

**'Preserving the Memory of so Memorable an Action':  
Narrative, Example, and Politics in Sir Anthony Sherley's  
*Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613)**

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## Abstract

This thesis presents a detailed study of the seventeenth century diplomat Sir Anthony Sherley's *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613). Sherley and his younger brother Robert travelled to Persia with a sizeable company of experienced English military officers who had originally been detailed to bolster the defences of Ferrara against an expected invasion by the Papal States in late 1597. Sherley remained in Persia for six months, which coincided with the Shah's return from a military expedition that had effectively secured his eastern frontiers against invasion, and as he embarked on preparations for a war of reconquest against the Ottomans, which was seized on by Sherley and his brothers to produce a stream of books, assuming credit for the later outbreak of war between the Muslim powers. Anthony and Robert Sherley were celebrated for inciting the Persians to war against the Turks, and their reputation was cemented with the publication of John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' play entitled *Travails of the Three English Brothers* (1607). Day, Rowley and Wilkins' *Travails*, as well as the brothers' persistent self-promotion through the medium of popular print, has led to the erroneous notion that they were responsible for the establishment of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations. This thesis provides an account of Sir Anthony Sherley's experiences prior to his journey to Persia, traces his shifting objectives as reflected in the clusters of texts published by and about the Sherley brothers, argues that his account was partly presented as an allegorical romance, and highlights the Machiavellian and Tacitean influences behind the *Relation*.

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I certify that the present dissertation and the conclusions it presents are wholly the product of my own investigation and research, and that all citations from the works of other scholars, whether published or unpublished, have been fully acknowledged in accordance with the guidelines provided by the University of London.

## Introduction

This thesis presents a detailed study of the seventeenth century diplomat Sir Anthony Sherley's *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613). Sherley and his younger brother Robert travelled to Persia with a sizeable company of experienced English military officers who had originally been detailed to bolster the defences of Ferrara against an expected invasion by the Papal States in late 1597. Sherley remained in Persia for six months and was sent back by the Shah as one of the members of a Persian embassy promoting commercial and military cooperation. Sherley was later dismissed from the embassy on account of his rivalry with the Persian ambassador, but this did not prevent him and his brothers from producing a stream of books, taking credit for the later outbreak of war between Persia and the Ottomans. Anthony and Robert Sherley were celebrated for inciting the Persians to war against the Turks, and their reputation was cemented with the publication of John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' play entitled *Travails of the Three English Brothers* (1607).<sup>1</sup> Day, Rowley and Wilkins' *Trauails*, as well as the brothers' persistent self-promotion through the medium of popular print, has led to the erroneous notion that they were responsible for the establishment of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations.<sup>2</sup> However, as Kenneth Parker has noted in his book *Early Modern Tales of Orient* (1999), little is known for certain

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<sup>1</sup> John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, *The trauailes of the three English brothers: Sir Thomas Shirley, Sir Anthony [Sherley], Mr. Robert [Sherley], as it is now play'd by her Maiesties Seruants*. (London: George Eld for Iohn Wright, 1607). Anthony Parr (ed.), *Three Renaissance Travel Plays: The Travels of the Three English Brothers [etc.]* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar provide a reliable account of Anglo-Persian diplomatic relations, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 63 ff.

concerning the Sherley brothers' lives, since current publications tend to 'vary either about the detail, or because details are not available.'<sup>3</sup> Parker went on to reason that the Sherley materials must have enjoyed 'considerable appeal', based on the number and variety of the publications about the journey to Persia, which would in turn signal a significant role in shaping 'attitudes towards Turks and Persians', but also admitted he could not determine if the narratives were reliable.<sup>4</sup> Parker was thinking specifically about Sir Anthony's *Relation of his Travels*, from which he published a series of excerpts, as well as passages taken from earlier accounts.<sup>5</sup> This thesis proposes to investigate Sherley's background prior to his journey to Persia; the reasons for his decision to travel there following his mission to Ferrara; evaluate the reliability of his account of the journey and of the Persian Shah 'Abbas I; and determine why he composed the *Relation* and to whom it was addressed. This introduction will provide an outline of Sherley's life and career (*ca.* 1565-1633), followed by an overview of the existing sources on the lives of the Sherley brothers. The introduction will proceed to discuss the manuscript and printed edition of the *Relation*, as well as its reception as reflected in the secondary sources and the current state of scholarship.

### ***The lives of Sir Anthony Sherley (ca. 1565-1633)***

Anthony Sherley was the second son of Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder and Lady Anne Kempe, a daughter of Sir Thomas Kempe of Olantigh in Kent, and was born at the

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth Parker, *Early Modern Tales of Orient* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 61.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-76, 76-79.



Sherley family estate of Wiston, West Sussex in 1565.<sup>6</sup> He matriculated at Hart Hall College Oxford in 1579, where he graduated BA in 1581, and was elected a Probationer Fellow of All Souls in 1582, before moving on to the Inner Temple in 1583. Sherley joined the Earl of Leicester's expedition to the Netherlands in 1585/86, where he was originally commissioned as captain of an infantry company, but later took over his brother Thomas' cavalry corps in March 1588.<sup>7</sup> He took part in Peregrine Bertie, 13<sup>th</sup> Baron Willoughby's expedition to Normandy in 1589/90, as well as Sir John Norris' campaign in Brittany from 1591 to 1595, where Sherley served as Colonel of the Horse and distinguished himself through his courage.<sup>8</sup> Sherley had married Frances Vernon, first cousin of the Earl of Essex *ca.* 1593, and was immediately banished from court when Elizabeth I received news of the marriage.<sup>9</sup> He was nevertheless chosen to accompany Sir Robert Sidney on an embassy to France, where King Henri IV created him a knight of the Order of Saint Michael, for which he was punished by being imprisoned in the Fleet in April 1594.<sup>10</sup> Sherley fitted out a substantial fleet for a privateering expedition in 1596, which took him to West Africa, Central America and

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<sup>6</sup> Richard Raiswell, 'Anthony Sherley (known as Sir Anthony Sherley) ... (1565-1636?), Adventurer and Diplomat in the Persian Service', in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) hereafter abbreviated and referred to as the *ODNB*.

<sup>7</sup> D.W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: the Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy [etc.]* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 28.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35-39.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

<sup>10</sup> *The Three Brothers; or, the Travels and Adventures of Sir Anthony, Sir Robert, & Sir Thomas Sherley, in Persia, Russia, Turkey, Spain, etc.* (London: Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1825), pp. 5-11, Evelyn Philip Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers: An Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley, and Sir Robert Sherley, Knights, by one of the same House* (Chiswick: printed by Charles Whittingham for the Roxburghe Club, 1848), pp. 8-9, and Davies, pp. 37-39.

Nova Scotia before he had to turn back, only to discover that his father had been bankrupted during his absence in 1596/97.<sup>11</sup> The Earl of Essex dispatched a team of volunteers under Sherley to defend Ferrara from the Pope in 1598, but the Duke of Ferrara capitulated while the team was passing through Germany, and Sherley led his company to Venice instead to await further instructions.<sup>12</sup> Sherley and his company traversed Ottoman Syria and Iraq by adopting the guise of Levantine merchants, and arrived at the Persian capital just as ‘Abbas I was returning from his victory over the Uzbeks, and who subsequently received Sherley and his companions as members of a high-ranking embassy from England or Scotland.<sup>13</sup> Shah ‘Abbas sent Sherley on a counterembassy to the capitals of Europe, offering an alliance and trading privileges, which took Sherley to Russia, Austria and the Papal States before he fell out with the Persian ambassador and was dismissed in 1601. Sherley acted as a political agent on behalf of James VI, Philip III, and Rudolph II from 1601-4, and was commissioned by the latter as his ambassador to Morocco in 1605-6.<sup>14</sup> Sherley completed his legation to

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<sup>11</sup> ‘A true relation of the voyage vndertaken by Sir Anthony Sherley Knight in Anno 1596 intended for the Ile of San Tome, but performed to S. Iago, Dominica, Margarita, along the coast of Tierra Firma, to the Ile of Jamaica, the Bay of the Honduras, 30 leagues up Rio Dolce, and homeward by Newfoundland’, Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries* (London: Imprinted by George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599), sig. 3D3<sup>v</sup>. Davies, pp. 47-55.

<sup>12</sup> Bonner Mitchell, *1598: A Year of Pageantry in Late Renaissance Ferrara* (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1990), pp. 18-22. Davies, pp. 77-80.

<sup>13</sup> E. Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure: including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1933). Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006), pp. 50 ff.

<sup>14</sup> R. Cottington, *A True Historicall Discourse of Muley Hamets rising to the three kingdomes of Moruecos, Fes, and Sus, the dis-vnion of the three kingdomes, by ciuill warre, kindled amongst his three ambitious sonnes, Muley Sheck, Muley Boferes, and Muley Sidan. The religion and police of the More, or barbarian. The aduentures of Sir Anthony Sherley, and diuers other English gentlemen, in those countries, with other*

Morocco in the autumn of 1606, after which he travelled to the Spanish court at Madrid, where he was appointed Admiral of the Levant Seas.<sup>15</sup> He served as Admiral for about three years before the fleet was disbanded, and returned to Madrid to meet his brother Robert in February 1611, where he probably gave him a copy of the *Relation of his Travels*, which was in turn passed on to the publishers in 1612/13.<sup>16</sup> Sherley himself remained as a pensioner of the King of Spain, where he was consulted for advice on a range of issues, and eventually settled in Granada where he died in 1633.<sup>17</sup>

Sir Anthony Sherley's life has been of interest to scholars since at least the early nineteenth century, but despite the surprisingly rich and varied archival materials regarding his military and diplomatic career, there have been rather few attempts to arrange the facts as a continuous and objective narrative, and the present investigation aims to provide a detailed account of Sherley's movements and associations from his participation in the Earl of Leicester's campaign in the Netherlands (1586) until his departure toward the Safavid Persian Empire (1598). Richard Raiswell's entry in the *Dictionary of National Biography* relies heavily on David W. Davies' *Elizabethans*

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*nouelties* (London: Thomas Purfoot for Clement Knight, 1609). Davies, pp. 141-65, 193-202. Franz Babinger, *Sherleiana: I. Sir Anthony Sherley's persische Botschaftsreise, 1599-1601, II. Sir Anthony Sherley's marokkanische Sendung, 1605/6* (Berlin: Reichsdruckerei, 1932). *Idem*, 'Sir Anthony Sherley: ein politischer Hochstapler um 1600', *Forschungen und Fortschritte* 9 (1933), pp. 155-57.

<sup>15</sup> Anthony Nixon, *Newes from sea, of two notorious pyrats: Ward the Englishman, and Danseker the Dutchman, with a true relation of all or the most piraces [sic.] by them committed vnto the sixt of Aprill 1609* (London: [printed by Edward Allde] for N. Butter, 1609). Davies, pp. 203-220.

<sup>16</sup> Anthony Sherley, *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes for Nathaniel Butter and Ioseph Bagfet, 1613). Ross, p. 80. Davies, pp. 220-21, 234-35.

<sup>17</sup> Davies, pp. 280-86. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2011), p. 116.

*Errant* (1967), which sought to address some of the gaps in Sir E. Denison Ross' biography of Sherley in *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (1933), which in turn made use of Evelyn Philip Shirley's *An Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley, and Sir Robert Sherley* (1848), and the anonymous *The Three Brothers; or, the Travels and Adventures of Sir Anthony, Sir Robert, & Sir Thomas Sherley, in Persia, Russia, Turkey, Spain, etc.* (1825). The anonymous author of *The Three Brothers* (1825) succeeded in constructing a fairly consistent narrative, partially based on the *Relation* but also incorporating a range of other printed and manuscript sources, including a number of important documents concerning Henri IV's elevation of Sherley to the Order of St. Michael, but the work lacks clear organisation and a scholarly apparatus and has largely been forgotten. The antiquarian, genealogist, and member of the same family Evelyn Philip Shirley, depicted by Disraeli as Mr. Ardenne 'a man of ancient pedigree... who knew everybody else's', composed his *Historical Memoir* along the same lines as the previous book, although he also utilised documents held at the State Paper Office, the East India Company Archives, and manuscripts now deposited at the British Library.<sup>18</sup> Shirley's meticulous transcription of letters by the Sherley brothers and contemporary ambassadors and residents, as well as his concise and generally reliable narrative based on the correspondence, render the work still useful despite the appearance of occasional errors where he digresses from the manuscripts themselves, such as the assertion that Sherley had been Colonel of the Horse during Essex' supposed expedition to Brittany.<sup>19</sup> The first director of SOAS Edward

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<sup>18</sup> Shirley, pp. vii-viii. Benjamin Disraeli, *Lothair* (London: Longmans, 1870). Vernon Bogdanor (ed.) *Benjamin Disraeli: Lothair* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975).

<sup>19</sup> Shirley, p. 5.

Denison Ross published *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* in 1933, containing editions of William Parry, Abel Pincon, and George Manwaring's narratives of Sherley's journey to Persia, which has recently been criticised for its occasionally intrusive editorial practices by Kenneth Parker among others, but nevertheless marked a clear departure from the nineteenth century biographies noticed above, and placed the study of Sherley's biography on a sound scholarly basis, especially through its eighty page plus discussion of his life and career in the introduction.<sup>20</sup> Ross was certainly aware of the existence of the anonymous *The Three Brothers* and E.P. Shirley's *Historical Memoir*, but chose to rely on manuscripts of Sherley's own *Peso Politico de Todo el Mundo* (1622), Sir Thomas Sherley of Bottlebridge's *Genealogica Historia Domus de Shirley* (ca. 1632), and the relevant narratives printed in Hakluyt and Purchas for his account of Sherley's life up to his departure for Persia.<sup>21</sup> Ross' examination of *Peso Politico* was a positive development, and his neglect of Sherley's activities before his departure was due to his particular concern with Persia, but he acknowledged the existence of gaps in his narrative concerning Sherley's stay in Venice (1601-4), and in Spain (1606-33) which would later be taken up by Davies. Boies Penrose intended to address the gap between the out-of-print nineteenth-century books, and what he saw as Ross' valuable and scholarly edition of the narratives concerning Persia, when he

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<sup>20</sup> Parker, pp. 77, 80.

<sup>21</sup> Xavier A. Flores (ed.) *Le "Peso Politico de Todo el Mundo" d'Anthony Sherley, ou un Aventurier Anglais au service de l'Espagne* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963). Angel Alloza, Miguel Angel de Bunes and Jose Antonio Martinez Torres (eds.) *Anthony Sherley: Peso de todo el mundo (1622), Discurso sobre el aumento de esta monarquía (1625)* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2010). Thomas Sherley (of Bottlebridge), 'The History of the Family of Sherley' survives in a number of parts held at the British Library, London, Harley MSS 4023, 4928 and at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, Rawl. MS D.923.

published his more popular biography called *The Sherleian Odyssey* (1938).<sup>22</sup> Penrose admitted he did not make use of many new manuscript sources, and drew heavily on Ross, Shirley and *The Three Brothers*, though his membership of the Royal Asiatic Society ensured the co-operation of Professor Franz Babinger, who transcribed the correspondence between Sherley and Emperor Rudolf II, preserved at the Austrian Archives in Vienna which also appeared in the volume.<sup>23</sup> Babinger himself is of course best known for his volume entitled *Mehmed the Conqueror and his Time*, but it is important to note that he had also published a book about Sherley, dealing with his counterembassy to Europe and his legation to Morocco, as well as an important article outlining some of Sherley's political machinations, which have unfortunately been neglected by English-language biographers of Sherley, much as the fine biographical introduction by Xavier Flores in his French edition of *Peso Politico* (1963).<sup>24</sup>

D.W. Davies' standard biography of Sherley took its cue from Ross' plea for more research concerning Sherley's residence in Venice and Spain, and also considerably broadened the range of materials studied in connection with Sherley's biography by examining manuscripts at the Bodleian Library, Hatfield House, National Library of Scotland, Archivo General de Simancas, Bibliotheque Nationale, Folger Shakespeare Library and the Huntington Library among others. Raiswell's entry on Sherley in the

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<sup>22</sup> Boies Penrose, *The Sherleian Odyssey... Travels and Adventures of Three Famous Brothers during the Reigns of Elizabeth, James I, and Charles I* (Taunton: Wessex Press, 1938), preface.

<sup>23</sup> Penrose, pp. 252-62.

<sup>24</sup> Flores, pp. 19 ff. To this may be added Alloza et al.'s recent Spanish language edition.

*Dictionary of National Biography* is based on Davies, though his account occasionally deviates from the evidence provided in the sources detailed above.

### ***Sir Anthony Sherley's Relation and its Reception***

Denison Ross recognised in *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* that the latter's *Relation of his Travels* was brought to England by his younger brother Robert during his first embassy to the British court in 1611, and that Robert had probably acquired the manuscript from his brother when the two shared a lodging at Madrid between February and June 1611, while Robert awaited King James' reply as to whether he could proceed with his legation to London.<sup>25</sup> Robert's role in transmitting the manuscript is confirmed by the preface preceding the printed edition.<sup>26</sup>

Sherley's *Relation* as preserved in MS Ashmole 829 was first noticed by Edward Denison Ross in his *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (1933), and was noticed again two years later in Percy Simpson's *Proof-Reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (1935), with a detailed scholarly description appearing more recently in Peter W.M. Blayney's *The Texts of King Lear and their Origins, vol. I: Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto* (1988).<sup>27</sup> Sherley's *Relation* as

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<sup>25</sup> Ross, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Sherley, *Relation*, sig. A3<sup>r-v</sup>. Ashmolean MS 829, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. The preface appended to the manuscript is discussed at the beginning of chapter two.

<sup>27</sup> Ross, pp. xix-xxi, xxxviii. Percy Simpson, *Proof-reading in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 38. Peter W.M. Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear and their Origins, vol. I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 262-91.

preserved is composed in six distinct hands, and on three separate stocks of paper indicating at least four distinct stages of revision.<sup>28</sup> The manuscript is marked and annotated throughout, with passages and sententiae underlined for italicisation, though this does not necessarily indicate authorial intention. The first hand in the manuscript appears to belong to Anthony Sherley himself, while the extensive normalisation of Persian names was carried out by his brother Robert, and the remaining hands presumably belonged to different amanuenses. The manuscript cannot be dated with certainty based on its formal and physical appearance. However, Peter Blayney's statement that the *Relation* had been composed 'almost certainly before the death of Elizabeth I' is not supported by the internal evidence.<sup>29</sup> Blayney does not offer any evidence for his proposed date for the manuscript, but his dating was most almost certainly based on a passage in the *Relation*, where Sherley's company punished an Italian traveller because he insulted Queen Elizabeth.<sup>30</sup> The Queen had of course been alive when Sherley and his company travelled to Persia, and there is plenty of other evidence that would place the dating rather later: Sherley's description of the Persian dignitary Shaykh Ahmad Agha was evidently borrowed from Don Juan of Persia's *Relaciones* (1604), while the insinuation that he travelled to Persia with the express purpose of inciting the Persians to war would not have had the resonances taken for granted before the publication of Day, Rowley and Wilkins's play in 1607.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Blayney, pp. 266-76.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 267.

<sup>30</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. B3<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>31</sup> Sherley's borrowing from Don Juan of Persia's *Relaciones* and the shifting aims of his journey to Persia are discussed more fully in chapters five and three respectively.



Sherley's *Relation* was printed as a quarto of eighteen and a half sheets by the printers Nicholas Okes and Melchisidec Bradwood in 1613.<sup>32</sup> The first quarter of the *Relation* recounts Sherley's journey from London to Qazvin.<sup>33</sup> This is prefaced by a short introductory section wherein Sherley provides a summarised account of his military background, emphasises his devotion to the Earl of Essex and explains the rationale behind the latter's interest in the conflict over Ferrara.<sup>34</sup> The rest of the *Relation* is divided evenly between Sherley's account of Shah 'Abbas' rise to power, which is followed by the deliberations which supposedly took place at the Persian court after Sherley persuaded the Shah to send an embassy to Europe.<sup>35</sup> This introduction will provide an overview of the critical responses, with respect to the divisions concerning Sherley's narrative of his journey to Persia, Shah 'Abbas' rise to power, and the deliberations about the proposed embassy to Europe, followed by an account of the arguments and methodology employed in the ensuing chapters of the dissertation.

The nineteenth-century author of the *Three Brothers* (1825) condemned Sherley's narrative of his journey to Persia on two principal grounds: since it 'abounds more with pompous argumentation, and tedious ethical reflections' and because it was written 'rather for the purpose of displaying his [Sherley's] knowledge on the subject of government and politics, than describing his adventures'.<sup>36</sup> The anonymous author's negative comments had a direct impact on Denison Ross' decision not to include an

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<sup>32</sup> Blayney, pp. 263, 632

<sup>33</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 118<sup>v</sup>-124<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. B3<sup>r</sup>-E3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 118<sup>r</sup>-118<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. B1<sup>r</sup>-B3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 124<sup>v</sup>-136<sup>r</sup>, and 136<sup>r</sup> ff. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>-L4<sup>v</sup>, and sig. L4<sup>v</sup> ff.

<sup>36</sup> *The Three Brothers*, p. 23.

edition of the *Relation* in his standard collection.<sup>37</sup> However, Richard Raiswell has recently come closer to explaining the reasons behind Sherley's ethical reflections by claiming that Sherley 'presents himself as endowed with a natural nobility; his difficulties, he suggests, are a consequence of the fact that such natural virtue is... regarded as less important than a person's financial worth.'<sup>38</sup> Raiswell's observation is important, since he draws attention to Sherley's financial difficulties, and implies the latter's complaints had been directed to an audience. Likewise, Sanjay Subrahmanyam has elaborated on Sherley's interest in politics, noting that he was a prodigious writer whose works were often 'pieces d'occasion', and that his 'primary and declared angle of vision would take him time and again to consider the state as an object, and... concentrate his intelligence on the practice of politics.'<sup>39</sup> Subrahmanyam's comments highlight Sherley's predilection to practical politics, and his willingness to make an intervention when he perceived a suitable opportunity. Sherley's practical political objectives were located in the sections of the *Relation* concerning Shah 'Abbas rise to power, and the deliberations about the proposed embassy to Europe:

The two objects [Sir Anthony Sherley] had in view were: to extol the greatness of Shah 'Abbas... and to explain why 'Abbas was in favour of an alliance with the princes of Christendom. Thus out of 139 pages of the original edition [of the *Relation*] 34 are devoted to the history of Shah 'Abbas and 40 to the arguments adduced for and against the mission to Europe.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ross, p. xix-xx.

<sup>38</sup> Raiswell, 'Anthony Sherley'.

<sup>39</sup> Subrahmanyam, pp. 119-20.

<sup>40</sup> Ross, p. xx.

Denison Ross was rightly sceptical about the elaborate speeches Sherley attributed to Shah ‘Abbas, the Grand Vizier Hatim Beg Urdubadi, the Secretary Bastam Agha Turkmen, and the Generals ‘Allah Virdi Khan and Tahmasb Quli Khan:

We should remember... that Anthony knew practically no Persian, and that he relied entirely on the interpreter for his knowledge of what was said; and secondly that it is unlikely that the interview between the Shah and the Turkish envoy was translated at the time for his benefit: at best he must have learnt afterwards what had passed between them. It is inconceivable that he really noted down or remembered exactly what was said, and we can only presume that he allowed free play to his pen and his imagination when describing these interviews.<sup>41</sup>

Subrahmanyam for his part observes that when describing the supposed deliberations Sherley’s narrative ‘takes the form... of a classic debate, dividing the Safavid court into those who supported his view and those who opposed it, with each side being given the occasion... to make long and rather windy speeches.’<sup>42</sup> Ross and Subrahmanyam are correct to suspect the authenticity of Sherley’s speeches: he was arguing *in utramque partem* as he had learnt at Oxford and the Inns of Court. However, Ross was perfectly willing to accept that Sherley had received all his historical information about Shah ‘Abbas’ rise to power from the Shah himself, provided we ‘take for granted... that Anthony had a phenomenal memory and a notebook’.<sup>43</sup> Ross’ conclusion is even more surprising given his acknowledgement that Sherley’s ‘names and facts’ relating to Persian history and the Shah were in ‘great disorder’. Peter Blayney has by contrast

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<sup>41</sup> Ross, pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>42</sup> Subrahmanyam, p. 99.

<sup>43</sup> Ross, pp. xxi-xxii.

reached the conclusion that: ‘Accuracy and honesty do not appear to have been Sir Anthony’s most persistently obtrusive qualities, and his account of the life and times of King Abas leaves something of both to be desired.’<sup>44</sup> The preceding readings taken together seem to suggest that Sherley’s ethical reflections during the narration of his journey to Persia were connected to issues of patronage; his account of the extended deliberations at the Shah’s court were a rhetorical exercise to demonstrate the latter’s readiness to form an alliance with Europe; and that his account of Shah ‘Abbas’ was intended to extol the Shah’s greatness despite its factual inconsistencies.

None of the above-cited scholars have addressed the issue of the *Relation’s* genre, however, which would be helpful in placing Sherley’s book in relation to some of the better-known seventeenth-century travel literature. Sherley opportunistically combines romance, political commentary and dialogue in sections dealing with his journey to Persia, Shah ‘Abbas and the extended deliberations. His method almost recalls Day, Rowley and Wilkins’ play which passes freely between ‘narration, mime, and spoken drama’ so that ‘progress through the play become like a journey in which, without warning, the mode of transport keeps changing: bus, bicycle, taxi, ferry – one never knows what will be next, or how long any stage will last.’<sup>45</sup> Andrew Hadfield has previously argued that the accounts of Fynes Moryson, Thomas Coryate and William Lithgow betray signs of ‘anxiety and confusion’ concerning their exact purpose and

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<sup>44</sup> Blayney, p. 289. Blayney refers to ‘King Abas’ instead of Shah ‘Abbas because he is following the construction as it appears in Sir Anthony Sherley’s *Relation*. The Persian title ‘Shah’, derived from Old Persian, is in any case an equivalent of, and corresponds to the English title ‘King’.

<sup>45</sup> H. Neville Davies, ‘Pericles and the Sherley Brothers’, in E.A.J. Honigmann (ed.) *Shakespeare and his contemporaries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986), p. 104.

generic identity through their mixing of genres.<sup>46</sup> Sherley's mixing of genres in the *Relation* displays no signs of anxiety, however, and instead appears to point to his confidence and versatility in adapting the genres for his own purposes.

### **Structure of Dissertation**

The structure of the present dissertation reflects the concerns alluded to earlier in connection with the existing secondary literature, namely questions over Sherley's background prior to his journey to Persia, his reasons for travelling to Persia, the reliability of his account of the journey and of Shah 'Abbas I, and lastly why he composed the *Relation* and to whom it was addressed. Sherley's production of the *Relation* as manuscript and printed book and its prospective audience(s) will be the subject of the first chapter of the dissertation, while the remaining concerns will be addressed in the same order as given above in chapters 2 to 5 respectively.

### **Chapter 1**

This chapter engages with Julia Schleck's recent distinction between the 'royal' and 'local' audiences addressed in the *Relation*, through an investigation of the *Relation's* print history and examination of the publication records of the publishers in order to

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<sup>46</sup> Andrew Hadfield, *Literature, Travel, and Colonial Writing in the Renaissance, 1545-1625* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 4.

approximate both the courtly and popular audiences.<sup>47</sup> Nathaniel Butter and Joseph Bagfet who published the *Relation* obtained a license from the licenser Gervase Nid, Rector of Southchurch whose imprimatur appears at the conclusion of the Bodleian manuscript, and given what we know about the process of licensing Nid would have shared the author and his patron's network of associates.<sup>48</sup> Nid is discovered to have licensed Robert Dallington's *Aphorismes Civill and Millitarie... out of the first Quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* in the same year as the *Relation*, which is significant given that Dallington was involved in public controversy over his promotion of foreign travel, and like many former supporters of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex held an important position at the court of Henry Stuart, Prince of Wales. Anthony Parr and Michelle O'Callaghan have noted the aggressive foreign policy favoured by Henry, Prince of Wales, and this chapter contends that given the fact that Robert Sherley brought the manuscript of the *Relation* while he carried a bellicose message from Shah 'Abbas, he would likely have received a more favourable audience from the Prince rather than King James who cultivated an image of himself as peace-maker.<sup>49</sup> Nathaniel Butter's well-known record as a pioneering publisher of newsbooks on the other hand points to the popular audience that might have been interested in reading Sherley's *Relation*.

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<sup>47</sup> Julia Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), p. 62.

<sup>48</sup> Samuel Harsnett's testimony provides the relevant details. Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 178. Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 52 ff.

<sup>49</sup> Parr, pp. 9-10. Michelle O'Callaghan, 'Coryats Crudities (1611) and Travel Writing as the 'Eyes' of the Prince', in Timothy Wilks (ed.), *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England* (London: Holberton and Southampton Solent University, 2007), p. 97.

## Chapter 2

This chapter addresses the two opposing views of Sherley either as a courageous Christian soldier or a sinister plotter and schemer as he appears in the pro- and anti-Sherley contemporary sources respectively. The chapter argues that neither image is entirely plausible since the clusters of Sherley material successively built on and elaborated tropes going back to the turn of the century, whereas the predominantly negative view of Sherley is ultimately derived from sources that were hostile to him based on a variety of different of reasons, and takes the example of Sir Charles Cornwallis who not only belonged to the opposite faction, but had personal and ideological prejudices that have not been recognised. Sherley's own presentation of himself in the preamble to the *Relation* poses additional problems on account of his emphatic association of himself with Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, which has largely obscured his earlier apprenticeship in the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648) and the French Wars of Religion (1562-1598) as reflected in the secondary literature, and this chapter attempts to address the current lacuna through examining Sherley's *curriculum vitae* as given in the *Relation* in light of the available archival and printed material including the State Papers Foreign, Ancaster Manuscripts and Salisbury Manuscripts.

## Chapter 3

This chapter addresses the problem of Sherley's shifting objectives for undertaking his journey to Persia as represented in the material published between Sherley's return to

Europe and the printing of his *Relation* (1600-13). Sherley had presented himself as having travelled to Persia in search of military ‘employment’ which had also been confirmed in William Parry’s *New and Large Discourse* (1601), but by the time the second cluster of texts about the brothers was published in 1607, the purpose of the mission had been transformed into a project to engineer a Perso-European league as reflected in much of the current secondary literature. Sherley and his companions had, however, made clear that the mission to Persia had its origins in the Earl of Essex’s decision to intervene in the succession crisis at Ferrara, and this chapter accordingly draws on the relevant Sherley material, diplomatic report of Andre Hurault, Sieur de Maisse and the Salisbury Manuscripts, as well as more recent research by Bonner Mitchell and Guido Guerzoni to trace the objectives of the Sherley mission from their involvement in the Ferrarese succession crisis until their departure for the Levant.<sup>50</sup>

#### Chapter 4

This chapter builds on Laurence Publicover and Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s work on John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins’ *Travails of the three English Brothers* and Sherley’s own *Peso Politico* respectively to argue that the first quarter of the *Relation* describing Sherley’s passage from England to Persia was conceived as a romance intended to instruct and entertain its proposed audience.<sup>51</sup> Sherley’s description of the

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<sup>50</sup> G.B. Harrison and R.A. Jones (eds.) *A Journal of all that was accomplished by Monsieur de Maisse, Ambassador to England [etc.]* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1931). Guido Guerzoni, *Le corti Estensi e le ‘devoluzione’ di Ferrara del 1598* (Modena: Comune di Modena, 2000).

<sup>51</sup> Laurence Publicover, ‘Strangers at Home: the Sherley Brothers and Dramatic Romance’, *Renaissance Studies* 24, 5 (2010), pp. 694-95. Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to be Alien*, p. 122.



journey from England to Persia includes many of the elements often associated with the genre of romance including chivalry, the quest motif, travel, adventure, disguise and coincidence, and these will be pointed out through a close reading of the narratives recording the journey from Malamocco to Baghdad. The chapter further argues that the above-mentioned sections were conceived as an allegorical romance underpinned by a series of examples developed at key points in the narrative, which were intended to castigate Sherley's enemies for casting doubt on his reputation, draw attention to his financial plight following his dismissal as Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean and attract the attention of the newly-installed Prince of Wales. The chapter contends that Sherley deliberately associated himself with Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, and chose to present the crusader kings of medieval England as heroic examples in the *Relation* in order to align himself with the ideology of Prince Henry as publically expressed the previous year in Ben Jonson's neo-Arthurian show *The Barriers*.

## Chapter 5

The final chapter takes its cue from Sanjay Subrahmanyam's recent suggestion that Sherley first reveals his interests as a political thinker in the *Relation*, and goes on to argue that Sherley's principal sources in his anatomisation of the Ottoman and Safavid empires were Machiavelli's *Prince* and Tacitus' *Annals*.<sup>52</sup> Peter W.M. Blayney has previously noticed Sherley's incorporation of an entire passage from Machiavelli's *Prince* into the *Relation*, while Jonathan Sell has noted the distinctly Machiavellian

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 109-110.

influence behind Sherley's portrait of Shah 'Abbas.<sup>53</sup> This chapter demonstrates that Sherley additionally used Machiavelli's *Prince* in conjunction with Lazaro Soranzo's *L'ottomano* to analyse Ottoman administrative and military practices, as well as in conjunction with Uruch Beg Bayat or Juan of Persia's *Relaciones* to exemplify Shah 'Abbas' political virtue in governing the Safavid Empire. Jonathan Sell has also previously noted that Sherley composed the *Relation* in the established tradition of mirrors for princes, which this chapter carries further by arguing that Sherley's association of 'barbarians' with virtue, presentation of the text as a mirror onto another culture and his own proximity to the Essex circle in the 1590's strongly suggest that Sherley conceived of the *Relation* as specifically a Tacitean mirror for princes.

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<sup>53</sup> Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear*, pp. 289-90, and Jonathan P.A. Sell, *Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing, 1560-1613* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publications, 2006), pp. 108-109.

## Chapter 1

### **‘Panned (as it seemeth) since his returne into Europe’: The Print History of Sir Anthony Sherley’s *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613)**

Julia Schleck observes in her book *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands* (2011) that although the material published by and about the Sherley brothers undoubtedly had popular appeal, one intended audience was ‘the royal circles of power in which the Sherleys once moved and to which they desired to return.’<sup>1</sup> This chapter locates the circles of power to which they wished to return, through an investigation of the print history of Sir Anthony’s Sherley’s *Relation* (1613), and argues that it was the court of Henry, Prince of Wales that was the intended audience. Anthony Parr has previously concluded that John Day, William Rowley, and George Wilkins’s play about the Sherleys, *Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), was probably aimed at the ‘constituency around the prince, which in marked contrast to his father’s court, was promoting an aggressive and interventionist foreign policy.’<sup>2</sup> Sherley’s manuscript *Relation* was brought to England by his younger brother Robert, who had recently returned to Europe as ambassador from Shah ‘Abbas I.<sup>3</sup> Sir Robert Sherley carried a

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), p. 62. Kenneth Parker, *Early Modern Tales of Orient: a Critical Anthology* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 63.

<sup>2</sup> Anthony Parr (ed.) *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995, reprinted with corrections, 1999), pp. 9-10, following Marion Lomax, *Stage Images and Traditions: Shakespeare to Ford* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 75.

<sup>3</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. Anthony Sherley, *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London: Nicholas Okes for Nathaniel Butter and Ioseph Bagfet, 1613), sig. A3<sup>rv</sup>.

message from Shah ‘Abbas for European heads of state to join the Persians in a coordinated campaign against the Ottomans, specifically to invade Cyprus and the Ottomans’ eastern Mediterranean provinces, instructions that are echoed by and are located at the heart of Sir Anthony’s *Relation*.<sup>4</sup> Anthony and Robert Sherley had been excluded from the circles of power in England, but they had good reason to expect a positive reception at the court of Prince Henry. Michelle O’Callaghan has drawn attention to the links between the Prince’s court, the Virginia Company, the Inns of Court, and convivial societies of London wits. She cites the satirical table-talk at a banquet held at the Mitre Tavern in 1611, where the wits are reported to have quipped: ‘Princeps nescit otari, / cupiens materium dari / propriae virtuti’ (‘Prince Henry cannot idly liuen, / Desiringe matter to be giuen / To prove his valour good). O’Callaghan concludes that there was seemingly widespread expectation that Prince Henry was preparing to ‘prove his valour good’ in a foreign expedition, based on a broad cross-section of opinions represented at the Mitre Tavern, which featured members of the intellectual, commercial and aristocratic communities.<sup>5</sup> Robert Sherley’s mission has nevertheless been uniformly characterised as what G.B. Shand has called a ‘dismal failure’, since the joint campaign never materialised.<sup>6</sup> This chapter argues that Robert Sherley’s mission was not perceived as being unsuccessful, and that he managed to

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<sup>4</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>v</sup>, 120<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>, C2<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Michelle O’Callaghan, ‘Coryats Crudities (1611) and Travel Writing as the ‘Eyes’ of the Prince’, in Timothy Wilks (ed.), *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England* (London: Holberton and Southampton Solent University, 2007), p. 97. Samuel Calvert of the Virginia Company included a copy of the poem ‘Convivium Philosophicum’ in a letter to William Trumbull dated February 1612, and it was translated into English by John Reynolds of New College, Oxford (d. 1614).

<sup>6</sup> G.B. Shand, ‘Source and Intent in Middleton’s Sir Robert Sherley’, *Renaissance and Reformation* 19 (1983), p. 263.

achieve a partial restitution of the family's reputation. Sir Anthony's *Relation* was certainly not prevented from being published. This chapter takes the licenser's manuscript at the Bodleian Library, Oxford as the starting point to approximate the circles of power to which it was likely addressed. Samuel Harsnett provided the following description of a licenser's operational procedure, in defence of his own controversial licensing of John Hayward's *The Life and Raigne of King Henrie IIII* (1599): 'it hath been custome and use, for eny man that entended in good meaning to put a booke in print, for the Author him selfe to present the booke unto the Examiner and to acquaynt him with his scope and purpose in the same.'<sup>7</sup> Harsnett recorded in his testimony that instead of John Hayward he had received the manuscript from a 'gentleman in my Lord of London his house' and that 'your Orator sett to his hand sodeinlie as mooved by his friend [the gentleman].' Harsnett's testimony reveals the extent to which licensing could depend on patronage (Lord Mayor of London) and networks of mutual associates (nameless gentleman). The publishers of Sherley's *Relation* who were interested in seeing the book licensed, would have approached a licenser who would be well disposed to grant a license for publication, based on the licenser and the author's network of associates. Sherley's *Relation* was licensed by Gervase Nid, whose signature appears on the Bodleian manuscript, and whose licenses reveal a number of links to Prince Henry's court. Nid issued a license for Robert Dallington's *Aphorismes Civill and Militarie... out of the first Quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* (1613) in the same year as the *Relation*. Dallington was involved in a

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<sup>7</sup> Samuel Harsnett's testimony is reproduced in Richard Dutton, *Licensing, Censorship, and Authorship in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), p. 178. Annabel Patterson, *Censorship and Interpretation* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), pp. 52 ff.

literary debate over the nature of foreign travel: Adriana McCrea notes that whereas Dallington advocated the rewards of foreign travel, he was opposed by Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, who, according to Daniel Vitkus, articulated English ‘xenophobia through the discourse of religious sectarianism’.<sup>8</sup> Robert Dallington and Joseph Hall’s relative positions in the debate are useful indicators for approximating the intended audience of Sherley’s *Relation of his Travels*. However, Schleck recognises that the material concerning the Sherley brothers was popular among broader sections of the reading public than the courtiers at St James’s Palace. This chapter contends that the publishing history of the joint publishers of the *Relation* provides an indication of the broader sections of the Jacobean reading public who would have been interested in learning about Sherley’s experiences in Persia. Lastly, the chapter maintains that the Sherley materials were unlike earlier publications about Persia on account of their concern with practical policy vis-à-vis the Ottomans. It begins with an account of Sir Robert’s well-publicised mission to the capitals of Europe, and his brother Anthony’s dismissal from his position as Spanish Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean, to contextualise the production of the *Relation* and draw attention to the reasons for its publication more than a decade after the Sherley brothers’ journey to Persia.

Robert Sherley (*ca.* 1581-1628) had been living in Safavid Persia for close to a decade when he was dispatched on a diplomatic mission to Europe on behalf of the Persian king

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<sup>8</sup> Adriana McCrea, *Constant Minds: Political Virtue and the Lipsian Paradigm in England, 1584-1650* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), p. 194. Jerzy Limon and Daniel Vitkus (eds.), ‘Sir Robert Sherley’, *Thomas Middleton: Collected Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), p. 671.

Shah ‘Abbas I (r. 1587-1629) on 12 February 1608.<sup>9</sup> Robert had joined a company of veteran military officers led by his brother Sir Anthony Sherley in Venice ten years earlier, who after a series of hazardous adventures had made their way through the Ottoman Empire and into western Persia in 1598.<sup>10</sup> Shah ‘Abbas had dispatched Sir Anthony to Europe six months after his arrival, as part of a diplomatic mission to establish a political and military alliance with the Papacy, the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs, Poland, Venice, Tuscany, France, England and Scotland to counter the military and economic might of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>11</sup> He was now sending Robert to Europe on a mission similar to that of his brother ten years earlier, as part of a longstanding objective to expand Perso-European cooperation.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Roger Savory, ‘‘Abbas I, Styled the Great, King of Iran (996-1038/1588-1629) of the Safavid Dynasty, third Son and Successor of Sultan Muhammad Shah’, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*. Richard Raiswell, ‘Sir Robert Shirley, Count Shirley in the Papal Nobility (c. 1581-1628), Diplomat’, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [hereafter *ODNB*]. The date of Robert’s departure for Europe is given by Thomas Glover, British ambassador to the Ottoman Empire, in a letter to Lord Salisbury dated 2 July 1608. Evelyn Philip Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers: An Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley, and Sir Robert Sherley, Knights, by one of the same House* (Chiswick: Charles Whittingham for the Roxburghe Club, 1848), pp. 61-62.

<sup>10</sup> George Manwaring, ‘A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley’s Travel into Persia [etc.]’, in E. Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure: including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1933), pp. 175, 13.

<sup>11</sup> Ross, pp. 22-23. cf. also Uruch Beg Bayat, a.k.a. Juan de Persia, *Relacion de Don Ivan de Persia* (Valladolid: por Iuan de Bostillo, 1604), sig. P7<sup>v</sup>. Guy Le Strange (ed.) *Don Juan of Persia: A Shi’ah Catholic (1500-1604)* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926), p. 233.

<sup>12</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia and the Papal Mission of the XVIIth and XVIIIth Centuries* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1939), pp. 70, 75. D.W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: the Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy, Morocco, Persia, Spain, and the Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 225.

Robert Sherley departed ‘well accompanied and furnished’ in February 1608, and travelling by way of the Caspian Sea and the Volga reached Muscovy, where he was well-received by the Tzar Vassili IV Shuisky.<sup>13</sup> He next proceeded to the court of the Polish King Sigismund III Vasa, where his arrival was commemorated in verse by a Scottish expatriate, Andrew Leech, in November 1608. Leech’s *Encomia Nominis & Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaeii* (1609) was printed shortly after 1 January, and Robert immediately dispatched a messenger known as ‘Master Moore’, to convey a copy of Leech’s printed *Encomia* from Krakow to London. Moore was probably instructed by Robert’s family to present the Latin *Encomia* to Thomas Middleton, who was then burdened with heavy debts since the theatres were closed due to an outbreak of the plague, and who adapted and translated the work as *Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassadour in the name of the King of Persia* (1609).<sup>14</sup> G.B. Shand has described Middleton’s pamphlet as ‘a piece of advance public relations work aimed at paving the way, at least with the general public, for [Robert’s] mission to James’ court’, while Daniel J. Vitkus, building on Shand’s earlier work, has elaborated on how Middleton adapted the *Encomia* for the English reading public.<sup>15</sup> Middleton added an original

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<sup>13</sup> Walter Payton made a list of the individuals accompanying Robert Sherley to Europe. ‘A Iournall of all principal matters passed in the twelfth Voyage to the East-India, obserued by me Walter Payton, in the good ship the Expedition’, in Samuel Purchas (ed.) *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London: printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), sig. 2R5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas Middleton, *Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassadour in the name of the King of Persia, to Sigismund the Third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other princes of Europe. His royall entertainement into Cracovia, the chiefe citie of Poland, with his pretended comming into England: also, the honourable praises of the same Sir Robert Sherley, giuen vnto him in that kingdome, are here likewise inserted.* (London: I. Windet, 1609). Jerzy Limon and Daniel Vitkus (eds.), ‘Sir Robert Sherley’, pp. 670-77. Davies, pp. 225-26. Shand, ‘Source and Intent in Middleton’s Sir Robert Sherley’, p. 258.

<sup>15</sup> Shand, pp. 257, 258, 260. Vitkus, p. 670.



introductory section including a letter ‘To the Reader’, removed a number of passages that might have been interpreted as pro-Catholic, and incorporated a short translated passage from the ancient Greek author Strabo of Amaseia. G.B. Shand and Daniel J. Vitkus correctly describe Robert’s hiring of Middleton as an attempt to prepare the grounds as it were for his own possible reception at Hampton Court, but it is also important to recognise that such deliberate ‘leaking’ of details concerning their diplomatic and military activities was the preferred mode of operation by all three Sherley brothers, as had been demonstrated by the printing of the pamphlet *A True Report of Sir Anthonie Sherlies Journey* (1600), and would continue with that of *Sir Antony Sherley his Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613).<sup>16</sup>

Middleton’s pamphlet was only one in a series of publications chronicling the swashbuckling adventures of Thomas, Anthony and Robert Sherley, and must be conceived of as being composed in ‘dialogue’ with the clusters of material produced about the brothers going back to the turn of the century. Robert’s elder brother Sir Anthony’s *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613), the production of which as a printed book is the subject of the present chapter, will likewise need to be placed in relation to the pre-existing printed books about the Sherley brothers and Persia, particularly since its genesis and dissemination were intertwined with the course of Robert’s mission from Persia to Europe in 1608-13. The chapter will accordingly

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<sup>16</sup> *A True Report of Sir Anthonie Shierlies iourney ouerland to Venice fro[m] thence by sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babilon, and soe to Casbine in Persia: his entertainment there by the great Sophie: his oration: his letters of credence to the Christian princes: and the priuiledg obtained of the great Sophie, for the quiet passage and trafique of all Christian marchants, throughout his whole dominions.* (London: Printed by R. B[lower] for I. I[aggard], 1600). Sherley, *Relation*.

recapitulate Robert's journey from Krakow to London, with his extended sojourn in Madrid where Sir Anthony completed and entrusted him with the manuscript of the *Relation*, before examining the passage of the manuscript through the press and its appearance as a printed book following Robert's departure, providing a sense of the diverse audiences that might have been interested in the *Relation*, and situating Sir Anthony's *Relation* with respect to the printed books about Persia and the Sherleys available to the English reading public when it appeared around April 1613.

***Sir Robert Sherley's celebrated embassy: from Krakow to London, 1609-1613***

Robert proceeded from Krakow to Prague, where he was made a Count Palatine by Emperor Rudolf II, and travelled via Milan and Florence to Rome, where Pope Paul V made him a Count of the Sacred Palace of the Lateran.<sup>17</sup> Paul V received him at an audience with a number of Cardinals attending, where after presenting his credentials Robert made an elaborate oration 'setting forth the esteem in which the King [of Persia] held his Holiness, the good treatment Christians received in Persia, the wars with the Turks and the victories gained, [expressing] hope that his Holiness would take steps to unite the Christian Sovereigns against the common foe'.<sup>18</sup> He next delivered the Shah's

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<sup>17</sup> Davies, pp. 226, 227-8. Shand, p. 257. Robert later showed 'the Originall Imperiall Charter vnder the Great Seale... subscribed by the Emperor himselfe', and 'the Originall Breue of Pope *Paulus Quintus*... wherein the said pope [did] constitute him Earle of the Sacred *Laterane* Palace, and Chamberlaine' to Samuel Purchas during his embassy to London, and Purchas subsequently published a translation of the Emperor Rudolf's Charter in his *Pilgrimes*. cf. Purchas, sig. 7M3<sup>v</sup>-7M5<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>18</sup> Giovanni Mocenigo, 'Giovanni Mocenigo, Venetian Ambassador, to the Doge and Senate, Rome, 3 October 1609', in Horatio F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers relating to English affairs in the archives of Venice, vols. 1-38* (London: HMSO, 1864-1947), vol. 11 (1904), no. 648.

letters to the Pope asking him to encourage the King of Poland to fight the Turks in Walachia and the Emperor to fight them in Hungary, and urge the King of Spain to conquer Cyprus ‘an island abounding with provisions of all kinds, with ports most suitable for wintering his [Philip III’s] fleet, and near at hand for an attack later on Syria... and so [to] join up with the Persian army’.<sup>19</sup> Shah ‘Abbas’ proposition that the King of Spain seize Cyprus as a convenient base for a later invasion of Syria and Anatolia is of central importance to the background, since it is also one of the main arguments of Sherley’s *Relation of his Travels*, demonstrating the close connection between Robert’s embassy and his brother’s completion of the *Relation*.<sup>20</sup>

Robert proceeded from the Holy See to Spain, and was received in audience by King Philip III at Aranjuez in the middle of January 1610. Robert delivered two letters to the King and reportedly ‘spake much in persuading him [Philip III] to join with some other Princes in making an effectual war against the Turk’.<sup>21</sup> Robert delivered a letter from Shah ‘Abbas, and another one on his own behalf: the Shah (as above) exhorted King Philip to attack the Ottomans in the provinces of Aleppo and Anatolia, while Robert informed the King of the lucrative trade that could be developed at Hormuz, and suggested that a Spanish ambassador be sent to Isfahan.<sup>22</sup> Robert expected to return to Persia with the King’s reply via Lisbon in October, but frustrated with the Spanish

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<sup>19</sup> *A Chronicle of the Carmelites in Persia*, pp. 147-49. Davies, p. 226-28.

<sup>20</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 119<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>-B4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Francis Cottington, ‘Mr. Francis Cottington [British Ambassador to Spain] to Lord Salisbury, dated Madrid, 20 January 1610’, Evelyn Philip Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers*, p. 72.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Sumario de los papeles tocantes a Don Roberto S[h]erley y a otro embajador persiano que ha venido por Lisboa’, MS Archivo General Simancas, Estado, Leg. 229, n. fol. no.

government's repeated delays in providing an answer to his proposals, he decided to proceed to England instead to negotiate with King James I, about the possibility of establishing mutual trade through the Persian Gulf.<sup>23</sup> Robert's decision to take his 'Persian businesses' to England did not in and of itself ensure a warm welcome at Hampton Court, however, despite Robert's public relations exercise in the form of the pamphlet put together by Thomas Middleton: Robert had already written to Lord Salisbury from the Holy Roman Empire, to obtain King James' permission to visit England as the Shah of Persia's ambassador, but had only received directions 'first to address himself to other princes, that seeing the reception he had in other courts His Majesty [James I] might better know how he was to be proceeded with'.<sup>24</sup>

Robert followed up his determination to travel to England in October with indirect negotiations with Lord Salisbury, conducted through the medium of the British ambassador Francis Cottington in January 1611. He evidently managed to impress Cottington with his proposals as well as his personality, the ambassador confessing to Lord Salisbury that Robert's propositions 'cannot but appear unto the King [James I] worth embracing', and adding 'Mr. Sherley hath here gotten very great reputation, through his wise and discreet carriage, he is judged both modest and moreover brave in his speech diet and expenses, and in my poor opinion to those vices which in Sir Anthony

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<sup>23</sup> Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers*, pp. 73-74. Davies, pp. 231-32.

<sup>24</sup> John Digby, 'Sir John Digby, Ambassador in Spain, to [Lord] Salisbury, Alcobendas, 4 June 1611', in W. Noel Sainsbury (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, East Indies, China and Japan, 1513-1616, vols. II-IV* (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1862-78), vol. II (1862), no. 572.

do so abound, in this man may be found the contraries.’<sup>25</sup> Robert was thus engaged in outlining his proposals to Lord Salisbury, and working out the details for a possible reception at King James’ court in a matter of months, when his brother Sir Anthony arrived from the Kingdom of Sicily, and was welcomed by Robert and lodged at his house in Madrid a month later in February 1611.<sup>26</sup> Sir Anthony had been appointed Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean fleet at Sicily in 1609, and had recently been relieved of his command due to allegations of insubordination and lack of discipline among his soldiers at Syracuse brought against him by the Spanish Viceroy of Sicily, Juan Fernandez Pacheco, fifth Duke of Escalona.<sup>27</sup> Sherley returned to Madrid ‘so extreme poor, as if his brother did not relieve him, he would doubtless suffer much misery’, and blamed the Spanish council for not rewarding him sufficiently for his services to the crown: ‘these people [*i.e.* the Spanish] in my opinion do begin much to despise him, which he well perceives, and talks sometimes of his going for England, and sometimes of a journey into Persia with his brother, and daily (as I am told,) utters very mutinous words against this state [Spain], but mine opinion is, that unless he governs his tongue with more discretion, his progress will shortly be at an end.’<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Cottington, ‘Mr. Francis Cottington to [the Earl of] Salisbury, dated at Madrid, 5 January 1611’, in Sainsbury, no. 503, Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers*, p. 74, and Davies, pp. 231-32.

<sup>26</sup> Francis Cottington, ‘Master Cottington to Lord Salisbury, dated at Madrid, 22 February 1611’, in Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers*, p. 75, and Davies, pp. 220-21.

<sup>27</sup> Juan Fernandez Pacheco, fifth Duke of Escalona, ‘Escalona to King Philip III and Secretary of State Andres de Prada, Palermo, 5 February 1610’ (with *consulta* containing recommendations of the Council), MS Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1164, fol. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers*, pp. 75-6. ‘The Persian Ambassador [Robert Sherley’s] unsatisfactory treatment by the [royal favourite the] Duke of Lerma, who cast in his teeth ‘the baseness of his brother Anthony’’, Sainsbury, no. 503, also Andres de Prada, ‘Andres de Prada to Juan de Idiaquez, dated at Madrid, 4 May 1611’, MS Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1171, fol. 209. Patrick

Sherley almost certainly completed his *Relation of his Travels into Persia* between February and June 1611, when he was disillusioned with his patrons in Spain and was lodged at his brother's house, who was then preparing to visit England on a well-publicised mission on behalf of the Shah of Persia. Sherley had held the same post a decade earlier and saw himself as the architect of Perso-European cooperation, and perceived Robert's present mission as an opportunity to remind the English reading public about his own previous achievements in Persia, in hopes of overcoming his desperate financial situation and neglect by the Spanish authorities, and attempt to capitalise on his brother's negotiations with Lord Salisbury and King James to rehabilitate his reputation as a supporter of the Earl of Essex, while exploring the possibilities for new British as opposed to Spanish patronage. Sherley had had over a decade to reflect on and evaluate the significance of his journey to Persia and the ensuing counter-embassy to Europe on behalf of Shah 'Abbas, but the fact that he chose to compose the *Relation* in the English language rather than Spanish or Latin, and then entrusted the manuscript to his brother to take to England during *his* mission as the Shah's ambassador, suggests that Sherley believed this to be an opportune moment to publish his own description of the Persian Empire, though whether he envisaged its appearance as a printed book about two years later is certainly debatable.<sup>29</sup>

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Williams, *The Great Favourite: the Duke of Lerma and the Court and Government of Philip III of Spain, 1598-1621* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), pp. 149 ff.

<sup>29</sup> Ross, pp. xix, 80-81. Robert's decision to hand over the manuscript to the publishers comes across almost as an afterthought, and while it cannot be ruled out that he maintained contact with Sir Anthony following his (Robert's) departure from Madrid, the decision to hand over the manuscript to the publishers on the eve of his return to Persia was probably an independent decision.

Robert departed for England in late May or early June, taking a manuscript of Sir Anthony's *Relation* with him as mentioned above, and on his way out of Spain met the future Earl of Bristol Sir John Digby, who had been appointed to replace Francis Cottington as ambassador, and would soon request the Infanta Ana (later Anne of Austria's) hand in marriage for Henry, Prince of Wales.<sup>30</sup> Digby's embassy to Spain within the context of a Spanish Match for the Prince of Wales is a reminder of the improvement in relations between England and Spain, which would in turn have encouraged Sherley to consider the possibility of patronage in England, despite his residence and employment in Spain since October 1606.<sup>31</sup> Robert eventually reached London in the first week of August 1611, and immediately set about obtaining an audience with King James who was, however, less than enthusiastic about receiving Robert as the Shah's ambassador, on account of his ambiguous status as an 'Anglo-Iranian', and for being an 'outlaw' who had lived in Persia without permission for the past decade: 'Six days ago an Englishman, [Robert] Shirley, came here; he brings letters from the King of Persia and calls himself the Persian Ambassador. The King does not like this and makes a difficulty about receiving him as such, on the grounds that he is an English subject, and, what is more important, an outlaw'.<sup>32</sup> Robert's request for an

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<sup>30</sup> John Digby, 'Sir John Digby, Ambassador in Spain to [the Earl of] Salisbury, dated at Alcobendas, 4 June 1611', in Sainsbury (ed.), no. 452, and Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: the Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 10.

<sup>31</sup> Davies, p. 201 ff.

<sup>32</sup> Antonio Foscarini, 'Antonio Foscarini, Venetian Ambassador in England, to the Doge and Senate, London, 11 August 1611', Horatio F. Brown (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers in the Archives of Venice relating to English Affairs*, vols. I-XXXVIII (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1864-1947) vol. XII (1905), nos. 302, 324. Robert had not converted to Islam, despite rumours to the

audience was further complicated by his insistence on being received in his Persian *khal'at* or robes of honour: 'as if his *Clothes* were his limbs, [he] accounted himself never ready till he had something of the Persian Habit about him'.<sup>33</sup> Lord Salisbury originally opposed the idea of Robert appearing in a Persian *khal'at* at his proposed audience with King James at the palace, but was later swayed by the Master of Ceremonies, Lewis Lewkenor of Sussex, who was personally related to the Sherleys, so that after 'many difficulties' Salisbury 'agreed that he [Robert] should go as he chose', and was granted a short audience in September 1611.<sup>34</sup> King James subsequently acknowledged Robert as the Shah's ambassador, and granted him another audience in October, as reported by the Venetian ambassador in London:

On last Tuesday week [Robert] Sherley had audience of the King. He was conducted by the Baron Rossi [William Cecil, Lord Ros] and went in English dress. Three paces from the dais he made submission, sinking on his knees and imploring his Majesty's pardon if he, while still his Majesty's subject, had ventured to accept that office [of ambassador], for he had done so on the express orders of the King of Persia. The King listened graciously and signed to Sherley to rise and approach. Sherley presented his credentials and begged his Majesty to cause them to be interpreted so that he might fully grasp the nature of his authority in order to proceed to develop the subject of his Mission... The King was pleased at this manner of proceeding, and presently caused Sherley to be covered and dismissed him, praising his prudence, eloquence and modesty

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contrary, but was viewed as a renegade by his detractors, such as Archbishop George Abbot, Sir Thomas Roe and others, who continued to regard him with suspicion. Nabil Matar, 'The Renegade in English Seventeenth Century Imagination', *Studies in English Literature* 33 (1993), 3, pp. 489-506.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Fuller, *The History of the Worthies of England who for Parts and Learning have been Eminent in the Several Counties* (London: J.G.W.L. and W.G. for Thomas Williams, 1662), sig. 302<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>34</sup> Foscarini, 'Antonio Foscarini, Venetian Ambassador in England, to the Doge and Senate, dated at London, 14 October 1611', in Brown, no. 352, and Davies, p. 236.



after he had retired. So in a few days he will explain his proposals, which, as far as I understand, are two, one is commercial, the other relates to a union of arms against the Turk.<sup>35</sup>

Robert Sherley's diplomatic mission to James I's court has almost uniformly been interpreted as what Shand calls 'a dismal failure', primarily because of the Levant Company and the East India Company's stubborn refusal to countenance Robert's proposals for channelling Anglo-Iranian trade to the Persian Gulf, and likewise on account of the failure of the proposed military campaign against the Ottomans to materialise in the aftermath of the negotiations.<sup>36</sup> Robert was already aware of the merchants' complaints that 'the way is long, the trade uncertain, and must quite cut off our traffick with the Turk' in November 1611, and accordingly petitioned the King to 'admitt genttilmen to aduenture in fassion of trade... that they myght have his maiestys lettars pattentts for declarattion, to incurradge thos that are alreddy well disposed; and others', which was granted and investments were made, by Henry, Prince of Wales among others, who 'adventured' no less than a hundred pounds, as appears from a hitherto unnoticed covenant in the Losely Manuscripts.<sup>37</sup> Robert also wrote to Lord

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<sup>35</sup> Foscarini, 'Antonio Foscarini, Venetian Ambassador in England, to the Doge and Senate, dated at London, 21 October 1611', in Brown, no. 355. Lord Ros lived in Madrid at the same time as Robert Sherley (most of 1610), returned by the same route via France and the Netherlands (1610 / 1611), and might very well have been a friend of Robert Sherley's, given Ros' association with other Catholics and crypto-Catholics including Thomas Howard, 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Arundel and Sir Toby Matthew, as well as Ros' genuine and lasting interest in Spanish (and Italian) culture and language. cf. Alastair Bellany, 'William Cecil, sixteenth Baron Ros (1590-1618), Courtier and Ambassador', in *ODNB*.

<sup>36</sup> Shand, p. 263.

<sup>37</sup> John Chamberlain, 'John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton, dated London, 13 November 1611', in Shirley, p. 78, and Robert Sherley, 'Sir Robert Sherley to Salisbury, London, 7 November 1611', in Sainsbury, no. 588. 'Robert Sherley to Lord Salisbury, London, 2 March 1612', in Shirley, p. 80. 'Covenant by Sir Robert Sherley, Lord Ambassador from Persia, to Henry, Prince of Wales, guaranteeing a

Salisbury that King James was ‘determynd to make a combynation betwixt this state and the Persian as they nowe stand, and w<sup>th</sup> the successor of eache party, to the eande that if the Spanniard at any tyme shoulde intimat any thinge this way, [his] maiesty myght be assured in the East Indies of a Potent frende’, and that James wished to ‘reseue these satisfacttions... to be assured of the goodnes, and situattion of the Persian Portts, and wheather they may be aduãtigable to annoi the Spanniard if neede shall require’ following another audience with the King in March 1612.<sup>38</sup> Robert’s description of the audience to Lord Salisbury presents the King as being supportive of the idea of an enduring alliance with the Safavid Shahs, as well as being interested in receiving practical information about the location of the harbours, and although what is being stressed in the letter (perhaps deliberately) is the essentially defensive nature of the proposed alliance directed primarily against Spain, it should not obscure the fact that what was being contemplated was still a form of naval cooperation, involving the stationing of British ships in Iranian harbours. This would have had the attendant possibilities of future trade and cooperation, as had already been the case with the Portuguese, and could hardly be characterised as a ‘dismal failure’.<sup>39</sup>

Count Robert and his retinue embarked for Persia on board a vessel called the ‘Expedition’ owned by Sir Henry Thynne, and under the guidance of the privateer-turned-colonist Christopher Newport on 7 January 1613, but not before Robert had

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‘three for one’ return on £ 100 adventured by the Prince in Sherley’s voyage to Persia, dated 1612’ MS Losely 1128, Surrey History Centre, Woking, fol. 128, cf. also Sainsbury, no. 633.

<sup>38</sup> Shirley, p. 80.

<sup>39</sup> Willem Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2001), pp. 176-200.

passed on a copy of his brother's *Relation*, via an anonymous intermediary, to the London booksellers Nathaniel Butter and Joseph Bagfet.<sup>40</sup> Butter and Bagfet, in the absence of Sir Anthony Sherley himself, were obliged to procure a license for the printing of the manuscript by themselves. Since authors and / or publishers could apparently choose which censor examined the work intended for publication, it is of particular interest to examine who the publishers turned to in order to procure the necessary license, especially since we are fortunate enough to know the name of the licenser who approved the printing of Sherley's *Relation of his Travels* from the licenser's manuscript preserved at the Bodleian Library in Oxford.<sup>41</sup>

#### ***Gervase Nid, Licenser and his ties to Prince Henry's court***

Master Gervase Nid and Master John Harrison Junior, Rector of Southchurch and Warden of the Stationer's Company respectively, licensed Sir Anthony Sherley's *Relation of his Travels* for publication on 20 January 1613. Nid's imprimatur and signature together with Harrison's countersignature appear on the last leaf of the licenser's manuscript at the Bodleian Library, one of only two extant pre-Restoration

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<sup>40</sup> Shirley, p. 81. Payton in Purchas, sig. 3R5<sup>v</sup>. Edmund Howes, *Annales, or a generall chronicle of England, begun by Iohn Stow: continued and augmented... vnto the end of this present yeere 1631 & c.* (London: Impensis Richardi Meighen, 1632), sig. 4G6<sup>v</sup>-4H1<sup>r</sup>. On the possible identity of the 'Gentleman of some vnderstanding' see Purchas *Purchas his Pilgrims*, sig. M73<sup>r</sup>. Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 153<sup>r-v</sup>, and Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. A2<sup>v</sup>-A3<sup>v</sup>; as well as Purchas, sig. 6Z2<sup>r</sup>. Robert had been made Count Palatine by Emperor Rudolf II, and Count of the Sacred Palace of the Lateran by Pope Paul V, during his diplomatic mission to the Imperial and Papal courts respectively, see n. 7 above.

<sup>41</sup> Dutton, pp. 162-191. Janet Clare, *Art made Tongue-tied by Authority: Elizabethan and Jacobean Censorship* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), pp. 173 ff. Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Jacobean England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), pp. 20-68.

examples containing both license and the signature of a Company official: ‘Let it be printed [...] xx<sup>th</sup> Januarua 1612 [...] Geruase Nid [...] John Harison.’<sup>42</sup>

Gervase Nid matriculated at Trinity College Cambridge (1596), where he graduated Bachelor of Arts (1596 / 97) and was admitted a Minor Fellow (1599). He proceeded Master of Arts and was elected a Major Fellow (1600), remaining a fellow or at least continuing to reside at Trinity College until *ca.* 1612, and assumed his first teaching position there as a Second Lecturer in 1604 / 5.<sup>43</sup> Nid was ordained as a deacon at Downham on 15 June, and as priest at the same parish on 21 September 1606.<sup>44</sup> He continued to hold office at Trinity College, as Lecturer in Greek (1609 / 1610), and afterwards as a Lecturer in Rhetoric (1610-11).<sup>45</sup> Archbishop George Abbot appointed him Rector of Southchurch in September 1611, and of Ivychurch where he proceeded Doctor of Divinity in November 1614, although Nid later resigned from the former position, and was subsequently reassigned to Cliffe and Sundridge in 1615.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 152<sup>v</sup>. Peter W.M. Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear and their Origins*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), Fig. 38a, pp. 270, 262.

<sup>43</sup> Book of Admissions and Admonitions, 1560-1759, and Senior Bursar’s Accounts, Trinity College Library, Cambridge, see also ‘List of Fellows’ in H. McLeod Innes, *The Fellows of Trinity College, Cambridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1941), pp. 29, and 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ely Diocesan Records, 1600-1609, MS EDR G/1/9, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, sub. 15/6/1606, 21/9/1606. Martin Heton, Bishop of Ely, ordained Nid both as a priest and as a deacon at Downham, Isle of Ely. Brett Usher, ‘Martin Heton (1554-1609), Bishop of Ely’, *ODNB*.

<sup>45</sup> Admissions and Admonitions, 1560-1759, Trinity College Library, Cambridge.

<sup>46</sup> George Abbot, ‘The Registers of Archbishop George Abbot’, preserved at Lambeth Palace Library, London, vol. 1, 4.9.1611, 5.11.1614, 15.7.1615, 17.17.1615 and 4.5.1615.

Nid licensed many books during his tenure at Southchurch, from court masques and entertainments to politico-historical works and treatises, moral and polemical tracts and more than a few collections of poems, which were perhaps predictably not all of the highest quality or attracted the same level of interest. He appears to have issued the majority of his licenses from about 1611 to 1615, with the exception of Richard Brathwaite's *An Exquisite Discourse of Epitaphs* licensed in May 1618, and a brief overview of these should indicate why Sherley's *Relation* was submitted to him rather than any other licenser, given that authors and publishers could choose which official examined their manuscript in order to obtain a license for publication.<sup>47</sup>

Nathaniel Butter and Joseph Bagfet as publishers were first and foremost interested in obtaining a licenser's approval for publication, and therefore approached a licenser disposed to approving the manuscript for publication, which in turn indicates both Gervase Nid's network of interests and associates, and the audiences likely to be interested in seeing Sherley's *Relation* appear as a printed publication.

Nid licensed a number of court masques and entertainments, including George Chapman's *Memorable Maske of the two Honorable Houses or Inns of Court... performed before the King, at White-Hall* (1613), Francis Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Grayes Inne... presented before his Maiestie, the Queenes Maiestie,*

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<sup>47</sup> W.W. Greg, *Licensers for the Press, & c. to 1640: A Biographical Index based mainly on Arber's Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers* (Oxford: Bibliographical Society, 1962), pp. 72-3. Richard Brathwaite, *The Good Wife: or, a Rare one amongst Women, Whereto is annexed An Exquisite Discourse of Epitaphs* (London: printed by [John Beale] for Richard Redmer, 1618).

*the Prince, Count Palatine and the Lady Elizabeth* (1613), John Coprario's *Maske of Flowers: presented... at the Court of White-hall* (1614), Thomas Tomkis' *Albvmazar: a comedy presented before the Kings Maiestie* (1615) and George Ruggle's *Ignoramvs: Comædia coram Regia Maiestate [etc.]* (1630).<sup>48</sup> Nid's decision to license these spectacles would hardly have been controversial, given that the King if not the entire royal family had been present at the above-mentioned performances.

Nid issued licenses for numerous collections of poetry, most notably Ben Jonson's *Epigrams* licensed on 15 May 1612, and later printed as part of Jonson's complete *Workes* (1616), John Taylor's *The Scvuller, Rowing from Tiber to Thames... Sonnets, Satyres, and Epigrams* (1612), Richard Brathwaite's *A Strappado for the Diuell: Epigrams and Satyres alluding to the Time* (1615), as well as William Browne's *The Shepherds Pipe* (1614), Augustine Taylor's *Encomiasticke Elegies* (1614) and Thomas Evans' *Oedipvs: Three Cantoes* (1615) among others.<sup>49</sup> Taylor's book was printed for

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<sup>48</sup> George Chapman, *The Memorable Maske of the two Honorable Houses or Innes of Court; the Middle Temple, and Lyncolns Inne, as it was performd before the King, at White-Hall on Shroue Munday at night; being the 15. of February 1613, etc.* (London: printed by G. Eld for George Norton, 1613). Francis Beaumont, *The Masque of the Inner Temple and Grayes Inne... presented before his Maiestie, the Queenes Maiestie, the Prince, Count Palatine and the Lady Elizabeth their Highnesses, in the Banqueting house at White-hall on Saturday the twentieth day of Februarie, 1612* (London: Imprinted by F[elix] K[ingston] for George Norton, 1613). John Coprario, *The Maske of Flowers: presented by the Gentlemen of Graies-Inne, at the court of White-hall, in the Banqueting House, vpon Twelfe night, 1613, etc.* (London: printed by N[icholas] O[kes] for Robert Wilson, 1614). Thomas Tomkis, *Albumazar: a comedy presented before the Kings Maiestie at Cambridge, the ninth of March 1614, by the Gentlemen of Trinitie Colledge* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes for Walter Burre, 1615), and George Ruggle, *Ignoramus: Comoedia coram Regia Maiestate Iacobi Regis Angliae & c.* (London: [printed by Thomas Purfoot], 1630).

<sup>49</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson* (London: Imprinted by William Stansby, 1616). John Taylor, *The Sculler rowing from Tiber to Thames: with his boate laden with a hotch-potch, or gallimawfry*

Nathaniel Butter, the main publisher of Sherley's *Relation of his Travels*, confirming Butter's longstanding interest in English adventures abroad, while William Browne, Augustine Taylor and Thomas Evans' books, as well as Coprario's *Maske of Flowers* (1614) and Tomkis' *Albvmazar* (1615) were all printed by Nicholas Okes, who would print the first and only edition of Sherley's *Relation of his Travels*.

Nid licensed a number of significant historical works, including Richard Johnson's *Remembrance of the Honors due to the Life and Death of Robert Earle of Salisbury, Lord Treasurer of England & c.* (1612), and Edmund Howes' continuation of John Stow published as *The Annales, or Generall Chronicle of England* (1615), with Howes providing a detailed, and slightly garbled, account of Robert Sherley's residence in London as the Shah of Persia's ambassador 1611-13.<sup>50</sup> Nid also approved a series of religious and moral tracts for publication, notably John Greene's *Refvtation of the Apology for Actors* (1615), a three-point rebuttal of Thomas Heywood's *Apology for Actors* (1612) printed incidentally by Nicholas Okes, and Saint Francis de Sales'

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*of sonnets, satyres, and epigrams.* (London: printed by E[dward] A[l]lde for [Nathaniel Butter], 1612). Richard Brathwaite, *A Strappado for the Diuell: Epigrams and satyres alluding to the time, with diuers measures of no lesse delight* (London: printed by I. B[eale] for Richard Redmer, 1615). William Browne, *The Shepheards Pipe* (London: printed by N[icholas] O[kes] for George Norton, 1614). Augustine Taylor, *Encomiasticke Elegies* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes, 1614), and Thomas Evans, *Oedipus three Cantoës, Wherein is contained: 1 His vnfortunate infancy. 2 His execrable actions. 3 His lamentable end. By T[homas] E[vans] Bach: Art. Cantab* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes, 1615).

<sup>50</sup> Richard Johnson, *A remembrance of the honors due to the life and death of Robert Earle of Salisbury, Lord Treasurer of England, &c.* (London: [G. Eld] for Iohn Wright, 1612). Howes mistakenly conflates Robert's five-year residence at the Medici court in Florence (1593-98), and his visit to the Holy Roman Emperor's court at Prague as the Shah of Persia's ambassador (1609), with his elder brother Sir Anthony's embassy to Morocco on behalf of the Emperor (1605-6). Howes, sig. 4H1<sup>r</sup>.

*Introduction to a Devout Life* (1616), which was probably Nid's most difficult commission during his career as a licenser, and would turn out to be of crucial importance in Prynne's prosecution of Archbishop Laud in 1644-45.<sup>51</sup>

Nid's licenses surveyed thus far show Nathaniel Butter publishing an earlier travel account examined by the Rector of Southchurch, as well as Nicholas Okes printing a number of poetic and religious works licensed by him, but Nid's approval of Grey Brydges, 5<sup>th</sup> Baron Chandos' *Discovrse against Flatterie* (1611), and Sir Robert Dallington's *Aphorismes Civill and Militarie... out of the first Quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* (1613), would appear to be of more immediate interest vis-à-vis the publication of Sherley's *Relation*, since both courtiers were involved in the Essex rebellion and were later rehabilitated under the new dynasty, which was also what the Sherleys were trying to achieve on their own account, following Sir Anthony's close association with the Earl during the turbulent period 1595-1600.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> John Greene, *A refutation of the Apology for actors: diuided into three briefe treatises, wherein is confuted and opposed all the chiefe groundes and arguments alleaged in defence of playes: and withall in each treatise is deciphered actors, 1. heathenish and diabolicall institution. 2. their ancient and moderne indignitie. 3. the wonderfull abuse of their impious qualitie, by I.G.* (London: printed by W. White, 1615). Thomas Heywood, *An apology for actors: containing three briefe treatises: 1. Their antiquity. 2. Their ancient dignity. 3. The true vse of their quality, written by Thomas Heywood.* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes, 1612). Francis de Sales, *An introduction to a deuout life leading to the way of eternitie, made by Francis Salis, Bishop of Geneva.* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes for Walter Burre, 1616). N.W. Bawcutt, 'A Crisis of Laudian Censorship: Nicholas and John Okes and the publication of Sales's *An Introduction to a Devout Life* in 1637', in *The Library* 1 (2000), 4, pp. 403-38.

<sup>52</sup> Grey Brydges, 5<sup>th</sup> Baron Chandos, *A discourse against flatterie* (London: printed by Will. Stansby for Walter Burre, 1611), and Robert Dallington, *Aphorismes Ciuill and Militarie... out of the first quarterne of Fr[ancesco] Guicciardine [etc.]* (London: printed for Edward Blount, 1613).



Chandos left England so he could be present at the Dutch siege of Julich after the outbreak of the Julich-Cleves War in 1609 / 1610, and spent the following years at Orleans and later at Spa in the Spanish Netherlands, and is therefore unlikely to have come into contact with Sir Robert Sherley during the latter's residence in London between August 1611 and early January 1613.<sup>53</sup> Dallington, on the other hand, was not only present in London, but happened to be highly connected, and was retained as gentleman of the chamber to Henry, Prince of Wales. He was also involved in a public quarrel with Joseph Hall over the nature of travel and travel literature.<sup>54</sup>

***Robert Dallington: Gentleman of the Chamber and Advocate of the Grand Tour***

Robert Dallington was born at Geddington, Northamptonshire in 1561, went to Corpus Christi College, Cambridge from about 1575 to about 1580, and was incorporated at Oxford as Master of Arts from Cambridge in 1601.<sup>55</sup> Dallington's first patrons were the Butts family from Norfolk, who were related to the Bacons through marriage, and installed him as schoolmaster in Thornage or Ryburgh.<sup>56</sup> Sir William Butts of Norfolk died in September 1583, and Dallington dedicated a book of epitaphs to his son,

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<sup>53</sup> Chandos' movements abroad are helpfully summarised in Andrew Wormington, 'Grey Brydges, fifth Baron Chandos (1578/9-1621), Courtier and Landowner', in *ODNB*.

<sup>54</sup> McCrea, pp. 194 ff.

<sup>55</sup> On Dallington's life see C.S. Knighton, 'Sir Robert Dallington (1561-1636x8), Author and Courtier', *ODNB*, and Karl Josef Holtgen, 'Sir Robert Dallington (1561-1637): Author, Traveler, and Pioneer of Taste', in *Huntington Library Quarterly*, vol. 47 (Summer 1984), no. 3, pp. 147-77.

<sup>56</sup> Knighton 'Sir Robert Dallington', and Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales, and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1986), p. 30.

containing verses from himself and other associates.<sup>57</sup> Dallington made a surprising appearance as a literary figure at age twenty-one with the publication of *The Strife of Loue in a Dream* (1592), a translation of Francesco Colonna's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* (1499), which he chose to dedicate to the memory of Sir Philip Sidney, and significantly to Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex. Dallington managed to secure the patronage of Sidney's indirect heirs with the Manners family, but his book is also important because it provides a direct link between the Italianate interests of Prince Henry's court, and the pioneer of such taste and his associates in the 1590's.<sup>58</sup>

Dallington next composed a series of commendatory verses for his friend Lewis Lewkenor of Sussex's *The Resolued Gentleman* (1594), a translation of Hernando de Acuña's rendition of Olivier de La Marche's *Le Chevalier Délibéré* (1488), in which Dallington argued that even though Lewkenor had been constrained to abandon the military profession he did not have to abandon the Muses.<sup>59</sup> Lewkenor had gone into

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<sup>57</sup> Robert Dallington, *A Booke of Epitaphes made vpon the death of the Right Worshipfull Sir William Byttes Knight... Anno 1583* (London: Imprinted by Henrie Midleton, 1583).

<sup>58</sup> Strong, pp. 30-31. Dallington, *The strife of loue in a dreame* (London: printed [by Abell Jeffes, John Charlewood, and Eliot's Court Press] for Simon Waterson, 1592). Joscelyn Godwin (ed.), *Francesco Colonna: Hypnerotomachia Polyphili* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2005). For a recent evaluation of Dallington's adaptation cf. L.E. Semler, 'Robert Dallington's *Hypnerotomachia* and the Protestant Antiquity of Elizabethan England', *Studies in Philology* 103 (Spring 2006), 2, pp. 228-41.

<sup>59</sup> Lewis Lewkenor, *The Resolued Gentleman* (London: printed by Richard Watkins, 1594), sig. A2<sup>v</sup>. Carleton W. Carroll and Lois Hawley Wilson (ed.) *Olivier de La Marche: The Resolute Knight* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 1999). Nieves Baranda and Victor Infantes (eds.) *Hernando de Acuña: El Cavallero Determinado* (Toledo: Antonio Pareja Editor, 2000). Holtgen, p. 157. Susie Speakman Sutch and Anne Lake Prescott, 'Translation as Transformation: Olivier de La Marche's *Le Chevaliere Delibere* and its Habsburg and Elizabethan Permutations', *Comparative Literature Studies* 25

voluntary exile in Holland due to his Catholic convictions (1580), where he was employed as a captain in the Spanish army and received a severe arm wound that terminated his military career, after which he sought safe conduct back to England through his, and Sherley's, relative Sir Robert Sidney. Lewkenor was extensively debriefed by Lord Burghley at his return and was subsequently employed as an interpreter and liaison with foreign ambassadors (1600), a position that was later formalised with the accession of James I when Lewkenor was appointed Master of Ceremonies on 21 May 1603, in which capacity he interceded on behalf of Robert Sherley with Lord Salisbury in September 1611 as mentioned above.<sup>60</sup>

Dallington accompanied Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland, as a tutor and his secretary on Rutland's continental tour to Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and France from 1595 to 1597, concerning which the Earl of Essex had addressed three private letters of travel advice to Rutland, which were later re-worked by the Essex secretariat, or more specifically Sir Francis Bacon, into the widely-circulated 'The Advice to the Earl of Rutland on his Travels'.<sup>61</sup> Dallington accompanied Rutland's brother, Sir Francis Manners, on another tour to France, Italy and the Holy Roman Empire from 1598 to 1600, with a party that probably included Inigo Jones and was

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(1988), pp. 281-313. Marco Nievergelt, 'Catholic Loyalty, Service and Careerism: Lewis Lewkenor's Quest for Favour', *Renaissance Studies*, vol. 24 (September 2010), no. 4, pp. 536-58.

<sup>60</sup> Roderick Clayton, 'Sir Lewes Lewknor (c. 1560-1627), Courtier and Translator', *ODNB*.

<sup>61</sup> Paul E.J. Hammer, 'Roger Manners, fifth earl of Rutland (1576-1612), Nobleman', *ODNB*. Brian Vickers (ed.) *Francis Bacon: the Major Works* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), pp. 69 ff. Essex's travel advice to Rutland is examined in Hammer, 'Letters of Travel Advice from the Earl of Essex to the Earl of Rutland: Some Comments', *Philological Quarterly* 74 (Summer 1995), pp. 317-26.

eventually received by the Emperor Maximilian II.<sup>62</sup> Dallington's continental tours with Roger Manners, fifth Earl of Rutland and his younger brother Francis led to the publication of two travel books, *A Method for Trauell: shewed by taking the View of France, as it stode in the yeare of Our Lord 1598*, and *A Survey of the Great Dukes State of Tuscany, in the yeare of Our Lord 1596* (1605).<sup>63</sup> Dallington's *Method for Trauell* was composed for the 'priuate use of an honourable gentleman' namely the young Francis Manners, and as K.J. Holtgen has observed was intended first and foremost for educational and practical purposes, echoing the title of Albrecht Meyer's *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes & arces* (1587).<sup>64</sup> Holtgen goes on to stress the book's practical purpose by noting that the 'methodized matter of Dallington's booklet is set out in a synoptical table after the Ramist fashion so that it may serve as a pattern or model for the traveler's own observations and his diary'.<sup>65</sup> Edward Chaney, on the other hand, describes Dallington's *A Survey of the Great Dukes State of Tuscany* as being excellent on the Florentine dependencies of Pistoia, Siena and Pisa, as well as on the 'rural economy, the silk industry, taxation, mining, monopolies, diet, banking,

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<sup>62</sup> Knighton, 'Sir Robert Dallington'. On Francis Manners, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl of Rutland, cf. Albert J. Loomie, 'Francis Manners, sixth earl of Rutland (1578-1632), Nobleman', in *ODNB*.

<sup>63</sup> Dallington, *A Method for Trauell: shewed by taking the view of France, as it stode in the yeare of Our Lord 1598* (London: Thomas Creede, 1605). Idem, *A Suruey of the Great Dukes State of Tuscany, in the yeare of Our Lord 1596* (London: printed by George Eld for Edward Blount, 1605).

<sup>64</sup> Albrecht Meyer, *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes & arces, & quid singulis locis præcipuè in peregrinationibus homines nobiles ac docti animadvertere, observare & annotare debeant... per M. Albertvm Meiervm* (Helmstadii: Excudebat Iacobus Lucius, 1587). Holtgen, p. 159. Meyer's *Methodus* had already been translated into English as *Certaine briefe, and speciall instructions for gentlemen, merchants, students, souldiers, marriners, & c employed in seruices abrode, or anie way occasioned to conuerse in the kingdomes, and gouernementes of forren prince* (London: printed by Iohn Woolfe, 1589).

<sup>65</sup> Holtgen, p. 159.

bureaucracy, brothels, methods of torture and local government', while noting that 'what ultimately fascinates [Dallington] is Florence's government and in particular the way in which one family, the Medici, could from such humble beginnings in a relatively democratic state have acquired almost regal powers'. This is not far removed from Sherley's decision to include an account of Shah 'Abbas' rise to power in the *Relation* since 'he is both one of the mightiest princes that are, and one of the excellentest... haveing come to this greatnes, though by right: yet through the circumstances of the time and the occasions, which then were, solelie his owne worthines and vertue'.<sup>66</sup>

Dallington was introduced to Prince Henry by Rutland in 1605 and joined the Prince's household five years later in 1610, following Rutland's recommendation of him to Salisbury for the Prince's service in December 1609, and Dallington's presentation of a manuscript of his *Aphorismes Ciuill and Militarie... out of the first Quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* to the Prince who was its original dedicatee.<sup>67</sup> Holtgen again notices Dallington's method as an educator in the *Aphorismes*: Dallington selects numerous 'ricordi' from Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* (1537-40), which are supplemented with recognised authors and suitable passages from the *Storia*. Dallington cites many

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<sup>66</sup> Edward Chaney, 'Robert Dallington's *A Survey of Tuscany* (1605): A British View of Medicean Florence', in *The Evolution of the Grand Tour: Anglo-Italian Cultural Relations since the Renaissance* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 150-51. Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 124<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>67</sup> Strong, p. 31. Chaney, p. 147. Knighton, 'Sir Robert Dallington'. Dallington's printed *Aphorismes* were dedicated to the deceased Prince's younger brother Charles. Holtgen discovered Dallington's presentation copy of the *Aphorismes* at Northamptonshire Record Office in 1981. Dallington, *Aphorismes ciuill and militarie: amplified with authorities, and exemplified with historie, out of the first quarterne of Fr. Guicciardine* (London: R. Field for Edward Blount, 1613). Finch Hatton MS F.H.315, Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton. Holtgen, pp. 161-66, and Appendix II, no. 6, p. 173.

authorities since the Prince did not have the leisure to read every individual book, provided citations in a number of different languages in order to ‘procure his [the Prince’s] better appetite’, and in conclusion argued that the aphorisms, quotations and examples were not too scattered but that ‘with [Justus] Lipsius Soder you may cymment them together, and make them con-center in the maine proposition.’<sup>68</sup>

Dallington’s endorsement of Justus Lipsius is an indication of his Tacitism stretching back to his association with the Earl of Essex. Sherley was also influenced by the reception of Tacitus via the Sidney and Essex circles during the 1590’s, as will be demonstrated in a subsequent chapter of the dissertation. Dallington’s Tacitism was an additional reason for his public quarrel with Hall as mentioned above.<sup>69</sup>

### ***Sir Robert Sherley’s contacts with the Prince of Wales***

Dallington presented his manuscript *Aphorismes... out of... Guicciardine* (1609) to the Prince after he had already dedicated his *Method for Trauell* to him (1605), and Sir Thomas Palmer, whose son was the cup-bearer to the Prince, had dedicated his own *Essay of the Meanes how to make our Trauailes, into forraine Countries, the more profitable and honourable* to the young Prince (1606).<sup>70</sup> Palmer was motivated to compose his *Essay* in part as an attempt to prevent ‘so many and such fugitiues

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<sup>68</sup> Dallington, *Aphorismes*, sig. A4<sup>v</sup>. Holtgen, pp. 168, and 173. Sidney Alexander (ed.), *Francesco Guicciardini: The History of Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

<sup>69</sup> McCrea, p. 194.

<sup>70</sup> Thomas Palmer, *An Essay of the Meanes how to make our Trauailes... more profitable and honourable* (London: Humphrey Lownes, 1606), sig. A2<sup>r</sup>-A3<sup>r</sup>. O’Callaghan, pp. 87, 85.

(vnworthie of the honourable name of Trauailers)... who... haue communicated with all euill and mischiefe in their trauailes, to subiect their own Countrie, Princes, State, Parents, friends and all that is held deare in this life', which must be understood in reference to the aftermath of the Gunpowder Plot (1605).<sup>71</sup> Palmer was likewise encouraged to compose the work 'vpō the vertue of the yonger sort of such noble gentlemen as intend so recōmendable a course [to travel], to prepare and addresse the same, by way of Essay', and it is the identity of these younger 'noble gentlemen' associated with the Prince's court that will provide some idea of the community of readers that would have been interested in reading of Palmer's *Essay*, Dallington's *Method and Survey* and Sherley's *Relation of his Travels into Persia*.<sup>72</sup>

Robert Devereux, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Essex, who had been educated with Prince Henry, would spend twenty-one months in France and Holland from 1607 to 1609, while John Harington, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Harington, and one of Henry's close companions, would travel through Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, the Empire and France for eighteen months from 1608 to 1610, and William Cecil, Lord Cranborne, another one of the Prince's close companions, would spend a similar length of time travelling through France and Venice from 1609 to 1612 (?).<sup>73</sup> Dallington was a tutor at Prince Henry's household and probably helped Essex, Harington and Cecil prepare for their travels

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<sup>71</sup> Palmer, *Essay*, sig. A1<sup>v</sup>. For recent secondary literature on the Powder Plot cf. Mark Nicholls, *Investigating Gunpowder Plot* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991). Antonia Fraser, *The Gunpowder Plot: Terror and Faith in 1605* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1996).

<sup>72</sup> Palmer, *Essay*, sig. A1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>73</sup> O'Callaghan, p. 88. John Morrill, 'Robert Devereux, third Earl of Essex (1591-1646), Parliamentarian Army Officer', Simon Healy, 'John Harington, second Baron Harington of Exton (bap. 1592, d. 1614), Courtier', G.D. Owen, 'William Cecil, second Earl of Salisbury (1591-1668), Politician', *ODNB*.

abroad, while the Prince, according to Balthazar Gerbier, was involved in plans for a Royal Academy, so that ‘if our [Nobility and Gentry] affected travel, they should go with minds better confirmed; with less expence of tyme and mony; and be able to show themselves less ignorant at their coming hither, than now they do; whereby we yield the French and other nations an occasion to undervalue us; and therein cause our country to suffer more dishonour than needs; seeing we may provide against it.’<sup>74</sup>

Prince Henry had declared his wish to protect Venice from the Papacy as early as February 1607, planned to intervene on behalf of the Protestant states during the Julich-Cleves crisis of 1609-10, and corresponded extensively with Sir Horace Vere and Sir Edward Cecil, who were both generals in the Dutch army under Count Maurice of Nassau during the conflict.<sup>75</sup> Sir Robert Sherley’s embassy to promote commercial and military relations with the Safavid Empire, echoed by his brother’s arguments in the manuscript copy of the *Relation* he brought from Spain, thus took place against the background of Prince Henry’s growing interest in modes of travel, and the looming possibility of a foreign military adventure. Robert’s self-fashioning as ‘General of Artillery’ and brother-in-law to the Shah of Persia, his residence at the Medici court for

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<sup>74</sup> Balthazar Gerbier, ‘The Project for an Academy Royal in England’, in John Gutch (ed.), *Collectanea Curiosa; or Miscellaneous Tracts, Relating to the History and Antiquities of England and Ireland... Chiefly collected... from the Manuscripts of Archbishop Sancroft; given to the Bodleian Library by the late Bishop Tanner* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1781), vol. I, p. 213. On Gerbier see Jerry Brotton, *The Sale of the Late King’s Goods: Charles I & his Art Collection* (London: Macmillan, 2006), *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> Strong, p. 75. David Norbrook, ‘The Masque of Truth: Court Entertainments and International Protestant Politics in the Early Stuart Period’, in *Seventeenth Century* 1, 2 (1986), pp. 89-90. O’Callaghan, p. 89. D.J.B. Trim, ‘Horace [Horatio] Vere, Baron Vere of Tilbury (1565-1635), Army Officer’, and Roger Lockyer, ‘Edward Cecil, Viscount Wimbledon (1572-1638), Soldier and Politician’, *ODNB*.



five years before travelling to Persia, and the honours heaped on him by the Emperor, Pope and other princes upon his return to Europe, would likely have appealed to the Prince and his followers who had been educated by Robert Dallington.<sup>76</sup>

Prince Henry certainly knew Robert and his wife Teresia (Sampsonia), and agreed to christen their first and only child in November 1611, while his mother Anne of Denmark stood godmother to the couple's newborn son.<sup>77</sup> Sir Robert Sidney, who was Queen Anne's chamberlain at the time, also mentions a visit paid by Robert Sherley to the Queen in a letter to his wife in October 1611.<sup>78</sup> Robert was encouraged to write to the Prince on account of his favourable disposition, and the extant letter is remarkable both for its rendering of standard Persian phrases into English, and for indicating Robert's keen sense of the Prince's desire to project his fame abroad: 'The great honnors and favors it hath pleased your highnes to use towards me, hath imbowlde me to wright the fewe lyns, w<sup>ch</sup> shal be to beseeche your highnes to Cristen a son w<sup>ch</sup> God hath given me. Your highnes in this shal make your servant happy, whos whole londginge is to doe your highnes some segnniolated servis, worthy to be esteemed in your Prinsly brestt. I have not the pen of Sissero, yet wontt I not means to sownde your highnesses worthy

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<sup>76</sup> Howes, sig. 4H1<sup>r</sup>. Sir Robert had been residing at the Medici court for five years, before he joined his brother on a journey to that of Shah 'Abbas, but he is not mentioned in the Medici archives before 19<sup>th</sup> September 1609. Belisario Vinta, 'Belisario Vinta to Orso Panocchieschi d'Elci, 19<sup>th</sup> September 1609', Medici Archive, Florence, Minute di Letteri e Registri, vol. 302, doc. no. 12495, fols. 6 ff.

<sup>77</sup> Howes, sig. 4H1<sup>r</sup>. On Lady Teresia (Sampsonia) Sherley see Bernadette Andrea, 'Lady Sherley: the first Persian in England?', *The Muslim World*, vol. 95 (April 2005), no. 2, pp. 279-95.

<sup>78</sup> Margaret P. Hannay, Noel J. Kinnamon and Michael G. Brennan (eds.) *Domestic Politics and Family Absence: the Correspondence of Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester, 1588-1621* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 172, and 169.

prayses in to the ears of forran nattions, and migtey Prinses; and I assure myselfe, your highborne sperritt thirstes after fame, the period of greate Prinses ambissions'.<sup>79</sup>

Sir Robert Sherley evidently had contact with Queen Anne and Prince Henry's households, and although these cannot always be reconstructed in the absence of documentary evidence, two incidental references by John Davies of Hereford and the traveller Thomas Coryate invite closer examination, since they appear to point to additional information about the readership amongst whom Sherley's *Relation* might have found a receptive audience in 1613. Davies of Hereford was a poet and writing master at Prince Henry's household, and he dedicated a poem to his friend and pupil Henry Mainwarring, who later accompanied Robert on his return voyage to Persia, ostensibly after the latter had drawn up a contract with the shipowner and merchant Sir Henry Thynne in the closing months of 1611.<sup>80</sup> Davies' poem appears in *The Muses Sacrifice* (1612) and is addressed to his 'most deare, and no lesse worthily-beloued Friend and Pupill, Henry Mainwarring Esquier, with the truly-noble and venterous Knight S<sup>r</sup>. Henry Thynne, accompanying, into Persia, the meritoriously-farre-renowned Knight, S<sup>r</sup>. Robert Sherley, Englishman, yet Lord Ambassador sent from the great Persian Potentate, to all Christian Princes, for the good of Christendome.'<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Robert Sherley, 'Robert Sherley to the high and myghty Prince of Wales, London, 4 November 1611', reprinted in E.P. Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers*, p. 79, examples of direct renderings from Persian: 'a son w<sup>ch</sup> God hathe given me', as well as 'this shal make your servant happy'.

<sup>80</sup> Shirley, p. 81.

<sup>81</sup> John Davies, *The Muses Sacrifice* (London: T.S., 1612), sig. Z3<sup>r-v</sup>. Davies' description of Sir Robert's mission to Europe appears to be very much in character, and given Davies' considerable output of specifically religious poetry throughout his writing career, it is to be expected that he would find the mission as expressed in Christian humanist terms important and compelling.

Henry Mainwarring Esquire was probably the son of George Manwaring, who had accompanied Sherley to Persia and composed a manuscript ‘True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley’s Travel into Persia... written by George Manwaring, Gent, who attended on Sir Anthony all the Journey’ (ca. 1599).<sup>82</sup> Davies had earlier composed another poem in praise of William Parry, Gentleman, who had likewise accompanied Sherley on his journey and after his return to England published *A New and Large Discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley* (1601).<sup>83</sup> Davies knew Ben Jonson and Inigo Jones who collaborated on Prince Henry’s *Barriers*, and spent 1609-10 at one of the estates of Henry Percy, 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Northumberland, and elder brother of William Percy the author of *Mahomet and his Heaven* (1601). Northumberland maintained extensive contacts with the expatriate community in Madrid, and his estate at Petworth House, where Van Dyk’s twin portraits of Sir Robert and Teresia Sherley are kept, is located near the Sherley estate at Wiston House.<sup>84</sup> Northumberland was also married to Lady Dorothy Perrott nee Devereux, sister of the second Earl of Essex.

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<sup>82</sup> Sloane MS 105, British Library, London, fols. 8-34. Ross, pp. 175 ff.

<sup>83</sup> William Parry, *A new and large discourse of the trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley Knight, by sea, and ouer land, to the Persian Empire, wherein are related many straunge and wonderfull accidents: and also, the description and conditions of those countries and people he passed by, with his returne into Christendome, written by William Parry gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his traueles*. (London: printed by Valentine Simmes for Felix Norton, 1601), sig. F3<sup>r</sup>, and Denison Ross, pp. 98 ff.

<sup>84</sup> P.J. Finkelpearl, ‘John Davies (1564/5-1618), Poet and Writing Master’, and Mark Nicholls, ‘Henry Percy, ninth Earl of Northumberland (1564-1632), Nobleman’, *ODNB*. Christopher Highley, *Catholics Writing the Nation in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), *passim*.

Coryate met Sir Robert Sherley after the latter had landed on the Indian coast, been received by the Mughal Emperor Jahangir at his capital in Ajmer, and had joined a caravan on his way back to the Persian court in Isfahan. Coryate's description of his encounter with Sir Robert and his retinue is especially interesting, since Coryate composed it for readers who were also linked to Prince Henry's court, and the joy occasioned by the encounter would necessarily have to pre-suppose an earlier acquaintance back in England, which was compounded by Coryate's view of his countryman rewarded with lavish presents and in flourishing condition:

About the middle of the way, betwixt *Spahan* [Isfahan] and *Lahore*, iust about the Frontiers of *Persia & India*, I met Sir Robert Sherley, and his Lady, trauailing from the court of the *Mogul*, (where they had beene verie graciously receiued, and enriched with presents of great value) to the King of *Persia's* Court; so gallantly furnished with all necessaries for their trauailes, that it was a great comfort vnto me to see them in such a florishing estate. There did he shew mee to my singular contentment, both my Bookes neatly kept; and hath promised me to shew them, especialy mine *Itinerarie*, to the Persian King; and to interpret vnto him some of the princiall Matters in the Turkish tongue, to the end, I may haue the more gracious accesse vnto him after my returne thither. For through *Persia* I haue determined (by Gods helpe) to returne to *Aleppo*.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> Thomas Coryate, *Thomas Coriate, Traueller for the English Wits: Greeting, from the Court of the Great Mogvl, Resident at the Towne of Asmere, in Easterne India* (London: printed by W. Iaggard and Henry Fetherston, 1616), sig. C4<sup>r-v</sup>. See also O'Callaghan, pp. 85-103. Coryate's two books printed before Robert's departure from London were: *Coryats crudities hastily gobled vp in five moneths trauels in France, Sauoy, Italy, Rhetia co[m]monly called the Grisons country, Heluetia aliàs Switzerland, some parts of high Germany, and the Netherlands; newly digested in the hungry aire of Odcombe in the county of Somerset, & now dispersed to the nourishment of the trauelling members of this kingdome*. (London: printed by W[illiam] S[tansby for the author], anno Domini 1611) and *The Odcombian banquet: dished forth by Thomas the Coriat, and serued in by a number of noble wits in prayse of his Crudities and Crambe too* (London: Imprinted [by George Eld] for Thomas Thorp, 1611).

Sir Robert Sherley's contacts with members of Prince Henry's household have been outlined in some detail, but there is also evidence linking his brother Anthony and by extension the *Relation* to the Prince's court, including a recently-discovered letter by Henry Wriothesley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Southampton, addressed to Sir Anthony sometime between 1613 and 1618, and a series of key events linking Sir Anthony and his brother Robert to Sir Thomas Chaloner the Younger, Lord Chamberlain and overall head of the Prince's household from 1610 to 1612. Southampton's letter to Sir Anthony is remarkable not only because he acknowledged the latter as his long-lost friend and brother-in-law, despite the fact that Sir Anthony had converted to Catholicism and had been serving Philip III for close to a decade at the time of composition, but also on account of a reference to an earlier letter by Sir Anthony, which had presumably been delivered by Robert Sherley when he travelled to England to carry out his mission on behalf of the Shah of Persia at King James' court in August 1611:

After so mayny... yeares absence nothinge could bee more welcome unto mee then to hear from you... I assure my self you cannot but remember that I was ever a frend more in substance then ceremonies... so have I con=tinued & therefore you must not iuge mee by owtward shewes but may beleue that I am still the same unto you I was when wee lay together in the Strand, though mayny... yeares are passed since that time & the face of this Kingdome so changed that you would now skarse know it, almost all those w[i]th whom you then conuersed are dead, & my self whom you left w.i.th out a beard haue now gotten a grey head... I wish that some occation... might ere wee die bringe vs once together but I cannot hope it, howsoeuer wee liue separated...

forgett not our owld frendshipp but continew still to loue mee, & no time or change shall haue power to make mee other then your faythfull frend & brother to serue you.<sup>86</sup>

Glyn Redworth who discovered the letter at Real Biblioteca, Madrid notes that it is indeed headed and signed ‘friend and bother’, and that while Southampton undoubtedly addressed Sherley lovingly he did so ‘rather as a long-lost friend than a relative by marriage’, which also seems to be borne out by Southampton’s subtle reference to the heady days at Essex House ‘when wee lay together in the Strand’, and in turn leads Redworth to doubt whether Sherley had ever been married to Southampton’s sister-in-law namely Frances Vernon of Hodnet in Shropshire.<sup>87</sup> Redworth cites a well-known letter from Rowland Whyte to Sir Robert Sidney written shortly before Sherley’s departure on a privateering expedition to West Africa and the Americas (1596), where Whyte reports to his employer (Sidney) that ‘Sir Anthony Sherley goes forward on his Voiadge very well furnisht, led by the straung Fortune of his Marriage to vndertake any Cowrse that may occupy his Mynd, from thincking on her vainest Words’, prompting Redworth to further question why Southampton makes no mention of Sherley’s wife Frances Vernon in the main body of the document. This was most likely because Southampton did not wish to revive any painful memories in his long-lost friend and brother-in-law after such a long absence, since we know from the Portuguese Jesuit

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<sup>86</sup> Glyn Redworth, ‘Worn and well near Spent: the mystery of the Earl of Southampton and Sir Anthony Shirley’, in *Archives*, vol. XXVIII, 109 (October 2003), pp. 114-15. Strong, p. 47.

<sup>87</sup> Redworth, pp. 114, 115, and 116. Southampton was admitted to Gray’s Inn in February 1588, by which time Sherley had left London and the Inner Temple, and had already been serving for two or three years as captain in Leicester’s expedition to the Netherlands (1584-87).

Francisco da Costa that Lady Sherley apparently had a history of mental illness and instability and that she eventually ‘lost her reason and died out of chagrin’.<sup>88</sup>

Sir Thomas Chaloner and Sir Anthony Sherley had both fought under the Earl of Leicester and the Earl of Essex, during Leicester’s campaign in Holland in 1586 and Essex’s expedition to defend Brittany in 1591, and were knighted for distinguishing themselves during the latter campaign in France.<sup>89</sup> Essex dispatched Chaloner as his resident emissary to the court of Florence in 1596, where Robert Sherley had already been residing since about 1593; and considering that Chaloner had been tutor to Leicester’s illegitimate son Robert Dudley, it is not inconceivable that Chaloner might have had a role in the education of Robert Sherley, before the latter departed from Florence to join his elder brother on his journey to Persia.<sup>90</sup> Chaloner was in any case close to Anthony and wrote on his behalf to the Essex secretariat in 1598.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Rowland Whyte, ‘Rowland Whyte, Esquire, to Sir Robert Sidney, London, 7 November 1595’, in Arthur Collins (ed.) *Letters and Memorials of State in the Reigns of Queen Mary, Queen Elizabeth, King James, King Charles the First, Part of the Reign of King Charles the Second, and Oliver’s Usurpation*. (London: printed for T. Osborne, 1746), vol. I, p. 359. *A Chronicle of the Carmelites*, p. 70.

<sup>89</sup> Sherley was knighted by Prince Henry’s role-model, the warrior-king Henri IV of France, during the course of a mission to the latter’s court in 1593, cf. Davies, pp. 37-39.

<sup>90</sup> Strong, p. 27. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 180, 305, note 187. Robert Sherley was about twelve years old when he was sent to live at the Medici court in Florence, and was about eighteen when he joined his brother Sir Anthony at Venice, where he embarked on his journey to Persia in 1598. The Sherleys were protégés of the Earl of Leicester.

<sup>91</sup> Thomas Chaloner, ‘Thomas Chaloner to Anthony Bacon, Lyons, 2 June 1598’, R.A. Roberts (ed.) *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. VIII (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1899), pp. 188-189. The letter will be discussed more fully in chapter three.

Gervase Nid's licenses point to an elite audience centred around the court of Henry, Prince of Wales as one of the audiences that would have been interested in seeing Sherley's *Relation* appear as a printed publication. However, a consideration of the background and careers of the publishers who were entrusted with the manuscript, whether by Robert Sherley or an anonymous intermediary, should provide additional information about the broader segments of the reading public who would have been interested in learning more about Sherley's experiences in Safavid Persia.

### ***Nathaniel Butter and his Pioneering News Publication***

Robert Sherley had conveyed the manuscript of Anthony's *Relation* to the booksellers Butter and Bagfet prior to his departure from London, and Butter and Bagfet had afterward handed over the manuscript to Nid for examination, in order to obtain the requisite license for printing as discussed above. Nid completed his examination of Sherley's *Relation* about two weeks after Count Robert's departure on board the 'Expedition', as appears from the imprimatur along with Nid and Harrison's counter-signatures on the last leaf of the extant manuscript, at which point Butter, who was evidently the senior partner in the enterprise, and Bagfet had obtained permission to continue the process of having the *Relation* published as a printed book.

Butter entered Sherley's *Relation* in the Stationers' Register on 17 April 1613, three months after it was licensed by Nid and Harrison, '17. Aprilis... Nathanael Butter... Entred for his copie vnder th[e h]andes of master NYD. and master Harison warden. A



booke called *The travailes of Sir ANTHONY SHERLEY knight into Persia with his Embassie to the christian prynces*. Wrytten by him self”, and Nicholas Okes and Melchisidec Bradwood printed the book soon afterwards.<sup>92</sup> Butter was well-known and influential within the British publishing industry for much of the seventeenth century, whereas by contrast relatively little is known about the junior partner namely the more low-profile Joseph Bagfet (or Bagford), a brief summary of the available evidence concerning whom will be presented before examining Butter’s career to determine why he was entrusted with the manuscript either by Robert Sherley or the ‘Gentleman of vnderstanding’ as claimed in the prefatory address ‘To the Reader’.<sup>93</sup>

Joseph Bagfet was the son of one John Bagfet, chandler originally from Guildford in Surrey, who had bound himself as an apprentice to Thomas Man the Stationer on 4 September 1598, and was freed of the Stationers’ Company thirteen years later on 27 May 1611. Bagfet had been a bookseller for some two years when he and Butter published an edition of Sherley’s *Relation*, and remained active for another twenty-one years before his will was proved at the Dean and Chapter of St Paul’s, by which he left all his real and personal estate to his wife Mary Bagfet on 22 January 1635.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Edward Arber (ed.) *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London*, vols. I-V (London: privately printed, 1875-77), vol. III (1876), p. 520. Blayney, p. 263.

<sup>93</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. A3<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>94</sup> Ronald B. McKerrow (ed.), *A Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers in England, Scotland and Ireland, and of Foreign Printers of English Books, 1557-1640* (London: Blades, East & Blades for the Bibliographical Society, 1910), p. 14. Katharine F. Pantzer, *A Short-Title Catalogue of Books Printed in England, Scotland, & Ireland, and of English Books Printed Abroad, 1475-1640*, vols. 1-3 (London: Bibliographical Society, 1972-91), vol. 3 (1991), p. 8. Peter Blayney speculates on whether Bagfet had been involved in editing the manuscript of the *Relation*, but it is more likely that changes such as the

Butter had been freed of the Stationers' Company by patrimony in February 1604, registered his first independent publication with the Stationers ten months later in December, and had been working from a shop near St Austin's Gate into Paul's Churchyard from 1605 onwards. He specialised in publishing plays, newsbooks and religious works, issued as small, accessible and inexpensive publications, which nonetheless included the first edition of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (1607), Dekker's *Bellman of London* (1608), and Chapman's translations of *The Iliad* (1611) and *The Odyssey* (1615) among others.<sup>95</sup> Butter achieved great success with his pioneering publication of news about the Thirty Years' War, first reprinting copies of imported Dutch and Italian corantos and gazettes with other stationers, and later forming a partnership with the bookseller Nicholas Bourne that led to the translation and popularisation of the news in English. Butter was apparently the public face of the business while Bourne was in charge of financing the enterprise, and the two hired

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standardisation and correction of Persian dignitaries' names were carried out by Robert Sherley and the members of his immediate circle, who were familiar with the Persian dignitaries themselves and had resided at the Persian court for close to a decade. Blayney, pp. 264, 277, 283-5, 643-7.

<sup>95</sup> William Shakespeare, *M. William Shak-speare: his true chronicle historie of the life and death of King Lear and his three daughters, with the vnfortunate life of Edgar, sonne and heire to the Earle of Gloster, and his sullen and assumed humor of Tom of Bedlam: as it was played before the Kings Maiestie at Whitehall vpon S. Stephans night in Christmas hollidayes, by his Maiesties seruants playing vsually at the Gloabe on the Bancke-side.* (London: [by Nicholas Okes] for Nathaniel Butter, 1607). Thomas Dekker, *The belman of London, bringing to light the most notorious villanies that are now practised in the kingdome: profitable for gentlemen, lawyers, merchants, citizens, farmers, masters of houtholdes, and all sorts of seruants to mark, and delightfull for all men to reade.* (London: [by E. Alldel] for Nathaniell Butter, 1608). George Chapman, *The Iliads of Homer prince of poets, neuer before in any languag trueely translated, with a co[m]ment vppon some of his chiefe places; donne according to the Greeke by Geo: Chapman.* (London: [Richard Field] for Nathaniell Butter, 1611). *Idem, Homer's Odysses, translated according to ye Greeke by Geo: Chapman* (London: Rich: Field [and W. Jaggard] for Nathaniell Butter, 1615).

historian Captain Thomas Gainsford to translate and compile a series of newsbooks, generally issued once every week as quartos of about four to forty pages and sold for around tuppence each. Butter and Gainsford became celebrities on account of the popularity of the newsbooks, and were both portrayed in Ben Jonson's *The Staple of News* (1626), John Fletcher's *Fair Maid of the Inn* (1626) and James Shirley's *Love Tricks, or, the School of Compliment* (1631), with Gainsford being noticed in three additional epigrams by Jonson as well as in *Neptune's Triumph* (1624).<sup>96</sup> Butter had begun publishing news of foreign events some years earlier, with *Articles of Peace between the Archduke Mathias and the Lord Botzkay* (1607) and a series of pamphlets by Anthony Nixon, including *Newes from Sea, of two notorious Pyrats: Ward the Englishman, and Danseker the Dutchman* (1609), *The Warres of Swethland, with the ground and originall of the said Warres* (1609) and *Swethland and Poland Warres: a Souldiers returne out of Sweden, and his newes from the Warres* (1610).<sup>97</sup> Butter's

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<sup>96</sup> S.A. Baron, 'Nathaniel Butter (bap. 1583, d. 1664), Bookseller', *ODNB*. Leona Rostenberg, 'Nathaniel Butter and Nicholas Bourne', in James K. Bracken and Joel Silver (eds.), *The British Literary Book Trade, 1475-1700* (London: Gale Research, 1996), pp. 31-6. Pantzer, vol. 3, p. 34. Henry R. Plomer, *A Dictionary of the Booksellers and Printers who were at Work in England, Scotland and Ireland from 1641 to 1667* (London: printed by Blades, East & Blades for the Bibliographical Society, 1907), pp. 40-41. Baron, 'Thomas Gainsford (bap. 1566, d. 1624), Soldier and Historian', *ODNB*.

<sup>97</sup> *Articles of the peace agreed vpon, between the Archduke Mathias, on the Emperours part, and the deputies of the Lord Botzkay, and of other Lords of Hungarie on the other partie. In like manner, the articles, and conditions of truce, set downe betweene the Emperour and the great Turke, for 15. yeares. All beeing faithfully translated out of high Dutch into French, and out of the same into English* (London: printed [at Eliot's Court Press] for Nathaniel Butter, 1607). Anthony Nixon, *Newes from sea, of two notorious pyrats: Ward the Englishman, and Danseker the Dutchman, with a true relation of all or the most piraces [sic.] by them committed vnto the sixt of Aprill 1609* (London: [printed by Edward Allde] for N[atthaniel] Butter, 1609). *Idem, The Warres of Swethland: with the ground and originall of the said warres, begun and continued betwixt Sigismond King of Poland, and Duke Charles his vnkle, lately crowned King of Swethland. As also the state and condition of that kingdome, as it standeth to this day.*

collaboration with Nixon before the publication of Sherley's *Relation* is of more than passing interest, since Nixon had earlier authored the pamphlet *The Three English Brothers* (1607), based on materials 'leaked' by Sir Thomas Sherley the Younger, the eldest of the Sherley brothers, which in turn formed the basis for John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' play about the Sherley brothers.<sup>98</sup> Nixon also purported to include an exchange of letters between Sir Anthony Sherley and the famous pirate Captain John Ward in *Newes from Sea*, where he effectively opposed Sherley to the protagonist of Robert Daborne's play *A Christian Turn'd Turk* (1611):

From [Naples] Sir Anthony sent his letter to Warde, directed to Tunis (where Warde was then resident) to dissuade him from that wicked & villanous manner of liuing, and the rather (he told him) he was perswaded to vrge him to it for that he was his Country man; or (which is most of al) for that he was a Christian: alleaging the incumbent paine in the world to come for euey Senses pleasure in this life, and promising to doe the utmost of his power, to effect his peace with al people if he might but preuaile to call him in, or be the happy meanes to intice him, rather to serue

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(London: printed [by J. Windet] for Nathaniel Butter, 1609). *Idem*, *Swethland and Poland warres: A souldiers returne out of Sweden, and his newes from the warres: or, Sweden and Poland vp in armes. And the entertainement of English souldiers there: with the fortunes and successe of those 1200 men that lately went thither*. (London: for Nathaniell Butter, 1610). Anthony Parr provides an excellent summary of Nixon's career in 'Anthony Nixon (fl. 1592-1616), pamphleteer', *ODNB*.

<sup>98</sup> Nixon, *The three English brothers: Sir Thomas Sherley his trauels, with his three yeares imprisonment in Turkie, his inlargement by his Maiesties letters to the great Turke, and lastly, his safe returne into England this present yeare, 1607. Sir Anthony Sherley his embassage to the Christian princes. Master Robert Sherley his wars against the Turkes, with his marriage to the Emperour of Persia his neece*. (London: printed by Adam Islip [?] for Iohn Hodgets, 1607). E. Denison Ross (ed.) 'Sir Thomas Sherley the Younger: The Discours of the Turkes', *Camden Miscellany* vol. XVI, Third Series, vol. LII (London: Butler & Tanner Ltd. for Royal Historical Society, 1936). John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, *The trauailes of the three English brothers: Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, Mr. Robert [Sherley], as it is now play'd by her Maiesties Seruants* (London: printed [by George Eld] for Iohn Wright, 1607).

and beare Armes with the chrisitans against the Turke, then to doe the Turk seruice, or by the robbing and spoiling of Chrisitans to inrich him or his dominions... Warde... made answeere that he would giue no credit to any fayre promises, or hazard his life on the hope of words, but would rather venture himselfe amongst the Turks, then in to the handes of Christians.<sup>99</sup>

Nixon declares from the outset that in his opinion Ward's life was 'nothing but a continuall battaile and defiance with Christians, with whome he ought to make his best peace', and while Sherley had been sufficiently impressed with Ward's success and sizeable following that he attempted to recruit him for an invasion of the Ottoman Mediterranean, Nixon presents the latter as being much too depraved to heed Sherley's call, which is in turn consistent with Nixon's earlier presentation of Sherley (noted by Anthony Parr) as being distinct from, and diametrically opposed to the 'renegade' adventurer Thomas Stukeley in *Three English Brothers*.<sup>100</sup> Butter's collaboration with Nixon on a number of pamphlets (1607-1610) before the publication of Sherley's *Relation* shows him working together with a writer who was not only personally sympathetic toward the Sherley brothers, but was also directly engaged by Thomas Sherley the Younger in 1607, much as Middleton was engaged by Robert Sherley in 1609, and who was largely responsible for shaping the myth of the brothers as indomitable soldiers and perennial thorns in the side of the 'Great Turk'.

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<sup>99</sup> Nixon, *Newes from Sea*, sig. C1<sup>r-v</sup>. David R. Ransome, 'John Ward [called Issouf Reis, Captain Wardiyya] (c. 1553-1623), Pirate', *ODNB*. Robert Daborne, *A Christian turn'd Turke: or, The tragicall liues and deaths of the two famous pyrates, Ward and Dansiker, as it hath beene publickly acted. Written by Robert Daborn, Gentleman.* (London: printed [by Nicholas Okes] by for [sic] William Barrenger, 1612). Daniel J. Vitkus (ed.), *Three Turk Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, Emperour of the Turks – A Christian Turned Turk – The Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

<sup>100</sup> Nixon, *Newes from Sea*, sig. B2<sup>r</sup>, C1<sup>r</sup>, B2<sup>v</sup>. *Idem*, *Three English Brothers*, G1<sup>v</sup>. Parr, p. 10.

Nathaniel Butter had been engaged in the publication and distribution of news and Englishmen's experiences abroad since 1607. Robert Sherley's arrival as the Shah of Persia's ambassador to King James' court in 1611 no doubt fuelled the interest of Butter's public in the purpose of his mission. Sherley's *Relation* would thus have acquired a topicality that would have been appreciated by ordinary readers of Butter's pamphlets containing news of foreign events. Butter's earlier collaboration with Nixon suggests that he was not averse to acting as a medium through which the brothers could hope to make a public intervention with regards to foreign policy, and the attendant efforts to rehabilitate their own standing and reputation in England.

Sherley's *Relation* was apparently printed soon after it was entered in the Stationers' Register, by the printers Nicholas Okes and Melchisidec Bradwood, Peter Blayney having first noticed the latter's role based on his use of Haultin and Tavernier-style english roman type, with Okes printing the first twelve out of the total eighteen-and-a-half sheets making up the quarto of the *Relation*.<sup>101</sup> Arthur F. Marotti points out that whereas a thirty or forty page poetic pamphlet or play quarto would have been sold unbound and often destroyed through repeated handling, 'a lengthy octavo or quarto book... would have been bound and kept in a personal library as a text to be preserved', which may have been especially true concerning the *Relation* given its 'strange, unexpected, and magnificent' events and descriptions.<sup>102</sup> Butter had previously had at

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<sup>101</sup> Blayney, pp. 263, 632.

<sup>102</sup> Marotti, 'Elizabethan Lyric Poetry and Early Modern Print Culture', Patrick Cheney and Anne Lake Prescott (eds.) *Approaches to Teaching Shorter Elizabethan Poetry* (New York: Modern Language

least seven books printed at Okes' workshop and at least two at Eliot's Court Press (where Bradwood was based), and even though he appears to have had only two more books printed by Okes after the *Relation*, Butter seems to have enjoyed an especially productive relationship with Eliot's Court Press which later printed a large number (at least twenty-eight) of his newsbooks about the Thirty Years' War.

***Divergence of the Sherley Material from earlier Books about Persia, 1473-1613***

Sir Anthony Sherley's *Relation* was one of many books about Persia available to the English reading public in spring 1613, and while these did not all belong to the same genre and reflected a diverse range of interests, a survey of the printed material will nevertheless assist in locating Sherley's book in relation to other sixteenth and seventeenth century accounts about the country. The early English books concerning Persia and printed between 1473 and 1613 can be conveniently divided into those purporting to describe the Achaemenid Empire (700-330 BC), and those purporting to describe the contemporary Safavid Empire (1501-1722).<sup>103</sup> Linda McJannet and Jane Grogan have published helpful surveys of early modern drama featuring Persian characters and (more recently) of various types of literature produced about Persia in

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Association of America, 2000), p. 266. Archbishop Richard Bancroft nevertheless had the first pamphlet concerning the Sherley brothers' journey to Persia bound and stamped with his own initials, cf. ref. 1593.28.03 in the printed book collections, at Lambeth Palace Library, London.

<sup>103</sup> R. Schmitt, 'Achaemenid Dynasty', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. R.M. Savory, J.T.P. De Bruijn, A.J. Newman, A. Welch, R. Darley-Doran, and P.J. Bearman, 'Safawids', *The Encyclopaedia of Islam vols. I-XII* (Leiden: Brill, 1960-2005), C.E. Bosworth (ed.) *vol. VIII* (1995), pp. 765-93, and more recently Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: Tauris, 2006), pp. 13 ff.

sixteenth / seventeenth century England respectively.<sup>104</sup> Dr. Grogan's survey has more immediate bearing on the present investigation, however, given its concern with the different genres and sources of printed books about Persia, and the chronological development of images of the Persian Empire up to about spring 1613.

The majority of the books concerning Achaemenid Persia were either early modern editions of Classical or Biblical books, or secondary chronicles and dramas based on those authorities, and were derived from the original Greek or Latin, or from recent English translations. Xenophon's *Cyropaedia* and Herodotus' *Histories* appeared in a number of different editions, highlighting an interest in the institutions and military campaigns of the Persians, which informed Richard Farrant's *Warres of Cyrus* (1594) and Thomas Preston's *Cambises* (1570) respectively.<sup>105</sup> Farrant was master of the

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<sup>104</sup> Linda McJannet, 'Bringing in a Persian', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England*, vol. 12 (1999), pp. 236-67. Jane Grogan, 'The Not-forgotten Empire: Images of Persia in English Renaissance Writing', in *Literature Compass*, vol. 7, no. 9 (September 2010), pp. 912-21.

<sup>105</sup> Xenophon of Athens, *The Bookes of Xenophon contayning the Discipline, Schole, and Education of Cyrus the noble Kyng of Persie, translated out of Greeke into Englyshe, by M. Wylliam Barkar* (London: Reynolde Wolfe, [1552?]). *Xenophontos Kyrou Paideias Biblia e* (London: printed by Melchisidec Bradwood, 1613). Heleen Sancisi-Weerdenburg, 'Cyropaedia', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. Herodotus of Halicarnassus, *The famous hystory of Herodotus conteyning the discourse of dyuers countreys, the succession of theyr kynges: the actes and employtes atchieued by them, etc.* (London: printed by Thomas Marshe, 1584), and *Herodotou Halikarnasseos Historion prote, Kleio*. (Oxoniae: Iosephi Barnesij, 1591). Richard Farrant, *The Warres of Cyrus King of Persia, against Antiochus King of Assyria, with the tragicall ende of Panthaea, played by the children of her Maiesties Chappell*. (London: Edward Alde for William Blackwal, 1594). Thomas Preston, *A lamentable tragedy mixed ful of pleasant mirth, conteyning the life of Cambises king of Percia from the beginning of his kingdome vnto his death* (London: Iohn Allde, 1570). Roger Bowers, 'Richard Farrant (c. 1528-1580), Musician and Theatrical Producer', and Alexandra Shepard, 'Thomas Preston (1537-1598), Playwright and College Head', *ODNB*. Muhammad A. Dandamayev, 'Cyrus, iii. Cyrus II, the Great' and 'Cambyses II', in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.



choristers at St George's Chapel, Windsor and of the Chapel Royal in London, best known for his role in the establishment of what would later become Shakespeare's Blackfriars Theatre, and probably organised a performance of *The Warres of Cyrus* as part of the festivities at court during Shrovetide (ca. 1580). Farrant's Cyrus is a wise and just ruler who triumphs over the treacherous plots of his enemy the King of Assyria, while the subplot features the fidelity and virtue of Panthea, Queen of Susa and her husband Abradates who dies in the King's service.<sup>106</sup> Preston, on the other hand, was a fellow of King's College, Cambridge (1556-81) who was appointed master of Trinity Hall by royal mandate (1585), and whose play may have been staged at court around Christmas 1560 though it was only licensed ca. 1570. Preston's 'lamentable tragedy mixed full of pleasant mirth' shows Cambyses' one good deed followed by a series of tyrannical abuses and his providential death, and while it is considered innovative both for its staging and as a hybrid dramatic form occupying a space between the earlier morality plays and Marlowe and Shakespeare's later tragedies and histories, it was ridiculed by contemporaries and was famously parodied by Shakespeare in *1 Henry IV* (1598) where Falstaff speaks 'in passion... in King Cambises' vein' as well as in Bottom's play in *A Midsommer Night's Dreame* (1600).<sup>107</sup> Jane Grogan has recently

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<sup>106</sup> E.H. Fellowes, *Organists and Masters of the Choristers at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle* (Windsor: Oxley, 1939), pp. 24-29. E.F. Rimbault (ed.) *The Old Cheque-book, or Book of Remembrance, of the Chapel Royal, from 1561 to 1744* (London: Camden Society, 1872), pp. 1-3. I. Smith, *Shakespeare's Blackfriars Playhouse* (New York: New York University, 1964), pp. 83 ff. McJannet, pp. 244-45.

<sup>107</sup> Charles Crawley, *Trinity Hall: the History of a Cambridge College, 1350-1975* (Cambridge: Trinity Hall College, 1976), pp. 66 ff. McJannet, p. 244. William Shakespeare, *1 Henry IV*, Act II, scene iv. *Idem*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, scene i. Gordon McMullan (ed.) *William Shakespeare: 1 Henry IV* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2003), p. 43. Harold F. Brooks (ed.) *William Shakespeare: A Midsummer Night's Dream* (London: Methuen & Company, 1979), pp. 338-43.

drawn attention to the different strands of interpreting Achaemenid history in early modern England, where Xenophon's view of Cyrus' just government was opposed to Herodotus' more negative criticism of Achaemenid tyranny for example, and the divergent views that emerge from Farrant's *Warres of Cyrus* and Preston's *Cambises* would appear to exemplify these two competing strands of interpretation.<sup>108</sup>

Quintus Curtius' *Historiae Alexandri Magni* (History of Alexander the Great) was another important Classical source that went through seven separate editions, and inspired the Earl of Stirling's *Tragedie of Darius* (1603), although Stirling would later draw on Herodotus in composing *Croesus* (1604).<sup>109</sup> The anonymous authors of *Godly Queen Hester* (1561) and *King Daryus* (1565) relied on the Old Testament and the Apocrypha in much the same manner, while Hebraists such as Matthieu Beroalde and Edward Lively argued for making them the basis of chronology, even though Johannes Sleidanus' comparatively more accurate chronology in *Chronicle of the Four Principall Empyres* (1563) had been available for half a century.<sup>110</sup> William Alexander, Earl of

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<sup>108</sup> Grogan, 'Many Cyruses: Xenophon's Cyropaedia and English Renaissance Humanism', *Hermathena: A Trinity College Dublin Review*, vol. 183 (Winter 2007, publ. 2009), pp. 163-74.

<sup>109</sup> John Brende, *The historie of Quintus Curcius conteyning the actes of the greate Alexander, translated out of Latine into Englishe by Iohn Brende*. (London: Rycharde Totell, 1553). William Alexander, *The Tragedie of Darius* (Edinburgh: Robert Walde-graue, 1603). *Idem*, *The Monarchick Tragedies* (London: V[alentine] S[immes] [and G. Elde] for Edward Blount, 1604), and David Reid, 'William Alexander, First Earl of Stirling (1577-1640), Poet and Politician', *ODNB*. A. Shapur Shahbazi, 'Croesus, Last King of Lydia (r. ca. 560-46 B.C.E.), and brother-in-law of Astyages', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*.

<sup>110</sup> *A new enterlude drawn out of the holy scripture of godly queene Hester verye necessary newly made and imprinted, this present yere MDLXI*. (London: Imprynted by Willyam Pickerynge and Thomas Hackett, 1561). *A pretie new enterlude both pithie [and] pleasaunt of the story of Kyng Daryus, beinge taken out of the third and fourth chapter of the thyrd booke of Esdras*. (London: Imprynted by Thomas Colwell, 1565). Matthieu Beroald, *A short view of the Persian monarchie, and of Daniels weekes beeing a peece of*

Stirling was a nobleman and entrepreneur who would rise to become Charles I's Secretary of State for Scotland (Winter 1626), and composed the *Tragedie of Darius* as one in a series of four Senecan closet dramas each corresponding to one of the four universal empires in the Book of Daniel – Babylonian, Persian, Greek and Roman – although as Linda McJannet and David Reid have noted the play does not preserve any trace of Darius' 'Persianness' and Stirling's tragedies were composed primarily to give occasion for speeches on counsel, empire and mutability.<sup>111</sup> Stirling's Darius loses dominion over the Persian Empire through a combination of Alexander's superior generalship and the treachery of his own generals, which is consistent with Anthony Parr's important observation that 'Persia was seen [by the late Elizabethans and early Jacobean] as a prime example of a culture fallen from its ancient glory, partly because many accounts had not caught up with the Safavid reforms of the sixteenth century', and goes on to cite a passage from Johann Bohm or Boemus' *The Manners, Lawes, and*

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*Beroaldus workes: with a censure in some points.* (London: Imprinted by Thomas Orwin, 1590). Edward Lively, *A true chronologie of the times of the Persian monarchie, and after to the destruction of Ierusalem by the Romanes: wherein by the way briefly is handled the day of Christ his birth: with a declaration of the angel Gabriels message to Daniel in the end of his 9. chap against the friuolous conceits of Matthew Beroald.* (London: printed by Felix Kingston for Thomas Man, Iohn Porter, and Rafe Iackson, 1597). Stephen Withers, *A briefe chronicle of the foure principall empyres: to witte, of Babilon, Persia, Grecia, and Rome. Wherein, very compendiously, the whole course of histories are conteined. Made by the famous and godly learned man Iohn Sleidan, and englished by Stephan Wythers.* (London: printed by Rouland Hall, 1563). G. Lloyd Jones, 'Edward Lively (c. 1545-1605), Hebraist', *ODNB*. Alexandra Kess, *Johann Sleidan and the Protestant Vision of History* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).

<sup>111</sup> Stirling had interestingly been made a gentleman of the privy chamber to Prince Henry in 1607, to whom he proffered his advice as a (potential) royal counsellor in *Paraenesis* (1604), although as David Reid has noted Stirling was careful not to contradict James's own advice in *Basilikon Doron* (1598). Stirling was also a friend of the Latinist poet John Leech, who may have been related to the Jesuit Andrew Leech, whom (as we have seen) also composed his *Encomia Nominis & Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaeii*, commemorating Robert Sherley's arrival at Krakow in the Latin language (1608).

*Cvstomes of all Nations* (1520): ‘The Persians at this day being ouercome by the Sarrasins, and infected with the madnesse of *Mahomet*, liue altogether in darknesse: It was once a warlike nation, and had for a long space the government of the East: but now for want of exercise in armes, it fayleth much of his ancient glory’.<sup>112</sup>

The anonymous morality plays *Godly Queen Hester* and *King Daryus* dramatise narratives about the origins of the feast of Purim and Darius I’s decision to continue rebuilding the Temple at Jerusalem as found in the Book of Esther in the Old Testament and the Book of ‘Esdras’ in the Apocrypha respectively. Linda McJannet and Parvin Loloi note the appearance of the vice characters Pride and Ambition (*Godly Queen Hester*) and Iniquity, Importunity and Partiality (*King Daryus*), as well as seemingly anachronistic references to ‘Ovid, Scotland, [and] France’ (*Godly Queen Hester*) and Buckingham and Peterborough (*King Daryus*), though Loloi carries her interpretation of *King Daryus* further to suggest that the model of Darius’ just government in the play might have been intended as a model for the reigning Queen Elizabeth.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Edward Aston, *The manners, lawes, and cvstomes of all nations collected out of the best writers by Ioannes Boemus... with many other things of the same argument, gathered out of the historie of Nicholas Damascen; the like also out of the history of America, or Brasill, written by Iohn Lerijs ; the faith, religion and manners of the Aethiopiens, and the deploration of the people of Lappia, compiled by Damianus a Goes; with a short discourse of the Aethiopiens, taken out of Ioseph Scaliger his seuenth booke de emendatione temporum; written in Latin, and now newly translated into English.* (London: G. Eld for Francis Burton, 1611), sig. H1<sup>r</sup>. Parr, p. 75. McJannet, pp. 247-8. Reid, ‘William Alexander’.

<sup>113</sup> McJannet, pp. 244, 245. Parvin Loloi, ‘A Dramatic Version from the Apocrypha: *King Daryus* and the Book of Esdras’, in Sabine Coelsch-Foisner (ed.) *Elizabethan Literature and Transformation* (Tubingen: Stauffenburg, 1999), pp. 33, 39-40. Robert Carroll and Stephen Prickett (eds.) *The Bible: Authorized King James Version, with Apocrypha* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 597 ff, 3ff.

The printed books about *Safavid* Persia were mostly either travel accounts or news relations, except for Abraham Hartwell's translation of Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi's *History of the Warres betweene the Turkes and the Persians* (1595), and both the travelogues and news items were initially adapted from other European languages.<sup>114</sup> Richard Willes' *History of Trauayle in the West and East Indies* (1577) was based on Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's *De Orbe Novo Decades* (1530), Gonzalo Oviedo's *Natural Hystoria de las Indias* (1526) and Ludovico di Varthema's *Itinerario* (1510), and included the first notices of early English voyages to Safavid Persia.<sup>115</sup>

Anthony Jenkinson was the first Englishman to travel to Safavid Persia, sent by the Muscovy (later Russia) Company to establish commercial relations and attempt to discover a passage toward the 'East Indies', and was followed by at least five other agents of the Company over the next two decades.<sup>116</sup> Willes incorporated abridged versions of narratives from the first, fourth and fifth voyages, whereas Hakluyt would

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<sup>114</sup> Abraham Hartwell, *The history of the Warres betweene the Turkes and the Persians. Written in Italian by Iohn-Thomas Minadoi, and translated into English by Abraham Hartwell. Containing the description of all such matters, as pertaine to the religion, to the forces to the gouernement, and to the countries of the kingdome of the Persians. Together with the argument of euery booke, & a new geographicall mappe of all those territories. A table contayning a declaration aswell of diuerse new and barbarous names and termes used in this history, as also how they were called in auncient times. And last of all, a letter of the authors, wherein is discoursed, what cittie it was in the old time, which is now called Tauris, and is so often mentioned in this history.* (London: printed by John Windet for John Wolfe, 1595).

<sup>115</sup> Richard Willes, *The history of trauayle in the West and East Indies, and other countreys lying eyther way, towardes the fruitfull and ryche Moluccaes: as Moscouia, Persia, Arabia, Syria, Ægypte, Ethiopia, Guinea, China in Cathayo, and Giapan: with a discourse of the Northwest passage, gathered in parte, and done into Englyshe by Richarde Eden [etc.]* (London: Richarde Iugge, 1577), sig. 2Ti<sup>r</sup> ff.

<sup>116</sup> Thomas S. Willan, *The Muscovy Merchants of 1555* (Clifton: Kelley, 1973), *passim*. *Idem*, *The Early History of the Russia Company* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1968), *passim*.

later include all six together with other documents including official letters, some of which appear in E. Delmar Morgan's *Early English Voyages to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and other Englishmen* (1886).<sup>117</sup> Morgan published his collection *Early Voyages and Travels* during a period of heightened tensions between Imperial Britain and Tsarist Russia in the wake of the Panjdeh Incident (1885), and as he put it 'when the two nations... stand face to face in Central Asia almost as foes, ready at any moment to engage in a contest to which none who wish well to the cause of civilisation and progress can look forward without dread.'<sup>118</sup> Morgan's organisation of the material clearly reflects his concerns about the seemingly inevitable hostilities against the Russians in Central Asia: he began with Jenkinson's narratives, since he was the first Englishman to have travelled to the region, before proceeding to relegate the five additional narratives of early English voyages to Persia to the back of the book as appendices, with only a fraction of the scholarly apparatus provided for Jenkinson's journeys to Russia and Russian-controlled Central Asia. The narratives of Richard Cheinie, Arthur Edwards, Lawrence Chapman, Lionel Plumtree and Christopher

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<sup>117</sup> Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques & Discoveries of the English Nation: Made by Sea or Over-land to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth at any time within the compasse of these 1600 Yeeres*, by Richard Hakluyt, Preacher, and sometime Student of Christ-Church in Oxford. (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1903-5). E. Delmar Morgan and C.H. Coote (eds.) *Early Voyages and Travels to Russia and Persia by Anthony Jenkinson and other Englishmen, with some Account of the first intercourse of the English with Russia and Central Asia by way of the Caspian Sea*, edited by E. Delmar Morgan, Member of the Hakluyt Society; and C.H. Coote, of the British Museum. (London: Whiting & Company for the Hakluyt Society, 1886), and cf. O.J.R. Howarth and Elizabeth Baigent, 'Edward Delmar Morgan (1840-1909), Linguist and Traveller', in *ODNB*.

<sup>118</sup> Morgan and Coote, Dedication. Prime Minister Gladstone's government was taken by surprise when Russian forces under General Komarov seized the Afghan village of Panjdeh (thus appearing to threaten British India) in March 1885. Christopher M. Wyatt, *Afghanistan and the Defence of Empire: Diplomacy and Grand Strategy during the Great Game* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2011), pp. 11, 169.

Burrough have in consequence received far less attention, leaving readers with the impression that Anglo-Persian relations had somehow gone into decline following Jenkinson's dismissal by Shah Tahmasb I (r. 1514-76).<sup>119</sup> Morgan's collection in fact contains a selection of documents that is by no means exhaustive, as can be seen from a cursory glance at the State Papers Colonial for the period in question, and he even excludes some of the material found in Hakluyt's sixteenth century collection, including official correspondence between the two governments.<sup>120</sup> Jenkinson, Cheinie, Edwards, Chapman, Plumtree and Burrough's reports to the Muscovy Company's board of directors meeting in London were an important new source of information on the contemporary Safavid Empire as opposed to the Classical Achaemenids, recording commercial opportunities as well as early diplomatic exchanges with the Safavid government, Persian geography, customs, manners, religion, weights and measures among other things, and were on the whole fairly accurate since they had not been composed either with a view to wide circulation or later print publication.<sup>121</sup>

Richard Willes' collection of voyages was followed by a number of individual travelogues to Medieval and Safavid Persia, including the first English translation of Marco Polo of Venice's *Most Noble and Famous Trauels* (1579), and the first two editions of Edward Webbe's *Rare and Most Wonderful Thinges which Edw. Webbe...*

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<sup>119</sup> Colin P. Mitchell, 'Tahmasp I (1514-1576), Second Ruler of the Safavid Dynasty, b. Village of Shahabad near Isfahan, 22 February 1514, d. Qazvin, 14 May 1576', *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

<sup>120</sup> Hakluyt, vol. III (1903), pp. 212-14.

<sup>121</sup> Morgan, *Early Voyages and Travels*. Grogan, 'The Not-forgotten Empire', p. 915.

*passed in his Troublesome Trauailes* (1590).<sup>122</sup> Edward Webbe had been Anthony Jenkinson's attendant on his third voyage to Russia (1566-8), fought under Don Juan of Austria on his campaign against Tunis in October 1573, and was subsequently taken captive and enslaved by Turkish corsairs at Livorno.<sup>123</sup> Webbe was constrained to fight on the Ottoman side against the Safavid Persians, after which he was ransomed by Ambassador William Harborne at Istanbul (1588), and later served as master gunner under Henri IV of France at the Battle of Ivry (1590), one year before Sir Anthony Sherley fought for him at the Battle of Chatelaudren.<sup>124</sup> Webbe would appear to have taken part in the campaign against Persia *ca.* 1580-88, and while he only alludes to a single encounter in which the Ottomans 'gaue a fierce assault vpon the Persians, where the Turkes side got the worst, and lost 60 thousand men', his narrative does take place against the background of the periodic wars between the rival Ottoman and Safavid

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<sup>122</sup> Marco Polo, *The most noble and famous trauels of Marcus Paulus, one of the nobilitie of the state of Venice, into the east partes of the world, as Armenia, Persia, Arabia, Tartary, with many other kingdoms and prouinces. No lesse pleasant, than profitable, as appeareth by the table, or contents of this booke. Most necessary for all sortes of persons, and especially for trauelers. Translated into English.* (London: [H. Bynneman for] Ralph Newbery, 1579). Edward Webbe, *The rare and most wonderfull things which Edw. Webbe an Englishman borne, hath seene and passed in his troublesome trauailes in the cities of Ierusalem, Damasko, Bethlehem and Galely and in the landes of Iewrie, Egypt, Grecia, Russia, and Prester Iohn, wherein is set forth his extreame slauery sustained many yeeres together in the gallies and warres of the great Turke, against the lands of Persia, Tartaria, Spaine, and Portugale.* (London: printed for William Wright, 1590). Raiswell, 'Edward Webbe (b. 1553/4), Soldier and Adventurer', *ODNB*.

<sup>123</sup> Raiswell, 'Edward Webbe'. Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II* (Glasgow: William Collins Sons & Co., 1973), vol. II, p. 1127-33.

<sup>124</sup> Christine Woodhead, 'William Harborne (c. 1542-1617), Merchant and Diplomat', in the *ODNB*, and Susan A. Skilliter, *William Harborne and the trade with Turkey, 1578-1582: A documentary study of the first Anglo-Ottoman relations.* (London: published for The British Academy by Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1977). On Ivry, cf. Vincent J. Pitts, *Henri IV of France: his Reign and Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), pp. 151-53. On Chatelaudren cf. Davies, pp. 35-37.



Empires, as do those of Giovanni Tommaso Minadoi, Anthony Jenkinson and other employees of the Russia Company in Safavid Persia.<sup>125</sup> Webbe's narrative had already appeared in two separate editions, when a series of books and pamphlets about the Sherley brothers started to make their appearance, Webbe's third and last edition being printed on the same year as the first one of the Sherley narratives (1600).

The Sherley materials about Persia represented a departure from previous accounts because they were primarily concerned with politics. Moreover, they often provided policy suggestions regarding Anglo-Persian relations, which in turn had a bearing on Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic and commercial relations, with the Sherleys adopting a consistently hostile stance against the Ottomans. Sherley's preoccupation with politics, and persistent attempts to influence public opinion through print publication, were unparalleled and displayed a greater concern with current events than antiquarian interests, ethnography or commercial opportunities and exchanges.

The anonymous *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies Journey ouerland to Venice... and soe to Casbine in Persia* (1600), was based on some of Sherley's own personal papers carried back to England by two of his attendants, William Parry and George Manwaring who had accompanied him to Persia (1598). The *True Report* was twice suppressed in as many months and recalled for being printed without a license, presumably because it included details of Sherley's unauthorised 'negotiations' with Shah 'Abbas of Persia, as well as implied suggestions of a certain rivalry between

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<sup>125</sup> Webbe, sig. B2<sup>r</sup>.

Sherley's party and that of the Ottoman ambassador to Persia, which (it was feared) might endanger Anglo-Ottoman diplomatic relations as well as the lucrative trade recently established by William Harborne and the Levant Company.<sup>126</sup>

William Parry is known to have carried some of Sherley's letters back to England in Autumn 1600, and his publication of *A New and Large Discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley* the following year, as Ross has noted, seems to indicate that he was at least aware of the existence of the earlier account.<sup>127</sup> Guy Le Strange has proposed that Parry might have been acting as Sherley's secretary during the expedition and the subsequent counter-embassy to Europe (1598-1600), which appears to be borne out by Parry's perspective as a privileged observer and the *Discourse's* anticipation of the central arguments made in Sherley's own *Relation*.<sup>128</sup> Alastair Hamilton has praised Parry's *Discourse* for being 'lively, amusing, and generally observant', and while he considers it to be the 'best description of Shirley's visit to Shah Abbas', he goes on to note that as an account of the Middle East Parry's *Discourse* is 'strongly prejudiced [against the Ottomans] and [is] occasionally misleading'.<sup>129</sup> Hamilton also notes that Davies of Hereford composed a sonnet 'In praise of William Parry Gentleman', 'the affectionate tone of which suggests that the two men may have been friends', which along with the previously mentioned poem concerning Henry Mainwaring Esquire,

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<sup>126</sup> *A true report of Sir Anthony Shierlies iourney*. Ross, pp. xiv-xv.

<sup>127</sup> Parry, *A New and Large Discourse* [etc.], Ross, pp. xv-xvi, and some biographical information is extracted in Alastair Hamilton, 'William Parry (fl. 1597-1601), Traveller', *ODNB*.

<sup>128</sup> Le Strange, p. 5. Sherley argues for an invasion of Ottoman Cyprus and the Levant.

<sup>129</sup> Hamilton, 'William Parry'. Hamilton draws attention to Parry's erroneous statement concerning the absence of any 'great libraries' in all of Persia, and the equally spurious legend about the Prophet Muhammad's coffin being magnetically suspended in mid-air at Mecca in Saudi Arabia.

probably son of George Manwaring, appears to indicate a longstanding association between the poet and writing master John Davies and trusted members of Sir Anthony Sherley's company during his expedition to Persia from at least 1601-1612.<sup>130</sup>

Jane Grogan has noted that books and pamphlets about the Sherley brothers were published in clusters following each brother's return back to Europe, and whereas the preceding *True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies Journey* and Parry's *New and Large Discourse* were printed to coincide with Sir Anthony Sherley's return to Europe on a counter-embassy on behalf of the Shah of Persia (1599-1601), the second cluster of works concerning the Sherley brothers were printed to coincide with the return of the eldest of the brothers Sir Thomas the Younger following his release and arrival in England after three years' captivity in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>131</sup> Anthony Nixon the pamphleteer and associate of Nathaniel Butter published the *Three English Brothers* following Sir Thomas' return to England (Spring 1606), with his pamphlet being based partly on Parry's *New and Large Discourse*, and (perhaps not surprisingly) on Sir Thomas's own manuscript *Discours of the Turkes*.<sup>132</sup> Richard Raiswell is perhaps the latest critic to characterise Sir Thomas' *Discours* as a 'virulent invective' against the Ottomans, in which Sir Thomas argued that Britain had a special part to perform if and when 'there shoulde bee a generall warre made by all Christian princes vpon the Tvrke', ostensibly because 'our shyppes are the gallanteste & best fitted for the warre of anye;

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<sup>130</sup> Parry, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>, Hamilton, 'William Parry'. Davies, *The Muses Sacrifice*, sig. Z3<sup>r-v</sup>. Davies appears to pun on 'Ant', the first phrase of Sherley's name, in the opening lines of the sonnet.

<sup>131</sup> Grogan, 'The Not-forgotten Empire', p. 916.

<sup>132</sup> Nixon, *The three English brothers*. Thomas Sherley, *Discours of the Turkes*, MS 514, Lambeth Palace Library, London. Ross, p. xii. Parr, 'Anthony Nixon (fl. 1592-1616), Pamphleteer', *ODNB*.

our mariners are moste apte for sutche enterprises, as men daylye treyned & experienced in fyghte, by reason of the longe warre that hathe bynne between Englande & Spayne’, and in conclusion of his *Discours* wished for ‘50 shyppes, & 30 or 40 gallyes at the moste... to vndertake this vpon the hazarde of my heade’.<sup>133</sup> Sir Thomas’ *Discours* anticipated his brother Anthony’s *Relation* in calling for a European naval expedition against the Ottoman Empire, and Sir Anthony may well have felt that he was more qualified to lead such an expedition given his previous experience as Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean, but it is important to recognise the relationship between the *Discours* and the *Relation* and the likelihood that Sherley had access to his brother’s *Discours* before completing the *Relation* at Madrid in Summer 1611.

Sir Robert Sherley’s embassy to Europe on behalf of Shah ‘Abbas I provided the background for the third cluster of Sherley narratives beginning with Thomas Middleton’s *Sir Robert Sherley*, mentioned above, and continuing with the Reverend John Cartwright’s *The Preachers Trauels* (1611).<sup>134</sup> Cartwright was a preacher who accompanied John Mildenhall in his travels as far as Kashan (c. 1603), before parting company with him and making his own way to Isfahan where he resided at Robert

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<sup>133</sup> Ross, ‘Discours of the Turkes’, pp. 8, 33-34.

<sup>134</sup> John Cartwright, *The preachers trauels: wherein is set downe a true iournall to the confines of the East Indies, through the great countreyes of Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Media, Hircania and Parthia, with the authors returne by the way of Persia, Susiana, Assiria, Chaldaeae, and Arabia. Containing a full suruew of the knigdom [sic] of Persia, and in what termes the Persian stands with the Great Turke at this day: also a true relation of Sir Anthonie Sherleys entertainment there, and the estate that his brother, M. Robert Sherley liued in after his departure for Christendome. With the description of a port in the Persian Gulf, commodious for our East Indian merchants; and a briefe rehearsall of some grosse absurdities [sic] in the Turkish Alcoran. Penned by I.C. sometimes student in Magdalen Colledge in Oxford* (London: printed [by William Stansby] for Thomas Thorppe, 1611). Middleton, *Sir Robert Sherley*.

Sherley's house for a number of weeks, although he apparently did not consider publishing his journal of travels until October 1611, when Robert Sherley had been recognised by King James as the ambassador of Shah 'Abbas.<sup>135</sup>

## Conclusion

Sir Anthony Sherley had completed the *Relation of his Travels into Persia* before summer 1611, when his brother Robert departed from Madrid for London, taking a manuscript of the *Relation* with him to England. Sir Anthony had been dismissed from his position as Spanish Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean, severely damaging his social and political standing in Habsburg Spain, which would have in turn been an inducement for him to seek alternative patronage. Sir Anthony's *Relation* echoed the message carried by his brother from Shah 'Abbas. The Shah's call for a joint military expedition would have likely found a more receptive audience at the court of Henry, Prince of Wales than the court of his father James I. Robert Sherley entrusted the manuscript of his brother's *Relation* to the booksellers Nathaniel Butter and Joseph Bagfet who in turn applied to the licenser and Rector of Southchurch Gervase Nid to obtain a license for publication approved in January 1613. Nid's licenses reveal a plausible connection to the Prince of Wales' court, whereas the presence of Robert Dallington and his position in the contemporary debate over foreign travel provides further indications of the elite audience for the *Relation*. Sir Robert Sherley certainly enjoyed the favour of the Prince and the Queen, with the two standing godfather and

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<sup>135</sup> Cartwright, sig. I2<sup>r</sup>, K3<sup>v</sup>, A3<sup>r</sup>.

godmother to his newborn son in winter 1611. There is also circumstantial evidence linking Robert to the Prince of Wales' court culture, primarily through the poet John Davies of Hereford and the traveller Thomas Coyrate. Nathaniel Butter's involvement indicates the broader reading public's interest in current events and topical discussions, distinguishing the *Relation* from earlier publications about Persia, through its concern with the adoption of an aggressive foreign policy against the Ottomans, as opposed to scholarly, antiquarian, dramatic or commercial interests and exchanges.

## Chapter 2

### **‘Many courses, of diuers fortunes, according to the condition of the warres’: Anthony Sherley’s ties to the Earl of Leicester and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex**

This chapter argues that neither the anonymous author who drafted the preface to the *Relation*, nor ambassador Cornwallis who reported on Sherley’s activities from Spain provide a reliable account of the author of the *Relation*. The publishers’ associate who drafted the preface for the most part replicated Sherley’s own preferred image and authorial persona, while the ambassador was motivated by his relationship with his patron as well as other politico-religious considerations. Sherley’s own decision to subordinate the account of his career to that of his devotion to his patron Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex in the *Relation* has, on the other hand, led to the dual consequences of establishing Essex as his patron before his journey to Persia, while obscuring his earlier career in France and the Netherlands. Scholars and students of Anglo-Persian and cross-cultural contact in the early modern period have, as a result either been unaware of the existence of the lacuna with respect to Sherley’s career, or have ignored his apprenticeship in the Wars of Religion. Sherley does nevertheless provide a cursory glance at his early career in the introduction to the *Relation* which, once investigated in view of external printed and archival material, will shed much-needed light on the background of the author responsible for the *Relation*.

Sir Anthony Sherley's manuscript *Relation* does not begin with any prefatory material, but a preface was appended to the manuscript shortly before it appeared as a printed book, in which the anonymous author of the preface enumerated the book and the author's positive attributes by way of recommendation.<sup>1</sup> He informed readers that the book contained the 'Register of so rare and attempt... as hath seldom ben seen in this, or any former age', and that it had furthermore been 'recorded by his owne pen who hath ben the first and chiefe Actor in it [*i.e.* Sir Anthony Sherley]'. He went on to assure readers that 'men of mature judgment' had examined the *Relation* and were of the opinion that it contained 'many fruitfull advertisments'. The anonymous author of the preface concluded by indirectly praising Sherley himself, whose relation 'having in it both the eleuations of a high spirit and the observacoñs of a man experienced and versed in great affaires: it is the rather vnto thee [reader] recom~ended'.<sup>2</sup> The publishers' associate's reference to Sherley's unparalleled achievement, either among contemporary travellers or through recorded history, and his touting of the *Relation* as a first-hand

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<sup>1</sup> Peter Blayney attributes the preface to the bookseller Joseph Bagfet, but the attribution is far from convincing. Blayney makes the attribution based on the assumption that the preface had to have been drafted personally, and in the hand of one of the joint publishers. He then rules out the senior partner Nathaniel Butter, because the latter's *signature* does not resemble the italic hand responsible for the holograph manuscript. Meanwhile there are no known examples of Bagfet's hand that might have been used for a positive identification. Peter W.M. Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear and their Origins, volume I: Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 273 ff. The contents of the preface are summarised and examined with particular attention to the language used to describe Sherley's character and personality in what follows. The anonymous author's rhetoric is hardly unusual compared to the prefaces of similar publications, but a close reading of the preface reveals the influence of Sherley's own language from the *Relation*, which in turn built on the earlier 'Oration to the Sophie' published in the *True Report*, as will be demonstrated in the ensuing passages.

<sup>2</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. Anthony Sherley, *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London: printed for Nathaniel Butter and Joseph Bagfet, 1613), sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>r</sup>.



account by the main protagonist were obvious selling-points, whereas his reference to ‘men of mature judgement’ and their verdict might well be significant if it could be shown to be something other than an advertising device.<sup>3</sup> The publishers’ associate’s indirect praise for Sherley’s character while commending the book is nevertheless significant, since it echoes Sherley’s own language in the *Relation*, as well as considerably earlier material about his journey to Persia. The publishers’ associate’s reference to ‘elevations of a high spirit’ for example, was probably derived from Sherley’s own ‘Oration to the Sophie [*i.e.* the Shah]’ as originally printed in *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies Journey ouerland to Venice, fro~ thence by sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babilon, and soe to Casbine [Qazvin] in Persia [etc.]* (1600).<sup>4</sup>

Sherley had already gained public attention as a cavalry commander in France and privateer in Africa and Latin America, with the publication of *A Iovrnall, or Briefe Report of the late seruice in Britaigne, by the Prince de Dombes, Generall of the French Kings Army in those partes* (1591) and ‘A true relation of the voyage vndertaken by Sir Anthony Sherley Knight in Anno 1596 [to] the Ile of Iamaica [and] homeward by Newfoundland’ (1599), but it was with the appearance of the *True Report* (1600) that

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<sup>3</sup> Samuel Purchas would later take up the theme of the Sherley brothers’ exceptional adventures and compare them favourably to Jason and the Argonauts. *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London: printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), sig. 7M3<sup>f</sup>. William H. Race (ed.) *Apollonius of Rhodes: Argonautica* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2009).

<sup>4</sup> ‘Sir Anthony Shirlies Oration to the Sophie’, *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies iourney ouerland to Venice, fro~ thence by sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babilon, and soe to Casbine in Persia: his entertainment there by the great Sophie: his oration: his letters of credence to the Christian princes: and the priuiledg obtained of the great Sophie, for the quiet passage and trafique of all Christian marchants, throughout his whole dominions* (London: R. B[lower] for I. I[aggard], 1600), sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>f</sup>.

news of his journey to *Persia* first came to public attention.<sup>5</sup> The *True Report* was produced as an attractive quarto-sized pamphlet, based on the reports of two gentlemen who had followed Sherley during the ‘whole time of his trauaile’, and had been ‘lately sent by him with Letters into Englande, September 1600.’<sup>6</sup> Sherley’s ‘Oration to the Sophie’ appears after a brief relation of his journey from England to Persia and his

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<sup>5</sup> *A Iovrnall, or brieve report of the late seruice in Britaigne, by the Prince de Dombes, Generall of the French Kings army in those partes, assisted with her Maiesties forces at this present there, vnder the conduct of Sir Iohn Norreis: aduertised by letters from the said prince to the Kings Ambassadour here resident with her Maiesty, and confirmed by like aduertisements from others, imployed in that seruice. Published, to aunswere the slanderous bruites raised of late by some euill affected to that and other good actions, vndertaken against the enemy of Gods true religion* (London: printed by Iohn Wolfe, 1591). ‘A true relation of the voyage vndertaken by Sir Anthony Sherley Knight in Anno 1596 intended for the Ile of San Tome, but performed to S. Iago, Dominica, Margarita, along the coast of Tierra Firma, to the Ile of Iamaica, the Bay of the Honduras, 30 leagues vp Rio Dolce, and homewarde by Newfoundland, with the memorable exploités atchieved’, in Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiqves and Discoveries* (London: Imprinted by George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599), sig. 3D3<sup>v</sup>. I am responding in part to Sanjay Subrahmanyam’s statement that Sherley first came to public attention with the appearance of the *True Report*. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press, 2011), p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> *A True Report*, sig. A3<sup>r</sup>. E. Denison Ross noted that Sherley’s letters to Sir Robert Cecil from Arkhangelsk were carried by William Parry, but was at a loss to explain the identity of the second ‘gentleman’. E. Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure: including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1933), pp. 245-46, xiv, 36. George Manwaring also accompanied Sherley during his journey to and from Persia, and wrote ‘A Discourse of Sir A. Sherley’s Travel into Persia’ (ca. 1599). Parry’s publication of *A New and Large Discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley Knight* (1601), possibly indicates an awareness of the existence of Manwaring’s manuscript ‘Discourse’, which would in turn suggest a certain level of cooperation between Sherley’s two former companions. George Manwaring, ‘A Discourse of Sir A. Sherley’s Travel into Persia [etc.]’, Sloane MS 105, British Library, London, fols. 8-34, and Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure*, pp. 175-226. William Parry, *A new and large discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley Knight, by Sea, and ouer Land, to the Persian Empire, wherein are related many straunge and wonderfull accidents: and also, the Description and Conditions of those Countries and People he passed by: with his returne into Christendome, written by William Parry Gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his Trauells* (London: printed by Valentine Simmes for Felix Norton, 1601).

‘entertainmnt there by the Great Sophie [Shah ‘Abbas I]’, and is in turn followed by copies of ‘Sir Anthony Shirlies letters of Credence from the Great Sophie, to the Christian Princes’, and the ‘free Priuiledges ob[tai]ned by Sir Anthony Shierlie, of the Great Sophie, for all Christians [*i.e.* merchants] to trade and trafique into Persia.’<sup>7</sup>

Sherley presents himself in the speech as a pilgrim ‘come from farre, to yeelde and pay vnto vertue his Zeale and Deuotion’, asking the Shah to accept the ‘consecration of his poore Carcas vnto you, which my minde hath caried hither to be made an Offering or hanging vow in the Temple of your most singuler vertues’. He goes on to explain that he wishes to render military service to the Shah, as it would otherwise be ‘too meeke a Subiect for your Maiesties most excelent vertues, if my deuotion and obseruances were not sealed with my Bloude, the which I do humble and freely offer... to be shed and spent, at the least signe and token of your... pleasure.’<sup>8</sup> Sherley makes a distinction

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<sup>7</sup> *A True Report*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> Subrahmanyam has recently complained that it is impossible to discern ‘what precisely [Sherley] was taken for by Shah ‘Abbas and his entourage’, much as it remains impossible to comprehend the ‘basis on which Sherley built his credibility at the Safavid court.’ Subrahmanyam considers the verdict of several modern historians who have suggested that Sherley’s main source of credit came from being a military expert, someone who was familiar with the modern manner of making war in western Europe, before turning to a seemingly promising anecdote in the *Relation*, which he admits one is more inclined to interpret as ‘another example of his [Sherley’s] deft mythmaking’. I would suggest that Sherley’s description of himself in the above speech from the *True Report* (1600), printed only a year after his journey to Persia is probably closer to how he presented himself at the Safavid court, rather than the patently self-serving image in the much later *Relation* (1613). Sherley’s description of himself in the speech is moreover consistent with discussions leading up to his arrival at Qazvin, as reported by his confidant Thomas Chaloner to another trusted colleague Anthony Bacon in 1598. ‘Thomas Chaloner to Anthony Bacon, Lyons, 2 June 1598’, R.A. Roberts (ed.) *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Honourable the Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. VIII (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1899), pp. 188-89. Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to be Alien*, pp. 97-98, 196, and notes 49-54. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. K1<sup>v</sup>.

between his status as a ‘pilgrim’ and other visitors to the Shah’s court, however, by pointing out that ‘it may please your Maiestie to remember, that the pitch of an Eagles flight doth farre surmount the fluttering of a flie, and that common base Mindes are not Capable of such Noble Thoughtes, as might raise themselues with the seeking of these your most rare and worthie parts, which haue drawn me to your Presence.’<sup>9</sup>

Sherley’s account of the motivations behind his ‘pilgrimage’ to the Shah’s court at Qazvin, through the metaphor of the eagle soaring above other ‘common’ and ‘base’ flies, most likely suggested the phrase ‘eleuations of a high spirit’ to the anonymous author of the preface to the *Relation* a decade later. Sherley’s ‘Oration to the Sophie’ does appear to have had some currency, both through manuscript circulation and production of Ralph Blower’s edition for John Jaggard: a ‘coppye of Sir Anthony Sher[ley] his speeches to the Great Kinge of Persia’ is held at the Folger Shakespeare Library, and Archbishop Bancroft’s personal copy of *A True Report* with gold-tooled initials may be viewed at Lambeth Palace Library.<sup>10</sup> Sherley’s attempt to distinguish himself from other ‘ordinary’ envoys to Muslim lands also recurs in the *Relation*, however, in a lengthy passage which incidentally sheds light on who Sherley was

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<sup>9</sup> *A True Report*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>, A4<sup>r</sup>. Anthony Parr, and more recently Laurence Publicover, have noted the crusading references implicit in combining the roles of pilgrim and soldier. Anthony Parr (ed.) *Three Renaissance Travel Plays: The Travels of the Three English Brothers – The Sea Voyage – The Antipodes* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 89, note 80, and Laurence Publicover, ‘Strangers at Home: the Sherley Brothers and Dramatic Romance’, *Renaissance Studies* 24, 5 (2010), pp. 694-95.

<sup>10</sup> MS V.b.142, Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C., fols. 11-12. Bancroft’s copy of *A True Report* has ref. no. 1593.28.03, Lambeth Palace Library, London. Folger MS V.b.142 also contains abstracts of letters by Anthony, and his younger brother Robert Sherley, to the Earl of Essex, Robert [*i.e.* Anthony] Bacon and their brother-in-law Anthony Tracy, dispatched after their arrival in Persia.

referring to as common ‘flies’ in the *True Report*. He describes how he and his companions escaped ‘certaine Turkish pirates’ close to the ‘entrance of the porte of Alexandretta’ and instead debarked in Lebanon, where they were reportedly ‘full of greate care how we should escape from thence... The Turke having given certaine ~~sea~~ scales to trade in, out of w[hi]ch as it was vnlawfull for any to converse: so it must needes be an unevitable p[er]ill for so great a company’.<sup>11</sup> He goes on to describe a chance encounter with ‘two Janizaries Hungarish runnagates’, who after being persuaded that ‘we were Christians compelled against our disposicons into that parte, our intention to be a visitatio~n of Jerusalem, and withall our feare of some greate preiudice by our being arriued out of the distinguished places for all Christians’, offered them protection and ‘cheer-fullie comfortinge vs, invited vs to lodge in their house, securinge vs by a number of greate protestationes from all danger’. The Hungarian Janissaries’ decision to defend the Englishmen in turn allows Sherley to digress on a somewhat detailed analysis of Ottoman imperial government, during the course of which he articulates his privileged position as a man ‘experienced and versed in great affaires’: ‘And now that I haue had occasion to speake of the Janizaries of Damasco, which by likelie hood of that they presumed to do... must be men of greate authoritie, both in power and estimac~on: It will not be amisse to vse so fitt an oportunitie to discourse of the Turkes whole gouernment of those partes [*i.e.* the Levant], which I did not behould with the eies of a common pillgrimme or merchante: which passinge onlie by goodly cities and territories, make their iudgm<sup>t</sup> vppon the superficiall appearaunce of what they see: but as a gentleman bredd vpp in such experiences, ^which hath made me some-what

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<sup>11</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. C1<sup>r</sup>.

capable to penetrate into the perfection and imperfection of the forme of the state, and into the good and ill orders by which it is gouerned'.<sup>12</sup> Sherley brings the idea of himself as a famous military figure on one hand, together with his professed knowledge of complex political systems (in this particular case represented by the government of the Ottoman Empire) on the other, anticipating the *combination* of the same ideas by the publishers' associate in the phrase 'eleuations of a high spirit and the observacoñs of a man experienced and versed in great affaires' mentioned above.<sup>13</sup>

The anonymous author of the preface thus may be said to have largely reproduced Sherley's authorial persona as existing in the *Relation*, and even though he appears to have given some thought to Sherley's language from the 'Oration to the Sophie' published a decade earlier (in order to come up with the phrase 'eleuations of a high spirit'), Sherley also recalls the text of the 'Oration' in a section of the *Relation* purporting to describe the court of Shah 'Abbas I. He had begun his 'Oration' by describing how he had 'hearde men speake with wonder' of the Shah's 'most rare & worthie parts', and subsequently travelled to Persia as 'a Pilgrim (who followeth the motion of his affections) [and] is come from farre... being brought to this point by the

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<sup>12</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 119<sup>v</sup>-120<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. A4<sup>r</sup>. In the process, Sherley manages to place several tiers of distance between himself and those he disparagingly refers to as common pilgrims and merchants through his deployment of rhetoric: on one level he dismisses their reports with the barely hidden implication that he belongs to a higher station, even though he modestly refers to himself as a gentleman, as well as the more direct assertion that his sagacity and political acumen far surpass the 'superficial' observations of merely ordinary religious and commercial travellers to distant countries. Sherley did not consider himself to be a 'common' pilgrim of course: not only does he imply that he belongs to a higher station; he also describes himself specifically as an armed pilgrim or crusader. cf. Sherley's 'Oration', *A True Report*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>r</sup>; Parr, p. 89, note 80, and Publicover, pp. 694-95.

Extremitie of my desires, with expenses of much time, and not without great perrill’, leading into the image of the eagle and flies / merchants.<sup>14</sup> He reproduces the same structure and phraseology in the *Relation* in words attributed to the Persian General ‘Allah Virdi Khan, where the latter suddenly decides to intervene on Sherley’s behalf during a heated discussion after the Grand Vizier, Hatim Beg denounces Sherley for having been sent to ‘disquiet your majesties [Shah Abbas I’s] tranquillitie of your state... & to embarke you in dangerous enterprises, for others interesses.’<sup>15</sup> ‘Allah Virdi Khan responds: ‘This Christian hath come from farre, & thorough great dangers he saith through his affection, growen from the excellenge fame of his Majestie: and should not I thinke that his glory is worthy to be carried as farre as tounes of men goe, & shall not I thinke also that a merchant speakinge of his vertues, is not inabled beyonde his spirite raised by such a subiect; to express it like it selfe, not like his own merchandise [?]’<sup>16</sup>

Sherley thus portrays ‘Allah Virdi Khan as repeating his (Sherley’s) motivations for travelling to Persia having ‘hearde with wonder of your most rare & worthie parts / excellenge fame of your Majesty’, and emphasising yet again that Sherley had ‘come from farre... through great perrill / danger’, before concluding with the flourish of a swipe at the unfortunate ordinary flies / merchants.<sup>17</sup> ‘Allah Virdi Khan is, in other words, made to recall Sherley’s figures and tropes from the ‘Oration to the Sophie’ (1600) in the *Relation* (1613), anticipating (and perhaps pointing the way to) the

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<sup>14</sup> *A True Report*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 136<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. M2<sup>r</sup>. Roger Savory, ‘Allahverdi Khan (d. 1022/1613), a Georgian Gholam who rose to high office in the Safavid State’, *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

<sup>16</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 137<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. M3<sup>v</sup>-M4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>17</sup> I am of course juxtaposing phrases from the ‘Oration’ (1600) with those of the *Relation* (1613).

anonymous author of the prefatory material above. That the publishers' associate should have followed Sherley's text closely while drafting the preface to the *Relation* is less surprising, however, than the high level of intertextuality already linking Sherley's *Relation* to the 'Oration' and the *True Report*: aside from the above-cited speech attributed to the Shah's General 'Allah Viridi Khan, other passages in the *Relation* reproduce substantial portions of the 'Oration', not to mention the elaboration of Sherley's itinerary from London to Venice and Qazvin at the outset of the *Relation*.<sup>18</sup>

Several critics have drawn attention to the exploits of the Sherley brothers in recent years. Jane Grogan has identified at least two different 'clusters' of texts associated with the adventures of the three Sherley brothers, prompted by the arrival in Europe of Sir Thomas Sherley the Younger (1606) and Sir Robert Sherley (1608), although she unfortunately omits the earlier cluster of texts produced in response to Sir Anthony Sherley's arrival in Europe via Russia in late 1600.<sup>19</sup> Anthony Parr goes further by identifying four clusters of 'panegyrics' produced in response to specific events, beginning with Sir Anthony Sherley's counter-embassy to Europe on behalf of Shah 'Abbas (1600-1601), followed by Sir Thomas Sherley the Younger's release from captivity in Ottoman Turkey and repatriation to England (1606), Sir Robert Sherley's first embassy on behalf of Shah 'Abbas (1608-1613), and ending with his second

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<sup>18</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 136<sup>r</sup>, 132<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. L4<sup>v</sup>-M1<sup>r</sup>, I4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> Jane Grogan, 'The Not-forgotten Empire: Images of Persia in English Renaissance Writing', in *Literature Compass*, vol. 7, no. 9 (September 2010), p. 916. D.W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: the Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons, as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy, Morocco, Persia, Spain, and the Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 178, 225 and 124.



embassy on behalf of the same monarch (1617-1627).<sup>20</sup> Parr also notes ‘extensive collusion’ between the pamphleteer Anthony Nixon, who was commissioned by Sir Thomas Sherley the Younger to produce *The Three English Brothers* (1607), and John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins who composed *The Travels of the Three English Brothers* (1607), a play based on Nixon’s pamphlet which in turn drew on Sherley the Younger’s own *Discours of the Turkes*.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, Parr points to Middleton’s adaptation of Andrew Leech’s pamphlet *Encomia Nominis & Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaei* (c. 1608) published as *Sir Robert Sherley, sent Ambassadour in the name of the King of Persia* (1609), a connection that had earlier been noted by G.B. Shand and has since been restated by Daniel Vitkus.<sup>22</sup> Parr’s conclusions regarding the ‘close cooperation’ between the authors involved in producing the second cluster of panegyrics were based first and foremost on intertextuality, much as G.B. Shand (following Juliusz Krzyzanowski) identified Leech’s *Encomia* as Middleton’s main source on account of the close textual relationship.<sup>23</sup> However, whereas Parr outlines close cooperation / extensive collusion between the authors involved in producing the

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<sup>20</sup> Anthony Parr, ‘Foreign Relations in Jacobean England: the Sherley Brothers and the Voyage of Persia’, in Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michele Willems (eds.) *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare’s Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 18. Davies, pp. 124-36, 178-81, 225-39, 248-72.

<sup>21</sup> Parr, *Three Renaissance Travel Plays*, p. 8.

<sup>22</sup> Andrew Leech, *Encomia Nominis & Negocii D. Roberti Sherlaei* (Krakow: 1609). Thomas Middleton, *Sir Robert Sherley, sent ambassadour in the name of the King of Persia, to Sigismond the Third, King of Poland and Swecia, and to other princes of Europe. His royall entertainment into Cracovia, the chiefe citie of Poland, with his pretended comming into England: also, the honourable praises of the same Sir Robert Sherley, giuen vnto him in that kingdome, are here likewise inserted.* (London: I. Windet for Iohn Budge, 1609). G.B. Shand, ‘Source and Intent in Middleton’s Sir Robert Sherley’, *Renaissance and Reformation* 19 (1983), p. 258. Jerzy Limon and Daniel Vitkus (eds.), ‘Sir Robert Sherley’, in *Thomas Middleton: The Collected Works* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2007), pp. 670-77, esp. p. 670.

<sup>23</sup> Parr, ‘Foreign Relations in Jacobean England’, p. 18. Shand, p. 258, n. 3.

second cluster, and Shand analyses and speculates on the process of translation / adaptation within the third cluster, Sir E. Denison Ross had earlier noted borrowing *across* the second and first clusters, with Nixon's incorporation of 'several passages' from William Parry's *New and Large Discourse* (1601).<sup>24</sup> Sherley's inclusion of the 'Oration' and other passages from the *True Report*, while not completely unprecedented does represent an additional level of intertextuality in linking the third with the first cluster of texts about the Sherley brothers, and would appear to carry a number of implications based on the nature of the material borrowed and re-presented, which revolve around Sherley's presentation of himself to the Shah and (simultaneously) the prospective readers of the *True Report* and the *Relation*: Sherley was consistent in presenting himself as a noble spirit and a pilgrim-soldier, drawing attention to his involvement in high politics and rejection of material wealth, which taken together indicate both his own preference for the image, *and* its popularity among receptive members of the late Elizabethan-Jacobean readership.<sup>25</sup> However, despite Sherley's persistent attempts to elaborate an idealised image of himself, as a virtuous knight negotiating a Perso-Christian alliance against the Ottomans, there were other voices emanating from British diplomatic circles whose less favourable impressions of him eventually won out during the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

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<sup>24</sup> Ross, p. xii.

<sup>25</sup> Anthony Nixon reproduces the same image in the second cluster of material, cf. *The Three English Brothers* (London: printed by Adam Islip for John Hodgets, 1607), sig. G1<sup>r-v</sup>. Julia Schleck has correctly pointed out that the Sherley material was addressed to the court as well as ordinary citizens. Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), p. 62.

Sherley's personal and political activities were strictly observed by a succession of British ambassadors residing in Habsburg Spain, from his first arrival at the court of Philip III (1606) until his settlement in Granada (1611).<sup>26</sup> Ambassador Sir Charles Cornwallis provided detailed reports of his activities, and was followed (though to a lesser extent) by Francis Cottington and Sir John Digby. Cornwallis' letters to Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury feature prominently in Evelyn Philip Shirley's *The Sherley Brothers* (1848) and Sir Edward Denison Ross' *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (1933), with the latter expressing a particular fondness for Cornwallis' 'customary delightful style and wealth of metaphor'.<sup>27</sup> Denison Ross' appreciation of Cornwallis' style in his exchanges with Salisbury, however, neither acknowledges the patron-client relationship existing between Salisbury and the ambassador, nor does it consider the background to the epistolary exchanges. Ross does not indicate any awareness of the patron-client relationship, confirmed by the ambassador's frequently exaggerated compliments as preserved in the correspondence, which is of more than passing relevance given Lord Salisbury's decades-long hostility toward Sherley, a deliberate opposition first noted by Samuel Chew in *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (1937).<sup>28</sup> Chew believed Sherley's 'energy and

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<sup>26</sup> Davies, pp. 201, 224.

<sup>27</sup> Evelyn Philip Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers: an Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley and Sir Robert Sherley, Knights, by one of the same House* (London: printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1848), pp. 65-66, and 70. Ross, pp. 70, 71, see also pp. 75, 76, and 77.

<sup>28</sup> Charles Cornwallis, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Earl of Salisbury, Madrid, 14<sup>th</sup> June 1607 O.S.', and 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Earl of Salisbury, 16<sup>th</sup> October 1608 O.S.', in Edmund Sawyer (ed.) *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I: collected (chiefly) from the original papers of the Right Honourable Sir Ralph Winwood, Kt., sometime one of the Principal Secretaries of State, [etc.]* (London: printed by W.B. for T. Ward, 1725), vol. II, pp. 319-20, 440, cf. also

resilient self-reliance, had they been directed into practicable channels, might have carried him to high office... He dreamt dreams and saw visions... He had a way with him; he could impress people, often the most influential people in Europe – almost everyone but the imperturbable Sir Robert Cecil.<sup>29</sup> Sherley had been a dedicated supporter and relative of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, which had pitted him against the rival political faction led by Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury; so that even though Sherley was in Italy at the time of the Essex Rebellion, he was nevertheless regarded with suspicion and distrust by Salisbury and his clients (such as Cornwallis), long after Essex' fall and execution in 1601.<sup>30</sup> Cornwallis' predominantly negative attitude toward Sherley should not be solely attributed to Salisbury's long-standing distrust due to his unequivocal support for Essex: Cornwallis had his own particular reasons for transmitting a negative image of Sherley in his correspondence, which proceeded firstly from Sherley's access to and meetings with Spanish courtiers and ministers, secondly from his contact and proximity to English Jesuits led by Father Joseph Creswell, and finally Sherley's well-known prodigality, or what Cornwallis

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Chris R. Kyle, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis (c. 1555-1629), Courtier and Diplomat', *The Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) on relationship with Lord Salisbury.

<sup>29</sup> Samuel Chew, 'A Great Plotter and Projector in Matters of State', *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 239. Chew's chapter heading is taken from James Wadsworth's *The English Spanish pilgrime: or, A new discoverie of Spanish popery, and Iesuiticall stratagems, with the estate of the English pentioners and fugitiues vnder the King of Spaines dominions, and else where at this present* (London: Thomas Cotes, 1629), sig. I3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>30</sup> Paul E.J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 341-88. Wallace T. MacCaffrey, *Elizabeth I: War and Politics, 1588-1603* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 453-536. John Guy, 'The 1590s: the Second Reign of Elizabeth?', *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 1-19. Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to Chief Justice [John] Popham, Venice, 20<sup>th</sup> July [1601]', Shirley, p. 36.

deemed his ‘wastefull and overweening humour’.<sup>31</sup> Cornwallis’ attitude toward the Spanish elites and Spaniards in general was one of contempt and disapproval, and he found the presence of numerous refugees and Jesuits from the British Isles a constant source of annoyance and irritation; but he was also capable of greatly magnifying potential threats on the basis of sketchy intelligence. He set down his views of the Spanish courtiers with whom Sherley had dealings in 1607: ‘The King of what apperteyneth to him is neither *carefull*, nor (in my judgmente) *capable*; the *Duke* [of Lerma] given over to his ease... Of the rest, some want power and others will... In their owne particular, a man may lawfully say here *non est qui facit bonum, non usque ad unum*. God Almighty deliver me from amongst them’.<sup>32</sup> Refugees and Jesuits from the British Isles did not fare much better: ‘soe long as *Jesuites* and *fugitives* of our country shall walk here [Madrid] with so much authoritye, those that shall serve his Majesty in my place shall never want matter to complaine of’.<sup>33</sup> Cornwallis’ casual dismissal of King Philip III, the Duke of Lerma, and other Spanish ministers as being either incompetent or too weak to conduct the government, and his disapproval of British refugees and Jesuits securing too many proscribed freedoms to themselves, masks a deeply-rooted fear of both that would surface time and again whenever Cornwallis

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<sup>31</sup> Cornwallis, ‘Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Earl of Salisbury, sent by the Ordinary of Flanders, who departed the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May 1607 O.S.’, Sawyer, vol. II, p. 308; cf. also p. 322.

<sup>32</sup> Cornwallis, ‘Sir Charles Cornwallis to my Lord of Salisbury by way of Saint Sebastian, the courier departed the 30<sup>th</sup> of May 1607 O.S.’, Sawyer, vol. II, p. 312, also p. 274. Patrick Williams, *The Great Favourite: the Duke of Lerma and the Court and Government of Philip III of Spain, 1598-1621* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), especially ch. 6, pp. 134-48.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 312. John W. Stoye, *English Travellers Abroad, 1604-1667: their Influence in English Society and Politics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), p. 241, n. 35.

happened to receive written or oral intelligence that the Spanish government, or the Jesuits and their associates were involved in hatching a plot against Britain.<sup>34</sup>

Sir Charles Cornwallis' rejection of the Spanish King, Lerma, and other councillors' power and abilities was balanced by what he appears to have perceived as an almost endless series of Spanish plots against Britain: 'They have hopes in *England*, as may appear [by] their discourse: In *Scotland* they are *so confident*, as they have cast up the number: In *Ireland* they always expect the effects of a *wavering and unfaithfull disposition*: what other plots are in hand God knoweth.'<sup>35</sup> Cornwallis was likewise alarmed by the presence and activities of British Jesuits headed by Father Joseph Creswell, who had been known to several of the Gunpowder plotters and circulated a *Letter to the Ambassador from England* (1606), concerns that were heightened in the aftermath of Gunpowder Plot though his vigilance often descended into paranoia:

Upon the Sondag the 17<sup>th</sup> of this month, tooke their journey from this towne for England four *Jesuits*. Two of them came from Sycilia directed from Sir *Anthony Shirley* to [Joseph] *Creswell*, and have the cariage of divers letters of Sir *Anthonye's* into *England*. They seem to be betwixt 40 and 50 years of age, having some grey hayres, and the one of them a scarr over one of his eyes... The other two, supposed to be the one of *Valladolid* the other of *Flanders*, about some thirty five years of age, of whome the one hath a little imperfection in one of his eyes. These taking their

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<sup>34</sup> Cornwallis was the first resident ambassador to Spain in almost four decades. Kyle, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis (c. 1555-1629), of Brome Hall and Beeston St Andrews, Suffolk and Harborne, Staffordshire', Andrew Thrush and John Ferris (eds.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1604-1629*, vols. I-VI (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), vol. III: *Members A-C* (2010).

<sup>35</sup> Cornwallis, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Earles of Dorsett, Nottingham, Suffolk, Northampton and Salisburie [dated from Madrid?, Anno 1606]', Sawyer, vol. II, p. 274.

leaves of *Waddesworth* and *Fowler* (the right and left hands of *Creswel*.) with many embracements were heard to say, *our Lord send us good success in our business that our Catholique Church may rejoice*; whereunto the others answered with *the like wish and prayer*.<sup>36</sup>

Cornwallis' hostile and anxious reports on Sherley's appointment as Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean and advisor on the prospects of a marriage alliance with the Stuarts cannot be read independently of his position vis-à-vis Sherley, the Spanish government and the Jesuits in Valladolid and Seville. Sherley wrote to the royal secretary, Pedro Franqueza, Count of Villalonga shortly after his arrival in Spain, to propose the formation a fleet of ten ships, to protect the coasts of Naples and Sicily against the depredations of pirates and corsairs, and King Philip had approved the formation of the fleet which was to be maintained by taking 'as many prizes as you are able of the ships and property belonging to our rebel subjects of Holland and Zeeland or belonging to Turks, Moors, or other enemies of Spain.'<sup>37</sup> Juan Fernandez Pacheco, 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Escalona and Viceroy of Sicily, ordered Sherley to sail against the fleet of Turkish Admiral Murad Reis the Elder in 1609, suspecting the latter of planning to invade the kingdoms of Naples and Sicily, while the majority of Spanish vessels were engaged in deporting the Moriscos to North Africa.<sup>38</sup> Sherley admitted in a letter to his father that he could not discern what King Philip and his council were planning to

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<sup>36</sup> *Idem*, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Lords of the Counsaile, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1609 O.S. ', Sawyer, vol. III, p. 37. Albert J. Loomie (ed.) *English Polemics at the Spanish Court: Joseph Creswell's Letter to the Ambassador from England* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1993), pp. 1-22, 41-105.

<sup>37</sup> Sherley, 'Don Antonio Sherley para Señor Conde de Villalonga, 28<sup>th</sup> November 1606', MS Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1171, fols. 71, 8, 17, 36. Davies, pp. 203, 207.

<sup>38</sup> 'Relacion de lo que se trato con Sirley, desde el año de 1607 hasta el presente en que estamos de 1611', MS Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1171, fols. 206, 19 ff. Davies, p. 216.

accomplish, and chose to interpret his instructions from the viceroy as an invitation to engage the Ottomans head-on and invade the eastern Mediterranean, escalations that would not have been supported by the Spanish Council given their predilection for preserving the balance of power and the *pax hispanica*.<sup>39</sup> Sherley's expedition to the Greek islands of Corfu, Kefalonia, Zakynthos, Skiathos and Mytilene, was hardly consistent with Escalona's instructions to 'divert Turkish forces from the kingdom of Naples and Sicily and to clear the sea of pirates', and was taken by Sherley as an opportunity to initiate the long-awaited Perso-European campaign against the Ottomans, as is indicated by his preoccupation with matters relating to the Persian Gulf in his correspondence with Philip III in late October 1609.<sup>40</sup> Cornwallis's response to the approval of Sherley's proposal and his attempt to recruit the Dutch pirate Simon Danseker was predictably exaggerated, for besides (falsely) claiming that Sherley's commission was 'so large, as he may within any of the King's domynions levye if need require 20,000 men' and procure *any* shipping whatsoever, he went on to express his concerns that Spain's armada augmented thus with northern European and Florentine galleys could in theory end up dominating the entire Mediterranean:

The consequence of this purpose [the possible recruitment of Simon Danseker] if it should succeed, your Lordship will consider much better then I can eyther deliver or imagine. The

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<sup>39</sup> '... what the kings purpose yss I may iudg: butt bycause iudgmētes ar uncertayne, I reamitt my self to whatt shall bee; for my owne part I knowe by gods grace that I will not fayle to accōplishe whatt I ow to my quality & your honour: & yf I dy I will dye welle'. Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to his father, from Palermo, 9<sup>th</sup> September 1609', Shirley, p. 71. Bernardo Jose Garcia Garcia, *La Pax Hispanica: Politica Exterior del Duque di Lerma* (Louvain: Louvain University Press, 1996), pp. 74 ff.

<sup>40</sup> Significantly, Sherley's letter to the King has been marked 'No hay que responder' – must not be responded to or acknowledged. Davies, pp. 218-19, 216, 217, and 318, n. 64.



*Spanyard* to become master of the *Levant Seas*, which by this very plot of Sir *Anthony Shirley* and the credulous acceptance of *this doateing estate* is the marke they leuell at, to bee possessed (besides their ordinary provision of gallyes) of so many shippes of *Alta Borda*, and to enforce themselves in tymes when their seasons shall serve with the conjunction of those that are gathered by the *Florentine*, (nowe so neare an allye unto this crowne), are things that in my weake judgment, though not likely to be effected, yet not to be neglected or disregarded.<sup>41</sup>

Cornwallis' misrepresentation of the resources available to Sherley and (potentially) available to Spain was another example of threat inflation, and while he remained ignorant of Sherley and the Spanish government's divergent and indeed conflicting agendas with respect to the fleet's mission, he was convinced that Creswell and the Jesuits planned to operate the fleet on the model of the Catalan Company, and were simply waiting in the wings for an opportunity to strike against England:

It seems, that as *our Jesuits* heretofore provided *seminaries*, with purpose to be furnished of *seedes-men* to sowe in their seasons their doctrine and privy practices against the estate there [*i.e.* England], so do they now endeavour to provide a *residency* and *cage of Catalinistes*, to be ready upon all events to take advantage of *any fyer*, that either their malice or God's punishment shall kindle upon any accident in *England*. Now that they shall want their former meanes of nourishing military men of their character in *Flaunders*, they hold it necessarye to provide another rendezvous,

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<sup>41</sup> Cornwallis, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Lord Treasurer, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1609', Sawyer, vol. III, pp. 40, 39. Anthony Nixon, *Newes from sea, of two notorious pyrats: Ward the Englishman, and Danseker the Dutchman, with a true relation of all or the most piraces [sic.] by them committed vnto the sixt of Aprill 1609* (London: [printed by Edward Allde] for Nathaniel Butter, 1609), sig. C1<sup>v</sup>.

whether all the dissolute and desperate of our nation may be gathered under the banner of one, not only of their own country, but of their own quality, case and condition [*i.e.* Sherley].<sup>42</sup>

Cornwallis was likewise angered and dismayed by news of the Spanish Council's consultations with Sherley regarding the prospects of a marriage alliance involving Britain and Spain, or Spain and France in 1606-1607. He reported that for 'myne own parte I beleeve it not, yet very lately is Sir *Anthony Shirley* (by what means I know not) *made* (as he saith) an *instrument in the matter*'. 'Not to want occupation', Cornwallis went on to complain, 'very earnest he [Sherley] is become (as I hear) to intrude himself in the business of the conjunction with *England*.' He concluded by speculating that 'having perhaps by way of discourse from *Villa Longa* [Pedro Franqueza, Count of Villalonga] gotten some taste, he pretendeth for the better shadowing himself with some smoke of trust or greatness to be made a dealer.'<sup>43</sup> Cornwallis' language strikingly

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<sup>42</sup> Cornwallis, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Lords of the [Privy] Counsaile, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1609 O.S.', in Sawyer, vol. III, p. 51. Creswell and the Jesuits were well-informed about Sherley's objectives and determination to organise a campaign against the Ottomans. Enrique Garcia Hernan, 'The Holy See, the Spanish Monarchy and Safavid Persia in the Sixteenth Century: some Aspects of the involvement of the Society of Jesus', in Willem Floor and Edmund Herzig (eds.) *Iran and the World in the Safavid Age* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2012), pp. 181-203. *Idem*, 'The Persian Gentlemen at the Spanish Court in the Early Seventeenth Century', in Jorge Flores and Rudi Matthee (eds.) *Portugal, the Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris in Association with the Iran Heritage Foundation, 2011), pp. 283-300. cf. also Bert Fragner, 'The Safavid Empire and the Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century Political and Strategic Balance of Power within the World System'; Colin Imber, 'The Battle of Sufiyan, 1605: a Symptom of Ottoman Military Decline?'; Luis Gil, 'The Embassy of Don Garcia de Silva y Figueroa to Shah 'Abbas I'; Mansur Sefatgol, 'Farang, Farangi and Farangestan: Safavid Historiography and the West (907-1148 / 1501-1736)' in Floor and Herzig (2012), pp. 17-29; 91-101; 161-80; and 357-64 respectively.

<sup>43</sup> Sawyer, vol. II, p. 273. Sherley argued for a marriage between Lady Arabella Stuart and the Archduke (later Holy Roman Emperor) Matthias of Austria, cf. MS Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Sicilia,

presents Sherley as an ‘intruder’, ‘pretender’ and ‘impostor’ purportedly hiding in the shadows or behind the smoke of ‘trust or greatness’.<sup>44</sup> However, his concerns over Sherley’s apparent ‘intrusions’, ‘pretences’ and ‘impostures’ are contextualised by the assurances of Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton and then Lord Privy Seal in a subsequent letter sent to Cornwallis in Spain: ‘Sir *Anthony Sherley* who laboured exceedingly to succeed you in place, though no labour in this vintage can enable to succeed in sufficiency, is called in question or... many questions upon faults of the highest nature, though rather personall then pollicique.’<sup>45</sup> Cornwallis also describes Sherley as a ‘mountebank’, ‘cunning juggler’ and ‘trickster’, a characterisation that has been taken up to varying degrees by some modern biographers.<sup>46</sup>

The publishers’ associate who drafted the preface to the *Relation* largely reproduced Sherley’s preferred image and authorial persona. Cornwallis on the other hand was influenced by his relationship to Salisbury and had his own particular reasons for describing Sherley as a ‘juggler’ and a ‘pretender’.<sup>47</sup> Sherley does, however, provide additional information that can be taken as a more objective basis to investigate the

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Leg. 1171, fols. 86 ff. Davies, p. 205. See also Glyn Redworth, *The Prince and the Infanta: the Cultural Politics of the Spanish Match* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 122-23.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Graces done to *so known an impostor* as Sir *Anthony Shirley*’, Cornwallis, ‘Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Earl of Salisbury, Madrid, 27<sup>th</sup> June 1607 O.S.’, Sawyer, vol. II, p. 322, 308.

<sup>45</sup> ‘From the Lord Privy Seale to Sir Charles Cornwallis, 18<sup>th</sup> July 1609’, Sawyer, vol. III, p. 55.

<sup>46</sup> Sawyer, vol. II, p. 308. Ross, pp. 86-87. Davies, p. 203, and *passim*. Jonathan Burton has recently referred to him as a picaresque figure or *picaro* in ‘The Shah’s Two Ambassadors: The Travels of the Three English Brothers and the Global Early Modern’ in Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani (eds.), *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), p. 33.

<sup>47</sup> Albert Loomie has noted Cornwallis’ exclusion from the Spanish court and his relative isolation during his two-year residency in Spain. *English Polemics at the Spanish Court*, pp. 3 ff.

background of the author behind the *Relation*: he provides a suggestive, if cursory account of his career before his departure for Persia. Sherley's rapid glance at the preceding three-and-a-half decades can be taken as the basis for an investigation of his background in light of the abundant surviving printed and archival materials.

Sherley begins with a preamble and a 'curriculum vitae', reflecting on his formal education as a gentleman at Hart Hall, All Souls and the Inner Temple some three decades earlier, in a passage that recalls Bacon's essay *Of Studies* (1597), with its deliberate association of 'learning' with 'ornament' for the purposes of a future 'occupation' in politics, which is not particularly surprising given Sherley's close friendship with the elder of the Bacon brothers.<sup>48</sup> Sherley remembers fighting under Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester and Sir John Norris, mentions the high levels of command he had held during their campaigns, and moves on to apologise for any possible mistakes he might have committed: 'In my firste yeares my friendes bestowed on me those learnings which were fitt for a gentlemans ornament, without directinge them to an occupation, and when they were fit for agible thinges, they bestowed them and mee on my princes service, in which I ranne many courses, of diuers fortunes, accordinge to the condi~con of the warres: in which as I was moste exercised, so was I most subiecte to accidentes: ^with what opinion I carried my selfe (since, the causes of good or ill must be in my selfe, and that a thinge without my selfe) I leaue it to them to speake. My places

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<sup>48</sup> Michael Kiernan (ed.) *Francis Bacon: The Essayes or Counsells, Civill and Morall* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), p. 152. Bacon's *Essayes* had been published in at least three separate editions prior to Sherley's departure from England. Bacon, *Essayes: Religious Meditations, Places of perswasion and disswasion* (London: printed [by John Windet] for Humfrey Hooper, 1597, and 1598).

yet in authority, in those occasions were euer of the beste, in which, if I committed errores it was contrarie to my will, and a weaknes in my iudgement: which, notwithstanding, I euer industriated my self to make perfect, correctinge my owne ouersights by the vertusesste examples I could make choise of...<sup>49</sup>

Sherley places great emphasis on his early vocation as an Elizabethan soldier, which together with his laudatory introduction of himself, and the unexpected appeal to his 'friends' to vouch for his conduct during Leicester and Norris' respective campaigns, assumes the form of a diplomatic recommendation, as supplemented with an oral message to be delivered to his intended audience. Sherley consequently provides few details about Leicester and Norris' campaigns in the Netherlands and Brittany respectively, and maintains that he always strove to remedy any occasional lapses in judgement on his own behalf, the most grievous error being his acceptance of a knighthood from King Henri IV of France in 1593.<sup>50</sup> Sherley's compendious rehearsal soon leads to a bold and surprising statement, where he claims to have drawn the inspiration for all his actions from Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, to the extent that he had even begun to resemble Essex in his rare qualities and virtues:

Amongst which, as there was not a subiecte of more worthines and vertue, for such examples to grow from, then the euer liuinge in honor, and condigne estima~con the Earle of Essex: as my reuerence and regard to his rare qualities was exceeding; so I desired (as much as my humilitie might answeere, with such an eminencie) to make him the patterne of my civill life: and from him

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<sup>49</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. B1<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>50</sup> Davies, pp. 37-39. Subrahmanyam, p. 90.

to draw a worthie modell of all my actiones. And as my true loue to him, did transforme me from my many imperfectones, to be as it weare, an imitator of his vertues: so his affection was such to me, that hee was not onelie contented, I should do so: but in the true noblenesse of his mind gaue me liberallie the beste treasure of his mind in counselling of mee: his fortune to helpe me forward and his verie care to beare mee vpp in all those courses, which might giue honor to my selfe, and inworthie the name of his friend [*i.e.* Essex's friend, Sir Anthony Sherley].<sup>51</sup>

Sherley's deliberate association of himself with Essex does carry a certain note of ambiguity, however, as evidenced by the careful qualification that he had only made Essex the pattern of his 'civill life', thereby distancing himself from any unwanted associations with Essex's perceived transgressions.<sup>52</sup> Sherley had adopted a similar stance shortly after Essex's rebellion and execution, when he did not so much turn against Essex as distance himself from his actions. This can be seen from his letters to Lord Chief Justice Sir John Popham, wherein Sherley contended that his counter-embassy from Persia ought to be allowed in England, since he had not been anywhere close to London at the time of the rebellion: 'If then... it be only because my Lord of Essex's name was set as an honor in his flourishing upon me, & my actions, wipe away that, and let them be looked on and myself without that, neither do I hear that... any mans affections to him nor his relations, was so pernicious as it falleth to me, which was

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<sup>51</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Henry, Prince of Wales taunted his boyhood friend Robert Devereux, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Essex, by calling him 'son of a traitor' as late as a decade after the rebellion. Robert Codrington, *The Life and Death, of the Illustrious Robert Earle of Essex* (London: F. Leach for L. Chapman, 1646), sig. B2<sup>r</sup>.

farthest removed in place and knowledge from his actions; *Justum est homines propter justitiam diligere, non autem justitiam propter homines postponere.*<sup>53</sup>

Sherley's invocation of the Earl of Essex as his patron and exemplary figure in the opening sections of the *Relation* is striking. He symbolically places himself under Essex's patronage a decade after his demise. Sherley's narrative of participating in campaigns in the Low Countries and France under Leicester and Sir John Norris is subsumed by that of his devotion to Essex, so that Sherley's subordination of his experiences in the above-mentioned campaigns has led to Sanjay Subrahmanyam's questioning of his precise role in those countries.<sup>54</sup> Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar make no mention of Sherley's experiences in the Netherlands, France (or elsewhere) before his unexpected appearance at the Persian court.<sup>55</sup> Daniel Vitkus has noted that Sherley led an abortive campaign to Italy, while Bernadette Andrea points out that Sherley's expedition had been bankrolled by Essex, before Sherley decided to capriciously 'redirect' his attention to Persia in 1598.<sup>56</sup> Sherley's subordination of the account of his earlier activities to that of his devotion to Essex has, on the one hand resulted in the recognition of the latter as his patron prior to his departure for Persia, while on the other it has obscured his relations with earlier patrons as well as his

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<sup>53</sup> Sherley, 'Sir A.S. to Ch: Justice Popham, 20th July 1601', Shirley, p. 36. Douglas Walthew Rice, *The Life and Achievements of Sir John Popham, 1531-1607: leading to the establishment of the first English Colony in New England* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), pp. 163-64.

<sup>54</sup> Subrahmanyam, p. 90.

<sup>55</sup> 'Anthony [Sherley] first appeared at the Safavid court in 1598'. Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 63.

<sup>56</sup> Vitkus, 'Sir Robert Sherley', p. 671. Bernadette Andrea, *Women and Islam in Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), pp. 42-43.

activities in the Netherlands and France (1586-97). He nevertheless provides enough clues to allow an investigation of his statements in light of the external material mentioned above, in order to address the lacunae in current scholarship as regards Sherley's experiences in the Low Countries and France as well as the nature of his relationship to his former patron Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex.

### ***Anthony Sherley and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester***

Anthony Sherley had been reading at the Inner Temple for two years, when he was reportedly summoned by his father Sir Thomas the Elder to serve in the Earl of Leicester's expedition to the Netherlands in 1585 / 86.<sup>57</sup> Sir Thomas was one of the noblemen who accompanied Leicester to Vlissingen in December 1585, and led a regiment of some 1,300 troops to the Low Countries.<sup>58</sup> Leicester's fleet arrived at Flushing on Friday 10 December, where he was saluted with 'all the shot of great ordnance', and was greeted by Maurice and William of Nassau, Philip Sidney, William

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<sup>57</sup> Inner Temple Admissions Database, <http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/itad/detail.asp?id=10733>. Ross, p. 4. Ross draws on Harley MS 4023 and Egerton MS 1824 at British Library, London for his account of Sherley's military service in the Netherlands. cf. Clare Rider, 'Lord Robert Dudley, Chief Patron and Defender of the Inner Temple', in the *Inner Temple Yearbook* (London: Tolley, 2000/2001), <http://www.innertemple.org.uk/archive/dudley.html>.

<sup>58</sup> Anonymous, 'Those who are going for the Earl of Leicester', and Anonymous, 'List of Gentlemen forming the train of the Earl of Leicester on his expedition to the Netherlands', Martin A.S. Hume (ed.) *Calendar of Letters and State Papers... preserved principally in the Archives of Simancas, vols. I-IV* (London: printed by Eyre and Spottiswoode for H.M.S.O., 1892-1899), vol. III: *Elizabeth, 1580-1586* (1896), nos. 418, and 419. The first document hints at some level of coordination between the Earl of Leicester and the Ottoman Sultan Murad III. Simon Adams, *Leicester and the Court: Essays on Elizabethan Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), Appendix 16.1, pp. 393 ff.



Davison and the town burgomasters and magistrates. Leicester's personal retinue was impressive, conveyed aboard fifty vessels in two parties: He was 'guarded in his own person by fifty archers with bows and arrows, fifty halberders, and fifty gunners'. His retinue, as Alan Stewart has noted, 'comprised the cream of young English nobility', including Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, the Lords North, Audley and Willoughby, Sir William Russell, Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Arthur Basset, Sir Walter Waller, Sir Gervais Clifton and others with 3,000 soldiers.<sup>59</sup> Sir Thomas Sherley and his son's participation in Leicester's campaign calls for some explanation as to Sir Thomas's background and reasons for accompanying Leicester to the Netherlands.

Thomas Sherley had matriculated at Oriel College, Oxford on 28 January 1554. He graduated Bachelor of Arts on the 23 of February, and was elected a Fellow of the College on 5 of July 1557, before moving on to Gray's Inn during 1559.<sup>60</sup> He was appointed Justice of the Peace and Deputy Lieutenant of Sussex in 1569, allegedly holding the latter position for thirty-two years until 1601, and served as the Sheriff of Sussex and Surrey for a year in November 1577.<sup>61</sup> Thomas Sherley was knighted by

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<sup>59</sup> Alan Stewart, *Sir Philip Sidney: A Double Life* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), p. 281.

<sup>60</sup> Charles Shadwell, *Registrum Oriense, an Account of the Members of Oriel College, Oxford, vols. I-II* (London: Henry Frowde, 1893-1902), vol. I: *The Commensales, Commoners and Batellers Admitted during the Years 1500-1700* (1893), p. 23. Joseph Foster (ed.) *The Register of Admissions to Gray's Inn, 1521-1889, together with the Register of Marriages in Gray's Inn Chapel, 1695-1754* (London: Hansard Publishing Union, Limited, 1889), p. 28. Thomas the Elder's father had died when he was only nine years old (1551), after which he had become a ward of Cardinal Reginald Pole. J.E. Mousley, 'Sir Thomas Sherley (c. 1542-1612), of Wiston, Sussex', P.W. Hasler (ed.), *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, vols. I-VII* (London: H.M.S.O., 1981-2009), vol. III: *1558-1603*, p. 375.

<sup>61</sup> Sir Thomas' early career is summarized in Mousley, p. 375, Davies, p. 8, and Janet Pennington, 'Sir Thomas Sherley [Shirley], (c. 1542-1612), Politician and Courtier', *ODNB*.

Elizabeth I at Rye, East Sussex on 12 of August 1573.<sup>62</sup> He appears to have been a protégé of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and the latter probably secured him his knighthood from Elizabeth I on the occasion.<sup>63</sup> Sir Thomas the Elder was named as Sussex Commissioner for recusancy in 1580, and again as county Commissioner for disarming the Sussex recusants in 1585.<sup>64</sup> Anne Howard, Countess of Arundel, was placed in his custody at Wiston from 1583-84, where he questioned her about ‘her speeches against the present government; reception of seminary priests and Jesuits; hearing of mass; [and] letters from Charles Paget & c.’<sup>65</sup> Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder had been elected an M.P. for Sussex in 1572 and 1584, where the Sherley family’s alliances with powerful local families ensured his appointment: ‘By the mid-sixteenth century the Wiston Shirleys had intermarried with such leading Sussex families as the Dawtreys of Petworth and the Shelleys of Michelgrove; they were also connected with the Blounts, Lords Mountjoy, and the Walsinghams.’<sup>66</sup> Thomas Sackville, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Buckhurst, personally endorsed Sir Thomas and his own son, Robert Sackville, as candidates in a letter to the Sheriff of Sussex in 1584: ‘Cousin Calvert, I hear that Mr. Herbert Pelham and Mr. G. Goring do stand to be the knights of the shire; and as you friendly offered me your furtherance if need were, so now, though I doubt not of any

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<sup>62</sup> Pennington, ‘Sir Thomas Sherley’.

<sup>63</sup> Mousley, p. 375. Pennington, ‘Sir Thomas Sherley’.

<sup>64</sup> Davies, p. 8.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas Sherley, ‘Interrogatories ministered to the Countess of Arundell by Sir Tho. Sherley, [at Wiston], 9 April 1584’, and Anne Howard, ‘Answers of Anne, Countess of Arundell, to the preceding Interrogatories; signed by Sir Thomas Sherley, [Wiston], 9 April 1584’, Robert Lemon (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, vols. I-VII* (London: printed by Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts and Green, 1865-71), 1581-1590 (1865), nos. 22, 23. Nancy Pollard Brown, ‘Anne Howard [nee Dacre], Countess of Arundel (1557-1630), Noblewoman and Priest Harbourer’, *ODNB*.

<sup>66</sup> Mousley, p. 375.

great need, yet would I be glad to use the help of my friends in this cause for Sir Thomas Shirley and my son.’ Anthony Browne, first Viscount Montagu, likewise threw his support behind Sir Thomas in the election, with a letter to the Sheriff dated only four days later: ‘I have thought good to signify unto you, that both sundry noblemen and gentlemen, with myself, have thought Mr. Robert Sackville and Sir Thomas Sherley most fit... if the country shall like so to make choice... I pray you to make my wish and desire to be known to the freeholders there.’<sup>67</sup> Sir Thomas Sherley’s participation in the Parliaments of 1572 and 1584, as well as those of 1601 and 1604, when he sat for his pocket borough of Steyning, West Sussex, are detailed in *The History of Parliament, House of Commons*: during the Parliament of 1572 ‘he was appointed to the committee on the subsidy (10 Feb. 1576), the large committee ‘to consult of bills convenient to be framed’ (25 Jan. 1581), and committees concerned with the preservation of woods (28 Jan.), returns (24 Feb.), the Queen’s safety (14 Mar.) and iron mills (18 Mar.). In the 1584 Parliament he was again on a preservation of timber committee (8 Dec.); served on the conference appointed 15 Feb. 1585 to consider the Lords’ complaints about the Commons’ attitude to them over the fraudulent conveyances bill, and was on the subsidy committee (24 Feb.).’<sup>68</sup> Sir Thomas the Elder’s participation in Leicester’s Netherlands campaign, with a sizeable regiment he had probably recruited himself, and on which he took his two eldest sons Thomas and Anthony, has been correctly described by D.W.

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<sup>67</sup> Harleian MSS 703, fols. 18<sup>v</sup>, 19<sup>v</sup>, and Add MSS 5702, fols. 88-89. John E. Neale, *The Elizabethan House of Commons* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1949), p. 68. Davies, pp. 6-7.

<sup>68</sup> Mousley, p. 376. Simonds D’Ewes, *The Journals of all the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, both of the House of Lords and the House of Commons* (London: printed for Thomas Starkey, 1682), pp. 247, 288, 300, 306, 308, 337, 349, 356, 474, 477, 481, 487, 499, 512, 521.

Davies as a turning point in the history of the family, effectively marking the beginning of their lengthy involvement in national and international politics.<sup>69</sup>

Leicester and his entourage made their way from Vlissingen to The Hague, where Leicester was to meet with the States General of the Netherlands, in what might well have been mistaken for a royal progress, passing through Middelburg, Dordrecht, Rotterdam and Delft through the rest of December.<sup>70</sup> Leicester and his considerable retinue of friends and allies, including Sir Thomas the Elder, and probably Anthony Sherley, were genuinely impressed by the sheer scale of the preparations, and the spontaneous emotional outpouring on behalf of the Dutch citizens:<sup>71</sup>

This town [Delft] ys an other London almost for bewty and fairnes, and have used me most honourably, as there berors can tell you... Ther was such a noyse, bothe here, at Rotradame, and Dordryght, in crying, ‘God save queen Elisabeth,’ as yf she had ben in Chepesyde, with the most hartly countenances that ever I sawe; and therefore, whatsoever hath byn sayd to hir majesty, I beleave she never bestowed hir favor uppon more thankfull people than these countries of Holland; for the states dare not but be queen Elyzabethes, for, by the lyving God, yf ther shuld fall but the least unkindness, thorow ther default, the people wold kyll them...<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Mousley, p. 375. Davies, chapters 1 and 2.

<sup>70</sup> Stewart, *Sir Philip Sidney*, p. 282. Roy Strong and Jan van Dorsten, *Leicester's Triumph* (Leiden: Leiden University Press for the Sir Thomas Browne Institute, 1964) pp. 31ff.

<sup>71</sup> Stewart, pp. 282-84.

<sup>72</sup> Robert Dudley, ‘The Earl of Leycester to Mr. Secretary Walsingham, [Delft], 26<sup>th</sup> of December 1585’, James Bruce (ed.) *Correspondence of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester, during his Government in the Low Countries in the years 1585 and 1586* (London: J.B. Nichols, 1844), pp. 31-32.

Sir Thomas the Elder is known to have accompanied Leicester on his journey from Flushing to The Hague, as he kept up a steady correspondence with Burghley and Walsingham between December and January, and his son Anthony was probably also travelling with the procession since he was one of the Captains appointed to lead Leicester's expeditionary force in the Netherlands.<sup>73</sup> Anthony's presence during Leicester's triumphal procession through the Netherlands, when he was barely twenty years old and reportedly close enough to Leicester to address him as his 'uncle', doubtless contributed to his sense of the dignity attached to the office of a royal representative abroad, as dramatically illustrated during Sherley's legation on behalf of Rudolf II to the Moroccan Prince Abu Faris b. Ahmad al-Mansur (1605):

After two dayes stay in the Citie, the King made preparation for [Sherley's] entertainment at Court, whither he went... he rode to Court, not lighting from his horse, where the Kings Sonnes usually doe, but rode thorow the Mushward, (which is the Kings great Hall, wherein most of his Lords, Gentlemen, and chiefe sort of people doe attend, when they come to Court) which none but the King himself doth... Some fiue dayes after, Sir Anthonie Sherley comming to audience, and thinking to haue ridden in as he did before, a chaine was hung crosse the entrance of the Mushward, which he perceyuing onely done to hinder his passage, would not alight from his horse, but returned backe verie discontented. This being certified to [King] Boferes, presently three of his chiefest Alkeyds were sent to qualifie the matter. But Sir Anthonie tooke the disgrace

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<sup>73</sup> Thomas Sherley, 'Sir Thomas Sherley to Lord Burghley [and Secretary Walsingham], Delft, 26 December 1585', 'Sir Thomas Sherley to Lord Burghley [and Secretary Walsingham], The Hague, 25 January 1586', calendared in Arthur James Butler et al. (eds.) *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series, of the reign of Elizabeth*, vols. I-XXIII (London: Longman, Green & Co., 1863-1950), Sophie Crawford Lomas (ed.) *vol. XX: September 1585-May 1586* (1921), pp. 239, 320. Davies, pp. 28 ff.

not as his owne, but his whose person he represented... The three Alkeyds [spent] an houre to pacifie his cholere... neither euer after was he hindered of riding thorow the Mushward.<sup>74</sup>

Leicester's letters from the Netherlands fulfilled a propaganda function in addition to providing information to the Council, the most prominent among whom were Lord Burghley and Secretary Walsingham.<sup>75</sup> Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder's letters to Burghley and Walsingham were probably intended to reinforce his patron Leicester's reports to his chief correspondents at court.<sup>76</sup> Anthony Sherley's presence during Leicester's triumphal procession would have enabled him to witness his father's contribution to the shaping of public policy through intensive correspondence and a certain level of manuscript circulation.<sup>77</sup> Sherley's notion of shaping public policy

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<sup>74</sup> R. Cottington, *A True Historical Discourse of Muley Hamets rising to the three kingdomes of Moruecos, Fes, and Sus, the dis-vnion of the three kingdomes, by ciuill warre, kindled amongst his three ambitious sonnes, Muley Sheck, Muley Boferes, and Muley Sidan ... The aduentures of Sir Anthony Sherley, and diuers other English gentlemen, in those countries, with other nouelties* (London: Thomas Purfoot for Clement Knight, 1609), sig. E2<sup>v</sup>-E3<sup>r</sup>. Ross, p. 6. Hammer discusses the parallel experiences of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, and his conceptions of religion and nobility that grew out of his participation in the expedition. *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 47, 50-51. Sherley's imperious behaviour in Morocco almost twenty years later was partly attributable to the fact that he was acting as the ambassador of the Holy Roman Emperor, though the example is provided to suggest that Sherley could have been equally impressed as a young man by the royal reception given to his patron Leicester, during the course of the latter's progress through the Netherlands in 1585/86.

<sup>75</sup> Stewart, p. 283.

<sup>76</sup> Lomas, *passim*. Sir Thomas's family had ties to the Walsinghams as has been noted above, and was probably also interested in developing closer ties to Lord Treasurer Burghley.

<sup>77</sup> Sir Thomas the Elder certainly had access to, and was at the very least aware of, the contents of other letters sent to the council by members of Leicester's retinue, as will be shown below. Sherley's own correspondence with Emperor Rudolph II, King James VI, and a series of influential politicians is still extant, and will be referred to over the ensuing chapters. Cyndia Susan Clegg, *Press Censorship in Elizabethan England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 266, note 36.

through correspondence with key decision makers, and reaching the broader literate public through manuscript circulation and printing, would thus have to predate his association with the Essex secretariat in London.<sup>78</sup> Sir Thomas the Elder's identical letters to Burghley and Walsingham from Delft, for example, do not only echo the substance of Leicester's own letters cited above, but also hint at an implicit consensus among members of Leicester's immediate retinue in the Netherlands:

*I know your lordship [Burghley] has received by Mr. [William] Gorge and others [?] the beginning of this journey [i.e. to the united Netherlands], and of his lordship's [i.e. Leicester's] arrival at Flushing and Middelburg... Since he has been to Rotterdam and is now at Delft. In all these places he has been so welcomed and has found her Majesty's name so honoured, as cannot be more so among the best-affected in England [e.g. Cheapside]. The general desire here is that the amity with England may be everlasting; and there is not any of our company of judgement but wish the same, for they that see the goodliness and stateliness of these towns, strengthened both*

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<sup>78</sup> Thomas the Younger, Anthony, and Robert Sherley were responsible for a series of publications advertising their various exploits, which lends credit to the view that their use of popular print need not necessarily have resulted from Anthony's association with the Essex secretariat, and could well have proceeded from a common source associated with all three of the brothers. Anthony Nixon, *The Three English Brothers and Newes from Sea*, Thomas Middleton, *Sir Robert Sherley*. Thomas the Elder's own interest in publication and print is confirmed by the recent discovery of his forgotten treatise on hunting: Peter Devers (ed.) *A Short Discourse of Hawking to the Field, with High-flying Long-winged Hawkes, together with the sorting and ordering of Spaniels* (Boise: Peregrine Fund, 2004). cf. also Victoria E. Burke and Jonathan Gibson (eds.) *Early Modern Women's Manuscript Writing: Selected Papers from the Trinity / Trent Colloquium* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), pp. 33 ff, and James Daybell, *The Material Letter in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), pp. 175 ff.

with fortification and natural situation, all able to defend themselves with their own abilities, must needs think it too fair a prey to be let pass; a thing most worthy to be embraced.<sup>79</sup>

Leicester and his retinue arrived at The Hague on 28 December 1585, and the States General almost immediately offered him the civil and military government of the Netherlands on the morning of 1 January 1586. Leicester appointed Roger North, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron North, William Davison, Bartholomew Clerke and Sir Philip Sidney to negotiate with their Dutch counterparts, while he attempted to distance himself from the entire process by removing to Leiden ten miles away.<sup>80</sup> Sir Philip Sidney's role in the negotiations with the States General over the exact nature of Leicester's proposed governorship is of some interest: Sidney advocated the idea of creating Leicester a dictator 'with absolute power over everything concerning the prosperity of the country, without any instruction, limitation or restriction.'<sup>81</sup> In a similar vein, Sherley expresses admiration for absolute power in the *Relation*: he describes the perilous state of the Persian Empire when 'Abbas I came to power, and the Shah's subsequent military campaigns against his internal and external enemies, consisting of a coalition of insubordinate local governors and what Sherley tends to describe as the 'rebellious Tatars' [*i.e.* Uzbeks] in the province of Khurasan. Sherley expresses admiration for the Shah's centralising policies and administration, strongly rejecting any imputation of

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<sup>79</sup> Lomas, p. 239 (emphasis added). Hume, no. 419. Paul Hammer refers in passing to 'that letter-writing network by which Leicester and his senior associates tried to maintain their friendly relations with the leading councillors at home', in *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, p. 53.

<sup>80</sup> Stewart, pp. 284-5. Strong, *Leicester's Triumph*, pp. 54-55.

<sup>81</sup> Marjon Poort, 'The Desired and Destined Successor: a Chronology of Sir Philip Sidney's Activities, 1585-1586', in Jan van Dorsten, Dominic Baker-Smith and Arthur F. Kinney (eds.) *Sir Philip Sidney: 1586 and the Creation of a Legend* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), p. 29, and Stewart, p. 285.



‘barbarousness’, and even goes so far as to argue that Shah ‘Abbas and the Safavid system of government could be taken as a kind of Platonic ideal to be replicated elsewhere: ‘the fashion of his government differringe so much from that which we calle barbarousnes that it maie iustlie serue for as greate an Idea for a principallitie as Platoes Common wealth did for a gouernment of that sorte.’<sup>82</sup> Sherley’s admiration for the Shah’s absolute authority is to some extent a reflection of general attitudes toward disciplined conduct in governance and warfare, but it is important to recognise that Sherley’s political ideas were also shaped by the specific example of Leicesterian ‘dictatorship’ exercised in the Netherlands.<sup>83</sup> Leicester’s difficulties in leading the Protestant Alliance against Spain would have brought the successes of Shah ‘Abbas against the Ottomans into relief a decade later. Sidney’s justification that ‘... when the state of the Republic of Rome had been in utter peril or danger, as the Netherlands nowadays are... it had been necessary to create a dictatorship’ is in fact not too far removed from Sherley’s own narrative of Shah ‘Abbas’ assumption of power under circumstances that seemed to threaten the very existence of the Persian Empire.<sup>84</sup> Sidney’s political philosophy had partially found expression in Hubert Languet’s *Vindiciae, contra tyrannos* (1579), which was often bound together with Machiavelli’s works in editions dating from the last decades of the century.<sup>85</sup> Sherley was certainly

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<sup>82</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 124<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>83</sup> Sherley’s admiration of the Safavids’ absolute power has its parallels in early modern travellers’ accounts of the neighbouring Ottoman Empire. Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 126, 131, 133, 182.

<sup>84</sup> Poort, p. 29. Stewart, p. 285.

<sup>85</sup> e.g. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Nicolai Machiavelli [Florentini] Princeps... Adiecta sunt eiusdem argumenti aliorum quorundam contra Machiavellum scripta, de potestate & officio principum contra tyrannos* (Basel, s.n., 1589) and (Hanoviae [Hanau]: Apud Guilelmum Antonium, 1595).

familiar with Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (1532), incorporating (at least) one extended passage of it into the *Relation*, and might also have been familiar with the *Vindiciae*, especially given its relevance to a Christian soldier fighting in the Netherlands.<sup>86</sup>

Leicester accepted the proposal of the States General for the governorship of the Netherlands on 14 January 1586, and was sworn in as the 'Governor General of the United Provinces and Cities' eleven days later. Elizabeth I's anger at Leicester for contravening her orders, and accepting the governorship of the Netherlands, is well known and does not need additional treatment here.<sup>87</sup> Leicester despatched William Davison to England, to give an account of the negotiations, and defend his course of action before the Queen in February 1586. Davison's mission to defend Leicester's acceptance of the governor-generalship was singularly unsuccessful, since he was perceived as being one of the prime movers behind the negotiations at The Hague, and was unwilling to take personal responsibility for what had after all been Leicester's decision to accept the outcome of the negotiations.<sup>88</sup> Leicester grew steadily more

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<sup>86</sup> I am here referring to the conditions set out in the *Vindiciae* that would have allowed for legitimate armed resistance against tyranny and oppression. Sherley, like Languet, tried to rise above faction, and appealed to all 'Christian princes' and potentates, whether Catholic or Protestant, to unite in the face of what he perceived as Ottoman aggression, and embark on a crusade to 'liberate' Jerusalem. Blayney, pp. 286-90. George Garnett (ed.) *Vindiciae, contra tyrannos* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Glynn Redworth, 'Between four Kingdoms: International Catholicism and Colonel William Sempel', in Enrique Garcia Hernan (ed.) *Irlanda y la Monarchia Hispanica: Politica, Guerra, Exilio y Religion* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Cientificas, 2002), pp. 255-64.

<sup>87</sup> Stewart, pp. 286-88. Hammer, pp. 47-50.

<sup>88</sup> William Davison, 'Mr. Davison to the Earl of Leycester, London, 17. February 1586', in Cotton MS Galba C.ix, British Library, London, fol. 82. Robert Dudley, 'The Earl of Leycester to Mr. Davison, with his comments written in the margin, dated Haarlem, 10. March 1586', Harley MS 285, British Library, London, fol. 230, letters reprinted in Bruce, pp. 117-26, 168-71, Stewart, p. 289.

anxious as he waited in the Netherlands, without news either from the Privy Council or his erstwhile advocate William Davison, and at length decided to send Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder to England towards the end of February 1586:

I do long greatly to hear from England; I never heard word since I received your lordships and the rest discomfortable letter of her Majesty's displeasure. How Mr. Davison hath satisfied her Majesty I know not. I pray God she may take all things as they have been intended and by necessity here taken in hand. And lest I may be thought negligent... I have thought good to send my cousin Sherley to her Majesty to acquaint her with the state of things here as they have passed since Mr. Davison's repair home. I hope her Majesty nor your lordships will mislike with the proceedings here... I will not trouble your lordship withal, but refer you to his declaration.<sup>89</sup>

Sir Thomas was ostensibly despatched to inform the Queen of the events that had transpired since Davison's departure from the Low Countries, but he had also been instructed to assume responsibility for defending Leicester's recent decisions before Queen Elizabeth, which Leicester was convinced had not been represented vigorously enough by Sherley's predecessor William Davison.<sup>90</sup> Sir Thomas the Elder's detailed correspondence with Leicester reveals much about the mood then prevailing at Greenwich Palace, and also sheds light on the proximity and nature of his association with the Earl of Leicester, who would shortly afterward extend his patronage to Sir Thomas' son Anthony as will be demonstrated. Sir Thomas had emerged as one of Leicester's closest confidants during the expedition, which had in turn influenced Leicester's selection of him for the delicate task of explaining to the Queen his

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<sup>89</sup> Dudley, 'The Earl of Leicester to Lord Burghley, 28. February 1586', Lomas, p. 402.

<sup>90</sup> Cotton MS Galba, C.ix, British Library, fols. 120, 128, 136. Bruce, pp. 159-61, 171-76, 180-88.

willingness to accept the governorship of the Netherlands without her permission.<sup>91</sup> Anthony Sherley's proximity to one of Leicester's confidants, and participation in what Simon Adams has called a 'Puritan crusade', which occasionally ran counter to the wishes of the reigning monarch, would have a profound and lasting influence on the trajectory of Sherley's career and political thought over the next decades: 'As the campaign [in the Netherlands] stuttered and hostile missives came from the queen, Leicester and the other members of his circle could only cling tenaciously to their belief in the rightness of their cause and pray for the chance to vindicate themselves by fulfilling the highest ideals of martial excellence. In the face of adversity grew a partisan solidarity and an even greater belief in the importance of their godly purpose.'<sup>92</sup>

Sir Thomas successfully defended Leicester's reputation and was subsequently put forward by Secretary Walsingham as a candidate for the post of Treasurer-at-War in spring 1586, to which he was jointly appointed with William Huddleston during the summer; partly attributable to the fact that the Sherleys enjoyed familial ties to the Walsinghams since the mid-sixteenth century. Walsingham's recommendation of Sir Thomas as the future Treasurer-at-War had, however, been predicated on his being a

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<sup>91</sup> Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder's proximity to his patron is evident from his correspondence with both Burghley and Walsingham on Leicester's behalf, the scale of his investment in terms of the number of troops he brought to Leicester's campaign in the Netherlands, and his detailed correspondence with Leicester while he represented him at Elizabeth's court especially during March 1586.

<sup>92</sup> Hammer, p. 51. Simon Adams, 'A Puritan Crusade? The Composition of the Earl of Leicester's Expedition to the Netherlands, 1585-86', *Leicester and the Court*, pp. 176-95. Sherley tended to think in terms of ideological, and international causes, and did not exhibit a sense of allegiance to any particular monarch. Sherley's political thought will be discussed later in the dissertation.

‘most constant affected gentleman’ toward Leicester, who was probably the Sherleys’ single most influential patron up until his death in September 1588.<sup>93</sup>

Sherley does not provide any details about his Dutch experience in the *Relation*, and chooses to defer to his ‘friendes’ to supply the relevant information. However, it is possible to follow his movements between July 1587 and January 1589, to throw additional light on his activities for the remainder of the expedition.<sup>94</sup>

### ***New Captain in the Netherlands, July 1587-January 1589***

Leicester selected Sherley to lead an infantry company, part of the English garrison charged with defending the fortifications at Brielle, under the command of Thomas Burgh, 5<sup>th</sup> Baron Burgh in late 1586 / 1587.<sup>95</sup> Sherley’s company initially refused to honour his commission, however, and ‘with great mutiny required to be satisfied of all their pay, which was not in any-one’s power to grant till the Treasurer etc. sent their warrants’.<sup>96</sup> Leicester’s selection of Sherley to lead the company at Brielle, and their refusal to recognise his authority until they were reimbursed by the Treasurer are

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<sup>93</sup> Francis Walsingham, ‘Mr. Secretary Walsyngham to the Earl of Leycester, at Court, 20<sup>th</sup> May 1586’, Cotton MS Galba, D.I, British Library, fol. 11, Bruce, p. 274. Mousley, p. 375.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. B1<sup>r-v</sup>. Davies, pp. 28 ff.

<sup>95</sup> Anthony Sherley took over the company from a certain Captain [John?] Roberts. ‘The Names of the Chief Officers and Captains serving her Majesty in the Low Countries since 11. October 1586 till this present day August 1587’, calendared in Sophie Crawford Lomas and Allen B. Hinds (eds.) *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, April-December 1587*, vol. XXI, part 3 (1929), p. 290.

<sup>96</sup> Lord Burgh reports the incident in a letter to Walsingham. ‘Lord Burgh to Walsingham... Causes why Lord Burgh removed Captain Sherley’s Company, Brielle, 12. July 1587’, *Ibid.*, p. 168.

significant, since the incident highlights Leicester's patronage of Sherley on the one hand, and the intervention by the Treasurer-at-War, Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder, on the other to diffuse the raucous reception accorded to his son.<sup>97</sup>

Thomas Lord Burgh, governor of Brielle, disliked Sherley's new company, 'for that I have ever found them most mutinous', and wished to hand over defence of the fortifications to his younger brother Sir John Burgh.<sup>98</sup> He found an opportunity to supplant the company with that of his brother, when Sir John Norris was recalled to England, and instructed Sherley to make his way to Peregrine Bertie, 13<sup>th</sup> Baron Willoughby, at Bergen op Zoom for re-deployment.<sup>99</sup> Norris had been serving as the Colonel General of the Foot during the campaign, and was then transferring the companies under his command to Lord Willoughby, just as Leicester was preparing to return after a seven-month absence in England.<sup>100</sup> Lord Burgh ordered Sherley's company to depart, and march to Bergen according to Norris' instructions, but the company refused unless they were first reimbursed by the governor:

... being by me [*i.e.* Lord Burgh] commanded to rise, and directed by Sir John Norris to Berghenzone [Bergen op Zoom], they put themselves in arms, drew up their bridge, and would not obey farther than they might be paid nine months' pay. Presently thereupon I went myself and demanded what had moved them to this insolency; persuaded them to remember that they

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<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth had dispensed with joint Treasurer Huddleston, and appointed Sir Thomas the Elder sole Treasurer-at-War on 27 February 1587. Pennington, 'Sir Thomas Sherley'.

<sup>98</sup> M.A. Stevens, 'Sir John Burgh (1561/2-1594), Solider', *ODNB*.

<sup>99</sup> Burgh, 'Thomas, Lord Burgh to Burghley, Brielle, 5 July 1587', Lomas and Hinds, pp. 150-51.

<sup>100</sup> Norris' actions against the Duke of Parma are discussed in John S. Nolan, *Sir John Norreys and the Elizabethan Military World* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997), pp. 102 ff.

attempted a thing in the nature of a rebellion... and that if they would conform themselves, I would rather impute it to error than condemn it as a wilful outrage... but they were all resolved to live or die in their cause. Hereupon I beset them with guards so that they should get no victuals, and when they wished to compound, in order to come forth, told them I would admit no compositions; for it was not a matter to be won from enemies... but to be continued in discipline, as over such as ought to be her Majesty's subjects, who being now become rebellious, I would execute according to their offence. So by compulsion they submitted, and by due examination the chief instruments were discovered, and to the number of four made examples to the rest.<sup>101</sup>

Sherley himself was not involved in the alleged mutiny of the infantry company, and probably took part in the court martial proceedings against the four hapless 'examples', but the event nonetheless indicates a notable shift within the context of Sherley's patronage during the campaign in the Netherlands.<sup>102</sup> Norris had transferred Sherley's infantry company to his successor Lord Willoughby during the absence of his rival Leicester from the Netherlands, despite the insistence of Sir Thomas the Elder that the company remain under a certain Mr. Roper.<sup>103</sup> Sherley had personally carried the Treasurer-at-War's letters to James Digges, who in turn passed on the request to his brother the Muster Master, Thomas Digges along with his deep reservations about contradicting the wishes of Lord Willoughby: 'Capt. Anthony Sherley showed a letter from his father, signifying his hope that Mr. Roper should retain the said charge; as his Excellency [*i.e.* Leicester] had promised him it; which makes me fear to go further with

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<sup>101</sup> Lomas and Hinds, pp. 150-51.

<sup>102</sup> Lord Burgh does provide some additional details, about the court martial proceedings, in a letter addressed to Walsingham and dated 12 July 1587. Lomas and Hinds, p. 167.

<sup>103</sup> Norris' rivalry with Leicester is discussed in Nolan, pp. 94 ff. Norris had probably transferred the company in response to Lord Willoughby's demands on 4 January, cf. Jane West, *The Brave Lord Willoughby: An Elizabethan Soldier* (Edinburgh: The Pentland Press, Ltd, 1998), p. 35.

Lord Wiloughbie (according to Mr. [John] Pooley's request) because my cousin Sherley averred so constantly that his lordship [Willoughby] should not have them.'<sup>104</sup>

Leicester severely rebuked Lord Burgh after his return to the Netherlands, not only because he had executed the 'rebellious' soldiers, but also because Leicester saw the Norris faction as being behind the entire incident: 'Since my last I have been with my lord of Leicester and tried to satisfy him as to the execution of the men whose notable mutiny and necessary example I imparted to your lordship, but he was so prepared to dislike it, that he would incline to no consideration which might allow my dealing... I desired my lord rather to show reason for condemning my doings than in words to exercise his displeasure, the indignity whereof was improper to me as a nobleman in England and here authorized by her letters patents to all I had hitherto done.'<sup>105</sup>

Sir John Norris' transfer of Sherley's infantry company to Lord Willoughby was significant in a more immediate context, however. It also signified Sherley's own passage, from being a member of the general staff, to becoming an officer in the field army, where he would begin his military apprenticeship in earnest, under the guidance of

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<sup>104</sup> James Digges, 'James Digges to his brother, Thomas Digges, Utrecht, 2 July 1587', in Lomas and Hinds, p. 144. Sir John Pooley was Captain-Lieutenant of Lord Willoughby's troop of horse. Sophia Crawford Lomas (ed.) *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster preserved at Grimsthorpe* (Dublin: printed for His Majesty's Stationery Office by John Falconer, 1907), p. 571.

<sup>105</sup> Lomas and Hinds, p. 168. Lord Burgh's supposed witnesses were none other than Sir John Norris himself, and Elizabeth's ambassador to the States General, Sir Thomas Wilkes, both of whom were highly critical of Leicester's administration in the Netherlands. *Ibid.*, p. 144. Nolan, pp. 100 ff.



two of Elizabethan England's most celebrated generals, namely Peregrine Bertie, 13<sup>th</sup> Baron Willoughby, and later the redoubtable Sir John Norris himself.<sup>106</sup>

Sherley and his company had been serving under Lord Willoughby, when the latter despatched 'Mr. Pooley his lieutenant [to Leicester], to report certain abuses in Mr. Shirley's company' in late August / September 1587.<sup>107</sup> D.W. Davies was prepared to accept the unspecified allegations of abuse, simply as an extension of the company's perceived lack of discipline at Brielle, although the context of Willoughby's letter to Leicester does admit of other possible explanations. Willoughby's letter was itself a response to recent accusations levelled at him by Leicester, concerning Willoughby's collection of ransom moneys paid for the release of a number of high profile Spanish prisoners in custody, prompting Willoughby to launch into a spirited defence of his actions right from the opening lines of his rebuttal to the accusations:

whosoever hath informed you that any man of state, either civill or martiall, hath ben ransond by me unles a company of sely merchants... hath most unjustly delivered that which shall be manlyfestly convinced of for false: and for that it is no litle greife to my mind, and touch to my pore credit to be blamed by your Excellencie [*i.e.* Leicester] to have proceeded in any thing otherwise than becomes me with all duty to your selfe, and reasonable discretion to the place I hold, I most humbly beseache you that I may be called before the Marshall, the G[enerall] of the Horse, the G[enerall] of th'Ordinance, the Serjeant Major-Generall and other of your privie councill and hed officers of the field: wherein if I have in any thing miscarried myselfe, let me receive that shame and paine which any sutch my fault shall require, and not underhand to be

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<sup>106</sup> Nolan posits the notion of a dual command structure. *Ibid.*, p. 92.

<sup>107</sup> Peregrine Bertie, 13<sup>th</sup> Baron Willoughby, 'Lord Willoughby to the Earl of Leicester, beginning of September 1587', Lomas, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster*, p. 59.

hardly conceived of and reputed a mis-doer; and I shall esteem this the greatest honour that may be done me, and more than if I had th' hiest [the highest] place of the worlde...<sup>108</sup>

Willoughby went on to acknowledge that he was still holding the wealthy merchant Martin de la Faille prisoner, and asked that 'I may have my count and reckning upon conscionable defalkements since I was first called into these partes' in which case he would be prepared to surrender de la Faille, in what was clearly intended as a *quid pro quo* formula to resolve the current impasse with his superior Leicester:

~~But peradventure it may be informed your Excellencie that the person comparable to the Marquis of Baden is Marten de la Faile. I will not dispute with none the similitude of their qualities, or of the manner they were taken. Only this, if he be the man, I am most willing to render him, nothing doubting but your Excellency will allow of your fatherly care to my selfe and respect that I and mine may serve her Majestie and you without begging. For Marten de la Faile, whom it may be your Excellencie meaneth, I humbly beseech you I may have my count and reckning upon conscionable defalkements since I was first called into these partes... and I shall willingly resigne him: otherwise your Excellencie can judge it is a great hindrance... to have spent 1,000 l.... which I had levest have of rights due to me, or otherwise by sutch blessings as God sends me in the warres rather than to be a loathsome and importune sutor to har Majestie or other frends.~~<sup>109</sup>

Willoughby probably added the postscript about abuses in Sherley's company to strengthen his own negotiating position, and was capitalising on the knowledge that Sherley was one of Leicester's clients and son of the Treasurer-at-War, which was particularly apt given that he was demanding financial compensation in return for

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<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 58.

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58, 57.

surrendering the prisoner Martin de la Faille.<sup>110</sup> Willoughby's letter to Leicester is important in the context of Sherley's career, suggesting that at this point Sherley occupied a relatively ambiguous position in the expeditionary force, where he was actually serving as one of the field captains in the expedition, but continued to be regarded by some superiors as one of Leicester's 'gentleman officers'.

Leicester had been suffering from poor health throughout the summer of 1587, and eventually withdrew from the Netherlands for good in December, where he was succeeded by Peregrine, Baron Willoughby as Lord General.<sup>111</sup> Willoughby wrote rather dismissively about those he called 'newly-made captains' appointed by Leicester, and Sherley probably did not hold out much hope for a swift advancement following Leicester's departure, but was unexpectedly promoted when his brother Thomas's cavalry company was transferred to him on 20 March 1588.<sup>112</sup>

Sir John Norris had transferred both Thomas the Younger and Anthony Sherley's companies to Willoughby around June 1587, and Thomas the Younger's cavalry was

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<sup>110</sup> Sherley probably got to know Willoughby's prisoner Maarten de la Faille, since he put his brother Robert in touch with the merchant Gilles de la Faille, presumably when he was lodged at his brother's house in Madrid between February and June 1611. cf. Davies, pp. 234-35. Maartje van Gelder, *Trading Places: the Netherlandish Merchants in Early Modern Venice* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), *passim*.

<sup>111</sup> West, p. 36.

<sup>112</sup> Bertie, 'Lord Wyllughby to Burghley, The Hague, 4 July 1588', in Richard Bruce Wernham (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, July-December 1588*, vol. XXII (1936), p. 9, Thomas and James Digges, 'A list of her Majesty's forces in the Low Countries, with the alterations, in garrison as follows; beginning 12 October, 1587, and ending 11 October, 1588', *ibid.*, pp. 263-4. Thomas the Younger's cavalry had almost certainly been recruited by the Treasurer-at-War. 'A note of such forces as may be drawn into the field, May 1587', Lomas and Hinds, p. 82, and see below.

subsequently stationed at Utrecht with that of Leicester himself, until the States of Utrecht petitioned Willoughby that the ‘horse companies of Shurley, [et al.] may be removed, as their charge, together with that of his Excellency [Leicester], amounts to 2,431 florins per month, and is too great for their States.’<sup>113</sup> Willoughby responded to the States’ petition by sending a letter to Adolf, Count of Meurs and Nieuwenaar, the Stadtholder of Utrecht and Gelderland, informing the latter of his recognition that ‘the city... is unable any longer to maintain the troop of horse of his Excellency quartered there’, and requesting Nieuwenaar to ‘remove them to Hessel [Hasselt?], Campen [Kampen] or Swol [Zwolle], as he may thinke best.’<sup>114</sup> Nieuwenaar promptly ordered Thomas the Younger’s cavalry to march toward Zwolle, but once they arrived the magistrates refused to admit them to the town, since they were already hosting an infantry company placed there by Nieuwenaar, though the burghers did hold out the possibility that the cavalry company might be admitted into the town, if Nieuwenaar would agree to removing the infantry already stationed at Zwolle:

being put in comfort by divers burghers, who would willingly have the horse if Graf Mures would ease them of a company of foot, I departed on the Sunday to get your Lordship’s [*i.e.* Willoughby’s] letters to that effect, hoping at my return to get the company in... I took the eldest corporal with me to show him a quarter where he should come, upon the Monday (being the 5<sup>th</sup> of February), for we could not rise on the Sunday without leaving some of our men in the town, who were there having their saddles, & c., mended, seeing that on Sunday the port is shut almost all the

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<sup>113</sup> John Burgh, ‘A review taken by Sir John Burghe of such companies of horse as were assembled at Duzburrowe [*i.e.* Doesburg] to march to the camp [*i.e.* Bergen op Zoom] in June 1587’, in Lomas and Hinds, p. 142. States of Utrecht, ‘The States of Utrecht to Lord Willoughby, dated at Utrecht, 9 January 1588, O.S.’, calendared in Lomas, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster*, p. 77.

<sup>114</sup> Bertie, ‘Lord Wylughby to the Conte de Moeurs, The Hague, 22 January 1588, O.S.’, *ibid.*, p. 78.

day. Therefore we determined that the men that night should sleep in their arms, with their horses saddled, keep good watch and rise next day; but fortune would not permit.<sup>115</sup>

Thomas the Younger's cavalry had received intelligence that a three hundred-strong Spanish infantry company was camped in the vicinity of Zwolle, but they had been unable to locate the foot company even though they were apparently only a mile away, and so were taken completely by surprise when they were charged by the Spaniards sometime between eleven and twelve o'clock at night: 'Mr. Treasurer's company of horse, coming into Swolle [Zwolle], were refused, so as lying... before the gates, attending the return of their lieutenant, who went away to seek more direction of [Adolf] Grave van Meures [*sic.*], were charged in the night by 400 foot and a company of horse of the enemy [Colonel Francisco] Verdugo, [the defector Rowland] Yorke being present. They slew and took prisoners sixty horse and men; the cornet was slain; a boy brought away the cornet; some twenty horse of the company are returned.'<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Jehan Dracortt, 'Jehan Dracortt, Lieutenant of Sir Thomas Sherley, to Lord Willoughby, about 28 January-7 February 1588', and Magistrates of Zwolle, 'Magistrates of Zwolle to Lord Willoughby, 28 January-7 February 1588', Lomas, pp. 78-79. Thomas the Younger himself was not present during the debacle at Zwolle: he had been absent in Holland earlier, and may have returned to England afterwards. Commissary van Broecke, 'A note of the muster of the garrison of Flushing taken by commissary van Broecke on 6 October, 1587', Lomas and Hinds, p. 335. Sir John Norris had personally recommended Dracortt to Thomas the Younger in summer 1587. Norris, 'Sir John Norries' answers to that which he is charged by James Digges' letters... 13 August 1587', in Lomas and Hinds, p. 240.

<sup>116</sup> Arthur Champernowne, 'Arthur Champernowne to Henry Kellegrey, Utrecht, 8 February 1588', in Lomas and Hinds (eds.) *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, January-June 1588*, vol. XXI, part 4 (1931), p. 70. The statements taken from the prisoners themselves do not mention Colonel Verdugo or Rowland Yorke, but they do mention Count Herman van den Bergh and Master Bouceur (Yorke's lieutenant) as holding them captive until they were presumably ransomed. Lomas, p. 80.

Willoughby was clearly infuriated by the debacle before the gates of Zwolle and addressed a letter to Burghley twelve days later, despairing of the severity of the losses sustained and intimating that the cavalry company was beyond any hope of recovery, before going on to suggest that Leicester's single bands ought to be broken up, and absorbed by those currently being led by experienced commanders:

Young Sherley's company of horse hath of late been overthrown... through the negligence of the officers; there remains not of them scarce twenty horse (God knows how and when they will be re-inforced); the meanwhile, the company standing... a charge to her Majesty without service. There is another company that has, long before this time, been at the same point and not yet re-inforced. It were better for her Majesty to turn bad captains of horse into good captains of foot. There be many *worthy, experienced gentlemen* – as the serjeant-major of the field – who could far better, with less charge, govern double bands of 200 and 300 than some of [the] *later choice single bands*; as the Muster-Master General can more at large inform his lordship.<sup>117</sup>

Willoughby wrote on behalf of Sherley to the Count of Meurs ten days after he had written to Lord Burghley, seeking his support in 'obtaining permission for Anthony Shurley – who is to have the troop of his brother, Sir Thomas Shurley, to garrison in the town of Swol, in order to be able to take his revenge upon the enemy, who lately plundered the said troop before the town.'<sup>118</sup> The Privy Council addressed a letter to Willoughby on the very same day, informing him of their response to his proposal to break up Sherley's badly mauled cavalry company, and offered a solution that was

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<sup>117</sup> Bertie, 'Lord Willoughby to [Lord] Burghley, Utrecht, 16 February 1588, O.S.' (emphasis added), calendared in Lomas and Hinds, vol. XXI, part 4, p. 93.

<sup>118</sup> Bertie, 'Lord Wyllughby to the Conte de Moeurs, Utrecht, 25 February 1588, O.S.', in Lomas, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Ancaster*, p. 89.

diametrically opposed to that of his own, desiring him ‘not to alter or discharge Captain Sherley’s company of horse, but to allow him four months’ checks towards repairing such of the said band as were lately lost and redeeming of the prisoners.’<sup>119</sup>

Willoughby’s letters to Nieuwenaar reveal what was probably a genuine desire on Sherley’s behalf to restore the family’s honour, although it is unlikely that he had approached Willoughby without first consulting Sir Thomas the Elder to whom the cavalry company had originally belonged, and the direct intervention by the lords of the Council, on behalf of the twenty-three year old Sherley, is perhaps also indicative of a certain favourable regard to the Treasurer-at-War. The structure of the Council’s own letter addressed to Willoughby is especially interesting, since it makes plain that the Queen had already instructed Willoughby to proceed with the plan to reconstitute the under-strength cavalry companies, and that the lords were writing to him again specifically to prevent the break up of Sherley’s company, and ensure that he was provided with the means to bring the depleted company back up to strength:

whereas by letters from her Majestie latelie sent unto him his Lordship received direccion to deale with the States for the converting of certaine decayed bandes of horsemen into companies of footemen, her Highenes was pleased that (if his Lordship and the States had or should proceede thereunto, according as by her said letters was particulerlie signified) his Lordship, for certaine good consideracions made knowne unto her Majestie, should nevertheles, according to the constitucion sett downe by the Lord Buckhurst and the rest for the repaire of companies decayed in

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<sup>119</sup> Bertie, ‘Wyllughby, Kyllgrew and Wylsford to [Lord] Burghley, The Hague, 20 March 1588’, in Lomas and Hinds, vol. XXI, part 4, p. 209, and John Roche Dasent (ed.) *Acts of the Privy Council of England, vols. I-XLVI* (London: H.M.S.O., 1897-1964), vol. XV: 1587-1588 (1897), p. 390.

service, forbear to alter the companie of Captain Shurley, and that allowance be made unto him of iiiij<sup>or</sup> monethes checkes towards the new repayinge of such of his said band of horse as were latedie loste, and the redeeming of the prisonners taken by th'ennemie.<sup>120</sup>

Willoughby drafted a reply to Burghley together with Henry Killigrew and Thomas Wilsford (top civil and military officials in the Netherlands), where in an apparent softening up of his tone he acknowledged that they all held a good opinion of Sherley despite his relative youth and inexperience, but nevertheless felt obliged to voice their legitimate concerns that such a decision could lead to difficulties, if other well-born and experienced leaders were to demand similar treatment in the future:

They like well of the gentleman [*i.e.* Sherley], so far as his years and experience may lead them, but fear that the example will prove very chargeable to her Majesty when other noble and *experimented* [*i.e.* experienced] leaders (who have lost many horses and men in *notable* services) shall hereby be drawn to sue for the like favour; which, if refused, will make great discontentment, to see such bounty bestowed where the loss grew by negligence. He himself (her Majesty's Lieutenant) has lost both horse and men in place of very good service.<sup>121</sup>

Willoughby's appeal to obtain permission for Sherley's cavalry company to garrison at Zwolle was apparently unsuccessful, with Sherley and Christopher Blount, who was leading the remnants of Leicester's cavalry company, being immobilised at Utrecht for several months until the summer, where they continued to press both Willoughby and

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<sup>120</sup> Dasent, p. 390. The Privy Councillors most sympathetic to the appeal would of course have been Sir Thomas the Elder's patrons the Earl of Leicester and Secretary Walsingham.

<sup>121</sup> Lomas and Hinds, vol. XXI, part 4, p. 209 (emphasis added). Henry Killigrew was Elizabeth's ambassador to the States, and Thomas Wilsford was Sergeant Major of the Field.



other officials, such as James Digges to despatch them to the front lines, where they could take revenge for the Spanish ambush at Zwolle: ‘Capt. Blunte and Capt. Sherley are very desirous to be placed very near the enemy to repair the honour lost by the late overthrow, not doubting but they should get forth of the town, if they might be employed that way, and have earnestly required me to move your honour therein.’<sup>122</sup>

Digges also observed that Sherley’s company was ‘strong, well appointed, and fit for service’, while Gerard de Prouinck, Burgomaster of Utrecht, reported that Sherley maintained the company in Utrecht ‘at his own charges’, which taken together with the fact that Sherley would not resign his infantry company garrisoned at Flushing for another two months, would again appear to indicate the continued involvement of Sir Thomas the Elder in terms of financing, and maintaining both Sherley’s cavalry and infantry companies garrisoned at Utrecht and Flushing respectively.<sup>123</sup>

Sherley’s cavalry company had been stationed at Utrecht for at least a month when he decided to take matters into his own hand, appealing to Willoughby directly to remind him of his earlier promise to transfer him to the front lines, and also intimating for the

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<sup>122</sup> Digges, ‘James Digges to Lord Willoughby, Utrecht, 5 May 1588, O.S.’; Bertie, ‘Lord Wyllughby to the Conte de Moeurs, 13 April 1588, O.S.’, Lomas, pp. 136, 121. Sherley’s relations with Christopher Blount are of paramount importance, not only because of their shared religious and educational backgrounds, but also because of the latter’s close ties to Leicester and his stepson the Earl of Essex. Blount was Sherley’s senior by about a decade, and appears to have acted as Sherley’s mentor in the Netherlands, although the surviving evidence is somewhat sketchy and incomplete as will be seen below.

<sup>123</sup> Lomas, p. 136. Gerard de Prouinck, ‘G. de Prunincq to Lord Willoughby, Utrecht, 3 May 1588, o.s.’, Lomas, p. 133. Wernham, vol. XXII, pp. 263-4.

first time that Willoughby might not have fully trusted him, either on account of his alleged abuses or because of his ties to Leicester and Walsingham:

My most honored Lorde, nott asse onne which hath any fancy of yowr Lordshipes forgettingte yowr promise made mee, butt in very desier to bee imploied in yowr Lordshipes service I make bould to remember yowr Lordshipe in this sort of dutie. I hope thear ys noe sparke remaininge livinge in yowr Lordshipes conceit of any mistrust of my honestest and truest affectionnes towards yowe; yf thear bee, my good Lord, lett yt die, for yf thear bee any thinge thatt I desier more then that yowre Lordshipe would use my best service, lett mee never bee beeleaved, knowinge thatt implo[i]ment would mutch increase my abillitie, nott my minde, which hathe beene longe and ever shall bee, yf I may, directed to runne a course with yowr Lordshipe.<sup>124</sup>

Willoughby responded by addressing a letter to the States General, desiring that ‘the troop of the bearer, Captain Charley [Sherley] now at Utrecht, may be accommodated elsewhere, as the said town is heavily charged, both with horse and foot soldiers.’<sup>125</sup>

Willoughby’s letter to the States did not prove effectual, however, and Blount and Sherley subsequently petitioned ambassador Killigrew the following month, who successfully obtained permission for them to transfer their companies to Rheinberg, where they were at last as close to the action as they could have wished:

We and our companies are arrived at Berck [*i.e.* Rheinberg] in very good case without loss or hazard from the enemy, whom we went to seek near Burique, but most part of the horsemen there were gone to Bonne, which is said to be straitly besieged by the enemy. We are going out tonight to see whether we can do any good upon a company which is reported to be the strongest band in

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<sup>124</sup> Sherley, ‘Capt. A. Sherley to Lord Willoughby, Utrecht, 12 May 1588’, Lomas, p. 143.

<sup>125</sup> Bertie, ‘Lord Wyllyughby to the States General, Dordrecht, 21 May 1588, N.S.’, Lomas, p. 139.

these quarters. If it be God's will we master them, we shall hold the rest hereabouts in awe. This garrison liketh our humours marvellous well, in that we are so neighboured on every side as no day almost may pass but some occasion or other will invite us to some service.<sup>126</sup>

Sherley also addressed a letter to 'his honorable friend, Mr. Kyllegree, embasciadour for her Majestie with the States', where he began by echoing the second half of Blount's letter regarding the supplies needed at the garrison, adding that they 'have not yet attempted anything against the [Spanish] enemy, their march having been so long, their companies so wearied and their intelligence too small to hazard their credits upon, but they hope, ere long, to make so honest a report go abroad of them that the States will not think a little extraordinary care of the town overmuch for their sakes.'<sup>127</sup>

Sir Thomas Morgan was convinced Blount and Sherley were now leading two of the finest cavalry companies in the expeditionary force, and the captains themselves were clearly enthusiastic about the possibility of harassing the Army of Flanders from their new quarters, when days later the Duke of Parma's forces responded by blockading the town and besieging the cavalry companies at Rheinberg.<sup>128</sup> Willoughby hurried off a letter to the Privy Council once he had received news of the blockade, wherein he recognised Blount and Sherley's desire to be present at the front lines of battle, then squarely placed the blame on Killigrew's shoulders for allowing them to transfer to the

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<sup>126</sup> Christopher Blount, 'Capt. Chris. Blounte to Mr. Killigrew, 17 June 1588', Lomas, p. 153.

<sup>127</sup> Sherley, 'Captain A. Sherley to Mr. Killigrew, Berke, 17 June 1588', Lomas, p. 153.

<sup>128</sup> Thomas Morgan, 'Sir Thomas Morgan to [Secretary] Walsingham, The Hague, 31 July 1588', in Wernham, vol. XXII, p. 93.

new garrison, which Willoughby was evidently concerned would either fall, or the captains would be forced to surrender Rheinberg to the Spaniards:

into which place... two of our English captains, Blunt and Shirley, have engaged themselves with their companies. These gentlemen, when I was at Ostend, (having before refused according to my potents to go to Berghes and other places,) solicited the Council of Estate and Mr. Killigrew, who recommended the same as a matter of importance for the service,)... yet if the town should be lost, or they miscarry, I hope your Lordships will clear me from the same.<sup>129</sup>

Blount and Sherley were already marching back toward Utrecht before Colonel Schenck's forces could relieve them at Rheinberg, however, and Sherley addressed a letter to Willoughby from London two weeks later to inform him of the failure of the Armada Campaign, where he had been attending Leicester either in preparing the country's defences or matters regarding counter-planning: 'Hearing from his cousin, James Digges, that Corporal Sommertonn, discharged from his company, has put himself into his Lordship's, he is arranging to get a re-mount for him. Our wars here in England, my Lord, are throughly, as it is thought, dissolved, certain advertisement being brought the Spanish fleet to have taken their course by Ireland for Spain. Mr. Comptroller [Crofts] is prisoner in the Fleet, and my Lord Steward, with my Lady and my Lord of Warwick, have taken a refreshing journey to the Bath, and so to Killingeworthe [Kenilworth].'<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Bertie, 'Lord Wyllughby to the Privy Council, Gertrudenbergh, 18 July 1588', Georgina Bertie, *Five Generations of a Loyal House, part I: containing the lives of Richard Bertie, and his son Peregrine, Lord Willoughby* (London: Rivingtons, 1845), p. 207; Wernham, vol. XXII, p. 57. Willoughby's suggestion that Sherley had previously disobeyed orders is baseless, cf. Lomas, pp. 103, 108-10.

<sup>130</sup> Sherley, 'Capt. Anthony Sherley to Lord Willoughby, London, 28 August 1588', Lomas, p. 178. 'Abbreviat of the last musters taken of her Majesty's forces, horse and foot, etc., 15 August 1588',

Sherley's letter to Willoughby is the last piece of evidence directly linking him to Leicester who died in September, although Willoughby's surprising statement to Walsingham that he understood 'the respect is very honourable for Captain Anthony Sherley', and Sir Thomas Morgan and Sir John Conway's entrusting Sherley with oral messages for the Principal Secretary, could suggest that Walsingham had succeeded Leicester as Sherley's primary patron in the closing months of 1588 / 89.<sup>131</sup>

***Anthony Sherley and Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex***

Sherley and another captain were sent to Henri of Navarre's camp in the vicinity of Dieppe in July 1589, and judging by the fact that Sherley addressed two letters to Walsingham from Dieppe, while his companion made contact with the English agent Otywell Smyth, it may be reasonably assumed that they were sent by the Principal Secretary, and probably also carried an oral message to the future Henri IV:

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Wernham, vol. XXII, p. 137; Adolf, Graf von Nieuwenaar, 'Adolf, Comte de Neuwenar, to Lord Willoughby, Utrecht, 5 August, O.S.', in Lomas, p. 175. George Gilpin, 'G. Gilpin to Walsingham, The Hague, 8 August 1588', and Bertie, 'Lord Wyllughby to the Privy Council, Flushing, 21 August 1588', Wernham, vol. XXII, pp. 119, 150. Xavier A. Flores (ed.) *Le "Peso Politico de Todo el Mundo" d'Anthony Sherley, ou un Aventurier Anglais au service de l'Espagne* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963), pp. 101 ff.

<sup>131</sup> Bertie, 'Lord Wyllughby to [Secretary] Walsingham, dated at Middelburgh, 30 December 1588', in Wernham, vol. XXII, p. 398. Thomas Morgan, 'Sir Thomas Morgan to [Secretary] Walsingham, dated Bergen op Zoom, 17 March 1589', and John Conway, 'Sir John Conway to [Secretary] Walsingham, dated Ostend, 31 March 1589', in Richard Bruce Wernham (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign, Elizabeth, January-July 1589* (1950), vol. XXIII, pp. 167, 185-6. Sir Thomas Morgan and Sir John Conway had themselves been closely associated with Leicester until his death in September 1588.

The governor [of Dieppe] heard this morning that Pontoise was taken last Tuesday, the chief soldiers and others being held prisoners at the King's [*i.e.* Henri III's] mercy, the rest of the burghers ransomed at four score thousand crowns, and the garrison departing with white rods in their hands and halters about their necks. Reports here of the King's intentions are uncertain. Goes in a few days to [the King of Navarre's] camp... Postscript [:] News has just come from the court that Remes [Reims] and Corball [Corbeil] are yielded to the King.<sup>132</sup>

Sherley had probably also been sent to assess the military conditions at Navarre's encampment and the country at large, as part of the preparations for Willoughby's forthcoming expedition in support of Navarre's Huguenot forces, in which Sherley evidently also took part as a volunteer in 1589 / 90. Willoughby's troops for the expedition were mostly drawn from Sussex, where Sir Thomas the Elder was Deputy Lieutenant, in which case it is less surprising to find Sherley participating in the expedition to France, during which Navarre's trusted advisor, Francois de la Noue, commended Sherley in a letter to Walsingham for being a 'gentil cavallero'.<sup>133</sup>

Sherley also took part in Sir John Norris' campaign to expel the forces of the Catholic League from their fortified base at Blavet, and distinguished himself during the first major engagement of the campaign at Kermen, where the League's forces under Duc de

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<sup>132</sup> Sherley, 'Captain Anthony Sherley to Sir Francis Walsingham, Dieppe, 18 July 1589', 'Anthony Sherley to Sir Francis Walsingham, Dieppe, 21 July 1589', and Ottywell Smyth, 'Ottywell Smyth to [Walsingham?], 31 July-10 August 1589', Wernham, vol. XXIII, pp. 389, 393, 409.

<sup>133</sup> Edward Potts Cheyney, *History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth, with an Account of English Institutions during the later Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries, in two volumes* (London: Longman, 1914-26), vol. I (1914), pp. 223-4, 221, 219. MacCaffrey, pp. 140 ff.

Mercoeur and Don Juan de Aguila, had occupied the strategic high-grounds facing the Anglo-French army, under Sir John Norris and the Prince de Dombes:

Friday [21 June 1591]... Now my Lord Generall [Norris] sent out 200 footmen to see the countenance of the enimie, who droue them to their strengths, put them to their hedges and Baricadoes, and slew diuers of them vpon the retreat: to these the Duke [de Mercoeur] put forth 500 French and 300 Spaniards to repossesse the place, whom he followed with the Armie: which being perceiued... order was giuen to put forward 300 foot commaunded by Captaine Anthony Wingfield, Captaine Moreton, & the English horse led by Captaine Anthony Sherley: this direction was valiantlie prosecuted by ours... so as the enimies horse and foot which were in the playne were enforced to flee, manie slaine, and the rest driuen to saue themselues within their Artillery... In this charge Captaine Anthonie Sherley gaue such an example to the French horse as was admired, and the Companies on foote performed their parts with no lesse valour...<sup>134</sup>

Sherley again demonstrated his bravery on the following day, when he routed a contingent of Mercoeur and Aguila's musketeers, who were approaching the Anglo-French lines from the other end of the heath, where both sides had taken position the previous day: 'Saturday [22 June] the enimie made a great shew to come forth, and sent out some number of shot: against whom Captaine Anthonie Sherley with fifteene horse, and some few foote made them quicklie take their heeles, pursuing them to their Baricadoes, where his horse was shot in the head, and some small hurt done.'<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> Emmanuel van Meteren, *A True Discourse Historically, of the succeeding Governours in the Netherlands* (London: Felix Kingston for Matthew Lownes, 1602), sig. S2<sup>v</sup>-S3<sup>f</sup>, S2<sup>f-v</sup>. Nolan, pp. 172-86.

<sup>135</sup> Meteren, sig. S3<sup>r</sup>.

Jean d'Aumont, Marshal of France and Governor of Brittany, offered Norris the use of Paimpol and Isle de Brehat in late 1592 / early 1593, whereupon Norris despatched Sherley to inform the Council of his plans to upgrade Paimpol into a fortified base, perhaps indicating that Norris had decided to appoint Sherley the governor, of what would have been the first cautionary town in France.<sup>136</sup> D'Aumont's promise of two Breton cautionary towns did not materialise, however, and Burghley wrote to Thomas Edmondes with considerable frustration that 'Sir John Norreys with his troops in Bretagne had been refused entrance into the town of Pempole, and the Isle of Breake [Brehat], to reside there as a garison', adding that 'these and such-like disappointments of promises have been the cause to provoke Her Majesty to withdraw her people, which have been more wasted in two or three years in France, for lack of relief, and places of retreat, than hath been in any open war these many years past.'<sup>137</sup>

Sherley served with Willoughby and Norris for five years in the absence of a clear successor to Leicester, and although he is wrongly alleged to have commanded one of Essex's regiments during the Siege of Rouen (1591-2), his association with Essex had begun somewhat earlier than has previously been recognised.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Nolan, p. 201. John Norris, 'The instructions for Colonel Sherley dispatched to Her Majesty, this first of Feb. 1592 / 93', and Sherley, 'The request addressed to the Lords of the Council, pursuant to [Sir John] Norris' instructions, 10 February 1593', in *State Papers, Foreign, France*, National Archives, SP 78 / 30, fols. 72-75, and 83-84, and cf. also Davies, p. 37, and Nolan, p. 176.

<sup>137</sup> William Cecil, 'Lord Treasurer to Thomas Edmondes, at Windsor, dated 23 September 1593', in Thomas Birch, *An Historical View of the Negotiations between the Courts of England, France, and Brussels, from the year 1592 to 1617* (London: A. Millar, 1749), p. 9. MacCaffrey, pp. 137, 144 ff.

<sup>138</sup> Ross, p. 5. Hammer, pp. 76 ff.



Sherley had addressed at least three letters to Essex between 1590-1591, preserved among the Salisbury manuscripts held at Hatfield House, that have generally been overlooked by his biographers over the centuries. Sherley's first letter concerns the surprising recovery of an unidentified lady, almost given up for dead earlier in the afternoon, who had been revived through the advice of a witch-doctor:

You are so kind and honourable in everything I could not doubt of your grief for this poor creature's case; which how lamentable it was the physicians can report, and myself which have not slept nor eaten these three days and nights. This afternoon she was given to God's mercy by all her physicians, which made me so desperate that I presently ran afoot two miles, and back again, to a woman which hath most miraculously brought her to so good terms that the doctors and myself are amazed with it. As soon as I came to her she told me her case and the despair held of her and that her disease was nothing concerning physic... she assured me I should not be in the house where she [*i.e.* the patient] was one whole hour but that I should hear her call for drink and broth and everything she needed; and though I returned in no great belief, yet I told all the doctors of it, who credited it as I did: when suddenly, awaking from an extreme fit, she called for drink, broth and preserved cherries, and excused her former passions as forced violently upon her. I know your wonder will accompany ours, and hope you will impute no irreligiousness to me for seeking this means, since I hope God Himself will excuse it by my very good intent.<sup>139</sup>

Sherley's 'poor creature' was most likely a noblewoman given the plurality of the number of doctors in attendance, and his concern to justify his actions indicates that he

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<sup>139</sup> Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to the Earl of Essex [1590]', S.R. Scargill-Bird et al. (eds.) *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, vols. I-XXIV* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode for H.M.S.O., 1883-1976), part IV (1892), p. 81. Sherley's other letters are polite messages, addressed to Essex immediately before, and one month into the Normandy expedition. Scargill-Bird, pp. 126, 138. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics*, pp. 97 ff and *passim*.

felt answerable to Essex for her well-being, suggesting that the unidentified lady was none other than Frances Vernon, daughter of Sir John Vernon of Hodnet and Elizabeth Devereux, and Essex's first cousin whom Sherley had secretly married.<sup>140</sup>

Sherley's marriage to Frances Vernon would thus appear to have taken place considerably earlier than 1593 / 94, rendering his marriage into the extended Dudley-Devereux-Sidney family a more prudent move than has previously been supposed, and accounting for the complaints brought against Sir Thomas the Elder for seeking to improve his position through engineering the match.<sup>141</sup> Sir Thomas responded to the accusations against him by contending that he had not known about the marriage until after it had been contracted, that his daughter-in-law was neither especially rich nor particularly close to Essex so as to dramatically improve his social position, and concluded his sophistical defence of himself by insisting that he was not interested in cultivating the favour of anyone alive with the exception of Queen Elizabeth:

The marriage was concluded by my son without my privitie, and the Earl [*i.e.* Essex] was the first that broke it to me, when my son was in France; I had no reason to refuse my consent, having no just cause of exception against the gentlewoman, but wished my son some match of wealth, though it had been of much meaner blood; she is not so near to his Lordship [*i.e.* Essex] as might give hope of any extraordinary regard, being but a cousin. I behave to the Earl [of Essex] in no other sort than before the marriage; neither use him in any cause, or commit my fortune in the hands of a man that seems to have small regard of his own. I am glad to hold the good favour of a

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<sup>140</sup> Ross, p. 6.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

man of his place and quality, but do not depend upon him nor any other, but only upon the Queen; I think it base for her servant and officer to depend upon any man living.<sup>142</sup>

Sherley himself was immediately banished once the Queen had received news of his marriage to Frances Vernon, but was nevertheless chosen to accompany Sir Robert Sidney on an embassy to Henri IV to recommend ‘the Protection of the Protestant Religion and its Professors’, and to propose that ‘Brest should be delivered into the Hands of the English, as a Retreat for them, and a Security for the Money advanced to him by her Majesty’ toward the end of October 1593.<sup>143</sup> Sherley’s participation in the mission, despite his banishment by Elizabeth I, suggests that he was viewed as an important if not indispensable diplomatic contact with the French court, and was probably chosen on account of his earlier acquaintance with King Henri IV and his trusted advisors and his mastery of the French language. Henri was more receptive to Sidney’s former proposal than the renewed demand for a cautionary town, and as a gesture of friendship created Sherley a Knight of the Order of St Michael before the conclusion of the Sidney / Sherley mission, in recognition of Sherley’s role as a trusted messenger and his long-term service during the Breton expedition.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Thomas Sherley, ‘The complaints against Sir Thos. Sherley and his answers, 23 May 1595’, State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, SP 12 / 252, fol. 29, calendared in Mary Anne Everett Green (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, Elizabeth, 1595-97* (1869), pp. 44-45.

<sup>143</sup> Birch, *An Historical View*, p. 10. Sherley, ‘Anthony Sherley to Sir Robert Cecil, 23 October 1593’, *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part IV, p. 396. Robert Sidney, ‘Sir Robert Sydney to Lady Sydney, Dover, 17 December 1593’, C.L. Kingsford (ed.) *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord de L’Isle & Dudley*, vols. I-VI (London: H.M.S.O., 1925-66), vol. II (1934), p. 146.

<sup>144</sup> Davies, pp. 37-39.

Sherley was apparently questioned by the Privy Council about the oath he had taken when he returned to England, and although he denied that he had taken any oath whatsoever during the investment ceremony, he had managed to incur the Queen's displeasure and it was soon reported that the 'Quene is very angry with Sir Anthony Shirley and Sir Nicholas Clyfford for taking the Order of St Michill, and hath commaunded that they shall send the order backe again; First, bycause they tooke it without her pryvyty; next bycause they toke the whole othe, and one part thereof is to defende the masse while they lyve, which my Lord of Lester and [Thomas Howard] the [4th] Duke [of Norfolk] were dyspensed withall when they toke it.'<sup>145</sup>

Frere's letter to his brother suggests that Sherley's investment with the Order was unacceptable to Queen Elizabeth primarily on religious grounds, whereas Sir John Puckering and Lord Buckhurst who first interrogated Sherley make it plain that the sticking point was the 'dividing of his service by oath given to another Prince', and perhaps to a lesser extent what they suspected was Sherley and his father's collusion in taking 'the place and precedence of other Knights'.<sup>146</sup> Puckering and Buckhurst's concerns over Sherley's 'divided allegiance' appear to be consistent with Queen Elizabeth's own position regarding Sherley's investment, concerning which she is reported to have declared that 'as a virtuous woman ought to look on none but her husband, so a subject ought not to cast his eyes on any other sovereign, than him God

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<sup>145</sup> G. Frere, Esquire, 'G. Frere to his brother, 2 May 1594', *Seventh Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts*, part I (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1879), p. 523 a.

<sup>146</sup> *The Three Brothers; or, the Travels and Adventures of Sir Anthony, Sir Robert, & Sir Thomas Sherley, in Persia, Russia, Turkey, Spain, etc.* (London: Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1825), pp. 6-7.

hath set over him’, and concluding that ‘I will not... have my sheep marked with a strange brand; nor suffer them to follow the pipe of a strange shepherd.’<sup>147</sup>

Sherley for his own part claimed that when Henri had initially offered him the knighthood he had ‘refused it, being minded never to accept thereof’, but had subsequently been informed by the noblemen Henri, Duc de Bouillon and Nicolas, Seigneur de Sancy that ‘if he did not accept of the King’s honourable offer, the King would take it in ill part, and to be done to his dishonour’. He had next consulted the English ambassador to France Sir Thomas Edmond, who advised him to ‘refuse the same if he could; but if he... could not refuse it, then to accept it without the oath, reserving always his service and duty to her Majesty.’ Sherley went on to relate to Puckering and Buckhurst that in Chartres ‘being afterwards earnestly pressed by the King, he did accept the same order of knighthood... that statutes of the order being read, he took the oath, saving always his duty and allegiance to her Majesty’.<sup>148</sup>

Elizabeth instructed Lord Keeper Puckering and Lord Buckhurst through Sir Robert Cecil, to persuade Sherley to sign a letter disavowing the knighthood he had received while he was held prisoner at the Fleet Prison, and they also asked for a separate statement in his own hand to provide details of the investment ceremony: ‘According to the contents of the letter we received from you [*i.e.* Sir Robert Cecil] late yesternight, of Her Majesty’s pleasure for Mr. Sherley’s signing to the letter sent enclosed, we have had

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<sup>147</sup> William Harris, *An Historical and Critical Account of the Life of Charles the Second... drawn from original writers and state papers* (London: printed for A. Millar, 1766), sig. R1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>148</sup> *The Three Brothers*, p. 6.

him before us this morning, and declared to him Her Majesty's pleasure and commandment, pressing him therein as much as we could, but we could get no other answer but such as in this writing here-enclosed is... to which we caused him, that we might mistake no part thereof, to set down with his own hand.'<sup>149</sup>

Sherley was interrogated by Puckering's secretary George Carew instead of the Lord Keeper and Baron Buckhurst themselves, which has led to some confusion about the number of times he was actually questioned, and in his personal statement reiterated much the same position he had previously held before the Privy Council: 'Being demanded by Mr. Cary [Carew] fro my Lorde Keeper & my lord of Bukhurst, whatt soleme othe I took att the receaving the order of S<sup>t</sup> Michael, ass I answered ther Lordships the other day, so I say styll; that othe I took none, accept the answer I made to the Kinges demaund wear an othe, for boke I had non presented me, to swear by, the effect of the kinges demaund wass, that I should promise in his handes neuer to bear arms against him for the service of any Prince Christian, butt my Sovereign, or by her Commandment, and I dyd freely assure him: and then that I should never spott myself with any Infamy unworthy so high ane order, ass he termed yt, w<sup>ch</sup> I dyd ass liberally promise, ass I mean to perfourme, This yss all upo my Lyff & reputation, so short a matter to be remembred, that I doe assure the truth of the report of yt.'<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> John Puckering, 'The Lord Keeper Puckering and Lord Buckhurst to Sir Robert Cecil, 26 April 1594', *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. IV, p. 516.

<sup>150</sup> Shirley, p. 9.

Lord Keeper Puckering and Baron Buckhurst interrogated Sherley for a second time about a week later in early May 1594, but despite their best efforts to persuade him to sign the Queen's letter and submit a written apology, he remained defiant and had evidently exasperated the older lords with his circular arguments:

We had Mr. Sherley before us, and from Her Majesty expressly commanded that he should sign the enclosed, and further acknowledge by submission in writing his great contempt in not doing the same at the first offer thereof, as he was then commanded... Wherein, albeit we did, in the most earnest and sharpest course that we might, urge the performance of her commandment, he would by no means yield, and notwithstanding our often sharp reprehensions, and our strict urging him to duty thereunto, yet this was his final and resolute answer. For the first, that this matter concerned his reputation, more dear to him than his life, his life and all that he had was at Her Majesty's commandment, and that he had rather lose his life than lose his reputation, desiring rather to die than live with disgrace, which he accounted the yielding up of this would bring upon him... And for the second, he thought it not any contempt to seek to preserve his reputation, and so in like manner, refused the same. For which his most contemptuous dealings, we, after due and just reprehensions, returned him to the Fleet, with strait commandment to the Warden to continue his strait and close imprisonment, as formerly we had given in charge.<sup>151</sup>

Sherley was eventually released from the Fleet in what appears to have been a compromise, in which he agreed to recant on any oaths he had taken during the investment ceremony, and sent back the insignia of the Order of St Michael he had

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<sup>151</sup> Puckering, 'The Lord Keeper and Lord Buckhurst to Sir Robert Cecil, 2 May 1594', *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part IV, pp. 521-22.

received from Henri IV of France, but retained the knighthood itself and was henceforward officially acknowledged as Sir Anthony Sherley.<sup>152</sup>

Sherley had already been banished from court on account of his secret marriage to Essex's cousin, and had been further humiliated by his imprisonment at the Fleet following his embassy to Henri IV of France, to the extent that he felt he had been entirely excluded from Elizabeth's presence during summer 1595: 'I am here in the country and, as far as I can judge, exiled from all hope of recovering such grace in the court as my best endeavours have ever held their course for; which though it be the greatest unhappiness that could happen a man that hath kept no time in store for any other use, yet it is so much benefit unto me, that the apparent favours of those I have cause to love and honour give me knowledge what I owe them in service and thankfulness, especially to you [*i.e.* Cecil] who in the nobleness of your disposition have been more bountiful unto me than any ability I can compass can make me deserve.'<sup>153</sup>

Sherley and his father Sir Thomas the Elder purchased a fleet of eleven ships from Thomas Heaton of Southampton, and raised what D.W. Davies has called a 'private army' of 1,500 men, which would have been impossible without Sir Thomas's positions as Deputy Lieutenant and Treasurer-at-War. Sherley planned to seize the

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<sup>152</sup> Thomas Arundel, 'Thomas Arundel to Sir Robert Cecil, 20 March 1596', *Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part VI (1895), p. 105. Davies, pp. 37-39.

<sup>153</sup> Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to Sir Robert Cecil, Inglefield, 17 April 1595', in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part V, p. 176. Sherley, 'Anthony Sherley to Sir Robert Cecil, London, 26 July 1594', *Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part IV, p. 570. Sherley's letter to Sir Robert Cecil dates from before the polarisation of politics in 1597 / 1598.



commercial hub of Hispano-Portuguese Sao Thome, in a lengthy voyage that would eventually take his fleet to the coasts of West Africa, Central America, and Canada before he managed to return to England in July 1597. Sherley's fleet departed from Southampton and reached Plymouth in April 1596 where Essex and Lord Admiral Howard were preparing for the Cadiz expedition.<sup>154</sup> Sherley managed to obtain a commission for his voyage through the influence of Essex, but was constrained by Admiral Howard to provide 'three ships and 500 souldiers' for the Cadiz expedition, before being allowed to proceed with his own expedition to Sao Thome: 'no way to release me could be possibly imagined nor thought of, except I would deliver 500 men armed, and four ships victualed for four months, for this journey [*i.e.* to Cadiz], which I did as frankly condescend unto, as a man would, that had no way left to escape apparent ruin, but that miserable one, yet better than none at all.'<sup>155</sup> Sherley's fleet seized a 'fly-bote of two hundred tunnes bound for *Brasill*' between Mogador [Essaouira] and the Canary Islands, and the captain of the captured vessel offering to act as the fleet's 'perfect Pilot' for Sao Thome, they set a course for the Cape Verde Islands 'he assuring vs that we should there meet the fleete of Saint *Tome*.' Sherley fell 'exceeding sicke' on the coast of Guinea to the extent that he was thought to be 'hopelesse of life', and

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<sup>154</sup> Thomas Birch, *Memoirs of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth from the year 1581 till her Death*, vols. I-II (London: printed for A. Millar, 1754), vol. I, pp. 456-58, 489-90. Thomas Howard and Robert Devereux, 'Commission of... the Lords General, to Sir Anthony Sherley, April 1596', in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part VI (1895), p. 162. 'A true relation of the voyage vnderaken by Sir Anthony Sherley Knight in Anno 1596 intended for the Ile of San Tome, but performed to S. Iago, Dominica, Margarita... Iamaica, the bay of the Honduras... and homeward by Newfoundland', Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries* (London: Imprinted by George Bishop, Ralph Newberie, and Robert Barker, 1599), sig. 3D3<sup>v</sup>. Davies, pp. 47 ff.

<sup>155</sup> Birch, *Memoirs*, p. 490.

directed the fleet to sail for Santiago in the Cape Verde Islands ‘for that the yere was past,’ and the coast of Guinea was ‘most tempestuous’. Sherley began to ‘recouer strength’ once they had departed from Guinea, and when they reached the island of Santiago in August he landed with his men at Praia, which they entered ‘without hindrance’ but ‘finding nothing’ marched on to Santiago. Sherley and the anonymous chronicler of the voyage were clearly impressed by the location and defences of Portuguese Santiago: ‘The strength and situation of this towne was sufficient to haue danted a man of very good courage, for it standeth between two steepe cliffes strongly housed, & three exceeding good forts commanding the whole... Upon the front of the towne the sea beateth, the rest standeth betweene two mighty cliffs, not accessible but by one small path, by which wee were enforced to goe.’<sup>156</sup> Sherley perceived that the defenders were hoping to lure him into the ‘trench’, but as the chronicler admiringly records ‘with an excellent resolution [he] cryed out, all courage my hearts: assure your selues that the device of the Spaniard shall serue our turne this day’, before ordering his men to descend on the path where according to the chronicler ‘shot, and stones we wanted none from them on euery side in great plenty’. Sherley and his men entered Santiago to find the streets packed with soldiers, who ‘ioyned with vs at the push of the pike [but] their captaine and diuers of them being slaine... and our Generall pursuing with... furious speede, did so dismay them that they fled the towne’, after which being ‘masters of the towne, we presently by the Generals direction baricadoed vp all the streets and brought our selues into a very conuenient strength.’<sup>157</sup> Sherley and his men had barely been in possession of Santiago for six hours when the Portuguese began to ‘sally

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<sup>156</sup> Hakluyt, sig. 3D4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D4<sup>r-v</sup>.

downe vpon vs, and to assault vs at euery baricado’, and seeing as the defenders had received reinforcements, increasing their number to three thousand, against the two hundred remaining English soldiers, Sherley decided to create a diversion and accordingly sent to ‘the [lower English-held] forts and his ships that about ten of the clocke in the darke of the night they should shoote at the vpper [Portuguese-held] fort with all possible diligence, and send all the boates ashore, which was accordingly performed. And wee likewise keeping a tumult in the towne, the enimie supposing that our purpose was to assault the vpper fort, (which God knowes was most impregnable for vs)... we in a souldierlike order with very good safety departed the towne.’<sup>158</sup>

Sherley and his men evacuated Santiago after two days and two nights and now set a course from the Cape Verde Islands for Dominica, in what was evidently a difficult crossing of the Atlantic and in recounting which the anonymous chronicler appears to hint that Sherley’s wife Frances Vernon, who had been ill since about 1590, may have died prior to the fleet’s departure from England: ‘our men fell generally downe, so that the hole could not relieue the sicke, the disease was so vile that men grew lothsome vnto themselues, franticke and desperately rauing, among whom our good Generals part was not the least; for his disease was vehement, the grieffe of his mind, the lamentation of his men, and the losse of those whom he loued were to him torments more then durable: all which with patience and humilitie in prayer he humbled himself vnto.’<sup>159</sup>

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D4<sup>v</sup>.

Sherley and his fleet ‘with all our men sicke and feeble’ reached Dominica in October, and spent more than a month on the island where the Indians ‘vsed vs with great kindnesse’ and were ‘greatly comforted’ to find ‘hote bathes’, so that they were all ‘perfectly well before we departed from this place.’ Sherley and his men sailed from Dominica to the Venezuelan island of Margarita ‘thinking to meete with the perle dredgers’, and captured a frigate ‘laden with *Guiny* corne’ en route to Santa Marta in Columbia, where they landed and after ‘being often times encountered by the way’ marched into the town with ‘the enemie flying before vs.’<sup>160</sup> Sherley and his troops remained at Santa Marta ‘al the time of Christmas’ and departed on ‘Newyeres day’, taking with them Santa Marta’s ordinance and a ‘prisoner lost there by Sir Francis Drake,’ and ‘with termes of great content to our General in the Spaniards great submission to him, for... being challenged by him to defend their towne like men of worth, they did notwithstanding intreat faour with great humilitie.’<sup>161</sup>

Sherley sailed from Columbia to Jamaica, arriving January 1597, and even though ‘people... on horseback made shew of great matters’, Sherley and his troops landed unopposed and marched to Spanish Town where ‘being masters of the towne and whole Isle, the people submitted themselues to our Generals mercy’ and provided the fleet with ‘dried beefe, and dried *Cassaui* meale to continue at sea’.<sup>162</sup> Sherley was preparing to depart from Jamaica when the privateer William Parker of Plymouth arrived on the

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<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D4<sup>v</sup>-5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D5<sup>r</sup>. Irene A. Wright, ‘The Spanish Version of Sir Anthony Sherley’s Raid of Jamaica, 1597’, *Hispanic American Historical Review* V (1922), pp. 227-48.

island, ‘with whom our Generall consorted to goe for the bay of *Honduras*, where by his perswasion we had hope of a very good voyage’.<sup>163</sup> Sherley and Parker planned to surprise the guard at Trujillo in Honduras, ‘but the watch discovering vs, made great fires, and the town presently shot off a great piece’, so the combined fleet headed to Puerto Caballos (Puerto Cortes) instead where ‘wee presently preuailed and tooke it the 7. of April, being the most poore and miserable place of all *India*.’<sup>164</sup>

D.W. Davies has estimated that Sir Thomas the Elder had invested fifteen to twenty thousand pounds in his son’s privateering expedition, who would have needed to take back the same amount in loot in order to break even, an anxiety reflected in the chronicler’s words that after the slim pickings at Puerto Caballos ‘our hopes were all frustrate and no likelihood remayning how we could by any meanes make a voiage’, adding that Sherley ‘reseruing vnto himselfe his silent inward impatience, laboured to doe some memorable thing’ and eventually decided to explore the Dulce River in Guatemala to discover a ‘narrow passage or Isthmos for the South Sea’.<sup>165</sup>

Sherley and Parker’s daring (and desperate) plan appears to have been based on the assumption, as the chronicler of the voyage lets slip, that ‘many charts’ appeared to indicate that Rio Dulce traversed the entire landmass, and as the separate account of Parker’s voyage shows the plan was not entirely devoid of a certain flair and sophistication: ‘we [were] thinking to haue passed ouerland with two companies of men,

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<sup>163</sup> Hakluyt, sig. 3D5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>165</sup> Davies, p. 47. Hakluyt, sig. 3D5<sup>r</sup>.

and to haue carried a pinnesse in sixe quarters to be set together with skrewes, and therein to haue embarked our selues in the South Sea [Pacific].<sup>166</sup> Sherley and Parker are reported to have travelled thirty leagues (162 kilometres) inland where they found ‘a strong built fort, a towne, and diuers store-houses: but for money or merchandize we had none’ and since they had ‘fallen sicke with the vnholesomenesse of this ayre, and our victuals so wasted’ they were constrained to go back to Honduras.<sup>167</sup>

Sherley next plotted a course for Newfoundland ‘there to reuictual, and to haue fresh men, of which we stood in good assurance’, so that he could afterward ‘depart for the straits of *Magellan*, and so by his very good policie [conclude] his voyage in the *East India*’, a voyage that, according to D.W. Davies, would have covered some forty thousand miles, when being ‘thwart *Hauana*’, recorded the chronicler ‘by what chance I know not [!], but all his ships forsooke him the 13 of May [1597].’<sup>168</sup>

Sherley’s fleet limped back home from its trans-Atlantic voyage in Summer 1597 to discover that Sir Thomas the Elder had been bankrupted and disgraced during his absence, prompting Sherley’s immediate enlistment in what later became known as Essex’ Island Voyage: ‘I am weather beaten home and met with the bitterest discomfort of my father’s troubles that could have befallen me. But I will endeavour to comfort his

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<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D6<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>167</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D5<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. 3D5<sup>v</sup>. Davies, p. 54.

adge and relieve my own wants; for though I be broken in pieces with all manner of mishaps, yet will I follow out this matter to see how God will bless me.<sup>169</sup>

Essex' fleet for the voyage had been detained by tempestuous weather, and Essex determined to send Sherley to inform the Queen and Council about the situation, providing Sherley with recommendations to Sir Robert Cecil, in order to exert his influence to restore him back into favour with Elizabeth: 'Unconstant destinies must make unconstancy in our styles, but our endeavour and courages shall be constant. I pray you receive information by this bearer, whom I have willed to shew you his instructions. And do him with her Majesty what favour you can, for, on my credit, he doth wonderfully deserve to be cherished, as you will say when you know him thoroughly. I will be both surety for him that he will deserve your favour by doing your service, and will be debtor with him till you have received full satisfaction.'<sup>170</sup>

Essex' Council of War also addressed a letter to the Privy Council, explaining that Sherley had been appointed Sergeant Major in place of Sir Ferdinando Gorges, and would be able to inform the Council of the fleet's current condition, based on his knowledge of the state of the forces involved in the expedition, and his previous participation at the conferences held by Essex' Council of War:

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<sup>169</sup> Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to Sir Robert Cecil, 23 June 1597', *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, part VII (1899), pp. 265-66.

<sup>170</sup> Devereux, 'The Earl of Essex to Sir Robert Cecil, 11 August 1597', *Ibid.*, p. 346.

At this short time since two of us attended her Majesty and your Lordships, hath bred an alteration in the state of her army, so we thought it necessary to send up some man acquainted therewith and privy to all our conferences since these accidents fell out, by whom her Majesty and your Lordships might be thoroughly informed. For which purpose we have made choice of Sir A. Shurley[,] succeeding Sir Ferdinando Gorges in the office of Sergeant-Major, is best acquainted with the state of the troops and hath also been a hearer of all our opinions and disputations every way. We do humbly beseech your Lordships to give credit to him...<sup>171</sup>

Essex and the Council of War's letters to Cecil and the Privy Council respectively, restored Sherley back into favour after some two years of isolation, so that Cecil informed Essex within a matter of days that 'Sir Anthony Shirley, his instructions and letter, were read by the Queen, and he himself presented by my Lord Admiral and me, used with great favour, both in the privy and drawing chambers.'<sup>172</sup>

Sherley's participation as Sergeant Major in the Island Voyage is confirmed by his signature on the official report of the expedition: it appears below that of the Vice Admiral Sir Thomas Howard and the Rear Admiral Sir Walter Raleigh in the version included by Purchas in his *Pilgrimes* (1625).<sup>173</sup> Sherley is also noticed by Sir Arthur Gorges in his 'larger relation' as one of Essex' staunch supporters during the latter's

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<sup>171</sup> Devereux, 'The Earl of Essex and his Council of War to the Lords of the Council, 11 August 1597', *Ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>172</sup> Robert Cecil, '[Sir Robert] Cecyll to [the Earl of] Essex, July 1597', in Walter Bouchier Devereux, *Lives and Letters of the Devereux, Earls of Essex, in the Reigns of Elizabeth I, James I, and Charles I, 1540-1646*, vols. I-II (London: John Murray, 1853), vol. I, p. 346 (emphasis added).

<sup>173</sup> Essex, 'The Relation [of the Voyage to the Isles of Azores, vnder the conduct of the Right Honourable Robert Earle of Essex, 1597], by the said Earle, and other Commissioners, Purchas, sig. 7Y4<sup>v</sup>, 7Y5<sup>f</sup>. Sherley's brother-in-law Sir Thomas Vavasour was also a participant. *Ibid.*, sig. 7Y5<sup>f</sup>.



proceedings against Raleigh over the capture of Faial.<sup>174</sup> Raleigh reached Faial before Essex and decided to land his men after four days. Gorges reports that when Essex arrived his partisans Sir Gelly Meyrick, Christopher Blount and Anthony Sherley, accused Raleigh of seeking to upstage Essex: ‘putting my Lord in the head, that these parts were plaid by the Reare Admirall... to steale honor, & reputation from him, and to set his owne forwardnesse to the view of the world’.<sup>175</sup> Sir Arthur Gorges’ concerns for his kinsman and patron Sir Walter Raleigh proved to be well-grounded as Meyrick, Blount and Sherley insisted that Raleigh’s actions were ‘not to be passed ouer without seuere punishment, and a Marshall Court [was] fit to be called’, and ‘gawe it out, that he was well worthy to loose his head for his labour’.<sup>176</sup> However, Vice Admiral Howard managed to intervene and brokered a reconciliation.<sup>177</sup> Gorges’ account of the Island Voyage is remarkable, not least because it describes Sir Gelly Meyrick, Sir Charles Blount, and Anthony Sherley as being in ‘greatest fauour’ with Essex, which in the

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<sup>174</sup> Arthur Gorges, ‘A larger Relation of [the] Island Voyage, written by Sir Arthur Gorges Knight: collected in the Queenes Ship called the Wast Spite, wherein he was then Captaine, with Marine and Martiall Discourses added according to the occurrences’, Purchas, sig. 7Y4<sup>v</sup> ff. Purchas explains that Gorges’ ‘Relation’ was completed and dedicated to Henry, Prince of Wales in 1607.

<sup>175</sup> Gorges, sig. 8A2<sup>r</sup>. ‘where the Courtyer is at a skirmishe, or assault, or battaile vpon the land, or in such other places of enterprise, he ought to worke the matter wisely in separating himself from the multitude, and vndertake his notable and bould feates which he hath to do with as little company as he can, and in the sighte of noble men that be of most estimation in the campe, and especially in the presence (and if it wer possible) before the very eyes of his king or greate personage he is in seruice withal’. Thomas Hoby, *The Courtyer of Count Baldessar Castilio* (London: Wyllyam Seres, 1561), sig. M1<sup>r-v</sup>. Hammer, p. 233.

<sup>176</sup> Gorges, sig. 8A2<sup>v</sup>, 8A1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>177</sup> Raleigh had in response to the charges ‘ment to haue put himselfe into his owne Squadron, and so to haue defended himselfe, or left my Lord [*i.e.* Essex].’ Gorges, sig. 8A2<sup>v</sup>.

absence of any evidence to the contrary would largely corroborate Sherley's own description of his ties to Essex in the opening sections of the *Relation*.<sup>178</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Anthony Sherley was summoned from the Inner Temple by his father Sir Thomas Sherley of Wiston to participate in his friend and patron Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester's expedition to the Netherlands (1585 / 1586). Sir John Norris transferred Sherley's company to Lord Willoughby during his rivalry with Leicester, marking Sherley's passage from being a fresh appointee to actively serving as a captain in the field army, where he gained considerable military experience under the leadership of Willoughby and Norris in the Netherlands and France. Sir Francis Walsingham briefly took over as Sherley's patron after the death of Leicester (1588), employing him as a liaison officer with Henri of Navarre (later Henri IV of France) in preparation for Willoughby's projected military expedition to Normandy (1589 / 1590).

Sherley gravitated toward Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex as did other military commanders formerly attached to Leicester (1590), marrying Essex' cousin Frances Vernon, daughter of Sir John Vernon of Hodnet in Shropshire and his wife Elizabeth Devereux, Essex' paternal aunt between 1590-93. Sherley obtained a license through Essex enabling a privateering voyage that would take him to West Africa, Central America and Nova Scotia before his return (1596 / 1597). Sherley had fallen out of favour with Elizabeth on account of his secret marriage to Frances Vernon, herself the

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<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.* sig. 8A2<sup>v</sup>, 8A6<sup>r</sup>.

sister of one of the Queen's maids of honour, as well as Sherley's acceptance of a knighthood of the Order of St Michael from King Henri IV of France, and was not pardoned or restored back into the Queen's favour until Essex and Charles, Admiral Howard's intercession on his behalf, immediately before the departure of the naval expedition that became known as the Island Voyage. Sherley's fierce loyalty to Essex during the voyage ensured his emergence as one of the latter's 'great favourites'.

### Chapter 3

***‘Resolution to aide the duke of Ferrara in his warres against the Pope’: Sherley’s Journey to Venice and the genesis of the mission to Persia***

Julia Schleck has argued in her book *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands* (2011) that Anthony Sherley’s reasons for travelling to the Persian Empire varied with ‘each audience or reader and remain somewhat obscure’.<sup>1</sup> He presented himself in the *True Report* (1600) as a pilgrim and soldier motivated by reports of the Shah’s ‘rare and worthie parts’ and hopes of military ‘imploymēt’.<sup>2</sup> Sherley’s reasons were seemingly confirmed in Parry’s *New and Large Discourse* (1601). Parry recorded that Sherley and his company reached Qazvin while the Shah was absent on a campaign against the Uzbeks, and that the ‘Gouernour’ of Qazvin the next morning ‘dismist a poste to the king, signifying vnto him, that there was come, a christian (right well attended) to see him, by reason of the great fame he had heard of him.’<sup>3</sup> Parry’s *Discourse* and the *True*

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<sup>1</sup> Julia Schleck, *Telling True Tales of Islamic Lands: Forms of Mediation in English Travel Writing, 1575-1630* (Selinsgrove: Susquehanna University Press, 2011), p. 67.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Sir Anthony Shirlies Oration to the Sophie’, *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies iourney ouerland to Venice, fro~ thence by sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babilon, and soe to Casbine in Persia: his entertainment there by the great Sophie: his oration: his letters of credence to the Christian princes: and the priuiledg obtained of the great Sophie, for the quiet passage and trafique of all Christian marchants, throughout his whole dominions* (London: R. B[lower] for I. I[aggard], 1600), sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> William Parry, *A new and large discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley Knight, by Sea, and ouer Land, to the Persian Empire, wherein are related many straunge and wonderfull accidents: and also, the Description and Conditions of those Countries and People he passed by: with his returne into Christendome, written by William Parry Gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his Trauells*

*Report* belong to the first cluster of Sherley material. However, by the time the second cluster of texts about the brothers appeared in quick succession, Sherley's reasons for travelling to Persia had undergone something of a transformation:

Sophy. What is the end thy sut would haue of vs [?]

Sir Anthony. That you by Ambassy make league with Christendom

And all the neighbor Princes bordering here,

And crave their general ayd against the Turke,

Whose grant no doubt of: so shall your Grace

Enlarge your empire lyuing, and being gon

Be call'd the Champion of the holiest one.<sup>4</sup>

Leaving aside the incongruity of the role assigned to Shah 'Abbas, Sherley's original search for 'employment' may be observed to have been transformed into a project to engineer a Perso-European league against the Ottomans. By the time the third cluster of texts were printed and published in London, the Reverend John Cartwright could

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(London: printed by Valentine Simmes for Felix Norton, 1601), sig. C3<sup>v</sup> (Italics added); see also Sir Edward Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure, including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1933), p. 116.

<sup>4</sup> John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, *The Travailes of the three English Brothers: Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, Mr. Robert Shirley: As it is now play'd by her Maiesties Seruants* (London: printed [by George Eld for] Iohn Wright, 1607), sig. C1<sup>f</sup>, and see also Anthony Parr (ed.) *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. 76. Day, Rowley and Wilkins' play certainly represented a departure from the *True Report* and Parry's *Discourse*, not only in its presentation of Sherley's objectives in travelling to the Safavid Empire, but also in terms of the conventions and expectations of its Jacobean theatre-going audience. However, the play was also commissioned by the eldest of the Sherley brothers as part of a sustained campaign to influence public opinion, and as such would go on to inform the brothers' own self-presentation in the subsequent clusters of narratives, as well more recent scholarly literature concerning the Sherley brothers as will be demonstrated.

confidently boast that ‘two of the most mightie and most warlike Princes among the *Barbarians*, the great *Turke* and the *Persian*, are now in armes one against the other; stirred vp thereunto by two of our Country-men, Sir *Anthonie Sherley*, and Master *Robert Sherley*... A warre not onely like to be long and bloudie, but also very commodious and of great opportunitie to the Christian Commonweale’.<sup>5</sup> Cartwright’s *The Preachers Trauels* (1611) preceded the publication of Sherley’s own *Relation* (1613), which likewise belongs to the third cluster of panegyrics. However, Sherley employed a perceptibly more subtle strategy in the *Relation*: he explained somewhat cryptically that he had dedicated himself to the ‘ffirste end’, which ‘was, and is, god his greate glorie’, without spelling out his reasons for travelling to Persia.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, while Sherley deliberately avoided spelling out his precise reasons, a close reading of the *Relation* reveals them to be similar to those of Cartwright, albeit hidden behind suggestive constructions such as ‘the first end’, ‘the great end’, ‘the maine end’, ‘the good purpose’, ‘the maine purpose’, ‘the great work’, ‘the good businesse’, ‘the great businesse’, ‘the

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<sup>5</sup> John Cartwright, *The preachers trauels: wherein is set downe a true iournall to the confines of the East Indies, through the great countreyes of Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Media, Hircania and Parthia, with the authors returne by the way of Persia, Susiana, Assiria, Chaldaea, and Arabia. Containing a full suruew of the knigdom [sic] of Persia, and in what termes the Persian stands with the Great Turke at this day: also a true relation of Sir Anthonie Sherleys entertainment there, and the estate that his brother, M. Robert Sherley liued in after his departure for Christendome. With the description of a port in the Persian Gulf, commodious for our East Indian merchants; and a briefe rehearsall of some grosse absurdities [sic] in the Turkish Alcoran. Penned by I.C. sometimes student in Magdalen Colledge in Oxford* (London: William Stansby, 1611), sig. A2<sup>v</sup>. Jane Grogan, ‘A Warre... Commodious: dramatizing Islamic Schism in and after Tamburlaine’, in *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 54, no. 1 (2012), pp. 45-78.

<sup>6</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes for Nathaniel Butter, 1613), sig. B1<sup>r</sup>.

maine businessse’, and not least ‘the glorious businessse’.<sup>7</sup> Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar’s notion that ‘Anthony had first appeared at the Safavid court... Advocating a coalition between Persia and the Christian states against the Ottomans’ is a direct consequence of Sherley and his partisans’ opportunistic transformation of the rationale behind the mission in the second / third cluster of texts about the brothers.<sup>8</sup>

John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins’ play *Trauailles of the Three English Brothers* (1607), wherein the curious above-cited exchange between Sherley and the Sophie was dramatised and presented, was itself based on the Jacobean hack-writer Anthony Nixon’s *The Three English Brothers* (1607).<sup>9</sup> Nixon had in turn received instructions from the Sherley brothers themselves, and revised or incorporated several passages from Thomas Sherley the Younger’s own *Discours of the Turkes* (ca. 1607), though the section relevant to the current discussion was an elaboration of a passage

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<sup>7</sup> Sherley, *Relation*, sig. B1<sup>r</sup>, D1<sup>v</sup>, D4<sup>r</sup>, E1<sup>r</sup>, E2<sup>r</sup>, L1<sup>r</sup>, O3<sup>r</sup>, S2<sup>r</sup>, and *passim*. Sherley may have been concerned about his claims finding their way back to Persia – cf. Anthony Parr, ‘Foreign Relations in Jacobean England: the Sherley Brothers and the Voyage of Persia’, in Jean-Pierre Maquerlot and Michele Willems (eds.) *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare’s Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 29. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, ‘Persianate Europology’, *Refashioning Iran: Orientalism, Occidentalism and Historiography* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2001), pp. 39, and 160, n. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 63. Samuel Purchas later elaborated on the supposed reasons behind the mission to Persia as part of the fourth cluster of texts about the brothers. *Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas his Pilgrimes* (London: printed by William Stansby for Henrie Fetherstone, 1625), sig. 7M3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> Anthony Nixon, *The three English brothers: Sir Thomas Sherley his trauels, with his three yeares imprisonment in Turkie, his inlargement by his Maiesties letters to the great Turke, and lastly, his safe returne into England this present yeare, 1607. Sir Anthony Sherley his embassage to the Christian princes. Master Robert Sherley his wars against the Turkes, with his marriage to the Emperour of Persia his neece.* (London: printed by Adam Islip for John Hodgets, 1607). Lambert Ennis, ‘Anthony Nixon: a Jacobean Plagiarist and Hack’, in *Huntington Library Quarterly* 3, 4 (1940), pp. 377-401.

taken from Parry's earlier *New and Large Discourse*.<sup>10</sup> Parry had provided a detailed account of Sherley's first audience with Shah 'Abbas: he recalled how Sherley had delivered his 'Oration to the Sophie', and how the Shah had asked about his passage through territories of the Ottoman Empire, during the course of which Sherley had remarked on the weakness of the Ottoman garrisons. Parry reported that the Shah was 'possest... with such a burning desire to invade the Turks dominions (by reason his strength was so small... and then at large Sir Anthony vnfolded) that he would on the very necke of that his late victorie [*i.e.* against the Uzbeks], before his blood was colde (as it were) have entred into action against the Turk'.<sup>11</sup> He went on to explain that the Shah's predecessors had lost several western provinces to the Ottomans, and that the Shah was in a more advantageous position to recover them since he had managed to secure his eastern frontier with the Uzbeks, but that he consented by 'Sir Anthonies aduice' to 'ioyne in league... and confederacie with the Christian princes, by meanes whereof, he may the sooner preuaile in his purpose'.<sup>12</sup> Parry presented the projected campaign as being contingent on the proposed alliance, which in the event proved to be little more than wishful thinking on Sherley's behalf, but did not prevent him from capitalising on the outbreak of the Ottoman-Safavid War (1603-1618).<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Nixon, *The three English brothers*, sig. H3<sup>r-v</sup>, sig. B2<sup>r</sup>, G1<sup>v</sup>, G3<sup>v</sup>, I1<sup>v</sup>, I5<sup>r</sup>, H2<sup>r</sup>. Ross, p. xii.

<sup>11</sup> Parry, *A new and large discourse*, sig. D1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, sig. D3<sup>v</sup>-D4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to the Count Duke of Olivares, dated at Madrid, 14<sup>th</sup> April 1622', in Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Flandes, Leg. 626, fol. 311. D.W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: the Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy, Morocco, Persia, Spain, and the Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 282.



MacLean and Matar's account of the reasons behind Sherley's mission to Persia demonstrate the extent to which his motives have been obscured by numerous pro-Sherley publications since the seventeenth century. Sherley's original destination had in fact been the northern Italian Duchy of Ferrara, before he managed to reach Safavid Persia via Venice, Ottoman Syria and Mesopotamia. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, Jonathan Burton and Chloe Houston among others have examined the origins of the mission to Persia and provide strikingly varied explanations: Subrahmanyam believes Sherley was despatched by the Earl of Essex to assist the 'exiled' Duke of Ferrara in retaking his territories; Jonathan Burton asserts that Sherley was entrusted with the conveyance of substantial funds 'earmarked for bribes in Ferrara'; while Chloe Houston believes he travelled to Persia to assess 'the potential for trade'.<sup>14</sup> The rest of this chapter will accordingly examine the origins of the crisis in Ferrara, the Earl of Essex' interest in an intervention to protect Ferrara from the Papal States, Sherley's abortive mission to Ferrara and his subsequent arrival in Venice, followed by the genesis of his mission to Persia and its international political background and ramifications.

### ***The abortive mission to Ferrara, January 1598***

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<sup>14</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011), p. 90. Jonathan Burton, 'The Shah's Two Ambassadors: The Travels of the Three English Brothers and the Global Early Modern' in Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani (eds.), *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), p. 30. Chloe Houston, 'Thou glorious kingdome, thou chiefe of empires: Persia in seventeenth century travel literature, in *Studies in Travel Writing*, vol. 13, no. 2 (2009), p. 141.

Alfonso II, fifth duke of Ferrara, died at Castello Estense on 27 October 1597. He had ruled for almost four decades, was related to the Habsburgs and the Valois, and had hoped to succeed Henri III as king of Poland.<sup>15</sup> Alfonso had married three times: to Lucrezia de' Medici (1558), Barbara of Austria (1565), and Margherita Gonzaga (1579), but all three marriages had been childless. He had been anxious about the issue of succession for at least three decades: Pope Paul II had originally bestowed Ferrara on Borso d'Este as a papal fief in 1471, and Alfonso's anxiety about the succession was no doubt exacerbated by Pope Pius V's bull (1567), forbidding the transmission of papal fiefs to any but legitimate descendants, in the absence of whom the fief would 'devolve' back to the pontiff and the Papal States.<sup>16</sup> Alfonso had almost obtained a perpetual imperial title from Maximilian II, and a reversal of policy from Pope Gregory XIV, but neither attempt guaranteed right of succession.<sup>17</sup> The duke's hopes to secure the right to choose his successor were dealt another blow, when one of his staunchest opponents during the previous unsuccessful negotiations with Gregory XIV, Cardinal Ippolito Aldobrandini was elected Pope Clement VIII on 30 January 1592.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Bonner Mitchell, *1598: A Year of Pageantry in Late Renaissance Ferrara* (Binghamton: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1990), pp. 18-19, and p. 56, note 37. On Alfonso II's ties to Henri III of France, cf. Pierre de Nolhac and Angelo Solerti, *Il Viaggio in Italia di Enrico III Re di Francia, e le Festi a Venezia, Ferrara, Mantova e Torino* (Turin: L. Roux e C. Editori, 1890), *passim*.

<sup>16</sup> Mitchell, p. 19, and Guido Guerzoni, *Le corti Estensi e le 'devoluzione' di Ferrara del 1598* (Modena: Comune di Modena, 2000). Mitchell, p. 19, and Ludwig von Pastor, *The History of the Popes, vols. I-XL* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1891-1953), vol. XXIV (1933), p. 382.

<sup>17</sup> Mitchell, p. 19. Pastor, vol. XXII (1932), pp. 379-85.

<sup>18</sup> Pastor, vol. XXII, p. 381.

Pope Clement VIII began his pontificate by confirming the bull of Pius V, which excluded all but legitimate descendants from succession to papal fiefs, and the congregation of cardinals followed suit by voting against Gregory XIV's resolution to reverse papal policy on such fiefs in June 1592.<sup>19</sup> Alfonso had managed to secure his claim to the imperial fiefs of Modena and Reggio, in exchange for a considerable sum delivered to the cash-strapped Emperor Rudolf II, but had not been able to make any headway regarding the papal fief of Ferrara.<sup>20</sup> The duke nevertheless trusted in his powerful allies and the duchy's own formidable defences, and nominated one of his cousins Don Cesare d'Este as his successor in a will drawn up in 1595, although the information was conveyed to Rudolf II so secretly that not even Don Cesare himself knew he had been chosen as Alfonso's future successor.<sup>21</sup> The duke only summoned Cesare to his chamber when he lay on his deathbed in October 1597, to hear a reading of the will and to impress upon his cousin that he was leaving him 'a most beautiful state, and one that was strong, both by its military power, and by reason of the allies, both within and without Italy, upon whom he could count with certainty'.<sup>22</sup>

Cesare took up residence at Castello Estense the day after the duke's death, and bells were rung to gather the magistrates and heads of guilds, to hear a public reading of Alfonso's will and to 'elect' the new duke of Ferrara. He received the city fathers in a public room of the castle the next day, seated on a throne and wearing a ducal beret and

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<sup>19</sup> Pastor, vol. XXIV, pp. 382-3.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 383.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 383; Mitchell, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> Pastor, pp. 383-4; Mitchell, p. 19.

crown on his head, and upon entreaty agreed to become lord of the city and accepted a sceptre and a naked sword as symbols of office. Cesare proceeded on a silver-draped horse along the streets to the cathedral, where after hearing a mass he swore before the bishop to act as a just ruler of people, while heralds announced the abolition of heavy taxes imposed by Alfonso outside in the piazza, although observers also noted that coins were not tossed to the crowd from the cathedral balcony, as the depleted state of the duchy's treasury rendered the custom impractical.<sup>23</sup> Don Cesare nevertheless started to bring Ferrara up to a state of military readiness, and dispatched envoys to the Holy Roman Emperor, the German princes, Henri IV of France, Philip II of Spain, and allied Italian power-brokers to shore up support for his election. He also dispatched Count Girolamo Giglioli as ambassador to the Holy See, to inform Pope Clement VIII that he had not only taken possession of Modena and Reggio, but also of the former papal fief of Ferrara which he claimed he now held by the feudal right of succession.<sup>24</sup>

Clement VIII received news of the death of Alfonso II on 1 November 1597, and summoned a general congregation of cardinals for the following day, at which he declared that as the legitimate line of Ferrarese rulers was now extinct, he wished to expressly confirm that the vacant papal fief had 'devolved' back to the Holy See in accordance with the bull issued by Pope Pius V.<sup>25</sup> Clement VIII followed up his declaration by giving orders to raise a large army, and appointed a congregation of

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<sup>23</sup> Mitchell, pp. 19-20, 57. Alfonso had exhausted the treasury through his rivalry with the Medici, and relentless pursuit of the Renaissance ideal of *magnificenza*, cf. *ibid.*, pp. 14 ff.

<sup>24</sup> Pastor, pp. 384-5.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 385.

nineteen cardinals to deal with the Ferrarese question, who recommended that a monitorium be issued to Don Cesare, and that the Pope's nephew Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini take charge of the army at Bologna. Clement VIII's monitorium was displayed at the cathedral in Ferrara on 12 November, in which the Pope gave Don Cesare fifteen days to present his claims at Rome, but as he did not respond to the summons a canonical process was set in motion against the 'pretender'.<sup>26</sup>

Duke Cesare d'Este ignored the Pope's monitorium and instead made a series of overtures to reach a settlement with Clement VIII, who replied that he would only consider Cesare's proposals once he had evacuated Ferrara, and that if he refused to comply he would be excommunicated as a usurper.<sup>27</sup> Don Cesare may not have been entirely convinced by Clement VIII's threat of excommunication given the purely material nature of the dispute, but any doubts over the pontiff's intentions were soon dispelled when the canonical process against Cesare was completed in late December, concluding that 'as Cesare obstinately adhered to his usurpation, he and his adherents incurred major excommunication, and that the countries which joined him, after the determined period had elapsed, were placed under an interdict'.<sup>28</sup>

Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, had dispatched one of his secretaries, Professor Henry Cuffe on a mission to Florence in 1597. Cuffe was stationed there between October 1597 and March 1598, and corresponded with Essex House, as well as his

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 386.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 386-7.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 388.

mentor the classical scholar Sir Henry Savile.<sup>29</sup> He observed the Ferrarese crisis unfold from his vantage point in Tuscany, and kept both the Essex secretariat and his friend Savile abreast of events, shortly before Essex made the decision to weigh in on the seemingly inevitable conflict, and dispatched Sir Anthony Sherley at the head of a mission to assist the beleaguered Don Cesare. Essex most likely conceived of his intervention on the Ferrarese side as a covert operation, and as such there are no references to the mission either in the State Papers or in the rather extensive Modena archives, the only known explanation for Essex's decision to intervene occurring in Sherley's *Relation* which will be discussed below.<sup>30</sup> Cuffe wrote to his friend Henry Savile two weeks after the sentence of excommunication had been pronounced against Don Cesare, and enclosed a copy of the sentence along with Cesare's little-known rebuttal which had been displayed at the Consistory in Rome, though as one of the ideologically-driven puritans in the Essex circle, he was quick to note that he had included them mainly on account of the 'notable absurd branches thereof', and not because the documents were of any particular value in themselves:

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<sup>29</sup> Paul E.J. Hammer, 'Henry Cuffe [Cuff] (1562/3-1601), Classical Scholar and Secretary to the Earl of Essex', and R.D. Goulding, 'Sir Henry Savile (1549-1622), Mathematician and Classical Scholar', in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Hereafter *ODNB*]. Hammer, 'The uses of Scholarship: the Secretariat of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, c. 1585-1601', published in the *English Historical Review* 109 (February 1994), 430, pp. 26-51.

<sup>30</sup> Essex's decision to intervene was made so suddenly that there was little if any coordination with the Ferrarese authorities, and Sherley's mission was most likely explained in Essex's letters that were addressed to Cesare d'Este and carried by Sherley, as well as the additional letters by Count Maurice of Nassau which were entrusted to Sherley later in the Netherlands (see below). *Archivio segreto estense, sezione casa e stato: inventario* (Rome: Archivi de Stato, 1953). I am grateful to Dr. Guido Guerzoni for additional information concerning Cesare d'Este's archives preserved at Modena.

The Scommunica against Don Cesare I enclose, which I had dispatched with my last, but that I hoped to adjoin his protestation against it; which however is not yet ready, though I have seen the principal points of it exhibited in the Consistory at Rome. I therefore sent off these enclosures without waiting, they being of themselves so great a packet that perhaps (were it not for some notable absurd branches thereof) the charge of carriage is more than their worth.<sup>31</sup>

Cuffe's prediction of a difficult struggle ahead for the Papacy was voiced by other contemporary observers, and he captured the general sense of amazement with which news of Clement VIII's sentence of excommunication was received on the Italian peninsula, along with contemporary concerns that the conflict had the potential to undermine the stability and very existence of the States of the Church:

The mother Church which has been long with child of Ferrara begins now to fall in labour, and as you may gather by these her cries, she stands in fear of a sore travail. To hear of excommunications in these parts [Italy] is no dainty, every light offence against the Romish hierarchy being able to procure a heavy censure. Notwithstanding this present against this poor prince [*i.e.* Don Cesare d'Este] is of all men thought to be the most terrible that ever was denounced. No imputation of heresy or schism, only upon a private controversy touching a small corner of the Exarchate of Ravenna [*i.e.* the Duchy of Ferrara], of little worth before it was beautified and enriched by the singular industry of the house of Este, to thunder and threaten so freely amazes our Italians and makes them fear a small flame, which once kindled may not be

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<sup>31</sup> Henry Cuffe, 'Henry Cuffe to Mr. Savile, Florence, 27 December 1597 O.S. / 6 January 1598', in S.R. Scargill-Bird (ed.) *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury*, vols. I-XXIV (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode for H.M.S.O., 1883-1976), vol. VII (1899), p. 524. cf. also Thomas Arundel, 'Sir Thomas Arundel to Sir Robert Cecil, 18 February 1601', Bodleian Library, Oxford, Ashmolean MS 1729, fol. 189, reprinted in Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine 'Studied for Action: how Gabriel Harvey read his Livy', *Past and Present* 129 (November 1990), 33, 34, and note 10.

quenched without the ruin of the ambitious clergy. How it will stir the loyalty of the Ferrarese, is not yet known. The general opinion is that they will remain constant in their faith.<sup>32</sup>

Cuffe goes on to report that Duke Francesco Maria II of Urbino had made a tentative attempt to calm the rapidly deteriorating situation, and that the Essex secretariat had already started to indicate its readiness to engage more actively in the crisis over the coming spring (1597/98), while Cesare d'Este and Cardinal Aldobrandini continued apace with their military preparations at Lugo and Bologna respectively:

Some three days since we heard from Rome that the Duke of Urbino [Francesco Maria II] has obtained a suspension of this censure until the end of this month. Some add that the town shall be consigned to him until the deciding of the title. This I hold very improbable, both because Don Cesare would be loath to lose the present advantage of his subjects' affection which time and other occurrences may alter, and because the Duke being a man whole at the Pope's devotion Don Cesare can hardly look for indifference at his hands. Thus you see little by little we provide for making the world believe that somewhat will be done here this next spring.<sup>33</sup>

Essex and his secretariat had evidently received a relatively large number of Italian gazettes as can be seen from the Bacon Papers, but Cuffe's letter to Savile is an

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<sup>32</sup> Cuffe, pp. 524-5. Paolo Paruta, the Venetian diplomat and historian, also believed that the Holy See would not be able to subdue Ferrara without a 'great struggle'. Pastor, p. 382. Cardinal Arnaud d'Ossat explains the rationale behind the pontiff's harsh sentence of excommunication, pronounced against Don Cesare d'Este lucidly and succinctly in his *Letters*. cf. also Pastor, p. 387.

<sup>33</sup> Cuffe, p. 525. On the last duke of Urbino see Warren Boutcher, 'Michel de Montaigne e 'Frederic Maria della Rovere': La chiave nascosta della biblioteca dell'ultimo Duca di Urbino', in Bonita Cleri, Sabine Eiche, John E. Law and Feliciano Paoli (eds.) *I Della Rovere nell'Italia delle Corti*, vols. I-IV (Urbino: QuattroVenti, 2002), vol. III: Cultura e Letteratura (2002), pp. 93-114, and Idem, *The Last Duke of Urbino's Library: a Historical Prospero and his Books* (forthcoming publication).



extremely rare example of the secretariat taking a close interest in the rather fluid Ferrarese crisis of succession, even though Cuffe's letter was probably written and dispatched too late for it to have had any direct impact on Essex's decision to send Sherley and his companions on the mission to assist Cesare d'Este.<sup>34</sup>

Sherley himself was not concerned with chronicling the succession crisis when he compiled the *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613), but his attendant George Manwaring provides an intriguing clue about the origins of the mission in *A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley's Travel into Persia*, which was preserved in manuscript and only printed in the early nineteenth century. Manwaring records that Sherley had 'heard' about the succession crisis at Ferrara, Don Cesare's courage and resolution in defending the duchy against Clement VIII, and how Cesare had sent to *Henri IV of France* for a number of experienced military commanders:

The first attempt of the voyage was this: Sir Anthony, understanding of wars like to have happened between the Duke of Pheraro [Ferrara] and the Pope, and hearing the duke to be a gallant man, and further he had notice that the duke had sent unto the French king for some good commanders, thought he could not spend his time better than to go and aid the duke with his service in the war; and, for this cause, did take his leave of England for a time.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Bacon Papers, MSS 661-62, Lambeth Palace Library. E.G.W. Bill, *Index to the Papers of Anthony Bacon (1558-1601) in Lambeth Palace Library* (London: Lambeth Palace Library, 1974). I am extremely grateful to Professor Paul E.J. Hammer for advice concerning the Bacon Papers.

<sup>35</sup> George Manwaring, 'A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley's Travel into Persia', in Sir Edward Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure, including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1933), p. 175.

Sherley was related to Essex by marriage and was also close to members of the secretariat, allowing him to hear about the events described by Cuffe and other intelligencers in Italy, but the reference to Cesare's appeal to Henri IV is much more intriguing and pertinent to the current discussion.<sup>36</sup> Henri IV had taken the side of Clement VIII in the struggle over the succession, as part of a pragmatic strategy to improve relations with the Pope, and to bring the ruinous Wars of Religion to a conclusion, but he also appears to have passed on the Ferrarese appeal for aid to his friend the second Earl of Essex, who in turn stepped in to fill the void left by Henri's refusal to be drawn into a conflict with the Holy See.<sup>37</sup> Henri IV's transmission of Cesare's appeal for military aid to Essex has not previously been noted by any of the writers on the Ferrarese crisis of succession, possibly because the mission would in the end turn out to be inconclusive and did not have any appreciable impact on the subsequent course of events, but it does appear to have resulted in Essex's decision to dispatch Sherley and his company to assist Cesare d'Este at Ferrara.<sup>38</sup>

Sherley's account of the mission to Ferrara is, as in many other instances, more concerned with political theory, and while he freely admits that Cesare was not a

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<sup>36</sup> Sherley was married to Essex's cousin Frances Vernon, and was especially close to Anthony Bacon among members of the secretariat. I have alluded to Sherley's relationships with Frances Vernon and Anthony Bacon in the second and preceding chapter of the dissertation.

<sup>37</sup> Vincent Joseph Pitts, *Henri IV of France: his Reign and Age* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), chapter viii, pp. 204 ff. cf. also Stuart Michael Carroll, *Martyrs and Murderers: the Guise Family and the Making of Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

<sup>38</sup> Essex had in fact met with Henri's ambassador to England, Andre Hurault, Sieur de Maisse, on 12 December 1597. G.B. Harrison and R.A. Jones (eds.) *A Journal of all that was accomplished by Monsieur de Maisse, Ambassador to England [etc.]* (London: Nonesuch Press, 1931), pp. 33-34.

legitimate descendant of the ducal line at Ferrara, he nevertheless counters that the tradition of good government by the Este had over time won the allegiance of the populace to the family and indeed the very name of the ruling house:

[T]he Duke of ffarrara [Alfonso II] dying, and leavinge Don Cesare Di Este inheritor of that principallitie: who by his birth could, indeed challenge nothing, iustlie being a bastard: notwithstanding in the worldes opinion hee was moste likelie to haue bi~n establyshed in that successio~n, through the longe contynuance of the government in that name: and the princes of that name [house of Este] having ever through their temperate and iuste condico~n of rulinge woven them selves into a sincere affecc~on of that people: which was well proved, by that greate league made against it in former tyme, by the Pope, the ffrench, and the Venetians: frustrated by the true devotion of those subiectes to their prince [Alfonso I d'Este]: besides the greate expectac~on, which was generallie had of that Don Cesare: and the extreame bondage of the government of the Church, which those that haue liued in an other quallitie do vtterlie abhorre.<sup>39</sup>

Sherley's claims about the 'temperate and iust' rule of the Este and the allegiance deriving from it are problematic, given the clearly despotic nature of government at Ferrara and speculation about the level of popular support for the ruling house, not to mention Sherley's somewhat obscure reference to a 'great league' formed against the duchy in the past consisting of 'the Pope, the French, and the Venetians'.<sup>40</sup>

Sherley's association of hereditary rule in any given state with popular support for members of the ruling house, as well as Ferrara's successful defence against a great

<sup>39</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, *Relation*, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>-B2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>40</sup> The rule of the Este is discussed in Werner L. Gundersheimer, *Ferrara: the Style of a Renaissance Despotism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), *passim*. Cuffe, p. 525.

league formed against her in recent memory, were in all likelihood borrowed from the second chapter of Niccolò Machiavelli's *Il Principe* (1532), where Ferrara is actually presented as a notable example of a successful hereditary state:

I say, then, that states which are hereditary, and accustomed to the rule of those belonging to the present ruler's family, are very much less difficult to hold than new states, because it is sufficient not to change the established order, and to deal with any untoward events that may occur; so that, if such a ruler is no more than ordinarily diligent and competent, his government will always be secure, unless some unusually strong force should remove him... To cite an Italian example: the Duke of Ferrara resisted the assaults of the Venetians in 1484, as well as those of Pope Julius [II della Rovere] in 1510, just because his family [*i.e.* the house of Este] was very well established in that state. For a natural ruler has fewer reasons and less need to harm others. Consequently, men will be better disposed towards him; and if he is not hated for unusually vicious conduct, it is not surprising that he should be regarded with affection by his subjects.<sup>41</sup>

Machiavelli here conflates duke Ercole I's war against Venice (1482-4) with that of Alfonso I against the Holy See (1509/10), but Sherley also seems to have recalled the latter's participation in the War of the League of Cognac (1526-7), and hence the great league including the Pope, the French and the Venetians, which Sherley had most likely encountered in Francesco Guicciardini's *Storia d'Italia* (1537-40).<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The translation is quoted from Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (eds.) *Niccolò Machiavelli: The Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), chapter ii, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6, note b, pp. 40, 123. The passage may be found in Sidney Alexander (ed.) *Francesco Guicciardini: The History of Italy* (1969) (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984), Book XVII, pp. 369 ff. cf. also Maurizio Arfaioli, *The Black Bands of Giovanni: Infantry and Diplomacy during the Italian Wars (1526-1528)* (Pisa: Edizioni Plus and Pisa University Press, 2005), *passim*.

Sherley provides a condensed account of what he claims were the factors taken into consideration by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, who was allegedly convinced that as neither Ferrara nor the Holy See had the power to win an outright victory, other Italian states as well as Spain would have to get involved and form alliances in a re-enactment of the Italian Wars, and that Spain's involvement would necessarily prevent Philip II from turning his attention to England and her allies, while leaving Spain vulnerable to raids such as that carried out by Essex himself against the port of Cadiz in 1596:

Judging that the *Pope* would not giue his claime vnto that Dutchie [Ferrara] without woordes, and actes: and by the impotencie of both those princes in them selues, both to make, and contynue, so greate a warre as that was likelie to haue bi~n by former examples: but that it muste growe to greate partialities: the lesser princes of Italie beinge not likelie to endure, the Churches so greate increase of temporalitie: which error was so greatlie reprehended by them all in Lewes the twelfth king of ffrance: and that giving place to the right of that title they should interest him in the same iudgement for Urbine allso and many other places: so that the warre by these reasones, in all appearaunce likelie to bee fomented: and that the King of Spaine, both in hope to better his estates in Italie, by that trouble: and by necessitie to preserue those which he had allreadie, and for being vicarr to the church, and obliged for his kingdome of Naples: muste be imbarcked fullie in that action, which would haue bin... a [great] diuersion from his other designes.<sup>43</sup>

Sherley and the other veteran captains are usually assumed to have departed on 29 December 1597 O.S. / 9 January 1598, based on the evidence of a letter by Sherley's father Sir Thomas the Elder to Sir Robert Cecil written on the following day, and

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<sup>43</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. B2<sup>f</sup>. Sherley's passing reference to the Italian states' criticism of Louis XII, for inadvertently increasing the temporal powers of the Church, is also taken from the third chapter of Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Skinner and Price, p. 12. Pastor, p. 384.

ostensibly seeking an injunction to prevent Sherley from going abroad, since he had reneged on the repayment of a debt to his father of some 431 Pounds:

Against my will I am driven to complain of the most unnatural and cruel dealing of Anthony Sherley towards me. Two jewels of his had been pawned... He did exceedingly urge me to procure means to redeem them, promising to see the money satisfied again within 10 days. I made means for it even of such friends as give me means to live and without whom I have not means to eat... after promising to pay... on Wednesday last, when my man came to him in the evening, he put him off till the morrow, being yesterday. When my man called then, Anthony had gone out of town, we hear, with purpose to go beyond seas, but whether with the Queen's license, or not, I do not know... He cannot be far gone as he was seen in London after 9 o'clock yesterday. I pray you, whether he have license or no, let him be stayed till he has made delivery either of the money or of the jewels. For this indeed is wickedness to add to the affliction of his poor aged parents.<sup>44</sup>

Sir Thomas the Elder's letter to Secretary Cecil is generally taken at face value by Sherley's biographers, without taking into account the long and complicated relations existing between the two families, which belies the familiar tone of the letter and Sir Thomas' apparent readiness to openly discuss his financial difficulties.<sup>45</sup>

Sir Thomas most likely knew that his son had left the country without the Queen's express permission, and hoped to avoid implication by pretending ignorance and

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Sherley, 'Sir Thomas Sherley [of Wiston] to Sir Robert Cecil, dated 30 December 1597', in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. VII, p. 526.

<sup>45</sup> Cecil's father, Lord Burghley's ruthless persecution of Sir Thomas and his responsibility for the latter's economic collapse in 1596 are rather poorly understood. Sir Thomas had thereafter been dependent on Burghley's son Sir Robert for patronage and support, and would in fact enter a business partnership with him only months after he wrote the above letter. Davies, pp. 41-46, 62-73, and notes.

portraying himself as an unsuspecting victim, in order to deny Elizabeth I and his enemies the Cecils an excuse for proceeding against him.<sup>46</sup> Sir Thomas was also technically still an inmate of the Fleet Prison, where he had been held for over thirty weeks on questionable charges of corruption, giving him further reason to avoid antagonising the authorities, but he probably delayed sending the letter long enough that no action could be taken to prevent Anthony from leaving the country.<sup>47</sup>

Sherley and his company of veteran soldiers embarked at Southwold, in Suffolk and landed at Flushing in the Netherlands, where they were ‘honourably received and entertained’ by the governor Sir Robert Sidney.<sup>48</sup> Sidney was a close relative and supporter of the Earl of Essex as was Sherley himself, and Sherley may well have discussed his mission with Sidney, before leaving for Middelburg where he was entertained by the Merchants Adventurers.<sup>49</sup> Sherley and his company took a boat at night from Middelburg to Zierikzee, and another boat on the following morning to a place called Somerdicke [?], before making their way to Brielle in the evening on foot, ‘hiring poore souldiers to carry our baggage, by reason that the frost was so great, that

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<sup>46</sup> Anthony Sherley, ‘To the Right Honourable Sir Robert Cecil, Knight, principall Secretary to her M<sup>y</sup>, Archangel, 10 June 1600’, Ross, p. 244. Sir Thomas twice rhetorically questions whether his son has a license during the course of the above letter to Sir Robert Cecil, to reinforce the idea that he is not in fact aware of whether or not his son has the Queen’s permission to depart from England.

<sup>47</sup> Sir Thomas was allowed to leave the prison during the day in December 1597, but was not actually released from the Fleet Prison until January 1598. cf. Davies, pp. 45-6.

<sup>48</sup> Manwaring, p. 174. Parry, *New and Large Discourse*, sig. A4<sup>r</sup>. cf. also Ross, pp. 12, 100.

<sup>49</sup> Millicent V. Hay, *The Life of Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester (1563-1626)* (Washington, D.C.: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1984), *passim*. Margaret P. Hannay, et al. (eds.) *Domestic politics and family absence: the correspondence (1588-1621) of Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester, and Barbara Gamage Sidney, Countess of Leicester* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005). Manwaring, p. 174.

horses were not able to passe, and the way vnusuall.<sup>50</sup> Sherley and his men took another boat from Brielle the next morning, and were conveyed by wagon train to The Hague, where Count Maurice of Nassau was then in residence: ‘where, no sooner being alighted, but that Sir Anthony... went to visite His Excellency [Maurice of Nassau], consociated with master [George] Gilpin, the Queens Agent thither, where continuing not past an houre to compliment with the Prince, he withdrew himselfe to his lodging’.<sup>51</sup>

Sherley and his company left The Hague for Leiden, Utrecht and the Dutch military outpost at Duisburg, where another one of Sherley’s former associates Sir Nicholas Parker was stationed along with his cavalry company, and provided the travellers with an escort across Spanish-held territory to Cologne in Germany, ‘hauing 25 of his horses to ride on, & 25 more of his troop, besides the cornet bearer to accompany vs to Collen, which we did in six daies, spending one night merily.’ Sherley dismissed Parker’s horsemen with a ‘bountifull reward’ the next morning, and the company resumed its rapid progress from Cologne to south-eastern Germany, travelling by coach through Frankfurt am Main and Nürnberg before coming to a halt at Augsburg.<sup>52</sup>

The company arrived at Augsburg only to discover that Don Cesare had already surrendered to Pope Clement VIII, who had in return allowed the Duke to retain

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<sup>50</sup> Parry, sig. A4<sup>r</sup>; Ross, p. 100.

<sup>51</sup> Parry, sig. A4<sup>r</sup>; Ross, p. 100.

<sup>52</sup> Parry, sig. A4<sup>r-v</sup>, Ross, pp. 100-101; Manwaring, p. 175. Sherley and Parker had both taken part in Willoughby’s expedition to Normandy (1589), Sir John Norris’ campaign in Brittany (1594), and the second Earl of Essex’s own more recent Island Voyage (1597). Parker’s biographical details may be gathered from T. Borman, ‘Sir Nicholas Parker (d. 1619), Soldier’, in *ODNB*.



possession of the imperial fiefs of Modena and Reggio, all of which as well as the journey to Augsburg are summarised by Sherley in a single paragraph: ‘and though my journey was vndertake~n in the deade of the winter, and I lefte no paines vntake~n to accelerate it: yet before I could arrive in Itallie I found the Duke given over to quietter resoluc~ouns, and ffarrara yeilded to the Pope, himself satissfyinge himself with Modona [Modena] and Rhegium [Reggio] of which he nowe beareth the title.’<sup>53</sup>

### ***The mission to take the war to the Spanish Indies, March 1598***

Sherley’s company of veterans had posted across the Netherlands and Germany in the dead of winter, and were evidently dismayed to hear that Don Cesare had recently capitulated to Clement VIII, but as one of Sherley’s attendants Manwaring would later recall ‘Sir Anthony did encourage us with comfortable words, assuring us, that if we would follow him and arm ourselves to take the adventure which he did purpose, we should all gain honour and greatly enrich ourselves.’<sup>54</sup> The party hired horses at Augsburg to travel across the Alps, ‘in respect that it was not passable by coach’, and after about ten days’ riding reached Venice. Sherley and his men do not offer any explanation as to why the decision was made to proceed to Venice, but it may have resulted from Sherley’s concern to lead his company to a friendly country, where they would be free to correspond with Essex and the secretariat, in order to receive new

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<sup>53</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>v</sup>; and Sherley, *Relation*, sig. B2<sup>r-v</sup>. Giovanni Dolfin, ‘Giovanni Dolfin, Venetian Ambassador at Rome, to the Doge and Senate, Rome, 20 December 1597’, *Calendar of State Papers, Venice*, vols. I-XXXVIII (London: H.M.S.O., 1864-1947), vol. IX: 1592-1603 (1897), no. 644. Pastor, vol. XXIII, pp. 208-9; vol. XXIV, pp. 389-94; Mitchell, pp. 20-22.

<sup>54</sup> Manwaring, p. 176.

instructions and to lift the spirits of his men, who had been downcast by the news of Cesare d'Este's capitulation to Clement VIII.<sup>55</sup> Sherley spent about three months at Venice casting about for a new project, and as another one of his attendants William Parry reported, 'Sir Anthony went to the Duke thereof [Doge Marino Grimani], who entertained him with all princely complement, sending him to his lodging a royall banquet of all kinde of confected sweete meates and wine in great aboundance; which continued a long time. Who likewise commaunded that we should haue libertie to see any thing in the cittie worthy the sight, which accordingly we saw'.<sup>56</sup>

Sherley meanwhile corresponded with members of the Essex secretariat and almost certainly with the Earl of Essex himself, during the three months he spent at Venice casting about for a profitable adventure, and a number of different possibilities were discussed during the course of the correspondence. Sherley's main options were to use his residence at Venice to seek employment elsewhere on the Italian Peninsula, to join the Huguenot forces of duc de Lesdiguières engaged in warfare from their base at Grenoble, and lastly to take ship from Venice for the Levant with the purpose of gathering intelligence about the so-called Portuguese and Spanish Indies.

Sherley unexpectedly took ship from Venice for the Ottoman Empire in May 1598, entrusting Thomas Chaloner the Younger who was on his way to join Lesdiguières at Grenoble, to explain to Anthony Bacon and the Essex secretariat the reasons behind his decision to leave for the eastern Mediterranean. Chaloner had been corresponding with

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 176.

<sup>56</sup> Parry, sig A4<sup>r</sup>; Ross, p. 101.

Essex and Bacon mostly from Florence since 1596, and he addressed a letter to Bacon from Lyons a few weeks after Sherley's departure, claiming that he had personally witnessed Sherley's repeated attempts to find employment at Venice:

I am safely arrived at Lyons, whereof I thought it convenient to advertise you, and withal to discharge part of so much as was committed to my charge by Sir Anthony Sherley at his departure for Constantinople, whose love and zealous affection to my Lord Marshal [Essex] and yourself [Anthony Bacon] is so well known that it were in vain for me to make any long protestation thereof. Therefore, in excuse of his journey toward the Levant without especial order, and perhaps disagreeing from some letters received at Venice, I can by my particular knowledge certainly inform you that he left no stone unmoved or means untried to find employment in the state of Venice, which is so far from entertaining new actions or new instruments for war, that they hardly vouchsafe those few which they have either good grace or large pension.<sup>57</sup>

Chaloner went on to report that Sherley had also decided against joining duc de Lesdiguières at Grenoble, as the war was fought on a small scale and he could not possibly expect much financial compensation, besides which France was decisively moving in the direction of reconciliation and a cessation of hostilities:

His journey to Monsieur Desdiguières [Lesdiguières] seemed a matter which would draw on a greater expense than the experience or reputation would return. For besides that there was no hope to bear any charge where there are already almost as many captains as there are soldiers, and the troops in those quarters being small and the enterprises in respect to the great bruit for the most

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<sup>57</sup> Thomas Chaloner, 'Thomas Chaloner to Anthony Bacon, Lyons, 2 June 1598', in *Calendar of the Manuscripts of the Marquis of Salisbury*, vol. VIII, p. 188.

part of small moment, whereunto adjoining the assurance of the issue of peace in France, the reasons seemed very lively unto him not to bend his course that way.<sup>58</sup>

Chaloner also admitted that ‘Monsieur Desdiguieres [Lesdiguières] hath disbanded his forces [and] the plague is in Grenoble’, which along with the pervading lack of enthusiasm for any new military adventures in Italy, had left Sherley with only the Levantine option that he had recently undertaken.<sup>59</sup> Chaloner went on to reveal that Sherley had discussed the project with Ferdinando I, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and the Venetian diplomat, Signor Antonio Foscarini. Whereas Ferdinando I had in effect signalled his approval of the project in writing, Foscarini had in Chaloner’s presence attempted to convince Sherley of its beneficence to all Christendom:

In conclusion, finding all projects answer his expectation weakly save only that of the Levant, he imparted it unto the Grand Duke [Ferdinando I de’Medici] and Signor [Antonio] Foscarini. The former named by letters urged it as a matter most necessary and of weighty consequence, promising to signify his allowance and opinion thereof to my Lord Marshal. The second in my presence gave him the greatest encouragement possible, affirming the undertaking of such an exploit to be beneficial to all Christendom and in particular to Venice, which by the traffic overland from thence was mightily enriched before the Portugals were lords of those parts. And for the facility thereof he held it so manageable that none but God only by miracle could give disturbance thereto. To prove that it stood with the grounds of Christianity he used many reasons, as transporting the war from our homes, as it were, into another world, the overwhelming of ambition and dispersing of those wares and merchants to all traffickers, which to the

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<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188. On Francois, Duc de Lesdiguières, cf. Stephane Gal, *Lesdiguières: Prince de Alpes et Connetable de France* (Grenoble: Presses universitaires de Grenoble, 2007) pp. 27 ff.

<sup>59</sup> Chaloner, p. 189.

empoverishing of all estates are now only made private to the Spaniard. In sum he held him happy that should by this good and lawful means immortalize his name forever.<sup>60</sup>

D.W. Davies took Chaloner's reference to the Grand Duke as meaning the Venetian Doge Marino Grimani, but as Manwaring's account makes abundantly clear it is Ferdinando I de' Medici who was the Grand Duke in question: 'From Augusta [*i.e.* Augsburg] we took post horses to Venice, where we did solace ourselves almost three months, in which time Sir Anthony did send his brother, Mr. Robert Sherley, of some business to the [Grand] Duke of Florence, who used him very honourably, giving him a chain of gold, valued to the worth of sixteen hundred French crowns'.<sup>61</sup>

Foscarini's devout arguments to transport the war 'from our homes, as it were, into another world', and to break the monopoly over eastern trade 'now only made private to the Spaniard' on the other hand, went far beyond Essex's long-standing intention to 'ascertain the strength and disposition of the Spanish and Portuguese forces in the [Indies] and the volume of their trade there.'<sup>62</sup> He was contemplating nothing less than igniting a war between the Indian kings and the Iberian colonisers, as reflected in Sherley's later attempts to make contact with the Mughal Emperor, and Chaloner's examples from Portuguese history to support the preceding arguments:

For my own part I find among the letters written to Pius Quintus one especially touching this matter written from the King of Portingale [Dom Manuel I], whereby he laments unto the Pope

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 188-89.

<sup>61</sup> Manwaring, p. 176.

<sup>62</sup> Davies, p. 82.

[Pius V] the hazard that he hath to be deprived thereof by the passage of the Red Sea, and intimates an intent already settled to attempt against him, against which he despaired to be able to prevail. Moreover the Senate of Venice, desirous to enjoy their accustomed traffick from those parts, understanding that certain Indian kings were in Portugal, they addressed their ambassador to congratulate with the king thereof, but their drift secretly was to move those kings to make head against the Portuguese, promising aid of leaders or to send founders to cast ordnance and make other weapons of war. This their practice was discovered by the kings themselves, and thereby ensued shame and discontentment to the Venetians to be taken playing double.<sup>63</sup>

Chaloner stated in his letter that Sherley had departed for the Levant without Essex' 'especial order, and perhaps disagreeing from some letters received at Venice', leading Samuel Chew to conclude that Sherley had begun acting on his own initiative, which is not an entirely accurate reading of the situation.<sup>64</sup> Sherley was a relative as well as a trusted lieutenant of the Earl of Essex, and was also on excellent terms with the secretariat, to the extent that he was allowed free reign to negotiate with the Tuscan Grand Duke and the Venetian diplomat Foscarini.<sup>65</sup> Chew appears to have interpreted Sherley's departure for the eastern Mediterranean as an ordinary soldier's act of insubordination, whereas Sherley had given assurances that he would attempt 'nothing without warrant from England', and later carried Essex' own letters of recommendation to the English consul and the Levant Company merchants at Aleppo.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Chaloner, p. 189. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *The Career and Legend of Vasco da Gama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 184 ff. Anthony Sherley, 'Sir Anthony Sherley to Anthony Bacon, Moscow, 12 February 1600', Ross, pp. 237-43. Davies, p. 84, and n. 23.

<sup>64</sup> Samuel C. Chew, *The Crescent and the Rose: Islam and England during the Renaissance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 243. cf. also Davies, pp. 83-4.

<sup>65</sup> Sherley's correspondence with Essex and Bacon is unfailingly warm and cordial.

<sup>66</sup> Chaloner, p. 189. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. B3<sup>r</sup>.

Sherley's own narrative moves seamlessly from Cesare d'Este's capitulation to his departure for Persia, avoiding any inconvenient references to the absence of a 'special order', although he does indicate that he cannot elaborate on the goals of his mission, given that he was vulnerable to prosecution under Spanish jurisdiction:

he [Essex] proposed vnto me after a smalle relation which I made vnto him of it from Venice the voiage of Persia: grounding of it vppon two pointes. ffirste the glorie of god... then if god would not please to cho[o]se me as a worthie instrumente to that greate ende: yet by making a profitable experience of my seeinge those cuntries, lymittinge vppon the kinge of Spaines vniall partes, & answearinge to her Maiesties marchauntes trades in Turkie, and Moscovie: and besides beinge not vnlikely but some partes might haue bi~n found, fitt for the India~n nauigati~on: then principated in Holland: and mutterd of in England: it might proue a subiecte to extracte greate, and good matter out of: for the honor of her Maiestie and the perticular good of our countrie: *besides, some more private [secret] designes, which my fortune being of the condic~on, which my persecutions haue brought it vnto, counselleth mee not to speake of: though they were moste worthie ones.*<sup>67</sup>

Sherley's claim that Essex had instructed him to travel to Safavid Persia is clearly a spurious invention, and while Essex would have certainly been aware of Sherley's negotiations with Ferdinando I de Medici and Antonio Foscarini, and the above-mentioned project to open up an eastern front against Spain by providing military assistance to the Mughals and other Indian princes, Sherley does not appear to have so much as alluded to having to travel to the Safavid Empire even with the intention of reaching the so-called Spanish Indies in any of the extant correspondence.

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<sup>67</sup> Ashmolean MS, fol. 118<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. B2<sup>v</sup>-B3<sup>r</sup>. Italics added in the latter part of the sentence.

Chaloner was convinced that Sherley had departed for Istanbul, but the latter had evidently decided to pursue his mission by travelling to Persia, following a chance encounter with the Italian traveller and interpreter Angelo Corrai, who had alerted Sherley to the lucrative opportunities at the court of Shah ‘Abbas I:

in the same city of Venice it was his fortune to hear of a great traveller, newly come to Venice from the Sophi’s [*ie.* the Shah’s] court, whose name was [Michel] Angelo [Corrai], born in Turkey, but a good Christian, who had travelled sixteen years, and did speak twenty-four kind of languages. This Angelo did likewise acquaint Sir Anthony of the worthiness of the King of Persia, that he was a gallant soldier, very bountiful and liberal to strangers, and what entertainment he had at his court; assuring Sir Anthony that, if he would go thither, it would be greatly for his advancement; and moreover that he would be his guide, and attend on him thither...<sup>68</sup>

George Manwaring recorded that when the mission to assist Don Cesare d’Este was rendered obsolete on account of his capitulation, Sherley had persuaded his companions that ‘if we would follow him and arm ourselves to the adventure which he did purpose, we should all gain honour and greatly enrich ourselves.’ Angelo Corrai’s revelation that Shah ‘Abbas was a ‘gallant soldier, very bountiful and liberal to strangers’ promised the same kind of riches Sherley had imagined earlier en route to Venice.

## **Conclusion**

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<sup>68</sup> Manwaring, pp. 176-7. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. B3<sup>r</sup>.



In conclusion, Sherley and his company were despatched to shore up the defences of Ferrara against a planned invasion by the Papal States. Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, had decided to take up Duke Cesare d'Este's appeal for military aid to his erstwhile ally Henri IV of France, most likely as a result of his meeting with Andre Hurault, Henri's ambassador on 12 December 1597. Sherley and his company reached Augsburg only to discover that Ferrara had conceded to the Pope's demands and determined to continue travelling south to Venice. Sherley's objectives were altered during his residence at the Venetian Republic, following discussions with the Grand Duke of Tuscany as well as Venetian authorities, who were interested in weakening Habsburg Spain's grip over eastern commerce, and seeing to it that Sherley and his company of veteran captains were deployed elsewhere, and persuaded him to travel to India to eject the Portuguese from *Estado da India*. Sherley's subsequent decision to travel to Persia via the Ottoman Empire, however, was underpinned by the promise of riches and military employment at the opulent court of Shah 'Abbas I.

## Chapter 4

### **‘One of the chiefe meanes by which he instructeth the world’: Allegorical Romance and Exemplarity in Sir Anthony Sherley’s *Relation of his Travels* (1613)**

In 1622 Sir Anthony Sherley dedicated a Spanish-language political treatise, *Peso Politico de Todo el Mundo* or *Political Power in the Whole World* to the Spanish chief minister, Gaspar de Guzman, Count-Duke of Olivares. He urged Olivares to heed his recommendations in *Peso Politico* so that it might ‘serve as a romance to amuse you when you feel tired of matters of greater significance.’<sup>1</sup> Sherley’s description of a political treatise that is structurally comparable to Giovanni Botero of Bene’s earlier *Relationi Universali* (1591-1598) is rather striking.<sup>2</sup> However, Sherley had made the connection between practical political treatise and popular romance almost a decade earlier in the *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (1613). This chapter argues that approximately the first quarter of the *Relation*, describing his journey from England to Persia and including many digressions, was conceived of as a romance intended to instruct and entertain much like the *Peso Politico*. William Sherman notes even the earliest English travel writing was ‘marked by complex rhetorical strategies. Its authors had to balance the known and the unknown, the traditional imperatives of persuasion and

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<sup>1</sup> ‘servira de un romance para desenfadarle cuando se hallare y estuviere cansado con mayores negocios’, Angel Alloza, Miguel Angel de Bunes, et al. (eds.) *Anthony Sherley: Peso de todo el mundo (1622), Discurso sobre el aumento de esta monarquia (1625)* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2010), p. 88.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36 ff.

entertainment, and their individual interests with those of their patrons... Given such diverse purposes, early modern travel writers were often torn between giving pleasure and providing practical guidance, between logging and narrating, between describing what happened and suggesting what could have happened.<sup>3</sup> Laurence Publicover has categorised John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins' play about the Sherley brothers as what he calls a dramatic romance.<sup>4</sup> Day, Rowley and Wilkins' play was twice-removed from the three brothers' memoirs, however, whereas the *Relation* had been penned by the 'chiefe Actor' in the enterprise.<sup>5</sup> Sherley's narrative does include many of the elements frequently associated with romance, including chivalry, the quest motif, travel, adventure, disguise and coincidence.<sup>6</sup> E. Denison Ross who edited the contemporary narratives relating to the Sherley mission, as well as more recent critics have been puzzled by the fact that Sherley's account often contradicts those of his companions George Manwaring, Abel Pincon and William Parry, especially since the latter had probably been instructed by Sherley himself.<sup>7</sup> This chapter demonstrates

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<sup>3</sup> William H. Sherman, 'Stirrings and Searchings (1550-1720)', in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs (eds.) *Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Laurence Publicover, 'Strangers at Home: the Sherley Brothers and Dramatic Romance', *Renaissance Studies* 24, 5 (2010), pp. 694-709. John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins, *The Travailes of the three English Brothers: Sir Thomas, Sir Anthony, Mr. Robert Shirley: As it is now play'd by her Maiesties Seruants* (London: printed [by George Eld for] Iohn Wright, 1607), and Anthony Parr (ed.) *Three Renaissance Travel Plays* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), pp. 55-134.

<sup>5</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. Anthony Sherley, *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London: printed by Nicholas Okes for Nathaniel Butter, 1613), sig. A4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Helen Cooper, *The English Romance in Time: Transforming Motifs from Geoffrey of Monmouth to the Death of Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 7 ff. Alex Davis, *Chivalry and Romance in the English Renaissance* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2003), pp. 2 ff.

<sup>7</sup> E. Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure: including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1933), pp. 15, 194. *A true report of Sir Anthony*

Sherley's fictionalisation of the mission by providing a close reading of the *Relation* alongside the narratives of Parry, Manwaring and Pincon, focusing on the company's passage from Malamocco to Ottoman Baghdad. The chapter further argues that the *Relation* is a thinly-disguised allegorical romance underpinned by a series of moral examples developed at key points in the narrative. Benedict Robinson (following Northrop Frye) has, in his book *Islam and Early Modern English Literature* (2007), described romance as the literary form that 'mediates between theogony and human experience... it translates mythical narratives into what we can first truly call literature, and thereby seeks to accommodate the divine to the human.'<sup>8</sup> Sherley was aware of romance's potential to adapt the divine to human purposes, and managed slowly to appropriate the divine will through a series of moral examples, which he in turn employed to castigate his Portuguese, Venetian and other enemies, and to exonerate himself from any suspicion as part of his rehabilitation.<sup>9</sup> John D. Lyons has written concerning the neglected rhetorical figure of the example that it is 'a way of taking our beliefs about reality and reframing them into something that suits the direction of a text. Example may therefore qualify as the most ideological of figures, in the sense of being the figure that is most intimately bound to a representation of the world and that most

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*Shierlies iourney ouerland to Venice fro[m] thence... to Casbine in Persia* (London: Richard Blower for Iohn Iaggard, 1600), sig. A3<sup>f</sup>. Jonathan Burton, 'The Shah's Two Ambassadors: The Travels of the Three English Brothers and the Global Early Modern' in Brinda Charry and Gitanjali Shahani (eds.), *Emissaries in Early Modern Literature and Culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 33 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Benedict Robinson, *Islam and Early Modern English Literature: the Politics of Romance from Spenser to Milton* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 4. Northrop Frye, *The Secular Scripture: a Study of the Structure of Romance* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976), pp. 139, 142.

<sup>9</sup> Sherley had of course converted to Catholicism after his return from Persia, and had in addition been serving the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs for close to a decade.

serves as a veil for the mechanics of that representation.’<sup>10</sup> Sherley employed both rhetorical and moral example as has been indicated, but it is important to note that he likewise co-opted and made use of heroic exemplarity in the *Relation*.

Sherley deliberately associated himself with Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex in a passage at the beginning of the *Relation* that almost becomes mesmeric through its repetition of the word example and its equivalents. Essex had of course been the champion of English Protestant chivalry after symbolically receiving the sword of his predecessor Sir Philip Sidney who was killed in 1586.<sup>11</sup> Henry, Prince of Wales had publically assumed Essex’ former role in 1610: he engaged Ben Jonson to write the speeches for his neo-Arthurian show *The Barriers*, in which Henry not only sought to assume Essex’ role through displaying his prowess, but also signalled his own royal ideology through a revival of the chivalric tradition. John D. Lyons states in his book *Exemplum* (1989) that examples were ‘predominantly chosen to reach common ground’ between early modern authors and their audience.<sup>12</sup> This chapter argues that Sherley’s association of himself with the Earl of Essex, and by extension with Prince Henry who considered himself to be Essex’ successor, as well as Sherley’s appeal to the crusader kings lauded by Jonson in the *Barriers*, indicate Sherley’s attempt to align himself with Prince Henry’s royal ideology through his choice of examples.

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<sup>10</sup> John D. Lyons, *Exemplum: the Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France and Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), preface, p. ix, and *passim*.

<sup>11</sup> Alexandra Gajda, *The Earl of Essex and Late Elizabethan Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), esp. chapter 2, ‘Philip Sidney’s Sword’, pp. 68 ff.

<sup>12</sup> Lyons, pp. x, 12 ff.

### **Malamocco to Antakya: elements of Travel, Adventure and Chivalry**

Sherley and his company sailed for the Ottoman Empire on 24 May 1598, expecting to reach their first port of call Zante in about ten days, but took more than twenty days to reach the island on account of adverse weather.<sup>13</sup> The Englishmen had only purchased enough provisions to last them fifteen days, and when the Italian passengers on board refused to sell them any more once they had run out of supplies, tensions started to escalate until one of the Italians allegedly insulted Queen Elizabeth: ‘whereof when Sir Anthony heard, he forthwith caused one of our company so to beate him with a billet [*i.e.* club or cudgel], that it is impossible he should ever recover it. In the performace whereof he made a great outcry, wherevpon all the Italians were vp in armes.’<sup>14</sup>

Parry mentions that no member of the company had been aware of the alleged insults until two days later, when they had been ‘made knowne by an Italian that attended maister Robert Sherly’, but the Italian passenger was nevertheless beaten so severely that he ‘burst both his arms, with many hurts besides’.<sup>15</sup> Sherley himself did not dwell on the nature of the punishment meted out to the passenger, except to note that he had been

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<sup>13</sup> Sherley, *Relation*, sig. B3<sup>r</sup>. William Parry, *A new and large discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley Knight, by Sea, and ouer Land, to the Persian Empire, wherein are related many straunge and wonderfull accidents: and also, the Description and Conditions of those Countries and People he passed by: with his returne into Christendome, written by William Parry Gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his Trauells* (London: printed by Valentine Simmes for Felix Norton, 1601), sig. A4<sup>v</sup>-B1<sup>r</sup>. Denison Ross, *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure*, p. 103. George Manwaring, ‘A True Discourse of Sir Anthony Sherley’s Travel into Persia’, in Denison Ross, p. 177.

<sup>14</sup> Parry, sig. B1<sup>r-v</sup>. Ross, pp. 102-3.

<sup>15</sup> Manwaring, p. 177.

compelled to give the order out of a sense of duty and respect toward the late Queen Elizabeth, and that his decision had been upheld as just by some of the more important merchants on board who were also travelling to Zante: ‘one of the worste in the shipp a passenger to Ciprus, vsed moste scandalous speeches of her ^maiesty, which being brought vnto me... I co~maunded one of my people to giue him a fitt rewarde for such a base vile abuse... and though the cause of the acte was iuste, and so vnderstood, by diuers principall marchants which went to Zante... yet through the instigac~on of one Hugo de Pottso a portingale factor which was going to Ormus [Hormuz]: though they shewed all to be satisfied, because they durste do no other: yett when we ~~with~~ weare to haue departed in the shipp... they would no more receiue vs.’<sup>16</sup> Sherley deflected attention away from the fact that he had taken it upon himself to punish an Italian passenger on board an Italian vessel by assigning blame to the Portuguese merchant Hugo de Potso whose name does not even occur in the other narratives.

Sherley was stranded on Zante and had to hire a dilapidated old ship to transport his company to Heraklion, in which ‘foure men had as much toile as possibly they could indure to laue water out of this rotten boate: which was so weake that if euen then wee hadde hadde but euer so little rough weather, there had all our hopes, together with our carcasses, perished, and we neuer haue arriued at Candia [Crete]’.<sup>17</sup> Sherley and his company sailed east from Heraklion to Paphos in south-western Cyprus, where the Turkish governor went on board the caramoussal with ‘wine and other fruits’ for refreshment, and as Manwaring recalled ‘used us very kindly, which made us think all

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<sup>16</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. B3<sup>r-v</sup>. Manwaring, p. 178.

<sup>17</sup> Parry, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>. Ross, p. 103.

Turks were of his condition, but we found it to the contrary.’<sup>18</sup> Manwaring was mentally comparing the governor’s gesture of hospitality with the company’s reception at their next port of call Larnaca, where the caramoussal carrying the Englishmen had been preceded in its arrival by none other than the ‘Morizell’ that had left them behind at Zante, and whose captain and master presently approached the governor and informed him that a company of desperate pirates were debarking at the harbour:

Sir Anthony having some notice of it, by a Greek which served in the argosy, presently sent Angelo [Corrai], his guide, unto the governor, to tell him that we were Englishmen going to Constantinople, to the Great Turk’s court; which message would not be heard, in regard the Venetians did labour so much against us. The governor... sent a captain for us, with three score soldiers, which they do call Janizaries; they came in a boat called a frigate, and when they were come close to the side of our ship, the captain came aboard us, commanding the Janizaries to remain still in the frigate: there he was talking with Sir Anthony an hour; in which time, the Armenian merchants that were in the argosy went to the governor, and persuaded him to take a ransom for us, and so to let us go, which he did, to Sir Anthony’s great cost.<sup>19</sup>

Sherley also describes the company’s ordeal at Larnaca in remarkable detail in the *Relation of his Travels*, even though his account differs from that of Manwaring in a number of important respects, namely the reappearance of the scheming Portuguese merchant Hugo de Potso, who had seen to it that the company were ejected from the Morizell at the island of Zante; a more pro-active and emotional intervention by the

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<sup>18</sup> Manwaring, p. 180.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. Manwaring places the incident at Tripoli (in Syria) rather than Larnaca, whereas Parry’s narrative clearly states that it took place at Cyprus, and Sherley’s own *Relation* places it specifically at the ‘Salines’, most likely referring to the salt lakes located close to Larnaca.



Armenian merchants on behalf of the English; and a noticeably more dramatic escape from the Janissaries sent for their arrest by the governor of Larnaca:

[T]he portingale [Hugo de Potso] and his complices presentlie wente on shore to the Subbassa of the place... and told him diuers pirats who had loste their shippes weare come into the harbour... he would giue him a good presente also, if hee would send some of his souldiers and take vs: at this oration of his weare present certaine Armenian passengers who had knowne vs in the shipp, which moued with the enormitie of so vile an acte, that Christians should sell and betraie Christians to Turkes: and that ... we should be persecuted... with all speed possible hired a boate themselues for Alexandretta: came with it vnto vs[,] prouided in it victualles for vs, and the masters themselues to loose no tyme and beseeched vs with the teares in their eies to flie from thence with all speed possible... wherefore we instantlie changed, into that barke: and perceiving a fregatt a farre of... for hast left most parte of our things behind vs, and yet could not make so much speed, but that the Janizaries which were in the fregatt and chased vs bestowed some shott vpon vs: and had peradventure ouertaken vs if the night had not ended their chasing vs.<sup>20</sup>

Parry and Manwaring do not make any mention of the perpetually scheming Hugo de Potso anywhere in their narratives, whereas Sherley appears to invite a comparison between the Portuguese villain and his ‘complices’ on one hand, and the devout and benevolent Armenians on the other, who are portrayed as being horrified by the Portuguese and Venetians’ ‘persecution’ of the Englishmen.<sup>21</sup> Sherley’s account of a

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<sup>20</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 119<sup>r-v</sup>. Sherley, sig. C1<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> Sherley may have simply invented the figure of Hugo de Potso, since he is not mentioned by Parry or Manwaring anywhere in their narratives, but it is important to note that Sherley was one of the few Englishmen present who could speak both Spanish and Italian, and may have been privy to additional information on account of his position as leader of the expedition. I have been unable to locate any

dramatic escape from the Janissaries was also closer to the elements of adventure romance, than Manwaring's account of an hour-long parley with the captain of the Janissaries, who had actually boarded the company's caramoussal.

Sherley and his companions were allowed to proceed with their journey after being detained by the authorities at Larnaca for two days.<sup>22</sup> William Parry and George Manwaring both agree that the company had difficulty finding a suitable vessel to transport them from Larnaca to the Turkish mainland. Parry recalled with evident disappointment that finding no alternative, the company 'hired a very small boate of some ten tunne (there being none other to hire)'. He also noted that the authorities at Larnaca dissuaded them from sailing to Iskenderun, warning that 'there lay Gallies fraught with Theeues [*i.e.* corsairs] that robbed all that passed that way'.<sup>23</sup>

Sherley and his company met another passenger boat from Cyprus on the road to Iskenderun some two hours after dark, but Sherley's small boat was soon blown off course and lost contact with the second vessel. Sherley and his men next sighted land close to Tripoli and al-Asi River in Lebanon, where he and Parry also learnt that the vessel they had seen the day before had been taken by the pirates at the entrance to Iskenderun and all her passengers had been killed: 'we... put ourselues to Sea thitherward... being accompanied by an other boat which helde her direct course whither

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references to Potso or Pozzo at Torre de Tombo, Archivo General de Simancas, or the Venetian State Archives, which does not necessarily preclude the existence of such a person.

<sup>22</sup> Parry, sig. B2<sup>r</sup>, and Ross, p. 104.

<sup>23</sup> Parry, sig. B2<sup>r</sup>.

we were bound, which was taken... and her men drowned. But, as God woulde haue it... our boate, by the way, being taken by an indirect winde to that our direct course, we thereby fell downe vpon Tripoly. Who being guided by an *omnipotent and neuer-failing Pilote*, we passed out of the sea into that famous riuier Orontes [al-Asi]'.<sup>24</sup>

Parry's *New and Large Discourse* (1601) was most likely composed according to instructions provided by Sherley himself, and a similar moralising strain permeates Sherley's own *Relation of his Travels* (1613), albeit the reflections in the latter publication aimed to partake of the divine will.<sup>25</sup> Sherley's own description of the passage to the Levant also includes many details about time and place, which were intended to lend a greater sense of authenticity to the *Relation*.

Sherley recorded that the boat they had taken regularly transported passengers between the two ports of Larnaca and Iskenderun, a 'smale waie of onlie a night and a halfe saylinge and halfe a daies sayling', so the captain could hardly have been expected to stray from his wonted course toward the latter. He further added that the weather conditions seemed to be well-suited for making the crossing, and recalled without any trace of doubt that the night was 'faire with the shyninge of the moone, and starre-light', which perhaps might not have boded well as far as the pirates lying in wait near Iskenderun were concerned, but nonetheless contradicted Parry's attribution of their survival to a contrary wind blowing them off course. Sherley arranged the detailed

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<sup>24</sup> Parry, sig. B2<sup>v</sup>-B3<sup>r</sup> (italics added). Ross, p. 106.

<sup>25</sup> Parry follows Sherley's actions rather closely in his narrative. His point of view is that of a privileged eye-witness, and his account of Sherley's actions is invariably complimentary.

references to the regular course plied by the vessel, the short distance between the relevant harbours, the slender possibility of the boat happening to go astray, and the seemingly perfect weather conditions in succession, to create a cumulative effect intended to present the surprising outcome as what he called a ‘greate worke of god’ to deliver his company from clear and present danger.<sup>26</sup> He denied agency either to the captain or to natural phenomena, in connection with their unexpected appearance at Tripoli rather than Iskenderun, by focusing on the ostensibly familiar course and favourable weather conditions, to drive home the notion that they had been guided instead by the mysterious hand of an ‘omnipotent and neuer-failing Pilote’.<sup>27</sup>

Sherley’s suggestion that his company’s survival could only be attributed to a ‘greate worke of god’, gently nudging them out of harm’s way toward the relative safety of Lebanon and the al-Asi River, is challenged by Manwaring’s independent account composed only a year after they had made the crossing to Lebanon:

but there [in Larnaca] we were driven to some extremity, in regard we could not get shipping, which constrained us to embark ourselves in a small fisher boat for Scandarone [Iskenderun], which was not past one day and night’s sailing, but, the wind being contrary, we could not weather the point of Scanderone, but were forced unto the sea, where, by reason of a tempest and contrary

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<sup>26</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. B4<sup>v</sup>-C1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Sherley’s remarkable rhetorical ability has on occasion been noted by his biographers. Sir Edward Denison Ross concluded that he ‘must have possessed an almost hypnotic power in personal intercourse – even over those men who trusted him least... In short he had the gift of leading men ‘by the nose’ and persuading them against their better instincts’. Ross, p. 87. He was certainly confident enough of his rhetorical abilities to publish what he claimed was his oration before Shah Abbas in the first leaked pamphlet concerning his journey to Persia. *A true report*, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>-A4<sup>v</sup>, and Ross, pp. 92-94.

wind together, we were tossed up and down six days, having no victuals, but a little fresh water and some tobacco. In the end, we had descried land, and, the wind serving us for that place, we took our adventure thither, and when we came within perfect view of that place, the master of the boat told us we were hard by the river Orantes [al-Asi] and, if it pleased Sir Anthony, we might go up that river, and so land ourselves in the Holy Land, which Sir Anthony was very desirous of; and so the seventh day we landed, being all of us almost spent for want of victuals.<sup>28</sup>

Manwaring stated unambiguously that they were blown out to sea where they were caught in a powerful storm for six days, which is a far cry from Sherley and Parry's divine pilot guiding them to the Levant, and indicates Sherley's concern to make his narrative conform to his declared 'godly' purpose.<sup>29</sup> He went so far as to provide an explanation for his decision a few pages later, in which he reminded his readers that 'good intenc~ons haue such a simpathie with god his owne disposic~on, that he will both assist them which haue them, for their better incouragement, and for others example, being one of the chiefe meanes ^ by which he instructeth the world.'<sup>30</sup>

### *Antakya to Baghdad: elements of Coincidence, Disguise and the Quest Motif*

Sherley and his company continued toward Antakya, and while they may have been spared having to face the pirates of Iskenderun, Parry's first impression of the local soldiers was hardly more favourable: 'we passed out of the sea into that famous riuer

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<sup>28</sup> Manwaring, pp. 180-81.

<sup>29</sup> Sherley and his partisans declared either implicitly or explicitly, beginning with the second cluster of material about the Sherley brothers, that he had travelled to Persia with the intention of instigating a war between the Safavids and the Ottomans in 1598-1599 (see above, chapter 2).

<sup>30</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 121<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. D1<sup>v</sup>.

Orontes; along the which we held our course vp into the countrie, the Janizaries or souldiers thereof flocking about vs, threatning, that if they might not haue what they demaunded, they would cul out such of our company as best pleased them to serve their sodomiticall appetites and most vile and villainous purposes.’<sup>31</sup>

Sherley’s own account of the landing is strikingly different from those of Parry and Manwaring: ‘Their we found a goodlie cuntrie replete euen naturallie with all the blessinges the earth can giue to man: for the moste parte vncultiuated, heere and there as it were sprinkled with miserable inhabitants: which in their fashion showed the necessitie they had to liue, rather then any pleasure in their liuinge.’ His reference to a ‘goodlie cuntrie’ was mostly dictated by the logic of his narrative: Sherley had claimed that his company had been delivered from danger and guided to safety through God’s intercession, so it could hardly have been otherwise. Sherley most likely avoided any reference to the dispute with the soldiers, and eventual capitulation to their demands, because it went against the spirit of his narrative. He nevertheless addressed the issue of travellers’ security if only in passing: ‘from thence [the place of their landing, close to Antakya] we sente our interpreter to Antiochia to provide vs horses to bring vs thither: which hee returned within two daies after: and with them wee proceeded in our journey thither full of greate care how we should escape from thence. The Turke having given certaine sea scales to trade in, out of which as it was vnlawfull for any to conuerse: so it must needes be an vneuitable perill for so greate a company’.<sup>32</sup> Sherley appears to suggest that he and his company had debarked outside of clearly demarcated trading

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<sup>31</sup> Parry, sig. B3<sup>r</sup>. Ross, p. 106. Manwaring, pp. 181-2.

<sup>32</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. C1<sup>r</sup>.

zones established by the Ottoman government. He was evidently familiar with the process of applying to the Sultan for a safe-conduct: he had followed the regular procedure for obtaining *aman* or protection, by applying to the Sultan through the English ambassador at Istanbul, Henry Lello in June 1598. Lello had obtained the *aman* which would have been issued either by the Sultan or one of his representatives as a *berat* or order, and forwarded it to Sherley in August 1598. Sherley ought to have been able to travel through the country unimpeded if he was in possession of the order, and one can only surmise that he had not yet received the Ottoman Sultan's *berat*.<sup>33</sup>

Sherley recorded that he sent Angelo Corrai to obtain horses for the company so they could ride from their landing place to Antakya. Parry, on the other hand, noted that Angelo had also been ordered to bring back a military escort: 'This while we sent [Angelo Corrai] to Antioch, not three dayes iourney off, for certaine Janizaries to safeconduct vs thither, which Janizaries were of our *interpreter's acquaintance*, who being come [to the port], the other left us immediately, and so we passed to Antioch, conducted by the Janizaries which we sent for thither'.<sup>34</sup> Sherley as leader would certainly have been aware of Angelo Corrai's instructions, but he does not mention meeting the Janissaries except as a chance encounter at Antakya:

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<sup>33</sup> Henry Lello, 'Mr. H. Lello to Sir Robert Cecil, dated at Istanbul, 6<sup>th</sup> August 1598', in Evelyn Philip Shirley, *The Sherley Brothers: an Historical Memoir of the Lives of Sir Thomas Sherley, Sir Anthony Sherley and Sir Robert Sherley, Knights [etc.]* (London: printed for the Roxburghe Club, 1848), p. 17. Stanford J. Shaw, *The History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), vol. I, p. 163; and see also Daniel Goffman, *The Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 64 ff.

<sup>34</sup> Parry, sig. B3<sup>r</sup> (*italics added*). Ross, p. 106.

when the same greate prouidence which at firste defended vs from the former hazards: gaue vs the good happ to meete with two Janizaries Hungarish-runngates: who vnderstandinge that we were Christians compelled against our disposicons into that parte: our intention to be a visitatio~n of Jerusalem, and withall our feare of some greate preiudice by our being arriued out of the distinguished places for all Christians: hauing tould vs firste that they themselues had bin Christians and though they had for reasons beste knowne to themselues altered that condic~on: yet they ever wished well to those which still weare so, and especiallie to all of those partes: and afterwarde cheerfullie comfortinge vs, inuited vs to lodge in their house, securinge vs by a number of greate protestac~ons from all danger: which ^ as they courteouslie offered, so if I maie giue so faire a tearme to such people [*i.e.* renegades] they honorable performed.<sup>35</sup>

Sherley's detection of the hand of providence in a 'fortuitous' meeting with the two Hungarian Janissaries should come as no surprise. Sherley contradicts Parry's earlier *Discourse* for which he had provided the instructions, for the second time since the passage from Larnaca to the al-Asi in Lebanon, to again demonstrate the sympathy between his intentions and 'god his own disposic~on'. He was also concerned with balancing the traditional demands of persuasion and entertainment: just as he had incorporated an imaginary pursuit of the Englishmen by the Ottoman Janissaries for dramatic effect at their departure from Larnaca, he sought to evoke a sense of surprise and wonder through the meeting with the Hungarian Janissaries at Antakya.

Manwaring agrees with Parry that it took six days to reach Aleppo and the party was warmly welcomed by the Levant Company merchants residing in the city: 'we were kindly received by one Mr. [Richard] Colthurst, then being consul for the English

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<sup>35</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 119<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. C1<sup>r-v</sup>.



merchants, and also of the merchants themselves, who lodged us in their houses, and furnished us with such things as we did want.’<sup>36</sup> Alfred Wood records that there were fourteen merchants at Aleppo beside the consul.<sup>37</sup> Sherley was by all accounts well-received by the consul and Levant merchants at Aleppo. He confided to the Levant merchants that he was to rendezvous with John Davies in the East Indies, which is consistent with Essex’s late strategy to disrupt commercial shipping between Spain and her colonies: ‘his [Sherley’s] voyage as we well perceive is to meet Captain [John] Davis with certain Flemish [*i.e.* Dutch] ships in the East Indies to take some hold of the Spaniards there, but he keepeth all very secret.’<sup>38</sup> Sherley and his men spent five to six weeks feasting and carousing in Ottoman Aleppo, after which they joined the armed convoy of two newly-appointed officials bound for Iraq, and after twenty-three days’ sailing down the Euphrates landed at Fallujah port close to Baghdad.

George Manwaring recorded that on the way to Baghdad the Kadi in whose convoy Sherley and his company had been travelling, warned the latter that his merchandise might be searched and impounded at the custom house, and offered to carry the company’s valuables through customs under his own name. The Kadi’s offer is the

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<sup>36</sup> Manwaring, p. 183.

<sup>37</sup> Alfred C. Wood, *A History of the Levant Company* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1935), p. 24. Gerald MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580-1720* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>38</sup> P.R. Harris, *The Letter-book of William Clarke, Merchant at Aleppo, 1598-1608* (London: Birkbeck College, 1954), p. 214. D.W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: the Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons, as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy, Morocco, Persia, Spain and the Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 88, and L.W. Henry, ‘The Earl of Essex as Strategist and Military Organizer, 1596-7’, in *English Historical Review* 68, 268 (1953), pp. 363-93.

starting point for a chain of events that taken together reveal Sherley's motives for adopting an overtly moralising authorial persona in the *Relation*:

before we came to Babilon [Baghdad] the Cadie that went of the embassage from the Turk to the Viceroy of Babilon [*i.e.* Hasan Pasha] told Sir Anthony that his goods would be searched and, as he did fear, would be taken from him, and did counsel him this: to deliver some of his goods to him, and he would safely keep them for him, and deliver them to him at his departure from Babilon... which he did very honestly perform. Sir Anthony did according to his advice, giving him some of his jewels and other commodities; but his cups of emmorods [emeralds] he reserved for the Viceroy of Babilon... before we came into the city we were searched, and all our goods taken from us, to the worth of six thousand crowns, and never saw it again. Had we not delivered that commodity to the Ambassador, we had been left naked to the world.<sup>39</sup>

William Parry corroborated Manwaring's account for the most part, and while he recognised that the Pasha 'dealt better with vs then wee expected; for hee gaue vs, by estimation, halfe the worth of our goodes', he could not conceal his annoyance that the Pasha 'extorted from Sir Anthony a great deal of plate made of pure emerald, which he purposed to bestow on the Persian King ['Abbas I].'<sup>40</sup> Manwaring's earlier jibe that Sherley reserved his 'cups of emmorods' for the 'Viceroy of Babilon' is meant to be ironic, but he seems to have been genuinely unaware of the fact that the Pasha had actually reimbursed Sherley for 'half the worth of his goods', about which Parry was

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<sup>39</sup> Manwaring, pp. 191-92.

<sup>40</sup> Parry, sig. C1<sup>r</sup>. Ross, pp. 111-12.

evidently better informed, which supports Guy Le Strange's statement that Parry had been employed as Sherley's secretary during the expedition.<sup>41</sup>

Sherley's own account does not mention either the Kadi's favour to his company or Hasan Pasha's audience with him: 'As soone as we came to Babyl~on having putt the stocke which I had all into jewells and marchandize to carrie the fashion of a marchant; at the Dougana which is the custome howse all whatsoever was staid for the Bashawe, and as I perceiued not so much for any great vse which he mente to make of those thinges: as for the suspicon which he had of me and my extraordinarie companie bearinge much cause thereof with it: and because I gaue out I had more goodes comminge with the caravan by lande, to bind me not to starte from thence.'<sup>42</sup> Sherley's contempt for the Governor's authority is evident from Manwaring's account, and to acknowledge any favour from a Turkish Kadi would have gone against the spirit of his narrative, but Sherley also intended to convey the impression that he and his company had been deprived of all means 'whatsoever' by the Governor. He went on to relate how he had been left with absolutely 'nothing in the world', and invited the reader to imagine his dilemma as the leader of a loyal band of soldiers, trapped in a foreign country without even the most basic means to obtain provisions for themselves:

in the meane time by verie necessitie, hauinge lefte me nothinge in the worlde: what extreame affliction I was in by that means for the presente and in what iuste cause of feare for the future: everie man maie easielie iudge: I had my brother with me a younge gentelma~n whose affeccion to

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<sup>41</sup> 'Parry, who acted as Secretary to Sir Anthony', Guy Le Strange (ed.), *Don Juan of Persia: A Shi'ah Catholic (1560-1604)* (London: Routledge & Sons, 1926), pp. 5, 332.

<sup>42</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 122<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. D2<sup>v</sup>.

me had onlie led him to that disaster, and the workinge of his owne vertue: desiringe in the beegininge of his beste yeares to inable himself to those thinges which his good minde raised his thoughtes vnto. I had also five and twentie other gentlemen for the moste parte: the reste such as had serued me longe: onlie carried with their loues to me into the course of my fortune. I had no meanes to giue them sustenannce to liue, and lesse hope to un^wrapp them, from the horrible snare into which I had brought them, being farre from all friends, and further from counsell, not vnderstandinge the language of the people... much lesse their proceedinges.<sup>43</sup>

Sherley's statement above that he had 'no meanes' to giue them sustenance to live is clearly an exaggeration, since his attendant Parry recorded that 'During the time we staid in Babilon, we hadde *all kinde* of fowle, flesh, and fish, with *great store* of venison very cheape' (emphasis added), while Pincon observed: 'In Babylon, otherwise named Bagadet [Baghdad], one lives well and cheaply; bread, wine, fruit, milk and cream are excellent and to be had for nothing, as also mutton, gazelle, chicken and pigeon, but especially the most exquisite partridges in the world... Stuffs for clothing are also very cheap, and there are groceries of all sorts [etc].'<sup>44</sup> Sherley's clear exaggeration of the situation derived from the strong sense of religious providentialism permeating the *Relation* as will be shown at his escape from Baghdad. He does admit a few lines down that victuals were 'moste aboundante and excellent good of all sortes, and verie cheape, which ^was a mightie blessinge for me, which had nothing but a generall wardropp of cloathes: not in our coffers but vppon our backes', but his claim that 'we were forced to

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<sup>43</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 122<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. D2<sup>v</sup>-D3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>44</sup> Parry, sig. C2<sup>r</sup>, Ross, p. 112. Abel Pincon, 'The Relation of a Journey taken to Persia... by a Gentleman in the Suite of Sir Anthony Sherley [etc.]', in Ross, p. 143. Manwaring, p. 192.

make monie of [our clothes] by peece-mele, accordinge to the fallinge of the lotte, and our necessitie, and with that liued' is not supported by the other narratives.<sup>45</sup>

Parry records that during their stay in Baghdad a Dutch member of the company, who allegedly bore a grudge against some of the others, approached the Ottoman authorities with 'matter of importance' regarding the expedition. Sherley and his company had disguised themselves as merchants, and any disclosure about their objectives and destination could well have led to their detention by the authorities:

At Babilon [Baghdad] wee remained a moneth or more, in which time a Dutchman, being one of our company, had like to have preferred vs all to the head-mans handling. For, being one day drunke (according to his wont) and withal, [(]bearing a grudge to some of our company) went in that moode to some of the chiefe Officers of the Turkes in Babilon, made signes to them that he had some matter of importance to deliuer to the Bashaw [Pasha], touching Sir Anthony. Which Officers sent for an Armenian a Christian, that was then in towne, who had vsed Sir Anthony exceeding wel... to whome they shewed the signes the Dutchman had made. Hee forthwith aunswered that hee was a druncken companion, and that Sir Anthony hadde often beaten him for his immoderate bowsing, and continuall drunkennesse, which was... the only cause he thus plaied his parte. And withall desired them to suffer their Janizaries [Janissaries] to beate him well and to send him so beaten to his maister. Which was done (by theyr commaunds) accordingly.<sup>46</sup>

Parry's reference to the anonymous Dutchman above is intriguing, since the latter may well have been travelling with the company in order to make eventual contact with the fleet of Cornelis and Frederik de Houtman (and John Davis) in the 'East Indies', as

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<sup>45</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 122<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. D3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>46</sup> Parry, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>-C2<sup>r</sup>, Ross. p. 112.

reported earlier by William Clarke from Aleppo.<sup>47</sup> Manwaring also mentioned the influential Armenian who had intervened on Sherley's behalf, referring to him as 'Margevelo' which comes across as an Italianised form, likely via the interpreter Michelangelo Corrai of that individual's name, although unfortunately it is not immediately recognisable in the form reproduced.<sup>48</sup> Parry recorded that the company lived in 'great feare and perplexitie, by reason of the druncken Dutchmans signes and tokens' for over a month, while they waited for 'a Carauan of Persians, and a great company of merchants' to depart from Baghdad for the Persian Empire, when they suddenly received letters from Aleppo by which 'we were wisht to make all possible speede from Babilon, for that wee were discouered there' and that 'there were letters from thence [Syria] in all post addressed to stay vs'.<sup>49</sup> Manwaring provides a detailed account of how the company managed to escape from Baghdad which he attributed primarily to the efforts of the Armenian 'Margevelo': 'There was a Christian, an Armenian born, which did attend on the Bashawe [Pasha], whom he loved dearly; his name was Margevelo: this Christian did labour very much in Sir Anthony's behalf; which, in the end, he obtained, and got him his liberty to depart quietly, but could not get him his [confiscated] goods... but made means to help Sir Anthony to eight hundred crowns, of some *Venetian merchants* which were there [*i.e.* Baghdad].'<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> Harris, p. 214. Davies, p. 88.

<sup>48</sup> I am grateful to Professor Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe of Tufts University, New York for her help in interpreting Manwaring's transcription of Michelangelo Corrai's 'Margevelo'.

<sup>49</sup> Parry, sig. C2<sup>v</sup>, Ross, p. 113.

<sup>50</sup> Manwaring, pp. 193-4 (italics added). Manwaring's account is corroborated by William Clarke who confirms that Sherley borrowed 800 dollars from a Venetian. Harris, pp. 215-16.

Sherley himself did not mention Margevelo even once and credited their successful escape to a Florentine named Victorio Speciero. He reported that after about a month's stay when the company had come under suspicion, Speciero had approached him and after some initial pleasantries, warned him that he was under surveillance, and advised him that even if he was not concerned for his own sake, he should nevertheless see to it that no harm would come to his numerous followers and dependents:

but after one monthe was paste, and time fastned everie mans eies more firmelie vppon vs: one daie a florentine marchante, whom I had onlie knowne in the waie betweene Aleppo and Babyl~on [*i.e.* Baghdad] by a ridinge acquaintance: came vnto me, and after a litle other discourse, tould me that there was a greate muttering amongste diuers greate men their: what I was, and what my designes might be that he founde me to be dangerouslie spied after: and wished me to haue regarde if not to myselfe: yet to so many which he did imagine weare impawned in that misfortune by my meanes... yet I was so fearfull of an Ittalian marchant that I did rather imagine him to be the spie: then lightlie to haue bi~n an instrument of his [*i.e.* the spy's] preuenc~on.<sup>51</sup>

Sherley's description of the supposed meeting with Speciero comes across as oddly contrived, not only because he had sailed from Birecik to Baghdad, but also because Speciero's speech constantly reflects Sherley's own views, whether with respect to his being 'dangerously spied after', or having 'impawned' his company in that 'misfortune', which is strikingly close to the above passage, where Sherley speaks of the 'horrible snare' into which he had brought them, and of course the supposed 'pawning' of the clothes off their backs to purchase goods in Baghdad. Sherley reported that Speciero returned two days afterwards and 'as a man moued in his verie soule with anguish',

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<sup>51</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 122<sup>v</sup>-123<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. D3<sup>v</sup>-D4<sup>r</sup>.

implored Sherley to put his trust in him, since he (Speciero) was seemingly convinced that Sherley would not have placed himself in such a manifestly dangerous situation, except for an uncommonly worthy cause, and that he only wished to assist Sherley and his company along with their mission out of Christian charity: ‘two daies after he... beseeched me not to couer my selfe longer from him, who did trulie wish me well, not so much for my person (which hee could know litle) but because his conceite was that I would not haue hazarded my selfe in such a journey: but for some greate end which he did beliuue well of and besides in charity to a Christian and so manie Christians with me saying that their was a carravan of Persian pillgrimes arriued two daies since from mec[c]a without the towne... and taking me by the hande, beseeched me againe to beliuue him and to go presentlie with him to the carravan’.<sup>52</sup> Sherley’s second meeting with Speciero initially reads much like the first, with the recurrence of the theme of his responsibility as head of the company – which becomes subordinated to what Sherley claimed was the ‘great end’ he was destined to bring about – and which runs like an unspoken code through the entire *Relation*: he was referring to his ‘quest’ that he travelled to Persia specifically to incite the Shah against the Ottomans.

Sherley resumed the narrative of his discussion with Speciero once they reached the caravan of Persian pilgrims ‘without the towne’. He then proceeded to relate what the printers have glossed as a ‘strange and extraordinary kindnesse’:

when I came there he brought me to a vittorin [Italian: vetturino] of whom he had allreadie hired horses, camelles, and moyles for me, and I founde a tente pitched by his servantes: and then

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<sup>52</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 123<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. D4<sup>r-v</sup>.



openinge his gowne he deliuered me a bagg of checkins [chequins], with these verie wordes: the god of heaven blesse yow, and your whole companie, and your enterprise, which I will no further desire to knowe, then in my hope: which perswadeth me that it is good... but if it please god so to directe both our safties with good providence that we maie meete againe, I assure my selfe that you will remember me to be your frind which is inough for all that I can saie to a man of your sorte: and without almoste giving me leasure to yeeld him condigne thanks (if any thanks could be condigne) for so greate and for so noble a benefitt, he departed from me.<sup>53</sup>

Sherley's claim that Speciero had hired 'horses, camelles, and moyles for me, and I founde a tente pitched by his servants' closely resembles the earlier episode in Larnaca, where the pious Armenians had with all speed possible hired 'a boate, themselues for Alexandretta: came with it vnto vs[,] prouided in it victualles for vs, and the maisters themselues to loose no tyme' both in terms of sentence structure and corresponding attention to the list of details given in the narrative.<sup>54</sup> Sherley's attempt to supplant 'Margevelo' with Victorio Speciero as his protector at Baghdad is interesting when viewed in relation to the earlier episode, but it is more instructive to recognise the symmetry at work within Sherley's *Relation* that demanded the replacement of the Armenian 'Margevelo' with the Florentine Speciero: the earlier episode wherein the generous Armenians had assisted Sherley and his company with their escape from Larnaca, had been intended to expose the 'scelerateness' of the Portuguese merchant Hugo de Potso, to whom Speciero is diametrically opposed.<sup>55</sup> E. Denison Ross and subsequent critics have found it difficult either to believe Sherley's incredible story

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<sup>53</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 123<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. D4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>54</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 119<sup>r-v</sup>. Sherley, sig. B4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>55</sup> The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines scelerateness as being 'atrociously wicked'.

concerning Speciero's generosity, or to reconcile his version of events with the total silence of Parry, Manwaring and Pincon regarding Speciero, and indeed Hugo de Potso for that matter: 'In his *Relation* Anthony tells how they were saved by the amazing generosity of a Florentine merchant named Signor Victorio Speciero, who not only helped them to get away secretly and to attach themselves to a caravan of Persian pilgrims, but also supplied Anthony with money and gifts to compensate for what he had lost. It is evident that Anthony kept the exact circumstances of this generous deed very carefully to himself: for neither Manwaring, Pincon, nor Parry report it; Manwaring indeed attributes their escape to a totally different agency [*i.e.* Margevelo].'<sup>56</sup>

Ross had in fact failed to see Sherley's point, since he was looking for an accurate representation of events, whereas the latter offers a kind of parable, or suggests 'what could have happened' with the invention of Speciero. Sherley had cast himself as a soldier of God in the introduction to the *Relation*, and his travails in Baghdad – the Biblical Babylon – signalled a key turning point in his narrative:

And though it bee a misserable thinge for a man to growe an example in cases of afflicc~on, yet it is necessarie that some men should be soe: and because it pleaseth god that I should be one, and a greate one of these so I maie be allso taken, for as greate a one of his infinitt mercies, and th^rough ^them his directe pleasure in what sorte he will haue men gover~ne themselues: for hauinge fastened my minde to that good purpose [incite the Shah to war], and intermingled some particuler intenc~ons of my owne ambiti~ons: as god shewed a sensible disposic~on to favour the one, so by humbling me to the verie pitt of extremities: he taught me to caste awaie the other, and

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<sup>56</sup> Ross, pp. 15, 194. Davies, pp. 91-2.

to haue my sole confidence in him, disposing my minde to his pleasure, not to the counsell of my owne frailtie: which founded in the perfectest man, moueth to contynuall errores.<sup>57</sup>

Sherley was making the case that God humbled him to the ‘pitt of extremities’ at Baghdad on account of his personal and self-interested reasons for undertaking the journey to Safavid Persia, but once he had ‘cast away’ his former motivations and dedicated himself wholly to the ‘good purpose’, he was made an example of God’s pleasure how he will have men ‘gover~ne themselues’. Needless to say, Sherley’s redemption was signalled through the intercession of the Florentine Speciero, who supposedly helped him escape from the Ottomans. Speciero’s appearance had been prefaced with a description of the remains of Babylon, and of the divine punishment meted out to the Babylonians for their pridefulness. Sherley’s punishment due to his personal ‘ambiti~on’ was meant to parallel that of the Babylonians, and once he was purged of his selfish and undesirable ‘intenc~ons’, he was supposedly rescued by the generous allegorical figure of the Florentine merchant Victorio Speciero:

I will... speake of Babil~on not to the intente to tell stories... but because nothing doth more impresse any thinge in mans nature then example: to shewe the truth of god his worde, whose vengeance threatened by his prophitts, are trulie succeeded in all those partes: which weare once so swolne with the pride of the greatnes of their state which they possessed... that as they weare the heades of the worlde by their power, and by their excellencie: so weare they... blowen vpp to a concepte of eternitie: as though any earthlie foundac~on... co[u]ld possiblie be perpetuall. Niniuie that which god himself calleth that greate cittie hath not one stone standing which may giue a memorie of the being of a towne... all the grunde on which Babil~on was spredd is lefte

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<sup>57</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 123<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. E1<sup>r</sup>.

now desolate, nothing standing... but onlie parte... of the great tower which God hath suffred to stand... for an eternall testimonie of his greate worke in the confusi~on of mans pride.<sup>58</sup>

Sherley's moral argument culminates in the following crucial paragraph, where he concludes that having dedicated himself entirely to God's 'great purpose', and been rewarded through Speciero's miraculous intervention on his behalf, no one should presume to judge his person based on his present condition, but based on the 'great purpose' which he had supposedly been selected to carry out by God:

god is not as man whom we maie abuse, by having diuers propositi~ones mingled of good and badd endes: the bookes of our hartes being laid oppen before him in which he readeth our moste inwarde thoughtes, for which we muste contynuallie giue an accompte: feelinge the rewarde of our good motiones, by the magnificencie of his mercies, and our badd by the inflicc~on of his calamities, which we maie avoide if wee will vnderstand god and our selues... which should make the judgment of men not to proceed to their absolutnes by behoulding the present fortune of any [e.g. himself], but firste see the ende which god hath appointed him vnto, and then to giue a ... sentence, in which they cannott erre drawing their judgment from his who neuer erreth.<sup>59</sup>

Sherley was pushing back against his detractors by downplaying the value of their judgement compared to that of Almighty God; but there still remains the lingering question of why he had chosen to describe Victorio Speciero as a Florentine merchant and Hugo de Potso as Portuguese for that matter, when we know from Manwaring and William Clarke that 'Margevelo' had arranged for Sherley to receive eight hundred

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<sup>58</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 122<sup>r-v</sup>. Sherley, sig. D3<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>59</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 123<sup>v</sup>-124<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. E1<sup>v</sup>-E2<sup>r</sup>.

dollars from a *Venetian* merchant or merchants. Sherley bore a grudge against the Venetians after he was arrested and banished ‘on pain of death’ from Venice (1604), while Nixon maintained that he was poisoned in Portugal soon after his embassy to Morocco, which explains why he had chosen to describe his arch-villain as Portuguese and his ‘complices’ as Venetians in the *Relation*.<sup>60</sup> Sherley’s grudge against the Venetians is detectable for example in his ironic reference to ‘my good frende the Venetian’ in a letter to his sister Lady Tracy, and perhaps more importantly in his deliberate targeting of Venetian commercial shipping, which contributed to his being recalled as Spanish Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean; but his decision to describe Speciero as a Florentine comes down to two possibilities: either it was a tribute to Ferdinando de Medici who had encouraged him to travel to the Indies and offered to write to Essex on his behalf, or a recognition of Prince Henry’s interest in Medici court culture, of which the former is the more likely of the two possibilities.<sup>61</sup>

Sherley routinely described various heads of state as ‘the Persian’, ‘the Turk’ or ‘the Venetian’, so it would hardly have been inconsistent as far as he was concerned, to imagine Ferdinando de Medici as ‘representing’ Florence, and the idea can be seen as early as the opening sentence of the *Relation*: ‘Since men are brought forth vppon the earth for good endes, the principalleste of which is the glory of god, and then to better the worlde (^in which ^manie haue had bandes, either of necessitie or other occupations to haue lesse experience) by their knowledge: I thinke I should mightelie erre if I should

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<sup>60</sup> Davies, pp. 141-65, and pp. 193-224. Anthony Nixon, *The Three English Brothers, [etc.]* (London: printed by [Adam Islip?] for John Hodgets, 1607), sig. K1<sup>f</sup>.

<sup>61</sup> Sherley, ‘Sir Anthony Sherley to Lady Tracy, Milan, May 1608’, Shirley, p. 68.

not deliuer as well to others, what I haue seene and learned by my passinge so many, and so strange countries as I should haue done if I had not giuen my time and the expence of it to the ffirste ende which was, and is God his greate glorie'.<sup>62</sup> Sherley was describing individuals in the *Relation*, but it is clear that he had modelled his opening sentence on that of Aristotle's *Politics*, although he replaced 'state' with 'man' as if they were *interchangeable*: 'Every state is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good; for everyone always acts in order to obtain that which they think good. But, if all communities aim at some good, the state or political community, which is the highest of all, and which embraces all the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.'<sup>63</sup> Sherley does allude to the medieval concept of the ruler as 'head of state' and the 'body politic' in his extant correspondence at the Archivo General de Simancas; but it is important to note that during the composition of the *Relation* Sherley modified the concept somewhat, by claiming that the royal council and citizenry were mere 'shadowes' that were solely moved by the acting head of state: by the same token the noble representative of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany could be taken as a manifestation of the benevolent (from Sherley's perspective) Tuscan Grand Duke Ferdinando I de Medici.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. B1<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>63</sup> S. Everson (ed.) *Aristotle: Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996). cf. Aristotle, *Aristotles Politiques, or Discourses of Gouernment: translated out of Greeke into French... by Loys Le Roy called Regius... translated out of French into English* (London: Adam Islip, 1598), sig. C5<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> MS Simancas, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1171, fol. 89: 'el Rey y sus Consejeros como por la cabeza y partes mas Principales del cuerpo del Estado.' Sherley, *Relation*, sig. L4<sup>r</sup>, E2<sup>v</sup>-E3<sup>r</sup>.

Sherley's nineteenth century biographer first noted and offered an assessment of the strong moral strain permeating the *Relation*. He opined that Sherley had written the *Relation* 'rather for the purpose of displaying his knowledge on the subject of government and politics', before disparaging the text for its use of rhetoric and the moralistic strain alluded to since it 'abounds more with pompous argumentation, and tedious ethical reflections, than with interest or amusement.'<sup>65</sup> Edward Denison Ross unfortunately took his cue from the anonymous author while preparing *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (1933), and as a direct result of the anonymous author's unfavourable opinion decided not to include a modern edition of Sherley's *Relation* in his would-be standard collection: 'This strange and prolix composition contains less than the other narratives of actual events and happenings... For this reason, although the *Relation* contains a great deal of good sense and reveals above all a rare understanding of Oriental politics, I have decided not to reprint it here.'<sup>66</sup>

Sherley made use of moral examples in the *Relation* to simultaneously defend his reputation and expose the 'scelerateness' of his enemies. He also drew upon *heroic* examples for the same purpose in his introduction. Sherley had made a conscious decision to declare his former association with Robert, second Earl of Essex in the opening sections of the *Relation*, but the same passage is also remarkable for its

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<sup>65</sup> *The Three Brothers; or, the Travels and Adventures of Sir Anthony, Sir Robert, & Sir Thomas Sherley, in Persia, Russia, Turkey, Spain, etc.* (London: Hurst, Robinson & Co., 1825), p. 23.

<sup>66</sup> Ross, pp. xix-xx. D.W. Davies, on the other hand, expresses a clear preference for Sherley's narrative style over those of William Parry and George Manwaring: 'Sherley's story is much better. It has a villain, heroes, and a moral, and is replete with human interest.' Davies, p. 87.

deliberate and constant reassertion of the *nature* of the association between the protagonist of the *Relation* and his heroic predecessor and example:

My places yet in authority... were euer of the beste, in which, if I committed errores it was contrarie to my will, and a weaknes in my iudgement: which, notwithstanding, I euer industriated my self to make perfect, correctinge my owne ouer-sightes by the vertusesste examples I could make choise of: Amongst which, as there was not a subiecte of more worthines and vertue, for such examples to grow from, then the euer liuinge in honor, and condigne estima~con the Earle of Essex: as my reuerence and regard to his rare qualities was exceeding; so I desired (as much as my humilitie might answeere, with such an eminencie) to make him the patterne of my civill life: and from him to draw a worthie modell of all my actiones. And... my true loue to him, did transforme me from my many imperfectones, to be as it weare, an imitator of his vertues.<sup>67</sup>

Sherley's constant references to Essex as his 'example', 'patterne' and 'modell' and to himself as an 'imitator of his [Essex's] virtues' leaves no room for doubt regarding Sherley's concept of the nature of their association. He was clearly striving to map himself as nearly as possible on to a previous life, and present his *actions* as being consistent with the actions of an earlier virtuous life. Timothy Wilks has recently specified 'a culture of rhetoric, suitable models, and a desire to emulate them' as provisional conditions for cases of heroic exemplarity.<sup>68</sup> Denison Ross and Sell have already noted Sherley's rhetorical abilities, while the latter could not have been more

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<sup>67</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>68</sup> Timothy Wilks (ed.) *Prince Henry Revived: Image and Exemplarity in Early Modern England* (London: Southampton Solent in Association with Paul Holberton, 2007), p. 10.



direct about the nature of his association with Essex.<sup>69</sup> Sherley's conscious decision to associate himself with an exemplary predecessor is consistent with his choice of an overtly moralistic representation as discussed above. He had clearly associated his protagonist (*i.e.* himself) with Essex and would have to ensure that all his actions conformed to Essex's known code of conduct: 'Underlying such *exemplum*-based, prophecy-fulfilling fashioning was an assumption that individual lives... had a limited number of possible enactments. Those concerned with the unfolding of worldly affairs could find confirmation of this in many historical parallels, and the repetition of the actions of men [like Essex], either for good or for ill.'<sup>70</sup> Sherley kept himself well-informed about recent events in England, and had likely heard about the Essexians' attempts to revive the Protestant chivalric ideal.<sup>71</sup> Samuel Daniel had staged his provocative *Tragedie of Philotas* (1605) and Fulke Greville was putting the finishing touches to his biography of Sidney *ca.* 1611.<sup>72</sup> He probably knew of the Essexian

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<sup>69</sup> Ross, pp. 86-87. Jonathan P.A. Sell, *Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing, 1560-1613* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), p. 106. Sell unfortunately limits his examination of Sherley's rhetoric in the *Relation* to the latter's initial character sketch of Shah 'Abbas the Great.

<sup>70</sup> Wilks, p. 12.

<sup>71</sup> Charles Cornwallis, 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to Lord Salisbury, Madrid [?], 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1607', in Edmund Sawyer (ed.) *The Memorials and Affairs of State in the Reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King James I, collected (chiefly) from the original papers of the Right Honourable Sir Ralph Winwood, Knight* (London: W.B. for T. Ward, 1725), vol. II, p. 308. Ross, p. 71. Shirley, pp. 46 ff.

<sup>72</sup> Samuel Daniel, *The Tragedie of Philotas* (London: G.E. for Simon Waterson and Edward Blount, 1605). Fulke Greville, *The Life of the Renowned Sir Philip Sidney* (London: printed for Henry Seile, 1652). Hugh Gazzard, 'Those graue presentments of antiquitie: Samuel Daniel's *Philotas* and the Earl of Essex', in *Review of English Studies*, vol. LI, no. 203 (2000), pp. 423-50. Greville's biography of Sidney had been completed in 1612, but was only published in 1651/2. Wilks, p. 11.

presence at the court of the Prince of Wales.<sup>73</sup> Prince Henry himself had taken over Essex's former role in his debut at the *Barriers*: 'The *Barriers* performed on Twelfth Night 1610 inaugurate[d] the Prince's public career... by casting himself as the hero of tilts and tourneys Henry was taking upon himself even more forcefully the role played by Elizabeth's favourite, Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, in the nineties: that of popular idol and hero of the Accession Day Tilts'.<sup>74</sup> Sherley was therefore not only associating himself with his former patron and example, but with the myth of the resurgent champion of English Protestant chivalry, and his actions described in the *Relation* had to meet the appropriate standards. He was also associating himself by extension with the newly installed Prince of Wales. Sherley probably completed the *Relation* at Madrid in the first half of 1611, following what has been described as the signal year in the life of the young prince: 'On 6 January [Prince Henry] tilted and performed in Ben Jonson's and Inigo Jones's neo-Arthurian show, *The Barriers*; On 31 May he enjoyed a water pageant on the Thames at Chelsea... on 3 June he witnessed the creation of twenty-five knights of the Bath he had personally selected; on the evening of his installation, Henry and his father attended *Tethys Festival*, a masque written by Samuel Daniel and designed by [Inigo] Jones; on 5 June he tilted again; and finally, on 1 January 1611, he witnessed Jonson's and Jones's famous show, *Oberon*, along with the

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<sup>73</sup> 'What is striking, however, is how many figures around the Prince [of Wales] had links either directly or indirectly with the Essex circle'. Roy Strong, *Henry, Prince of Wales and England's Lost Renaissance* (London: Thames and Hudson Publishers, 1986), pp. 224, and *passim*.

<sup>74</sup> Strong, p. 141. Prince Henry's *Barriers* consisted of fighting at the barriers, framed by speeches composed by Ben Jonson, who collaborated with Inigo Jones in realising the event. The theme of the festival was the revival of chivalry in the 'reunited' kingdom of Great Britain.

*Barriers* his most important masque commission.<sup>75</sup> Sherley's *Relation* touches on parallel themes expounded in the *Barriers*. Prince Henry had issued the challenge preceding the festival under his pseudonym 'Meliadus'. William Drummond of Hawthornden explains that the Prince 'in the challenges of his Martial Sports & Mascarads, was wont to vse, *Mæliades Prince of the Isles* [*i.e.* Britain] which in Anagramme maketh *Miles A DEO* [Soldier to God].'<sup>76</sup> Sherley likewise introduced himself from the outset as being 'most exercised' in the 'warres' and claimed that his principal object 'was, and *is*' to glorify God.<sup>77</sup> He shifts rather tellingly from past to present tense here in a deliberate attempt to place the introduction of his protagonist squarely within the political context of 1610/11.<sup>78</sup> Sherley and the Prince both cast themselves predictably as soldiers of God, but a closer look at the *Barriers* and its speeches reveals a number of thematic similarities. John Hawkins records that Prince Henry had planned the festival that turned into the *Barriers* so 'that the world might know, what a brave prince they were likely to enjoy.'<sup>79</sup> He may originally have been planning a highly visible tournament at the tiltyard. The Venetian diplomat Marc'

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<sup>75</sup> James M. Sutton, 'Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, 1594-1612' in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>76</sup> Leon E. Kastner (ed.) *The Poetical Works of William Drummond of Hawthornden* (Edinburgh: Blackwood for Scottish Text Society, 1913), vol. I, p. 75. Strong, pp. 141-42.

<sup>77</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. B1<sup>r-v</sup> (emphasis added).

<sup>78</sup> Sherley entrusted a manuscript of the *Relation* to his brother Robert, the Persian ambassador who departed from Madrid for the English court in June 1611. John Digby, 'Sir John Digby, Ambassador in Spain, to [Lord] Salisbury, Alcobendas, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1611, in Noel Sainsbury (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, 1513-1616* (1864), p. 224. Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 153<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>79</sup> John Hawkins, *An Account of the Baptism, Life, Death and Funeral of the Most Incomparable Prince, Frederick Henry, Prince of Wales, by Sir Charles Cornwallis, Knt., his Highness's Treasurer* (London: printed for J. Freeman, 1751), p. 23. Strong, pp. 141 and 227.

Antonio Correr observed that the Prince ‘found some difficulty in obtaining the King’s consent, but his Majesty did not wish to cross him.’<sup>80</sup> Correr’s letter provides an early indication of the uneasy relationship between the new standard-bearer of militant Protestantism and his father as the ‘Rex Pacificus’.<sup>81</sup> Prince Henry had secured the King’s permission to continue planning the festival, but the *Barriers* would now take place indoors at the Whitehall Banqueting House.<sup>82</sup> The Prince issued the customary challenge preceding the festival on Christmas, when persons ‘strangely attired, [and] accompanied with Drums and Trumpets’, proclaimed its contents ‘before the King and Queen and the whole Court’ in the Chamber of Presence:

That *Meliades* [*i.e.* Prince Henry], their noble Master, boyling with an earnest Desire to try the Valour of his Years in Foreign Countries, and to know where Virtue triumphed most, had sent them [the envoys] abroad to espy the same, who after their long Travels in all Countries, and Return, shewing, how no where in any Continent, save in the fortunate Isle of *Great Britain*, they had found his Wishes; which ministering Matter of exceeding Joy to their young *Meliades*, who (as they said) could lineally derive his Pedegree from the famous Knights of this Isle, was the Cause that he had now sent to present the first Fruits of his [Henry’s] Chivalry at his Majesty’s [James’s] Feet. Then after... excusing their Lord in this their sudden and short Warning... they

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<sup>80</sup> Marc’Antonio Correr, ‘Venetian Ambassador in England, to the Doge and Senate, London, 17<sup>th</sup> December 1609’, in Horatio Brown (ed.) *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice* (London: HMSO, 1864-1947), vol. XI: 1607-1610 (1904), p. 401.

<sup>81</sup> cf. R. Malcolm Smuts, ‘The Making of Rex Pacificus: James VI and I and the Problem of Peace in an Age of Religious War’, in D. Fischlin and M. Fortier (eds.) *Royal Subjects: Essays on the Writings of James VI and I* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2002), pp. 371-88.

<sup>82</sup> Strong, pp. 141, 142.

after humble Delivery of their Chartle, concerning Time, Place, Conditions, Number of Weapons, and Assailants, took their Leave, departing solemnly as they entred.<sup>83</sup>

Hawkins' report rings true with its allusions to Prince Henry's 'boying' desire for a military adventure abroad, as evidenced by his strong interest vis-à-vis the conflict between the Papal States and Venice (1607) and the Julich-Cleves Crisis (1609-10), as well as the Prince's own view of himself as occupying a place within a chivalric continuum reaching back to the Arthurian Golden Age. The legend of King Arthur of course lies at the very heart of Prince Henry's *Barriers*, for the realisation of which in verbal terms the Prince turned to Ben Jonson. Strong believes that the scenario and themes of the *Barriers* stemmed from the Prince, given that Jonson was not fond of Arthurian themes and did not employ them elsewhere.<sup>84</sup> Jonson chose to adapt the scenario for the Prince's martial festival from the thirteenth century romance *Les Prophetes des Merlin*, from which he borrowed the main characters of the Lady of the Lake, King Arthur, Merlin, and the knight Meliadus.<sup>85</sup> The *Barriers* began with some kind of curtain falling to reveal the Lady of Lake standing against a backdrop with classical ruins representing 'ancient' British architecture. She declared her intention to (re)present the knight Meliadus to the court of 'Britany' now that King James had propitiously reunited the ancient kingdoms of England and Scotland:

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<sup>83</sup> Hawkins, p. 23. cf. Olav Lausund, 'Splendour at the Danish Court: the Coronation of Christian IV', in J.R. Mulryne and Margaret Shewring (eds.) *Italian Renaissance Festivals and their European Influence* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 289-315.

<sup>84</sup> Strong, p. 142.

<sup>85</sup> Ben Jonson, 'The Speeches at Prince Henries Barriers', in *The Workes of Beniamin Ionson* (London: printed by W. Stansby, 1616), sig. 4M3<sup>r</sup>-4N1<sup>v</sup>, and Stephen Orgel (ed.) *The Complete Masques of Ben Jonson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969), pp. 142-58.

Now, when the Iland hath regain'd her fame  
 Intire, and perfect, in the ancient name,  
 And that a *monarch* equal good and great  
 Wise, temperate, iust and stout *claims ARTHVRS* seat.<sup>86</sup>

The Lady of the Lake's joy at the reconstitution of the Arthurian kingdom of Great Britain nevertheless gave way to her lament that the 'house of Chiualrie' appeared in contrast to have degenerated and visibly crumbled to the ground:

Only the house of *Chiualrie* (how ere  
 The inner parts and store be full, yet here  
 In that which gentry should sustain) decayed  
 Or rather ruin'd seemes, her buildings layd  
 Flat with the earth; that were the pride of time,  
 And did the barbarous Memphian heapes out-clime...<sup>87</sup>

The sky opened at this point to reveal King Arthur who had been translated to the star Arcturus as a reward for his virtuous governance. He told the Lady of the Lake that James's reunification of the country had fulfilled Merlin's prophecy, and urged her to proceed with her intention of presenting Meliadus to the court, before handing her a mystical shield the Fates had supposedly fashioned for the Prince:

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<sup>86</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M3<sup>r</sup>. Orgel, p. 143.

<sup>87</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M3<sup>r-v</sup>. Orgel, p. 143.

But first receiue this shield; wherein is wrought  
 The truth that he must follow; and (being taught  
 The wayes from heauen) ought not to be despis'd.  
 It is a piece, was by the fates deuis'd  
 To arme his mayden valure; and to show  
 Defensiue armes th'offenisue should fore-goe.<sup>88</sup>

Roy C. Strong has pointed out that Jonson's decision to present the Prince with a defensive shield rather than an offensive weapon blunted, and sought to rein in the aggressive, militaristic message of the *Barriers*.<sup>89</sup> Richard Badenhausen has more recently endorsed Strong's interpretation and elaborated on Jonson's dilemma in negotiating the conflicting interests of both King and Prince over the entertainment: 'Jonson faced the unenviable task of simultaneously satisfying the need of those who identified Henry as the reviver of the chivalric tradition and fulfilling the wishes of James that the marital aspects of the tradition be downplayed.'<sup>90</sup> James I and the Prince of Wales' competing royal ideologies are crucial to placing Sherley's advocacy for a military campaign to be directed against the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>88</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M4<sup>r</sup>. Orgel, p. 146.

<sup>89</sup> Strong, p. 143.

<sup>90</sup> Richard Badenhausen, 'Disarming the Infant Warrior: Prince Henry, King James, and the Chivalric Revival', *Papers on Language and Literature* 31, 1, (1995), pp. 23-24. Samuel Daniel by contrast presented Prince Henry with a sword in *Tethys Festival* (1610) but was subsequently barred by the court from receiving any other similar commissions. King James also insisted that Jonson's *Oberon* (1611) conclude with dances rather than a final combat as Prince Henry would have preferred. Strong, p. 160. Stephen Orgel, 'The Dream, the State, the Stage', First Plenary Address, Ohio Shakespeare Conference, Cleveland, Ohio, 25<sup>th</sup> March 1993 as quoted in Badenhausen, p. 25.

The Lady of the Lake raised Merlin from the grave and the shutter parted to reveal Meliadus and his assistants standing in tableau. She conducted them to one side in procession while Merlin engaged in reading the shield. He declared that it contained a model of governance and lawgiving rather than the deeds –

Of antique Knights, to catch their fellowes steeds,  
 Or Ladies palfreyes, rescue from the force  
 Of a fell gyant, or some score to unhorse.  
 These were bold stories of our *ARTHVRS* age;  
 But here are other acts; another *Stage*  
 A *Scene* appears; it is not since as then:  
 No gyants, dwarfes or monsters here, but men.  
 His arts must be to gouerne and giue Lawes...<sup>91</sup>

Badenhausen observes that Jonson's model would have struck the Prince who was dressed in his fighting gear as rather anachronistic. Jonson was clearly exalting the King's values over those of medieval chivalry. Badenhausen describes the tone of Merlin's lines as mimicking 'the strained voice of a father lecturing his son before turning over a particularly dangerous plaything.' He then carries the suggestion to its logical conclusion by linking it to James's *Basilikon Doron* (1599) which is not surprising given that Jonson was the king's poet *par excellence*.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M5<sup>r</sup>. Orgel, pp. 148-149.

<sup>92</sup> Badenhausen, pp. 24, 25. Strong, p. 143.



Merlin's speech next fractured into two 'scarcely complementary' sections as Jonson attempted to present a selection of royal examples from British history that the Prince ought to heed to and imitate in his government. Merlin / Jonson began with a list of English kings notable for pursuing the arts of peace: 'Edward I, who encouraged trade and agriculture; Edward III, who created the clothing industry; Henry VII, who amassed money, 'To be the strength and sinews of a war / When Mars should thunder or his peace but jar'. Then followed Henry VIII, who built forts and encouraged military training, and Elizabeth who constructed 'a wall of shipping'.<sup>93</sup> Jonson's examples merely illustrate James's own advice to his son in *Basilikon Doron*.<sup>94</sup> Merlin then continued with the second half of his speech praising the *warlike* kings of England: Richard I 'Cœur de Lion', Edward I, Edward of Woodstock 'the Black Prince', Henry V, and of course Elizabeth's triumph over the 'Invincible Armada'. Strong believes that the lists were emblematic of the conflicting ideals of the King and Prince and describes Merlin's incongruous speech as being 'curious and uneasy in the extreme'.<sup>95</sup>

However, it would appear the perceived dichotomy between Jonson's peaceful and warlike examples is not as clear-cut as proposed. He did not endorse Coeur de Lion, Edward I, or the Black Prince without justification. Jonson explicitly counselled the Prince after his discussion of the peaceful royal examples –

These worthiest Prince, are set you neere to reade,

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<sup>93</sup> Strong, p. 143.

<sup>94</sup> Daniel Fischlin and Mark Fortier (eds.) *James I: The True Law of Free Monarchies, and Basilikon Doron* (Toronto: Center for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 1996), pp. 85 ff.

<sup>95</sup> Strong, pp. 143-44.

That ciuill arts the martiall must precede,  
 That lawes and trade bring honours in and gaine,  
 And armes defensiue a safe peace maintaine.<sup>96</sup>

Jonson's advice remained similarly prudent and consistent at the close of the section concerning Strong's supposedly more warlike examples:

... not t'incite  
 Your neighbour Princes; giue them all their due,  
 And be prepar'd if they will trouble you.  
 He doth but scourge himselfe, his sword that drawes  
 Without a purse, a counsaile and a cause.<sup>97</sup>

Jonson placed security and prosperity before military adventurism throughout the *Speeches at Prince Henries Barriers* (1616), and presented a rather more polished and consistent argument than has been acknowledged, which begs the question how he justified the actions of the exemplary warrior-princes. He went about treating them in pairs beginning with Richard I and Edward I, who 'were grac'd / To fight their *Sauours* battailes, and did bring / Destruction on the faithlesse'; the Black Prince and Henry V who fought 'not for the same high cause, / Yet for the next (What was his right by lawes / of nations due)', and Elizabeth's victory over the Armada. Jonson treated the latter as an example of divine punishment for Spanish arrogance. He placed the other two pairs of warlike princes within an obvious hierarchy of examples for waging just war, with

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<sup>96</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M5<sup>v</sup>. Orgel, p 150.

<sup>97</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M6<sup>v</sup>. Orgel, pp. 154-5.

Richard I and Edward I noticeably elevated above the Black Prince and Henry V, on account of the superiority of their cause in waging war on behalf of their Saviour and bringing destruction upon the infidels [Muslims].<sup>98</sup> Sherley's call for an invasion of Cyprus exploited this loophole in the hierarchy: he and Jonson tread a fine line in appealing to Prince Henry's military adventurism, and simultaneously recognise an ecumenical vision of Christianity that would have appealed to King James, who would not have been entirely indifferent to Sherley's reports of fellow Christians in Cyprus living as 'prisoners shutt vpp in divers prisones'.<sup>99</sup> Sherley likely hoped to revive his earlier position as Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean, and lead the Christian navy as Don Juan of Austria had done at Lepanto in 1571, and was probably also aware that James had celebrated the latter victory in verse.<sup>100</sup> Sherley furthermore recalled as illustrious predecessors the same figures Jonson had lauded as examples for waging righteous war, namely the crusader kings of the Middle Ages:

where are those genrouis spiritts of the forepassed princes, and men which against all humaine reason, to revenge iniuries and wronges do~ne to the holie name of god: thrust themselues into moste daungerous ~~ent~~terprises onlie trustinge in the true worthines of their cause which they judged god would miraculously prosper: beeing vndertaken with so true and good hartes for him: the successes of which we maie reade allso to haue bine most prosperous: god striuinge in mercie

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<sup>98</sup> Jonson, sig. 4M5<sup>v</sup>-4M6<sup>v</sup>. Orgel, pp. 150-154.

<sup>99</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 119<sup>f</sup>. Sherley, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>. Strong, p. 148. James encouraged Sir Henry Savile to undertake his multi-volume translation of the works of St John Chrysostom and himself maintained a correspondence with Greek Orthodox patriarchs. W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 196 ff.

<sup>100</sup> James I, 'The Lepanto of James the Sixt, King of Scotland', in *His Maiesties Poeticall Exercises at Vacant Houres* (Edinburgh: Robert Walde-graue, 1591), sig. G3<sup>f</sup>. James' poem was reprinted the year of his English coronation 1603, and was followed by two Latin editions in 1604.

with mans intenc~ones, and though it be true that the daies of visiones and such apparante miracles are finished: yet let vs not by to greate precisnes mistake the thinges which indeed are... that god [*i.e.* Christ] yet hath pleased... to inlarge his power and greatnes, by his onlie breath to shake him [*i.e.* the Turk, or the Ottoman Sultan] with such ^in æeffecon: that his overthrowe is moste facile: if we will vse the time pointed vnto vs by his mercifull finger.<sup>101</sup>

Sherley's impassioned plea contains an implicit rebuttal to Jonson's dismissal of medieval chivalry as an atavistic fantasy having no bearing upon events in Jacobean England, which derived directly from Sherley's own authority as an eye-witness to the Ottoman weaknesses elaborated in the *Relation*.<sup>102</sup> John Chamberlain the letter writer recorded that Princess Elizabeth's wedding in February 1613 was preceded by a mock naval battle involving Christians and Turks, which perhaps indicates that the Sherley brothers' appeal for a naval campaign had not gone entirely unnoticed.<sup>103</sup>

## Conclusion

In conclusion: Sherley's numerous exaggerations, dramatic adventures and persistent moral examples, contradicting the other accounts, are attributable to his choice of the genre of romance in relating his journey to Persia. Sherley marshalled the numerous moral examples to co-opt the divine will, which he then employed to castigate his

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<sup>101</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 121<sup>r-v</sup>. Sherley, sig. C4<sup>v</sup>-D1<sup>r</sup>. Strong, p. 144.

<sup>102</sup> Badenhause, p. 25.

<sup>103</sup> Norman E. McClure (ed.) *The Letters of John Chamberlain* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society vol. XII, 1939), vol. I, pp. 423-26. Alan Stewart, *The Cradle King: A Life of James VI and I* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2003), p. 250. Prince Henry had been deeply involved in planning the magnificent festivals for his sister's wedding. Strong, pp. 79, 175 ff.

enemies in an attempt to restore his own reputation. He also associated himself with Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex and by extension with the newly installed Prince of Wales through the shared culture of exemplarity. Sherley's deliberate association of himself with the Prince's predecessor Essex, is mirrored by Sherley's citation of the exemplary warrior princes from British history, who had earlier been lauded by Ben Jonson in the speeches performed at the *Barriers*. Prince Henry's *Barriers* was a public declaration of the future king's ideology, and Sherley's choice of *moral* and *heroic* examples in this context was significant: his examples represented the common ground between him (Sherley) and the devout and martial Henry, Prince of Wales.

## Chapter 5

### ***‘Wise and prudent understanders of the times and places which they conuersed in’: Tacitus and Machiavelli in Sherley’s Relation of his Travels (1613)***

Sanjay Subrahmanyam has noted in his book *Three Ways to be Alien* (2011), while discussing Anthony Sherley’s *Peso Politico* (1622), that Sherley already reveals his interests as a political thinker in the *Relation* (1613).<sup>1</sup> Subrahmanyam proceeds to examine an important passage from the *Relation*, appearing shortly after Sherley’s meeting with the two Hungarian Janissaries en route to Antakya, in which he had presented himself as a man ‘experienced and versed in great affaires’:

And now that I haue had occasion to speake of the Janizaries of Damasco, which by likelie hood of that they presumed to do... must be men of greate authoritie, both in power and estimac~on: It will not be amisse to vse so fitt an opportunitie to discourse of the Turkes whole gouernment of those partes [*i.e.* the Levant], which I did not behould with the eies of a common pillgrimme or merchante: which passinge onlie by goodly cities and territories, make their iudgment vppon the superficiall appearaunce of what they see: but as a gentleman bredd vpp in such experiences, ^which hath made me some-what capable to penetrate into the perfection and imperfection of the forme of the state, and into the good and ill orders by which it is gouerned.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Sanjay Subrahmanyam, *Three Ways to be Alien: Travails and Encounters in the Early Modern World* (Waltham: Brandeis University Press, 2011), pp. 119-20.

<sup>2</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, Bodleian Library, Oxford, fols. 119<sup>v</sup>-120<sup>r</sup>. Anthony Sherley, *Relation of his Travels into Persia* (London: for Nathaniel Butter and Joseph Bagfet, 1613), sig. C1<sup>v</sup>.

Subrahmanyam notes Sherley's clear distinction between what he referred to as a gentleman's 'some-what capable' observations and the supposedly 'superficial' and therefore misleading reports of pilgrims and merchants. He goes on to assert that if this was the case, 'then it is clear why someone like Sherley would disdain forms of ethnographic observation on a more or less systematic basis.' Subrahmanyam is certainly correct to notice Sherley's interest in political thought, as he is with respect to the distinction between Sherley's own observations in contrast to those of pilgrims and merchants, but it is also important to recognise the frequent discrepancy between Sherley's declared intentions and what he later performed: after all, *The Peso Politico* contains a great deal of ethnographic information, as does Parry's *New and Large Discourse* (1601) probably based on Sherley's instructions, and even though Sherley appears to dismiss traditions of ethnographic writing in the *Relation*, his comments should not be taken to be as unequivocal as proposed.<sup>3</sup> This chapter argues that the *Relation* does indicate Sherley's evolving interest in political thought, and that the principal sources he relied on to anatomise the Ottoman and Safavid empires were Machiavelli's *Prince* and Tacitus' *Annals*. Sherley made more extensive use of Machiavelli's treatise than the *Annals*: he drew upon the relevant chapters of Machiavelli's book to explain the Ottomans' impressive record of administration and attendant successes in foreign military expeditions, as well as the procedures for governing their territories in the Levant and elsewhere. Sherley also drew upon Machiavelli to demonstrate Shah 'Abbas' political virtue, which is more difficult to detect than Sherley's more direct treatment of matters relating to the Ottomans, on

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<sup>3</sup> Angel Alloza, et al. (eds.) *Anthony Sherley: Peso de todo el mundo (1622), Discurso sobre el aumento de esta monarquía (1625)* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2010), pp. 92 ff, 96 ff, 115 ff.

account of the obscure names and personalities involved. The chapter accordingly prefaces Sherley's demonstration of political virtue in Persia with an account of the personalities involved as well as that of Shah 'Abbas' rise to power.

Peter W.M. Blayney was the first to point out Sherley's incorporation of an entire passage from Machiavelli's *Prince* into the *Relation*.<sup>4</sup> He was followed by Jonathan P. Sell, who while analysing Sherley's rhetoric in the *Relation*, noticed a distinctly Machiavellian influence behind his portrayal of Shah 'Abbas'.<sup>5</sup> Sell also perceptively remarked on Sherley's use of the text as a mirror, held up to reflect the prospective reader's virtues in addition to those of Shah 'Abbas'.<sup>6</sup> Sell contended that Sherley composed the *Relation* in the established tradition of 'mirrors for princes', and the present chapter proceeds to carry Sell's proposal further, by arguing that Sherley conceived of the *Relation* as specifically a *Tacitean* mirror for princes.

Richard Tuck has described the spread of Tacitism from Jacopo Corbinelli's circle in Paris during the 1570's, adapted and elaborated by Michel de Montaigne and Justus Lipsius in the following decade, to the appearance of Sir Henry Savile and Robert Greenway's translations in London in the 1590's.<sup>7</sup> David Norbrook (following Blair Worden) has noted that 'the restless members of the Sidney and Essex circles' then

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<sup>4</sup> Peter W.M. Blayney, *The Texts of King Lear and their Origins, vol. I: Nicholas Okes and the First Quarto* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 289-90.

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan P.A. Sell, *Rhetoric and Wonder in English Travel Writing, 1560-1613* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publications, 2006), pp. 108-109.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>7</sup> Richard Tuck, *Philosophy and Government* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 40 ff.



‘popularized the study of Tacitus and Machiavelli.’<sup>8</sup> Richard Greenway, who translated Tacitus’ *Annals* and *Germania*, in fact dedicated his book to Essex as ‘a glasse representing in liuely colours of prowesse, magnanimitie and counsel; not onely woorthie personages of ages past and gone, but also your L. owne honourable vertues.’<sup>9</sup>

Felix Raab and more recently Alessandra Petrina have shown that English readers consulted Machiavelli’s *Prince* as early as in the 1530’s.<sup>10</sup> Edward Dacres’ translation would not appear in print until later in 1640, but Sherley was able to read Italian and would have had access to Italian editions in London.<sup>11</sup> He does directly refer to

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<sup>8</sup> David Norbrook, *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 153, following Blair Worden, ‘Classical Republicanism and the Puritan Revolution’, in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, Valerie Pearl and Blair Worden (eds.) *History and Imagination: Essays in Honour of H.R. Trevor-Roper* (London: Gerald Duckworth, 1981), pp. 185-187. J.H.M. Salmon, ‘Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England’, Linda Levy Peck (ed.) *The Mental World of the Jacobean Court* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), pp. 169-88. Peter Burke, ‘Tacitism, Scepticism and Reason of State’, J.H. Burns and Mark Goldie (eds.) *Cambridge History of Political Thought, 1450-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 479-98.

<sup>9</sup> Richard Greenway, ‘To the Right Honorable Robert Earle of Essex’, *The Annales of Cornelius Tacitus / The Description of Germanie* (London: Arn. Hatfield, 1598). James B. Rives, ‘Germania’, in Victoria Emma Pagan (ed.) *A Companion to Tacitus* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 46 ff.

<sup>10</sup> Felix Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli: A Changing Interpretation, 1500-1700* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 30 ff, and Alessandra Petrina, *Machiavelli in the British Isles: Two Early Modern Translations of The Prince* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), pp. 1 ff.

<sup>11</sup> Edward Dacres, *Nicholas Machiavel's Prince: also, the life of Castruccio Castracani of Lucca. And the meanes Duke Valentine us'd to put to death Vitellozzo Vitelli, Oliverotto of Fermo, Paul, and the Duke of Gravina, translated out of Italian into English, by E.D., with some animadversions noting and taxing his errours* (London: R. Bishop, for William Hils, 1640). *Il Prencipe di Nicolo Machiaveuelli al Magnifico Lorenzo di Piero de Medici, con alcune altre operette, i titoli delle quali trouerai nella seguente facciata* (Palermo [London]: Appresso gli heredi d'Antoniello degli Antonielli, 1584). The latter edition was produced by the printer and publisher John Wolfe, who also printed Italian editions of Machiavelli’s

‘Machauello’ in his extant Spanish correspondence.<sup>12</sup> He was also preoccupied with Tiberius’ strategic alliance with ancient ‘barbarians’, or as he put it with Tiberius’ alliance involving ‘los Romanos con los Barbaros de Alemana y Panona’, which is significant as the expression coincided with Sherley’s efforts to present the Shah of Persia as a desirable ally in a future campaign against the Ottomans.<sup>13</sup>

Sherley’s distinction between his own ‘capable’ observations and the ‘superficial’ accounts of others has already been mentioned. He would have been aware that a substantial body of literature about the Ottomans had accumulated over the past two decades and was attempting to distinguish the *Relation* by presenting it as the most reliable and up-to-date account of the Ottomans.<sup>14</sup> Sherley dispenses with the need to

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*Discourses on Livy, The History of Florence, The Art of War, and The Golden Ass* under various pseudonyms; cf. *STC*, nos. 17159, 17159.5, 17161, 17163, 17163.5, and 17158.

<sup>12</sup> MS Archivo General de Simancas, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1174, fol. 89.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, Estado, Sicilia, Leg. 1174, fol. 71. Sherley’s reference to a possible alliance occurs in a letter addressed to Philip III and the Count of Villalonga wherein Sherley sets out his vision of the strategy required to counter the Ottoman presence in the Mediterranean. Sherley’s letter ought to be considered together with Thomas Sherley the Younger’s advocacy of a naval campaign against the Ottomans in his *Discours* (ca. 1607), Sir Anthony’s own concern to maintain Perso-European cooperation through the Persian Gulf during his campaign in the Mediterranean (1609), and Robert Sherley’s arguments for the invasion of Cyprus, Syria and Anatolia during his embassy on behalf of Shah ‘Abbas.

<sup>14</sup> Daniel Vitkus (ed.), *Three Renaissance Travel Plays from Early Modern England: Selimus, Emperor of the Turks – A Christian Turned Turk – The Renegado* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), introduction, pp. 1-54. Idem, *Turning Turk: English Theatre and the Multicultural Mediterranean, 1570-1630* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), *passim*. Nancy Bisaha, *Creating East and West: Renaissance Humanists and the Ottoman Turks* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), pp. 43 ff. Matthew Dimmock, *New Turkes: Dramatising Islam and the Ottomans in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), *passim*. Idem, *William Percy’s Mahomet and his Heaven: a critical edition* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), *passim*. Jonathan Burton, *Traffic and Turning: Islam and English Drama, 1579-1624* (Delaware: University of Delaware Press, 2005), *passim*. Gerald MacLean, *Looking East:*

retrace the origins of the Turks as a redundant exercise: ‘The originall of the Turkes; many haue writte~n well of; the maintaininge of their estate hath be~ne their subiects true and devote [devout] adherence to their religi~on, without scisme or faction, and obedience to their princes. They increase the same religi~on allso: which contynuallie instigateth them to the propagacon of it: and the reason of their begininge which was armes; they induced by a confidence in them, haue ever desired to vse them: and to detaine such a stirring disposition from ciuill dissentiones, their princes haue ever with forraine enterprises led them to the exercise of them.’<sup>15</sup> Sherley ascribes the security and stability of the Ottoman Empire to its law-abiding citizens and generally successful military expeditions, which is a barely concealed variation on one of Machiavelli’s aphoristic statements in the *Prince* (1532): ‘The main foundations of all states (whether they are new, old or mixed) are good laws and good armies. Since it is impossible to have good laws if good arms are lacking, and if there are good arms there must also be good laws, I shall leave laws aside and concentrate on arms.’<sup>16</sup> Sherley’s substitution of ‘deuote adherence to religion’ for Machiavelli’s ‘good laws’ does not obscure the fact that he was attempting to present the Ottoman Sultan’s position as wielding absolute power in the manner prescribed by Machiavelli, and later taken up by Hubert Languet in

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*English writing and the Ottoman Empire before 1800* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 27 ff. Idem, *Britain and the Islamic World, 1558-1713* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), *passim*. Mark Hutchings, ‘The stage historicizes the Turk: convention and contradiction in the Turkish history play’, in Teresa Grant and Barbara Ravelhofer (eds.) *English Historical Drama, 1500-1660: Forms outside the Canon* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), pp. 158 ff. Margaret Meserve, *Empires of Islam in Renaissance Historical Thought* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2008), pp. 117 ff.

<sup>15</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 120<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Quentin Skinner and Russell Price (eds.) *Niccolo Machiavelli: The Prince* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), ‘The different types of army, and mercenary troops’, pp. 42-43.

*Vindiciae contra Tyrannos* (1588) and Sir Philip Sidney in his negotiations over Leicester's assumption of the governorship of the Netherlands. Sherley's fleeting reference to a religion 'without scisme or faction' is also a reminder of his earlier participation in the Wars of Religion and the new ecumenical movement referred to above, as articulated in Edwin Sandys' *A Relation of the State of Religion... in the Severall States of these Westerne Partes of the World* (1605).<sup>17</sup> Sherley went on to detail the Ottomans' dual method for 'preserving' their extensive territories:

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<sup>17</sup> Edwin Sandys, *A Relation of the State of Religion and with what Hopes & Policies it hath beene framed, and is maintained in the Severall States of these Westerne Partes of the World* (London: printed by Valentine Sims for Simon Waterson, 1605), and cf. also Henry Wotton, *The State of Christendom, or, a most exact and curious discovery of many secret passages and hidden mysteries of the times, written by Henry Wotten, [etc.]* (London: printed for Humphrey Moseley, 1657). Sandys' *Relation* was probably the first comprehensive justification for peaceful co-existence in Reformation Europe and Sherley may well have been familiar with Sandys' work given the latter's close association with Sherley's brother-in-law the third Earl of Southampton and his colonial ventures in America. Sandys had been a student of Richard Hooker at Corpus Christi College Oxford, and helped prepare and finance the publication of Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593), in which Hooker proposed the 'divine invention' of a general council as the means to heal the divisions caused by the Reformation. Georges Edelen (ed.) *Richard Hooker: Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1977-1998), vol. I (1977), pp. 109-10. Peter Munz, *The Place of Hooker in the History of Thought* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 95-99, 106-10. Gunnar Hillerdal, *Reason and Revelation in Richard Hooker* (Lund: CWK Gleerup, 1962), pp. 53-55. Egil Grislis, 'The Role of Consensus in Richard Hooker's Method of Theological Inquiry', in Robert E. Cushman and Egil Grislis (eds.) *The Heritage of Christian Thought* (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), pp. 83-85. Paul Avis, *Anglicanism and the Christian Church* (London: T. & T. Clark, 2002), pp. 23 ff. W.B. Patterson, 'Hooker on Ecumenical Relations: Conciliarism in the English Reformation', in Arthur Stephen McGrade (ed.) *Richard Hooker and the Construction of Christian Community* (Tempe: Renaissance Society of America, 1997), pp. 283-303. Olivier Loyer, *L'Anglicanisme de Richard Hooker* (Paris: Honore Champion, 1979), vol. II (1979), pp. 524-26, 581-85. Lee W. Gibbs, 'Richard Hooker's *Via Media* Doctrine of Justification', in *Harvard Theological Review* 74, 2 (1981), pp. 211-20. H.R. Trevor-Roper, 'Richard Hooker and the Church of England', in *Renaissance Essays, 1400-1620* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1985), pp. 103-20. William P. Haugaard, 'Richard Hooker: Evidences of an Ecumenical Vision from a Twentieth-Century Perspective',

[T]he meanes of the preseruacion of their states so greate, and so manie acquisted, haue bene the secureste of any other: the princes [*i.e.* Sultans] personallie inhabitinge of the moste daungerous: and his ruinatinge and possessinge by colonies actuallie, though in another name the reste. So that where his dominion ioyneth with the power of the christians princes: his [the Sultan's] presence keepeth those partes from daunger of innovation: where he is further separated his Tymarrie [*i.e.* Timarli], which are certaine to whom he distributeth so much lande for their deserte in vertue, which was their [*i.e.* the Ottomans'] firste instituc~on; and by that tenure are bound to find him theire persones, and so many horses in his warres; they I saie, hauinge theire estates solie dependinge vpp~on his gouernment assuringe him from all perill of alterac~on: and besides, to strengthen himself the more, he hath not onlie destroyed the noble bloude of the cuntries: but in moste places the citties, townes and howses, to remoue from the verie memorie of menne, by the rinueinge of those spectacles the apprehension of their former condic~on of livinge.<sup>18</sup>

Sherley suggests that the Ottomans regularly deployed sheer violence not only to eliminate the local aristocracies, but also to destroy most of 'the citties, townes and howses' in their recently conquered territories. Sherley's generalisations about the horrific levels of violence unleashed upon the conquered territories sound suspicious, even after taking into account the extensive destruction caused by the so-called Celali

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*Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 24, 3 (1987), pp. 427-39. C.J. Sisson, *The Judicious Marriage of Mr. Hooker and the Birth of The Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1940), pp. 4, 12, 18, 20, 22, 32, 45, 47, 62, 100, 104, 107. Joseph Lecler, *Toleration and Reformation* (London: Longman, 1960), vol. II (1960), pp. 403-6. W.B. Patterson, *King James VI and I and the reunion of Christendom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 63-67. Theodore K. Rabb, *Jacobean Gentleman: Sir Edwin Sandys, 1561-1629* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), pp. 21 ff. Paul Avis, 'Conciliarity in the Anglican Tradition', *Beyond the Reformation: Authority, Primacy and Unity in the Conciliar Tradition* (London: T & T Clark, 2006), pp. 134 ff. Paul Valliere, *Conciliarism: a History of Decision-making in the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), pp. 163 ff.

<sup>18</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 120<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>-C2<sup>r</sup>.

Revolts in Anatolia around the turn of the century.<sup>19</sup> Sherley's account of the 'Tymarrie' appears to owe a great deal to Lazzaro Soranzo's *L'ottomano* (1598):

The best horsemen, that the Ottoman Empire hath, are the *Spahi* [Sipahi], who liue vpon their *Timari* [Timar]. For the great Turke giueth two kinds of wages to his souldiours: one is called *Timaro*, and the other *Vlefe* [Ulufa]. The *Timaro* is properly a certain pension or an assignment of rents, which for the most part are leuied out of the lands that are gotten in war, and are proportionately distributed amo[n]g the souldiors that are of good desert, & do answer in some sort to the ancient *Colonies* and to *Fees*, or rather to Commendams... The said word *Timaro* may also be deriued, and peradventure more truly from the Turkish it selfe, whereby is signified a certaine kind of procuration or prouision for some charge or gouernment, which the *Timarioti* are bound to haue ouer the lands that are graunted vnto them... The *Timari*, which the Turke hath in *Europe*, may bee some sixteene thousande... Euerie *Spahi*, that hath from three to fiue thousand *Aspres*, of yearely rent, is bound to go to the war with one horse: from fiue to ten thousand, with two horses, and so by proportion to a certaine determinate quantitie...<sup>20</sup>

Sherley and Soranzo agree that Timar was bestowed on the sipahi as reward for their military service and brought with it an obligation to furnish a proportional number of horsemen when called upon for future campaigns. Soranzo's book was first printed at Ferrara the year Sherley arrived in Italy and the latter might well have procured and

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<sup>19</sup> William Griswold, *The Great Anatolian Rebellion, 1000-1020 / 1591-1611* (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz, 1983), pp. 24 ff., as well as Karen Barkey, *Bandits and Bureaucrats: the Ottoman Route to State Centralization* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), especially pp. 48 ff.

<sup>20</sup> Abraham Hartwell, *The Ottoman of Lazaro Soranzo – Wherein is deliuered aswell a full and perfect report of the might and power of Mahamet the Third... Translated out of Italian into English by Abraham Hartwell* (London: printed by Iohn Windet, 1603), sig. D2<sup>v</sup>-D3<sup>v</sup>. Sherley clearly follows Soranzo in equating the Ottoman 'Timar' system with ancient Roman 'colonies'.

carried a copy with him to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>21</sup> Sherley may have borrowed such details of the Timar system from Soranzo, but his proposed dual method of state preservation was clearly derived from elsewhere. Sherley's confident assertion that the Ottoman sultans ordinarily resided in the 'most dangerous' provinces adjoining the 'power of the Christian Princes' was most likely borrowed from the third chapter of Machiavelli's *The Prince* concerning so-called 'Mixed principalities':

But considerable problems arise if territories are annexed in a country that differs in language, customs and institutions, and great good luck and great ability are needed to hold them. One of the best and most effective solutions is for the conqueror to go and live there. This makes the possession more secure and more permanent. This is what the [Ottoman] Turks did in [former Byzantine] Greece: all the other measures taken by them to hold that country would not have sufficed, if they had not instituted direct rule. For if one does do that, troubles can be detected when they are just beginning and effective measures can be taken quickly. But if one does not, the troubles are encountered when they have grown, and nothing can be done about them.<sup>22</sup>

The second part of Sherley's argument that the sipahi were actively engaged in 'ruinatinge' the rest of the Ottoman Empire and 'possessing it by colonies actuallie, though in another name' was, interestingly enough derived from the paragraph immediately following the above-cited passage from Machiavelli:

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<sup>21</sup> Lazzaro Soranzo, *L'Ottomanno di Lazaro Soranzo... Alla Santita' di N. Signore Clemente VIII* (Ferrara: per Vittorio Baldini, Stampatore Camerale, 1598). Sherley was both a reader of Italian and is known to have taken a substantial number of books with him. Sherley, sig. K1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>22</sup> Skinner and Price, pp. 8-9.

The other very good solution is to establish colonies in a few places, which become, as it were, fetters for the conquered territory [e.g. the Ottoman Levant]. If this is not done, it will be necessary to hold it by means of large military forces. Colonies involve little expense; and so at little or no cost, one establishes and maintains them. The only people injured are those who lose their fields and homes, which are given to the new settlers; but only a few inhabitants are affected in this way. Moreover, those whom he injures can never harm him, because they are poor and scattered. All the other inhabitants remain unharmed, and should therefore be reassured, and will be afraid of causing trouble, for fear that they will be dispossessed, like the others.<sup>23</sup>

Sherley achieves a synthesis of Soranzo and Machiavelli's texts in much the same manner as he had done with Guicciardini and Machiavelli when sketching out the political history of Ferrara before the devolution: he carefully extracted specific information from Guicciardini and Soranzo, which is then made to conform to Machiavelli's sweeping political observations.<sup>24</sup> Sherley repeatedly treats the latter's observations as having an almost axiomatic authority which is in turn important for placing his own opinions on the political spectrum. Sherley's politically savvy target audience at St James's can not have failed to notice his constant incorporation of arguments taken from Machiavelli's *The Prince*. Sherley was relying on Machiavelli's political language to impart his first-hand knowledge of the Ottoman Empire to his colleagues from Essex House and was probably also hoping to impress the Prince of Wales with his keen political sense and 'penetrating' observations.

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<sup>23</sup> Skinner and Price, p. 9.

<sup>24</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 118<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. B1<sup>v</sup>-B2<sup>r</sup>.



Machiavelli's expressed preference for colonies as an economically viable method of occupation requiring a small number of personnel, was in turn reversed by Sherley to argue that since Cyprus and Palestine had been colonised by the Ottomans, they must necessarily be defended by a relatively small number of Janissaries:

with the verie sight of a competente armie his [the Sultan's] soldiarie in those parts would be terrified through their inabilitye to resist: and the people who cannott change possibly to worse fortune: would all followe those ensignes [of the invader], which their extremitie doth allready force them to wish for. and lett all iudgement giue, but themselves a smalle tyme of truce with other passionnes and we shall see... what a shame it is to the verie name of Christianitie to suffer that greate Sepulchre of our redempti~on to be possessed to our etern~all ignominy by his professed enemies who vouchsafed to giue his deereste blood to buye vs from perdic~on: religion is that which ever moueth the blindest hartes of men to the moste resoluteste enterprises.<sup>25</sup>

Sherley intended to offer practical political advice to his aristocratic audience with the last sentence, but by taking a purely objective and detached view of religion over the course of history inadvertently reveals his own Machiavellian leanings, since as Felix Raab points out the hallmark of late Tudor and early Stuart Machiavellian thinking consisted of taking a completely secular view of politics.<sup>26</sup> Sherley then proceeds to

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<sup>25</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 121<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. C4<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>26</sup> Raab, *The English Face of Machiavelli*, pp. 8-101. Jonathan Bate, 'The Elizabethans in Italy', in Jean Pierre Maquerlot and Michele Willems (eds.) *Travel and Drama in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 55-74. Andrew Hadfield, *Amazons, Savages & Machiavels: Travel & Colonial Writing in English, 1550-1630* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 72-80, 89-90. Sherley was almost certainly aware that his appeal to 'liberate' the Sepulchre would not have been sufficient to propel his militant Protestant audience into action, which is probably why he decided to

illustrate his argument on the power of religion to mobilise popular support with examples drawn from Plutarch's 'Life of Romulus' in the *Parallel Lives* and the fifth book of Livy's *Roman Histories*, which in turn confirm his former attachment to the Essex secretariat at the turn of the century, as well as his preference for reproducing speeches *in extenso* during the later sections concerning Safavid Persia:

Romulus when his people fled before the Sabines so that the victorie shewed it [*sic.* self] vndoubtedlie on their side, and the overthrowe on his: the verie remembringe them of leaving Iupiter and the reste of the godds in the capitoll, to the possessi~on of their enemies: was sufficiente to turne that desperate fortune; and when the ffrench had sacked and burnte a great part of Rome: the same awefull reverence to their gods and loue to their cuntrie could binde them rather to re-build their ruined cittie then to goe to Vejes [*i.e.* Veii] a towne readie and magnificentlie builded: but we can leaue in the Turkes possessi~on not onlie the cuntrie of our Saviour, which should be deerer vnto vs, then our owne, for his greate names sake: but this the Sepulcher of his pretious ^ holie bloode which he gaue free lie an oblati~on, to giue vs by that sacrifice, that which is aboue all; eternall life: without compuncti~on of loue or religion.<sup>27</sup>

Sherley's reliance on Plutarch to draw attention to comparable historical situations harkens back to an established practice among the Earl of Essex's followers with the best-known example being Sir Henry Wotton's *A Parallel between Robert, late Earl of Essex, and George late Duke of Buckingham* (1641).<sup>28</sup> Sherley's account of the

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provide additional justifications in the form of historical examples culled from the pages of Plutarch's *Parallel Lives* and Livy's *Roman Histories* as discussed in the following.

<sup>27</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 121<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Wotton, *A Parallel between Robert, late Earl of Essex, and George, Late Duke of Buckingham* (London: s.n., 1641). Hugh Gazzard, 'Those graue presentments of antiquitie: Samuel Daniel's Philotas and the Earl of Essex', *Review of English Studies*, vol. LI, no. 203 (2000), p. 429.

Ottomans' civil and military administration is informed by the relevant chapters of Machiavelli's *Prince* in a more transparent manner than is the case with his account of Safavid Persia, which will be analysed in the following sub-section.

***Safavid Empire: November 1598-May 1599***

Sherley's use of Machiavelli's *Prince* in conjunction with Soranzo's *L'ottomano* to anatomise the Ottoman Empire is clearly discernible, but his use of Machiavelli in conjunction with material on Persian history, as well as his idealised portrait of the Persian monarch present more of a challenge, since neither the Persian officials mentioned in the records concerning the mission nor Shah 'Abbas' trajectory in his accession to the throne are particularly well known. Sherley shaped his material to conform to Machiavelli's instructions in the *Relation*, but he adopted a more subtle approach in his portrayal of Shah 'Abbas, which can nonetheless be traced back to Tacitus through careful analysis of Sherley's language. Sherley's use of Tacitus also reveals a concurrent Machiavellian concern with political virtue and triumph over fortune's adversities, which in turn points to a specific tradition of Taciteanism championed by Henry Savile and the Essexians. Sherley's portrait of the Shah is presented after the company's arrival in Qazvin and during the Shah's absence on a campaign against the Uzbeks in Central Asia, calling for a brief description of the company's arrival and reception by the relevant Safavid officials during the Shah's absence, and an accurate account of the Shah's accession and achievements before Sherley and his company's arrival in late 1598, in order to facilitate the further

investigation and assessment of Sherley's anatomisation of the Safavid Empire with respect to his information on Persian history and the princely mirror within which he chose to present the Shah to his intended audience at St James's Palace.

Sherley and his company traversed the Ottoman-Safavid frontier in winter 1598, and spent a little over five months in Safavid Persia calling at Qazvin, Qum, Kashan and Isfahan, before Shah 'Abbas dispatched Sherley to Europe as part of an embassy to establish a political and military alliance with the Papacy, the Austrian and Spanish Habsburgs, the Kings of France, Scotland and Poland, and the Queen of England, the Doge of Venice and the Grand Duke of Florence.<sup>29</sup> Sherley and his companions took about a week to reach the former capital Qazvin, where they awaited the Shah's return from his recent campaign against the Uzbeks, and afterward accompanied him on a journey to the new capital Isfahan, where they resided from late January until the embassy's departure in late April / early May 1599. Parry, Manwaring and Pincon all describe meeting the Shah and a limited number of courtiers, but Sherley's position as head of the company and his favourable treatment by Shah 'Abbas meant that he had greater access to the Shah's presence and met with many other statesmen, and these Safavid officials will be identified whenever possible. Sherley and his company had travelled from the Ottoman-Safavid border as far as Asadabad by 27 November when Sherley dispatched his major-domo Pincon, Angelo Corrai and one of his servants to

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<sup>29</sup> E. Denison Ross (ed.) *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure: including some contemporary narratives relating thereto* (London: G. Routledge & Sons, 1933), pp. 22-23.

prepare a house for his imminent arrival at Qazvin.<sup>30</sup> Sherley instructed them to do so secretly and meet the rest of the party some distance from the city after dark because he did not wish to be seen entering Qazvin in his ‘trauelling apparell’:

So, passing along the country... Sir Anthony sent Angelo, our guide, accompanied with an English gentleman, whose name was John Ward, some four days’ journey before us, to Casbeene [Qazvin], in secret, to provide us of a lodging, and to attend our coming two or three miles from the city, somewhat late in the evening, and so to convey us to our lodging, without the knowledge of the citizens, in regard we were unprovided with apparel and other necessaries by reason of our long travels; yet they could not so secretly work their intended purposes, but it was made known, both to the Lord Steward of the king’s house, and also to the Governor of the city, who sent for them both, to know what he was that was coming to see their king [Shah ‘Abbas].<sup>31</sup>

Parry is more assertive claiming that ‘we... sent a Currier before, to signifie what we were, to the Gouvernor of the Citty [who] therevpon prepared for vs, a house of the kings, furnisht with such ornaments as befitted a great State’ and agrees with Manwaring on Sherley’s concern to manage his appearance at Qazvin.<sup>32</sup> Manwaring recalled that the company were visited the following day by the ‘Lord Steward of the King’s House’

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<sup>30</sup> Abel Pincon, ‘The Relation of a Journey taken to Persia, in the years 1598-1599, by a Gentleman in the Suite of Sir Anthony Sherley, Ambassador from the Queen [etc.]’, in Ross, p. 152.

<sup>31</sup> George Manwaring, ‘A True Discourse [etc.]’, in Ross, pp. 200-201.

<sup>32</sup> William Parry, *A new and large discourse of the Trauels of Sir Anthony Sherley Knight, by Sea, and ouer Land, to the Persian Empire, wherein are related many straunge and wonderfull accidents: and also, the Description and Conditions of those Countries and People he passed by: with his returne into Christendome, written by William Parry Gentleman, who accompanied Sir Anthony in his Trauells* (London: printed by Valentine Simmes for Felix Norton, 1601), sig. C3<sup>v</sup>. Ross, p. 115.

accompanied by a great train of ‘gallant gentlemen’.<sup>33</sup> Manwaring and Parry do not record the name of the Lord Steward, but Sherley refers to him as ‘Marganabeague’ which Denison Ross has rendered as ‘Marjan Beg’.<sup>34</sup> Ross’ identification is pure guesswork and is not based on any evidence whatsoever: Marjan (literally coral) is ordinarily a feminine name in Farsi (Persian), and while it could (in theory) have been applied to one of the eunuchs resident at the Safavid court, there is no record of any official by that name in the Safavid chronicles, which should have been known to Ross who had both Iskandar Beg Munshi Turkmen’s *Tarikh-i Alamara-yi Abbasi* (1629), and Jalal al-Din Yazdi’s *Tarikh-i Abbasi* (1611/12) before him when editing his own *Sir Anthony Sherley and his Persian Adventure* (1933).<sup>35</sup> Manwaring and Sherley’s description of the official’s position within the bureaucracy as ‘Lord Steward of the King’s House’ on the other hand, does have an equivalent in Safavid bureaucratic literature as can be seen from the surviving manuals on administration, where it corresponds to the position of *Ishik Aqasi Bashi-yi Haram*. Willem Floor renders the position as ‘Chief Royal Mace-bearer of the Royal Harem’, whose responsibilities included keeping watch at the palace gate from a purpose-built guardhouse, and ‘not allowing anyone who has no business there to be in its surroundings’, as well as

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<sup>33</sup> Manwaring, p. 201.

<sup>34</sup> Ross, p. 16.

<sup>35</sup> Roger Savory (ed.) *Tarikh-e Alamara-ye ‘Abbasi: the History of Shah ‘Abbas the Great*, vols. I-III (Boulder: Westview Press, 1978-86). Sayf ‘Allah Vahidniya (ed.) *Tarikh-i ‘Abbasi, ya Ruznamah-yi Mulla Jalal* (Tehran: Intisharat-i Vahid, 1366 / 1987). Ross, p. 20. Sholeh Quinn describes the chronicles of Iskandar Munshi and Mulla Jalal at some length in her excellent monograph. Quinn, *Historical Writing during the Reign of Shah ‘Abbas* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2000), pp. 21, 22.

maintaining law and order within the palace precincts.<sup>36</sup> Parry's statement that the company were lodged at a 'house of the kings', as well as the official's return about a week later to invite them to the palace, where they were required to kiss the gate also agree with his position as *Ishik Aqasi Bashi-yi Haram*.<sup>37</sup> Shah 'Abbas' Steward of the Royal Household, or *Ishik Aqasi Bashi-yi Haram* at this point was Amir Guna Beg, rendered by Sherley as 'Marganabeague' in the *Relation*.<sup>38</sup> Manwaring provides an interesting and detailed account of Amir Guna Beg's first meeting and exchange with Sherley at his residence near the palace in Qazvin. Amir Guna Beg (according to Manwaring) began by informing Sherley that the Shah was engaged in a military campaign against the Uzbeks in Greater Khurasan. He then presented Sherley with twenty pounds in gold for his expenses and assured him he would receive the same amount daily until the Shah's return from Khurasan.<sup>39</sup> Manwaring adds that as soon as Amir Guna Beg had left, the Governor of Qazvin arrived with a 'gallant train of gentlemen, very well horsed' to welcome Sherley and his companions 'offering Sir Anthony all that he was worth to be at his service'.<sup>40</sup> Sherley's exchange with the Governor of Qazvin resembles the earlier one, with Sherley politely refusing any assistance from the two provincial authorities, knowing full well that they would still have been obligated to see to his needs as a royal guest of the Shah, but Sherley's meeting with the Governor is important for another reason to which I will return in

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<sup>36</sup> Willem M. Floor (editor), *Titles and Emoluments in Safavid Iran: A Third Manual of Safavid Administration* (Washington, D.C.: Mage, 2008), p. 44. Floor and Mohammad H. Faghfoory (eds.) *Dastur al-Muluk: a Safavid State Manual* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2007), pp. 171-75.

<sup>37</sup> Parry, sig. C3<sup>v</sup>-C4<sup>f</sup>. Ross, p. 116. Manwaring, pp. 202-3.

<sup>38</sup> Savory, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, p. 1262.

<sup>39</sup> Manwaring, p. 201.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 202.

connection with Sherley's sources in the *Relation*. I will simply point out for the time being that the Governor of Qazvin at this juncture was Shaykh Ahmad Agha Sharaflu Ustajlu who also held the position of *Darugha* or Mayor of Qazvin and was known for meting out rather severe punishments to transgressors.<sup>41</sup> Parry records that Shaykh Ahmad Agha the Governor of Qazvin (more likely Amir Guna Beg) wrote a letter to Shah 'Abbas 'signifying vnto him, that there was come, a Christian (right well attended) to see him, by reason of the fame he hard heard of him', on account of which 'hee [ie. Shah 'Abbas] made as much expedition as possibly hee could (with respect had to his great affaires) to come to Sir Anthony'. Parry then adds rather sheepishly that 'we remained there some three weeks before he came'.<sup>42</sup> Parry was blatantly rewriting the official's letter by interpolating gratuitous self-congratulatory remarks, claiming that Sherley was 'right well attended' and that the Shah subsequently made 'as much expedition as he possibly could to come to Sir Anthony'. Shah 'Abbas in fact had a reputation for making forced marches, in which he covered vast distances over short periods of time, and if he took three weeks (or more) to travel from Khurasan to north central Iran, he can not have been making a great deal of 'expedition'.<sup>43</sup>

Sherley himself wrote relatively little about Amir Guna Beg and does not mention Shaykh Ahmad Agha until much later in the *Relation*. He remained unfazed by the

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<sup>41</sup> Floor, *Titles and Emoluments in Safavid Iran*, p. 262. Savory, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, passim. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions* (Costa Mesa: Mazda, 2001), p. 120.

<sup>42</sup> Parry, sig. C3<sup>v</sup>. Ross, p. 116.

<sup>43</sup> Savory, "'Abbas I, styled the Great (996-1038 / 1588-1629)', *Encyclopedia Iranica*.



Shah's absence from the city of Qazvin, and chose to describe him regardless, so that his discourse would 'passe with a more liuely, and more sensible feeling':

And now that I am in Persia and speake of the kinges [*i.e.* Shah 'Abbas's] absence: since he is both one of the mightieste princes that are, and one of the excellenteste, for the true vertues of a prince, that is or hath binne: and haveing come to this greatnes, though by right: yet through the circu~mstances of the time and the occasiones, which then were, solee his owne worthines and vertue, made waie to his right, besides the fashi~on of his government, differinge so much from that which we calle barbarousnes, that it maie iustlie serue for as greate an Idea for a principallitie as Platoes Common wealth [Plato's *Republic*] did for a government of that sorte.<sup>44</sup>

Jonathan Sell observes that Sherley's description begins with hyperbole 'one of the mightiest princes that are, and one of the excellentest, for the true vertues of a Prince' before making a prominent reference to Plato's *Republic*. Sell argues that Sherley's reference to Plato's *Republic* conjures up associations with political writing in the tradition of mirrors for princes, so that the reader would expect to find 'himself, or an ideal form of himself, reflected in the image of 'Abbas'. Sell goes on to reject the possibility of a mimetic representation of the Safavids, but nevertheless admits that Sherley's strategy makes sense from the point of view of presenting Shah 'Abbas as a desirable ally in a future campaign against the Ottomans.<sup>45</sup> Sherley's description also reveals a distinctly Machiavellian edge, with its repeated invocation of 'vertue' which could either be read as virtue or the Machiavellian 'virtu', which in turn suggests an

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<sup>44</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 124<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>45</sup> Sell, p. 107.

awareness of multiple readerships at the time of composition.<sup>46</sup> Sherley next proposed to include a description of the Shah's nature or physical appearance:

His person then is such as a well vnderstandinge nature would fitt for the end proposed for his beinge: excellently well shapped, of a moste well proporced stature, stronge and actiue, his couller somewhat inclineing to a manlike blackenes: is allso more blacke by the sunnes burninge, his furniture of his mind infinittlie royall, wise, valiante, liberall, temperate, mercifull, and an exceeding louer of justice... farre... from all vnprincelie signes or actes; knowing his power iustlie what it is, and the like acknowledgment will allso haue from others, without any gentilicious adoration, but with those respectes, which are fitt for the maiestie of a prince, which foundeth it self vpon the power of his state, generall loue, and awefull terror.<sup>47</sup>

Sell is equally dismissive of Sherley's description of the Shah's physical appearance, contending that it involves nothing but a 'straightforward enumeration of the stock physical attributes stipulated for the arguments *a persona* under invention, or singled out for praise in epideictic oratory' as treated and elaborated by Cicero, Quintilian and Priscian, and all are '*prima facie* attributes fit for a king, so that in conjunction they merely affirm 'Abbas' kingliness, while the description has all the value of a circular argument, as Sherley himself half-acknowledges'.<sup>48</sup> Sell manages to source Sherley's comment that even though Shah 'Abbas did not seek 'gentilicious adoration', he did nevertheless demand the twin respects of 'generall loue and awefull terror', a pairing

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<sup>46</sup> Skinner and Price, pp. 103-104.

<sup>47</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 124<sup>r-v</sup>. Sherley, sig. E3<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>48</sup> Sell, pp. 107, 108.

ultimately derived from Chapter XVII of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, 'Cruelty and Mercifulness; and whether is its better to be loved or feared'.<sup>49</sup>

Sherley's initial portrait of Shah 'Abbas clearly draws on classical rhetoricians and Machiavelli, and is followed by a lengthy account occupying thirty-four leaves of the printed book about how the Shah succeeded to the throne of Persia, which is sadly no more accurate than the idealised portrait discussed above. Peter W.M. Blayney, who has carried out the most rigorous and painstaking comparison of the manuscript and the printed edition of Sherley's *Relation*, has recently observed: 'Accuracy and honesty do not appear to have been Sir Anthony's most persistently obtrusive qualities, and his account of the life and times of King Abas leaves something of both to be desired. The account is not a complete fabrication, but Sherley was sometimes guilty of adjusting events to fit the words in which he wished to describe them.'<sup>50</sup> Blayney's field of research may not be related to Safavid history, but his evaluation and remarks on Sherley's description of Shah 'Abbas' rise to power are judicious: Sherley's semi-fictional account of the Shah's succession to the throne rarely rises above the level of third or at best second hand information, and is so riddled with inaccuracies and interpolations that it would perhaps best be served with a modern critical edition, where each and every point might conveniently be addressed. Sherley begins aptly with the death of Shah 'Abbas' grandfather Tahmasb (r. 1524-1576), and the outbreak of the Second Safavid Civil War (although Sherley does not employ the term), but things go rapidly downhill from there, and it would perhaps be best to provide a bare outline of

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<sup>49</sup> Skinner and Price, pp. 58 ff.

<sup>50</sup> Blayney, p. 289.

Shah 'Abbas' rise to power based on Safavid sources, and then point out where and in what manner Sherley departs from them in the *Relation*.<sup>51</sup> Shah Tahmasb had apparently intended his twenty-year-old son Haydar Mirza to succeed him to the crown, but the latter was killed on the day of his coronation by the guards on duty at the palace who were partisans of his warlike elder brother Isma'il, who had been imprisoned by Shah Tahmasb for the past twenty years for endangering the hard-won peace with the Ottomans with his military exploits on the frontiers.<sup>52</sup> Isma'il was crowned as Shah Isma'il II with the backing of the Qizilbash military aristocracy in 1576, but his systematic execution of nearly all potential rivals to the crown and his wide-ranging purge of the ruling classes resulted in the alienation of his supporters, and he was eventually poisoned with the connivance of Tahmasb's daughter princess Pari Khan Khanum and died a year after his accession in 1577.<sup>53</sup> Pari Khan Khanum set up a council of state following the assassination of Isma'il II, but the Qizilbash chose to support Isma'il's elder brother Muhammad Khudabandah, who had previously been passed over on account of his blindness, and who promptly put the princess to death shortly after his arrival at Qazvin in February 1578.<sup>54</sup> Sultan Muhammad Shah's

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<sup>51</sup> Sherley composed the sections of the *Relation* about his travels as a kind of allegorical narrative, whereas he was insistent that the sections regarding politics and government in the Ottoman and Safavid empires should be taken seriously, and certainly more so than what he dismissively referred to as the accounts of 'common' pilgrims and merchants. Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 119<sup>v</sup>-120<sup>f</sup>. Sherley, sig. C1<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 69. Andrew J. Newman, *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (London: Tauris, 2006), pp. 41-42.

<sup>53</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, pp. 69-70. Newman, p. 42. The Qizilbash military aristocracy was composed of Turkmen tribesmen originally from Anatolia, Iraq and Syria who had brought the Safavid politico-religious movement to power by force of arms in 1501. Savory, 'Kizil-Bash', *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, vols. I-XII (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960-2005), vol. V (1986), pp. 243-45.

<sup>54</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, p. 70. Newman, p. 42.

coronation appears to have been largely symbolic, however, since real power was primarily wielded by his wife Mahd-i 'Ulya, and his eldest son Hamza Mirza was appointed as *vakil* or regent with greater powers than the Grand Vazir, while Sultan Muhammad Shah's second son 'Abbas, was brought up in the care of the Qizilbash commander Ali Quli Khan Shamlu at Herat in Afghanistan.<sup>55</sup> Mahd-i 'Ulya was supported by certain factions of the Qizilbash, but soon came into conflict with other elements who after publicly denouncing her to Sultan Muhammad Shah, decided to neutralise the Queen and killed her at Qazvin in 1579.<sup>56</sup> Mahd-i 'Ulya's allies in Khurasan responded by pledging allegiance to her second son 'Abbas (the future Shah 'Abbas) and rising in revolt against the government.<sup>57</sup> Sultan Muhammad Shah and Hamza Mirza were unable to quell the rebellion on account of a large-scale Ottoman invasion of the western provinces, and after Hamza Mirza was also murdered in mysterious circumstances while leading the campaign against the Ottomans from his encampment in Azerbaijan, and a series of governors had broken away from the government in the north, west and south of the country, 'Abbas Mirza and his guardian rode to the capital and assumed power in October 1587.<sup>58</sup> Shah 'Abbas was forced to confront three distinct challenges on his accession: Sultan Murad III's armies had practically occupied western and north-western Persia, 'Abd Allah II's Uzbeks had plundered half the eastern province of Khurasan, and several local governors were in revolt against the Shah and central government. Shah 'Abbas realised he could not

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<sup>55</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, p. 71. Newman, p. 42.

<sup>56</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, pp. 72-73. Newman, p. 42.

<sup>57</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, pp. 73-4. Newman, pp. 42-3.

<sup>58</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, p. 75. Newman, p. 43.

address all the above challenges simultaneously, and would have to re-establish the authority of the central government before he could dislodge the Uzbeks and the Ottomans from the eastern and western provinces. He accordingly consented to a pragmatic peace with Murad III, whereby he recognised Ottoman sovereignty over Azerbaijan, Karabakh, Ganja, Qarajadagh and parts of Georgia, Luristan and Kurdistan, while fully intending to reclaim the provinces, once he had successfully reasserted his authority in Iran and driven the Uzbeks out of Khurasan. Shah 'Abbas' decision to consent to a strategic peace with Sultan Murad allowed him to implement a radical overhaul of the military and financial institutions, in preparation for confronting the internal challenges to his authority, expelling the Uzbeks from Greater Khurasan and dislodging the Ottomans from the western provinces.<sup>59</sup> Shah 'Abbas blamed the Qizilbash military aristocracy for the chronic instability of the past decade, not to mention their involvement in the assassination of members of the royal house, and consequently established a standing army that would be entirely loyal to himself, to obviate his reliance on the Qizilbash in his upcoming campaigns against the rebellious provincial governors, the Uzbeks and the Ottomans. He instituted a new corps of mounted musketeer '*Qullar*' from among the royal slaves or servants of Armenian, Georgian and Circassian background; greatly augmented the existing musketeer and artillery units with Chaghatai Mongol, Arab and Iranian volunteers and expanded the number of his own personal bodyguard which, like the *Qullar* were recruited primarily from the ranks of the royal slaves or *qullar / ghulams*.<sup>60</sup> Shah 'Abbas had already

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<sup>59</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, pp. 76-77. Newman, pp. 51-52.

<sup>60</sup> Savory, *History of Shah 'Abbas the Great*, p. 527. Idem, *Iran under the Safavids*, pp. 78-79. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, pp. 137, 166, 176, 188. Sussan Babaie et al. provide an excellent

established the ‘*Qullar*’ mounted musketeer corps, greatly augmented the existing musketeer ‘*Tufangchi*’ and artillery ‘*Tupchi*’ corps, as well as his personal retainers before his victory over the governor of Shiraz, Ya’qub Khan Zu’l-Qadr and the conclusion of the Second Safavid Civil War in 1590.<sup>61</sup> He had also taken advantage of ‘Abd Allah II’s death to defeat the Uzbeks on 9 August 1598, so that having both concluded the Civil War, and expelled the Uzbeks from Khurasan, he only needed to dislodge the Ottomans from the western provinces, as he headed back from his victory over the Uzbeks at Ribat-i Pariyan in Afghanistan to Qazvin, where Sherley and his company had been waiting for an audience since December 1598.<sup>62</sup>

Sherley’s account of Shah ‘Abbas’ accession in the *Relation* is for the most part so adulterated as to render it almost unrecognisable: Sherley claims that young prince ‘Abbas was governor of the ‘prounice of Yasde’ [Yazd] before he was forced to take refuge with the ‘king of Corasan’ [khan of Uzbeks] on account of the jealousy of his father and brother Xa Codabent [Shah Khudabandah] and Sultan Hamzire Mirza, *i.e.* Shah ‘Abbas elder brother, crown prince Hamza Mirza. Shah ‘Abbas story begins to vaguely resemble Marlowe’s *Tamburlaine*, as he invades Persia with three thousand ‘Tartars’ but he is checked by the local governors, and manages to escape to the mountains with about ‘ten or twelue followers’.<sup>63</sup> He is forced to keep changing his

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introduction to the subject: Sussan Babaie, Kathryn Babayan, Ina Baghdiantz-McCabe and Massumeh Farhad, *Slaves of the Shah: new Elites of Safavid Iran* (London: Tauris, 2004), pp. 20 ff.

<sup>61</sup> K.M. Rohrborn, *Provinzen und Zentralgewalt Persiens in 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1966), p. 32. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, p. 166. Newman, p. 52.

<sup>62</sup> Savory, *Iran under the Safavids*, pp. 83-84. Newman, p. 52.

<sup>63</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 125<sup>r</sup>-126<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. E4<sup>v</sup>-F3<sup>r</sup>.

hiding place in the mountains of ‘Sistan’, until he suddenly recalls the devotion of his former subjects in the ‘province’ of Yazd, and makes his way to the city where he is greeted with demonstrations of popular support, and is soon after joined by the loyal prince ‘Ferrat Can’ and his brother ‘Zulfer’, evidently named after the general Farhad Khan and his brother Zu’lfaqr Khan Qaramanlu.<sup>64</sup> ‘Abbas Mirza and Farhad Khan march on Qazvin with a relatively large number of supporters, but are almost immediately surrounded by the governors of Shiraz, Isfahan, Gilan, Mazandaran and Hamadan, and have to resort to an elaborate ruse, whereby Farhad Khan pretends to abandon the prince, and lures the various governors into the confines of Qazvin, where they are all massacred and Shah ‘Abbas is crowned.<sup>65</sup> Sherley’s knowledge of Persian history and geography rarely exceeds a basic familiarity with a limited number of personal and place names in the above passages: Tahmasb I is alleged to have died ‘without issue’, Sultan Muhammad Shah is asserted to have been his brother, Hamza Mirza is supposed to have succeeded him to the crown, and there is an obvious misunderstanding about Shah ‘Abbas’ years in Khurasan, which Sherley evidently conceived of as being ruled by ‘Tatars’ (Uzbeks). Sherley was less concerned with replicating the precise details of the historical record, because Shah ‘Abbas had effectively seized power in a coup, and had to address a series of challenges to the legitimacy of his authority, whereas Sherley wished to emphasise the Shah’s legitimate

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<sup>64</sup> Rudi Matthee, ‘Farhad Khan Qaramanlu, Rokn al-Saltana, Military Commander of Shah ‘Abbas I, executed at the Shah’s orders in 1598’, in *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

<sup>65</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fols. 126<sup>v</sup>-127<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. F3<sup>r</sup>-G1<sup>v</sup>.



aspirations and having come to power ‘through the circu~mstances of the time and the occasiones, which then were, solelie his owne worthines and vertue’.<sup>66</sup>

Jonathan Sell has observed that given Sherley’s diplomatic mission on behalf of Shah ‘Abbas, it is hardly surprising that he presents him as someone the Christian princes ‘could do business with’ in the *Relation*, and suggests that Sherley’s reference to Plato’s *Republic* invokes the tradition of mirrors for princes.<sup>67</sup> Sell is certainly not mistaken about Sherley’s concern to represent Shah ‘Abbas as an ‘excellent prince’, but he is clearly mistaken in taking Sherley’s fictional portrait as the starting point for an evaluation of the Shah’s character (which he pursues too earnestly), and Sherley’s ‘mirror’ recalls the medieval tradition less than it does Tacitus:

I speake onely of... the iustice, wisdome, temperance, liberalitie, valour, mercifulnes, and gene^ra^lity of all excellent vertues, in a prince [Shah ‘Abbas] esteemed by us barbarous, and yet in deed fitte to be a patterne and mirrour to some of ours, who haue Christ in our mouthes, and not the least of his Sayntes in our heartes, besides the variety of his fortunes disposition, bridled and brought to a good inclination by the force of his wisdome and goodnes and true experience of the power of fortune, in which discourse there is noe alteracon of matter, the subiect beinge euer the person of the kinge and his excellenge vertues which I had rather speake of, to poynte out by them the happines of his state [Safavid Iran], then to see a farre of, the misery of some of ours, swimminge in blood, full of cruell commaundement, continuall accusac~ons, false friendshippes,

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<sup>66</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 124<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>. Newman, pp. 50-51.

<sup>67</sup> Sell, p. 107. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. E3<sup>r</sup>. Chloe Houston, ‘An Idea for a Principality? Encountering the East in Bacon’s *New Atlantis*’, *Seventeenth Century* 21, 1 (2006), pp. 22-32.

the ruines of innocents, implacable factions, and pernicious endes of things, contrarie to that which ought to be with us of a better profession, and is with those which wee despise.<sup>68</sup>

Sherley's presentation of Shah 'Abbas as a 'patterne and mirror' for some Christian princes, and his proposed contrast between the 'happines' of the Safavid Empire as opposed to the 'misery' of some Christian countries are plainly Tacitean, while his description of Shah 'Abbas' rise to power with its emphasis on virtue, fortune and eventual control comes across as having distinctly Machiavellian overtones, both of which were hallmarks of Henry Savile's expositions to the Essex circle wherein he: 'yoked together Tacitean accounts of Roman history with notions of political 'virtue' derived from Machiavelli and proponents of Huguenot resistance theory [*e.g.* Hubert Languet] to impart lessons about the importance of military commanders making principled interventions in the political life of their state.'<sup>69</sup>

Savile was the *key figure* in the transmission of Taciteanism from the academic environment in Oxford to the Essex secretariat in London, where Essex's personal secretaries Henry Cuffe and Henry Wotton, Antonio Perez, Arthur Atey, and Francis and Anthony Bacon became exponents of Taciteanism, and among whom Sherley was

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<sup>68</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 144<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. P3<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>69</sup> Paul E.J. Hammer, *The Polarisation of Elizabethan Politics: the Political Career of Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex, 1585-1597* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 307-8. Malcolm Smuts, 'Court-centred Politics and the uses of Roman Historians, c. 1590-1650', Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (editors), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (London: Macmillan, 1994), p. 27. David Womersley, 'Sir Henry Savile's Translation of Tacitus and the Political Interpretation of Elizabethan Texts', in the *Review of English Studies*, vol. 42 (1991), New Series, pp. 313-42.

certainly familiar with the elder Bacon, Atey and Wotton.<sup>70</sup> Savile first published a translation of four books from Tacitus' *History* and *The Agricola*, together with a composition of his own entitled *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba* (corresponding to the missing chapters of the *Annals*), and an appendix on Roman military organisation under Essex' patronage in 1591.<sup>71</sup> William Jones published a translation of Justus Lipsius' Tacitean political manual *The Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Ciuil Doctrine* about three years later in 1594, followed by Richard Greenway's translations of *The Annals* and *The Germania* in 1597, making almost all of Tacitus' extant works accessible to an English audience.<sup>72</sup> Malcolm Smuts notes that Francis Bacon also published the first edition of the *Essays*, considered a 'shrewd guide to politics influenced by Tacitus and Machiavelli', the same year Richard Greenway's translations of Tacitus were published in London.<sup>73</sup> Sherley would certainly have had access to most if not all of Tacitus' writings before his departure from England in 1597/98, but his reliance on a Tacitean 'mirror' in his account of 'Abbas I and the distinctly Machiavellian language used to describe the latter's 'excellence', combined with his description of himself as a soldier 'most exercised in the wars' making a

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<sup>70</sup> Smuts, p. 25. Gustav Ungerer (editor) *A Spaniard in Elizabethan England: the Correspondence of Antonio Perez's Exile*, vols. I-II (London: Tamesis, 1974-76), vol. II (1976), pp. 371 ff. Anthony Bacon: D.W. Davies, *Elizabethans Errant: the Strange Fortunes of Sir Thomas Sherley and his Three Sons as well in the Dutch Wars as in Muscovy, Morocco, Persia, Spain, and the Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 48, 49, 84, 121, 142; Wotton: Davies, pp. 160, 210. Atey: Alloza, et al., p. 138.

<sup>71</sup> Henry Savile, *The Ende of Nero and Beginning of Galba: fower bookes of the Histories of Cornelius Tacitus / The Life of Agricola* (Oxford: Ioseph Barnes and R. Robinson, 1591).

<sup>72</sup> William Jones, *Sixe Bookes of Politickes or Ciuil Doctrine, written in Latine by Iustus Lipsius: which doe especially concerne principallitie* (London: Richard Field, 1594). Greenway, *The Annales of Cornelius Tacitus / The Description of Germanie* (London: printed by Arn. Hatfield, 1598).

<sup>73</sup> Smuts, p. 30.

principled intervention by travelling to Persia and opening negotiations with the Shah, (without the sanction or even knowledge of Elizabeth) would appear to have flowed almost directly from Sir Henry Savile's expositions.<sup>74</sup> Savile's apparent influence on Sherley can also be detected in the ensuing forty leaves that take up most of the remainder of the *Relation*, where Sherley claims to provide a record of the debates occasioned by his proposal for the Shah to dispatch an embassy to Europe, and which Ross was prepared to accept as such if only we are willing to take for granted that Sherley had a 'phenomenal memory and a notebook'.<sup>75</sup> Sherley's detailed account of the debates involving the Grand Vazir Haldenbeague [Hatim Beg], Bastan-Aga [Bastam Agha] and Courtchy Bassa [Qurchibashi] on the one hand, and Xa-Tamas-Coolibeague [Shah Tahmasb Quli Beg], Oliuer Di-Can [Allahviridi Khan] and Sherley himself on the other hand should not of course be taken literally, even though Ross was evidently inclined to do so and went so far as to praise Sherley for his 'rare understanding of Oriental politics': the debates are simply a series of pro and contra arguments such as Sherley would have been familiar with from his humanist education at Oxford and the Inns of Court, and which are largely invented in the manner of Livy with some consideration of the personalities' relative position within the government and a few references to the political circumstances then attaining.<sup>76</sup> Sherley's account of the

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<sup>74</sup> Sherley, sig. B1<sup>r-v</sup>.

<sup>75</sup> Ross, p. xxii.

<sup>76</sup> Hatim Beg Urdubadi was the Grand Vazir, Bastam Agha Turkmen the 'Darugha-yi Daftarkhana' (*i.e.* Head Clerk of the Royal Secretariat), 'Allah Quli Beg Qapama-oghlu Qajar the 'Qurchibashi' (*i.e.* commander of the royal household troops), while Shah Tahmasb Quli Beg was of Shah 'Abbas' most trusted Caucasian *qul* / *ghulams* or slaves / servants, and 'Allahviridi Khan was the commander of the newly-instituted Qullar corps of mounted musketeers mentioned above. Savory, *History of Shah 'Abbas the*

protracted debates leading up to Shah ‘Abbas’s decision to dispatch an embassy to Europe is interesting not because of the precise words attributed to the various participants in the debate, but because of what Sherley set out to achieve through rendering such partially plausible exchanges and what purpose they were intended to serve in taking up such a large portion of the *Relation*, which again brings us back to Savile’s Taciteanism and the English and Dutch traditions of interpreting Tacitus’ representations of the opaque and ruthless politics of imperial Rome:

I set downe these thinges with soe particular a care... because in all discourses which I haue seene giuen forth for the world as better understandinge of those things which one man hath compiled out of... his readinge and experience, it hath beene a good and necessary use to set downe the nature of the people treated of, and in what sorte they might be or weare temperately gouerned and how much was learned of the princes and greate mens disposition iudgment and skill in rullinge by which course they which obserued it weare accounted wise and prudent understanders of the times and places which they conuersed in. So in this time of greater corruption where all contrary examples not seene nor knowne by us may breade a wonder, by that rarenes of others vertues and by that a detestation of our owne familiar vices which giue few amongst us the wisdome to make a true distinctione of honesty from dishonesty and that which is iustly profitable, from that which is uniuertly harmefull by which meanes may be gathered more better profite, by other mens forrigne experience, then those examples in which they are dayly exercised.<sup>77</sup>

Sherley justifies his prolix account through what comes across as an allusion to the tradition of ethnographic writing ‘the nature of the people treated of’, which in

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*Great*, pp. 503, 616-33. Floor, *Safavid Government Institutions*, p. 142. Savory, ‘Allahviridi Khan (d. 1022/1613), a Georgian ghulam who rose to high office [etc.]’, *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

<sup>77</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 143<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. P2<sup>v</sup>.

conjunction with his later reference to this time of 'greater corruption' and repeated questioning of notions of 'barbarousnes', appears to invoke Tacitus' *Germania* as a precedent, but he quickly moves to the nexus between Tacitus and Machiavelli (as elaborated by Savile) with his attention to 'how much was learned of the princes, and greate mens disposition iudgment and skill in rulling'. He finally hints at his own expectation of how the *Relation* should be viewed by his audience, making clear his preference that he be considered one of those who 'were accounted wise and prudent understanders of the times and places which they conuersed in' and reminding his readers that by means of books containing such rare and uncommon virtues 'may be gathered more better profite, by other mens *forraine experience*'. Sherley's initial point about ethnographic writing and the Tacitean dichotomy between Safavid Persia and some European countries are clear enough and have been touched on already, but the second and third points (which are closely related) ought to be borne in mind when discussing the debates involving the participants listed above: Sherley's declared intention to provide a qualitative analysis of the 'princes and great mens disposition, iudgement and skill in ruling', given the Tacitean framework within which Sherley's comments are made, presupposes a degree of familiarity with what Tacitus calls *arcana imperii* or secrets of state in which Savile was particularly interested. Henry Savile (and Justus Lipsius before him) regarded Tacitus as an author who revealed the hidden causes of political events and secret counsels of rulers to uninitiated observers, and Sherley's lengthy account of the deliberations preceding Shah 'Abbas' decision to dispatch a embassy to Europe is intended to provide similar 'Tacitean' insight into the inner workings of the Persian court, and is in turn informed by Sherley's attention to his

audience at St James' Palace, where Taciteanism continued to flourish among the remnants of the Essex faction, and where Prince Henry himself stated that he heard 'Tacitus represented by everyone as a writer of admirable sagacity'.<sup>78</sup>

Sherley may have invented much of his story of Shah 'Abbas' rise to power and the deliberations leading up to the Persian embassy to Europe, but this was certainly not because he did not have access to better information, and proceeded rather from the particular image he set out to present in his narrative, which brings us back to the relatively small space devoted to the Governor of Qazvin, Shaykh Ahmad Agha and Sherley's hitherto unidentified sources in the *Relation*. Sherley acknowledges that the 'Gouverneur' visited him upon his arrival at Qazvin, and he certainly refers to 'Xa-Hammadaga' (Shahammadagawe in the extant manuscript) in at least four different passages in the *Relation*, but he evidently did not make the connection that these were one and the same person, and even more strikingly believed 'Shahammadagawe' to correspond to a position he refers to as 'Knight Marshal'.<sup>79</sup> Sherley first mentions 'Shahammadagawe' in connection with Shah 'Abbas' installation and his subsequent nomination of new 'Gouverners and officers of all sorts'. Sherley records that Shah 'Abbas appointed 'Haldenbeague' [Hatim Beg] as 'chiefe *Viseire*' [Grand Vazir] and commanded him to 'passe through all his prouinces, accompanied with the *Xa-Hammadaga* [Shaykh Ahmad Agha]; who is, as it were, Knight Marshall [?], to cleare

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<sup>78</sup> Thomas Birch, *The Life of Henry, Prince of Wales* (London: printed for A. Millar, 1751), p. 121. J.H.M. Salmon, 'Stoicism and Roman Example: Seneca and Tacitus in Jacobean England', in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, vol. 50 (1989), no.2, pp. 199-225. Smuts, pp. 28, 22.

<sup>79</sup> Ashmolean MS no. 829, fols. 128<sup>v</sup>, 129<sup>f</sup>, 129<sup>v</sup>, and 132<sup>f</sup>. Sherley, sig. E3<sup>f</sup>, G4<sup>f</sup>, H1<sup>f</sup>, H3<sup>v</sup> and J4<sup>f</sup>. Sherley avoids using 'Earl Marshal' because of its association with Essex and his rebellion.

them from vagabonds, robbers, and seditious persons'.<sup>80</sup> Sherley's use of the definite article to refer to Shaykh Ahmad Agha here and on other occasions, as well as his equation of the latter with the position of Earl / Knight Marshal back in England, exemplify Sherley's conviction that he was describing a position rather than the personage whom he had met at Qazvin in December 1598.<sup>81</sup> Sherley later devotes a considerably more detailed passage to Shaykh Ahmad Agha in connection with Shah Abbas' return from his campaign in Gilan and Mazandaran:

First then, after his arriual in Casbin [Qazvin] hauing heard by his Viseire, and the relation of Xa-Hammadaga, [of some] who had not onely spoyled the subiects in their substances; but also [the country] of all orders, and iust forme of gouernement, which it now hath; and giuen them, by that meanes, more matter of dis-vnion then union; insomuch, that they were ful of theeues, of vacabonds, of factions, and such like insolencies: hee iudged it fit, to reduce it to the more peaceable and obedient, to giue it in those cases, a good condition of gouernment: Whereupon, he presently dispatched that Xa-hammadaga, a terrible, and resolute person, with full power and authority, for the reformation of those disorders; who in short time, though with more terrible examples, reduced all the prouinces to a vnite tranquillity, with mighty reputation.<sup>82</sup>

Shah 'Abbas had in fact conducted a series of punitive expeditions to the northern provinces of Gilan and Mazandaran (1592-97), in which Shaykh Ahmad Agha (rather surprisingly) had been involved and dispatched as the advance guard of the Safavid military and the 'executioner of the king's justice', and it is evident from Sherley's

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<sup>80</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 128<sup>v</sup>. Sherley, sig. G4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>81</sup> Sherley also refers to 'a thousand of *the* Xa-Hammadagae [guard]', as well as '*the* Xa-Hammadagae horse-men' (emphasis added). Ashmolean MS, fols. 130<sup>r</sup>, 132<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. H3<sup>v</sup> and J4<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>82</sup> Ashmolean MS 829, fol. 129<sup>r</sup>. Sherley, sig. H1<sup>r</sup>.



description that he had the same person in mind, who was generally known for the severity of the punishments he meted out to transgressors.<sup>83</sup> Blayney has shown that Sherley ‘had a set of words ready to describe some events, and used them with as little modification as possible’ in the above-cited passage: Sherley has only substituted the names of ‘Abbas I and Shaykh Ahmad Agha for those of Cesare Borgia and Remirro d’Orco from Chapter VII of Machiavelli’s *The Prince*, entitled ‘New principalities acquired through the power of others and their favour.’<sup>84</sup> Blayney’s comments are consistent with Sell’s recognition of Sherley’s reliance on Machiavelli, as well as other instances alluded to earlier in the dissertation, but Sherley’s information about Shah ‘Abbas’ punitive expedition against the Caspian provinces and Shaykh Ahmad Agha’s involvement therein are also more accurate than other parts of the *Relation*, which together with Sherley’s mistaken notion that Shaykh Ahmad Agha denoted a position comparable to that of Earl Marshal in England, point to Uruch Beg Bayat or Juan of Persia as the source for the information provided above. Uruch Beg was one of the retainers of Shah ‘Abbas’ elder brother crown prince Hamza Mirza, who entered the service of the new Shah in the wake of his former patron’s assassination while on campaign against the Ottomans in Azerbaijan (1586), and was sent as one of the four secretaries accompanying Shah ‘Abbas’ envoy Husayn Ali Beg (and Sherley) on a diplomatic mission to the courts of Europe in 1599-1602. Uruch Beg converted to Catholicism toward the end of the mission to Spain / Portugal (1602), and shortly afterward composed *Relaciones de Don Ivan de Persia* (1604) dedicated to Royal

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<sup>83</sup> Savory, *History of Shah ‘Abbas the Great*, pp. 621-25, 628, 634-37, 673-78, 693-98. Vahidniya (ed.) *Tarikh-i ‘Abbasi, ya Ruznamah-yi Mulla Jalal*, pp. 115-16, 143-47.

<sup>84</sup> Blayney, pp. 289-90. Skinner, p. 26.

Chaplain Alvaro de Carvajal, the *Relaciones* including a detailed account of Persian history from Noah's Flood to the reign of Shah 'Abbas and Uruch Beg (now Juan's) personal diary of the mission to the courts of Europe.<sup>85</sup> Uruch Beg Bayat / Don Juan of Persia may in some respects be compared to Hasan al-Wazzan / Leo Africanus, but unlike the latter has received relatively little attention since the translation of his *Relaciones* into English, with the exception of a book chapter by Nasrin Rahimieh and several research papers by Enrique Garcia Hernan.<sup>86</sup> Don Juan devoted a detailed paragraph to the *Hakim* (governor) and *Darugha* (mayor) of Qazvin Shaykh Ahmad Agha in the *Relaciones*, interestingly enough within the context of Shah 'Abbas' first punitive expedition against the Caspian province of Gilan (1592-93), where Don Juan managed to combine a description of Shaykh Ahmad Agha as 'alcalde mayor de corte' with the uniform of the king's executioner 'librea de la justicia real', which is almost certainly where Sherley mistook Xiec-Hamet / Xa-Hammad [Agha] as referring to the

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<sup>85</sup> Juan of Persia, *Relaciones de Don Ivan de Persia* (Valladolid: por Juan de Bostillo, 1604).

<sup>86</sup> Guy Le Strange (editor), *Don Juan of Persia: A Shi'ah Catholic (1500-1604)* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1926). Nasrin Rahimieh, 'A Conversion gone Awry' in *Missing Persians: discovering Voices in Iranian Cultural History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2001), pp. 21-38. Enrique Garcia Hernan, 'The Holy See, the Spanish Monarchy and Persia in the Sixteenth Century: some Aspects of the Jesuit Order's Involvement', presented at School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 2002. *Idem*, 'Don Juan de Persia and the Society of Jesus', presented at the Freer & Sackler Galleries, Washington, D.C., 2007, and 'Persia en la accion conjunta del Papado y la monarquia hispanica: Aproximacion a la actuacion de la Compania de Jesus (1549-1649), in *Hispania Sacra* LXII (2010), pp. 213-41. *Idem*, 'The Persian Gentlemen at the Spanish Court in the Early Seventeenth Century', in Jorge Flores and Rudi Matthee (eds.) *Portugal, the Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2010), pp. 283-300. Okaia Efendieva and Akifa Farzalieva (eds.) *Rossiia i Evropa glazami Orudzh-Beka Baiata: Don Zhuana Persidskogo* (St Petersburg: Filologicheskii fakul'tet Sankt Petersburgskogo gos universiteta, 2007). Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: in Search of Leo Africanus* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2006).

Earl or Knight Marshal as later expressed in the *Relation*.<sup>87</sup> Don Juan and Sherley had been members of the same diplomatic mission until 1601, and were associated with members of the Society of Jesus in Spain / Portugal, so it is reasonable to suppose Sherley had managed to procure Don Juan's *Relaciones*.<sup>88</sup> Sherley's reliance on Don Juan raises two further issues concerning the *Relation*, namely the manner of his incorporation of information from Don Juan's *Relaciones*, and the question of why Sherley did not make more extensive use of the text, particularly in relation to Shah 'Abbas' unexpected rise to power and the abundant historical and geographical information concerning seventeenth century Persia. Sherley completed the *Relation* in about the three-and-a-half months between February, and his brother's departure from Spain for England in June 1611, and from a practical point of view may not have had enough time to digest and include many details from the *Relaciones*, while it is also evident that the structure and aims Sherley set out to achieve in the *Relation* did not necessitate a similar amount of detailed information.<sup>89</sup> Sherley's use of Don Juan's *Relaciones* in the particular example cited above (and elsewhere in the *Relation*) is no different from his use of Guicciardini and Soranzo: Guicciardini, Soranzo and Don Juan's accounts of Italian, Turkish and Persian history were combed for specific information, which was invariably utilised to prove one of Machiavelli's precepts from *The Prince*, with the intent of offering examples of moral and (more often) political virtue, when

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<sup>87</sup> Juan of Persia, *Relaciones*, sig. O6<sup>f</sup>. Le Strange, p. 215.

<sup>88</sup> Davies, pp. 134 ff, 198 ff. Sherley's use of the information concerning Shaykh Ahmad Agha Sharaflu Ustajlu is the clearest, but by no means the only example where he borrows from Don Juan – see the latter's account of the execution of the Qizilbash conspirators at Qazvin (c. 1587), and the rebel Khan Ahmad Gilani's escape from Lahijan to the Turkish court at Istanbul (1592/93) for other examples. Le Strange, pp. 210, and 215. Sherley, *Relation of his Travels*, sig. F4<sup>v</sup>, and G4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>89</sup> Davies, pp. 220-21, 234.

reflecting either his own or Shah ‘Abbas’ image in the ‘Tacitean’ mirror that was being held up for his intended audience at St James’s Palace. Sherley used Machiavelli in connection with Guicciardini to highlight the stability of hereditary principalities, with Soranzo to demonstrate the advantage of small colonies over large-scale military occupation of newly conquered territories, and Don Juan to provide an example of political ‘virtu’ in the use of state-sanctioned violence.<sup>90</sup> Sherley’s heavy reliance on Machiavelli’s *Prince* throughout the *Relation* proceeded from a number of specific reasons and had equally important consequences: Sherley probably believed that by making his comments agree with Machiavelli’s conclusions he was setting the *Relation* on a much stronger footing, and could thereby elevate his own profile as a political thinker through indirect association with Machiavelli. Sherley could also partially overcome the distance created by his fourteen-year absence from England by falling back on political language that was still readily recognisable to surviving members of the Essex faction who had coalesced around the future king, Henry Prince of Wales and retained an undeniable influence at the prince’s court.<sup>91</sup> Sherley’s considerations and methods in composing the *Relation* also had the attendant consequence that whatever information did not immediately agree with Machiavelli’s precepts would have to be discarded, which is perhaps an additional reason for the dearth of accurate details concerning Shah ‘Abbas’ rise to kingship, or the deliberations preceding the Shah’s decision to dispatch a counter-embassy to the prominent courts of Europe.

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<sup>90</sup> Sherley’s use of Guicciardini and Soranzo are discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>91</sup> Prince Henry of course predeceased King James in November 1612.

## Conclusion

Sherley's descriptions of the Ottoman and Safavid empires were based on Lazzaro Soranzo's *L'ottomano* and Uruch Beg Bayat / Don Juan of Persia's *Relaciones*, buttressed by arguments drawn from Machiavelli's *Prince*. He achieved a synthesis between Machiavelli's aphoristic statements and the details culled from Soranzo and Bayat in the same manner as he had done earlier when describing the Ferrarese succession crisis before that Duchy's 'devolution' to the Papal States: the details borrowed from Guicciardini, Soranzo and Uruch Beg were marshalled to 'prove' Machiavelli's more general statements from the *Prince*, thereby allowing Sherley to partake of Machiavelli's astute political observations. Sherley likewise made use of Richard Greenway's translations of Tacitus' *Annals* and *Germania*, though in the latter case he displayed less concern with specific details, and was more interested in the practical purpose served by Greenway's translation: Greenway had claimed to present Essex with numerous examples of virtue in the *Annals* and *Germania* that would simultaneously reflect the Earl's own virtues, and Sherley opportunistically seized on Greenway's presentation as a suitable precedent. Sherley's reliance on Tacitus and Machiavelli was linked to his association with the Essex circle, who were heavily involved in the diffusion of the authors' respective works in the 1590's.

## Conclusion

This dissertation has provided a detailed account of the diplomat Sir Anthony Sherley's apprenticeship as a soldier in the Dutch Revolt and the French Wars of Religion, and explored the reasons behind his decision to travel to Safavid Persia, as well as the circumstances under which he composed the *Relation*. The dissertation has also attempted to ascertain the accuracy of Sherley's description of his journey to Safavid Persia as well as that of his account of the rise of Shah 'Abbas I to power, and approximated the courtly and popular audiences of the *Relation* in London.

Anthony Sherley was originally summoned from the Inns of Court by his father Sir Thomas Sherley the Elder to participate in his patron Sir Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester's expedition to the Netherlands in 1585-86. He gained considerable military experience under two of England's famous generals, Lord Willoughby and Sir John Norris in France and the Netherlands during 1587-95. He was also employed by Sir Francis Walsingham as a liaison officer with the future King of France Henri IV in preparation for Willoughby's campaign to France in 1589. Sherley gravitated toward Robert Devereux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Essex after the death of Leicester, marrying the former's cousin France Vernon of Hodnet sometime in 1590-93, and had emerged as one of Essex's 'great favourites' after the conclusion of the Island Voyage in 1597.

Essex dispatched Sherley and a company of veteran military officers to shore up the defences of Ferrara against an expected invasion by Pope Clement VIII following a meeting with the French ambassador in 1597. Sherley and his company reached Augsburg only to discover that Ferrara had conceded to the Pope's demands and

determined to continue travelling south to Venice. Sherley's objectives were altered during his residence at the Venetian Republic, following discussions with the Grand Duke of Tuscany as well as the Venetian authorities, who persuaded him to travel to India and drive the Portuguese from their colonies. Sherley's subsequent decision to travel to Persia via the Ottoman Empire, however, was motivated by the promise of patronage and military employment at the opulent court of Shah 'Abbas I.

Sherley's description of his journey to Persia displays many of the elements often associated with the genre of romance including chivalry, the quest motif, travel, adventure, disguise and coincidence, and was conceived as an allegorical romance supported by a series of *examples* developed at key points. These were intended to castigate Sherley's enemies for casting doubt on his reputation, draw attention to his financial plight following his dismissal as Admiral of the eastern Mediterranean and secure the patronage of Henry, Prince of Wales. Sherley also associated himself with Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, and by extension with the newly installed Prince of Wales through the shared culture of *exemplarity*. Sherley's deliberate association of himself with the Prince's predecessor Essex, is mirrored by Sherley's mention of the exemplary warrior princes from British history, who had earlier been lauded by Ben Jonson in the speeches performed at the *Barriers*. Prince Henry's *Barriers* was a public declaration of the future king's ideology and Sherley's choice of moral and heroic examples in this context was interesting: his examples represented the common ground between him (Sherley) and the devout and martial Henry, Prince of Wales.

Sherley's portrait of Shah 'Abbas likewise draws on classical rhetoricians and Machiavelli, and only makes sense for the purposes of presenting Shah 'Abbas as a

desirable ally in a future campaign against the Ottomans. Sherley's description of his journey to Persia and his portrait of Shah 'Abbas could not have been analysed objectively in the absence of the detailed narratives of his companions as well as the detailed Persian chronicles of the Safavid period, which both draw attention to the discrepancies and inconsistencies within the *Relation* and in turn indicate Sherley's overriding concern to secure the patronage of Henry, Prince of Wales.



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**Meyer, Albrecht.** *Methodus describendi regiones, urbes & arces, & quid singulis locis praecipuè in peregrinationibus homines nobiles ac docti animadvertere, observare & annotare debeant... per M. Albertvm Meierym.* (Helmstadii: Excudebat Iacobus Lucius, 1587).

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*Composed by Iames Wadsworth Gentleman, newly conuerted into his true mothers bosome, the Church of England, with the motiues why he left the Sea of Rome; a late pentioner to his Maiesty of Spaine, and nominated his captaine in Flanders: sonne to Mr. Iames Wadsworth, Bachelor of Diuinity, sometime of Emanuell Colledge in the Vniuersity of Cambridge, who was peruerted in the yeere 1604., and late tutor to Donia Maria Infanta of Spaine, published by speciall license (T[homas] C[otes] for Michael Sparke, London, 1629).*

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