

The Literature of Travel and Exploration: The Work of the Hakluyt Society

A transcript of the lecture delivered by Professor Roy Bridges* at the Guildhall Library, London, on Wednesday, 19 March 2014.

You will have noted that the publicity for this talk says that the Guildhall Library has a full set of the volumes published by the Hakluyt Society since its foundation in 1846. That means 362 volumes: 100 in the First Series which lasted until 1899; 190 in the Second Series which finished at the end of the last century; twenty-five so far in our larger format Third Series; and forty-seven volumes in what we call our Extra Series, not to mention various pamphlets and more ephemeral publications. I must confess, incidentally, that I have not been able to discover exactly how and when the Guildhall Library acquired all 362 volumes. The Society's membership list for 1946 and all the later ones say the Guildhall Library had subscribed to the Hakluyt Society since 1847, in other words from the beginning, but I have not been able to find a membership list earlier than 1895 which mentions the library. So perhaps all volumes were gifted to the library at some time after 1846. Be that as it may, I am glad all the volumes are here as I believe they constitute a treasure house of important and enjoyable information about the world. [The Guildhall Library does not appear in the membership list for 1850 but *is* named in the Prospectus for 1887. It is therefore probable that membership was at some time backdated to include the early years — Ed.]

One other interesting point which has come to light is that in the 1940s, at least, the Guildhall Library had its own special position on the Hakluyt Society Council. The place was filled in 1941 by J. L. Douthwaite Esq., and then from 1943 by Raymond Smith. How and why this special connection came about, and why it ceased to be the case in 1945, I have not yet been able to discover. However, it is a very heartening sign of the close relations which once existed between the Society and your library.

However, my subject is the Hakluyt Society itself. My first thought when I was invited to talk to you was to say something about the beginnings of the Society and its actual founder, William Desborough Cooley, and then go on to discuss the nature of the records and the resulting literature produced by explorers and travellers and the problems, both practical and theoretical, of using these materials. This would have been a rather abstract approach and I would be in danger of losing myself trying to disentangle postmodernist approaches to travel literature. I shall pay some attention to these matters but my second thought was to tell you about the foundation of the Society, yes, but then go on to say something of my own experiences in editing travel records for publication by the Society. The two travellers I would like to bring to your attention are Jacob Wainwright and James Augustus Grant. There is an added reason for mentioning Grant because, despite being a son of the manse from Nairn in northern Scotland, he has a close, one might say perhaps *intimate* relationship with the City of London.

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For the moment, back to 1846 and the Hakluyt Society. The name is part of the story I want to unfold for I might just as easily be here talking to you about the ‘Columbus Society’. Who or what is Hakluyt anyway? The Reverend Richard Hakluyt was born in about 1551 or 1552 and died in 1616. Despite his odd looking name, which no-one is quite sure how to pronounce, he was from a Herefordshire family and became a great advocate for English overseas enterprise publishing two great collections of accounts of *English* voyages and travels, one in 1589 and a much extended edition in 1598–1601 as a means of encouraging further activity. I cannot show you a picture of Hakluyt himself because none is known to exist. I am able, however, to jump about 250 years and show you a picture of the actual founder of the Hakluyt Society, one William Desborough Cooley.



Figure 1. A portrait of William Desborough Cooley.

Cooley was an odd, awkward, disputatious and eccentric character. Some of these eccentricities were apparent in 1846 but in most people’s eyes at that time he was one of the most knowledgeable geographers of the age. Later on, his theories, especially about the interior geography of Africa, were so clearly wrong that he became discredited and is now practically forgotten. As one of his very few champions I have tried to redeem his reputation and I do think that his founding of the Hakluyt Society is the greatest justification for looking at him with some respect and gratitude.

The Cooley family was probably English but moved to Ireland when Thomas Cooley, an architect, was chosen to design and build the Royal Exchange, the handsome building which is now the City Hall in Dublin. Thomas had a son who became a barrister, and in 1795 his wife bore him twin sons. One, Thomas, was a deaf mute who nevertheless became a noted portrait painter, and the other was my William Desborough. He was also later to suffer from severe deafness which must have been congenital and perhaps increased his peculiarities in the eyes of others.

This Cooley graduated in 1816 from Trinity College, Dublin, having, it seems, emphasised mathematics in his studies which qualified him later on to produce some mathematical text books for schools. However, he moved to London and became more and more interested in geographical matters whilst maintaining himself by journalistic work and other writing. He deserved and continues to deserve praise for the work he brought out in three volumes in 1830–31 which was entitled *A History of Maritime and Inland Discovery* and was later translated into several other languages. The great and most surprising thing about this work is that it is the very first history of exploration and discovery. There had of course been many collections of accounts of travels, not least Hakluyt's, but no-one had before tried to provide a comprehensive historical study of the way a knowledge of the basic layout of the earth had emerged.

Cooley's work on his *History* obviously meant that he developed a very comprehensive knowledge of the literature recording past travels and discoveries which he thought could inform current geographical discussions. In addition, by showing that an African traveller called J. B. Douville was actually a fraud, Cooley developed a taste for confounding contemporary travellers which did not go down well with later genuine explorers like Richard Burton or David Livingstone who were told by Cooley that they had not seen what they said they had seen. For the time being, however, Cooley's reputation was secure and he quickly rose to a vice-presidency of the Royal Geographical Society which had been set up with powerful patronage, if little money, in 1830. Typically, within five years he had fallen out with the Society over some trivial problem concerning the payment of his subscription. Fifty years later, just before he died, Cooley still maintained that the R.G.S. had defrauded him in the 1830s.

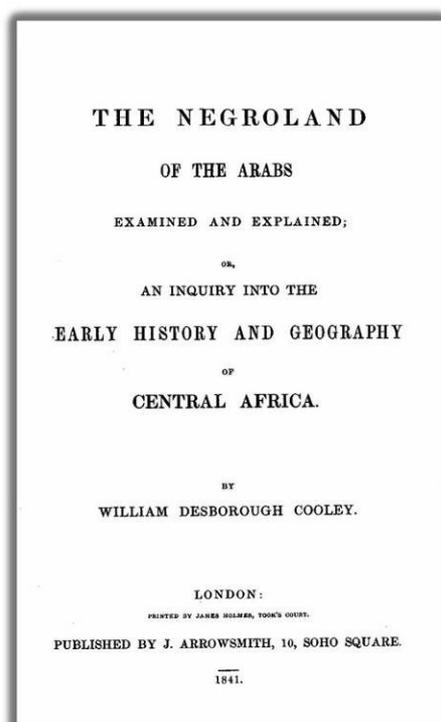


Figure 2. The title page of Cooley's *The Negroland of the Arabs*.

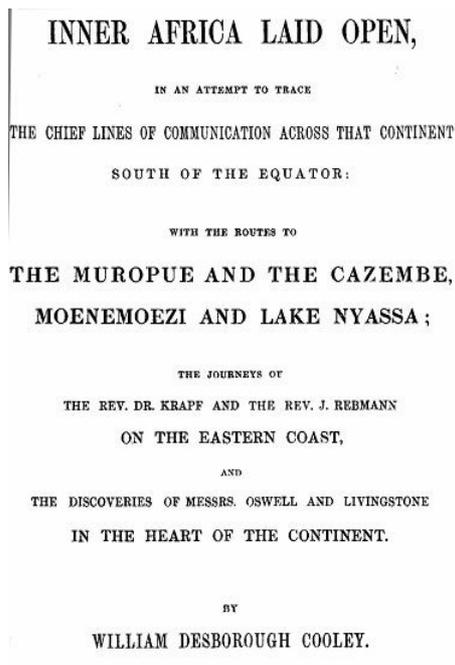


Figure 3. The title page of Cooley's *Inner Africa Laid Open*.

Perhaps I should quickly add here that the R.G.S. actually treated Cooley rather well by arranging for him to receive a Civil List pension. Sir Clements Markham, however, who dominated both the R.G.S. and the Hakluyt Society between 1875 and 1910 was never gracious enough in all his writings to acknowledge that Cooley had founded the Hakluyt Society. But founder of the Society Cooley was, and his ambivalent if not often hostile relationship with the R.G.S. helps to explain why he did so. In the first twenty years of its existence after 1830 the R.G.S. was neither able to send out many expeditions nor, as it was to do so successfully later, persuade the Government to support exploration. Cooley thought that much could nevertheless be learned about, for example, the interior of Africa or Asia by careful examination of early texts. He also pointed out that British geographers were slow to acknowledge the discoveries of other Europeans such as the rather despised Portuguese or even the French and he tried to remedy this by persuading Longmans to publish some translations. More interestingly, Cooley was also prepared to attempt to get information from Arabic documents, from contemporary Arab trader travellers in East Africa, and even via linguistic studies from black Africans. Later critics derided what they called Cooley's 'theoretical discoveries', yet he was to produce a great many articles and three books with his theoretical discoveries. *The Negroland of the Arabs Examined and Explained* of 1841 is a worthwhile study of West Africa in the light of historical evidence whilst *Ptolemy and the Nile* of 1854 was right in my view in showing that the second-century Alexandrian astronomer and cosmologist actually knew nothing at all about the sources of the Nile. In 1845 Cooley devised a map of the central band of Africa for the Royal Geographical Society. His book *Inner Africa Laid Open* of 1852 elaborated on the 1845 ideas. In the eastern part he showed the lake he called Nyassi. And then, as you can see from another part of the map [Figure 4], Cooley had theoretically discovered what we know as the Victoria Falls. Livingstone was not to visit and name the Falls until three years later in 1855! On the other hand, Cooley showed two separate river basins in the latitude of the Zambesi. However, by arduously walking along its valley, David Livingstone showed there was only one Zambesi river basin. No wonder that Livingstone was annoyed when Cooley said he was wrong, and

no wonder too that his one lake seemed ridiculous as more discoveries began to be made showing at least four major lakes in East Africa. Cooley lost his credibility.

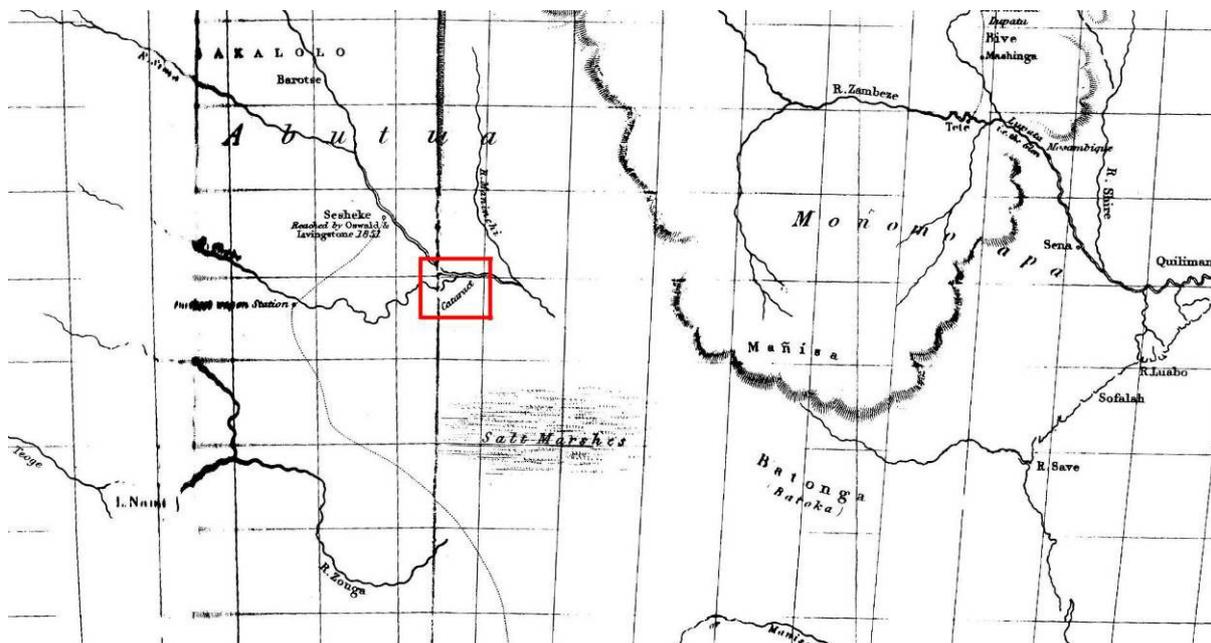


Figure 4. A detail from Cooley's 'theoretical' map of Inner Africa. Note the 'Cataract' (outlined in red) corresponding to the position of the Victoria Falls, discovered three years later.

Back in 1846, however, the 1845 map was regarded as an important contribution to knowledge. At the same time, Cooley was gearing up his campaign for more attention to be paid to information from the past by the R.G.S. Such criticisms struck a chord with several other members of the Society who were upset by its somewhat moribund condition in the mid 1840s. So we find that on 12 December 1846 the *Athenaeum* announced this:

A new Society is about to be established in London under the name of the Columbus Society... The object which the Society has in view is the publication of early and rare voyages and travels – applicable to all countries and written in all languages ...

A Prospectus was prepared and which said the object was:

To commemorate the achievements of all civilised nations in the career of discovery and to exhibit the constant progress of exploration and intercourse, of the study of man, and of physical inquiry throughout the globe.

Cooley had chosen the name 'Columbus Society' because he believed that this would emphasise the intended international approach and the obvious importance in world history of the discovery by Europeans of the Americas. So really I should be here talking to you about the work of the Columbus Society. But at some time between December 1846 and March 1847, probably in January, Cooley was persuaded by his associates to change the name of the new body to 'Hakluyt Society' because, it was said, the records printed would not, after all, be in 'all languages' but in English. Moreover, those records would particularly include 'the more important early narratives of British enterprise'.

COLUMBUS SOCIETY.

THE object of this Society is to print for its members a collection of the most rare and valuable Voyages, Travels, and Geographical Records.

The highly-prized collections of this kind, made by Ramusio, Hackluyt, Purchas, and De Bry, were all produced between the middle of the 16th and that of the 17th century. Europe still felt, during that period, the emotions awakened by the discovery of a New World, and viewed with pleasure the spirit of enterprize resulting from the impulse of that remarkable event.

The first steps leading to a communication with the inhabitants of strange and distant countries, are naturally those which we regard with the deepest interest. Yet the extension of scientific research into every region of the earth, and the frequent, though less prominent discoveries which affect the channels of commerce, and with them the fortunes of nations, furnish materials of the greatest importance to the history of civilization.

This store of knowledge increases daily. Exploration and discovery advance without intermission; while the general progress of learning throws new light continually on the writings of early travellers.

The publication of Hackluyt's collection may be ranked among the many characteristic distinctions of the age of Elizabeth. That writer had it in view, as he informs us, "for the benefit and honour of his country, to bring Antiquities, smothered and buried in dark silence, to light; and to preserve several memorable exploits by the English nation achieved from the greedy and devouring jaws of oblivion." But now the time seems to be arrived when the rich treasures of Geographical information already accumulated, may be worthily and advantageously reproduced on a plan more comprehensive than Hackluyt's, as well as more in the spirit of an advanced literary age, so as to commemorate the achievements of all civilized nations in the career of discovery, and to exhibit the constant progress of exploration and intercourse, of the study of man, and of physical inquiry throughout the globe.

Figure 5. The first page of the Prospectus of the 'Columbus Society'.

It was clear that the new society was not to be allowed to become any sort of real rival to the R.G.S. in dispensing new geographical information but to be rather more antiquarian as well as national in its approach. From this perspective, 'Hakluyt' was a much better title than 'Columbus'. Clearly, some early supporters of the new Society did expect commemoration of Hakluyt, national glory and exciting adventures of Elizabethan 'sea dogs'. Tension certainly existed between these supporters and those like Cooley and his successor as Secretary of the Society, R. H. Major, who emphasized the value of scholarly analysis. The historian and critic J. A. Froude said the Society's first editors had 'left little undone to paralyse whatever interest was reviving in Hakluyt' with their footnotes and introductions. Not least among those who looked to a renewed engagement with Hakluyt and Elizabethan heroes as an inspiration for the early Victorian age was Charles Kingsley. His *Westward Ho!* of 1855 drew directly on Hakluyt's *Principal Navigations* for its characters, and on the first Hakluyt Society volume, concerning Hawkins. Kingsley's heroes are transformed from Elizabethans into high-toned early Victorians. Yet the Hakluyt Society was not destined to go down the route of providing materials for stirring adventure stories set in the Elizabethan age. Hakluyt and patriotic pride would continue to be invoked at crucial periods, it is true, but the publications on Hakluyt were serious scholarly works, whilst, more generally, something like Cooley's original conception of the Society prevailed.

HAKLUYT SOCIETY.

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The highly-prized collections of this kind, made by Ramusio, Hakluyt, Purchas, and De Bry, were all produced between the middle of the 16th and that of the 17th century. Europe still felt, during that period, the emotions awakened by the discovery of a New World, and viewed with pleasure the spirit of enterprise resulting from the impulse of that remarkable event.

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Figure 6. The first page of the Prospectus of the 'Hakluyt Society'.

That the Society should not be narrowly British in its interests was demonstrated in a subtle way. Cooley chose to have a vignette of the ship *Victoria* embossed on the cover of the very first volume of 1847, and this logo has been used ever since. It has nothing to do with Queen Victoria but is actually Magellan's *Victoria*. This ship was, said Cooley, 'a monument to the most remarkable voyage ever performed' – the first circumnavigation of the world. The direct inspiration for the image was the depiction of the ship by the 'German Hakluyt', Levinus Hulsius. How precisely the model was followed is shown by the pennant attached to the mainsail. The design was modified by reference to an illustration on Ortelius's map *Mar del Sur*. Although the wind is blowing in two directions at once, the pennant and clear depiction of the Spanish flag must have helped the engraver whom Cooley chose. The cost of the block was three guineas – a bargain given the 168 years the Society has been sailing under its Spanish flag. I explained all this in a little more detail in an article in the latest volume in our Extra Series which put that same image on the cover.¹

¹ Roy Bridges, 'The Legacy of Richard Hakluyt: Reflections on the History of the Hakluyt Society', in Daniel Carey & Claire Jowitt, eds, *Richard Hakluyt and Travel Writing in Early Modern Europe*, London, 2012, pp. 309–17.



Figure 7. The *Victoria* as depicted by Levinus Hulsius.



Figure 8. The *Victoria* as adopted for the Society's logo, stamped in gold on the front board of its publications.



Figure 9. The present Society logo, as 'embellished' by Professor Bridges.

The Society's logo emphasizes its continuing commitment to an international approach. This may be illustrated by some simple statistics on the number of volumes it has published.

	British	European	Non-European	Other	Total
First Series	28	63	8	1	100
Second Series	81	94	9	6	190
Third Series	14.5	8.25	2.25	-	25
Extra Series	16	1	1	-	18
Totals	139.5	166.25	20.25	7	333

This is very much simplified and it is worth bearing in mind that a volume is not the same as an edition. Hence the hundred volumes of the First Series actually comprise seventy-seven editions. But it does show that Cooley has prevailed inasmuch as the approach has been broadly international. In fact we are, I am pleased to report, now moving away from just British or European travellers. My edition of Jacob Wainwright's journal, which appeared for 2007, is the first featuring a black African traveller who recorded an exploration. More recently we have had an Arab traveller and a group of Japanese youths who visited Europe in the sixteenth century.

The general tendency in the First Series was for greater scholarship to be deployed as time went on. Henry Yule set the standard with his two volumes on *Cathay and the Way Thither* of 1866. What Yule called a preliminary essay was 253 pages long, and the accounts featured both medieval Christian travellers and the great Arab geographer and traveller, Ibn Battuta. The second series, which began roughly with the new century, comprised 190 volumes, more and more of which were the work of professional and expert editors, especially university academics. Also in the twentieth century the Society began to issue what it called an Extra Series – that is volumes which were not automatically issued to subscribers but had to be bought separately. For the most part they were special in some way. The first twelve were the second edition of Hakluyt's *Principal Voyages* which the Society had begun to plan to produce but which they found already being printed by the Glasgow publisher Maclehose. You could have a set of the twelve volumes bound in the Hakluyt style if you wished but that was really all the Society's input amounted to. It is a nice edition but with no editorial apparatus other than a 100-page essay by Walter Raleigh on sixteenth-century voyages and a useful index.

Much later, the Extra Series offered a facsimile edition of Hakluyt's original 1589 volume but what I think attracted most attention and resulted in a considerable increase in membership and prestige was the appearance of six volumes between 1955 and 1974 containing edited texts of all the journals of Captain Cook's three great Pacific voyages, plus a definitive biography by the New Zealand scholar J. C. Beaglehole. In the ordinary Second Series several other records of naval explorations, especially those of the eighteenth century, began to appear, and I believe this resulted in a certain amount of tension with the Navy Records Society. Despite this the Hakluyt Society went on to issue three very large and impressive volumes reproducing the charts and coastal views made by Captain Cook and his

associates. The last of these appeared in 1997. In the year before, Paul Hair and I edited a volume celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Society which was well received. We prepared to go into the new century by closing the Second Series after 190 volumes and embarking on our Third Series which would be in a redesigned and larger format so that more maps and illustrations could be easily included. To all intents and purposes, therefore, the Hakluyt Society seemed at the end the twentieth century to be in good standing and prospering.



Figure 10. A selection of the Hakluyt Society's publications.

Yet all was not well. That 1997 volume was the last work to appear in the Extra Series for fifteen years. In the anniversary volume Paul Hair and I had remarked on the changing context in which the Society was working. He and I were the last presidents actually to have served in the old British Empire of dependent territories. Implicit in that observation is the question of what the Society's purposes are. There is no doubt that in the nineteenth century and perhaps up to the 1940s, the Society was associated in people's minds with the general cause of Empire. This was certainly how Markham saw it at the fiftieth anniversary in 1896 and the later president, Albert Gray, on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the death of Richard Hakluyt in 1916. Markham said that the 'heroic deeds' of the explorers were 'ennobling' and created patriotic zeal in readers. By the time of the 100th anniversary in 1946 the Society's officers were much more restrained and nostalgic, more reflective of Britain's perceived decline. Yet such views did not much impinge on the actual editorial work which continued to become more and more careful and professional, and I think it fair to claim that the aims of the Society as they had been set out in the 1866 remained accepted:

The Hakluyt Society which is established for the purpose of printing rare or unpublished Voyages and Travels, aims at opening by this means an easier access to the sources of a branch of knowledge, which yields to none in importance, and is

superior to most in agreeable variety. The narratives of travellers and navigators make us acquainted with the Earth, its inhabitants and productions; they exhibit the growth of intercourse among mankind, with its effects on civilization, and, while instructing they at the same time awaken attention by recounting the toils and adventures of those who first explored unknown and distant regions.

In 2013 the statement was more succinct:

To advance education by the publication of ... accurate and reliable records of voyages, travels, naval expeditions and other geographical material ... and thereby promote public understanding of the stages by which different parts of the world and their different societies have been brought into contact with one another ...

This does not seem to me to be in essence very different from the mid-nineteenth century statement, and so in this respect I think all is well and good: the Society has adapted to changing outlooks but is fundamentally maintaining its basic purposes. We are still sailing with Magellan under the Spanish flag in a way that its founder, William Desborough Cooley, would surely approve. Moreover, the Society continues, to my gratification at least, to produce its volumes in a handsome format so that one likes to have the books on one's shelves.

Yet I cannot wholly maintain a complacent view of this kind. There are practical and intellectual challenges. Twenty-five years ago we had well over 2000 subscribers and the costs of production were fairly comfortably covered. We also, I suspect, had various hidden subsidies from bodies like the British Museum and the R.G.S. and sometimes universities. Our address continues to be c/o the British Library and it is not unknown for visitors to turn up in Euston Road expecting to find palatial offices. The reality is that our Administrator, who is paid a fairly minimal salary, operates from his spare bedroom, and that all the other officials, not to mention the editors, are unpaid. Like other institutions these days, the Hakluyt Society has to pay its own way and does not receive any subsidies, hidden or otherwise.

At the same time, of course, the digital revolution has been in progress and it has posed considerable problems for a long-established and rather traditionalist body like the Hakluyt Society. Should we go with it or ignore it on the assumption that there would continue to be a core of old-fashioned people who liked to have a set of nicely bound books on their shelves? In the event, we have chosen to go with the revolution. All our volumes are now produced in both digital and printed form and we have made arrangements for all our previous volumes to be available in digital or print-on-demand form. At the same time we have developed our website and included an online *Journal* among other features. I think that the hope must be that we shall keep a core of subscribers (after all, the Society survived in the nineteenth century with fewer than 500 supporters) but that the revenue to produce our books will come from greater sales of each volume as it is published – that is to a clientele that is no longer captive.

I could say much more about these practical problems but I think that underlying them there may be a deeper and more intractable situation which is intellectual. Many younger scholars, especially those affected by the growing popularity of travel literature studies in universities, do not regard the Hakluyt Society and its products with much favour. They and many others have been influenced by post-modernism and in this case more

particularly by the approaches popularised by Edward Said to what he called ‘Orientalism’. An explorer’s or traveller’s written records are not simple evidence of what the traveller saw in describing the people and places he had visited. His very presence in a place and the way he described things was, whether the traveller was actually himself aware of it or not, part of an imperialistic and intellectual takeover. The records are to be discounted if not indeed vilified.

I would own up that historians in particular have been inclined to take travel literature at face value, and I think there is much to be learned from Said and his followers. Indeed, I have made great efforts to attract them into the Hakluyt Society and with some success. Although I agree that travellers may be mixed up with colonialism, I believe that the key to studying them is encounter between different peoples and cultures with all the implications that this has for understanding what we now call our ‘globalised world’. My no doubt old-fashioned view is that a post-modern approach often shows little understanding of historical realities and is often based on a limited analysis of finally published texts rather than, for example, the original diaries and notebooks of an explorer which I believe one should try to get back to in order to discover the real nature of the encounter.

Having said that I have to confess that my own practice in this respect has run into difficulties. At last, at long last you may think, I come on to what I promised at the beginning – some account of my own experiences in editing text of travellers for publication. First of all Jacob Wainwright, whom I have mentioned already. He was a Yao who was born somewhere near the eastern shores of Lake Malawi probably in about 1856. When still very young, like many another young Yao at the time, he was sold into slavery and marched down to the coast at Kilwa for transhipment to the slave market in Zanzibar. However a Royal Navy anti-slave trade patrol intercepted the slave dhow and freed the captives. The young man was eventually taken to India, to a school at Nasik near Mumbai (Bombay) run by the Anglican Church Missionary Society. Here Wainwright was given his new name and learned to read and write English. Then in 1872 came a call for volunteers from Nasik School to return to East Africa to help carry supplies inland for the great Dr Livingstone who was searching for the sources of the Nile (in the wrong place) and thought to be somewhere near Lake Tanganyika where Stanley had found him on the occasion of the famous meeting in 1871. Wainwright did join the party and was with Livingstone for the last few months of the great man’s life.



Figure 11. A portrait of Jacob Wainwright.

As you probably know, Livingstone died on the southern shores of Lake Bangweulu in what is now Zambia in May 1873. His African followers decided that they must carry Livingstone's body back to the coast to prove that he was dead and that they had not deserted him. Because of his good English, Wainwright was chosen to carve the inscription on the tree near where Livingstone's heart (and other internal organs) were buried. This much of the story is pretty well known. What is less well known is that Wainwright also kept a journal in English describing what he called the 'troublesome and toilsome' journey to the coast.

It is this text of Wainwright's which I wanted to annotate and publish because it is a truly remarkable record. Unfortunately, Wainwright's original journal has been lost. The story now becomes very complicated, but it happened that a translation into German of the text was made for a German geographical periodical and published in April 1874. It is this text which I have taken and re-translated back into English. I did not try to change it into what may have been Wainwright's brand of English prose but I hope I got both the essential information and the spirit of the thing. Nevertheless, the difficulty is that I cannot claim that this is actually Wainwright's original. (I have had the mortification, incidentally, of having someone steal the story of Wainwright from my edition and produce an eBook which grossly and even offensively distorts the true nature of Wainwright's life and character.)

The problems concerning the edition I am currently working on are much more briefly described and illustrated. James Augustus Grant, as I have said, a son of the manse from Nairn became an Indian Army officer and in 1860 joined another Indian Army man, John Hanning Speke, on the R.G.S.-organised expedition to East Africa designed to reach the source of the Nile which Speke guessed would be found to issue from the lake he had discovered two years before and which he had christened 'Lake Victoria'.

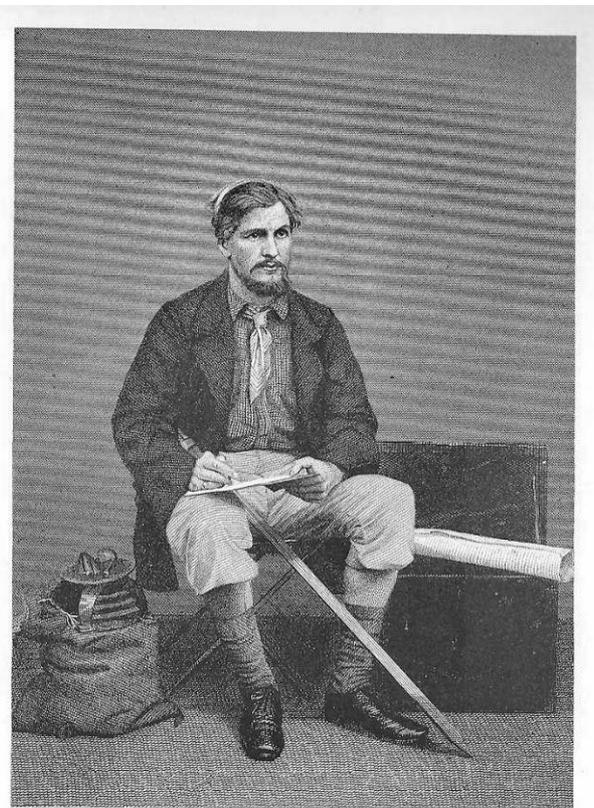


Figure 12. A portrait of James Augustus Grant.

Grant is a somewhat neglected figure but he did three remarkable things on the expedition which lasted from 1860 to 1863. He collected no fewer than 702 plant specimens of which 113 were new to botanical science. Secondly, although he was by no means a brilliant artist, he produced over 250 sketches and watercolour depictions of people and places in East Africa and along the Nile valley which were in most cases the first ever visual record of a vast tract of Africa. I have reproduced and written about some of them but hope to show them all in my edition. Thirdly, Grant kept a very detailed day-to-day record of his experiences and observations in the form of a journal. This is a priceless and wonderful source of information.



Figure 13. A watercolour by James Augustus Grant.

My original hope was to publish the journal. However, as you can see from figure 12 below, it is written in a miniscule hand and is often difficult or impossible to decipher. Moreover, it is mainly in note form rather than connected sentences. Even if I had been able to transcribe it all – and that was impossible – it would have been so detailed and so dense a text that it would have been unreadable by anyone taking up the Hakluyt Society volume. What I am doing, therefore, is to produce an annotated edition of the book which Grant produced, *A Walk Across Africa*. I supplement the text with extracts from the journal at key points and with Grant's pictures. So, once again, the business of choosing a traveller's original record of his explorations has not been straightforward.

valid and that it will continue to produce interesting volumes which your library and its members will find worthwhile. I believe travellers' texts can tell us a great deal about the way our now globalised world has emerged and that by promoting their study the Hakluyt Society can in a modest way promote understanding. That is why, when I was President, I ventured to change the logo, or rather to embellish it by including a phrase from Hakluyt himself which I think sums it all up: 'Compassing the Vaste Globe of the Earth'.