

Chapter 9

THE FIRST IRRUPTION: FRANCIS DRAKE

... the ticklish and brittle state of the greatness of Spain. Their greatness consisteth in their treasure, their treasure in their Indies, and their Indies, if it be well weighed, are indeed but an accession to such as are masters by sea.

what English shippes did heeretofore euer anker in the mighty riuer of Plate? passe and repasse the vnpassable (in former opinion) straight of Magellan, range along the coast of Chili, Peru, and all the backside of Noua Hispania, further than any Christian euer passed, travers the mighty bredth of the South sea, land upon the Luzones in despite of the enemy, enter into alliance, amity, and traffike with the princes of the Moluccaes, & the Isle of Java, double the famous Cape of Bona Speranza ... & last of al returne home most richly laden with the commodities of China?

Northern ways to the South Sea: Anian and the Three Brothers

Englishmen were the first outsiders to break into the Spanish Lake, although apart from the Bristol venturers into and across the North Atlantic, who were sailing at least as early as 1480,¹ they were slow in taking to long-distance voyaging under their own colours; but this did not preclude some academic speculation and lively projecting. The wealthy merchant Robert Thorne, Seville-based and like Magellan's gunner Master Andrew a Bristol man, invested in Sebastian Cabot's Spanish voyage for the South Sea (1526) and so was able to place with it two Englishmen, Roger Barlow and Henry Latimer, in the unavowed pursuit of knowledge as to whether the seas extended from the Spiceries 'without interposition of londe ... to the newe founde landes that we discovered' across the North Atlantic;² a pursuit unsuccessful since the voyage was diverted, by tales of a silver Sierra, to La Plata and up the Parana. In the next year, 1527, there was some diplomatic talk looking to a purchase of the Spanish claims to the Moluccas by Henry VIII, and indeed his father had made it clear, as early as 1502, that he would not recognise claims based simply on discovery without effective occupation.³ As a matter of practical politics and logistics, however, for the first half of the century English interests and activities had by and large a northerly bias, with only one really important exception.⁴ This was

'Considerations touching the War with Spain', *The Works of Francis Bacon* (London 1824–34), V. 229–85 at 282–83; R. Hakluyt, 'Epistle Dedicatorie' to *The Principall Navigations, Voiages and Discoveries of the English nation* (London 1589).

the early trespassing on Portuguese preserves in Guinea and Brazil, often using as a forward base the Canaries, a relatively free-trade area in the Spanish system, where English merchants had rights by the Treaty of Medina Campo (1489).⁵ The resulting Anglo-Portuguese friction was less important, both in the long and short run, than the opportunity provided for John Hawkins's economically well-conceived, if politically unfortunate, pioneer enterprise in slaving from West Africa to the Caribbean: long term, the precursor of the great 'triangular trade' of the eighteenth century; short term, the occasion for the clash at San Juan de Ulua, perhaps not quite so sharp a turning-point in Anglo-Spanish relations as is generally reckoned, but of immense significance in the career of Francis Drake.⁶ Without it there would doubtless still have been challenges to the Spanish monopoly, but the affair ensured that Drake would be a special agent in the process.

Early efforts by Thorne and Barlow to secure royal support for a northwards search for Cathay had no effect: the manuscript docketed *Geographia Barlow* lay in the archives for nearly 400 years.⁷ However, the readjustment of the currency in 1551 and the consequent fall in exports, perhaps also the simultaneous isolation of Protestant England from both Habsburg and Valois, made the England of Edward VI's time more receptive to overseas projects: there was a need for alternative outlets for mercantile capital. In 1548 the veteran Sebastian Cabot, who had first sailed from Bristol about 1509 (if not with his father in 1497!) was attracted from his office of Pilot-Major to the Casa de Contratacion, to become an expert adviser to the English government; three or four years later we find him discussing with the Duke of Northumberland an attempt on Peru, perhaps by sending 4000 men in pinnaces up the Amazon! More to the point, Richard Eden and John Dee were beginning a program of geographical education. The first fruit of the new interest was the chartering (1552-3) of the Merchant Adventurers, for discovery and trade to the northeast, north and northwest, with Cabot as Governor for life: by 1558 the voyages to the White Sea promoted by this 'Muscovy Company' had opened up an important new market in Russia for the badly depressed cloth trade, and the company's agent Anthony Jenkinson had reached Bokhara. Not surprisingly in view of the hardships and hazards of the boreal seas, where Hugh Willoughby and all his men perished, the company tended to discount the distant vision of opening the Arctic ways to Cathay and the South Sea, in favour of the more solid prospects of profit from clothing the shivering Russians in good English wool.

The thinking of England's pioneer geographers was global, not flat-map: the use of 'Mercator's projection' (1569) as a navigational aid, with all that has implied for the image of the world, had to wait until Edward Wright applied it in his 'Azores' chart of 1599.⁸ It was indubitable that the shortest routes from England to Cathay and the South Sea lay northabout. These were also the most free of political hazard or objection; indeed, in the view of that good Welshman John Dee, the Tudor Crown had an indefeasible title to those countries beyond

Iceland that had been colonised by King Arthur.⁹ Even on Cabot's southern voyage, Barlow's aim had been to find if there were unbroken sea between the Moluccas and Newfoundland, 'without interposition of londe'; that indeed was the nub. In the last resort only experience could decide—as Richard Willes put it, 'It must be Peregrinationis historia, that is, true reportes of skilfull travailers, as Ptolome writeth, that in such controversies of Geographie must put us out of doubt.' There were, however, plenty of theorists prepared to discount the obstacles of climate and ignorance: whatever the risks and hardships of an Arctic route, the reward would be commensurate, for had not the King of Portugal given the Emperor 350,000 crowns 'to leave the matter unattempted', and was not that too much to pay for 'egges in moonshine'?¹⁰

The arguments, as exemplified in Sir Humphrey Gilbert's famous discourse on the Northwest Passage, were wonderfully mixed appeals to authority, to experience, and to unnatural physiography, and the proponents of northern Passages were far from agreed on the layout of circumpolar lands and seas;¹¹ but by mid-century it was generally agreed that a way through did exist. From the Atlantic side there had been various probes. Verrazano, looking over a low neck of land, had seen a great open water, which he thought must be the South Sea; it was probably Chesapeake Bay or Pamlico Sound. A year or two later, in 1524–5, Estevão Gomes (Magellan's deserter) carefully surveyed the whole coast from the Bay of Fundy to Florida, finding no passage, and by 1535 Jacques Cartier had eliminated the promise of the Gulf of St Lawrence: as on the Pacific shores, any 'doubtful strait' must lie well to the north.¹² Danes and Portuguese may well have been in the waters between Labrador and Greenland as far back as the 1470s; here the Corte Reals had sailed and vanished in the first years of the new century, and here about 1509 Sebastian Cabot had very likely penetrated into the very portal of Hudson's Bay—in his own view, between the horns of Asia and America. It is possible that the mysterious name 'Fretum Trium Fratrum' refers either to the Corte Reals or the Cabots.¹³

This Strait of the Three Brothers was the eastern end of a waterway shown on the very influential 1537 globe of Gemma Frisius, Cosmographer to the Emperor; it was thought to lie in about 61–64°N, trending southwest and after about 200 leagues broadening out, to merge into the South Sea in a much lower latitude than its Atlantic entry. This eastern mouth was thought of as reasonably well fixed as to position, but difficult as to access; on the Pacific side was nothing but a vagueness, in which the western entrance to the Passage, the Strait of Anian, could be inserted at any point between Cipangu and Nueva España that might suit the cosmographer's or projector's fancy. In a sense of course Anian was really there, since a watergap does exist between Asia and America; but the discovery of this genuine strait by Bering in 1728 did not end the career of the Anian claim. It became associated with mythical voyages by the real Greek pilot Juan de Fuca, the seedy and shadowy Lorenzo Ferrer Maldonado, and the fictitious 'Admiral of Mexico and Peru' Bartholomew de Fonte—the last

two complete hoaxes; but belief in a waterway through America much to the south of Bering Strait was held, sometimes passionately, far into the eighteenth century, and the idea was a factor in the planning of the voyages of Byron, Cook (1776–8), La Pérouse, Vancouver, and Malaspina. In Spain the ghost of Anian was not finally laid to rest until 1802.¹⁴

More particularly to our point, whether or not Anian was a factor in the initial planning of Drake's voyage around the world, in the working-out of that voyage it led to the first non-Iberian European discovery in the South Sea, the only non-Spanish exploration of a Pacific mainland coast before the Russians reached the Sea of Okhotsk in 1639.¹⁵

The shift to the south and the rise of Drake

Two essential elements in this enterprise were converging by the mid-1570s. Francis Drake had established himself as an outstanding seaman and commander; and, although the most famous northwestwards voyages were yet to come, this approach was relatively losing ground. Expert opinion, which had begun by seeking northern ways into the South Sea, was now paradoxically swinging round to southern approaches to a Northern Passage. With Richard Grenville's project of 1573–4, the wheel had turned: where Barlow had told Henry VIII that to discover 'this waie of the northe onlie . . . resteth unto your graces charge', Grenville, leaving that route to the French, tells Elizabeth that 'the fourth [way] to the south is by God's providence left for England'.¹⁶

Gilbert's discourse seems to have been the first proposal for an English settlement in the Mar del Sur, 'about Sierra Nevada', that is in our California, Drake's Nova Albion. From the generally assumed lie of the Strait of the Three Brothers, and from experience of its ice-ridden eastern approaches, it seemed fair to reckon that a Pacific entrance at say about 44°N, or even down to the Tropic, would be easier to find and negotiate; and indeed Gilbert tells a circumstantial story of having himself been told by a gentleman of New Spain that sometime before 1560 Urdaneta in person had come from the Mar del Sur to Germany by the Northwest Passage.¹⁷ A new factor enters with the first reports of Mendaña in the Solomons: these reached England not later than 1572,¹⁸ and appear to have inspired, at least in part, the project of Grenville and his friends for 'the discovery, traffic and enjoying . . . of all or any lands . . . southwards beyond the equinoctial', not being already in the possession of any other Christian Prince in Europe. Such lands, beneath the Pole Antarctic and to be reached through the Straits of Magellan, imply the great Terra Australis of Mercator and Ortelius.

The antithesis between the two approaches is sharpened by a later version (c. 1575–6) of Grenville's project, made apparently with direct reference to Gilbert. Admitting the Northwest Passage exists, Grenville asks whether it is better to seek it by 'passing under the congealed Arctic circle, for so high the main of America reacheth', or by Magellan's way—a longer course, but over known seas with better weather, so that full sail could be carried night and day

until the Strait of Anian was approached, and moreover passing by regions likely to be in all respects much richer than the boreal lands (this was before Frobisher had returned from the north with his fool's gold). The Magellanic tract might be searched to discover sites for fortifying the Straits 'if need were'; in effect, England might secure both the austral and the boreal approaches to the South Sea.¹⁹ Terra Australis now seems not altogether ignored, but to have slipped out of focus. A grandiose plan, and so much would surely be too much for the canny Gloriana.

Yet the reception of the first project was initially favourable, though it might well be doubted (and it probably was) whether Richard Grenville was the man to respect the more distant bounds of any Christian Prince. According to John Oxenham's deposition to his Spanish captors, the plan included a settlement at La Plata (obviously a sensitive spot) and then passing the Straits to 'establish settlements wherever a good country for such could be found.'²⁰ A patent for the voyage was drawn up, but this provisional approval was withdrawn for fear of consequences: while in the early seventies Anglo-Spanish relations were at a nadir (with the seizure of the silver for Alba's troops, San Juan de Ulua, and the Ridolfi Plot), by 1574 a new understanding had been reached by the Convention of Bristol, and this 'was the reef upon which Grenville's project foundered'. An expedition into the Spanish Mar del Sur, with its standing temptation to treasure-raiding, would be a provocation which Elizabeth could hardly afford as yet.²¹ But clearly South Sea venturing was in the air, and Grenville's plan remained in effect a blueprint for Drake's performance. Already indeed the aftermath of Spanish foul play at San Juan de Ulua had brought Englishmen, armed, across the Isthmus to the Mar del Sur: John Oxenham briefly on to its very waters, Francis Drake as yet only to a peak in Darien, a Pisgah-sight of the Ocean, a glimpse which led him to a longer voyage than Magellan's.

The hero of the Spanish Main, romantic theatre of Kingsley's schoolboy fiction and Froude's scarcely less impressionistic essays,²² was born in the early 1540s, of a strongly Protestant Devonshire family, forced by the Catholic rising of 1549 to fly to more congenial Kent, which became four years later the very hearth of Wyatt's rebellion against Queen Mary's marriage with Philip of Spain.²³ The boy thus grew up in an atmosphere compounded of Protestant Hot Gospelling and the maritime activity of the Medway estuary. A family relationship with John Hawkins gave him a post with John Lovell, who in 1566 took four of Hawkins's ships on the almost routine run to Guinea for slaves (as often as not seized from Portuguese ships) and across to the Indies, where these and other commodities would be disposed of in flagrant breach of Spanish law. Often there was a hint of force, just sufficient to give the labour-hungry Spanish colonists an excuse to 'submit' to the exchange:

the general landed with one hundred men and the people of the town came down under a captain; and with their agreement a

shot was fired and an old house burned, and they did business together . . .²⁴

Scruples were not nice on either side in such a trade, and at one of the tiny ports of Tierra Firme the Governor refused to pay for ninety Negroes already landed; twenty-five years later Drake was still recalling 'the wrongs received at Rio Hacha', the beginning of his personal war with King Philip and his officers.²⁵

In October 1567 Drake sailed on Hawkins's 'third troublesome voyage', and was sent ahead in the 50-ton *Judith* to Rio de la Hacha. Here he was fired on and replied in kind, blockading the port until Hawkins arrived with superior force; after some violence, trade proceeded amicably. Now the troubles began: Hawkins was forced by storm damage to put into San Juan de Ulua, the port of Vera Cruz, to refit; his entrance was unopposed as the fleet was mistaken for the expected flota. When this did arrive a few days later, with the new Viceroy Don Martin Enriquez, Hawkins controlled the harbour mouth with a battery and was able to make terms before permitting its entry. Once in, however, Enriquez covertly prepared to attack, indubitably in gross and premeditated breach of faith.²⁶ After hard fighting only two of the five English ships got away—the *Minion* with Hawkins himself, and the *Judith*. Drake reached England in January 1569, a few days ahead of Hawkins, who had a nightmare voyage in the overcrowded and under-rationed *Minion*, even though half her crew had voluntarily taken their chances ashore in New Spain; and an ill chance it was. Hawkins wrote that the *Judith* 'forsooke us in our greate miserie', and he cannot be blamed for taking hard the apparent desertion by a young relative whom he had advanced; but then Drake may well have thought that his first duty was to bring his own tiny vessel safely home. It was not a brilliant start in command, though the estrangement from Hawkins does not seem to have remained serious for long.

For a time Drake returned to an obscurity from which he had only begun to emerge. In 1570, however, he made the first of three definitely known annual Caribbean voyages, probably largely financed by Hawkins, which brought him to the portal of the Pacific. Little is known of the first; on the second he went up the Rio Chagres as far as Cruces, and at the eastern end of the Isthmus marked down a well-hidden cove as a base for next year's voyage.²⁷ These forays were simply freebooting—if Drake had a commission at all, it would probably have been a Huguenot one, of doubtful avail against non-French Catholics.

The objective of the third voyage was far more than the usual snapping-up of coastal traders and raiding of undefended coastal towns; Drake had determined to seize the Peruvian treasure itself, by a surprise raid with only two small ships (70 and 20 tons) and seventy-three men. He had now a close acquaintance with the coast from the Chagres to Cape Tiburon, on the present Panama/Columbia border; but, strangely, he seems to have had only imperfect intelligence on the seasonal flow of traffic across the Isthmus. This was active only when the galeones were in, during the first four or five months of the year; for the remainder, the silver of Peru piled up in Panama City, but naturally was

not portaged to the vulnerable northern shores until its onward shipping was becoming available. Since Drake left Plymouth on 24 May 1572, he was far too late to intercept treasure for that year's Seville fleet. In a more general view, however, the timing for a real blow at 'old Philip's treasury' was appropriate, since in January the Spanish Ambassador had been expelled for involvement in the Ridolfi plot against Elizabeth's crown and life. A damaging unofficial counterstroke was not likely to be frowned upon.

The magnificent adventure story of the Isthmus raid can be only outlined here. Although he found that his hidden Port Pheasant was no longer a secret to friend or foe, Drake assembled there his three pre-fabricated pinnaces, and at the end of July took them into Nombre de Dios at moonrise. Brilliantly successful at first, the surprise lost impetus, and when Drake himself fainted from an early wound, the seventy-odd assailants took to their pinnaces in some disorder.²⁸ This first attempt was a failure, though hardly a fiasco; and from the Cimarrons or Bush Negroes with whom contact was now made, it was clear that there would be no point in a second try until silver again began to move over the trail, in about five months' time. Apart from an outbreak of yellow fever, this interval was filled in agreeably enough by minor feints and forays, playing havoc with the cabotage carried on by the scores of small 'frigates' of the coast, and planning the next attack with the Cimarrons, who proved admirable allies, intelligent, born to the bush, physically tough, valiant and loyal.

The galeones arrived in January 1573, and Drake immediately set out with John Oxenham and sixteen others, accompanied by thirty Cimarrons, to ambush a *requa* near Casa de Cruces. On the way the guides took Drake to a look-out in a tall tree, whence he could see at once both the Caribbean and the South Sea, begging 'Almightie God of his goodnesse to give him life and leave to sayle once in an English Ship in that sea'; and Oxenham 'protested. . . that he would follow him by Gods Grace.' The prayer was granted, but it was Oxenham who led, to his own destruction.

The ambush was set, but one Robert Pike 'having drunken too much Aqua vitae without water. . . unadvisedly he rose up', and although 'the *Symeron* (of better discretion) puld him downe, and lay upon him', the alarm had been taken. The loot of the little village of Cruces was poor consolation for being 'defeated of our golden Recoe'; so far the voyage had been only modestly successful, and the company had dwindled to thirty-odd. They now fell in with a Huguenot party under the cartographer Guillaume Le Testu (Tetu), who brought news of the Massacre of St Bartholomew and proffered alliance: Drake was wary, but had little choice save acceptance, since the French had more than double his resources.²⁹ A new ambush was set near Nombre de Dios, this time successfully, though Le Testu was killed. Little of the massive haul of silver could be carried off, but gold to the value of 80–100,000 pesos was taken away: after the disappointments of Nombre de Dios and Cruces, 'our voyage was made.'

There was a last wild adventure, a raft voyage to regain the pinnaces, driven

off by a storm; then an emotional leave-taking from the Cimarrons, whose leader Pedro was given the gilded scimitar, once owned by Henry II of France, which Le Testu had presented to Drake. On 9 August, 1575 a Sunday, Drake reached Plymouth 'about Sermon-time . . . very few or none remained with the Preacher. All hastning to see the evidence of Gods love and blessing towards our Gracious Queene and Countrey . . .' More to the point, Drake had exposed Spanish weakness, not least to the Spaniards themselves, and had pioneered a long series of attempts against the Isthmian node, the 'door of the seas, the key of the universe':³⁰ by Oxenham, Parker, Morgan and later buccaneers, Paterson, Pointis, Vernon.

Interlude: Oxenham on the Mar del Sur

Once again, like any Toynbeean hero, Drake withdrew, to wait for a return of greater renown. The negotiations for the Convention of Bristol were now in full swing (if that is the right phrase for any dealings between those incomparable deferrers Elizabeth and Philip), and any prominence for so successful a corsair would have been most inconvenient. Drake betook himself to the Irish wars, leaving to his companion on that peak in Darien the by now traditional free-booting on the Main. Oxenham's penetration right across the Isthmus was probably not the 'if of history', the 'Gallipoli campaign of the sixteenth century', that J. A. Williamson once called it—the lines of communication were too tenuous for Panama to have been held, had Oxenham taken it—but it has the interest of being the first European but non-Iberian enterprise on the waters of the Mar del Sur.³¹

Oxenham sailed from Plymouth in April 1576, with two small vessels and only fifty-seven men. After the usual marauding between Veragua and Acla, he came to the Cimarrons at their town of Ronconcholon—a considerable place, 217 houses, four or five times the size of Cruces. Meanwhile the President of the Panama Audiencia, Gabriel de Loarte, had sent out a small force from Nombre de Dios, which found Oxenham's hidden ships and took most of his guns and ammunition, with the goods which he carried to back up his cover story of innocent trading with the Cimarrons; but the English salvaged enough iron-work and cordage to build a new vessel. With the help of the Cimarrons, on whom he was now dependent, Oxenham took these materials across the Isthmus and built a 45-ton pinnace, and in February 1577 raided the Pearl Islands.

Here there was a good deal of wanton sacrilege: John Butler, the pilot and interpreter, opened a child's lesson-book, and 'when he came to the commandment: *Thou shalt not steal*, he laughed loudly at it. . . .'³² There was loud talk of returning with 2000 men 'to make himself master of all this realm', and altogether the party behaved recklessly. Oxenham captured a ship from Guayaquil—the first European prize ever taken in the Pacific—with 38,000 pesos in gold, a figure soon inflated to 100,000;³³ but by this time all Tierra Firme was aroused. Loarte had mobilised 500 men at Panama and sent 200 in search

of the raiders; he appealed to Peru for aid, expended money ‘in anticipation of sanction’ (to use a classic phrase of the British Raj), and in general displayed a most unbureaucratic energy. Oxenham retired to Vallano, the Indian country, and might have got away (for the time being) but for carelessness: the pursuing Spaniards were baffled until they noticed a trail of food scraps—in one version, chicken feathers floating down a creek. Some of the English were killed or taken; the Spaniards reached and burnt Ronconcholon, which, as they calculated, led to trouble between the allies.

In Peru, Francisco de Toledo was not the man to ignore Loarte’s appeal, and sent succours from Trujillo and Manta. Loarte tried to stop them, thinking he now had the situation well in hand and not wishing to share the credit; but an officer of Toledo’s was not likely to desist at the behest of a legal official, however eminent. After tedious and confused ‘campaigns’ by handfuls of men in the jungly hills of Darien, all but a few of the English were rounded up: Oxenham’s account of his own capture is one of the most vivid episodes in the whole story of the Spanish Main.³⁴ Thirteen were hanged at Panama, but Oxenham, Butler, and one ‘Xerores’ or ‘Xervel’ were taken to Lima for examination by the Inquisition: they were there when Drake came to Callao, and were at last hanged in 1580, a bitter payment for the sacrilege at the Pearl Islands. The handful who had escaped the Spanish net managed to seize a small vessel and sail away; their fate is unknown. As for the Cimarrons, many made terms, and were given letters of freedom and resettled with some degree of autonomy; others remained recalcitrant, and as late as 1580 were still waiting for the return of Oxenham’s remnant showing the agreed signal, a black flag.³⁵

Oxenham’s raid was merely a disastrous episode, but not without some wider significance, even if its immediate result was only to impel the Spaniards to deal more effectively than before with the Cimarrons. The simplest English approach to the South Sea was indeed his: march across the Isthmus and build a ship. ‘But that method was available only for a grab-and-run pirate raid, and was useless for serious empire-building.’³⁶ In their depositions at Lima, Oxenham spoke quite freely of Grenville’s discarded project; Butler scouted the idea that a poor man like Drake could mount an expedition through the Straits. Oxenham thought that he could and would do so if he had the royal licence—but that this was impossible so long as Elizabeth was Queen. The net effect of the activities of Drake, Oxenham, and other corsairs of the 1570s may well have been to concentrate Spanish attention on the Caribbean side, so that when Drake did irrupt into the South Sea, with more force than Oxenham’s pinnace, its shores were naked of defence. ‘The colonists of [Chile and Peru], when they saw a sail approaching, knew no misgiving, and never dreamt that it could be other than a friend.’³⁷

The problem of Drake’s plan

The mass of literature surrounding the second circumnavigator seems proportionate to the loot he brought back; some of it seems bad Hollywood, though one

contemporary account—Cooke, on the trial of Thomas Doughty—provides a tense and authentic court-room scene.³⁸ On the vexed question of Drake's aims and motives, the trend is to accept K. R. Andrews's closely argued position, but it would perhaps be premature to claim a consensus;³⁹ and there will probably always be obscurities about the Doughty affair, Drake's movements in Magellanic waters, his Californian landing, his 'Island of Thieves'.

Concerning the objectives, it would be as well to recall Williamson's remark that Drake combined 'all aims and all motives' of the 1570s—not perhaps in the planning, but in the event;⁴⁰ there was undoubtedly an element of *on s'engage, et puis on voit*. Precisely because the question of the plan gathers together so many strands—political, exploratory, economic, psychological—it transcends such matters as Cape Horn or the Plate of Brass, and indeed lies central to any discussion of the gathering stand against Habsburg dominance; even though the voyage itself, in its immediate political effects (not its long-term economic results) was no more than a foray, Corbett leads up to it under the significant heading 'Drake and the War Party'. Zelia Nuttall took this line of thought to an extreme, suggesting that 'the present occupation of the North American Continent by the Anglo-Saxon race is, after all, but a realisation of what may be called Drake's Dream'; but the evidences she cites are at times misinterpreted and in any case cannot bear the weight of the colonising designs she infers.⁴¹ This enthusiastic vision received severe, though not short, shrift from H. R. Wagner, who saw the expedition as a trading venture to the Moluccas, and possibly China, diverted by Drake to plundering Peru. His massive study might have settled the issue for decades, had not Eva Taylor, only three or four years later, signally refuted his forecast that 'no other document of real value' was likely to be found—by turning up a draft plan for the voyage.⁴²

The important points in the draft (some words in which are conjectural) are that Drake is to enter the South Sea by the Straits of Magellan and then sail north as far as 30° 'along the saeied coaste', where there should be countries not subject to any Christian Prince but offering great hope of profitable commodities; and having gone to 30° or as close as he thinks fit, he is to return the same way as he went out. Nothing on Anian, nothing on the Moluccas, a general resemblance to Grenville's first project. The immediate questions are: which is 'the said coast' and which 'the other coast' associated with it? Andrews argues that there are simply the west and east coasts of South America respectively. To Taylor, followed by Williamson, the latter merely suggests some earlier reconnaissance, but 'the said coast' is Terra Australis as shown on the standard Ortelius/Mercator maps (Plate XVI), trending from Tierra del Fuego towards the Spice Islands, the intended term of the voyage: 'Clearly its objective was not the American coast already under the obedience of Spain' as far south as Valdivia (39° 46'S), founded in 1552. So far Taylor; but for the Moluccan aspect—which is to the fore in his version—Wagner relies on statements by Francis Fletcher, chaplain to the expedition: a man with a good gift of phrase, often a good observer



Plate XVI. DRAKE'S PACIFIC: ORTELIUS 1570. The standard view of the later sixteenth century. Note the run of New Guinea-Terra Australis-Tierra del Fuego, the passage from Anian to Greenland, and the Chilean bulge. From *Typis Orbis Terrarum* (Antwerp 1570). NLA.

(he even gives an inventory of the ‘furnishings’ of a Fuegian hut), but pedantic and quite often muddle-headed: a minor Shakespearean character, comic but unpleasant, one moreover on bad terms with Drake. Andrews is quite warranted in dismissing such a witness on such a point.

Taylor bases herself rather on the seemingly more respectable evidence of John Winter, who as Drake’s second should have known the real objective. His statement is self-exculpatory, to explain away what looks like desertion with his ship the *Elizabeth*; he gives no indication of a definite rendezvous, but says that after an accidental separation he tried to get his crew to sail for the Moluccas, but was overborne—and then, most revealingly, he ‘despair[ed] utterly of the favourableness of the wind for to go to the Peru.’ Edward Cliffe, one of his company, denies that the crew wished to give over the voyage but confirms that Winter ‘alleged, he stood in dispaire, to haue winds to serue his turne for *Peru*’. According to John Cooke, Doughty pleaded with Drake ‘I pray yow cary me with you to the Perwe’, and Fletcher himself (or *The World Encompassed*, based on his notes) says that after the separation they sailed ‘to coast amongst the parts of Peru . . . that we might fall . . . with the height of 30 deg., being the place appointed for the rest of oyr fleete to reassemble.’⁴³ Against all this stress on Peru, there is nothing in Winter’s statement to indicate the Moluccas as an *original* objective.

Taylor’s insistence that ‘the said coast’ was that of Terra Australis thus seems odd, quite apart from the fact that on current maps this supposed coast trended not north but initially south, then west swinging round to northwestwards. As for Anian, Taylor thinks that under John Dee’s influence this was added as a possible objective, before the sailing. She makes much of a passage in one of Dee’s manuscripts (mid-May 1577) which speaks of a great exploring expedition to be carried out ‘presently’ (i.e. immediately) by a British subject who has ‘se[cret]ly’ undertaken this exploit for God, Queen, and Country; she takes this to refer to Drake, since the objective of Frobisher, who was to sail in a week or two after Dee’s writing, was perfectly well known to be the Northwest Passage. As Andrews points out, ‘presently’ could well mean Frobisher, but not Drake, since he was not to sail for six months; ‘secretly’ could suggest Drake but not Frobisher—‘but the middle four letters of this word are putative. In effect there is room for doubt about Taylor’s inference.’⁴⁴ Indeed, there is, for what if we read ‘se[cure]ly’, in its older sense of ‘assuredly, of a certainty’? This would fit the Frobisher context, and it seems to have a good Elizabethan ring. The fact that Drake did make a move towards Anian and did go to the Moluccas is explicable by events: there was no other way for him to go. The Magellanic waters had proved highly hazardous by nature, and by the time that ‘the voyage was made’ nothing would seem more likely than an attempted Spanish interception at the Straits, only twelve degrees south of Valdivia, of whose existence Drake was now aware.

But if not Terra Australis nor the Moluccas nor Anian, what then? In

Andrews's opinion, the voyage was really to explore the commercial opportunities (plunderage not excluded) of South America beyond the Spanish limits: a trade reconnaissance in some force, but hardly a trading voyage, since there were no letters for foreign princes (surely essential for the Moluccas?) and scarcely any trade goods. One need not take too seriously the pious preamble about places not under the obedience of any Christian Prince; although Andrews says that the English might reasonably think the coast would be unoccupied by Spaniards south of 30°S, one must agree with Williamson that such ignorance would be remarkable, since Santiago in 33° 30' had been founded for over thirty-five years, and Ortelius's map of 1564 shows several towns between 30° and 35°, including '[Val]paraiso'. However, the draft is careful to allow Drake the option of turning back before 30°; very possibly this clause was to facilitate a royal disavowal if need be. Nevertheless, even with this safeguard, the promoters must have known that to Philip of Spain an exploration from La Plata to Chile would appear a wanton provocation. Hence the cover stories: there was a rumour, doubtless leaked, that 'Drake the pirate' was going to Scotland to kidnap the little James VI; the official destination was Alexandria for currants,⁴⁵ a commodity in which Captain Drake had so far shown little interest. It is not very likely that many of the complement were fooled by this tale, though later on it suited some of them to say they were.

Wagner and Taylor regard the project as basically a peaceful venture: this is difficult to square with Drake as leader and (at this stage of his career) John Hawkins as a principal backer. Other supporters included Leicester, Walsingham, Hatton, the Navy's Master of the Ordnance Sir William Winter and his brother George; Drake himself subscribed £1000. The draft says that the Queen should be 'made pryve to the trewth of the viage' and asked to contribute a royal ship; this she did not do, but very probably she did invest in the enterprise. It is scarcely possible to believe, however, that Drake held any formal commission from the Queen; though he assiduously spread around this impression, no reliable document was ever produced, even when Doughty—on trial for his life—directly asked for it, nor was one used to quash the 'appeal of murder' brought against Drake by Doughty's brother.⁴⁶ That the plan existed on paper before the Queen had been informed of its real object tells strongly against Drake's claim that Elizabeth had directly and spontaneously incited him to reprisals against Spain; an unlikely story, produced with splendid bravura at a crisis in the voyage.⁴⁷ Francis Drake was a great man; he was also a great con man or, if you prefer it so, a master of psychological warfare.

On the peaceable view, we have to explain a 'trading' voyage carrying only one identifiable merchant and a few presents, and with no mercantile element amongst its backers, all of whom 'were associated with maritime enterprise of a predatory kind, and all, with the exception of the Queen, advocate[s] of a vigorous anti-Spanish policy.'⁴⁸ It is significant that what in the last resort seems to have cost Doughty his head was the admission that he had revealed

the true 'plott of the voyage' to Burghley who, if not the appeaser he is often made out to be, disapproved of plundering to the extent of refusing a proffered share of Drake's booty. As a reconnaissance for future operations, and perhaps for political benefits from contacts with Indians beyond the Spanish limits (a concept which certainly appealed to Drake),⁴⁹ the plan makes sense. But it is unlikely that its Court backers would have seen much sense in a reconnaissance which did not meet expenses; and who more likely to make it pay its way than the captor of the *Nombre de Dios* treasure train?

Port St Julian: a new Plutarchan parallel

The fleet which Drake took out of Plymouth late in 1577 consisted of the *Pelican* of over 100 tons; *Elizabeth* of 80, under John Winter; *Marigold* of 30, a storeship and a pinnace, not to mention the taken-down parts of four more pinnaces, hardly needed for peaceful trade.⁵⁰ The complement of at least 160 was also a heavier man/ton ratio than usual for trading voyages, though 'normal for a long-distance plunder cruise.'⁵¹ Ten were gentleman-adventurers, not one of whom, despite Spanish fears, was to profit by this sea-cadetship to become a leader in naval affairs. The most notable of them was Thomas Doughty, a client of Hatton's with a rather ambiguous record in the past and a very ambiguous position now. Like Juan de Cartagena, he has been suspected by some scholars of being a spy (for Spain) or a secret agent (of Burghley's),⁵² and he clearly regarded himself as an equal to his commander, or more; in a 'Society' sense he was Drake's superior, and though he seems to have had no definite posting on the staff, this higher social standing would have entitled him, by normal Elizabethan notions, to a major say in the direction of the undertaking. Such rule by committee was not Drake's way, and while Doughty was not Spain's man, and probably not Burghley's man in any sinister sense, he was surely Thomas Doughty's man; and that proved enough to chafe the latent ill-feeling between gentlemen and common mariners into a flame.

The Alexandrian story was soon exploded, for the fleet sailed down the Moroccan coast, robbing stray Iberian fishing smacks and coasters of their provisions.⁵³ At the end of January 1578, when off Santiago in the Cape Verdes, they took and retained a Portuguese ship laden with wines, cloth, and other goods for Brazil. This was significant in several aspects. First, it was naked piracy: there could be no question of reprisals, the islands had been Portuguese for over a century, and it was only two years since Elizabeth had signed a treaty to stop English incursions in these parts.⁵⁴ Second, while Drake released the rest of the company, he took good care to keep Nuño da Silva, a pilot highly experienced on the Brazilian coast. Finally, it was here that serious friction began, with charges and counter-charges between Doughty and Drake's brother Thomas over the pilfering of prize goods.

As the ships crawled slantwise and slowly through the Doldrums, friction grew into disaffection: there were petty squabbles, crude horseplay, arrogant or ironic

speeches, ostentatious avoidances between gentlemen and mariners, and Drake's attempts at alleviation by shifting commands were unsuccessful. Early in April they saw land somewhere in the modern Rio Grande do Sul; the next ten weeks

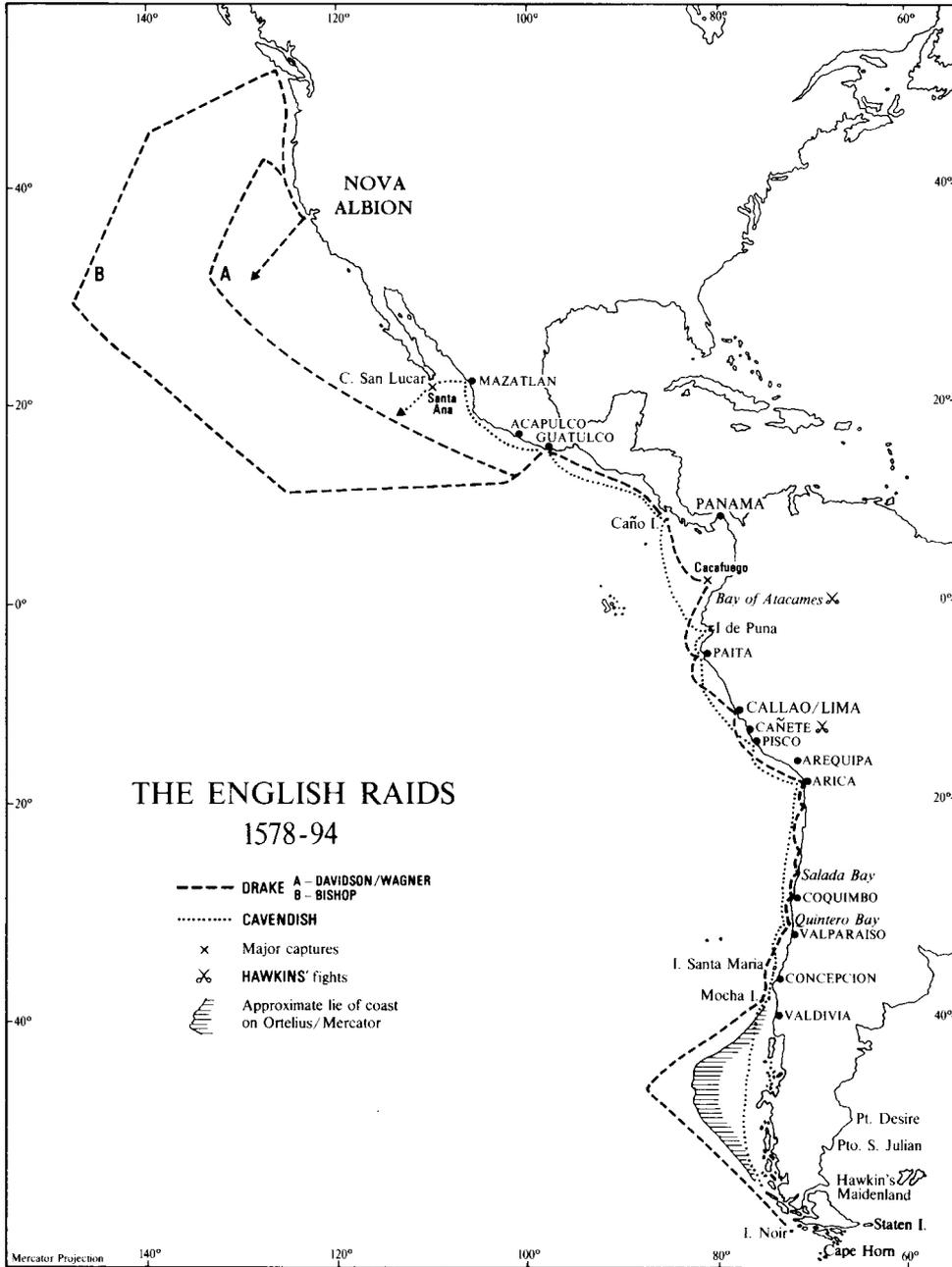


Figure 20. THE ENGLISH RAIDS, 1578-94

were spent in reconnaissance almost to the Straits. After the equatorial heats and calms, they now had to contend with storm, fog, and cold, and tensions worsened: according to Cooke, Drake called Doughty 'a coniurer and witch, and, at any time when he had any fowle wethar, he . . . wolde say that it came out of Tom Dowghtys' capcase, and wold avouch the same with greate othes.' No suitable wintering-place was found, and the little fleet turned north to enter, on 20 June, Magellan's Puerto San Julian. The ill omen of the place—they found his gibbet, 'with mens bones vnderneath'—was soon fulfilled. Hitherto contacts with the Patagonians had been friendly, if uncomprehending, on both sides; now a small shore party was attacked, and two killed by arrows. 'This bloody Tragedie being ended another more greivious ensueth . . . more greivious because it was among ourselves begunn contrived & ended'.

The 'authorised' narrative (as Wagner says, 'the most untrustworthy of all') draws the Plutarchan parallel between Magellan and Drake, Cartagena and Doughty—but doctors Fletcher's notes to the extent of omitting Doughty's name; the 'famous voyage' version in Hakluyt mentions Doughty by name but is if anything even smoother. Cooke's account is a passionate brief in Doughty's defence and for Drake's conviction of judicial murder. (It is also one of the most vivid and 'immediate' things in Elizabethan prose, an artless masterpiece of reportage.) It is impossible now to unravel the truth from the tangle of charges, ranging from slander to high-level political betrayal; there seems to have been no question of real principle involved, such as a stand by Doughty against plundering. Through the confusion we can at least see that Doughty was at the head of a dangerously strong trend towards insubordination amongst the gentlemen-adventurers, and from Drake's point of view this put the whole voyage at hazard—and with it the whole career, if not the life, of Francis Drake.

Some of the large jury empanelled were clearly most ill at ease, and Drake forced a decision with a high hand: it was a kangaroo court, its proceedings full of challenges, sudden shifts of mood, catastrophic admissions. In the event, according to Cooke (who despite his obvious bias tells a much more likely tale than the smooth and sanctimonious official version), the jury, under pressure, answered for a verdict of guilty, Drake undertaking to answer for the sentence. He made an unconvincing show of reprieve, but decided (and from a realist point of view, almost certainly correctly) that after what had happened, it would be too dangerous to hold Doughty prisoner, to be a continuing centre of disaffection. To him, his problem was the same as Magellan had faced in this very port, and his solution also had to be Magellan's: Stone dead hath no fellow. Only the mode differed, not the end. It is an ugly episode, lightened only by the Elizabethan genius for the great gesture: the die once cast, Drake and Doughty took Communion together, dined at the same table, and then took their leave in the high manner of the age, 'by drinking each to other, as if some journey oneley had beene in hand.'⁵⁵

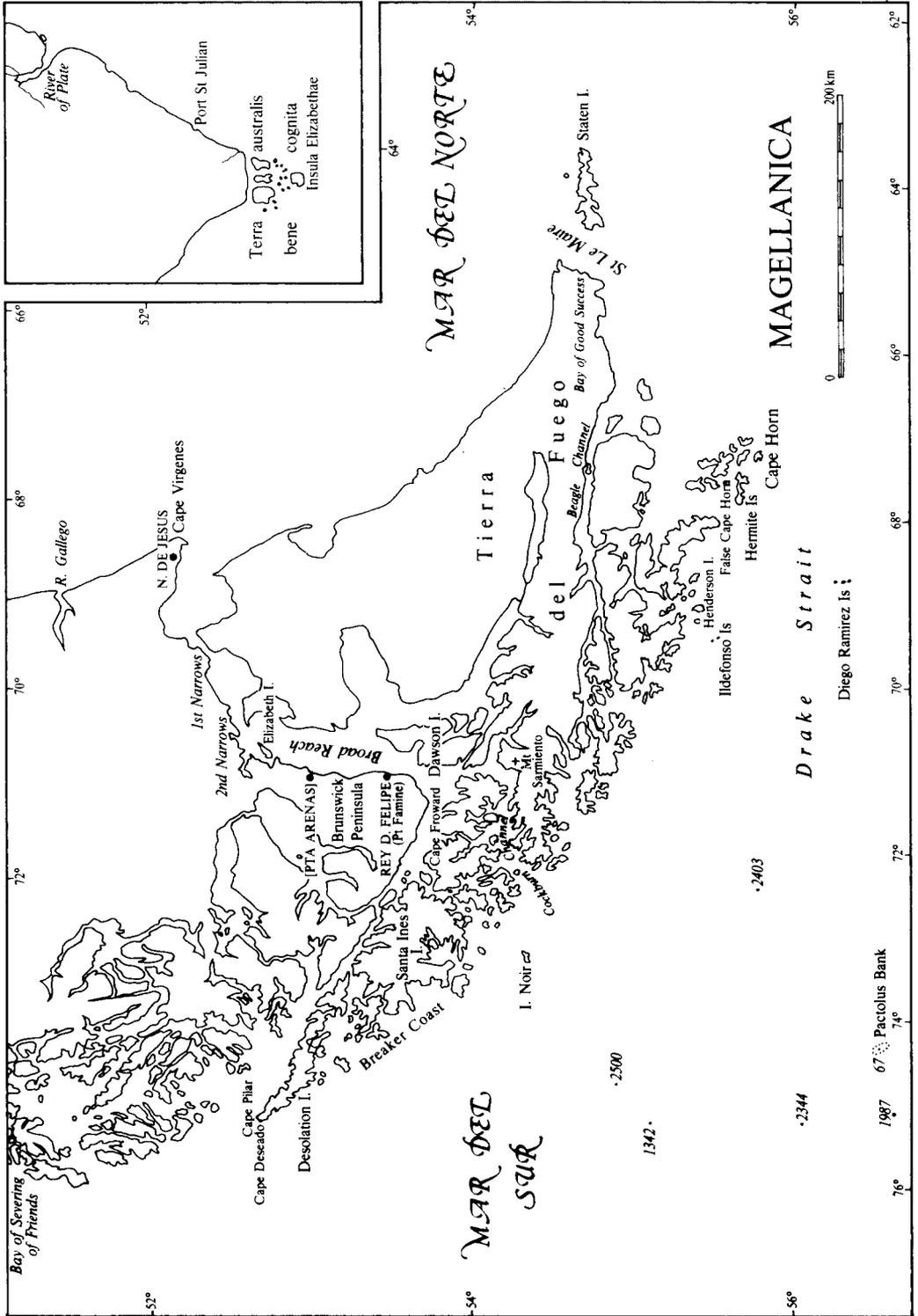
The troubles were not yet over. Drake had asserted his authority, but there

were still murmurings sufficient to account for the scene a few weeks later when he discharged all his captains and masters, only to reinstate them after some remarkable justificatory speeches. Beginning conventionally ‘My mastars, I ame a very badd orrator’, he gave his version of the Queen’s initiative in setting out the venture, and played on patriotism and greed, hopes and fears, as cunningly as that other poor orator Mark Antony. It was now that he spoke the famous words that in Williamson’s opinion marked ‘the beginning of a new tradition in English leadership,’⁵⁶ and ironically are recorded by his bitter enemy John Cooke: for the controversy and ‘stomakynge between the gentlemen and saylars . . . I must have it lefte, for I must have the gentleman to hayle and draw with the mariner, and the maryner with the gentleman . . .’ If at Port St Julian he has seemed almost paranoid, or else acting a magnificent but unscrupulous bravura role, from now on we shall see Francis Drake at his best, superbly in command of himself as well as of his company.

‘the Southermost knowne land’

Three ships only, the *Pelican*, *Elizabeth*, and *Marigold*, left the port on 17 August 1578, Nuño da Silva’s and the others having served their turn and been abandoned or broken up. Only three days brought them to Cape Virgins, where the *Pelican* was given the more famous and resounding name of the *Golden Hinde* (Plate XVII)—a compliment to Hatton, whose crest bore that heraldic beast, and doubtless a bid for a friend at Court should things go wrong. For the next phase of the voyage, Drake had a large and costly world map obtained from Lisbon, probably drawn by the great Portuguese cartographer Vaz Dourado, and it is also possible that he carried a Portuguese rutter of 1577 giving the coasts and courses from Brazil round to Chile, though beyond La Plata only sketchily,⁵⁷ his exploit was not such a daring of the unknown as Magellan’s.

The passage was unhurried: islands were annexed, according to da Silva a great tree was taken as a souvenir—if so, it is perhaps a hint that he did not mean to return this way. It was however remarkably swift, only sixteen days, and this in mid-winter. By 6 September they had emerged into the South Sea, and for the next three days they sailed northwest, parallel to the Chilean coast as shown on Ortelius’s standard map, but away from the immediate trend of that of Terra Australis.⁵⁸ But now their winter’s luck ran out: tremendous contrary winds drove them for three weeks far to the south, down to 57°; the *Marigold* was lost ‘in the uiolent force of the winds intollerable workinge of the wrathfull seas . . .’⁵⁹ Early in October the wind changed, and in a week the two remaining ships were among islands a degree or two north of Cabo Deseado: but almost at once a new storm forced them to sea, and by the morning of 8 October the *Elizabeth* had disappeared. Her captain John Winter lit fires just inside the Straits, but after two or three days he retreated further in and stocked up with penguin meat before returning to England, whether compelled by his crew or compelling them is now impossible to say.



Meanwhile the now solitary *Golden Hinde* was again driven south, once more to $55-57^{\circ}$, but this time with more easting, closer to the ‘Breaker Coast’ and the wild fiord shores southeast from Isla Santa Ines. While his actual tracks and landfalls remain matters of dispute, Drake now indisputably made what may fairly be claimed as the most notable geographical discovery by any Englishman before James Cook: in Fletcher’s fitting words, ‘The vttermost cape or hedland . . . without [outside] which there is no maine or Iland to be seene to the Southwards, but that the Atlanticke Ocean and the South Sea, meete in a most large and free scope.’



Plate XVII. THE *GOLDEN HINDE*. Reconstruction by Gregory Robinson. By permission of the National Maritime Museum, London.

The precise location of the uttermost cape is indeed most uncertain. Consciously or subconsciously, the student of such a problem will always be torn between a feeling of ‘How splendid if it really were so!’ and a desire to maintain a cool scepticism, unsecluded by the romantic or ironic but in any case dramatic

◀ *Figure 21. MAGELLANICA.* Inset: Francis Fletcher’s map of southern South America. Fletcher’s original is oriented with south at top. On main map, figures thus, ‘.2403’, are depths in fathoms.

coincidence; anyone who claims immunity must either deceive himself or be singularly insensitive. In British tradition, Drake's landfall has been associated with Cape Horn itself, the true southernmost land, and Corbett gave this belief his sober and weighty support. Although this view has been somewhat blown upon, as late as 1971 Richard Hough admits uncertainty in his text, but on his map opts clearly for Cape Horn; and its case has recently been revived, on new lines, by Robert Power.⁶⁰

H. R. Wagner, arguing mainly from distances and bearings, made a plausible case for Henderson Island ($55^{\circ}40'S$; cf. Fletcher's 'neere in 56'), and is followed by S. E. Morison: these are weighty authorities. Felix Riesenbergh, a sea captain with much experience in Magellanic waters, reconstructed a possible course from Nuño da Silva's log, allowing for usually neglected currents, and came up with the novel suggestion that this farthest south point of land is now under water: the Pactolus or Burnham Bank, where a sounding of 67 fathoms, black sand and small rocks, is surrounded by depths of 2000 fathoms and more: clearly a volcanic sea-mount, and such are notoriously likely to disappear. Moreover, several maps—French, Spanish and German as well as English, and as late as 1775—show in this general area the 'Elizabethides' or a port or land named for Drake. Again, while Fletcher's concept of an island is normally a crude rectangle, in this instance he does give some internal detail, a water body suggesting a (still rectangular!) crater lake. But the position seems much too isolated to square with Fletcher's suggestion of near-by inhabited islands, and this also weakens the likelihood of the assumption that has to be made, that this volcanic summit was well supplied with wood and 'herbes of great virtue': Horn Island has at least some vegetation, but obviously there can be no evidence at all of its existence on a hypothetical island. It is risky to rely too implicitly on the accuracy of da Silva's observations, made by astrolabe in far from ideal conditions and with some gaps; and indeed, like Riesenbergh using nautical rather than academic arguments, Brett Hilder analyses the same data and concludes that the solution is the Diego Ramirez group, which seems as reasonable as Henderson Island and more reasonable than Cape Horn.

Power's argument for the latter is novel and ingenious. Its main thrust is that the four islands shown south of the Straits on the well-known sketch map of South America in Fletcher's notes are to be read on two different scales:

What we really have in this Fletcher map of South America are two plans in two vastly different scales which have been spliced together to dramatize what the uttermost Cape below South America looked like to the Elizabethans.

This would be highly unorthodox but not impossible cartography. On one scale, the spread of the four islands would be comparable in size and shape to the Fuegian archipelago as a whole; on the other, to the southern Hermite Islands and Cape Horn. Apart from one or two side-points, the case really depends on whether one can reasonably make sophisticated inferences from maps admittedly

drawn in a 'crude simplistic style'; so rudely drawn indeed that were it shorn of place-names, one might well fail to recognise West Africa on what Power calls a 'crude but identifiable Map'. Given the premise, things fall neatly into place; but to deduce measurements from such barbarous cartography as Fletcher's seems very hazardous. Nevertheless, there is the striking though rough coincidence of the layout of his islands with the Hermite group, and if one could have confidence in Fletcher's cartography the case would be quite strong. As it is, it seems fair to say that Power has put the Cape Horn claim on a more reasoned basis than has been done heretofore.⁶¹

However, as Hough says, the precise island, existing or not, does not matter much: the real point is that though Drake had not actually demonstrated the existence of what is now Drake Passage or Strait, he had sailed far enough to establish the virtual certainty that the two Oceans did indeed 'meete in a most large and free scope.' Fletcher's denial that the Strait of Magellan was a strait is pedantic perversity, and Terra Australis was broken down into islands for but a small sector of longitude; his riders owe more to bigotry than geography, but on the main point he did put the matter succinctly. Immediately, there was no attempt to use the route thus indicated, but this was probably not due, as has been suggested, to an English policy of secrecy. It is true that while the disposal of the treasure, with its political bearing, was still under advisement, publicity about the voyage was naturally muted; but in 1587 Richard Hakluyt himself

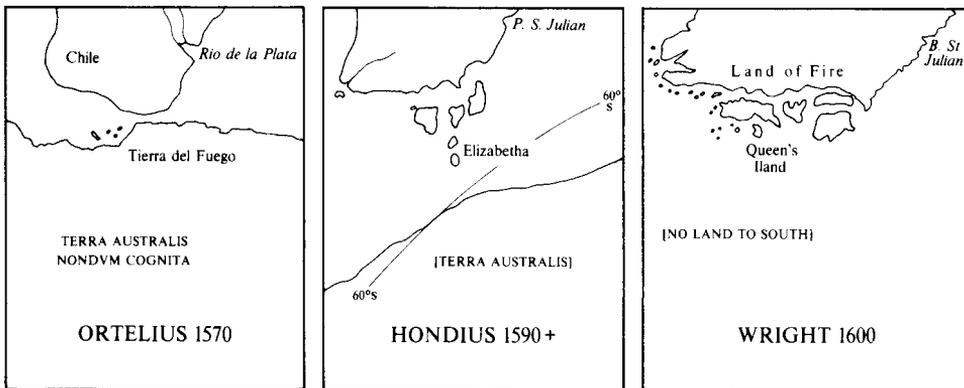


Figure 22. BEFORE AND AFTER DRAKE. The Ortelius is the standard sixteenth-century version before Drake (see Plate XVI); the Hondius from the famous broadside *Vera Totivs Expeditionis Nautica* (c. 1593) showing the tracks of Drake and Cavendish; Wright's map was published in the 1600 edition of Hakluyt's *Principall Navigations*, with the note 'By the discouerie of S^f Francis Drake made in the year 1577 the streights of Magellane (as they are comonly called) seeme to be nothing els but broken lands and Ilands and the southwest coast of America called Chili was found, not to trend to the northwestwards as it hath beene described but to the eastwards of the north as it is heere set down: which is also confirmed by the voyages and discoueries of Pedro Sarmiëto and M^f Tho: Cavendish A^o 1587.'

published, in Paris, a map showing open water south of the Elizabethides, and by 1593 Hondius, in his famous *Vera Totivs Expeditionis Nauticae*, showing Drake's and Cavendish's tracks, pushed Terra Australis (in these longitudes) down below 60°—in fact, almost to Graham Land. Moreover, as early as April 1582 Philip II's ambassador in England, Bernardino de Mendoza, reported to the King that a person who claimed to have seen Drake's own chart had affirmed to him that 'there was the open sea beyond Tierra del Fuego.'⁶² For some thirty years before the new passage was actually used its secret, like its seas, was open.

The delay in using this new Southwest Passage was not without good reason. Drake's immediate successors (Cavendish, Chidley, Richard Hawkins) must have been greatly impressed by his amazingly quick transit, barely a fortnight from Cape Virgins to Cape Desire; and no less by the frightful tempests met in latitudes south of the exit into the South Sea. The Straits had also an important advantage in the many anchorages where wooding and watering were easy, and fresh stocks of penguin meat might be had for the taking—a matter of particular significance to those on plunder bent, whose ships were of necessity heavily manned.⁶³ In contrast, the supremacy of Dutch shipping in the seventeenth century carrying trade was largely due to ship design which gave a maximum ratio of cargo space to crew; and the Dutch traders, Schouten and Le Maire, were to be the first to sail from ocean to ocean round the Horn—for the very Batavian technical reason that they desired to circumvent the [Dutch] East India Company's legal monopoly of trade by the Cape of Good Hope and the Straits of Magellan—nothing said of a by-pass!

The shores of silver

Cape Horn or Pactolus Bank or somewhere in between, the Elizabethides offered no inducements to linger, and on 30 October the *Golden Hinde* sailed 'right Northwest, to coast alongst the parts of Peru', as these were shown on the 'generall mappes', in search of the rendezvous in 30°; the great Chilean bulge on these maps (Plate XVI) was not due (as Fletcher asserted with much moral unctio) to deliberate Spanish distortions, but to mistakes of compilation, as is shown by the 1577 rutter itself.⁶⁴ Realising that the maps were in error, Drake changed course and by 25 November was off Mocha Island (38°25'S), about half-way between Valdivia and Concepcion and in that debatable land where warfare with the Araucanians was endemic. After an initial welcome by the Indians, a small watering party was attacked, two being captured and the rest, including Drake, wounded: a very close call, since had not 'one of the simplest of the company' cut the painter, all might have been lost. Naturally enough the English assumed, and it has been generally accepted, that they had been mistaken for hated Spaniards, and hence Drake refused to take revenge by bombardment. But not all Indians were freedom fighters, and this group had in fact been incited to attack by two local Spaniards; other Indians had in fact reported to Valdivia the passage of ships with black sails, but the local

commander had refused to divert troops from the Araucanian front, since there was little truth in these Indians.⁶⁵

Just north of Valparaiso Drake learnt from an Indian fisherman of that harbour and of a large ship lying there; he turned back, reaching it on 5 December. Valparaiso was as yet a wretched place, some nine households and a little church; but the ship was no less than Mendaña's capitana on the Solomons voyage. The eleven men aboard innocently invited the newcomers to drinks; the guests came aboard with a shout of 'Abaxo Perro, that is in English, Goe downe dogge.' The loot of the 'town' was not much—trifles of church silver (duly handed to Fletcher), wine, cedar boards for fuel—but the ship herself had a cargo of wine, at least 25,000 pesos in gold, and at this stage perhaps the most precious booty of all, an experienced pilot: Juan Griego, possibly that Juan de Fuca whose Strait is the last relic of Anian.⁶⁶ With this guide, Drake took a leisurely way north, twelve days, sailing with wind and current, to cover the roughly 330 km between Valparaiso and La Herradura, just south of Coquimbo. This was only some 15 km from La Serena, which had been warned: women and children were sent inland, and Drake's watering party was attacked by some scores of Spanish horsemen, plus Indians; he sheered off. Nearly a month was spent in careening and assembling a pinnace in Salada Bay, near Copiapo; perhaps Drake was still hoping for the *Elizabeth* to rejoin and give sufficient strength to attack Panama, though obviously this delay increased the risk of warnings reaching the north. That no alarm was in fact raised beyond La Serena was due to a bureaucratic ineptitude on which he could not reasonably have reckoned: the gamble came off because the local treasury, alleging strict orders, refused to advance the Santiago Cabildo 400 pesos for a fast boat, and nothing could be done until the Governor returned from the frontier wars. Then on 14 January 1579, seven weeks after the sack of Valparaiso, a message was sent: it reached Callao on 26 February, thirteen days after Drake.⁶⁷

On 19 January Drake sailed north, still ahead of any warning; so complete was the surprise that at Tarapaca he snapped up thirteen bars of silver whose owner was asleep, and at Arica (5 February) over fifty bars, perhaps half a tonne of silver, were taken from two or three unguarded ships: there is a sportive note in the Hakluyt account of these doings, and that night Arica's score or so of households were in a manner serenaded by the *Golden Hinde's* musicians. However, messengers were sent out from Arica, and near Arequipa a much more valuable cargo, 500 bars, was unloaded only two hours before the corsair's arrival. But a few leagues south of Callao a coaster was taken, and this had great news: two ships were taking on really large quantities of bullion at that port, while a third, San Juan de Anton's *Nuestra Señora de la Concepcion* (or *Cacafuego*) had just left for Panama and intermediate ports. Taking a couple of local pilots, Drake entered Callao harbour on the night of 13–14 February.

Rapid and doubtless forceful enquiries around the shipping showed that the silver was not yet loaded; meanwhile a customs boat sent to examine a ship just in from Panama hailed the *Golden Hinde*, who replied that she was Miguel

Angel's ship from Chile. But an official sent on board 'light[ed] upon one of the great peeces'—and no Spanish ship from Acapulco to Valdivia carried heavy guns. A flight of English arrows followed on the alarm so given, and the port fell into uproar as the English cut the cables of the ships and cut or damaged the masts of the two largest. This would be an obvious precaution against pursuit, and it is difficult to believe John Drake's story that the object was to gather the ships up and use them as an exchange for Oxenham; even if Drake knew that his old comrade was held in Lima (he did know it a little later), he took no action.⁶⁸ In any case, he had drawn a blank, but the rich *Cacafuego* was ahead, while despite his damage to the Callao shipping, he could not know what other military resources might be at hand, nor risk a second San Juan de Ulua.

Drake entered the port about 10 p.m.; the news reached Lima in time for the Viceroy, the great Toledo, to order candles to be set in all the waterfront windows, to simulate ranks of arquebusiers ready with lighted match.⁶⁹ The sense of outrage must have been intense, but little could be done about it. On Toledo's orders some 300 men piled into two ships and set out after the pirate, now standing out northwest from Callao. The Panama ship had been taken, but her cargo was of little interest, and seeing two large ships coming out in pursuit, Drake abandoned his prize, together with his conscripted pilots. Everything now went wrong for Toledo's gallant three hundred: the capitana was becalmed under the lee of Isla San Lorenzo, the ships were unballasted and very crank, and by sunset on the 14th the *Golden Hinde* was almost out of sight. Obviously they were not going to catch Drake, and to many it seemed just as well: their fire-power was only arquebuses, quite inadequate to meet the English guns; in their haste they had not taken on food; and 'the most imperative reason for returning seemed to be that many of the gentlemen were very seasick . . .'⁷⁰ They returned to face the anger of Toledo, who promptly gave orders to fit out two ships properly, with good pilots, 120 soldiers, his own son Don Luis in command, and the redoubtable Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa on the staff. The ships were readied with despatch, and left Callao on 27 February.

Meanwhile Drake had made some minor but profitable captures, and at Paita learnt that the *Cacafuego* was only two days ahead: on 1 March she was sighted near the modern Esmeraldas in northern Ecuador. The *Golden Hinde* made all sail but put out drags astern, an old corsair's trick to disarm suspicion and yet to delay coming alongside until nightfall. The bewildered Anton had barely time to refuse to strike sail before he was shot up with bow and arquebus, lost his mizzen by a chain-shot, and was boarded; despite her name, the *Cacafuego* was virtually unarmed. A couple of days later, out of sight of land, she was searched: 360,000 pesos of registered treasure, perhaps as much more unregistered. The English vastly enjoyed the wry comment of one of their victims, that the *Golden Hinde* should be styled *Cacafuego* and her prize *Cacaplata*, 'Shitsilver', 'which pretie speech of the Pilots boy ministred matter of laughter to us, both then and long after.' The voyage was now indeed 'made', and Drake, naturally a generous

man, could afford to be expansive: all prisoners were released, the crew with thirty or forty pesos each, the officers and gentlemen with gifts befitting their rank. As other witnesses testified, Drake robbed with a courtly air, dining and wining his involuntary guests well (on their own stores) and making elaborate presentations; but certainly losing nothing on the exchange:

Highwayman's manners no less polite,

Hoped that their coppers (returned) were right. . . .⁷¹

He also gave Anton a safe conduct addressed to Winter, which would of course suggest at least one other English ship on the coast, and openly discussed possible return routes. The known routes were by 'China' (the Moluccas and the Cape), 'Norway' (the Northeast Passage), and the Straits of Magellan, which could now be discounted as liable to interception, even had the western entrance been easy and safe. A fourth route was mentioned, but its location kept secret. Hints and enquiries from Drake's company suggested to some Spaniards that this undisclosed route might be by crossing Panama or Nicaragua and seizing shipping on the Atlantic side; Corbett thought it was the new way south of Tierra del Fuego, but this seems unlikely, and probably Sarmiento was right in thinking that it was by Cape Mendocino and Labrador, that is Anian. Drake's design was to create the utmost doubt about his intentions, and although Anton (who on his release went to Panama) correctly deduced that immediately Drake would make for Nicaragua to water and careen, the Spanish authorities were indeed totally bemused by these seemingly casual but, in retrospect, carefully planted stories.⁷² Licentiate Valverde of Guatemala even built up an elaborate argument that Drake would winter in California and then return by the Straits of Magellan, gravely citing the fact that he had carried off from Guatulco the entire stock of Indian women's petticoats, obviously to use as trade goods along the coast, 'for he was not going to wear [them], nor would [they] be of utility in England. . . .'⁷³ Toledo's pursuing force was hamstrung by dispute between those who wished to follow up the coast to Panama, looking into every creek, and the bolder spirits who were for striking across to Nicaragua: this, the correct course if an interception was really desired, was forcibly and ably argued by Sarmiento, and his remarks when the more timid decision was taken had to be conveyed to Luis de Toledo 'algo glosado', somewhat toned down. The little fleet simply dithered around for over four months before returning to Callao on 12 June, by which date Drake was about to leave Nova Albion.

By whatever passage Drake was to return, at the moment he had no choice but to go north: all to the south of him was now alert and hostile, and he could not sail directly for the Moluccas without giving his ship a thorough overhaul. He might well reach New Spain ahead of any alarm, and there also he might get information on sailing courses and seasons for the Moluccas, while Anian remained a possibility, either as major objective or *pis aller*.

After stripping the *Cacafuego*, then, Drake stood out across the Gulf of Panama,

and by mid-March reached the island of Caño (Costa Rica), where he took a bark which he used to lighten the *Golden Hinde* for caulking. The cargo, sarsaparilla and local produce, was thrown aside; the real prize was one Colchero, an experienced pilot on the Manila run.⁷⁴ Despite strong pressure, including apparently physical maltreatment, Colchero turned down Drake's efforts to enlist him as a pilot, but his charts and sailing directions were invaluable, confirming that this was not the right time of year to make for the Moluccas: Drake must wait for some months, out of reach of Spanish power.

It seems likely that he intended his next call to be at Acapulco. A few days after leaving the island he fell in with a ship a week out of that port, and, still passing himself off as Miguel Angel, took her by surprise: she belonged to a gentleman of good family, Don Miguel de Zarate, and carried a typical Acapulco cargo, largely Chinese silks and porcelain. Drake took 'some trifles . . . for his wife', and the meeting passed off on a chivalrous note—but with touches of realism: Colchero was a prisoner on the ballast, and some of Zarate's men headed Drake off Acapulco by saying that there were ships and men already there. Instead, Drake settled for the tiny and decaying port of Guatulco. Here, in an almost farcical Easter interlude (13–16 April), Drake's people sacked a church being decorated for Easter, ostentatiously held 'Lutheran' services, and invited the handful of local officials to the *Golden Hinde*: these prudently took their dinners first, lest they should have to eat meat on Ash Wednesday. Drake loaded up with water for fifty days; and he set ashore Nuño da Silva.

Unless da Silva was a willing party to some subtle counter-intelligence scheme, this seems an inexplicable and uncharacteristically heartless action. Despite a marked reserve, da Silva had been seen by some of Drake's temporary guests in situations very compromising for a good Catholic, and even without this he would have much to explain to the secular authorities. He did in fact survive severe interrogation by the Inquisition, being sentenced to public abjuration at an *auto-de-fe* and to exile from the Indies; but by 1583 he was in Spain, apparently in royal favour.⁷⁵ But in a sense this abandonment of Nuño was symbolic: the Iberian and piratical phase of the voyage was over.

Nova Albion

Colchero's information and the state of the ship must have decided Drake's next move after Guatulco, with Anian as an entirely compatible secondary factor.⁷⁶ To leave New Spain for 'China' after mid-April would be to risk arriving at the height of the typhoon season, and he could not sail at once since the *Golden Hinde*, probably straining from the weight of bullion aboard, needed a full overhaul. A northern sweep would at one and the same time secure a place for thorough careening well beyond any risk of Spanish interference; fill in time until a less hazardous season for crossing the Ocean; and perhaps disclose a short and safe passage for home, should there really be a Strait of Anian near the Sierra Nevada of Ortelius and Gilbert's map. Not the least of Drake's gifts

was a flexibility of mind which enabled him to make good use of an enforced waiting-time, as on the Isthmus in 1572–3, and again now.

Even apart from the risk of interception from an aroused Acapulco, a direct course along the coast was impracticable; before reaching Guatulco, Drake had ‘notice that we shoold be troubled with often calmes and contrary winds, if we continued neere the coast, and did not run of[f] to sea to fetch the wind.’

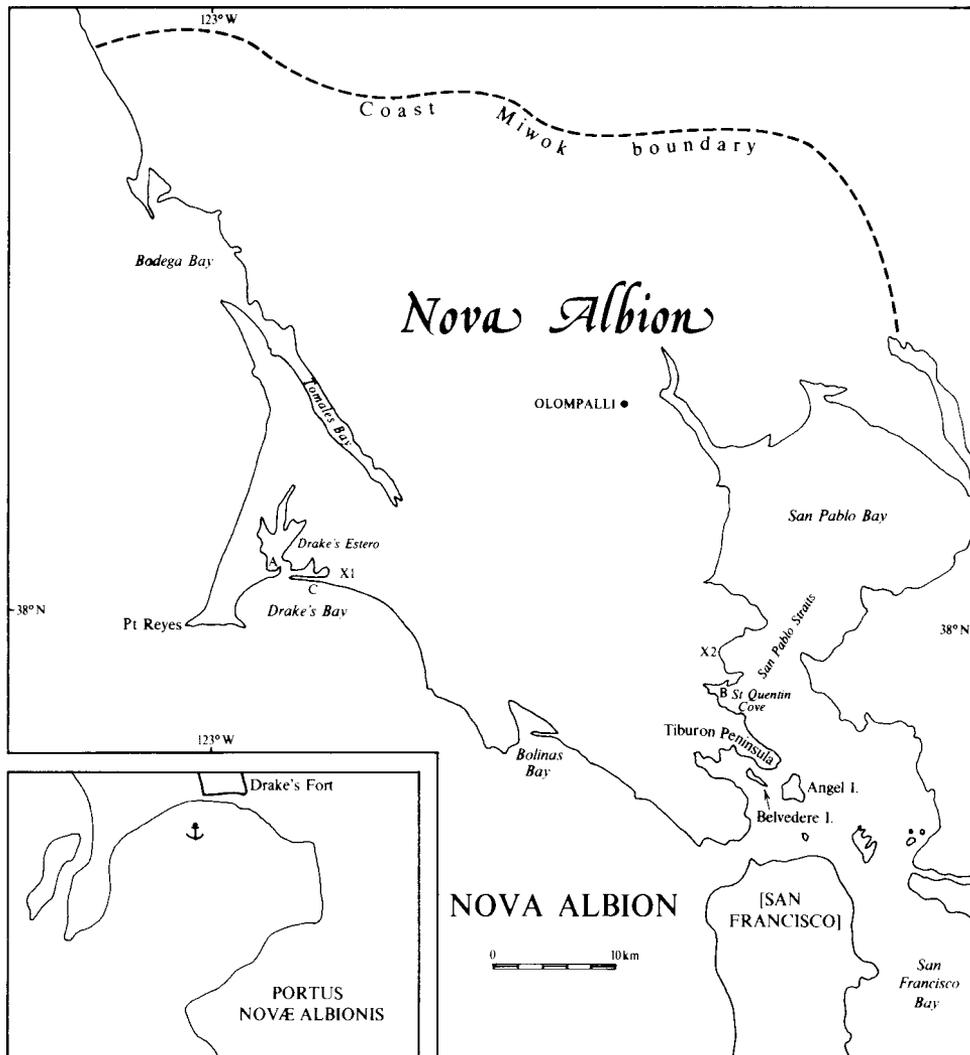


Figure 23. NOVA ALBION. Inset: outline of Portus Novæ Albionis. On main map: A, anchorage in hypothetical Drake's Cove; B, in Bahía de las Calaveras; C, Cermeño's camp 1595; X1, X2, sites where the Plate of Brass was said to be found in 1933 and 1936 respectively. Coast Miwok boundary after R. F. Heizer, *Elizabethan California* (Ramona 1974), Fig. 6. Inset from Hondius, *Vera Totius Expeditionis Navitiæ* (c. 1593), omitting detail; original is 64 × 44 mm.

From Guatulco, then, he sailed west for some 500 leagues, then swung north in a great arc to meet the coast again: the northern mirror-image of Juan Fernandez' passage from Callao to Chile. They made a landfall on 5 June, above 42°N and perhaps as high as 48° or even Vancouver Island; the sources are confused and confusing.⁷⁷ Like Arellano, they met with a very surprising degree of cold for the latitude and season (but then they were straight from the *tierra caliente*), with snow lying even on low coastal plains. Mount Olympus (47°43'N, c. 2240 metres) carries snow in June, but this scarcely suffices, nor does the tree-ring evidence for cooler and longer winters in this region and period.⁷⁸ It seems likely that dense mists, or the great dunes which blanket the coast in many places, were mistaken for snow. As evidence for a landfall well to the north, Eva Taylor stressed contemporary reference to 'that part of America . . . running on continually North-west, as if it went directly to join with Asia'; but so tangled is the argument that even that formidable lady was willing to defer to the authority of Wagner, who drew an opposite conclusion from the same text.⁷⁹ The weight of much discussion is for Cape Arago (Oregon) in 43°20'N.

If there is some doubt as to the landfall, the case is even worse as to the precise site where Drake careened the *Golden Hinde*; the polemic is almost a minor industry in the Bay area, and an adequate review would fill a monograph. The linguistic, cultural, and archaeological evidence (which includes undoubted relics, such as Ming porcelain, of Cermeño's camp at Drake's Bay in 1595) establishes that the landing was in the territory of the Coast Miwok Indians (Fig. 23), so that basically the choice lies between Bodega, Drake's, and San Francisco Bays, though Wagner favoured Trinidad Bay, north of the Miwok area. This has scarcely anything to recommend it except his own authority, and he pretty conclusively demolishes Bodega Bay. As he says, it was until recently almost an article of local faith that Drake's Bay was precisely what its name asserts, but there is now a party for San Francisco Bay itself. The protagonists handle their cases with such skill and detail that the outsider finds himself in a sad state of alternating conviction. *Sub specie aeternitatis*, it does not matter much; but 'There is nothing so minute or inconsiderable, that I would not rather know it than not'.⁸⁰

Everything has been pressed into service, literally from lettuces to coney, and the texts have been analysed with a close exegesis usually reserved for Holy Writ: inferences have even been drawn from the imputed attitudes and gestures of engraved human figures on the Hondius map, which in the original are under 3 mm high and when enlarged not 10 mm. But it is at least agreed on all hands (except, perversely, by Wagner) that the 'white bancks and cliffes, which lie towards the sea' and led Drake to call the country Nova Albion, are those inside Point Reyes, at Drake's Bay, which indeed bear a striking resemblance to the Seven Sisters near Beachy Head; but it does not follow that this was the actual careening place. A. S. Oko made out a strong navigational case that it was so, showing for example how easily a small ship might miss the Golden Gate; he

is implicitly supported by Alan Villiers,⁸¹ and the views of practical seamen are entitled to respect.

Any identification, however, must come to terms with the tiny (64 × 44 mm) but quite detailed inset of 'Portus Novae Albionis' on the 1593 Hondius map; as Power has shown, this may derive from Drake's own record (known to have been presented to the Queen), since in 1589 Hondius was in close association with Thomas Talbot, keeper of the records in the Tower. It is true that the main map shows Drake's course inaccurately—there is no call shown between Mocha and Callao, nor at Guatulco, and the track is laid down close to the Californian coast; only the latter error could perhaps be ascribed to 'security'. But the track may be conventionalised, while the inset is circumstantially detailed, and Aker shows that the other insets have a high degree of specificity. It is true that when he has to get rid of a crux, he rather weakens the argument by remarking that 'Hondius did not really understand what he had engraved';⁸² but the insets do represent real places, and it seems extreme to set the Portus map aside altogether.

Accepting it as evidence, the crux is the island lying parallel to the 'Portus Peninsula', which cannot be reconciled with any *existing* claimant except within San Francisco Bay itself. To the Drake Navigators Guild, the solution is found in regarding the island as a temporary but recurrent sand spit formed in Drake's Estero, the inlet within the Bay.⁸³ This may be so, but obviously it can only be hypothesis that the Estero had this conformation in 1579, and while the geomorphological argument is persuasive, it is not the absolute demonstration that the Guild rather dogmatically asserts. The Guild's arguments in other respects—notably the ecological—are much less convincing, and the problem is not to be solved on one criterion only. Above all, perhaps, much archaeological digging in and around Drake's Bay has produced nothing that can with probability be referred to Drake's visit, but plenty to Cermeño's; and yet the *Golden Hinde's* cargo must have been piled on the beach, and some eighty men ashore for over seven weeks where the Guild claims to have found the probable careening basin. (This argument is not available against San Francisco Bay sites, since these are built over.)

For Power, the island can be matched by Belvedere Island, which lies in the right relation to the Tiburon Peninsula: the problem now becomes one of accounting for the omission of Angel Island, off the tip of Tiburon, and of San Pablo Strait. Power gets over this by regarding the inset as a 'cartographic view' from Angel Island itself, rather than a map in the strict sense—a much more likely sixteenth century device than Fletcher's bifocal scale for Cape Horn. In my opinion Power deals successfully with the navigational problem, always regarded as a strong point for Drake's Bay, and is very convincing on the ecological side.

Either case can be made without appeal to the famous Plate of Brass (or lead, in one contemporary account) with an inserted sixpence, set up to record Drake's Act of Possession. Such a plate was found near the Tiburon Peninsula in 1936; it has been claimed that it was first found near Drake's Bay in 1933; much

ink has been wasted on this side-issue. Some Californian scholars had almost invited a hoax, and there was initially an odd reluctance to submit the Plate to test; nor is it true, as has been claimed, that the metallurgical analysis when made was not challenged; challenges were made but brushed aside or ignored.⁸⁴ The orthography and style of the inscription have been generally suspect to experts in these matters, and Wagner has shown that lead and not brass was used for such plates, for good reasons.⁸⁵ Altogether, pending a metallurgical analysis with more refined techniques than were available in the 1930s, the Plate must be regarded with much suspicion; but even were it genuine, so portable an object, unless it had been found in a definite archaeological context, can say nothing as to the actual site of Drake's camp. As to that, the weight of evidence and argument, particularly as presented by Power, seems to me to point, though not strongly, to San Francisco Bay; but see p. 261.

A question of much more import than 'this bay or that bay?' is that of the significance to be granted to Drake's formal acceptance from the Miwok Indians of sovereignty over their country, 'the King and diuers others [having] made seuerall orations, or rather, indeed, if we had understood them, supplications, that hee would take the Prouince and kingdome into his hand.' To British students, this has seemed simple opportunism; as we have seen, the Draft Plan does not support any premeditated scheme of colonisation, and Zelia Nuttall mistook a wish that the country *might* 'have layen so fitly for her maiesty to enjoy . . . that the riches and treasures thereof . . . might with as great conuenciency be transported' to England into a statement that they *were* to be so transported.⁸⁶ Any tentatives towards a follow-up of Drake's action were forgotten; even when Oregon was disputed between the United States and the United Kingdom in the 1840s, 'Drake's discovery appeared out of the haze again for a brief moment', but Britain had debarred herself from pressing any claim based upon it, because since the Nootka affair in 1790 (if not since Henry VII) she had insisted on occupation as well as discovery being necessary to secure title.⁸⁷ Recently, however, the claim that Drake was in effect the founder of British dominion in North America has been revived, in a more sophisticated style than Nuttall's hero-worshipping rhetoric.

Like Nuttall, proponents of this view attach a rather literal significance to the dotted lines between Nova Albio [*sic*], Nova Hispanie, and Nova France on maps such as the French version of 'La Herdike Enterprinse' (Plate XVIII). Setting aside all doubts as to the date of this document,⁸⁸ reputedly of the 1580s, and the undoubted fact that though allegedly 'veuee et corige par le dict siegneur drack' it shows his track wrongly, those who assert that it represents a conscious claim for English dominion from sea to sea should explain why the Atlantic frontage claimed between New France and New Spain is squeezed into the peninsula of Florida, where the Spaniards had founded St Augustine in 1565, and slaughtered a Huguenot colony: a region surely in the obedience of that

Christian Prince Philip II. More weight should be given, not only in this case, to J. A. Williamson's words:

Some yield to the fascination of maps, wildly incorrect maps as they obviously are, and strive to extract from them secrets which for the most part they do not contain . . . a form of self-deception unrecognised by [its victim] and increasing its influence as his mind becomes more absorbed in the study. His minutely detailed scholarship becomes ever more admirable, while his judgment of the broad implications of evidence decays.⁸⁹

Nevertheless, these lines of dots presumably did not spring out of thin air, they

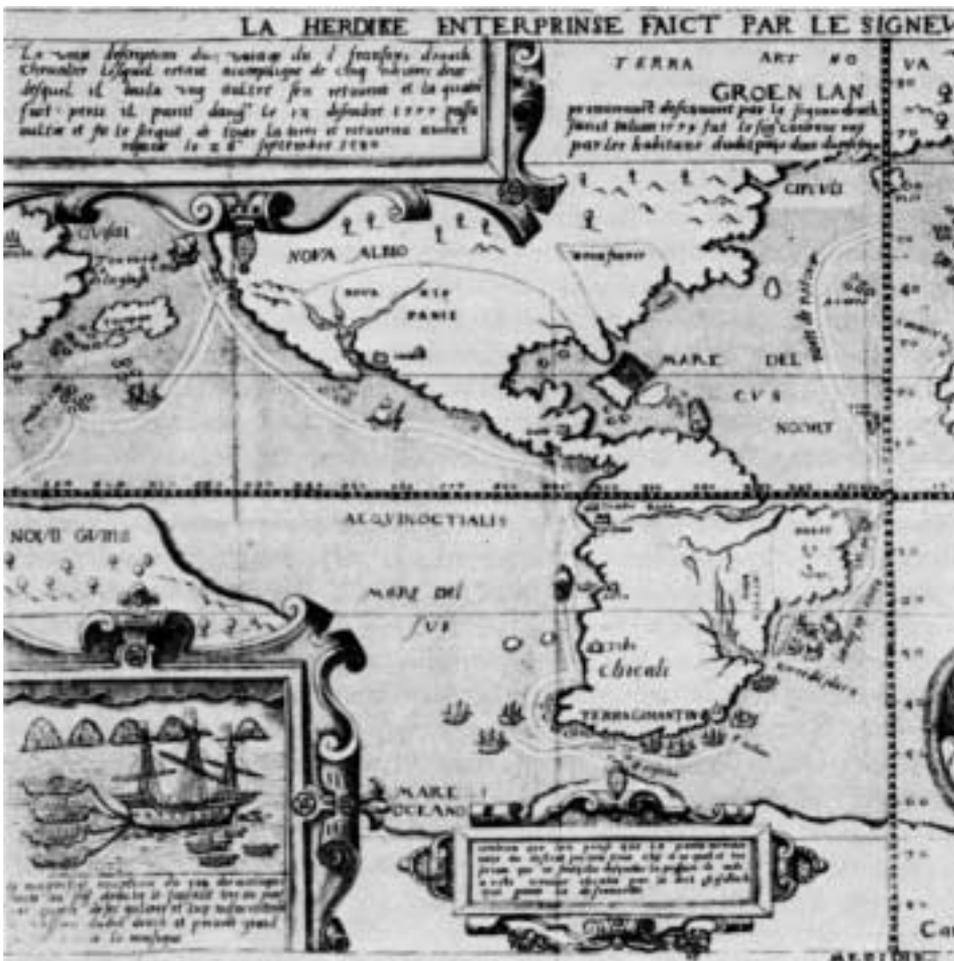


Plate XVIII. DRAKE IN THE PACIFIC: 'LA HERDIKE ENTERPRINSE'. For comment see text, pp. 259 ff. Reproduced in Zelia Nuttall (ed.), *New Light on Drake* (London 1913). By courtesy of the Hakluyt Society. ANU.

must have had some rationale, even if a distorted one, and the question cannot be resolved by a mere denial of significance.

To begin with, Power points out that Drake's patron Hatton was also the patron of John Dee, who was undoubtedly a protagonist of a British Empire—indeed, it was he who coined this term which was to have so long a history. In 1577 Dee published an *Arte of Navigation* with a highly symbolic title page showing Elizabeth as patroness of a fleet of five ships prepared for overseas enterprise. In the same year Richard Willes issued his *History of Travayle* with an epistle to Anne, Countess of Bedford, whose husband was none other than Drake's godfather. Both these books were clearly propaganda for expansion, and their publication may well have some relation to Drake's enterprise, then on the stocks. It is also perhaps significant that immediately after Drake's return, according to William Camden, Elizabeth responded to Mendoza's protests by asserting, very forthrightly, the right not only to trade in the New World, but to 'transport colonies thither'.⁹⁰

Probably more significant is a manuscript map in the Mellon Library, similar to *La Herdike Enterprinse* and possibly derived from a great wall map known to have existed in Whitehall Palace. This shows the Nova Albion/Nova Hispania boundary and a very suggestive distribution of banners of St George, which are placed on Meta Incognita (Baffin Land), Virginia, the Straits of Magellan, and Nova Albion. This recalls Grenville's project with its desire to secure an English foothold on both the northern and the southern approaches to the Mar del Sur: it will be noted that two of Drake's Acts of Possession fit in with Grenville's ideas. This certainly suggests a conscious rather than an absent-minded claim to Empire.⁹¹

Finally there is the remarkable poem *De Navigatione . . . Humfredi Gilberti . . . Carmen* (1582) by the young Hungarian scholar Stephen Parmenius, who was drowned off Newfoundland on Gilbert's 1583 voyage.⁹² This is a most high-spirited call for English (and Protestant) colonisation, and Power very plausibly argues that the 'Speech of America' is an imagined plea by the Miwoks for the protection promised by Drake. The one brief mention of Drake himself in the poem is conventional, but notable for its early date, when publicity about the voyage was seemingly still not favoured; and a poem of 1582 is of course not evidence that Drake himself had any definite ideas of a continent-spanning dominion when he proclaimed Nova Albion. It might also be said that the 'America' of the poem is merely one of the standard rhetorical personifications so dear to Renaissance poets; but the phrasing seems too explicit for this:

. . . You surely see that sad
 America, who proffered recently
 (With downcast crown) her rights and loyalty
 To independent England. . .

In any case, Drake's Californian activities, even were they merely opportunistic, were intensely interesting to Gilbert, Hakluyt, and others of the 'forward school'

with whom Parmenius was on intimate terms; and indeed in Hakluyt's 1600 reprint of the poem there is a marginal note 'Nova Albion' at the beginning of America's appeal.⁹³

It is more difficult, however, to trace any continuity of this incipient imperial idea. It is all very well to cite the seventeenth century charters to English colonisers of America, running 'from sea to sea'; but there is the difficulty that these do not begin until *after* 1606.⁹⁴ It is probably too much to claim with Power that the maps and the poem amount to 'a continental claim, [a] concept [which] was later identified by historians as a manifest destiny'; but even the hard-headed Wagner admitted that 'If a navigable Northwest Passage had been found by John Davis in his voyages after 1585, perhaps there would be another story to tell' of Nova Albion.⁹⁵ At the least we have here a new and challenging view on an old question, a new field for enquiry which might well lead to the revision of some received ideas.

[Although it is now generally accepted that the Plate of Brass is most likely a hoax, a Brazen Plate, controversy is not yet dead. Robert Power has issued *A Study of Two Historic Maps* (Nut Tree 1978), in which he abandons his original idea that the Hondius 'Portus Novae Albionis' was a 'perspective rendering' in favour of its being a properly surveyed 'planimetric map'. Computerised comparisons of distances and bearings on this inset and on a chart of San Francisco Bay (1856) show a close fit, although at one point it is necessary to invoke two separate maps and an erroneous scale reduction of one of them when they were put together. There remains the very difficult crux that Angel Island is omitted on the 'Portus', and San Pablo Strait is crossed by a shoreline. One cannot see why 'these points are no longer material to the identification'.

Admitting the likelihood of some lingering subjectivity in one's personal choice, I now feel inclined to attach rather more weight to the Drake Navigators Guild geomorphological argument, admittedly not a conclusive demonstration, as indicating the probable solution.]

The return and the reckoning

Drake left his anchorage on 23 July, calling at the Farallon Islands next day. After that there was no landfall until 30 September, when they fell in with islands in 8–9°N; many canoes came off, but so thievish were the people that to be 'ridde of this vngracious company' it was necessary to make 'some of them feele some smart as well as terror'—according to John Drake, a score were killed. The identity of this 'Island of Theeues' has hardly such interest or importance as attaches to Drake's Magellanic or Californian visits, but it has attracted its share of attention. The choice lies between Yap, favoured by Wagner and Power, and Palau, and after an exhaustive analysis of every scrap of ethnographical data which can be extracted from the narratives, the anthropologist W. A. Lessa opted for Palau over Yap, in the last resort on the ground of location; but this seems his

weakest ground since, as Robert Power points out, the distance from Palau to the next landfall a fortnight later on Mindanao is such as to give an unacceptably slow rate of sailing, under half the average on the whole California-Mindanao run. Lessa does, however, convincingly refute Andrew Sharp's view that both the first and second landfalls were on Mindanao (this depended on a misreading of 'within' for 'without' sight of land, which has crept into modern editions of *The World Encompassed*); and he has also probably established the position of the Mindanao landfall, about 75 km north of the Gulf of Davao.⁹⁶

Passing down the coast of Mindanao, Drake had a brush with a Portuguese galleon, and rumour of his presence filtered through to Manila. He was making for Tidore when a chance encounter diverted him to Ternate, whose Sultan Baber was bitterly hostile to the Portuguese who had murdered his father. Hence the welcome to Drake was princely, and the English were much impressed by the colour and civility of the Court. The Sultan offered to 'sequester the commodities and traffique of his whole Iland from others . . . and reserue it to the intercourse of our Nation'; nevertheless, though he formally came out to the *Golden Hinde*, he did not venture aboard, and Drake in turn declined a personal visit ashore. Beneath all the courtesies there was mutual suspicion; and it is significant that there is no mention of any presentation of official credentials from the Queen—so much for that much-vaunted commission, and for Wagner's insistence on a Moluccan motive. As for the treaty, nothing was formalised, nothing written down. Although to English minds the visit marked a great break-through into the eastern trade, and was the proximate inspiration of Fenton's expedition of 1582–3 (the first English voyage destined for, though not reaching, the East Indies), the immediate results were six tons of cloves, a vague feeling of goodwill mixed with uneasiness, and some useful intelligence.⁹⁷ This included a first-hand but much slanted report on China by an exile from that country—amongst other items, the Chinese had 'brass ordnance of all sorts (much easier to be trauesed than ours were, and so perfectly made that they would hit a shilling) aboue 2000 yeares agoe': rating this at what it was worth, Drake cannily declined a pressing invitation to the Celestial Empire, but this was very likely the first face-to-face meeting of an Englishman and a Chinese.

The *Golden Hinde* spent only four or five days (5–9 November) in this Moluccan paradise, just about enough time to load the cloves. The passage onwards through the archipelago was not without incident: a month was spent on a small island near Celebes (Sulawesi), careening and refitting and enjoying the land-crabs, so big 'that one was sufficient to satisfie foure hungry men at a dinner, being a very good and restoratiue meate'. This idyllic interlude was followed by near-disaster, when on 8 or 9 January 1580 the ship struck a reef off Celebes: for some time they were in serious danger, and Fletcher preached a moralising sermon on judgments—probably too near the bone, for once they were free Drake put him in the stocks with a mocking inscription. The *Golden Hinde* was got off by jettisoning some stores and guns and (what must have hurt)

three tons of cloves. Drake probably passed between Alor and Timor, and spent an agreeable fortnight (10–26 March) in Southern Java, most likely at Tjilatjap, victualling, cleaning the ship, and hobnobbing with half a dozen or more local rajas. They passed the Cape of Good Hope in June, called at Sierra Leone for water and provisions, and on 26 September 1580 the *Golden Hinde* entered Plymouth harbour:⁹⁸ a great voyage, some thirtyfour months, with remarkably few lives lost, and the first circumnavigation carried out by the one commander.

Boldness at sea must be matched by caution at Court: this Drake well knew, and his first act was to communicate to the Queen, urgently and confidentially, the results of his campaign. News of his depredations had of course reached Spain and England, but Philip had instructed his new ambassador Mendoza to hold his hand until Drake should return. When he did, probably no English commoner had as yet been so popular a hero: amongst the more respectable there were some murmurings over Doughty, over Nuño da Silva, over the negress carried off from New Spain and abandoned, pregnant, in the Indies. But these were whispers in a storm. San Juan de Ulua was more than avenged.

There was a party on the Queen's Council for returning the booty, and also a compromise proposal to repay the promoters their capital plus 100 per cent, restoring the rest on condition that Spanish subversion in Ireland should cease. The recent abortive invasion of Ireland by Papal volunteers, massacred at Smerwick, and the fact that much of the plunder, being unregistered bullion, had no really licit ownership, greatly strengthened the Queen's hand in playing Mendoza, a game in which she seemed to take an aesthetic delight. It could be argued that refunding so much treasure would simply build up Philip's power for the subjugation of the Netherlands, if not England itself, and that a repudiation of Drake (dangerously unpopular as that would be) could only lead to further abject appeasement, putting the whole cause of the Reformed Churches at grave risk. Though Burghley and Sussex refused Drake's proffered douceurs, the big investors—Leicester, Hatton, Walsingham—soon prevailed over any further tendency to morbid probity; and indeed, a year before Drake's return steps were being taken to receive—and conceal—his treasure.⁹⁹ The stakes were simply too high for customary morality to hold.

Just how high they were can never be known. Even before the registration for the Crown began, Drake was allowed to abstract £10,000, but this was far from the total of preliminary deductions. The recorded bullion came to £307,000 and altogether the treasure must have exceeded £600,000, or say £18,000,000 in the early 1970s; perhaps it may have been twice as much. The return to the shareholders was stated on good evidence at a trifle of 4700 per cent, on an investment of the order of £5000. The Crown itself seems to have received around £300,000, more than a year's Exchequer receipts. The result of course was a boom in the privateering industry; but beyond that, in the much-quoted words of Keynes,

The booty brought back by Drake may fairly be considered the fountain and origin of British foreign investment. Elizabeth paid off out of the proceeds the whole of her foreign debt and invested a part of the balance (about £42,000) in the Levant Company; largely out of the profits of the Levant Company was formed the East India Company, the profits of which during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were the main foundation of England's foreign connections. . . .¹⁰⁰

This in the long term. Immediately, the monopoly of the Spanish Lake had been broken, and clearly from the Spanish official point of view, this was no time for the diversion of forces, needed for the defence of existing holdings, into the founding of new and yet further-flung colonies, mere tempting trifles to be snapped up by the heretic sea-rovers: a factor in the long gap between Mendaña's first and second voyages. Meanwhile, Anglo-Spanish tension was screwed up to a new pitch; but so too was the English temper: as massive and as enduring as the fiscal dividend was the gain to the nation's confidence and pride. The great clash was to be fought out in Atlantic waters and the English Channel; but before it took place the Pacific was to be the scene of Cavendish's reprise of Drake's exploit, and before that of a heroic but tragic Spanish riposte, Sarmiento's.