

**“The bees that sat upon the Grecian’s lips”:
Classical Contaminations in
Early Modern English Drama**

Edited by Alessandro Grilli and Emanuel Stelzer





Skenè Texts DA • 5

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Supplement to *SKENÈ. Journal of Theatre and Drama Studies*

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Palazzo Roncioni - Lungarno Mediceo, 16, I-56127 Pisa

info@edizioniets.com

www.edizioniets.com

Distribuzione

Messaggerie Libri SPA

Sede legale: via G. Verdi 8 - 20090 Assago (MI)

Promozione

PDE PROMOZIONE SRL

via Zago 2/2 - 40128 Bologna

ISBN (pdf) 978-88467-7273-2

ISBN 978-88467-7274-9

ISSN 2464-9295



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“More lines than is in the new map”: Modern and Ptolemaic Cosmography in *Twelfth Night**

CARLO M. BAJETTA

Abstract

In 1599 Edward Wright (1558?-1615), professor of mathematics at Cambridge, published *The Correction of Certain Errors in Navigation*. This volume contained new mathematical tables and described a method to plan straight line routes on maps based on the Mercator system. Drawing inspiration from Ptolemy, Mercator had utilised coordinate geometry not only as a reliable foundation, but also as a tool for creating and implementing a mathematically coherent map. His famous projection not only facilitated navigation but also conveyed the concept of an inhabitable and interconnected Earth – which stood in contrast to the classical Greek notion of four separate continents, where communication between their inhabitants was limited. This double attitude to Ptolemy’s cosmography also informed Wright’s ‘Chart of the World’ based on his own projection of a globe which his former associate and business partner, the artisan and mathematician Emeric Molyneux, had cast in 1592. The map was attached to a limited number of copies of Richard Hakluyt’s 1599-1600 edition of the *Principall Navigations*. This revolutionary, foldable map was the first of its kind in England and one of the first to mention Virginia in the early modern era. It quickly became famous; in *Twelfth Night* (1599-1602; probably 1601), Malvolio is described as one who “does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies” (3.2.60-1). This paper explores the links between Wright, Hakluyt, and Sir Walter Raleigh’s circle, pointing to the fertile negotiation between modern and Ptolemaic cosmography which informs both their works and the imagination of Shakespeare’s time.

KEYWORDS *Twelfth Night*; cosmography; Ptolemy; early modern maps; Walter Raleigh; Edward Wright

* This essay is part of the “Classical Receptions in Early Modern English Drama” Research Project of National Interest (PRIN2017XAA3ZF) supported by the Italian Ministry of Education, University, and Research (MUR).

In *Twelfth Night* 3.2, the usually pompous and humourless Malvolio, convinced that Olivia loves him, beams with delight. He is portrayed as a man who “does smile his face into more lines than is in the new map with the augmentation of the Indies” (3.2.60-1). Just as this character is no doubt essential for the play (Arthur Symonds once claimed he was “the protagonist of the play, the centre of our amused interest”, Shakespeare 2016, 1826), map-making and cosmography, evoked in Malvolio’s wrinkling smile, are important elements of this pièce, too.

The very first scenes of *Twelfth Night*, in fact, centre on spatial opposites: Olivia is distant – in terms both of miles and of affection – from the Duke; Illyria is a country where Viola does not wish to be, given that her twin brother Sebastian “is in Elysium” (1.2.3); a storm separates Viola and Sebastian, who may have drowned while she has managed to reach the shore. Heaven, earth, sea, and land frame a plot of confused identities, which will eventually be resolved by the final epiphany of individuality, which makes impossible love possible.

Referred to no less than ten times in *Twelfth Night*, Illyria, quite significantly, would not have sounded like a real country to many – though, as Lea Puljcan Juric has convincingly argued, by no means all – of Shakespeare’s spectators: it had ceased to indicate a geopolitical entity long before, following the Ottoman expansion into the Balkans during the fifteenth century. As well as being mentioned in numerous classical sources from Pliny to Ovid it was, though also, a name found on many Renaissance maps (cf. Puljcan 2019, 12-14).¹

Several ‘new maps’ including the Indies, that is, the Americas, had appeared in Shakespeare’s lifetime. Their importance and popularity can hardly be overestimated. They provided adventurers and merchants with a means of planning their journeys, while, at the same time, frequently advertising an economic agenda. To quote but an example, Robert Thorne’s world map (originally drafted in 1527 for Henry VIII) depicted North America as a solid mass, suggesting

1 One should note that the name does not appear in Shakespeare’s most evident sources for the play, Barnaby Riche’s *Apolonius and Silla*, set on the island of Cyprus (Riche 1581; 1593, G2-L3v), or in Plautus’s *Menaechmi*.

the impossibility of a Northwest Passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific. This map had been republished in 1576 for the Muscovy Company, probably with the intent of showing that no North-West passage existed – and, implicitly, that trade with the Indies could only have been pursued via Asia and the Indian Ocean.²

These documents were certainly also a trigger to ignite one's imagination. As Jeremy Black has argued, exploration and maps

affected not just the knowledge of places and peoples that was available, but also the very way of seeing and explaining the world. This was the case from the existence, number and shape of its continents, particularly the understanding of the existence and scale of the Americas, to the extent of the world's circumference; and from the projections employed by mapmakers to the perspectives deployed. Maps and globes literally changed, and these changes, and the very nature of change itself, encouraged an awareness of a world that was at once known and knowable and yet also in the process of discovery and thus uncertain. (2018, 6)

A renewed interest in maps in both commercial and literary terms was ultimately related to the development in knowledge brought about by the advancement in mathematical cartography. The rediscovery of Claudius Ptolemy's *Geographike Hyphegesis* ("Guide to the Description of the Earth", commonly known as the *Geography*) in the fifteenth century, and, much later, its new and corrected Latin translation by Regiomontanus (1525) together with Erasmus's Greek edition (1533) prompted scholars such as the Flemish cartographer Gerard Mercator (Gerard De Kremer, 1512-1594) to look for new ways of solving the problem, first tackled by Ptolemy, of how to project a spherical earth on a flat surface. Drawing inspiration from Ptolemy's grid system, which used latitude and longitude to define the position of places on the Earth's surface, Mercator utilised coordinate geometry not only as a reliable foundation, but also as a tool for creating and implementing a mathematically coherent map. His famous projection (1569) not only facilitated navigation but also

² Hakluyt's *Divers Voyages* also included a new engraved version of this map; see below and Black 2018, 22.

conveyed the concept of an inhabitable and interconnected Earth – which stood in contrast to the classical Greek notion of separate continents, where communication between their inhabitants was limited. No matter how rooted in antiquity, then, Mercator’s idea of an ordained and accessible cosmos was reflected in his cartographic representation (cf. Woodward 2007; Cosgrove 2007; Sáenz-López Pérez 2014; Mentz 2014; Black 2018, 30).

In this sense, Mercator’s publications paved the way for many early modern works on cosmography, a science that, as Peter Macall has observed, had many facets in the Renaissance:

There is no exact modern equivalent of the intellectual pursuit of cosmography as sixteenth-century Europeans practiced it. Its closest modern relative is geography, an ancient science that was only then making its way into the curricula of English colleges. Cosmography, by contrast, also included the study of history in ways that differentiated its practitioners’ work from later geographers. The brilliant polymath John Dee in 1570 noted that cosmography included geography along with music, astronomy, and hydrography. A contemporary cosmographer declared (in a book that was quite possibly in the lawyer’s room) that this discipline was the most important science known on earth. There was no one ‘so meane witted, but will confesse her ample use, nor yet so simply learned but must acknowledge her manifold benefites’. (2008, 19)

The first complete atlas of the world appeared in Shakespeare’s lifetime. It was drawn by the prominent European cartographer Abraham Ortelius (1527-1598); the enduring popularity of his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, first published in Antwerp in 1570, is evidenced by its forty editions released by 1612. Ortelius made no mystery of his indebtedness to Ptolemy: in his *Parergon*, a work attached to the 1595 Latin edition of the *Theatrum*, he clearly stated that his map of Illyria was based on Ptolemy’s fifth Map of Europe.³ Such indebtedness was evident also in Gerard de Jode’s ‘rival’ atlas,

3 See the 1606 English translation of Ortelius’s *Parergon*: “We in this Mappe have expressed only Ptolemey’s Illyricum, which hee divideth into two parts, namely into Liburnia and Dalmatia” (qtd in Puljcan 2019, 290).

Speculum orbis terrarum (first published in 1578). In fact, the very first paragraph of the introduction in the 1593 edition, enlarged and published by De Jode's son Cornelius after his father's death explicitly mentioned Ptolemy's name:

Geographia, ut ea diffinitur [i.e., definitur] à Ptolomaeo, est imitatio picturae totius terrae, cum ijs, quae sibi universaliter sunt adiuncta.

Quare huius proprium erit continuam terram, una cum eius partibus praecipuis, quadam regulari forma picturae imitatione ferè demonstrare; hoc est eam ostendere in tabulis, quemadmodum se habeat in nativa sua positione . . . (1593, 2S2)

[Geography, as it is defined by Ptolemy, is the depiction of the whole earth, along with those things which are universally connected to it. Therefore, its purpose is to depict the land, together with its principal parts, in a certain regular form that is almost an imitation of a painting; that is, to show it on maps as it exists in its natural position.]

The importance of a quasi-Ptolemaic 'natural depiction' was evident also in the work of Edward Wright (1558?-1615), professor of mathematics at Cambridge. In 1599 the latter published what would become a seminal volume in this field, *Certaine Errors in Navigation* (republished in 1610 as *Certaine Errors in Navigation, Detected and Corrected*). This book contained new mathematical tables and described a method to plan straight line routes on maps based on the Mercator system. Mercator's double attitude to Ptolemy's cosmography also informed Wright's 'Chart of the World', which was based on a Mercator projection of a globe which his former associate and business partner, the artisan and mathematician Emeric Molyneux, had cast in 1592. This revolutionary, foldable map – the first of its kind in England and one of the first to mention Virginia in the early modern period – was attached to a limited number of copies of Hakluyt's 1599-1600 edition of his *Principall Navigations*.⁴

⁴ See London, British Library 212.d.1-2; San Marino, Huntington Library RB 3440 (first state, with a single cartouche in the South Atlantic); Oxford, Bodleian Library, H. 8.15; San Marino, Huntington Library RB 3438, Windsor,

No doubt, as critics have almost unanimously recognised, this heavily lined map “with the augmentation of the Indies” was the one Shakespeare had in mind when writing *Twelfth Night* (composed between 1599 and 1602, quite likely in 1601; cf. Shakespeare 2016, 1828). Rather importantly, though, the term ‘Illyria’ does not appear on the Wright-Molyneux map. It does appear, however, in a detailed engraving in de Jode’s 1593 *Speculum* (which, in a cartouche text attached to the map of Illyria, adds the alternate name “Ilirici” to “Sclavoniae”; 2S1-2S2) as well as in Ortelius’s work (*Pannoniae et Illyrici Veteris Tabula*), which also features a reproduction of the ancient world according to Ptolemy’s principles (*Aevi Veteri Typus Geographicus*; cf. Puljican 2019, 290-3). Three of the latter book’s reprints were issued near the probable composition date of the play, in 1596, 1598 and 1601.

Most importantly, in about 1601 an English *Epitome of Ortelius his Theater of the world, wherein the principal regions of the earth are described in smalle mappes* was produced in Antwerp for the London bookseller John Norton (later to become the King’s Printer in Latin, Greek and Hebrew between 1603 and 1612).⁵ A map of

Eton College Ag.4.1-2 (second state, with another cartouche located in the South Pacific); see Anthony Payne, Richard Hakluyt’s *Divers Voyages* (1582) and *Principal Navigations* (1589; 1598/9 to 1600): *a Census of Surviving Copies* https://www.hakluyt.com/downloadable_files/Hakluyt_Census/1599.pdf (Accessed 26 October 2024). To this list one should probably add: John Carter Brown Library, Providence, Rhode Island, Map Collection D598 P975n and University of Virginia Library, A1598.H35.

5 On the date of this edition see Pollard and Redgrave 1976-1991, no. 18857; *ESTC*, no. S120945. Various translations and editions were also available by this time. Among these, a French (1590), an Italian (1598), and two Dutch versions (both 1598) as well as two new Latin editions (1601), one of which published in Antwerp by the prestigious press of Jan Moretus, who had taken over the *Officina Plantiniana*, the famous printing workshop originally established by Christopher Plantin. This edition claimed to be “the latest” and to have been updated and corrected, with the addition of some new maps, (“*Editio ultima, multis locis emendata, et novis aliquot tabulis aucta*”, as advertised by its frontispiece; Ortelius 1601, A1). Some of these books may have been consulted while preparing the English version, which boasted in its titlepage to have been “*donne in more exact manner, then the*

‘Illyricum’ appears here in the section devoted to Eastern Europe, preceded by a description of the same country:

Between the Adriatic sea & the kingdom of Hungarie were in old tyme two famous regions, the one Illyricum, the other Dalmatia, but Illyricum being now devided into many sundry prouinces, as Schlaunonia, Croatia, Carnia, or Carinthia, Istria, Bosnia, &c. maketh that the confines of this country (through diuersie of the opinions of authors) are not easy to be set downe.

Strabo saith that this country hath good hauens, the soile is very fat, devided into vineyards & Oliue trees, exceptin certaine stony places.

Among the country people some are found to haue great bagges growing vnder their chinnes, which is said to proceede of their drincking of snow water, which falleth from the hilles. The famous citties were Flamone, Segne, Iadere, Scardone, Spalare & Epidaurum, which being destroyed by the Gothes, the cittie of Ragusia is growne great through their ruynes, being now a cittie of great trasyke, but of litle territorie, and accompted the least comon weith or republyke in the world, & is now vnder the protection of the Turck for the which they pay a tribute of 12000 ducats by yeare.

In Carinthia is a cittie called Clagen, where they obserue an old custome albeit very rigorous, for yf a thief bee taken with the fact hee is forthwith hanged, without more a doo: & they hang those also which are vpon great presumptuous thought culpable of theft, & 3 dayes after iudgement is giuen on the case, & yf the iudges then fynde the party guylty is hee left hanging on the gallows til hee fall thence, but yf hee be vnguilty hee is taken downe, & honestly buried, to make him amends. (Ortelius 1601, N1v-N2)

Even if the way to deal with thieves in the Austrian Carinthia region would no doubt be applauded by the inflexible Angelo of *Measure for Measure*, this text can hardly be accounted for as an analogue or even less likely as a direct ‘source’ of *Twelfth Night*. What one may say, however, is that Shakespeare may have been thinking not merely of one map, or even of a map of Illyria in particular, but of

lyke declarations in Latin, French, or other languages” and to include “new mappes wanting in the Latin editions” (ibid.).

a series of *representations* of Illyria and of the world (old and new), when composing his play.

It is worth noting that John Norton (1556/7-1612), the London stationer at whose instance the English translation of Ortelius was printed, was a prosperous book trader and importer, who, at about this time was undertaking a rather ambitious project, the publication of Sir Henry Savile's Greek edition of Chrysostom (which was eventually published in eight volumes on a press specially set up by Melchisidec Bradwood at Eton between 1610 and 1612). Besides his interest in Greek culture, Norton was a man with good connections both in Scotland (soon after James I's accession, he was granted the office of king's printer of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew) and in England. His contacts at the Elizabethan court were among the circle of the Earl of Essex; one of them was the earl's secretary, Henry Cuffe. In a note in his will, Cuffe gave instructions that the remarkable sum of £40 was to be left to his "honest friend Jhon Norton the bookseller". While this was certainly meant also as a way to clear a debt, Cuffe also mentioned that it was a "recompence for the trouble which this great tempest (I feare) is like to bringe uppon him" (Gadd 2008). The "tempest" was the attempted coup against Elizabeth I of February 1601, which cost Essex and many of his followers (including Cuffe) their lives. Just a few months before this, in fact, Norton had been entrusted with a secret letter from Essex to James VI. However, the printer was never accused of being one of the conspirators. In this respect he was luckier than another of Essex's followers, Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton, who, stripped of his earldom, spent over two years in prison for his role in the rising (cf. Stewart 2005, 50-70; Gadd 2008; Honan 2012). The earl would later be much involved in the colonial enterprises of the 1600-1610s: he helped to equip George Weymouth's expedition to Virginia in 1605, and, in the same year, became a member of the Virginia Company (he joined also the East India Company four years later; Rowse 1965, 242-77; Honan 2012).

Even before this time, between the mid-1580s and the mid-1590s, Southampton's sometime card-playing companion at court Sir Walter Raleigh (cf. Honan 2012) had been sponsoring projects which would have revolutionised the English idea of the world and of its representation. His plans for the Virginia and Guiana

expeditions were in large part the fruit of his collaboration with the leading scholars and mapmakers of the day. Two names stand out as Raleigh's chief intellectual partners in this enterprise, those of Thomas Harriot and of Richard Hakluyt. Working mostly in Paris, Hakluyt had been studying, taking notes, and gathering from explorers and navigators "intelligences" intended to help the English "western planting and discoverie" (SP 12/167, fol. 1). More importantly, he had the occasion to make use of King Henri III's library and meet with some of the leading authorities in the field, including André Thevet, the royal cosmographer. At Raleigh's request he had written and presented to the Queen the *Discourse of Western Planting* (entitled "A particuler discourse concerninge the greate necessitie and manifolde commodities that are like to growe to this realme of Englande by the westerne discoueries lately attempted") in 1584-1585.⁶ Soon after this, however—and, most notably, after the official start of the privateering war against Spain following Philip II's order to seize all English ships in May 1585 – any news related to the plans for the Virginia plantation project were kept confidential. As David Beers Quinn has evidenced, Raleigh "had to prepare the first three expeditions with a minimum of publicity which could be useful to the enemy" (Quinn 1955, 6).

By the autumn of 1586 the state of war, even if unofficial, was quite evident to everybody. Notwithstanding Elizabeth's attempts to negotiate with the Duke of Parma, the days of the Armada were not far off (cf. Bajetta 2017, 121-57). The first voyage had already taken place, and it would have made little sense to try to conceal what had become quite evident, that the English were trying to establish a permanent trading base on the North American coast. Raleigh started a campaign to find supporters for his project. Hakluyt, no doubt with his consent, praised Elizabeth's favourite in

6 Hakluyt's *Discourse* was written before the return of Amadas and Barlowe: the manuscript in the New York Public Library reads "A particular discourse concerninge the great necessitie and manifolde comodities that are like to growe to this Realme of Englande by the Westerne discoueries lately attempted, Written in the yere 1584. by Richarde Hackluyt of Oxforde at the requeste and direction of the righte worshipfull Master Walter Raghley nowe knight, before the commynge home of his Twoo Barkes" (MssCol 1282, fol. 1).

his dedication of the English translation of Peter Martyr's *De Orbe Novo* (1587). In this text he provided an important detail as to what was happening in Raleigh's household:

Cum vero artis navigatoriae peritia, praecipuum regni insularis ornamentum Mathematicarum scientiarum adminiculis adhibitum suum apud nos splendorem posse consequi facile perspiceres, Thomam Hariotum, iuvenem in illis disciplinis excellentem, honestissimo salario iam diu donatum apud te aluisti, cuius subsidio horis successivis nobilissimas scientias illas addisceres, tuosque familiares duces maritimi, quos habes non paucos, cum praxi theoriam non sine fructu incredibili coiungeret. (Taylor 1935, 2.360; 365-6)

[Ever since you perceived that skill in the navigator's art, the chief ornament of an island kingdom, might attain its splendour amongst us if the aid of the mathematical sciences were enlisted, you have maintained in your household Thomas Harriot, a man preeminent in those studies, at a most liberal salary in order that by his aid you might acquire those noble sciences in your leisure hours, and that your own sea captains, of whom there are not a few, might link theory with practice, not without almost incredible results]

Harriot, the young man who was teaching Raleigh and his sea captains how to navigate according to his new principles at Raleigh's large house in the Strand, Durham House, was a young Oxford graduate. He was a true Renaissance man, and one with which Raleigh would have indeed willingly spent many of his leisure hours. He was a scholar admired not only by his friends Hakluyt and Robert Hues (the cosmographer who authored *Tractatus de Globis*, 1594, significantly, another book dedicated to Raleigh), but also by the notorious contemporary hair-splitting pedant Gabriel Harvey, who placed him alongside polymaths such as Thomas Digges and John Dee. Hariot's grasp of mathematics was short of prodigious: among his innovations are the use of *ab* to represent *a* multiplied by *b* and the introduction of the signs "<" and ">" to indicate "greater" and "smaller than". In addition to this, as the large amount of his manuscript notes now at the British Library and at Petworth House show, he also devoted time to the study of optics,

gravity, and astronomy (his discoveries on sunspots and on Jupiter's moons were made independently of and contemporaneously with Galileo's; cf. Stedall, 2003, 4-5; Arianrhod 2019, 262-3).

At Durham House, Harriot was teaching a new system of calculating nautical routes. Notwithstanding the rumours spread by Raleigh's enemies, according to which Harriot and he were daily deriding the scriptures, his 'lectures' were solidly orthodox in their method. This was not based on a heliocentric model (of which Harriot was no doubt aware), but derived mostly from that described in *Almagest*, Ptolemy's mathematical and astronomical treatise on the motions of the stars and planetary paths, the contents of which Harriot applied to navigation purposes, correcting its calculations, especially when it came to the problem of finding a reliable way to establish one's coordinates at sea (cf. Arianrhod 2019, 29-40).

While the geo-centric vision of the universe is sometimes seen today merely as a relic of ancient lore—and possibly as a slightly naïve theory – Ptolemy's *Almagest* played a crucial role in the Renaissance as a foundational astronomical text. It was, in fact, far more than a star catalogue. Its name derives from the Arabic *al-majisṭī*, meaning "the greatest"; Ptolemy had called it a "mathematical synthesis" (*Mathematike syntaxis*). As such, it was a grandiose model of the world, starting with a discussion of Aristotle's cosmology, moving on to the spherical form of the heavens, via the analysis of the motion of the moon and the stars, the lunar parallax, the eclipses up to the deviation of planets from the ecliptic (what appears as the oblique path of the Sun through the stars). As a model, it was comprehensive, and fascinating. As Owen Gingerich has observed:

Ptolemy's *Almagest*, more than any other book, convinced people that the seemingly complex phenomena of the heavens could be represented by a simple underlying mathematical description, one that afforded the possibility of continuing prediction of celestial events. Certainly, this was a major milestone in the development of science. (1998, vi)

Both Harriot and Hakluyt (who had corresponded with Mercator in the 1580s) were actively researching better systems to describe the

world.⁷ Hakluyt had realised this was his calling in his early Oxford days, when his cousin had invited him to compare an old Ptolemaic map with one in all likelihood similar to Ortelius's:

Reviewing this modern map, the elder Hakluyt emphasized the 'speciall commodities, & particular wants' of each territory, 'which by the benefit of traffike, & entercourse of merchants, are plentifully supplied'. The list, linking geographical features associated with enterprise with the forms of political regime in which commercial exchange might occur, demonstrated that God had so disposed the world to balance scarcities in one place with abundance in another to promote exchange between regions. The new map, then, revealed that history was now not just unveiling more and more of the truths of God's creation, but bringing the dispersed peoples of the world into mutually beneficial exchange with one another. (Sacks 2023, par. 12)

Hakluyt and Harriot were not merely concerned with maps and geography; their interest lay in a more comprehensive, cosmological and philosophical, view of the world, a search for a unifying meaning as well as for a more efficient mapping of the Earth in relation to constellations. Both Harriot and Hakluyt, as David Harris Sacks has recently argued, shared a passion for knowledge and an Erasmian-inspired desire that the much-vexed Christian world of the Sixteenth century, the battlefield of so many confessional confrontations, could finally find peace (2023).

Harriot, not a preacher like Hakluyt (but certainly by no means the 'atheist' advertised by the anti-Raleigh propaganda), chose a very concrete way to do this. He contributed with his expertise, his preparatory lectures for, and his own participation in the Roanoke expeditions of the mid-1580s, which he chronicled in his *Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia* of 1588 (cf. Sacks 2023; Horton 2023).⁸ Hakluyt chose another path. As Anthony

⁷ For an excellent survey of contemporary ideas of cosmography and their ideology see Mosley 2009. On Hakluyt and map-making see Skelton 1974.

⁸ There has been some debate as to whether Harriot was present both on the 1584 and the 1585 voyage; see Horton 2023.

Payne has demonstrated, he worked assiduously to publish, and publicise, most of the materials he had originally assembled in his *Divers Voyages and Discourse of Western Planting* in the two editions of his later *Principal Navigations* (1589 and 1600). He described his labour (“travail”, appropriately) of compiling the new edition of the *Navigations* as “zealously bestowed” for “the honour and benefit of this Common weale wherein I live” (1598, *4r). Such an effort, however, went beyond a general patriotic aim or the support of a specific colonial scheme. Successful attempts to reach lands as far away as Asia and the Americas, as well as commerce with the peoples of such countries were to him

a pledge of Gods further favour both unto us and them: to them especially, unto whose doores I doubt not in time shalbe by us caried the incomparable treasure of the trueth of Christianity, and of the Gospell, while we use and exercise common trade with their marchants. (Hakluyt 1589, *3r; cf. Payne 2023, 85-6; see also Payne 2008)

As Sacks has observed, Hakluyt interpreted his task as that of setting “the stories of discovery into an orderly, time-governed narrative, tracing the sequence of events that would advance in practical terms”, what he perceived as “their ordained, providential end” (2023, par. 15). Interestingly, while his inspiration was no doubt Christian in temper, Hakluyt’s methodology was founded on the Classics. In his dedication to Sir Francis Walsingham, he stated that

I have referred every voyage to his Author, which both in person hath performed, and in writing hath left the same: for I am not ignorant of Ptolomies assertion, that *Peregrinationis historia*, and not those wearie volumes bearing the titles of universall Cosmographie . . . beyng in deed most untruly and unprofitable ramassed and hurled together, is that which must bring us to the certayne and full discoverie of the world. (1589, *3v)

Following the precepts of Ptolemy (*Geography*, 1.2), in the *Principal Navigations*, as in his previous publications, Hakluyt aimed at

presenting transcripts of documents with a minimum of editorial interventions, accompanied by a clear citation of their origins:

first principle and chiefe ground in all Geographie, as Ptolome saith, is the history of travell, that is, reports made by travellers skilfull in Geometrie and Astronomie . . . *Peregrinationis historia*, that is, true reportes of skilful travailers, as Ptolome writeth, that in such controversies of Geographie must put us out of doubt. (Hakluyt 1589, 613; 615)⁹

Such emphasis on sources was of particular significance in the mid-late 1590s, an era of well-known, if controversial, sea voyages. In 1595 Raleigh organised his journey to Guiana and the next year he published his account of the enterprise with the captivating title of *The Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guiana, with a Relation of the Great and Golden City of Manoa (which the Spaniards Call El Dorado)*. The book was both praised and criticised by contemporaries and was widely discussed at court and elsewhere (cf. Lorimer 2006). The mid-late 1590s had also been the era of the grandiose, if not always successful, naval expeditions by Raleigh and Essex: the Cadiz raid of 1596 and the ‘Islands voyage’ (an attempt to intercept the Spanish Plate Fleet at the Azores) of the following year, on both of which Southampton served as a volunteer. The latter expedition, in particular, ended up in an epic failure, but triggered a series of manuscript pamphlets in which the protagonists of the events gave their views on what had happened (Nicholls-Williams 2011, 119–30). In this respect, the recurrent references to piracy and fight at sea in *Twelfth Night*, as well as Feste’s remark “I would have men of such constancy put to sea, that their business might be everything and their intent everywhere, for that’s it that always makes a good voyage of nothing” (*TN*, 2.4.77) would have sounded as relevant to the 1597 expedition to many.

It is worth noting that another, however indirect, intriguing connection links Raleigh with *Twelfth Night*. Virginio Orsini, Duke of

⁹ Payne points out that these quotations were taken from the treatise on Frobisher and the north-west passage reprinted by Hakluyt from Willes 1577 (where they are at fol. 233 and 235v–236r).

Bracciano, nephew of the Grand Duke of Tuscany was received and lavishly entertained by Queen Elizabeth I in January 1601. At court he witnessed a play, “mixed with music and dances” as he wrote, probably performed by Shakespeare’s company. (Hotson 1954, 208-16; Zapperi 1993, 60-8; Latham-Youings 1999, 202-3; Shakespeare 2008, 93-4; 157; Vertunni 2019, 65-8; cf. also Morucci 2015). There might be a possibility to claim that Shakespeare intended the name of his Duke in the play as a homage to Duke Orsini or changed this for an *ad hoc* performance commissioned for the latter’s visit. What seems more likely, as Keir Elam has suggested is that “Shakespeare, present as an actor at the Whitehall banquet, remembered Duke Orsini when he wrote his comedy, perhaps later in the same year or early in the next” (Shakespeare 2008, 94). Be that as it may, Raleigh together with his friend Lord Cobham had probably spent a good deal of time with him: they escorted him to Hampton Court on 9 January and rode with him from Gravesend to Chatham on the 13th. In mid-late January, Raleigh wrote to Sir Rober Cecil that Orsini had safely arrived in Flushing (Cecil Papers 186/132; Latham-Youings 1999, 203).

In a recent miscellaneous volume on early modern cosmographical knowledge, François Laroque has argued that Shakespeare found the name Illyria “in Cicero’s *Offices* and in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses*”, and that this “seems to correspond to the Adriatic coast of present-day Croatia”. He then goes on to affirm that “such a descriptive uncertainty corresponds to the dramatist’s cosmographic strategy of not identifying the exact nature of the geographical decor in order to make indirect allusions to England” (2023, 263-4). Laroque’s affirmation, which is clearly influenced by the work of critics such as Manfred Pfister, Roger Warren, Stanley Wells and Leah Marcus, confirms a tendency, as Puljcan has noted, “to romanticise Illyria”: typically, “modern-day critics overemphasise its ‘poetic’ quality”, possibly as a reaction to the “Romantic glorification of the Balkans” (2019, 19-20; see also Shakespeare 2008, 68-77).

No need, to be sure, to argue that Shakespeare ‘researched on Illyria’ to write *Twelfth Night*. Certainly, though, this play resonates both with this name and with the complex ideological interplay between old and new geography, old and new world(s). As Laroque has justly observed:

Shakespeare's plays constantly refer to maps, to the lie of the land, to forests, seas, cities as well as to various aspects of the countryside, even though the playwright never uses the words 'cosmography' or 'geography'. (2023, 256)

In fact, neither 'cosmography' nor 'geography' are per se relevant in *Twelfth Night*. What lies at its centre is Orsino's court, to which the sea brings novelty and love. The point of arrival, the final destination and destiny of the characters' terrestrial and sea journeys is standing before the duke (which for a Elizabethan, used to an ever-itinerant queen, would be synonymous with the court). Just as Orsino's court is the ultimate *locus* of the play, what lies at the core of *Twelfth Night* is the Elizabethan courtly discourse of travel.

Whether or not Shakespeare's mention of a "School of Night" in *Love Labour's Lost* was really meant as an allusion to Raleigh's and Harriot's circle of 'obscure' mathematicians, map-makers and philosophers, there is little doubt that for about a decade Durham House had been a focal point for the new English colonisation attempts (cf. Acheson 1903; Strathmann 1951; Bradbrook 2011; Reid 2014). Such endeavours were built on works based on a revisionist vision of Ptolemy's *Geography*, which, as the surviving evidence from contemporary private libraries show, was a popular book among Elizabethan courtiers.¹⁰ Raleigh owned a copy of it, as witnessed by two entries in the list of some of the volumes he kept with him during his imprisonment, extant in British Library MS 57555 (fols. 138 and 166v: "Ptolemie" and "Ptolemaei tabulae"; cf. also Oakeshott 1968, nos. 8 and 385). As seen above, 'Malvolio's' map, the Wright-Molineaux engraving attached to Hakluyt's *Navigations*, was inspired by Ptolemaic principles. This document had its roots, in fact, in the Durham House circle: Molyneux's work had been sponsored by Raleigh's nephew William Sanderson, and two of his globes were presented to the Queen in 1592 (Shirley 1983, 218-22; McConnell, 2004). Wright, in his turn, had been captain of the *Hope*

10 About twenty-nine copies of Ptolemy's works were owned by Elizabethan and Jacobean courtiers: see the COLEEN database available via the Skenè Digital open-access archives platform at the University of Verona: <https://clare.dlss.univr.it/>.

in Sir Francis Drake's West Indian voyage of 1585-1586. On his way back, Drake evacuated some of the Raleigh colonists who had remained on Roanoke Island, and brought them back to England. As A.J. Apt has affirmed, "Wright probably had ample opportunity on the return voyage to make the acquaintance of and to discuss navigational mathematics with Thomas Harriot, one of the colonists and his near contemporary" (Apt 2004). Most interestingly, Wright had also been frequenting the earl of Essex's entourage in the weeks before the attempted rebellion of 1600/1 (*ibid.*).

Shakespeare might have had two maps at hand, the Wright-Molineaux, which had connections with the Raleigh circle, and one of the many Latin or continental vernacular editions of Ortelius. He was possibly in a position to consult its English version, a book linked in various ways to the Earl of Essex. In this respect, the presence of both Wright and Norton in the Essex circle around the time of the Earl's attempted coup of 1601 is rather intriguing, given the famous episode of the staging of Shakespeare's *Richard II* at about this time.

That the author of *Twelfth Night* had any need to engage with theoretical works of geography or cosmography, however, is much less likely. When he thought of Illyria, or of any other 'exotic' geographical location in which to set his plays, his mind may have been much more easily drawn to contemporary discourses of travel, which in the late Elizabethan period were almost invariably rooted, directly or indirectly, in the fruitful negotiation between modern representations of the world and Ptolemaic cosmography.

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This volume explores the shifting presence of Greek antiquity on the early modern English stage, tracing how Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights grappled with Greek texts, myths, and models. Far from being a simple inheritance, 'Greekness' emerges here as a site of creative friction – at once revered and resisted, adapted and unsettled. Through the lens of *imitatio* and *contaminatio*, the contributors examine how early modern dramatists reworked Greek sources through Roman mediation, scholastic traditions, and vernacular experimentation, fashioning new dramaturgies that challenged notions of purity, authority, and originality. From the bee as emblem of intertextual transformation to the cosmopolitan hybridity of English comedies set in Greece, the essays illuminate the complex negotiations that made Greek culture both a source of prestige and a point of contention. By foregrounding the ambivalence of reception, the volume rethinks what it meant for early modern dramatists to write with, against, and through the Greeks – and invites us to consider how pressing questions of cultural transmission and contamination remain today.

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Cover: Workshop of Raphael, *The Triumph of Hercules Tapestry* (c. 1540-1542), Hampton Court Palace

ISBN 13: 978-8846772749



25,00 €

ISBN 9-788846-7-7274-9

ISSN 2464-9295