navigations* have read if Hakluyt had been connected to members of the Venice, rather than Turkey Company? Assumedly there would have been less reliance on Harborne's material, and a focus on currants rather than cloth as the primary trading good – as the excision of the gun trade indicates, Hakluyt was no stranger to re-writing history. Recognising these voices who were recorded in his work also invites us to ask how – and if – they can be recovered. Some, like Joan Lete's, may have unexpectedly been preserved, but these are relatively rare. Perhaps then, the best we can do is recognise their absence.

## Notes

1. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1598–1600), II (1599), p. 296.
2. Wood, *History*' pp. 1–3.
3. Skilliter, *William Harborne*' p. 7.
4. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), p. 296.
5. Dimmock, *New Turkes*' pp. 24–5.
6. MacLean, *Looking East*' pp. 47–8.
7. Examples include 'King Henry VIII', 1537; 'King Edward VI', p. 1547.
8. Painter, *Pleasure*, 132 r, 166 v, 173 r; Heresbach, *Foure bookes*, 76 r, 161 v.
9. Dimmock, *New Turkes*' p. 202.
10. See Andrea, *Women and Islam* for further detail.
11. McJannet, "'Oranges and Lemons Say the Bells of St. Clement's': Domesticating Eastern Commodities in London Comedies', p. 219.
12. Brotton, *The Sultan and the Queen*, vol. 172; Hutchings, *Turks, Repertories, and the Early Modern English Stage*.
13. Croft, 'Introduction'; Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), pp. 146–50; Brown, 'Venice: August 1583'.
14. Croft (1973).
15. Epstein, *Early History*, p. 20.
16. TNA SP 12/233 f.28.
17. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), 166; Skilliter, pp. 34–48.
18. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), pp. 146–50.
19. Skilliter, pp. 180–83.
20. Lansdowne vol. 60, f. 8 r; Epstein, p. 23.
21. Turner, 'The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Corporation', p. 85.
22. Ramsay, 'Clothworkers, Merchants Adventurers and Richard Hakluyt', pp. 516–9.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 518.
24. Anderson, 'Osborne, Sir Edward'.
25. A full list of sources is available in the Appendix.
26. ForceAtlas2 is designed for networks of <100,000 nodes, and aims to provide an intuitive way to spatialise networks, simplifying the map as far as possible. For more information, see Mathieu Jacomy and others, 'ForceAtlas2'.
27. Blondel and others, 'Fast Unfolding of Communities in Large Networks'.
28. TNA SP 12/239 f. p. 105.
29. Furdell, 'Hewett, Sir William'.



30. Kassell, Hawkins, Ralley, and Young, 'Casebooks Project', *A Critical Introduction to the Casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596–1634*.
31. Kassell, Hawkins, Ralley, Young, Edge, Martin-Portugues, and Kaoukji (eds.), 'CASE17065', *The Casebooks of Simon Forman and Richard Napier, 1596–1634: a digital edition*.
32. Ibid., 'CASE1215'.
33. Ibid., 'CASE26229'; 'CASE36684'; 'CASE48116'; 'CASE25471'.
34. Ibid., 'CASE5291'.
35. Ibid., 'CASE41692'; 'CASE55539'; 'CASE14383'.
36. See Ramsay 504, 521 for other examples of editorial bias.
37. Bruner Parks, *Richard Hakluyt and the English Voyages*, ed. by James A. Williamson, pp. 127–28.
38. Quinn, II, p. 355.
39. Appleby, 'Jenkinson, Anthony'.
40. Quinn, II, p. 355.
41. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), p. 112.
42. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1589), vol. 81; Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), p. 113.
43. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), pp. 112–3.
44. All quotations taken from Ibid, 'A Catalogue or register of the English ships, goods, and persons wrongfully taken by the Galleys of *Alger*, with the names of the English captiues, deliuered to *Hassan Bassa* the Beglerbeg of *Alger*', p. 179; 'Of the preparation of the Carovan to goe to Mecca', pp. 203–5; 'Another letter of the said *M. Newberie*, written to Master *Leonard Poore* of London, from *Alepo*', pp. 246–7; 'Another letter of Master *Newberie* to the aforesaide *M. Poore*, written from *Babylon*', p. 247.
45. Taylor, pp. 182–3.
46. See Brayshay. pp. 48–65 for more detail on the practicalities of transporting letters, and Sherman 'Distant Relations' for contemporary examples of letters serving as travel writing.
47. Allison, pp. 132–3.
48. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), pp. 183–194.
49. Schleck, 'Forming the Captivity of Thomas Saunders: Hakluyt's Editorial Practices and their Ideological Effects', pp. 129–38.
50. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), vol. 194. Pega is now a district in Istanbul.
51. Ibid., vol. 174; Brotton, *This Orient Isle*, pp. 93–8.
52. Ibid., p. 175.
53. For more on Hakluyt and translation, see Turner, 'Book, list, word: forms of translation in the work of Richard Hakluyt'.
54. Dimmock, 'Guns and Gawds', pp. 217–8.
55. Skilliter, p. 26.
56. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1589), p. 183.
57. Skilliter, p. 33.
58. See Ramsay.
59. Hakluyt, *Principal Navigations* (1599), pp. 271–81.
60. Halliday, 'Anti-Languages', pp. 570–84.

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## Appendix

Sources for the network data are given below:

### Manuscripts

*London, British Library*

Add MS 48026

Add MS 78174

Cotton MS Nero B XI

Lansdowne 34

Lansdowne 38

Lansdowne 61

Lansdowne 112

Yelverton MS 141

*Kew, The National Archives of the UK*

'Objections against the Tripoli merchants, addressed to Lord [Burghley]', SP 12/239, fol.105<sup>r</sup>

'The Answer of the Company of Merchants Trading to Venice to the Five Articles

Submitted to Them by Lord Burghley [1590]', SP 12/233, fol. 28<sup>r-v</sup>

'Will of Thomas Cordell', PROB 11/119/382

'Will of Richard Staper', PROB 11/112/156

'Will of Henry Hewett', PROB 11/91/131

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'Will of Dennis [Dionysus or Dionizie] Staper, PROB 11/119/613

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