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JOHN DEE'S 'BRYTISH IMPIRE': 'A LABORIOUS TREATISE' ON OPHIR OF 1577

Graham Yewbrey

In the scholarly studies of John Dee which consider the scheme for a British Empire that he put forward between 1576 and 1583, the question of why he attached importance to Ophir, the biblical source of Solomon's wealth, has received comparatively little attention.¹ This has created inaccuracy in the definition of the proposed empire's geographical extent and understatement of Dee's objectives. My intention here is examine Ophir's value for him; and to outline a reappraisal of his plans and what they meant to him. That Dee eventually failed in his endeavours is clear; yet the significance for him of this failure, which had many facets, has been underestimated. He had reached fifty years of age in July 1577 and the imperialist project was the culmination of his life's work up to that point. Its demise was, in itself, likely to have been extremely difficult for him; and when this is viewed in conjunction with other setbacks in the years before his departure for Eastern Europe in 1583, the overall effect emerges as possibly severe, not least with regard to his private feelings. His commitment to the project was deep and long-standing. He had been accumulating a vast body of knowledge since the 1540s, following, in part, a pre-conceived programme. This resulted in his self-declared status in 1577 as a 'Christian Aristotle'.² By then, his imperialist design had developed substantially, indicating significant preparation through selection and pursuit of appropriate areas of study. Additionally, his design drew on a providential scheme of history, constructed from his research in astrology and angelology, which anticipated circumstances favourable to the realisation of his imperialist objectives in the late 1570s and early 1580s. Dee believed his personal destiny at this time to be bound up with that of Britain, and that both were in accord with cosmic forces. The project's failure contributed to a profound shift in the direction of his life. The other concurrent powerful influence on him was his growing absorption in angelic conferences, particularly after the involvement of Edward Kelley, which came to supersede Dee's failing imperialist ambitions. As the fortunes of one overriding preoccupation declined, so it seems those of another advanced.

Dee's imperialist project has so far eluded full definition. Insights arising from investigations into his life and studies, however invaluable, do not always tell the full story. Fundamental questions about the practical application he intended for his

1. The most extensive treatment is in I. R. F. Calder, 'John Dee Studied as an English Neoplatonist', Ph.D. dissertation, 2 vols, Warburg Institute 1952, I, p. 721 and II, pp. 419–22.

2. This quotation is from sig. e.*j^v of 'A Necessary Advertisement', dated 4 July 1577: for bibliographical

details see n. 16 below. For the description of Dee's treatise as 'laborious', quoted in the title to this essay, see below at n. 71. For the term 'Brytish Impire' see below at n. 145. Quotations and titles in this essay retain the original spellings and orthography, to preserve the character of the text.

learning have not always been asked. How did he intend to convert ideas into action? And why? Similarly, the circumstances with which he was confronted require fuller appreciation. While this initial study puts forward a revised interpretation of Dee's imperialism and a re-evaluation of what he saw as its purpose, it leads also to an investigation of the means by which he sought its implementation.

In numerous studies on Dee over the past sixty years or so,³ no single unifying theme to his work has emerged: instead, as opinions about him have developed, so have divergences, particularly concerning his interest in occult subjects. How can his esoteric pursuits be reconciled, if at all, with the broad range of his more mundane preoccupations? Ian Calder's Warburg Institute Ph.D. thesis of 1952, presenting him as an English Neoplatonist, set the scene for much of the subsequent debate.⁴ Then Nicholas Clulee set about redirecting perception of Dee by studying him through his own writings and actions, occultism included, rather than as an embodiment of established intellectual traditions.⁵ Deborah Harkness further expanded the perspective on Dee's thought and outlook through her study of Dee's angelology. In her view, his overriding ambition was to unify the many branches of natural philosophy (optics, alchemy, astrology, cabala, mathematics, geometry and astronomy) in order to prepare the world for the Day of Judgement.⁶ More recently, Glyn Parry has emphasised the occult and magical elements of Dee's outlook, presenting him as deeply immersed in Tudor society and placing the whole scheme in the setting of contemporary politics and diplomacy. As Parry argues, Dee propounded an apocalyptic view of history, within which Elizabeth was 'the Reforming Empress of the Last Days'. A hidden purpose of Dee's imperialist writings, Parry believes, was to reclaim a lost empire in mainland Europe; potentially, this would have led to confrontation with Spain. Parry underlines, too, the vulnerability of Dee's position, due to his dependency on courtly patronage. He purports to show that in the second half of the 1570s, Dee became associated with the Earl of Leicester's aggressive policies towards the Low Countries, which included advocating military intervention. Dee's imperialist scheme was, however, subordinate to the changing demands of patrons and to shifting political circumstances, all of which contributed to his eventual failure.⁷

3. See the introduction by S. Clucas to *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies in English Renaissance Thought*, ed. idem, Dordrecht 2006, pp. 1–22, for a historiographical survey up to that date.

4. Calder (as in n. 1). This was the basis for P. J. French, *John Dee: The World of an Elizabethan Magus*, London 1972, pp. 1, 183–85, 189, 195, where Dee is portrayed as a Hermetic philosopher, 'England's great magus'. French's opinion was flatly contradicted by W. H. Sherman, *John Dee: The Politics of Reading and Writing in the English Renaissance*, Amherst 1995, pp. xi–xiv, 12–19, who characterised Dee as an 'intelligencer', 'perhaps the first English think tank'.

5. N. H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion*, London and New York 1988, pp. 2–3, challenged the view that 'a scientifically orientated form of Neoplatonism' sufficed to unify Dee's diverse endeavours.

6. D. E. Harkness, *John Dee's Conversations with Angels: Cabala, Alchemy and the End of Nature*, Cambridge 1999, pp. 4, 62, 78.

7. G. Parry, 'John Dee and the Elizabethan British Empire in its European Context', *The Historical Journal*, XLIX, 2006, pp. 643–75 (665 for the quotation about Elizabeth); idem, *The Arch-Conjuror of England: John Dee*, New Haven, CT and London 2011, pp. x–xi, 103, III.

Besides highlighting the fundamental disagreements about Dee, this brief summary of opinions is also indicative of the lack of basis for agreement, especially with regard to his imperialism. One reason for this is that important documentation has only recently come to light. Dee's *General and Rare Memorials*, written in 1576–77, was for a long time the primary source of material on his imperialism.⁸ The basic features appeared well established: a historical basis in Arthurian conquest; advocacy of naval strength; and a more or less defined geographical spread, embracing all of North America and the territories lying between North America and Scandinavia. These themes are familiar to students of Dee, yet in themselves they contain uncertainties which have contributed to differences of opinion, particularly over the nature and extent of any godly or occult dimension to the enterprise.⁹

The discovery of a second major statement of Dee's imperialist design, entitled *Brytanici Imperii Limites* or *The Limits of the British Empire* (hereafter referred to as *Limits*), has necessitated re-evaluation of his programme. It comprises four papers, ordered sequentially by date of composition, and thought to be lost until a copy made in 1593 was rediscovered in 1976. This was acquired by the British Library, then published in 2004.¹⁰ Unlike *General and Rare Memorials*, the documents which make up the *Limits* were written at the behest of others, including Elizabeth. The earliest was probably written in the winter months of 1576–77 following Martin Frobisher's return from his initial voyage to seek the North-West Passage;¹¹ the final one is dated 22 July 1578. Geographical matters predominate in the first two papers, whereas England's territorial claims take precedence in the others.

In the light of the *Limits*, scholars have begun to reassess Dee's imperialism. To date, the most substantial analysis is by Ken MacMillan. He extends the outer boundaries of Elizabeth's empire as conceived by Dee, to include the British Isles in their entirety, half of North America, the North Atlantic ocean, much of Scandinavia and, to the south, the Iberian peninsula. Importantly, MacMillan brings to the fore the necessity for Dee of a sound legal basis for his scheme and lays emphasis on his attitude to Pope Alexander VI's 1493 bull, *Inter caetera*, which

8. For the *General and Rare Memorials* see below, pp. 251–52.

9. Dee's imperialism was considered at length by Calder (as in n. 1), 1, pp. 713–36. Calder proposed that Dee's 'somewhat mystical ideas of England's imperial destiny' connected to 'a divine and particular reservation of territory in the New World' (p. 713). Clulee (as in n. 5), pp. 180–89, suggested that the empire envisioned by Dee encompassed Elizabeth's 'legitimate claim to all of North America and to all territories ... extending from England north between North America and Norway' (p. 182), noting also Dee's urging that 'England should assume leadership of European affairs' (p. 185). Sherman (as in n. 4), p. 149, agreed, but scorned interpretations which 'inflated' Dee's imperialism 'into a full-blown political, religious, and even mystical mission'. Contrastingly, F. A. Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*,

London 1979, pp. 99–100, considered Elizabeth 'the representative of a purified and reformed religion to be expressed ... through a reformed empire', within which a 'pure British church' was to be defended against 'Hispano-Papal attempts at universal domination'. She held that Dee 'identified completely' with this 'British imperial myth', believing Arthur to be 'the chief religious and mystical exemplar of sacred British imperial Christianity'.

10. John Dee, *The Limits of the British Empire*, ed. K. MacMillan with J. Abeles, Westport, CT 2004. My quotations are taken from this edition, which substitutes Dee's original Latin text with English translations by E. Leedham-Green (see *ibid.*, pp. 32–33). The 1593 manuscript is London, British Library Additional MS 59681.

11. For Frobisher's voyages see below at n. 151.

enabled Spain and Portugal to claim exclusive rights to all parts of the world which remained undiscovered before 1493.¹² Most recently Parry, based on his own analysis of the *Limits*, the *General and Rare Memorials*, together with all Dee's other imperialist writings, emphasises the magical and religious aspects of Dee's imperial perspective.¹³ He argues that despite Dee's apparent preoccupation with North America, his deeper interest lay in recovering Britain's empire in mainland Europe; but he also draws on Dee's use of his sources, notably Giovanni Battista Ramusio's collection *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, which enabled him to include the Caribbean and Mexico within the area he claimed for Elizabeth.¹⁴

It must be acknowledged that, among these various approaches and views, there are some which are clearly incompatible. A fundamental division over the existence or otherwise of an apocalypticism behind Dee's scheme is compounded by diverging ideas of what that concept might involve. My aim in the present article is to throw light on one area of Dee's imperialism, together with his promotion of it, on the basis his own words and deeds, and to assess the effects of contemporary events on his project. Dee had a greater interest in the Pacific than has hitherto been appreciated, as I hope this article will establish. As I shall argue in detail, Ophir and its wealth have special importance to the *General and Rare Memorials*, seemingly the only work to include them. I also examine some of Dee's comments in the *Limits*, concerning territories in and surrounding the Pacific Ocean. Notably, the second *Limits* document includes a reference to the North Pacific as part of Elizabeth's 'imperial seas'.¹⁵ Finally, in drawing conclusions from this material, I touch on three topics which have particular relevance to my interpretation as a whole: Martin Frobisher's voyages to North-East Canada in 1567, 1577 and 1578, together with the resultant gold-mining venture; Dee's promotion of the North-East Passage to Cathay, present-day Northern China; and the failure of his imperialist project after 1578. A sub-theme which runs throughout the article is my awareness that Dee knew that he faced significant difficulties. When he wrote and initiated courses of action, he very probably recognised that his ability to direct events to achieve his objectives was minimal. In seeking to persuade his readers of the desirability of his goals, he designed his texts to inspire as well as explain. My interpretation will reflect this, particularly in the investigation of his motives, the expression of which evolved over the years of composition.

12. MacMillan, in *The Limits* (as in n. 10), pp. 8, 3–4 respectively; idem, *Sovereignty and Possession in the English New World: The Legal Foundations of Empire, 1576–1640*, New York 2006, pp. 66–74. The *Limits* are also discussed by Sherman (as in n. 4), pp. 182–92; and mentioned by B. Woolley, *The Queen's Conjuror: The Science and Magic of Dr Dee*, London 2001, pp. 133, 136, 137.

13. Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror* (as in n. 7), pp. 94–96, treats all Dee's imperialist writings 'as one collective text', but considers that the *Limits* reveals his 'magical imperial perspective', which placed the Arthurian empire 'within a magical, cosmic religious framework'.

14. Ibid., pp. 104, 106. The Caribbean and Mexican territories are not mentioned elsewhere in Dee's extant works. Dee's copy of the 1563–65 edition of Ramusio's *Navigazioni et viaggi di diversi*, which I have not seen, is in Dublin, Trinity College Library, ref. DD.dd.40,41; see J. Roberts, 'Additions and Corrections to "John Dee's Library Catalogue"', in *John Dee: Interdisciplinary Studies* (as in n. 3), pp. 334, 336. References in this article cite Giovanni Battista Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi*, 6 vols, ed. M. Milanesi, Turin 1978–88.

15. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), p. 41 (tr. Leedham-Green).

Ophir and the *General and Rare Memorials*

Firstly, some explanatory words are required on the substantial, yet ultimately uncompleted, work in which Ophir is discussed. The *General and Rare Memorials* was planned as a tetralogy. Its constituent volumes seem to have been composed sequentially, beginning with *The Brytish Monarchie*, which was drafted in the first six days of August 1576, and ending with *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, which Dee started writing before 24 March 1577 and finished on or after 8 June 1577. The first volume, the only one to be published, went to the printer on 19 August 1577, along with an introductory apologetic address entitled 'A Necessary Aduertisement', a short statement entitled 'A Brief Note Scholastical', and a dedicatory poem addressed to Christopher Hatton, whose arms occupy the final page. The 'Aduertisement' is dated 4 July 1577, as well as *anno mundi* 5540 and the fifth year from the New Star which had appeared in Cassiopeia in early November 1572. A limited edition of 100 copies was printed by John Day in September, the low figure perhaps reflecting restrictions due to publication costs, which Dee himself seems to have met; it may also indicate the select nature of the intended readership. The title-page refers to the work in its entirety, described as 'General and rare memorials pertayning to the perfect arte of nauigation: annexed to the paradoxal cumpas, in playne: now first published: 24. yeres, after the first inuention thereof'. Dee, who claimed the invention of the compass as his own, evidently felt an urgent need for written self-defence against rival claims by an unnamed mariner.¹⁶ One of his purposes was to argue for the creation of a fleet on permanent patrol, a 'Pety Navy Royall', to provide domestic maritime security. Some vessels would be employed 'toward New Forreyn Discoveries making: for Gods glory, the Wealth-Publik and the Honorable Renown of this Ilandish Impire'.¹⁷

All this was prefatory to the matters discussed in the second volume, *The Brytish Complement of the Perfect Art of Navigation*, which is now lost. Completed between September and December 1576, its subject was 'our Queene Elisabeth her tables gubernautick for longitudes and latitudes finding most easily and speedily, yea, if need be, without sight of sun, moon, or star'.¹⁸ What was to have been the

16. John Dee, *General and Rare Memorials pertayning to the Perfect Arte of Nauigation*, London 1577; there is a facsimile edition (imprint Amsterdam and New York 1968). This publication will be referred to hereafter as '*The Brytish Monarchie*', since, as explained above, it consists only of the first of the four volumes which are collectively entitled *General and Rare Memorials*, together with the 'Aduertisement' and 'Brief Note Scholastical' (unfoliated). Dee calls the tetralogy his 'memorials' in the 'Aduertisement', sig. e.iii^v. He refers to his having started composing *The Brytish Monarchie* on 'An. 1576 Augusti. 1' in a marginal note against the book's first paragraph; and to its completion in six days in a marginal note at p. 65. An original manuscript of *The Brytish Monarchie*, in Dee's hand, is in a collection of papers now in Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1789, fols 59^r–115^r (art. IV). This manuscript

is undated but does not contain a section on 'Trinker-men' which appears in *The Brytish Monarchie* (pp. 43–50) and is obviously a later insertion; see Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror* (as in n. 7), pp. 123–24. For the date of sending the work to the printer see *The Diaries of John Dee*, ed. E. Fenton, Charlbury 2000, p. 2. the date of printing is found on p. 80 of the 1577 edition. On the matter of the expense of printing, the 'Brief Note Scholastical' says that 'the vnkown Freend' (one of the third-person identities assumed by Dee in the 'Aduertisement') had 'at his own charges' put 'the foresayd two Treatises, in Print'. The compass is mentioned in the 'Aduertisement', sig. e.iii^{r-v}, in the opening two paragraphs of *The Brytish Monarchie* and at p. 10. For the composition dates of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* see below, n. 20.

17. *The Brytish Monarchie* (as in n. 16), p. 28.

third volume was deliberately destroyed by Dee, its contents to remain unknown, as he expressly states in the 'Aduertisement', publicly confirming its eradication.

Nonetheless, he refers to the final section, *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, as the 'fourth Volume'.¹⁹ Dee's original draft of this survives in part but is both unfinished and badly damaged. Now in the British Library, MS Cotton Vitellius C. VII, it lacks the first five chapters and most of the others are unnumbered.²⁰ The contents of the lost chapters can, however, be partially reconstructed from the work of Samuel Purchas, who used them their account of Solomon's voyages to Ophir in his *Hakluytus posthumus ... A History of the World in Sea Voyages, & Lande-trauells ...*, popularly known as his *Pilgrimes*.²¹ Purchas was a graduate, like Dee, of St John's College, Cambridge; he was also a biblical scholar.²² He obtained Dee's text as one of the manuscripts he acquired from Richard Hakluyt in the mid-1610s and, unlike Hakluyt, he amalgamated his source material into compositions of his own which reflected his Anglicanism.²³

While our understanding of the structure and argument in *General and Rare Memorials* relies primarily on its extant texts, they do not readily divulge Dee's overall intentions. This implies caution on his part about making public his full plan and suggests a strategy of revealing it gradually, at times when he judged he could interest potential sponsors.²⁴ In any case, if the subsequent volumes had been published, then their content—and by extension the scheme as a whole—might well have evolved during the preparations for printing; this happened to *The Brytish Monarchie*, which contains a section on 'Trinker-men' that is not found in an earlier manuscript.²⁵ Increased textual length certainly introduced incremental difficulties, with ambition outstripping resources. In the 'Aduertisement' Dee lamented as prohibitive the £100 printing costs for the second volume, which he described as massive.²⁶ The same would have been true of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*: at about

18. 'Aduertisement' (as in n. 16), sig. e.iiii^r-v. A later document, Dee's 'Compendious Rehearsall' of 1592, adds that the tables were also to be used 'for Navigation by the Paradoxall Compassee'; see *Autobiographical Tracts of Dr John Dee*, ed. J. Crossley, Manchester 1851, pp. 1–45 (25).

19. 'Aduertisement' (as in n. 16), sig. e.iii^jv. See also next note.

20. London, British Library MS Cotton Vitellius C. VII, art. 3, referred to hereafter as *Famous and Rich Discoveries*. In quotations from this manuscript, areas of damage are indicated between angle brackets, thus: {...}, with interpolated characters wherever possible. The earliest date mentioned in the text is 24 Mar. 1577 (fol. 42^r) while the latest is 8 June 1577 (fol. 264^v); therefore, this volume was very probably concluded before the 'Aduertisement'; see also Sherman (as in n. 4), p. 176. It can be surmised from these dates that the abandoned third volume of *General and Rare Memorials* was written in Jan.–Feb. 1577.

21. Unless otherwise stated, my citations in this article are taken from the fourth edition, *Purchas his pilgrimes: in five books ...*, 4 vols, London 1625–26; a

digital version is available through the online books facility of the University of Pennsylvania, <http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu>; in this edition book 1, chapter 1, sections 7–11, pp. 21–44, concentrate on Ophir. Earlier editions of *Purchas his pilgrimes* had appeared in 1613, 1614 and 1617.

22. See D. Armitage, entry on Samuel Purchas in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford 2004. Purchas graduated as Bachelor of Divinity from Oxford in 1615, six years after Dee's death. He became chaplain to George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, who may have known Dee in the 1590s; see *John Dee's Library Catalogue*, ed. J. Roberts and A. G. Watson, London 1990, p. 57; and *The Diaries of John Dee* (as in n. 16), p. 265.

23. On Hakluyt and Purchas see P. C. Mancall, *Hakluyt's Promise: An Elizabethan's Obsession with an English America*, New Haven, CT and London 2007, pp. 233, 273.

24. See, e.g., the quotation below at n. 43, where he alludes enticingly to the 'Secret Center' of the intended fourth volume.

25. See above, n. 16.

six times the length of *The Brytish Monarchie*, publication would have been hugely expensive.

As for Ophir, what was known about it? The answer originates in the Bible. Thought to be an island or peninsula somewhere beyond the Red Sea, Ophir provided much of the wealth of Solomon, who according to II Chronicles 9.22 was 'greater then all the kynges vpon earth, in riches and wisdome'.²⁷ The Israelite fleet, which included that of Hiram, the Phoenician ruler, reputedly made three-year voyages there from its Red Sea port of Ezion Geber. Ophir's treasure is mentioned in several books of the Bible and became legendary: gold, silver, precious stones, plus apes, ivory, peacocks, as well as almug trees, which were made into columns and terraces for the Temple and harps and psalteries for singers.²⁸ It was reputed to have been named after its first occupier in the repopulation of the earth following the Flood. Genesis 10.29 and I Chronicles 1.23 refer to a man named Ophir who, with his brother Havila, was a son of Joktan, descended through Shem from Noah. According to Purchas, it was Ophir 'Who (it is likely) gaue name to this Golden Region.'²⁹ Genesis 10.30 adds that 'their dwellynge was from Mesa [or: 'Mesha'], tyll thou come vnto Sephar a mountayne of ye east'.

In seeking to locate Ophir, Dee's wider researches incorporated extra-biblical material, presumably because Genesis provided only meagre information. One such source, noted by Purchas, was Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities*, which states that Joktan's sons, who came to inhabit the region, came there from a part of Asia adjoining 'Cophen, an Indian river'; and that Solomon commanded his fleet, with Hiram's pilots as navigators, to go 'to the land that was of old called Ophir, but now the Aurea Chersonesus, which belongs to India, to fetch him gold'.³⁰ Dee cited Josephus, as well as the *Geographia* of Dominico Mario Niger (Basel 1557), when determining the descent of the 'Tartarians' and the Scythians, who inhabited Northern Europe and Asia, from Magog, son of Japhet, son of Noah.³¹ The location of the 'Aurea Chersonesus' or 'golden peninsula' had long been the subject of speculation.³² A depiction of Ptolemy's world map dated to the third quarter of the fifteenth century identifies it with the Malay peninsula.³³ Consistent with this among Purchas's various sources, Franciscus Junius, Immanuel Tremellius and

26. 'Aduertisement' (as in n. 16), sig. e.*ij^v; at sig. e.iiij^r, Dee estimated that in terms of bulk, the printed second volume would be 'greater than the English Bible'. He may well have been referring to the Great Bible, the large size of which would have been very familiar to his readers, as a copy was securely chained in all churches following its licensing in 1538. On the Great Bible see B. Bobrick, *The Making of the English Bible*, London 2003; for Miles Coverdale see pp. 148–50, for the chaining p. 150, and for the licensing p. 310.

27. Cited from the Coverdale Bible of 1535.

28. For biblical references to Ophir and its treasure see I Kings 9.26–28, 10.11–12, 22.48; II Chronicles 8.18, 9.10–11; Job 22.24, 28.16; Psalms 45.9; Isaiah 13.12.

29. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), 1, p. 28.

30. Flavius Josephus, *The Works*, tr. W. Whiston, Peabody, MA 1987, pp. 36, 37, 224. The river Cophen, or Kabul, has its source in modern-day eastern Afghanistan and discharges into the Indus in western Punjab.

31. Dee cites Josephus, and Niger's *Geographia*, pp. 559 and 562, in *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fol. 121^r. His personal copy of Niger's *Geographiae libri XI* is London, Royal College of Physicians Library, D19/3.

32. C. Jack-Hinton, *The Search for the Islands of Solomon 1567–1838*, Oxford 1969, pp. 1–15. The area was sometimes also referred to as 'Khryse Khersonesos'.

33. London, British Library MS Harley 7182, fols 58^v–59^r; a digital image is available on the British Library website.

Dominico Niger all put the Aurea Chersonesus in Malacca. We can presume, therefore, that Dee too believed Ophir and the Aurea Chersonesus to refer to the same location, accepting the replacement of the biblical name.

Purchas made a further observation:

I like Master *Dees* similitude, which sets the feete of his *Ophirian* compasse, one in *Zeilan*, the other in *Samatra*, the head I place in *Pegu*. This head is *caput caenæ*, the true Ophir, the other parts of the compasse, the parts compassed and traded in, in this *Ophirian Voyage*.³⁴

On this account, Dee placed Ophir between Zeilan, the Dutch name for Sri Lanka at that time,³⁵ and Sumatra. Purchas interpreted that location as a triangle with ‘the true Ophir’ at the top, in Pegu. He deduced that Ophir was in India, but also cited the eminent cartographer Abraham Ortelius, who thought its location was Sofala in Mozambique, and others, including the controversial polymath Guillaume Postel, who argued for Peru, a view Purchas refuted:

... and where should Peru yield him Iuory, where neuer was seene an Elephant? Doctor *Dee* that famous Mathematician hath written a very large Discourse of that Argument which I haue seen with Mr *Hakluyt*, much illustrating what the Ancients haue written of those Seas and Coasts, and concludeth that Hauila is the Kingdome of Aua (subiect of Pegu) and Ophir is Chrysee or *Aurea* before mentioned, possessed by *Ophir*, mentioned *Genes.* 10. that golden name eating vp the former of *Ophir*.³⁶

Dee, then, identified Ophir as the territory of the son of Joktan mentioned in Genesis 10.29; and he distinguished it from the territory held by Ophir’s brother Havila, which had come to be identified with the kingdom of Ava. Given what Dee evidently presumed to be the close proximity of the territories of Ophir and Havila, it is possible he thought the brothers founded them at about the same time during the post-diluvian repopulation of the earth. Importantly, although Purchas inclined strongly to Pegu as the true location of Ophir, this was his own deduction. Dee himself, as reported by Purchas, provided no definitive statement as to its whereabouts.

Dee may, however, have identified an alternative source of gold in the Pacific. In the *Limits*, he referred to an island called ‘Chryse’, ‘now commonly called Japan, (but, incredibly, spoken of by the great M: Paulus Venetus as Zipangu)’. This statement is found in the second *Limits* document, written probably between June and November 1577, just after he had concluded *Famous and Rich Discoveries*.³⁷ Marco Polo’s *Travels*, as related by Ramusio in the third volume of his *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, say that the inhabitants of Zipangu

34. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), 1, p. 34.

35. See Abraham Ortelius’s world map, in his *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, Antwerp 1570; facs. edn, intr. R. A. Skelton, Amsterdam 1964; for another reproduction see *Abraham Ortelius and the First Atlas: Essays Commemorating the Quadricentennial of his Death 1598–1998*, ed. M. van den Broecke et al., Utrecht 1998, p. 180.

36. I have been unable to trace this quotation in the fourth edition of Purchas’s work. It is quoted here from the third edition, *Purchas his pilgrimes*, London 1617, book vii, ch. 7, p. 859; see M. Mabora, *Diviners and Prophets Among the Xhosa (1539–1856): A Study in Xhosa Cultural History*, Brunsvick, NJ 2004, p. 148.

37. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), pp. 39–41 (41, tr. Leedham-Green). For the date of this document see *ibid.*, p. 5.

have gold in the greatest abundance, because it is found there beyond measure; but as the king does not allow it to be exported, few merchants go there and on rare occasions ships from other parts.³⁸

Although Japan cannot be Dee's Ophir given that, as we have seen, Purchas indicates that he left the question of its location open, nonetheless such an identification was entirely plausible—Columbus for one had made it.³⁹ For his part, Purchas held that there were 'diuers Chersonesi' and more than one 'Chryse',⁴⁰ with which Dee may well have agreed.

A question which needs to be asked is, why, if Ophir was mentioned by Dee only in this one, unpublished volume of his planned tetralogy, it should be thought important to him, especially given its ancient and uncertain historical and geographical placement. His comments about *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, comprising crafted public statements and private notes, provide some elucidation. I shall start with the formal remarks, which include two summaries of its contents, in lists of his unpublished manuscript works. The first is in his 'Compendious Rehearsall' of 1592:

*The great Volume of famous and rich discoveries; wherein also is the History of King Salomon, every three years, his Ophirian voyage, with divers other rarities – written A.1576.*⁴¹

The second occurs in a letter to Archbishop Whitgift of 1595:

The first great volume of Famous and rich Discoveries: wherein (also) is the History of King Salomon, every three yeeres, his Ophirian voyage. The Originals of Presbyter Joannes: and of the first great Cham, and his successors for many yeeres following: The description of divers wonderfull Iles, in the Northen, Scythian, Tartarian, and the other most Northen Seas, and neere under the North Pole: by Record, written above 1200 yeeres since: with divers other rarities – Anno 1576.⁴²

These descriptions echo the words of the 1577 'Aduertisement', where Dee used the persona of 'the Vnknown Freend', writing of himself as 'the Philosopher' in the third person, a convention sometimes adopted by contemporary authors of contentious works:

But, the fourth Volume, I may Iudge it, to be as an Earthly Paradise: A Booke, of as great godly pleasure, as worldly profit and delight: A Booke, for the BRYTISH HONOR and WEALTH (And that, in diuers maner) such an one, as neuer, King *Ptolomaeus*, or Prince *Abilfada Ismaël*, or any Geographical or Hydrographical Discoverer did write, or Collect:

38. Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi* (as in n. 14), III, *I Viaggi di Marco Polo*, chapter 2, p. 252: 'Hanno oro in grandissima abbondanza, perché ivi si truova fuor di modo e il re non lo lascia portar fuori; però pochi mercanti vi vannon, e rare volte le navi d'altre regioni.' It is highly likely that Dee used Ramusio's version of the *Travels*; for his copy of Ramusio see above, n. 14. There is no mention of any other account of Marco Polo's voyage either in *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22) or in Roberts, 'Additions and Corrections' (as in n. 14).

39. See, e.g., H. Thomas, *Rivers of Gold: The Rise of the Spanish Empire*, London 2010, p. 234.

40. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), I, p. 34.

41. 'Compendious Rehearsall' (as in n. 18), pp. 24–25.

42. Dee, 'A Letter Containing a most briefe Discourse Apologeticall to Whitgift', in *Autobiographical Tracts* (as in n. 18), pp. 69–83 (74). Dee refers nowhere else to this being the 'first great volume'. See also Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror* (as in n. 7), p. 244.

as I (for my simple Capacity) do verily Iudge of it. The Title wherof, is, OF FAMOVS and RICH DISCOVERIES: The Discourse therof, not only conteineth the Generall Suruey Hydrographicall, of all the whole world, (and chiefly the rare Euidences for all partes therof, most Septentrionall) but also, a particular and ample examination, of King Solomon his Ophirian three yeres voyage: And also, the lawfull and very honourable Entitling of our most gracious and Soueraigne Lady, QVEENE ELIZABETH, (and so, this BRYTISH SCEPTRE ROYALL) to very large Forreine Dominions: such, as in, and by the same, duly recouered and vsed, the Course of the Diuine prouidence generall, in this present Age, will bring to light and life, matter of great Importance and Consequency, both to the Glory of God, and the benefit of all Christendom, and Heathenes. The greatnes of this Volume, is not much les, than of the Second. And one way, it far passeth the Second: For, in the Secret Center therof, is more bestowed, and stored vp, than I may, or (in this place) will expres.⁴³

He concluded:

The same Volume, was, chiefly, of the Ientleman his own very speedy collecting: And (by his wil, and order) hath this Inscription, or Dedication, TO THE MOST WORTHY: And the same Inscription, to be written, or printed in letters of Gold.⁴⁴

So, while the significance of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* for the *General and Rare Memorials* as a whole was, according to Dee, slightly less than that of *The Brytish Complement*, its unrevealed content or ‘Secret Center’ was far more valuable than anything else in the work. Moreover, it was a book on geographical and hydrographical discovery which surpassed all others, which included an important section on Ophir, and which was intended to conclude with an exposition of Elizabeth’s imperial titles. By the time of Dee’s descriptions of the work written in the 1590s, however, the ‘Secret Center’ is no longer mentioned: Ophir has become the only, or first main topic. The prominence of Ophir within *Famous and Rich Discoveries* in the lists of his unpublished works affirms its persistent importance within his imperialist scheme as a whole.⁴⁵

Dee’s private comments are different in character. They occur in his angelic conversations and reveal a feature of the philosophical underpinning for his imperialist design. Following a spiritual ‘action’ at Mortlake on 22 December 1581, when contact was first made with the angel Annael, he wrote:

...it is not to be forgotten, that as he sayd his name was Annael (with a dubble n) so he also confessed himself to be the same Annaël which is *prepositus orbis veneris*: and also Chief governor Generall of this great period, as I haue Noted in my boke of *Famous and rich Discoveries*.⁴⁶

43. ‘Aduertisement’ (as in n. 16), sigs e.iiij^v–e.*j^f.

44. *Ibid.*, sig. e.*j^f.

45. I return to this matter at the conclusion of the present article.

46. *The Diaries of John Dee* (as in n. 16), p. 23. Dee termed such angelic encounters ‘actions’. His manuscript account of this one, in London, British Library MS Sloane 3188, is transcribed in C. Whitby, ‘John

Dee’s Actions with Spirits: 22 December 1581 to 23 May 1583’, Ph.D. dissertation, 2 vols, University of Birmingham 1981, II, pp. 199–201 (thesis available through the British Library’s EThOS programme). See also *John Dee’s Five Books of Mystery: Original Sourcebook of Enochian Magic*, ed. J. H. Peterson, York Beach, ME 2003, pp. 56, 65.

At the beginning of his record of this event, Dee had called Annael the ‘Angel or Intelligence now presiding over the whole world’ (‘Angelus, siue Intelligentia, nunc toti Mundo preadominans’).⁴⁷

Then, in a later document, he addressed another angel, King Bynepor:

Thow begynnest new worlds, new people, new kings, and new knowledge of a new government.⁴⁸

Dee was here adapting a statement made by Bynepor in an ‘action’ of 20 November 1582:

What I speak hath not byn reuealed...in these last tymes, of the second last world. But I begynne new worldes, new peoples, new kings <& new> knowledge of a new Gouernment.⁴⁹

In the margin next to his revised wording, Dee remarked:

New Worlds: perhaps a new period doth begynn, as I haue set down in the Volume of famous and rich discoveries. ♂ [Venus] after ♀ [Jupiter] great period.⁵⁰

That is, he wondered whether the commencement of the ‘new period’ on which, evidently, he had expressed his views in 1577, was ‘perhaps’ the same as Bynepor’s new beginning. His notes about these two experiences suggest that Dee perceived the angelic utterances as retrospective validation for his claim in *Famous and Rich Discoveries* that the ‘great period’ of Jupiter would imminently replace that of Venus, of which Annael was the self-confessed angelic governor. We should not infer from this that his conclusion in 1577 had been reached through direct angelic contact; rather, it was the result of scholarly research into occult learning.⁵¹

In the ‘Aduertisement’, Dee referred to the three preceding decades as his ‘Tyrocinie’, a studentship or apprenticeship. The clear implication is that his long ‘Course of Philosophicall Enquiries’ prior to that point had been a preparation for the work he was now announcing.⁵² This is an intriguing statement given that it was made less than two weeks before his fiftieth birthday.⁵³ Some of his earlier comments on the course of a human life help to shed light on it. In the dedicatory

47. *The Diaries of John Dee* (as in n. 16), p. 23.

48. London, British Library Additional MS 36674, fol. 176^v.

49. For Dee’s record of this angelic ‘action’ see Whitby (as in n. 46), II, pp. 199–201 (200); Whitby uses angle brackets to denote phrases taken from Elias Ashmole’s transcript (London, British Library MS Sloane 3677) of Dee’s original manuscript, when Whitby himself found Dee’s handwriting difficult to read (on his annotational system see *ibid.*, II, p. v). See also Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror* (as in n. 7), p. 112.

50. London, British Library Additional MS 36674, fol. 176^v.

51. Dee’s angelic ‘actions’ all appear to have occurred after *Famous and Rich Discoveries* was written. The earliest ‘action’ for which there is an extant record is that of 22 Dec. 1581. Clulee (as in n. 5), p. 141,

argues convincingly that Dee was actively interested in scrying and the conjuration of angels from the 1560s. There is, however, no record of any successful attempt at communication he may have made in this earlier period. His reading on the subject was probably the source of his opinions prior to his acquiring the services of scryers by 1581. There has been considerable recent scholarship on Dee’s angelic ‘actions’, a valuable example of which is S. Clucas, ‘False Illuding Spirits & Cownterfeiting Deuills: John Dee’s Angelic Conversations and Religious Anxiety’, in *Conversations with Angels: Essays Towards a History of Spiritual Communication, 100–1700*, ed. J. Raymond, London 2011, pp. 150–74 (168–69 n. 1).

52. ‘Aduertisement’ (as in n. 16), sig. ε*^r.

53. See above, p. 251: the ‘Aduertisement’ is dated 4 July 1577.

preface to his *Monas Hieroglyphica*, dated January 1564, Dee adapted a standard Pythagorean figure, the letter Y, which illustrates the age at which an individual chooses between a life of virtue or one of vice.⁵⁴ The Y's stem and arms are divided into seven segments, each representing seven years, thus it represents the years from birth to age forty-nine. The left arm leads to the bottomless pit (*abyssus*), while the right leads towards wisdom. Dee speaks of a 'probably singular' philosopher who has become an adept (*adeptuus*) by following this course and clearly has himself in mind.⁵⁵ It is at the least a striking coincidence that Dee's forty-ninth birthday, 13 July 1576, fell less than three weeks before he began the first draft of *The Brytish Monarchie*.⁵⁶ In terms of the timetable outlined, he had completed the period required to reach the highest state of philosophical accomplishment. For what, then, had his long 'Course of Philosophicall Enquiries' been a preparation? That question is best addressed by investigating in what way he thought the *General and Rare Memorials*, culminating in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, was its fulfilment.

A providential tone pervades the surviving texts of the planned tetralogy. Dee's certainty that a divine plan guided human destiny is evident in his insistence on Britain's seizing a 'manifest occasion' provided by God 'for these many yeres last past', but soon to expire.⁵⁷ In so doing, Britain will surpass any monarchy in history 'before, all, be vtterly past and for euer'. There are structures in world history which will reveal when and where such an 'occasion' would occur, although active human intervention will be required to realise its benefits. Dee's thinking is still influenced by the angels, although any involvement they might have in earthly affairs is unspecified. The missing chapters on Ophir presumably contained the reference to Annael,⁵⁸ which is absent from the Cotton manuscript and unmentioned by Purchas. Overt naming of an angel near the beginning of the *Famous and Rich Discoveries* would have served to clarify the setting of *General and Rare Memorials*.

The highly distinctive association of Annael, Venus and a change of 'great period' suggests that Dee adapted for his own purposes either the angelic-planetary system of world history devised in 1508 by the occult philosopher Johannes Trithemius, in his book *De septem secundeis* (*On the Seven Planetary Intelligences*), or that of the medieval astrologer and physician Pietro d'Abano, Trithemius's own source. Dee owned works by both men.⁵⁹ Both systems named seven angels, each acting as a governor of one of the seven planets in cyclical repetition. According to Trithemius, every governorship lasted for 354 years and four months. Events in human history were synchronised with the positions of the planets and their angelic

54. There is an extensive literature on the Pythagorean Y; for a brief account see, e.g., S. C. Chew, *The Pilgrimage of Life*, New Haven, CT and London 1962, pp. 177–78 and fig. 131.

55. For an edition and translation see C. H. Josten, 'A Translation of John Dee's *Monas Hieroglyphica* (Antwerp, 1564)', *Ambix*, xii, 1964, pp. 83–222 (115–19). See also H. Håkansson, *Seeing the Word: John Dee and Renaissance Occultism*, Lund 2001, pp. 166–69.

56. That is, on 1 August; see above, n. 16.

57. *The Brytish Monarchie* (as in n. 16), pp. 53–54.

58. For this reference see above at n. 46.

59. N. L. Brann, *Trithemius and Magical Theology: A Chapter in the Controversy over Occult Studies in Early Modern Europe*, Albany 1999, pp. 25, 68, 114, 143; Håkansson (as in n. 55), pp. 231–37, 259–65; D. P. Walker, *Spiritual and Demonic Magic from Ficino to Campanella*, London 1975, pp. 85–90. See *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), nos 81, B69 and DM114 for d'Abano, and nos 218, 286, 359, 622, 646, 678, 897, 969, 1884 and DM165 for Trithemius.

governors. Dee's notes of his angelic conferences indicate a structural similarity between his system and those of Trithemius and d'Abano; but he was not uncritical of their model and diverged from it fundamentally. Firstly, he rejected Trithemius's chronology of world history. This is clear from their different dating of the year of Christ's birth. Trithemius calculates it as *anno mundi* 5205, while for Dee it is 3962, a date he repeats elsewhere, including in a note on the title-page of his copy of *De septem secundeis*.⁶⁰ In fact, Dee's chronological system shows a close affinity to that of Gerard Mercator, his close friend and collaborator from his years at Louvain. This introduces a second area of divergence from the systems of Trithemius and d'Abano: the 'new art' of astrological physics which Dee developed at Louvain, published as the *Propaedeutic Aphorisms* in 1558, with a revised edition in 1568, both dedicated to Mercator.⁶¹ It seems likely that Dee incorporated the angelic-planetary synthesis used by Trithemius and d'Abano into the modernised system he developed during and after his stay at Louvain.⁶² A feature common to both Dee's and Trithemius's schemes of history is the predictability of celestial events, which can then be utilised in the service of prophecy. In the final section of *De septem secundeis*, Trithemius asserted that prophecy was required for the final planetary period from AD 1525 (*anno mundi* 6732) to the end of the world in AD 1879 (*anno mundi* 7086), predicting that at its beginning, established religion would be overthrown by a new sect.⁶³ Dee, too, attributed meanings to such heavenly occurrences; but a note in his copy of the *Astronomica* of the Roman astrological poet Manilius reveals the difficulty of predicting what, precisely, the effects of such events might be:

60. Dee's copy of *De septem secundeis* is the Frankfurt 1545 edition: Cambridge, University Library, shelfmark Dd*.4.5¹¹(E). Dee made notes on the recto and verso of the title-page (but his handwriting is difficult to read in places, in addition to which the edges of the page have been cropped). One of these notes says that Christ was born 3,962 years after the beginning of the world, which sets Dee's dating system at odds with that of Trithemius. In another note he mentions that he copied one of his works in 1563, the year of Trithemius's death; presumably this was the *Steganographia*, on which, see Walker (as in n. 59), pp. 86–90. A later note refers to the new star appearing in Cassiopeia in 1572 and there are underlinings by Dee in the text. According to Trithemius, *De septem secundeis*, Frankfurt 1545, pp. 12–13, Christ was born in *anno mundi* 4960, 245 years after the beginning of the rule of Orifiel, the angel of Saturn.

61. See *John Dee on Astronomy: 'Propaedeutica aphoristica' (1558 and 1568)*, ed. and tr. W. Shumaker, intr. J. L. Heilbron, Berkeley etc. 1978, pp. 110–19, for Dee's dedicatory letter in this, his principal work on astronomy and astrology. For Dee's copy of Mercator's 1569 *Chronologia* see *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), no. 211. The coincidence between Dee's and Mercator's *anno mundi* dating systems is shown by the

following dates. The Flood: Dee 1656, Mercator 1656 (p. 3). The Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt: Dee 2453, Mercator 2453 (p. 26). The Temple of Solomon begun: Dee 2933, Mercator 2933 (p. 43). Dee and Mercator disagree, however, over the year of Christ's birth: Dee 3962, Mercator 3966 (p. 100). Dee's dates are taken from the circular diagram of time in his 'Playne Discourse ... concerning the needful reformation of the vulgar kalender' of 1582–83 (Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1789, fols 1–40; the diagram is on fol. 11); Mercator's dates are from his *Chronologia. Hoc est, temporum demonstratio exactissima, ab initio mundi, usque ad Annum Domini MDLXVIII ex eclipsibus et observationibus astronomicis omnium temporum...*, Cologne 1569 (with page references given in brackets).

62. The manner in which Dee developed and achieved this integration of his studies in astrology and angelology is complex and an area for further investigation. See S. V. Broecke, *The Limits of Influence: Pico, Louvain, and the Crisis of Renaissance Astrology*, Leiden 2003, pp. 168–83, 206–12, for Dee's involvement in the 'reform' of astrology at Louvain.

63. Trithemius, *De septem secundeis* (as in n. 60), pp. 26–27; Brann (as in n. 59), p. 134.

I did coniecture the blasing star in Cassiopeia appering a° 1572, to signify the fynding of some great Thresor or the philosphers stone ...⁶⁴

Since Dee rejected Trithemius's chronology, he may well have questioned prophecies deriving from it.

It would have been clear to readers of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* that its composition and argument were not only connected but also co-ordinated with the changing of the angelically governed planetary 'great ages' of Venus and Jupiter. These heavenly occurrences were the uniquely propitious circumstances which lay behind the urgency of his advocacy of British imperial expansion before the expiry of the opportunity presented by 'manifest occasion'.⁶⁵ The movements of the planetary bodies would activate forces in the heavens, the nature of which Dee does not define in his imperialist writings. Such forces, if recognised by a person skilled in the understanding of their operations, could, despite problems of predicting the specific effects that they might produce, somehow be utilised in the service of terrestrial human interests. And just as the implementation of Dee's imperialist project was timed to take advantage of these celestial influences, so, too, was the conclusion of his 'Tyrocinie'. His development as an adept would reach its culmination in the mid-1570s.⁶⁶ But as well as being the proponent of an imperialist vision, he hints at a role for himself as a philosophical guide and mentor.

In its references to Annael and the changing of 'great ages', *Famous and Rich Discoveries* was drawing attention to a cosmic dimension which, as the surviving evidence suggests, informed the whole of the *General and Rare Memorials*. What, then, did Dee say about Ophir, the opening subject of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*? Purchas was in possession of most of the information about the text. Acquaintance with Hakluyt, who died in 1616, gave him access to someone with direct knowledge of Dee, his works and reputation; and his acquisition of Hakluyt's papers seems to have begun before publication of the first two editions of *Pilgrimes* in 1613 and 1614.⁶⁷ But what text did he acquire? Dee gave a manuscript of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* to the bookseller Andreas Fremonsheim, who had helped compile his library catalogue, shortly before his departure for Eastern Europe in 1583. Fremonsheim was the London factor for the Birckmanns of Cologne, through whom Dee bought many of his books.⁶⁸ Subsequently, the diplomat Robert Beale returned the document to Dee in March 1591.⁶⁹ It later became part of the Cottonian collection, where the chapter headings were summarised by Elias Ashmole, except for the first five, which were missing.⁷⁰ Therefore, the initial section had been detached. It is unknown when, why or by whom. As we have seen, the notion, deriving from Purchas, that these opening chapters dealt predominantly with Solomon's voyages, is supported by Dee's own descriptions of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*. There is

64. *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), no. 251; see p. 85 for the quotation.

65. See above, n. 57.

66. See above at n. 55.

67. Mancall (as in n. 23), p. 233.

68. *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), p. 1.

69. *The Diaries of John Dee* (as in n. 16), p. 252.

70. Oxford, Bodleian Library MS Ashmole 1788, art. 4; see *A Descriptive, Analytical and Critical Catalogue of the Manuscripts Bequeathed... by Elias Ashmole...*, ed. W. H. Black, Oxford 1845, p. 493; and also Calder (as in n. 1), II, pp. 422–23.

no extended discussion of Ophir in the Cotton manuscript, so it must have been contained in the missing initial section.

The identity of the text used by Purchas can be determined from his comments on his manuscript's length:

D. Dee hath written a laborious Treatise almost wholly of this *Ophirian* argument (the same yeere in which I was borne, A.1577. of seuentie sheets of paper) howsoever entituled, *Of Famous and Rich Discoveries*; of which I haue a Copie, and could willingly but for the length haue published it...⁷¹

Notably, the title of the work as stated here, beginning 'Of...', matches Dee's own reference to the fourth volume of the tetralogy in the 1577 'Aduertisement'.⁷² Moreover, the year of composition matches the dates in the Cotton manuscript.⁷³ It is highly likely, then, that Purchas's document was the opening section of that manuscript, which probably contained the title-page. The existing document has 245 sheets. The surviving text of chapter 6 begins with Ophir, as does the first part of chapter 7. These together comprise just over two sheets.⁷⁴ Purchas says that his text is 'almost wholly' about Ophir. Such a single-subject tract does not conform to any of the descriptions given in Dee's lists of his writings; but since he gives the title, his comments are consistent with a larger work which combined his seventy sheets with the 245 of the Cotton manuscript. The Ophir chapters may well have been separated before Hakluyt acquired the volume, possibly on Dee's death in February 1609.⁷⁵ In any case, the text subsequently owned by Purchas was probably not Dee's complete account of his subject.

Purchas's sheets would have been double-sided, as in the Cotton manuscript. The substantial size of the Ophir document can be gauged by comparison with the Ashmolean manuscript copy of *The Brytish Monarchie*, which comprises fifty-six double-sided sheets (excluding the 'Aduertisement').⁷⁶ Purchas's Ophir text was fourteen sheets longer. His seventy pages included 'ten sheets of paper about the Almug trees',⁷⁷ while on the maritime details of Solomon's ventures,

D. Dee hath written 23. sheetes of paper in examining the miles, the dayes, the way, the employments of the time, and mustering of Men and Ships employed in their service.⁷⁸

This leaves thirty-seven sheets for other material. Some paragraphs later, Purchas gives a further account of information he has gleaned from Dee:

He alloweth 4500, workmen for the mines, not all at once working, but in courses, some resting by turns, others working, and then succeeding to their works whiles they again rested (the works and yeeldings whereof hee diligently examineth) three hundred for the Almug trees, for Elephants teeth twenty, for Apes and Peacocks ten: one hundred Officers: in all

71. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fols 26^r–28^r.

72. 'The Title wherof, is, OF FAMOVS...' (cited above at n. 43).

73. See n. 20.

74. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fols 26^r–28^r.

75. D. Gwyn, 'John Dee's "Arte of Navigation"', *The Book Collector*, xxxiv, 1985, p. 310, notes that Dee's *Famous and Rich Discoveries* manuscript was split up after his death.

76. For this MS see above, n. 16.

77. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), I, p. 38.

78. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

5040. To this businesse he holdeth requisite fiftie tall ships, to each ship thirty Mariners, in all 1500. which with the former number make vp 6540 men. Thus he and more than thus with much curiositie of mineral and nauall learning, which cannot be expressed *without that libertie of long discourse...*⁷⁹

These 'nauall' matters may be included in the '23.sheetes', but there is considerable discussion, too, of 'mineral learning', a subject well known to Dee.⁸⁰

Purchas's tone when referring to *Famous and Rich Discoveries* is bantering, even slighting or critical. In an early reference, against a marginal note, 'D.Dee in a M.S.', he says:

Sure if I were in the starrie Heauen, with mortall eyes I could not thence in such distance be able to see this small Globe, whence I see so small the greatest starres, whence the light of the World and King of starres (so much neerer in place, greater in quantitie, more visible in qualitie) seems as little, as the head that views it. And should this Earth which cannot there be seene, so Eclipse my lower Moonlike borrowed beames by interposition, that all should be shadow in a double night and twofold darknesse? No, No, I will get vp thither, euen farre aboute my selfe, farre aboute all Heauens, (say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into Heauen? That is to bring Christ from aboue) and thence with a spirituall and heauenly eye looke on earth ...⁸¹

He does not identify his source precisely and appears not to quote directly from it, since he usually italicises his quotations (as here with the verse from Romans 10.6 in round brackets); but it is likely to be Dee's Ophir manuscript, given that he cites no other source. However elusive Purchas's meaning in this passage, an association of Dee with a spiritual and semi-divine ascent to view the earth from above the heavens would be in line with statements in the surviving parts of *General and Rare Memorials*. While it cannot be known what in the manuscript prompted Purchas's comment, his thoughts are suggestive of a perspective on human affairs which could have accorded with Dee's angelological observations.

Although he was viewed critically, Dee was a primary source for Purchas's Ophirian discourse, which is the opening topic of the *Pilgrimes*: Purchas considers the riches it provided to Solomon, then assesses the course and duration of the various voyages there.⁸² First, he employs Dee in connection with gold and almug trees. In his introductory remarks, Purchas notes gold's rarity compared to silver, observing that Ophirian gold was known before Solomon, in the days of Job and David. He defers an answer to the question of whether David's fleet voyaged to Ophir, exploring instead the 'computation of a Talent' in order to value the 3,000 talents of gold and 7,000 of silver which David bestowed on the Temple.⁸³ Here, Dee along with the antiquary and mathematician Edward Brerewood are judged

79. *Ibid.*, I, p. 42. (It should be noted that in this 1625 edition p. 41 is also, but incorrectly, numbered as p. 42.)

80. Dee's books which are relevant here are identified under the heading of 'Mining and Metallurgy' in *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), index III.

81. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), I, p. 9; see also Parry, *The Arch-Conjuror* (as in n. 7), p. 112. Calder (as in n. 1), II, p. 42 n. 142, described Purchas's tone as 'bantering'.

82. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), I, pp. 35–44 (chapter I, sections X and XI).

83. *Ibid.*, p. 36; I Chronicles 29.4.

to provide 'the best construction', using Moses's statement that a talent contains 3,000 shekels. Their calculation gives £375 as the value of a talent of silver and £4,500 for a talent of gold, gold being twelve times more valuable than silver.⁸⁴ Curious as to the value of biblical precious metals in contemporary currency, Purchas concludes that David's 3,000 talents of gold was equivalent to £13,500,000. Then, from I Kings 9.26–28, he estimates that the 420 talents of gold brought to Solomon by Hiram's fleet in a single voyage approximated to £1,890,000.⁸⁵ After examining biblical texts on the sources of Solomon's wealth, Purchas then returns to David and Ophirian gold, deciding that David did not send a fleet to Ophir: rather, he acquired his riches through frugality and conquest. In a marginal note, he cites I Chronicles 22.14 and 18.11 to support his position, together with 'D. Dee', implying that it had also been Dee's position. Purchas concludes this discussion with further consideration of why silver should exist in greater quantity than gold, having declined to do so earlier for fear of disagreement with Solomon's account. Nonetheless, against another marginal 'D. Dee', he notes: 'Some thinke that there was in euery voyage 24. times as much Siluer as Gold.' Again, this presumably was Dee's opinion, Nature having 'giuen so much more thereof in quantitie'.⁸⁶

A quotation from II Chronicles 9.11 introduces discussion of the almug trees:

...whereof were made *Pillars for the House of the Lord, and for the Kings House, Harpes also and Psalteries for Singers: there came no such Almug Trees, nor were seene vnto this day.*⁸⁷

They might once have grown in Lebanon, according to II Chronicles 2.8. As to their nature, Purchas turns first to Dee's 'ten sheets of paper' on the almugs in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*:

Hee there, as Commissioner for *Salomons* Timbers like a learned, both Architect and Planter, hath summoned a Iury of twelve sorts of Trees (mentioned by diuers Interpreters) to examine or to bee examined rather, which of them were the Almugs here mentioned. I should bring you into a Wood to relate his labours in this kind: the kinds are, the Deale, Boxe, Cedar, Cypresse, Ebonie, Ash, Iuniper, Larch, Oliue, Pine, Oke and Sandall Trees: all which with them their seuerall qualities and fitnessse for Royall and Sacred buildings hee examineth by best testimonies, and concludeth nothing absolutely, but inclineth to *Iosephus*, who either by some Monuments in writing might haue learned, or in some remainders to his time in Instruments Musicall, or other profane or sacred memorials, might probably bee thought to haue seene thereof.⁸⁸

His summary indicates that Dee's exposition was detailed and extensively researched, although the reasons why he thought the almugs important are not revealed. The device of a jury of trees, whose testimonies established their identities and qualities as building materials in palaces or temples, produced an inconclusive verdict on the almugs' nature. Purchas, like Dee, appears inclined towards Josephus's judgement in his *Jewish Antiquities* that almugs were larger and finer than pines before or since, with wood altogether whiter and more shining than

84. *Ibid.*, p. 35; Exodus 38.25–26.

85. *Ibid.*, p. 36.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 37.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 38.

88. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–39.

that of the fig.⁸⁹ He makes no other mention of the use of almugs for making musical instruments in the course of his comments on Dee's discussion. It is impossible to say, therefore, whether Dee considered the almugs' worth to lie in their physical qualities or was aware of characteristics which might make them valuable in other ways, possibly religious.

Purchas next considers the likely route to Ophir and why it took three years for an expedition to reach it and return. He begins by referring to Dee's '23.sheetes' on the navigational and maritime aspects of the voyage,⁹⁰ then continues:

I cannot presume either of so much learning in my Selfe, or so much patience in the Reader. Yet I shall be bold both to follow him, and to adde somewhat for further light.⁹¹

The ancient coastal routes are reconstructed: southwards down the Red Sea, around the Arabian peninsula and the Indian sub-continent, and along the shores of Burma and Malaysia. The place names mentioned are Solomon's port of Ezion Geber, the Gulf of Oman, 'Muziris', 'Taprobane', 'Cape Nigraes' and 'Singapura'. Purchas is uncertain about some locations: in noting varying opinions on the whereabouts of Muziris, he says 'D. Dee thinks it *Surat*' (in modern Gujarat).⁹² It is unclear which authorities were cited by Dee and which are Purchas's subsequent additions. Pliny the Elder's account of Roman trading voyages to India appears, with reference to Jacques Daléchamps's commentary on the *Natural History*.⁹³ For example, when discussing the voyage to Taprobane, among his classical sources, Purchas draws on the voyages of Onesicritus and Nearchus, although he discounts the information on Nearchus in Arrian, Ptolemy and Marianus.⁹⁴ All of this would have been readily available to Dee through diligent scholarship, using the resources of his library and information provided through his numerous contacts.

There was still considerable scope for Purchas to disagree with Dee, not least over sailing conditions and his estimation of the timetable for a three-year voyage. He considered that the quality of Solomon's vessels and of their crews' seamanship would have been inferior to those of his own time. The ancient fleet would have had to keep together 'for mutuall helpe and common security', hugging the coast, further decreasing its already slow progress. It would not have sailed on the Sabbath, 'especially in a Voyage for adorning the Temple'. Concerning the miles it travelled, Purchas comments:

89. *Ibid.*, p. 38; Josephus (as in n. 30), p. 225.

90. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), 1, p. 39 (cited above at n. 78).

91. *Ibid.*, p. 39.

92. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

93. *Ibid.*, p. 39; Pliny the Elder, *Natural History*, vi.26.101–06 (Loeb edn, 10 vols, London 1938–63, vi, pp. 414–19); the commentary by the botanist Jacques Daléchamps is in his edition of Pliny's *Historia mundi libri XXXVII*, Lyons 1587. For Dee's copy of the *Natural History* see *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), no. 237.

94. *Purchas his pilgrims* (as in n. 21), 1, p. 40. The voyages of Onesicritus and Nearchus are recounted in Pliny, *Natural History*, vi.26.96–101 and 27.107 (Loeb edn, as in n. 93, vi, pp. 410–15, 420–21). Listed in *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22) are Dee's two copies of Arrian's *Periplus Ponti Euxini*, *Periplus Maris Erythraei* (*Circumnavigation of the Black Sea*) (nos 36, 405); various works by Ptolemy, including eight copies of his *Geographia* (nos 140, 166, 402, 458, 1301, B65, B180, B190); and a copy of Scotus Marianus's *Chronicon* (no. 287).

D. Dee is sparing in this calculation, and yet makes it from *Ezion Geber* to Cape *Negraes* 9155; of which we deduct for the *Arabike gulfe* but 1514, and leaue 7641.⁹⁵

The figure of 7641 is the sea mileage from the Israelites' home port to the nearest one in Ophir, excluding the distance around the Arabian Gulf:

Doctor *Dee* allows fiftie miles a day of requisite way, that is 1200. miles euery foure weekes, resting the Sabbath, and forty miles a day within the Gulfe or Red Sea: the miles he computeth 9155.^{3/5}. and the whole Voyage to be performed in seuen months and six and twenty dayes outward, and as much homeward; one fortnight of rest after their landing before they fell to their Mine-workes, to be spent in mind-workes of deuout thankfulnesse, prayers and festiuall reioycing; as much before their shipping for returne, the rest in their works and purueying of commodities. So that for what I allow a yeere, to each of these he alloweth the space of eight moneths or there abouts: the third yeere he bestoweth on their businesse, rest, and triumph at home, care of their family and state preparations for the next returne, as trimming the *ships* ... and other prouisions.⁹⁶

Purchas is sceptical:

I honour his great industry, but cannot conceiue that that age yielded such great ships to carrie so many, nor that they could one day with another make so much way, nor that *Salomon* would permit so long a stay as a whole yeere, but rather presse new men.⁹⁷

His own view is that '*Salomons* seruants sent to *Ophir* were not *Israelites*' but, rather, the remnants of those peoples whom they had previously conquered, now serving under Israelite command. He claims that 'This hath been omitted by others handling this argument', presumably including Dee in his criticism, which continues:

Besides, it is as likely (which others also obserue, and before is mentioned, & agreeth to the 666.talents of Gold yeerely) that *Salomon* after the Temple buildings were ended, employed Fleetes yearly to *Ophir*, one vnder another, that each should make their voyage in three yeers, but of them euery yeere one should returne: which agrees not with *D. Dees* speculation of a yeers stay. Neither is it probable that in seuen or eight moneths so much Gold and Siluer could be gotten by so vnexpert miners. Nor doth *D. Dee* consider the *Monsons* of those Seas which are by six moneths regulated, and not by eight.⁹⁸

Purchas further doubts the sufficiency of Dee's eight months for a voyage, as it does not accommodate stops 'by the way at each good mart': 'Yet if any approue, and lust to follow him, I haue no Empire ouer opinions'.⁹⁹ These comments not only provide insight into the extent and detail of Dee's reconstruction of Solomon's voyages, indicating the project's significance for him, but also reveal his potential vulnerability. Purchas's sources, by and large, were available at the time Dee was writing: his criticisms could easily have been made by others in 1577, although there is no evidence that this happened. Nonetheless, Dee's strategy is clear: to lend maximum credibility to his description of the voyages, he used copious analysis of biblical, ancient and more recent sources.

95. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), 1, p. 41 (mis-numbered as 42).

96. *Ibid.*, pp. 41–42.

97. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

98. *Ibid.*

99. *Ibid.*

The extent of any selectivity in Purchas's choice of material from Dee's discourse cannot be determined and nor does he indicate anything of its relationship to the rest of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* or *General and Rare Memorials*. But what did Dee himself say of Ophir in the remnant of his text's opening chapters? In chapter 6, the descriptive title of which is now lost,¹⁰⁰ Dee was evidently resuming after a digression: his opening phrase is 'Returning now again'.¹⁰¹ He discusses 'a frequented Sea Trade' with the Far East in the time of David and Solomon, its route revealed through place names: the first, 'Æzio(...)', may be Ezion Geber, which would make geographic sense as it was the Israelites' embarkation point; the others are the 'Gangesicall Goulf' and 'Singapura'.¹⁰² But before he changes topic and leaves 'these Sowtherne and Asiaticall Sea Coasts', Dee turns to ancient and contemporary records of such voyaging. Firstly, he cites 'the Sea Trauayll of Iambolos by Diodorus Siculus recorded', which is 'accownted Auncyent', being Iambolos's 'Navigation from Æthiop to Sumatra (otherwise called Taprobana)'.¹⁰³ Iambolos, a Greek merchant trading for spices in Arabia, was captured by robbers and taken to Ethiopia, from where he began this voyage.¹⁰⁴ Next, he refers the reader to one of his primary sources, Ramusio's *Navigazioni et Viaggi*, for the report of an unnamed Portuguese who was expert in 'Indian Navigations', appended to the account of Iambolos's journeys taken from Diodorus.¹⁰⁵ For Dee, the testimony of Diodorus supports his previous statements about an 'Africa Periplus'. Presumably, this is a reference to navigation around the African continent, described in the previous chapter, which would explain the apparent digression and be consistent with his mention of the Portuguese account. Ramusio is an important source also for Purchas, who uses the accounts of Portuguese navigators in the *Navigazioni et Viaggi* to calculate distances sailed by Solomon's fleets. Dee may have done the same, as Purchas cites mileage figures from *Famous and Rich Discoveries* shortly after those of Ramusio's Portuguese navigators.¹⁰⁶ Dee, however, evidently pictures himself now in the Indian Ocean, possibly off the Arabian coast, as he pauses to consider Panchaea, an island in the Persian Gulf visited by Indians and Scythians in ancient times.¹⁰⁷

100. See above at n. 74. Elias Ashmole noted that this chapter dealt with 'Of Sowtherly and Eastern Sea coasts'; see Calder (as in n. 1), II, pp. 422–23, who cites Ashmole's manuscript (as in n. 70), 'f.78 et seq'.

101. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fol. 26^r.

102. *Ibid.*

103. *Ibid.*, fol. 26^v.

104. On Iambolos see Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, II, Cambridge, MA and London 1935, pp. 55–60.

105. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fol. 26^v. For Ramusio's account from Diodorus see his *Navigazioni e viaggi* (as in n. 14), I, pp. 893–908.

106. *Purchas his pilgrims* (as in n. 21), I, pp. 40, 41 (misnumbered as 42).

107. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fol. 27^r. A voyage from the Scythian Ocean to Panchaea

would have covered an enormous distance. According to Pliny, Scythian tribes occupied areas to the north of the rivers Danube and Don as far as China in the east (*Natural History*, IV.80 and VI.50, 53; Loeb edn, as in n. 93, IV, pp. 178–79, VI, pp. 374–75, 376–79). Roughly speaking, this would have incorporated much of modern Russia and Siberia. Roger Barlow, in 1541–42, recorded that the Scythians inhabited lands to the east of the River Dnieper and north of the Don (see his *A Brief Summe of Geographie*, ed. E. G. R. Taylor, London 1932, p. 64). The Scythian Ocean comprised those seas above the coastline of northern Europe from Novaya Zemlya in the west to the Taymyr peninsula and beyond in the east. A map drawn by Dee himself in 1580 shows the Scythian Ocean above the northern coasts of Europe and Asia. (This map, drawn in connection with the voyage of 1580 by Arthur Pet and Charles Jackman to seek the North-East Passage,

At this juncture, Dee bids farewell to ‘the Off[icers] and Captaynes’, his sources and authorities, who return westwards, while he has in sight oriental seas, setting course to Asian shores in chapter 7, entitled:

The Orientall and Scythian Ocean, next enuissioning Asia Septentrionall hath aunciently bin sayled in: and from one to the other.

He begins with a passage which is underlined to advertise its importance:

Upon the premisses about the Ophirian voyage, I haue bestowed some dayes to make euident how, euery three yeres, once: that most notable Ophirian prouision might be got to Hierusalem. But upon the Rest of these Collections speedily shuffled together yt will become manifest how this Incomparable Ilandish Impire may euery two yeres (...): or (by good order deuised & continued euery yere (...)¹⁰⁸

Charring of the manuscript creates a textual gap before the underlined section concludes with Dee beseeching ‘o(u)r Redemer Christe’ to ‘lighten’ (presumably ‘enlighten’) his mind and offering his services to Christ’s glory, reconfirming his Christian purpose. This is clearly an allusion to a previous section in his text concerning triennial shipments of gold to Jerusalem.

The next part of the discussion is again incomplete. With ‘Incomparable Ilandish Impire’, a synonym for Britain, Dee is introducing matter not mentioned in Purchas’s *Pilgrimes*. He seems to be proposing voyages to be made by British ships; they would be biennial or even annual and are certainly envisioned as round trips.¹⁰⁹ As this immediately precedes a lengthy discussion of the Scythian Ocean and its coastline, he must be referring to northern journeys along the ‘Septentrionall’ shores of Europe and Asia, and into the Pacific through the Strait of Anian (that is, the route later known as the North-East Passage), oceans which ‘hath aunciently bin sayled in: and from one to the other’.¹¹⁰ This is a persistent theme of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*. Indeed, so committed is Dee to demonstrating it that he devotes thirty sheets of the four chapters following those on Ophir to verifying a report by the Roman geographer, Pomponius Mela, of a voyage around the coasts of northern Asia and Europe by Indian merchants, before they were shipwrecked on the king of Sweden’s territories sixty-two years before the birth of Christ.¹¹¹ Cathay, long famed for its wealth, had been the primary goal of the north-easterly expeditions of 1553 and 1556, in which Dee had been involved.¹¹² Spanish and Portuguese wealth deriving from their Pacific monopolies was well known. Dee strongly advocated contact with Cathay through Scythian Ocean trade routes, desiring that the principal Cathayan cities, Cambalu and Quinsay, ‘will become to

is held at Dee’s former home of Burghley House in Lincolnshire, where it is interleaved in William Cecil’s copy of Abraham Ortelius’s *Theatrum orbis terrarum*, ref. BKS16611; for Pet and Jackman’s voyage see K. R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire 1480–1630*, Cambridge 1991, pp. 72–75.)

108. *Ibid.*, fol. 27^v.

109. *Ibid.*

110. *Ibid.*, fol. 54^r.

111. *Ibid.*, fols 31^r–61^r. For this voyage see F. E. Romer, *Pomponius Mela’s Description of the World*, Michigan 1998, pp. 113–14.

112. Andrews (as in n. 107), pp. 64–75; K. Mayers, *North-East Passage to Muscovy: Stephen Borough and the First Tudor Explorations*, Stroud 2005, pp. 34, 41–53; J. Evans, *Merchant Adventurers: The Voyage of Discovery that Transformed Tudor England*, London 2013, p. 58.

the Brytish & natural(l) Inhabitants of this Monarchy, so well known a(s) ar the Coasts of Denmark or Norway'.¹¹³

What might have been Dee's purpose in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*? Besides outlining the historical background to Elizabeth's territorial claims, he argues for British penetration of the Pacific through the Strait of Anian. The following statistics, while not a precise proportional analysis of the work's contents, nevertheless indicate his priorities. Despite damage to the manuscript, an original total of twenty-nine chapters can be distinguished.¹¹⁴ Those with headings mentioning the Scythian Ocean, its coastline or topography, total roughly 125 sheets. Others dealing with China, including the Great Cham and Prester John, occupy almost fifty sheets. The two final chapters, concerning Arthur's conquests and British imperial titles, account for about twenty sheets. These figures should be set alongside the seventy sheets claimed by Purchas for the Ophir manuscript and the fifty-four comprising *The Brytish Monarchie*. On the basis of this rudimentary quantitative estimation, the subjects receiving the greatest attention are Scythian and Ophirian.

Notwithstanding its detours, the broad structure of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* is a kind of periplus of its own. From Purchas's account, the opening part covers the route between Ezion Geber and Ophir. Chapter 6, as we have seen, seems to find Dee just off the Persian Gulf. The discourse then moves to the Scythian Ocean, with chapters 7 to 12 all pertaining to matters Scythian. Next come the chapters relating to China, including that on 'the Periplus from Inde toward the Caspian Sea', which for some authorities was thought to open onto the Northern Ocean above Cathay.¹¹⁵ Dee then resumes his main theme, touching again on 'the Scythian Ocean Periplus',¹¹⁶ concluding this part of his discourse with a chapter reaffirming his argument for a 'passage to Cathay and Periplus of Asia'.¹¹⁷ Although Dee in the 'Aduertisement' states that *Famous and Rich Discoveries* will set out Elizabeth's entitlement to large foreign dominions, he concentrates in the final two chapters on islands in the Northern and Scythian Oceans and does not mention Elizabeth by name. He begins chapter 28 by explaining that the aim of his previous discussion of these islands was to prove that the sea route along the coasts of northern Europe and Asia was sailed in ancient times. This was to support his contention that navigation between Britain and the Pacific was feasible.¹¹⁸ The chief of the islands, having been discovered by British soldiers and sailors, 'doo iustly belong to the Royall CROWN and Scepter' of Britain.¹¹⁹ The same theme is continued in chapter 29, which argues that 'all the Northern Iles, & Regions Septentrionall doo seme to be lawfully appropriat (...) to the Crown of this Brytish Impire' on the basis of

113. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fols 60^r, 80^r; Sherman (as in n. 4), p. 177.

114. Sherman (as in n. 4), p. 176, and Calder (as in n. 1), II, pp. 422–23, both have 28 (following Ashmole); see above, n. 70. As stated, the first five chapters are missing. There are headings for all of those which remain, even though some are badly damaged, such as that for chapter 6 (see above at nn. 74 and 100). Chapters 6, 7, 8 and 9 are numbered, at fols 26^r, 27^v, 42^v and 54^r; headings for the other 20 chapters are at

fols 60^v, 72^r, 75^v, 82^v, 85^r, 94^v, 98^v, 109^v, 133^r, 145^r, 150^v, 169^v, 175^v, 183^v, 192^r, 217^v, 223^r, 243^r, 249^v and 264^v.

115. *Ibid.*, fol. 94^v; L. Casson, *The 'Periplus Maris Erythraei'*, Princeton 1989, pp. 239–41.

116. *Ibid.*, fol. 150^v.

117. *Ibid.*, fol. 243^r.

118. See above at nn. 109–110.

119. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fol. 249^v.

their first discovery by ‘King ARTHVR his subiects’.¹²⁰ An exploration of the Arthurian claims leads Dee to quote a letter he had received from Mercator on the subject; then the discourse comes to an abrupt halt. The impression of the text being incomplete is confirmed by Dee’s note in the bottom left-hand corner of this final page, to remind himself what to include in order to finish the work.¹²¹ Elizabeth’s titles to these territories are, however, more fully developed in ‘Brytanici Imperii Limites’, dated July 1578, the fourth and by far the longest of the *Limits and Rich Discoveries*.¹²² Dee had presumably intended to complete that work with a statement of her entitlement.

This analysis of the structure of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* makes Dee’s stated intention in the ‘Aduertisement’—to survey ‘all the whole world’—appear misleading.¹²³ The Spanish Americas, for example, are conspicuously absent. Instead, his survey of Europe and Asia draws attention to the Orient, emphasising access to the Pacific by the Strait of Anian (North-East Passage). Why?

As the Cotton manuscript was his first draft, Dee’s initial plan can be discerned, although any connection between Ophir and the angelically governed history has not survived. The destroyed third volume presumably linked the narrower focus of the first two volumes, *The Brytish Monarchie* and *The Brytish Complement*, with the more expansive outlook of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*. Owing to the absence of information about the third volume, its relevance remains impossible to judge. Yet despite that, the consecutive placement of the opening sections on Ophir and the Scythian Ocean in *Famous and Rich Discoveries* invites comment. Dee’s evident sense of purpose makes it improbable that he meant nothing by the juxtaposition. While the care and effort expended on both topics denotes deliberation, his intention in writing so extensively about Ophir can be interpreted in different ways. First, the aim may have been substantially academic, opening the ‘Suruey Hydrographical’ with a subject of interest befitting his erudition and authority. But although he undoubtedly aspired to high scholarly standards, this is unlikely to have been Dee’s sole motivation; nor does it explain the abrupt shift in subject-matter from Ophir to the Scythian Ocean within chapter 7. Second, alternatively Ophir may have been an eye-catching leader, conceivably an analogue for Cathay, intended to help refocus attention on the North-East rather than the North-West Passage. Yet if Dee had wanted to re-activate interest in the Orient, he could more profitably have written about Cathay and Japan at the outset, each having contemporary appeal; but he did not do so.

While Ophir may have had an importance for Dee which is now lost, a third option is that he intended to establish contact with other areas rich in precious metals as well as with Cathay. Potentially that would have led to regular voyages

120. *Ibid.*, fol. 264^v.

121. *Ibid.*, fol. 269^v.

122. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), pp. 51–120. Two examples of duplication of material are quotations from the same letter from Mercator, and also from

Trithemius’s *De septem secundeis*; see, respectively, *The Limits*, pp. 83–85 and 67; cf. *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, fols 265^v–69^v and 262^v.

123. This is quoted above at n. 43.

along the northern coasts of Europe and Asia, akin to those between Spain and its New World empire. The biblical Ophir could have represented a prototype for such ventures. Considered from this perspective, the detail in which Dee evidently analysed the practicalities of the journey to Ophir is striking. His reconstruction of the route, distances, sailing times and manning levels looks as much like a retrospective feasibility study as it does historical research. The implication is that what was achievable in ancient times should be more readily so in 1577. This interpretation offers the best explanation for Ophir's placement in the text, justifying its use as the opening of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, while providing a rationale for its relationship with the following subject, the Scythian Ocean.

Expeditions to seek riches in the Pacific had set sail from other countries. A Spanish expedition under Alvaro de Mendaña, dispatched from Peru in 1567–69 to locate Ophir, discovered and named the Solomon Islands.¹²⁴ Moreover, interest in Ophir and other places reputedly rich in gold, like Tharsis and Marco Polo's Lochac (sometimes called Beach), was already well established.¹²⁵ Columbus had believed that Hispaniola, present-day Haiti, was Tharsis.¹²⁶

The return to Seville in 1522 of the survivors of Magellan's expedition from their circumnavigation had led to a conference between Spain and Portugal at Badajoz, its main purpose being to determine the line of longitude which would separate their areas of influence in the Pacific. The corresponding line for the Atlantic had been negotiated between them in 1494 at Tordesillas, following from the 1493 papal bull *Inter caetera*, which awarded to Spain all undiscovered territories to the west of the Atlantic line below 45°N and to Portugal, by implication, all those to the east. The Pacific line was important now because it would decide which of them possessed the Moluccas and their immensely valuable spice trade. The conference at Badajoz was inconclusive, but in 1524 a report commissioned by Emperor Charles V found that the Moluccas were indeed Spanish. A co-author of the report, the explorer Sebastian Cabot, then *piloto major* responsible for all navigational and cartographic matters respecting Spain's New World empire, was commanded in 1526 to voyage to the Moluccas and to seek 'the discovery of Tharsis, Ophir and Eastern Cathay', but the expedition failed to reach the Pacific.¹²⁷ The English merchant and later North-East Passage advocate, Roger Barlow, sailed with Cabot. In his *A Brief Summe of Geographie* of 1540–41, derived from work by Martín Fernández de Enciso entitled *Suma de Geographia*, Barlow identified Ophir with Lochac.¹²⁸ Barlow's friend, the Seville-based merchant Robert Thorne,

124. Jack-Hinton (as in n. 32), p. 31.

125. Tharsis (or Tarshish) is mentioned in Ezekiel 27.12 and Jeremiah 10.9 as rich in metals. For Lochac see *I Viaggi di Marco Polo*, chapter 8, in Ramusio, *Navigazioni e viaggi* (as in n. 14), III, p. 258 with n. 7. For Dee's references to Beach see below at nn. 140–142.

126. C. Delaney, *Columbus and the Quest for Jerusalem*, London 2013, pp. 104, 197.

127. For a summary see the entry for Sebastian Cabot by R. A. Skelton in the *Dictionary of Canadian*

Biography (available online). See also H. Thomas, *The Golden Age: The Spanish Empire of Charles V*, London 2010, pp. 136, 421–22.

128. Barlow (as in n. 107), pp. xvi, 10. For the various forms of the names given to Lochac see Jack-Hinton (as in n. 32), p. 10. See also D. B. Quinn, 'Frobisher in the Context of Early English Northwest Exploration', in *Meta Incognita: A Discourse of Discovery. Martin Frobisher's Arctic Expeditions, 1576–1578*, ed. T. H. B. Symons, 2 vols, Quebec 1999, I, pp. 7–18 (p. 10 on Thorne and Barlow, and pp. 11–12 on Cabot); and

invested in Cabot's expedition. He had noted significant unresolved differences between Spain and Portugal at Badajoz, one concerning Ophir, which he believed lay to the south-east of the Moluccas.¹²⁹ In 1527, Thorne had drawn a world map, which he sent to Henry VIII, showing 'the islands of Tharsis and Ophir most wealthy' ('Insulae Tharsis et Offir ditissimae') and arguing for exploration of a route into the Pacific from the north. Dee was certainly aware of Thorne's work, for he made copies of letters written in 1527 by Thorne, concerning voyages for northern discovery.¹³⁰ He owned a copy of the 1530 edition of Enciso's *Suma*, although there is no record of his having Barlow's *Brief Summe*.¹³¹ He would, however, have had at least some familiarity with Barlow's opinions, since Dee, too, had worked for Cabot. He was employed as a geographical authority by the Company of Merchant Adventurers to New Lands, which engaged Cabot, Sir Hugh Willoughby and Richard Chancellor for its 1553 voyage to seek the North-East Passage to China, commanded by Willoughby and piloted by Chancellor. Barlow, who knew Cabot well, was also probably consulted by him in connection with that voyage.¹³² Cabot was a long-standing believer in the viability of the North-East Passage and his 1544 world map, which survives only from a copy, shows the Indian merchants whose voyage Dee examined in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*.¹³³

Towards the end of the final document of his *Limits* collection, Dee mentions Cabot, referring to him familiarly as 'Iohn Sebastian'.¹³⁴ As part of a general assertion of Elizabeth's claims to territories above latitude 50°N, he has just criticised Denmark and Sweden for occupying territories legitimately belonging to her and for 'intermedlinge' in her northern islands, meaning those at the western end of the Scythian Ocean. His next target is *Inter caetera* and the Spanish and Portuguese division of the world, particularly as it affects Atlantis, the North American continent.¹³⁵ But immediately before this, he compares himself to Cabot and Elizabeth to Charles V, likening his championing of her imperial claims to Cabot's telling the emperor in 1524 'that the Iles of Spices were within the limit of his iurisdiction'. He has been 'assured', he says, that his 'faithfull service' will receive her approbation.¹³⁶ This is revealing of his self-image at this time: not only is he Britain's Aristotle,¹³⁷ he is also by implication *piloto major* for its prospective empire. And, importantly, his plans are attracting Elizabeth's attention. He acknowledges two paragraphs later that the dispute between Spain and Portugal over the antimeridian still remains unresolved.¹³⁸ In that context, his reference to the Moluccas by way of the Cabot analogy is tantamount to a declaration that latitude 50°N is as important for Britain in the late 1570s as the antimeridian line of longitude had been for

Andrews (as in n. 107), pp. 52–54 (on Thorne, Barlow and Cabot).

129. Jack-Hinton (as in n. 32), pp. 2–4.

130. Dee's copies of Thorne's letters are in London, British Library Cotton MS Vitellius C.VII, fols 329^r–345^r; see Sherman (as in n. 4), pp. 172–73.

131. *John Dee's Library Catalogue* (as in n. 22), no. 1325.

132. See Evans (as in n. 112), pp. 54–55; also pp. 59–60 on Dee and Cabot; and pp. 74–77 on Dee's

relationship with Richard Chancellor, whom Cabot regarded highly.

133. On Cabot's 1544 world map see *ibid.*, pp. 48–49, 56 and 59 (for the Indian merchants); the map is illustrated in the plates located between pp. 148–49.

134. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), p. 91.

135. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

136. *Ibid.*, p. 91.

137. See above, n. 2.

138. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), pp. 91–92.

Spain in 1524; and that Atlantis is as important as were the Spice Islands. Underlying this is Dee's belief that Britain's historical territorial claims could make it the 'most Peaceable, most Rich, most Puissant, and most Florishing Monarchy of all els (this day) in Christendome', as he had asserted in *The Brytish Monarchie*.¹³⁹ His objective was British global dominance.

Also worthy of comment is the placement of Ophir and Arthur as the first and final subjects of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*. Just as Arthur was the exemplar of an imperial ruler for Elizabeth, so Solomon may have been for English enterprise. Dee's Arthurian imperialism marks the culmination not only of that volume—and the whole of the *General and Rare Memorials*—but also of his life's work to date, according to his remark about his 'Tyrocinie'. The chapter in which Arthur is introduced begins with Dee revealing that the purpose behind his many mentions of 'Iles in the Scythian Ocean' is to use 'the Records therof' to prove

the Asian Periplus and the Nauigation from Cap Cumfort or this most comfortable Brytish Kingdome to the land of BEACH... yf skillfull sailers & discrete Capitaynes, use the opportunity of tyme & plac requisite therto.¹⁴⁰

A marginal note reiterates the urgency of seizing the moment of 'manifest occasion', since 'Opportunitie is the fairest flower of tyme'. Despite its prominence here, Beach is little mentioned elsewhere by Dee in the extant manuscript. One reference records its origin in the earth's repopulation by Noah's descendants. Duodennin, a son of Japhet, settled to the north of the Taurus Mountains in Cappadocia, 'toward Scythia'. He had three sons, Rheneth, Beath (or Beach) and

139. *The Brytish Monarchie* (as in n. 16), p. 55.

140. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fol. 249^v; this passage is also quoted by Jack-Hinton (as in n. 32), pp. 21–22. On Beach see the discussion below; on Marco Polo's name of Lochac for what may be the same location see above at n. 125. Cape Comfort is on the Barents Sea coast of Norway and Russia. It appears as 'C. Comfort' on Mercator's 1569 world map, the *Nova et aucta orbis terrae descriptio ad usum navigantium emendate accommodata*. A colour reproduction of the appropriate section of the 1569 map is in *Gérard Mercator Cosmographe le temps et l'espace*, ed. M. Watelet, Brussels 1994, pp. 204–05. Cape Comfort is shown too in a chart of the northern coast of Scandinavia and of Muscovy drawn by William Borough, probably in 1567–68, which is reproduced by Mayers (as in n. 112), p. 110. It is in the same vicinity as shown in Mercator's map. At the age of 16, William had sailed on Richard Chancellor's ship the *Edward* in Willoughby's 1553 expedition. His elder brother Stephen was the ship's master. On the involvement of the brothers in this voyage see Evans (as in n. 112), pp. 82, 85; for a wider summary of their activities in navigation and exploration, see Andrews (as in n. 107), pp. 69–72. Andrews explains that the brothers made a subsequent voyage to these northern seas in 1556, during which Stephen kept a journal recording details of the coast

there, which became the basis of William's chart. Dee knew both men. He mentions Stephen in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, chapter 10. Dee's first reference occurs where he considers the details of Borough's locating of Cape Comfort on the basis of Borough's own observations. Dee says that these findings were 'exhibited to me vpon his Returne' by Borough from 'his serch & vewe of these Isy Seas' (fol. 69^f). In the second reference, shortly afterwards, Dee discusses differences in latitudinal reckoning between Mercator and 'my frende Mr Stephen Borrowgh his plat' concerning the precise location of the mouth of the River Tanais (now the Dvina) where it enters 'the Moscovy Bay' (fols 69^f–70^v). (It is interesting that Stephen too had a chart of his own.) However, Dee appears not always to have been upon cordial terms with William. The latter is undoubtedly the 'W.B.' mentioned by Dee in a diary entry for 17 May 1580 when both attended a meeting of the Muscovy Company at Muscovy House to discuss the imminent departure of Charles Jackman and Arthur Pet 'for the Cathay voyage' by way of the North-East Passage: 'I was almost provoked to anger by the haughty words of W.B. ... towards Muscovy House'; *The Diaries of John Dee* (as in n. 16), p. 9. He later notes on 7 Aug. 1583: 'Mr William Burrow passed by me'; *ibid.*, p. 100.

Itheb. Although Rheneth was ‘the great Discoverer by Sea’, Beath sailed ‘owt of the Scythian Ocean’, coming to ‘this land of Beach’, which ‘he possessed & so named’.¹⁴¹ The Mercator and Ortelius world maps both show Beach immediately south of Java on a tip of the presumed southern landmass, ‘Continentis Australis’, but Dee conceals his opinion concerning its location; nor does he mention its possible identification with Marco Polo’s Lochac or with Ophir. He does, though, emphasise its riches:

and what may be sayd of Beach the Province lying next the Sea Coast, which doth abownd wt Gold & other things to mens great commodity very servisable & yet to this day by the name of Beach known, where yt lyeth, I will not here Discours.¹⁴²

Arthur’s introduction appears unanticipated in his text and unconnected to either the North-East Passage or the access it provided to the Pacific and its wealth. Yet the imperialism of *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, to which the Arthurian conquests were central, has emerged as its most enduring feature. Furthermore, within Dee’s descriptions of this work quoted earlier, Elizabeth’s foreign titles are mentioned only in the ‘Aduertisement’.¹⁴³ In 1577, when both that and *Famous and Rich Discoveries* were written, interest in the ‘Empire’ was gathering, as were Dee’s hopes for it. But the opening words of the chapter on Arthur imply a connection with the Pacific involving the ‘Iles in the Scythian Ocean’, the chief of which ‘doo iustly belong to the Royall CROWN and Sceptre’ by virtue of ‘Brytish ancyeut Conquest or possession taken’—that is, by Arthur. Their value may have been as bases for provisioning and refitting British ships passing through the Scythian Ocean, similar to the scheme outlined for the ‘Pety Navy Royall’ in *The Brytish Monarchie*.¹⁴⁴ Thus, besides territories claimed in the Americas and Europe, the Arthurian finale to the *General and Rare Memorials* points to a conclusion in the Pacific via the Strait of Anian.

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In view of all this, what was Ophir’s importance for Dee? There is no evidence that he discussed Ophir after 1577, except in the 1592 and 1595 lists of manuscript works; and his other writings do not mention it overtly. Indeed, his only substantial statement on Ophir appears to have been in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*. This is an odd way to treat a weighty matter, unless it had attracted controversy and he was forced to drop it. Elaboration of Elizabeth’s titles to overseas territories certainly became more marked in his writings around 1576–78, his persistent use of the terms ‘Brytish Empire’ or ‘this Ilandish Empire’ confirming them as a major element in his project.¹⁴⁵ The prominence of Ophir as the ‘ample’ opening to *Famous and*

141. *Famous and Rich Discoveries* (as in n. 20), fols 205^v–207^r.

142. *Ibid.*, fol. 206^r.

143. This passage is cited above at n. 43.

144. *The Brytish Monarchie* (as in n. 16), pp. 27–28, 31, 60–61. See also Dee’s manuscript *Synopsis* of the British state, dated 1570 (full reference below, n. 153):

at the bottom left-hand corner he mentions a scheme for the provisioning and maintenance of a fleet permanently patrolling British waters. This may be the origin of the plan outlined in *The Brytish Monarchie*.

145. For Dee’s exposition of Elizabeth’s titles see the ‘Aduertisement’ (as in n. 16), sig. e.iiij^v; and the third and fourth documents in *The Limits* (as in n. 10),

Rich Discoveries,¹⁴⁶ together with the length and ‘laborious’ detail of the document described by Purchas,¹⁴⁷ suggests that Dee’s positioning of the discussion was intended to enhance its significance, together with that of the *General and Rare Memorials* as a whole. Accordingly, the extensive treatment of the Scythian Ocean in *Famous and Rich Discoveries* was meant to prove its viability as a route to the Pacific and its presumed wealth. Dee’s argument, glimpsed in fragments, is that Englishmen could make biennial or even annual trips there,¹⁴⁸ just as Solomon’s treasure fleets had done from Ezion Gebir. Purchas, when he discussed the value of silver and gold transported by Solomon’s fleet, for which he relied primarily on the ‘testimonies’ of Dee and Brereward, commented that ‘American Peru, and Sofala are beggarly in comparison of those parts of India, where we haue placed Ophir’.¹⁴⁹ Dee may well have compared the values of Ophirian and Spanish New World bullion. When the initial chapters of *Famous and Rich Discoveries* were written, probably in March 1577,¹⁵⁰ gold was about to become highly topical, which may not have been a coincidence. Preparations were afoot for Frobisher’s second voyage to North America, its primary purpose being to mine the black ore, thought to be gold-bearing, which had been discovered during the first expedition in 1576. When Frobisher sailed on 25 May, his 120-strong complement included thirty miners and a German assayer and mining engineer, Jonas Schutz.¹⁵¹ Dee’s estimate of 4,500 men to be engaged in Ophir’s mines was 150 times greater.¹⁵²

As Solomon’s Ophir was biblical truth and thus possessed undoubted authority, Dee’s tract is unlikely to have been simply an academic reconciling of the Old Testament with historical and recent records. Ophir was not only a source of wealth in its own right, but a means to introduce, in *Famous and Rich Discoveries*, the key topic of contact with the Orient through the Scythian Ocean. To many, this would have meant Cathay. Trade had long been a strong motivation for Dee, as is clear from his *Brytannicae Reipublicae Synopsis* of 1570, which appears to refer to a lost three-volume work of 1565.¹⁵³ In the section on wealth, he advocates the exportation

pp. 43–49, 51–120. He makes several references to a British empire in *The Brytish Monarchie* (as in n. 16), e.g., p. 28 (‘this Ilandish Impire), p. 53 (‘Imperiall Monarchy’), p. 55 (‘Imperiall Brytish Monarchy’). The term recurs in the *Limis*, of which the fourth is entitled ‘Imperij Brytanici Limites’, taken from the map (now lost) which had accompanied the second document; see *The Limis* (as in n. 10), pp. 41, 51; for further examples see pp. 39, 52, 53.

146. As described in the ‘Aduertisement’: see above at n. 43.

147. See above at n. 71.

148. See above at n. 109.

149. *Purchas his pilgrimes* (as in n. 21), pp. 35–37 (37).

150. See above, n. 15.

151. A. Savours, ‘A Narrative of Frobisher’s Arctic Voyages’, in *Meta Incognita* (as in n. 128), pp. 27–37; R. McGhee, *The Arctic Voyages of Martin Frobisher: An Elizabethan Adventure*, Seattle and London 2001, p. 63; J. McDermott, *Martin Frobisher: Elizabethan*

Privateer, New Haven, CT and London 2001, pp. 163–90.

152. See above at n. 79.

153. London, British Library Cotton MS Charter XIII, art. 39. The *Synopsis* is a single large sheet, measuring about 2½ × 3½ feet, headed ‘Brytannicae Reipublicae Synopsis: libris explicata tribus. Synopseos Adumbratio. a Joanne Dee. Londinensis. Designata: A°. 1570’. I discussed this document in G. Yewbrey, ‘John Dee and the “Sidney Group”: Cosmopolitics and Protestant “Activism” in the 1570s’, Ph.D. dissertation, University of Hull 1981, pp. 42–55, 200–27; for my proposal that the *Synopsis* manuscript was a summary of a lost three-volume work of 1565 see pp. 44–45. See also Clulee (as in n. 5), pp. 181, 289 n. 21. More recently Sherman (as in n. 4), pp. 128–47 (with illustrations at pp. 110–12), discusses the *Synopsis* in some detail; he queries the possibility of a longer work at pp. 130–31.

of surplus domestic production and establishes a principle for the balance of trade:

It wold be pollitikly cumpassed (and not by comandment publik) that of our commodities (in totall summe) more be carried out, than in wares do come in, yerely, by $\frac{1}{3}$: or $\frac{1}{4}$ at the least.¹⁵⁴

An unfinished tabulation lists overseas markets, intended to catalogue goods imported as well as exported. The trading counterparts include ‘Cambalu. Quinsai, the two chiefe cities of the whole world’.¹⁵⁵ Dee’s plan in 1577, however, is indistinct. But if possession of islands in the Scythian Ocean was integral to English entry into the North Pacific, this would imply more than a trading relationship with the Orient. Atlantis, Dee’s name for North America, was, as he wrote in the *Limits*, ‘almost opposite Quinsay’ in southern Cathay, the two being separated only by the North Pacific, part of Elizabeth’s ‘imperial seas’.¹⁵⁶ The supply of New World precious metals which financed the Spanish empire could have provided a precedent for his own imperialist design. His objective was for Britain to become the dominant power of its time. As the ‘most Rich’ power, its wealth would result from trade and treasure; but it would also be the ‘most Peaceable’ as well as the ‘most Puissant’, complementing commerce with force of arms.¹⁵⁷ Enormous wealth and substantial organisation would be needed to achieve this dominance. Dee’s focus was on the Pacific to provide the former.

What does this mean for the geographical scope of Dee’s ‘Brytish Impire’? The claim he laid to North America, the North Atlantic territories and areas of continental Europe has been well researched but his intentions regarding the Pacific have attracted less attention. He was evidently ambitious to develop a trading relationship with Cathay; but the text on Ophir text indicates an additional aspiration to seek precious metals and stones, whether in Ophir itself or in Beach or Chryse. It is difficult to determine how exactly he thought *Famous and Rich Discoveries* related to contemporary affairs: this is due partly to a lack of clarity about his objectives in what survives of the manuscript, but also to the piecemeal way in which Dee produced his texts. There is no one work which provides a comprehensive statement of his imperialist programme. Did he really advocate an expedition to seek Ophir or any other location? Precisely how was all the information about the Scythian Ocean and the ‘periplus of Asia’ relevant to his imperialism overall and to Arthurian conquests in particular? What were the implications for Britain’s international relations? Did he want a confrontation with Spain? Despite the absence of explicit statements on such matters, it is possible to suggest some answers which lend coherence to the whole.

Dee is clear that his objective is English supremacy within Christendom, but a consequence of this would be confrontation with the Spanish. The vast sums transferred into the Seville treasury from the New World were the basis of Habsburg hegemony. In order to supplant Spain, England would require its own sources of

154. Dee, *Synopsis* (as in n. 153). Sherman (as in n. 4), partially quotes this passage at p. 132.

155. *Ibid.*

156. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), p. 41 (tr. Leedham-Green).

157. *The Brytish Monarchie* (as in n. 16), p. 55.

wealth, as well as disrupting or eliminating those of its rival. For England to eclipse Spain, the necessarily huge financial resources required were unlikely to be provided from known export markets or territorial possessions. The Orient was the only alternative. The Pacific would therefore see intense competition between the two countries in the development of commerce and mineral extraction. In the meantime, Frobisher's gold-mining project could develop separately in north-east Canada, which was beyond the area of Spanish jurisdiction, although the indications are that Dee's plans for the Pacific were on a far larger scale. Dee was led to this politic appreciation of the Pacific by the logic of his own imperialism rather than the lure of treasure: his vision of empire came first, with acquisition of wealth a necessary corollary to make it feasible. Such a view accommodates the angelically governed 'great periods' and the 'manifest occasion' he believed to exist at the time he wrote. He had developed, through his natural philosophical studies, a theoretical model of the cosmos which allowed him to determine times and places where conjoined heavenly influences would have their greatest terrestrial potency. It can be posited that the goals and content of his imperialism, even the setting up of a timetable to which he worked, were guided by his calculations of the operations of these celestial forces. If Dee perceived himself to be the philosopher striving to secure for England the benefits of the opportune 'occasion', then his remarks concerning his 'Tyrocinie' and the attaining of adeptness become more intelligible. His years of study had been intended to culminate in the imperialist project and its ramifications, with the full power of his knowledge concentrated into a huge personal effort to optimise England's God-given opportunity. This introduces larger questions. When did the process of preparation begin and what did it encompass? Were works like the *Propaedeutic Aphorisms* preliminary stages within a long-term strategy?¹⁵⁸ Might his imperialism have been a part of some larger scheme?

In addition to analysing of Dee's writings, notably the relationship of the *Limits* to the *General and Rare Memorials*, and the records of his activities, contemporary political and diplomatic developments will need to be considered in validating or rejecting the suggestions offered here. This will involve, too, interactions between Frobisher's venture and Dee's plan. First, however, it is necessary to clarify what Dee actually said about his imperialist design, before considering what befell his project during what he called the 'perelous tymes' of 1578 and subsequently.¹⁵⁹

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158. For this work see above, n. 61.

159. *The Limits* (as in n. 10), p. 98.