Scholarship

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On 23 January 1696 the scholar, librarian, and high-church nonjuror Thomas Smith wrote to his friend in Oxford, Edward Bernard, the Savilian professor of astronomy. From his letter we learn of Smith's intention to set out from his lodgings in Dean Street, Soho and to walk the two miles, past Lincoln's Inn and Saint Paul's cathedral, to the Royal Exchange, where Edward Jarman's new baroque building graced the commercial centre of the city of London. There, he told Bernard, he hoped to find the English Levant Company's newly-appointed chaplain 'or any other merchant or Captaine' setting out in the next fleet for Iskenderun, the port for the Levant Company's operations in Syria. Through these, his 'Turkey acquaintance', he planned to convey letters from Bernard and their mutual friend, the archbishop of Dublin Narcissus Marsh—letters bound for the Syrian city of Aleppo.¹

This vignette, the bookish divine weaving his way among 'the great con-course of merchants and commanders of ships', as one later writer described the scene between Threadneedle and Cornhill Street, provides us with a glimpse of two worlds rarely connected in the historiography of early modern England.² Smith and Bernard were habitués of darkened college libraries, practitioners of the arts of a recondite species of scholarship. Between them, they had delved into such nebulous topics as the Aramaic paraphrases of the Old Testament, antique weights and measures, the manuscript holdings of English libraries. This was the kind of thing easily ridiculed by the dawning age of Enlightenment; yet something of the intellectual vitality of their interests,

1 T. Smith to E. Bernard, 23 Jan. 1696, Bodl. Oxf. MS Smith 57, fol. 539. Smith had referred to his 'Turkey acquaintance' in an earlier letter to Bernard (Bodl. Oxf. MS Smith 57, fol. 527), although had noted here that: 'I seldome or never go upon the Exchange or meet with any of my Turkey acquaintance ...'.

2 'The Voyage of Don Manoel Gonzales, (Late Merchant) of the City of Lisbon in Portugal, to Great-Britain', in *A Collection of Voyages and Travels ... from the Curious and Valuable Library of the Earl of Oxford* (London, 1745), vol. i the authorship of this text has been attributed to Daniel Defoe: see John Robert Moore, 'The Authorship of *The Voyage of Don Manoel Gonzales*', in John Robert Moore, *Defoe in the Pillory and Other Studies* (Bloomington: Literary Licensing, LLC, 1939), 74–103; however, also P. N. Furbank and W. R. Owens, *Defoe De-Attributions: A Critique of J. R. Moore's Checklist* (London: Bloomsbury 3PL, 1994), 150.

the culture of erudition and sociability in which they participated, has been captured by recent work which we might broadly label 'history of scholarship', in particular work concerned with recovering early modern 'antiquarian' and 'Orientalist' practices.³ All of this was, at least on the surface, a far cry from the bustling commercial environment of the Royal Exchange—a social milieu carefully delineated in the work of Perry Gauci, Natasha Glaisyer, Ann Saunders, and others.⁴

However, this image of Smith seeking out a departing merchant points us to one way in which these two spheres might connect. Moreover, this connection might be illuminated by thinking of Smith's walk across London as, on a conceptual level, a movement between two early modern corporations: the Oxford college and the London trading company.⁵ Smith's promise to seek out his 'Turkey acquaintance' to deliver the letters of an Oxford scholar and a Church of Ireland archbishop to Syria provides us with an illustration of the corporation in its guise—as set out above—of an agent of knowledge exchange, moving ideas and scholarship across continents and cultural boundaries. The role of the corporation in the production of scientific knowledge has been explored in an influential article by Steven J. Harris.⁶ We might take as a starting point here the fact that several of Harris's claims about the corporation in its relationship to the 'big sciences'—its way of organising 'mobility', and its facilitation of 'corporate' or 'organized travel'—might apply equally when we turn

- 3 Joseph M. Levine, *The Battle of the Books: History and Literature in the Augustan Age* (Ithaca, 1991); T. Harmsen, 'Letters of Learning: a Selection from the Correspondence of Thomas Hearne and Thomas Smith, 1703–1710', *Lias* 24 (1997): 37–66; Mordechai Feingold, 'Oriental Studies', in *The History of the University of Oxford*, 8 vols (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984–2000), vol. iv, ed. N. Tyacke (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 449–503; Dmitri Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom in the Age of the New Science: Histories of Philosophy in England, c. 1640–1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 155; G. J. Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom and Learning: The Study of Arabic in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 243–8, 299–305.
- 4 Perry Gauci, *Emporium of the World: the Merchants of London 1660–1800* (London: Hambledon Continuum, 2007); idem, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660–1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003); Natasha Glaisyer, *The Culture of Commerce in England, 1660–1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2006); Ann Saunders (ed.), *The Royal Exchange* (London: Guardian Royal Exchange, 1997).
- 5 Following the schema of William Shephard, *Of Corporations, Fraternities, and Guilds* (London, 1659), 1–2, we might also consider the archbishop as a third kind of corporation: 'a Body Politick that indureth in perpetual succession ... And this politick body, is either of one person only, and so the King was, and the Lord Protector is, a Body politick. So the *Bishops*, *Deans*, *Prebends*, and *Canons* of Churches were ...'.
- 6 Steven J. Harris, 'Long-Distance Corporations, Big Sciences, and the Geography of Knowledge', *Configurations* 6.2 (1998): 269–303.

from the natural sciences to forms of humanistic enquiry.⁷ Most substantially in terms of the themes of this volume, the case of Smith will provide us with a snapshot of the corporation in its integrative capacity, facilitating a connection between a series of national and global contexts. Examining more closely the circumstances which had led to Smith's setting out across London for the Exchange on a winter's day will enable us to glimpse one aspect of the corporation's global sociology.

Smith was already in his late fifties at the time this letter was written. Nearly thirty years earlier, he had travelled to the Levant himself. In 1668 he had taken leave from his fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford to accompany the ambassador to the Ottoman Empire Sir Daniel Harvey to Istanbul, where he would serve as a chaplain to the embassy for the next three years. During this time, he would receive a salary of two-hundred dollars (around fifty pounds) per annum from the English Levant Company.⁸ This was standard practice by the 1660s. From at least the first decade of the seventeenth century, the company supplied the funds to provide the ambassador with a chaplain, whom it clearly regarded as its own employee.⁹ From the 1610s (the earliest period from which regular minutes of the Levant Company's General Court survive) the company had developed a formal procedure for vetting, electing, and appointing chaplains. In subsequent years, young clergymen were posted to what had emerged as the Levant Company's two most important trading centres: Izmir (Greek Smyrna) in western Turkey and Aleppo in Syria. Nor was the Levant Company the only one of early modern England's trading corporations to send chaplains to its overseas settlements. By the Restoration, young clergyman like Smith, undeterred by the countless perils of foreign travel, might find employment in a number of English overseas settlements—from the East India Company's factories in Java and on the west coast of India, to the colony in Virginia.¹⁰

7 Harris, 'Long-Distance Corporations', 274–5.

8 TNA SP 105/152, fols 186^v–189^v.

9 This point was made explicit in the Levant Company's advice to the ambassador Thomas Glover consequent on Glover's attempt to expel William Biddulph from his household, Levant Company to Thomas Glover, 9 Jun. 1607, TNA SP 105/110, fol. 9^v: 'And albeit your servant yet he was chosen our officer And ther[e]fore howsoever he hath failed soe farre as might deserve sequestration from his place, yet wee thinke it too hard to turne him out of your house in a strange country w[i]thout freinds or means untill our directions had bene knowne'.

10 For an overview, see Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 219–53. J. B. Pearson, *A Biographical Sketch of the Chaplains to the Levant Company, maintained at Constantino-ple, Aleppo and Smyrna, 1611–1706* (Cambridge: Deighton Bell, 1883); Daniel O'Connor, *The Chaplains of the East India Company, 1601–1858* (London, 2012).

At least some of the men who took up these positions must have been motivated by financial concerns. In 1624 the East India Company sent out a recruiting letter to encourage young clerics to consider employment in its factories in India, having previously noted that 'the University aboundeth with excellent men that want means'.¹¹ The Levant Company permitted serving chaplains to supplement their stipends by participating in trade, and was prepared to pay wages at home in sterling to be invested in commodities to be traded abroad. For men such as Smith, however, a sojourn in the Levant was desirable for other reasons. A posting to Istanbul would bring with it a range of opportunities to further various aspects of the research programme upon which he and his Oxford colleagues were engaged—in particular, the task of recovering the languages and religions of the ancient Near East as part of a broader project to reconstruct the world of the Hebrew and Greek scriptures.

We can gain some insight into this from Smith's correspondence. In the months preceding his departure, he was to receive from his Oxford friends a series of wish lists containing questions to enquire into or books and manuscripts to be sought out. In July 1668, for example, Samuel Clarke, the 'architypographus' of the university press, passed on a request from the Oxford Arabic professor Edward Pococke that Smith 'acquaint y[ou]rself' with the Karaite Jews he was likely to encounter in Istanbul; Clarke himself was 'for Historie and Geography', asking Smith to procure in particular the works of the well-known scholar-prince Abu'l-Fida.¹² A few weeks later, Bernard wrote to Smith that 'I have had a great Inclination to the Coptick Tongue, pray blesse mee if you are soe fortunate, with a Glossarye in th[a]t Tongue or th[a]t of the Bible'.¹³ In June of the same year, Smith had already received requests from the Bodleian's librarian Thomas Hyde for 'any book that treateth of Plays and Games, as Chess and Tables, or the like' (this had stemmed from Hyde's own, rather idiosyncratic, interest in Oriental games, which would result in his 1689 book *De ludibus orientalibus*) and—more conventionally—for 'a catalogue of all such books as are extant about Constantinople in any of the Eastern languages, with the prices of each'. The next month, Hyde recommended that Smith 'enquire into the Religions of any other sorts of strange people, as you have occasion,

11 Quoted in O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company* (London: Continuum 3PL), 34; on the recruiting letter see 19.

12 S. Clarke to T. Smith, 14 Jul. 1668, Oxf. Bodl. MS Smith 48, fol. 11. On the term 'architypographus', see Peter H. Sutcliffe, *The Oxford University Press: An Informal History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978), xvii–xviii.

13 E. Bernard to T. Smith, 28 Jul. 1668, Oxf. Bodl. MS Smith 47, fol. 33.

and especially if you can get the authentic books of their Religions written in their own language'.¹⁴

The hopes invested in Smith by his colleagues were grounded in an awareness of some of the work of the chaplains who had served in the Levant earlier in the seventeenth century. In fact, a significant proportion of the manuscripts which would make the Bodleian library renowned across Europe as a treasury of Oriental learning had been acquired by Edward Pococke, who had served the Levant Company, both in Aleppo and in Istanbul, in the 1630s and 40s. Smith's contemporary, Robert Huntington, would achieve a comparable feat in Aleppo in the 1670s. In comparison with the substantial libraries compiled by Pococke and Huntington, Smith's own procurements were modest.¹⁵ Nevertheless, he was to furnish himself with materials for a programme of scholarly publishing which he would continue for the next two decades on topics such as contemporary Ottoman culture and the Greek Orthodox church.¹⁶ This combined a prior knowledge of Islamic and Eastern Christian history and theology, derived in large part from Smith's patristic and Oriental studies at Oxford, with the kind of first-hand reportage characteristic of the extant writings of some of the earlier chaplains who had served in the Near East and Asia. William Biddulph, for example, had given some account of the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic communities of the Levant in his *Travels*, written during his years as chaplain to the English merchants at Aleppo at the turn of the seventeenth century. Edward Terry, who had accompanied Thomas Roe's embassy to India in the 1610s, recorded his impressions of Islam and Hinduism in his later *A Voyage to East India* (1655).¹⁷

14 T. Hyde to T. Smith, 8 Jun. 1668, in Thomas Hyde, *Syntagma dissertationum quas olim auctor doctissimus Thomas Hyde S.T.P.* (Oxford, 1767), vol. ii, pp. 483–4; T. Hyde to T. Smith, 18 Jul. 1668, Hyde, *Syntagma dissertationum*, vol. ii, p. 484.

15 W. D. Macray *Annals of the Bodleian Library*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1890), 149 listed three manuscripts given to the library by Smith on his return from Istanbul.

16 Thomas Smith, *Remarks upon the Manners, Religion and Government of the Turks ... and a Brief Description of Constantinople, etc* (London, 1678); idem, *An Account of the Greek Church, as to its Doctrine and Rites of Worship ... To which is added, an Account of the State of the Greek Church under Cyrillus Lucaris, Patriarch of Constantinople, with a Relation of his Sufferings and Death* (London, 1680). The most detailed study of Smith's work in these fields is Andrei N. Pippidi's 'Knowledge of the Ottoman Empire in Late Seventeenth-Century England: Thomas Smith and some of his Friends', (unpublished D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 1985).

17 William Biddulph, *The Travels of Certain Englishmen into Africa, Asia, Troy, Bythinia, Thracia, and to the Blacke Sea* (London, 1609). On the book, and the circumstances of its production, see Gerald M. MacLean, *The Rise of Oriental Travel: English Visitors to the Ottoman Empire, 1580–1720* (Basingstoke: Houndmills, 2004), 50–114. Edward Terry, *A Voyage to East-India* (London, 1655).

Nor were chaplains the only employees of the early modern trading companies who would undertake this kind of work on behalf of English scholarship. Glancing through the accession registers of the Bodleian library, it is striking to observe the number of items received from ambassadors, consuls, and merchants. Some of these acquisitions were far from insubstantial. In 1611 Thomas Bodley reported on the arrival in Oxford of 'twentie severall volumes' in 'the Syriacke, Arabicke, Turkishe and Persian tongues' procured in Aleppo by the Levant Company's consul Paul Pindar—books which, although they were 'valued in that place at a verie highe rate', had been bestowed freely by the consul.¹⁸ Twenty years later, the library received a further thirty manuscripts from Sir Thomas Roe, the Levant Company's ambassador in Istanbul. By far Roe's most significant acquisition during his years in the Ottoman capital was the so-called Codex Alexandrinus, a Greek manuscript of the Old and New Testaments which Roe would obtain from the Greek Orthodox patriarch Cyril Lukaris—recognised immediately by English scholars as a gem among early witnesses to the Greek text of the Bible.¹⁹ More sporadic, no doubt procured more haphazardly, but certainly no less exotic were many individual donations sent in by merchants. During the course of the seventeenth century, the library was to receive such rarities as a priest's vesture inscribed with the entire Qu'ran, its first ever book written in Sanskrit, and a Chinese map of the heavens, all of which had been sent in by East India Company merchants.²⁰ As cotton, silk, and spices were shipped between London, Iskenderun, and Surat they were occasionally accompanied by manuscript treasures such as these. Nor were

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- 18 T. Bodley to T. Singleton, 5 Nov. 1611, in G. W. Wheeler (ed.), *Letters of Sir Thomas Bodley to the University of Oxford, 1598–1611* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1927), 21–2. For some account of the manuscripts, see Colin Wakefield, 'Arabic Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library: The Seventeenth-Century Collections', in *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. G. A. Russell (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 128–146, 129.
- 19 Matthew Spinka, 'Acquisition of the Codex Alexandrinus by England', *Journal of Religion* 16 (1936): 10–29; Scot McKendrick, 'The Codex Alexandrinus or the Dangers of being a Named Manuscript', in Scot McKendrick and Orlaith A. O'Sullivan (eds), *The Bible as Book: The Transmission of the Greek Text* (London: British Library Publishing Division, 2003), 1–16; Scott Mandelbrote, 'English Scholarship and the Greek Text of the Old Testament, 1620–1720: The Impact of Codex Alexandrinus', in Ariel Hessayon and Nicholas Keene (eds), *Scripture and Scholarship in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2006), 74–93.
- 20 Macray, *Annals*, 108, 133, 154. See Macray's comments at 133: 'It is noticeable what a real, although somewhat indiscriminating, interest the London merchants appear to have taken in the Library. Continual mention occurs not merely of books but of curiosities of all kinds, natural and artificial, which persons engaged in commerce, chiefly with the East Indies, sent as for a general repository'.

manuscripts the only items which might be found occasionally on the ships chartered by the early modern corporations. Via Aaron Goodyear, a Levant Company merchant stationed in Aleppo, the Ashmolean Museum, opened at Oxford in 1683, was to receive one of its first mummies—transported from Alexandria, ‘inscribed and decorated with characters and several hieroglyphic figures’ (if Dmitri Levitin is right, however, and this was the same mummy later seen by John Woodward, then it did not fare well in its new home: ‘after it had been for some time in our more humid air’, reported the latter, it ‘began to corrupt and grow mouldy, emitted a foetid and cadaverous scent, and in conclusion putrified and fell to pieces’).²¹

The kind of historical-ethnographical work which had occupied Smith would also be taken up by some of the men employed in secular roles by the overseas trading companies. One of the most successful examples of this was the private secretary to the ambassador, later consul at Izmir, Paul Rycaut.²² Rycaut would mine the first-hand experience gleaned as a diplomat at the Porte in the 1660s in his *The Present State of the Ottoman Empire*, a well-received analysis of Ottoman state and society. His interests would overlap even more closely with those of Smith’s in his *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches, Anno Christi, 1678* (1679), based in part on expeditions undertaken from Izmir to discover the so-called ‘seven churches of Asia’ addressed in the Book of Revelation.²³

Company employees—chaplains, but also ambassadors, consuls, and merchants—could, then, use their years abroad to pursue interests related to various fields of humanistic scholarship. Here, we have a clear example of the corporations bringing Englishmen into non-European contexts. The resulting movement of things (manuscripts, antiquities) and ideas would have important implications for English intellectual life, even if the intellectual impulse for

21 Macray, *Annals*, 149, recording the note that ‘Nine shillings were paid for the carriage of a mummy from London’. Ashmolean Museum, Benefactor’s Book, fol. 6r (‘... ab Alexandria advectum; exterius characteribus, et figuris aliquot hieroglyphicis inscriptum et ornatum’). Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*, 209.

22 On Rycaut, see Sonia P. Anderson, *An English Consul in Turkey: Paul Rycaut at Smyrna 1667–1678* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989); Colin Heywood, ‘Sir Paul Rycaut, a Seventeenth-Century Observer of the Ottoman State: Notes for a Study’, in *English and Continental Views of the Ottoman Empire, 1500–1800: Papers read at a Clark Library Seminar, January 24, 1970* (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, 1972), 33–59; repr. Colin Heywood, *Writing Ottoman History: Documents and Interpretations* (Aldershot: Routledge, 2002), ch. 4.

23 Paul Rycaut, *The Present State of the Greek and Armenian Churches, Anno Christi, 1678* (London, 1679), 30–80. P. Rycaut to T. Smith, 10 Dec. 1670, Oxf. Bodl. MS Smith 53, fol. 155.

these kinds of studies rarely came from within the trading companies themselves. However, we can also discern aspects of a more systematic connection between scholarly institutions and the overseas trading companies by looking at the ways in which scholars, or patrons of scholarship, attempted to utilise the infrastructures put in place by the corporations.

A good example of this can be found in the career of William Laud, who as chancellor of Oxford university in the 1630s, had played a foundational role in institutionalising the programme of Oriental scholarship which would later be taken up by Smith—augmenting the stipend of the Hebrew professor, endowing a chair in Arabic, and building up the library's holdings of Near-Eastern manuscripts.²⁴ As part of these endeavours, Laud would turn to the Levant Company. In 1634, he was behind a plan demanding of the Company, under order of the king, that:

every Shippe of yours at every Voyage that th[a]t makes should bring home one Arab: or Persian Booke to be delyvered presently to the Master of your Company, and by him carryed or sent to the Lord Archbishop of Cant[erbury] for time being, who shall dispose of them as Wee in our Wisedome shall think fitt.²⁵

As G. J. Toomer has pointed out, Laud's endeavours bore little fruit.²⁶ Within a year, Laud had been confined to the Tower of London, and the project had effectively come to an end. Nevertheless, the scheme perhaps provides us with an illustration of the way in which the corporation's subordinate position in relation to the state could be exploited by an ambitious scholarly patron—interestingly, a similar procedure would be followed a generation later in France, when Jean-Baptiste Colbert would draw on the Catholic missions and the French consuls in the Levant to procure manuscripts for the library of Louis XIV.

Elsewhere, we can find attempts to place young men in the overseas chaplaincies with the intention of their using their positions to further the cause of English scholarship. In 1629 the Oxford astronomer John Bainbridge wrote

24 Hugh Trevor-Roper, *Archbishop Laud, 1573–1645*, 3rd edn (Basingstoke: Houndmills, 1988), 271–94; Mordechai Feingold, 'Patrons and Professors: the Origins and Motives for the Endowment of University Chairs—in particular the Laudian Professorship of Arabic', in *The 'Arabick' Interest of the Natural Philosophers in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. G. A. Russell (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 109–27.

25 TNA, SP 16/260, no. 16.

26 Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome*, 108.

to the archbishop of Armagh James Ussher recommending that the latter use his influence to procure the chaplaincy in Aleppo for a certain Samson Johnson. Johnson, Bainbridge reported, having 'spent some Years in the Oriental Languages, and being desirous to improve his Knowledg therein', was 'desirous to spend his time in perfecting his Languages, and making such other Observations as may tend to the advancement of Learning'.²⁷ Four decades later, Thomas Hyde would ask Robert Boyle, a director of the East India Company, to place chaplains in the Company's factories to facilitate his procuring books in ancient Persian and Sanskrit—a plan which appears to have occasioned some degree of success.²⁸

Beyond this, there are many more cases of figures from the world of scholarship drawing more informally on the global networks brought into being by the trading companies to further their research agendas—using merchants to procure manuscripts, making use of the ships to transport books or antiquities, or simply exploiting the companies' postal networks to obtain news from North Africa, Syria, or India.²⁹ On the ground in the English overseas settlements, too, embassies, consulates, and merchants' houses, in addition to the legal protection secured as a precondition for commercial activity (the 'capitulations' in the case of trade within the Ottoman empire), were essential constituents of the experience of travellers with a scholarly agenda. It is this more informal type of connection between the world of scholarship and the world of commerce which is captured by our opening vignette of Smith. The letters from Marsh concerned instructions for the chaplain in Aleppo to procure Near-Eastern manuscripts, to further the archbishop's intention of building up an Oriental library in Dublin, just as Laud had done a generation earlier at Oxford.³⁰ The letters from Bernard concerned an ongoing project—one which

27 Quoted in Toomer, *Eastern Wisedome*, 119.

28 T. Hyde to R. Boyle, 23 Oct. 1671, *The Correspondence of Robert Boyle*, ed. Michael Hunter, Antonio Clericuzio, and Lawrence M. Principe, 6 vols (London: Routledge, 2001), vol. iv, 221; T. Hyde to R. Boyle, 1 Feb. 1671, *Correspondence of Boyle*, vol. iv, 238–9; T. Hyde to R. Boyle, 29 Nov. 1677, *Correspondence of Boyle*, vol. iv, 469–70. Further contacts with chaplains serving in the East India Company's factories are recorded in Hyde's letters to Captain Thomas Bowrey, e.g. BL MSS EUR E192a J. 763, no. 5, fol. 2^r. See also T. Hyde to R. Boyle, 5 Mar. 1691, *Correspondence of Boyle*, vol. iv, 330–2; O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company*, 49–50.

29 For one example, see William O'Sullivan, 'Ussher as a Collector of Manuscripts', *Hermathena* 88 (1956): 34–58; John Gywnn, 'On a Syriac MS. belonging to the Collection of Archbishop Ussher', *The Transactions of the Royal Irish Academy* xxvii (1886): 269–316.

30 W. Halifax to T. Smith, 7 Dec. 1694, Bodl. Oxf. MS Smith 45 fol. 49. Colin Wakefield, 'Archbishop Marsh's Oriental Collections in the Bodleian Library', in *The Making of Marsh's Library: Learning, Politics and Religion in Ireland, 1650–1750*, ed. Muriel McCarthy and

would involve a collaboration between merchants, chaplains, an Arab sheik, and scholars in England, France, and the Netherlands—to rediscover the ruins of Palmyra and the (then little-known and still undeciphered) Palmyrene script.³¹

We have seen, then, some of the various means by which scholars such as Smith and Bernard, or patrons of scholarship such as William Laud or Narcissus Marsh, might draw on the resources and tap into some of the infrastructures of the overseas trading companies for their own ends. The spheres of the scholarly divine—university and church—might overlap with the trading corporation in its integrative capacity.³² However, it is worth attempting, too, to consider this question from the other side; that is to ask whether there is any way in which the trading corporations themselves fostered or promoted the interests of learning, alongside their commercial activities. The Levant Company occasionally justified its privileges as a corporate entity on the grounds that its merchants' cumulative experience of the 'Laws and customs' of Ottoman society was the most effective means of maintaining its commerce.³³ If, as Harris has argued, long distance corporations integrated 'knowledge-gathering and knowledge-producing mechanisms into their social fabric' then what, if any, implications did this have for the development of humanistic enquiries?

Reading through the minute books of the General Court of the Levant Company we can find occasional instances of the Company directors investing in scholarly projects bearing some relevance to their more immediate concerns. Most of these related either to languages or to geography. The Italian linguist Giovanni Torriano, for example, received a gratuity from the Levant Company and dedicated his 1640 Italian grammar to England's Turkey merchants—being 'in a continuall commerce with most parts of *Italy*, as well as *Turkey*, where the

Ann Simmons (Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2004), 76–84. Wakefield found (78) that 'Only a handful of, mostly Arabic, manuscripts in the Marsh collection can be associated with the then Aleppo chaplain, William Halifax'. See also N. Marsh to T. Smith, 6 Jan. 1699, Oxf. Bodl. MS Smith 53, fol. 155.

31 For an overview, see Iain Browning, *Palmyra* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1979), 53–76; Peter T. Daniels, 'Shewing of Hard Sentences and Dissolving of Doubts: The First Decipherment', *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 108.3 (1998): 419–36.

32 See Harris's suggestive comments ('Long-Distance Corporations', 303) on how the 'Republic of Letters' 'might be reexamined as an interorganizational network where "citizenship" in the republic depended in part upon formal ties among the elites of distinct corporations'.

33 William A. Pettigrew and Tristan Stein, 'The Public Rivalry between Regulated and Joint Stock Corporations and the Development of Seventeenth-Century Corporate Constitutions', in *Historical Research* 90.248 (2017): 341–62, 354.

Italian Tongue is all in all'.³⁴ Torriano evidently continued to be patronised by the Levant Company during subsequent decades, and would dedicate his 1659 Italian dictionary to the governor Sir Andrew Riccard.³⁵ When it was brought to the attention of the General Court in the winter of 1660 that the author had 'lost all his Bookes and papers by a fire in Swithen Alley', the Company granted him a further gratuity of ten pounds 'out of a desire to incourage ingenuous designes'.³⁶ When the cartographer Richard Blome presented the map of the Turkish empire from his *A Geographical Description of the Four Parts of the World* dedicated to the Levant Company to the Court in 1669 he was rewarded with the sum of six pounds.³⁷

The Company also provided some limited financial support and free passage on its ships to a handful of Greek youths who came to study at the English universities during the seventeenth century. In 1634, for example, a certain Matthew Muto, a Greek student at Trinity College, Cambridge, was granted an annual stipend of three pounds.³⁸ When in the last years of the seventeenth century a plan was set in motion to establish a Greek college at Gloucester Hall in Oxford, the scheme's initiator, Benjamin Woodroffe, appeared before the General Court and was promised free passage for all future students on the Company's ships.³⁹ These benefactions were no doubt also underpinned by some commercial or diplomatic rationale: the hope that the future graduates might eventually serve the Company in some capacity abroad—even if these hopes rarely appear to have come to any fruition. Yet they would also have the effect, in a small way, of furthering scholarly work.

34 Giovanni Torriano, *The Italian Tutor, or a New and Most Complete Italian Grammer* (London, 1640), sig. A2^r; TNA SP 105/149, fol. 201^v.

35 Giovanni Torriano, *Vocabolario Italiano & Inglese, A Dictionary Italian & English* (London, 1659), sig. A2^{r-v}.

36 TNA SP 105/152, fol. 4^v (30 Nov. 1660).

37 TNA SP 105/153, fol. 18^r (3 Mar. 1669); Richard Blome, *A Geographical Description of the Four Parts of the World* (London, 1670), sigs MM3^v-MM4^r.

38 TNA SP 105/149, fol. 80^v; this was increased to six pounds per annum the following year (fol. 102^r).

39 TNA SP 105/155, fol. 113^r. On the college, see E. D. Tappe, 'The Greek College at Oxford, 1699–1705', *Oxoniensia* xix (1954), pp. 92–111 (repr. in *Anglicanism and Orthodoxy: 300 Years After the 'Greek College' in Oxford*), ed. Peter M. Doll (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2006), 153–74; E. D. Trappe, 'Alumni of the Greek College at Oxford, 1699–1705', *Notes and Queries* (March 1955): 110–4. See also, TNA SP 105/156, pp. 110, 123, 156–8, 171, 219. *A Model of a College to be Settled in the University, for the Education of Some Youths of the Greek Church* (1689) envisioned a limited role for the Levant Company, assigning the reception of students on their arrival in England to the governor or deputy governor.

Yet the most substantial investment on the part of the Levant Company in projects tending towards the advancement of learning can be discerned when we turn, once again, to the Company's dealings with its chaplains. In appointing clerics to serve in its overseas factories, the Company directors were concerned above all with two factors: first, that ministers in the Company's employment conformed to the doctrines of the Church of England; second, that they exhibited uprightness of moral character. The duties of the chaplain as defined by the Company were fairly limited: to 'preach the word of god & administor the sacrement to the English Nation according to the canons & constitutions of the Church of England'.⁴⁰ However, from the very early days, it is clear that the Company also valued men with proven talents in learning.⁴¹ Testimonials on behalf of candidates frequently contained reference to a potential chaplain's scholarly capacities.⁴² When the most illustrious scholar to hold the chaplaincy at Aleppo, Edward Pococke, came before the Court in March 1630, his recommendations drew attention—among his other qualities—to his 'abilitie in learning' and 'soundness in the studdy of devinitie'.⁴³

The most substantial manifestation of the Company's commitment to maintaining a learned clergy was the libraries it endowed in its overseas settlements. These libraries might well have grown out of the collections of books carried over to the Levant by Company chaplains. From the early seventeenth century, the Company began the practice of assigning a one-off payment to newly-appointed chaplains to furnish themselves with books deemed necessary to their ministerial functions. Chaplains continued to have books shipped out to them during their years abroad, and it is likely that some of these remained overseas. Yet during the course of the seventeenth century, the Company began to invest more substantially in furnishing its libraries with collections of scholarly books. When the esteemed preacher Robert Frampton was recruited to serve in Aleppo in 1655 the Court decreed that, in addition to the usual twenty pounds for his private allowance, a further fifty pounds 'be laid out in Bookes'; to Frampton was assigned the task of overseeing the selection of these, which would then be 'carried over with him & remain at Aleppo for the Companies account, and for the use of himselfe & such as may succeed him in that charge'.⁴⁴ The library would grow over the years, in part through

40 TNA SP 105/149, fol. 203^v.

41 TNA SP 105/148, fols 39^v, 69^r.

42 Anna Lady Wake to Sec. Conway, 11 Nov. 1627, TNA SP 16/84, fol. 71^r; TNA SP 105/148, fol. 147^v, 158^r; TNA SP 14/184, fols 19–20.

43 TNA SP 105/148, fol. 218^v.

44 TNA NA SP 105/151, fol. 131^v.

donations, and in part through further grants to subsequent chaplains.⁴⁵ At Izmir, the chaplain John Luke played a comparable role in augmenting the factory's scholarly resources. In 1676 the Court responded favourably to Luke's request that three volumes of Matthew Poole's *Synopsis criticorum aliorumque sacrae scripturae interpretum*—an important compilation of a vast amount of Renaissance biblical criticism—'bee bought & sent thether [to Izmir] to bee chained in the Comp[any] Library'.⁴⁶ Thomas Smith performed similar services in Istanbul. Following his return to England, Smith received a letter from Edward Brown, his successor as chaplain at the embassy, acknowledging that 'you have left a very great obligation to all scholars that shall ever come hither, to confess you a great benefactor to the library, w[hi]ch I at this time enjoy. S[i]r I find many excellent books here, of your consignment, which I do heartily thank you for'.⁴⁷ By the end of the century, the libraries in Aleppo, Izmir, and—we can assume—Istanbul each contained several hundred volumes.⁴⁸

It is no surprise, given the involvement of the chaplains in compiling these collections, that their scope reflected the humanistic intellectual culture of the universities. What is perhaps more striking is that some of the most technical and most expensive books were acquired as gifts from the governor, Sir Andrew Riccard, and his wife, Lady Susannah Riccard. In 1666 Riccard, at the request of John Luke, had given 'as a Gift to the Compa[ny] and as the foundation of a large Library at Smyrna' all six volumes of the London Polyglot Bible—to 'remayne at Smyrna for the use of the Company and be chained and made fast'.⁴⁹ Four years later, he was to present the same library with the first volume of Poole's *Synopsis* and Edmund Castell's *Lexicon heptaglotton* (a dictionary, designed in part as an aid to reading the Polyglot Bible).⁵⁰ Further donations included volume two of Poole's *Synopsis*, all six volumes of the Polyglot for Aleppo, and copies for both libraries of William Seaman's Turkish translation of the New Testament and Turkish grammar.⁵¹ In 1678 Lady Riccard gave notice

45 TNA SP 105/154, fol. 213^v; TNA SP 105/155, fol. 28^v; TNA SP 105/155, fol. 176^v.

46 TNA SP 105/154, fols 2^v, 4^r.

47 E. Brown to T. Smith, 24 May 1677, Oxf. Bodl. MS Smith 48, fol. 11.

48 TNA SP 105/145, fols 157–164: 'A Catalogue of the Library belonging to the English Nation at Aleppo, taken in the yeare of o[u]r Lord 1688'; TNA SP 105/145, fols 301–2: 'A Catalogue of the Books in the Library belonging to the English Nation at Smyrna, taken in the year of our Lord 1702'. I have not found a record of the Istanbul library catalogue among the Levant Company papers.

49 TNA SP 105/152, fol. 159^r.

50 TNA SP 105/153, fol. 34^r.

51 TNA SP 105/153, fol. 94^v. On Seaman and his Turkish Bible, see Alastair Hamilton, 'Seaman, William (1606/7–1680)', *ODNB*, online edn; Noel Malcolm, 'Comenius, Boyle, Oldenburg,

of her intention to furnish the library at Aleppo with the first three volumes of Pool's *Synopsis* (at which the company agreed to provide the other two).⁵²

What was the purpose of these donations? Riccard's and Lady Riccard's benefactions most likely reflect a concern to promote religion in the overseas factories, rather than scholarship per se. This can be inferred from considering the parallel provision for libraries in the East India Company's overseas settlements. The two cases were similar: the East India Company directors were prepared to cover the expenses and the chaplains were involved in the selection of appropriate books. As Daniel O'Connor has noted, even small factories like that of Hirado in Japan acquired their own libraries; larger factories, like those at Bantam and Surat, built up more substantial collections.⁵³ As in the Levant, these included some important works of scholarship: the factory at Surat, for example, possessed the *Critici sacri* (1660; a compilation of biblical commentaries which formed the basis of Poole's later *Synopsis*) as well as the works of some of the Church Fathers.⁵⁴ In 1659 Thomas Rich, a former director, gave two sets of the Polyglot Bible for the factories at Surat and Fort St George. The minutes record the missionary hopes behind the donation; the books were given 'so that those may make good use of them in propagating the gospel among the people and instructing themselves in some of these languages'.⁵⁵ This reflects, too, the East India Company's openness to the schemes of figures such as Robert Boyle, Hyde, and the bishop of Oxford John Fell to propagate the Gospel in the East—constitutive of what has been referred to as an 'evangelical awakening'.⁵⁶

As O'Connor has noted, there is little indication of what effect these books had in the propagation of the Gospel abroad.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, the libraries were to demarcate a place within the overseas communities where scholarly activities could flourish. We have seen already that in Izmir the books were chained to the shelves. The Court of the East India Company ordered that at Surat the books be stored 'in a room appointed purposely for the same and not at any time removed thence into any particular man's chamber, without a receipt first

and the Translation of the Bible into Turkish', *Church History and Religious Culture* 87.3 (2007): 327–62; Toomer, *Eastern Wisdom*, 215–18.

52 TNA SP 105/154, fol. 57^r.

53 O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company*, 51–2.

54 O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company*, 52.

55 Quoted in O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company*, 52.

56 Donald F. Lach and Edwin J. Van Kley, *Asia in the Making of Europe: Volume III, A Century of Advance. Book One: Trade, Missions, Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 288.

57 O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company*, 52.

to be given to the minister for the same'.⁵⁸ By the eighteenth century, the library in Aleppo housed not only books but at least one stone with an engraved Greek inscription.⁵⁹ It might be useful to consider here the way in which intellectual historians increasingly have turned to thinking about the *spaces* of knowledge and knowledge production;⁶⁰ the libraries might be thought of as one of the '*lieux de savoir*' mapped in the ongoing work of Christian Jacob—sites for language learning, composition, and scholarly collaboration.⁶¹ They could provide the backdrop to moments of intellectual exchange across confessional and linguistic boundaries. The letters of Smith, for example, record him sharing European books with various figures he was to meet in the Ottoman capital—Albert Bobowski, the Polish convert to Islam, and, through him, Arabic- and Turkish-speaking scholars.⁶² In this respect, we might think of the role of scholarship within the Levant Company's and the East India Company's settlements abroad as constitutive of the corporations as processes of negotiation; the corporation's 'inclusive sociology' in a 'global field of view' provides a useful model for thinking about how the exchange and circulation of knowledge could be effected in specific overseas contexts.

It is beyond doubt that the companies' decisions to invest in the scholarly resources in their overseas settlements contributed to the realisation of some of the intellectual projects pursued by chaplains and consuls, some of whose activities we have sketched above. In Aleppo, for example, books written in situ, such as the chaplain Henry Maundrell's hugely-successful *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem* (1703), and the factor marine and future consul Alexander Drummond's *Travels through Different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece, and Several Parts of Asia, as far as the Banks of the Euphrates* (1754) bear the traces of their reliance on the materials accumulated in the factory library.⁶³ We should

58 Quoted in O'Connor, *Chaplains of the East India Company*, 52.

59 Alexander Drummond, *Travels through Different Cities of Germany, Italy, Greece, and Several Parts of Asia, as far as the Banks of the Euphrates* (London, 1754), 237.

60 See in particular the comments of David Armitage, 'The International Turn in Intellectual History', in Darrin M. McMahon and Samuel Moyn (eds), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 232–52, esp. 239–42.

61 Christian Jacob (ed.), *Lieux de savoir: Tome 1, Espaces et communautés* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2007); *Lieux de savoir: Tome 2, Les mains de l'intellect* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2011).

62 Some of these links are explored in Pippidi, 'Knowledge of the Ottoman Empire in Late Seventeenth-Century England'.

63 Henry Maundrell, *A Journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem at Easter, A. D. 1697* (Oxford, 1703); Drummond, *Travels*. Examples include Maundrell's reference to Casaubon's notes on Strabo (Maundrell, *A Journey*, 42; citing the library's copy of Isaac Casaubon, *Commentarius et castigationes ad lib. Strabonis geograph. xvii* (Geneva, 1587), 213; TNA SP 105/145, fol. 163); and to the geography of the Flemish author Christian van Adrichem (Maundrell, *A*

be wary, however, of seeing in this any more direct connection between the political and commercial intentions of the companies and the work undertaken abroad by chaplains and other company employees.⁶⁴ The impetus for this kind of work came from elsewhere—even if the opportunities for undertaking it had been provided by the financial support and the infrastructures of the Levant Company.

This would no doubt change in the second half of the eighteenth century, concomitant with the East India Company's transformation from a commercial into a colonial institution. A 1768 proposal to found an Oxford chair in Persian—attributed to the future governor-general of Bengal Warren Hastings—is indicative of an increasingly close-knit relationship between scholarly interests and the more utilitarian concerns of the overseas corporation.⁶⁵ The Oxford Arabic professor Joseph White's collaboration with Hastings's Persian secretary William Davy on the 'Institutes' of the emperor Timur—the Persian text of which was printed on the press established in Calcutta in the 1780s by Daniel Stuart and Joseph Cooper—reflects something of the same intersection between scholarship and the infrastructures of the 'company state'.⁶⁶ William Jones's rise to fame as one of Europe's most eminent Orientalists—from promising young scholar at Oxford in the 1760s; to judge in Calcutta in the 1780s; to pioneer of the study of Sanskrit literature as the

Journey, 23; citing the library's copy of Christian van Adrichem, *Theatrum terrae sanctae et biblicarum historiarum* (Cologne, 1593), 186; SP 105/145, fol. 157). Drummond's letters from Iskenderun to the chaplain John Hemming (BL Add MS 45932) frequently depict him asking the chaplain to supply him with references to books in the factory library.

64 I can see no evidence, for example, to support Nabil Matar's claim that Henry Maundrell 'went on his journey to gather information about the region that might prove useful in England's commercial and political goals'; Nabil I. Matar, 'The Sufi and the Chaplain: 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nablūsī and Henry Maundrell', in *Through the Eyes of the Beholder: The Holy Land, 1517–1713*, ed. Judy A. Hayden and Nabil I. Matar (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 165–184, 166.

65 *Proposal for establishing a Professorship of the Persian Language in the University of Oxford* (Oxford, 1768); P. J. Marshall, 'Warren Hastings as Scholar and Patron', *Statesmen, Scholars and Merchants: Essays presented to Dame Lucy Sutherland*, ed. A. Whiteman, J. S. Bromley, and P. G. M. Dickson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 242–62.

66 Joseph White, *A Specimen of the Civil and Military Institutes of Timour, or Tamerlane* (Oxford, 1780); Joseph White and William Davy, *Institutes Political and Military, written originally in the Mogul [or rather, Jagatai-Turki] Language by the Great Timour, improperly called Tamerlane* (Oxford, 1783); Joseph White and William Davy, *Tuzūkāt-i Tīmūrī, Institutes, Political and Military, of the Emperor Timour* (Calcutta, 1785). On the press, see Abhijit Gupta, 'The History of the Book in the Indian Subcontinent', in *The Book: A Global History*, ed. Michael J. F. Suarez and H. R. Woudhuysen (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 553–72, 560.

motivating force behind the Asiatick Society of Bengal—is exemplary of the same trend. Jones’s indebtedness to the kind of studies undertaken in the seventeenth century by Pococke, Hyde, Smith, and others would reward further investigation; but background to his career—scholarly Orientalism fused with emergent British colonialism—was something new.⁶⁷

Conclusion

We have seen, then, that tracing the ways in which scholarship overlapped with, and found a place to flourish within the early modern trading corporation might shed some light on the corporation’s distinctive global sociology. The role of scholarship within the corporation might be viewed in relation to the corporation’s integrative quality. As English scholars looked to the East in the seventeenth century, the emergent forms of Oriental scholarship (which in their origins had no connection to the motivations and concerns of the trading companies) might nevertheless overlap with the infrastructures—the practical mechanisms for moving people, goods, and information around the globe—brought about by the corporations. Here again, the comparison with Harris’s account of the corporations’ role in the development of the ‘big sciences’ is worth stressing. As for Harris, ‘situating knowledge and its means of acquisition in the context of corporations allows knowledge production to be viewed both as “local” and as “distributed” without privileging the former over the latter’, so the corporation might provide us with a way of linking Smith’s interactions with Turkey merchants in the 1690s to his encounters with Islamic scholars in Ottoman Istanbul some thirty years earlier.

Yet two further aspects of the corporation in a global context might be illuminated by considering the role of scholarship within it. The subordinate quality of the corporation to the state might provide us with a way of thinking about how patrons of learning in positions of authority could exploit the corporation for scholarly ends. The corporation as a process of negotiation might prove useful for a better understanding of the mechanics of intellectual exchange. One of the various ways in which the trading corporations might

67 Among the extensive body of work on Jones and early oriental scholarship in colonial India, see Rosane Rocher, ‘British Orientalism in the Eighteenth Century: the Dialectics of Knowledge and Government’, in *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia*, ed. Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1993), 215–49.

'provide means for historians to view cross-cultural interactions' could certainly be glimpsed by looking more closely at the place of scholarship within them—both in seventeenth-century England, and beyond.⁶⁸

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