

**"The Discovery of English Wants": Dearth and Plenty in
Early Modern Anglo-Indian Exchanges**

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Soon after the acute food shortages of the 1590s, the last decade of Elizabeth's reign, an order was issued on December 4, 1600 to the London merchants Richard Staper, Thomas Alabaster, and Richard Wright, led by Captain James Lancaster, directing that they "shall conferre together touching suche lres [letters] as shalbe solicited from her maie [Majesty] to suche princes and Potentates as are in the places of the Este wher trade shalbe sought."¹ The herald William Segar was asked to write Elizabeth's letters "to the kinges of the East Indies," for which he was paid £13 6s 8d, and an additional 12d for the box carrying the letters. Six letters were transported on the voyage to the East Indies in 1601.² The copy preserved in the Court Books (India Office Records) appears to be a template with a blank space for filling in the name of the recipient. Elizabeth's pitch is broad, astutely deploying a rhetoric of dearth and plenty, cooperation and renewal, and princely desire to execute providential justice, which had become the staple of Tudor diplomacy and governance.

The letter partly reflects an Elizabethan development of Edwardian models of governance, merging political expediency, dynastic superiority, and territorial imperialism with the claims of charity, commonwealth, and moral economy.³ At the turn of the sixteenth century, English experiences of late-Elizabethan economic crises coincided with national ambition to engage in global trade, marking a shift in the discourse of "needs" and "wants" in the English commonwealth. English traders and travelers, with or without direct royal commission, sought to document in different modes of writing—travelogues, journals, letters, official reports—the topography, climate, food resources, markets, and roadways of Mughal India, to better understand local abundance, needs, and wants. Experiences of traveling through food insecure regions in India, interacting with local inhabitants, and encountering famine created hybrid chorographic modes: forms of writing about travel and place within English environments were adapted and applied to Indian regions. The dislocation of English needs and wants to the very different context of Mughal India (and the new forms of writing and knowledge this produced) informed the reimagination of an English commonwealth and an English writer's sense of nationhood.

In his acclaimed study of Elizabethan nationalism, Richard Helgerson asserts that chorographies were

distinct from overseas travel narratives. "The chorographic traveller never encounters bad weather, impassable roads, or poor fare," writes Helgerson, classifying traditional chorography as an "expository device laden with ideological significance" but different from voyages that "actually happened."⁴ Later scholarship on early modern domestic travel and local chorographic writing has shown how practical geographic narrative and chorographic ideological exposition could merge in English writing about space, place, and mobility in a national context.⁵ The lines between "ideological" and "actual" were blurred. In this study of selected early English travel writing about India, I argue that overseas narratives produced their own practical chorography which, over time, shaped and contested emergent values of mercantile nationalism: this "new alignment of power in England," which gave merchants a greater scope of influence, was complex and conflicted.⁶ Studies following established critical narratives about the rise of English capitalism have pointed to the corporate structures and ethnographic prescriptions of the English East India Company, arguing that their official discourses, knowledge-gathering, and writing practices were aligned to mercantile nationalist discourses about "other" cultures.⁷ This work has built upon the recent reconceptualization of European companies as participants in wider commercial cultures of the Indian Ocean region,

reliant on both Asian intermediation and their own capacities for corporate constitutional flexibility and interaction with radically different political and social norms and structures.⁸ It is curious, in the context of the East India Company especially, that scholarship on the writing of early modern English national space and studies of the English as "actors in an entangled global arena" have moved in divergent directions.⁹ On one hand, chorography (domestic, national, ideological) and voyage (global, pragmatic) are seen to be separate; on the other hand, the East India Company's mercantile nationalism is emphatically grounded in luxury trades procuring commodities "far fetched and dear bought," which, as English contemporaries proverbially joked, were "good for the ladies."¹⁰ English and European trading companies and private traders are positioned as key facilitators of trade in fine products and oriental curiosities, which shaped consumption patterns of the early modern elite and wider society.¹¹ The English factors' access to and modified application of domestic chorographic modes and discourses of dearth, need, and want to their descriptions of hardships faced in foreign lands is often neglected, and the economic landscape of Mughal India is still often assumed to be the undifferentiated locus of oriental richness and luxurious production that the Western imagination has long considered it to be. If studies of English chorographic ideologies and

demographic structures continue to look firmly inward, while analyses of foreign travel and trade face outward, such misapprehensions are likely to persist, and the plurality of populations cannot be apprehended. At the turn of the sixteenth century, English understandings of population and commonwealth shifted with attempts to comprehend and inhabit complex spaces of other populations and their needs, wants, and crises, as well as those of Britain.

While the organizing voices of compilers like Richard Hakluyt and Samuel Purchas posited the nation or monarchy as "ultimate actor"—an ideology held in common with some examples of conventional chorography—the grounded voices and perspectives of individual travelers could resist this overarching discourse through their involvement in local networks, their comparisons with English conditions, and their observation of new and different hierarchical patterns, which combined to destabilize the prescribed strengths of the English nation.¹² I suggest we view the authors of these travel accounts (who were often neither landed gentry nor affluent merchants) not only as actors in an entangled global arena obedient to the ultimate actor (nation or monarch), but as actors in the practical chorography of foreign lands, who were forced into negotiations with other actors, often without support from their national corporate structures. These other actors were not just

European competitors; they also consisted of Mughal courtiers and petty officials, local rulers and merchants, itinerant trading communities, migrating households, and the displaced rural poor—groups of exceptional religious, cultural, and linguistic variety in early modern India—who had to be negotiated with and relied upon for survival. Beyond this, the highly complex, continuously shifting cultural geographies of Indian environments and regional frontier zones remained partly recalcitrant and unknowable despite mediation and adaptation.¹³ Indian space could (and did) seem beyond the grasp of ethnographic and demographic prescriptions for writing the land and its people, no matter how firm the instructions to factors and agents. Ironically, domestic and familiar models of writing space offered subtle and fluid scope for being adapted by travelers, official and unofficial.¹⁴ Furthermore, experiences and discourses of death, I suggest, threw such challenges into sharp relief and should be brought into the conversation. I thus begin by taking a closer look at how the needs and wants of the earliest English royal commissions were articulated, and how they resonated with domestic discourses of death. I then consider a selection of narratives by lesser-known English travelers in India from varied nonelite backgrounds, with particular attention to the processes by which they became cognizant of realities on the ground and wrote of their own

shifting perceptions. While critically examining the protocapitalist logic of corporate structure, ethnographic direction, and consumption patterns that drove English mercantile expansion, I also give critical attention to how the local and contingent cultural geography of early modern India shaped experiences, practices, and discourses of English travelers on Indian ground.

English wants and traveling letters

Reimagination of the English nation within "a new global system of differences" began in the earliest missives from Queen Elizabeth to her Mughal (or East Indian) counterparts.¹⁵ This also took shape, I argue, in practical domestic discourses of wants and needs, which sought, as the Elizabethan practitioner and poet Hugh Platt put it, "to turne this our penury into plenty."¹⁶ God had created the good things of this world "for thuse of man," argues Elizabeth's letter of 1600, and yet, wherever these creations "origiallie growe and are gathered," they are

by the Industrie of man directed by the hand of God dispersed and sent out into all the partes of the world, that his wonderfull bountie in his Creatures may appeare vnto all Nacions, his Maiestie hauing soe ordaned that noe one place should inioye (as the

Natiue Comodities thereof) all thinges appertayninge to mans vse, but that one Countrie should haue need of another, and out of the aboundance of the Fruites which some region enioyeth the necessities or wants of another should be supplied: By which meanes men of seuerall and far remote Countries haue comerce and trafique one with another, and by their interchadge of Comodities are lincked together in amitie and frendshipp.¹⁷

This curiously conflicted argument acknowledges that "all thinges appertayninge to mans vse" had their native place, allocated by God, yet human industry was the agent of distributional justice. Such justice lay in the displacement of things through divinely sanctioned trade and commerce, and a nation's solitary enjoyment of its possessions was presented as selfishness that would cause and perpetuate dearth.¹⁸ Elizabeth's play on abundance, necessity, and want was resonant in the context of England's very recent failures to cope with its own dearth. English discourses of dearth, powerfully shaped by the crises of the 1590s, infused prevailing practices of knowledge-making and inflected contemporary understandings of labor, trade, luxury, and the common good. For many practitioners, coping with dearth locally became an instrument for criticizing and modifying centralized measures.¹⁹ But the rhetoric of amity, friendship, and the common good in Elizabeth's letter,

echoed in accounts reporting the outcomes of the voyages, was tied to commercial exchange ("interchandise of Commodities"), deploying the language of "turning penury into plenty" to justify overseas cooperation and trade. Elizabeth emphasizes that English traders had undertaken a long and dangerous voyage, and the eastern monarch could expect "Justice and Ciuillitie" to shine in their conduct. English merchandise, she asserts, would compete with that of other European nations and promised to supply better goods than the East Indies had been "heretofore supplied, either by the Spaniard or Portugall, who of all other Naciones in the partes of Europe haue onelie hitherto frequented your Countrie with trade of marchandize."

This provided an opening to criticize the Spanish and Portuguese, deftly identified as a common enemy preventing other European nations from trading with the East Indies. Elizabeth's letter claims that the Portuguese "pretended themselues to be the Souereigne Lordes and Princes of all your Territories, and gaue it out that they held your Nacion and people as Subiects to them: and in their stiles and Titles doe write themselues kinges of the East Indies." The blow is astutely aimed at the eastern kingdom's sovereignty and monarchical authority of their kings, which English merchants, Elizabeth claims, would not challenge. The letter makes clear how the merchants are expected to engage with local

people, learn their language, "applie their behavie as yt may best sorte to the Converce with your Maiesties Subiectes to thend that Amitie and friendship being intertayned and begun, the same may the better be Contynued when our People shalbe instructed how to direct themselues according to the fashions of your Countrie." The expectation that English merchants would adapt to cultures of East Indies kingdoms, rather than impose their own, was an approach that aligned well with the topos of humility that underpinned values of sovereignty in an English context. In some ways, the language of the letter expands upon familiar political values, but now the line is directed at new, and relatively unknown, players. As scholarly work on early Anglo-Indian contact has shown, England played a minor role at the turn of the sixteenth century in terms of European trading presence in the East.²⁰ Early English embassies and trading initiatives received relatively little attention from Mughal and other East Indian princes, and the bearers of the letter, in no position to play an authoritative part, were thus being instructed to know their place.

Copies of the letter, "written to divers princes of India, offering to enter into a league of peace and amitie with them," were carried by Sir James Lancaster on his voyage to the East Indies in 1601, duly delivered to the rulers of Aceh and Bantam.²¹ Lancaster did not travel beyond the Indonesian archipelago to enter Mughal

domains. As his men sought amity with Aceh, a small but powerful kingdom on the edges of Mughal India, they were informed by Dutch merchants that Elizabeth was famous in these parts because of her wars and victories against Spain.²² The modified text of the letter presented to the sultan of Aceh, Allauddin Shah, who had usurped the throne after murdering the former ruler Mansur Shah, makes more explicit the original letter's language of dearth, plenty, and just distribution, moving swiftly on to the justification of trade.²³ The positioning of Spain and Portugal as aggressive seekers of territorial dominance remains almost verbatim, while a sentence is added to show the English delegation's awareness of recent conflicts between Aceh and the Portuguese, and the former's victories.²⁴ The amendment underscores that the king of Aceh and the queen of England are alike in their successful protection of sovereignty against Spanish and Portuguese threats. This was a point of anxiety because Philip II of Spain's assumption of the Portuguese crown in 1580 had stimulated fears of national isolation in England. Hakluyt worried, for instance, that Spain, via Portugal, would take East Indian trade away from English merchants.²⁵ Although Elizabeth's letter was adapted to reflect the political concerns of the king who was approached, it is unclear whether a copy reached Akbar. In 1603, when the independent merchant John Mildenhall arrived in Akbar's court in Lahore, his address to the

emperor echoed fundamental points of Elizabeth's letter, stating that the English queen "desired to have friendship with him" and playing on English rivalries with European traders, especially Portugal.²⁶ Although Mildenhall claimed he obtained trading concessions from Akbar, his venture carried no official backing from the queen.²⁷ Yet, similarities with the official approach, and the bold assertion that the queen sought the Mughal emperor's "friendship," suggest that independent merchants were aware of and attempted to use the royal missive. The blurring of private enterprise ("industrie of man") and diplomatic effort in this formative period of Anglo-Indian relations makes it likely that the language and arguments of official letters were also mediated through less formal channels. Even when used officially, as in Lancaster's case, enterprising travelers endorsed by the queen could refashion her words.²⁸

Elizabeth's letter, written after the 1590s crises, contrasts the earliest extant communication from her to Jalaluddin Akbar (misaddressed as "lord Yeladin el Kubar king of Cambaya") carried by John Newberry, Ralph Fitch, William Leedes, and James Storey during their journey to India in 1583.²⁹ Undertaken before the dearth of the late 1580s and 1590s, this enterprise was funded by the successful merchants Richard Staper and Edward Osborne, who had secured trading concessions in the Ottoman

Empire.³⁰ The communication—broadly supportive of private mercantile enterprise—shows limited knowledge of Mughal political specificities. By the time the second letter was drafted—involving some of the same figures like Staper and Segar—England's "needs" and "wants" are more urgent, partly due to the rapid advance of Dutch East Indian trade, which had potential to undercut English prices.³¹ The other economic motivation, I argue, was more local in nature and rhetorically masked in Elizabeth's comments on supplying English "wants." This was not only a moment when English policy on Anglo-Asian trade shifted, but the change was also connected to developments in domestic economic policy due to the crises of Elizabeth's last decade. She was deploying a language of national "want" all too familiar in economic pamphlets and treatises of the 1590s, such as Hugh Platt's A Discouerie of Certaine English wants (1595). Though closely invested in exchanges of local knowledge to remedy dearth, this economic discourse also explores impacts of international rivalries—especially with the Spanish, Dutch, and French—on local economies. Platt competitively lists "some englishe secrets wherby we may be lesse beholding either vnto Spaine, or France in some of their best commodities."³² At the same time, domestic debates about dearth imagined transnational remedies in subtle ways, as seen in Platt's applications of

experiments with food for voyages to relieve English domestic environments during famine.

Platt operated within a network of practitioners who exchanged knowledge in the form of "receipts," stimulated by the need to use resources efficiently in a context of dearth.³³ Platt's writings, such as Sundrie new and Artificiall remedies against Famine (1596) and Discouerie of Certaine English wants, followed the providential reasoning that also appears in Elizabeth's letter of 1600. In the former work, he prays God might provide "such meanes as shall seeme best in his owne eyes, for the reliefe of these our present wants, to turne this our penurie into plenty."³⁴ To achieve this, one of his key areas of pragmatic experiment was to adapt "outlandish" foods for sea voyages and war into domestic contexts of dearth, taking into account the unsettled state of itinerant consumers who were not necessarily sailors and soldiers alone.³⁵ Ordinary households could adapt their methods, Platt argues, as he describes his experiments with producing Italian "Macaroni" and "Cus-Cus" of Barbary—he had supplied Francis Drake and John Hawkins with these foods on their voyages—or his recipes of "broths" for ailing mariners when there was no fresh meat "to strengthen or comfort them," which seem to be an early modern equivalent of "instant soup."³⁶ Platt's Jewell House of Art and Nature (1594) carries an illustration of the "Engin" for making macaroni, which

was the basis for his later broadside on food for seafarers.³⁷ Platt's manuscripts testify that between 1594 (the publication of Jewell House) and 1607 (the broadside), he repeatedly conducted experiments with food for mariners and soldiers. Interconnected clusters of receipts (published and unpublished) show the careful detail underpinning the labor of famine "remedies." Some receipt clusters are deliberately linked with others, thus connecting different areas of experimentation and clarifying shared points of emphasis: reduction of volume and long-term preservation of food, transportability, or overlaps between food and medicine.³⁸ Domestic knowledge of remedying dearth was thus not necessarily domestic in origin; it relied on wider global experiences of travel, and knowledge of survival from foreign communities was brought into English domestic realms. Platt's examples show this was achieved through the mediation of itinerant communities of international travelers, who gathered and experimented with coping practices from other nations.

The idea that one country's "wants" could be recovered by access to (and improvement upon) another's knowledge and plenty was thus not infrequently aired, and the discourse of "needs" and "wants" was pragmatically grounded in the late Elizabethan English practice of knowledge-making, which I have elsewhere termed "dearth science."³⁹ Moreover, English national discussions about "remedies" for famine and dearth were beginning to

suggest that global trading opportunities should be widened alongside measures taken locally, such as stricter controls on grain hoarding, the responsible use of natural resources, and microlevel measures through the management of estates, households, and local trades. Thus, in the newly emerging international policy regarding the East, there was a dual emphasis on establishing common ground—by politically articulating opposition to Spain and Portugal, and by expanding socioeconomic arguments for the common good to address spaces beyond the British nation. The only late Elizabethan record of a written response to the queen's letter of 1600 from an East Indian king is a reply carried back by Lancaster from the ruler of Aceh.⁴⁰ Allauddin Shah responds tactfully yet pointedly to the argument about just distribution of resources across nations by praising the queen of England for her good governance in sending men of "just" disposition, who were committed to their "purpose for exchange," "doing good in generall" and "helping the creature in prosperitie and aduersitie ioyently, giuing liberally vnto the poore and such as stand in neede of their abundance, preserving the creature to their vttermost with a willing mind: which for them is now extended vnto India and Arach."⁴¹ By praising English merchants for sharing their "abundance" and noting their wider ambitions to trade in India and Arabia, Aceh's reply subtly reorients the responsibility

for just "exchange," pointing out that it is a mutual obligation. If the kings of the East Indies were to supply England's "wants," plenty must flow in both directions, and not just in letters.

Such early exchanges, scholars note, captured "an imaginary set of relations" between the people and nations involved.⁴² Yet, I would emphasize, they were grounded in material, political, and domestic needs of those involved. By the time the letter conceived in the Elizabethan or Jacobean court, copied by the royal herald, transported on mobile spaces of ships across liminal spaces of the sea, had arrived in the realm of an imagined monarch, its amorphous meanings were modified by the concerns that occupied the regions where it was read. This is nowhere more evident than in written accounts of travelers themselves. In what follows, I focus on the less-discussed travel accounts of Ralph Fitch, William Hawkins, and William Finch, who were part of the earliest voyages to India, in 1583–91 and 1608–13. I contrast the motivations of these Elizabethan and Jacobean accounts with the later journal of Peter Mundy, who went to India in the 1630s, by which time much had changed. Subtly altering meanings of needs and wants across these decades shaped how the travelers wrote about India's resources and envisioned England's relationship with Indian populations.

Ralph Fitch: Pursuing plenty

The voyage of 1583 was mooted (and funded) by merchants keen to establish a trade route to India via the Persian Gulf. Ralph Fitch, a freeman of the Company of Leathersellers, who led the voyage, was accompanied by John Newberry, who had previously been in Ormuz, a jeweler William Leedes/Leech, and a painter James Story. In the narrative of the voyage—reported in Hakluyt's Principal Navigations—Fitch asserts he was motivated by the desire “to see the countreys of the East India.”⁴³ The way India was “seen” by the merchants was governed, especially at this early phase of Anglo-Indian exchange, by an amorphous and shifting set of objectives connected to the mercantile needs they hoped Mughal India would supply, but equally was complicated by the contested state of lands, rivers, coasts, and trade routes along which they traveled.⁴⁴ In Fitch's account, Queen Elizabeth's letter of introduction to Akbar plays little, if any, part, while the chronicle of his travel reads as a chorography, or verbal mapping, of times, places, and routes. Fitch describes in considerable depth a set of journeys remarkable in their coverage: from the western Portuguese stronghold of Goa, across the southern kingdoms of Bijapur, Golconda, and Bidar, up to Agra via the Mughal frontier in Burhanpur, eastward across Bengal into Burma, Thailand, and Malaysia, and round the

southern coast of India. Using a complex network of land, river, and coastal routes, Fitch's journeys explored the spaces of two major frontier zones of Mughal India—the Deccan and Bengal. These regions were notoriously difficult to define and map due to their political, economic, demographic, and ecological intricacies and highly complex cultural (especially linguistic) geographies.⁴⁵

The account's journey covers more than the standard route (Surat to Agra) for East India Company factors in the immediately following decades. Its linear descriptive pattern is complicated by the recovery and recording of networks of supply and exchange that the merchants encountered on the ground. Arriving in Diu, "which standeth in an iland in the kingdome of Cambaia [Khambayat], and is the strongest towne that the Portugales have in those partes," Fitch and his companions face conflict and competition from the Portuguese and Jesuits, are briefly imprisoned in Goa, and eventually escape to the neighboring Bijapur sultanate.⁴⁶ Fitch undertakes a stock-taking of local trades in surrounding towns, in desperate need to find an opening for English goods. In Daman, he notes, was "no trade but of corne and rice"; but in the nearby territory of Nizam-ul-Mulk (king of Ahmadnagar) there was "great traffike for all sortes of spices and drugges, Silke, and cloth of Silke, sandales [sandalwood], elephants teeth,

and much China worke, and much sugar which is made of the nutte called Gagara [jāgra, or palm sugar]" (470).

Deriving partly from the Venetian merchant Cesar Federici's Viaggio, published in English in 1588, Fitch states that the tree called "the palmer [Port. palmeiro]" is "the profitablest tree in the worlde." For Fitch, the "profit" from such natural resources lies in their multiple uses—the palmer always bears fruit, yields wine, oil, sugar, vinegar; its leaves are used for thatching houses, sails for ships, and mats; its branches are used to make brooms, and its wood to make ships (470). The single species of the tree afforded an immediate image of abundance and practical, everyday utility, familiar rather than luxurious, reinforced by the observation that Fitch and his fellow skilled traders had now arrived at a place where many trading opportunities of the eastern world converged: "Hither many shippes come from all partes of India, Ormus, and many from Mecca" (470).

Cornucopia is perhaps the most potent literary motif in Fitch's narrative and other early travel writing on India. As they move through the Deccan, Fitch notes the "great market" of "diamants [diamonds], rubies, sapphires, and many other soft stones." Bijapur has a "good store of gold and silver," Golconda "aboundeth with great store of fruites and fresh water," and the port of Masulipatan gives access to the "Gulfe of Bengala, whither come many shippes out of India, Pegu, and Sumatra, very richly

laden with pepper, spices, and other commodities." (472). Even before their arrival in Akbar's imperial seat of Burhanpur, the country appears "fruitfull" and trade with it worthy of the godly endorsement their endeavors had apparently received.

Upon entering Akbar's domains, Fitch's first observation is the high quality of silver coinage that served as money in the region ("round and thicke, to the value of twentie pence, which is very good silver"), an indication of Mughal wealth, now carefully itemized.⁴⁷ Cotton cloth, drugs, grain, and rice seem to be abundant, with an active trade in cotton. The abundance is fortified by accounts of local celebratory practices, evoking a satisfied populace. The city spaces of Agra and Fatehpur and their markets and transportation of goods are noted. To Fitch, they seem "much greater then London and very populous" (473-74). Such observations are not mere generalities, and the bustling environs of these key Mughal centers of governance are aptly captured in the descriptions.

While Fitch moved east toward Bengal, joining a dispatch of 180 boats "laden with salt, opium, hinge [asafetida], lead, carpets, and divers other commodities, downe the river Jemena [Jamuna]" (475); Newberry set off for Lahore, with plans of moving further northwest to Persia and Aleppo; and Leedes the jeweler entered service with the emperor in Fatehpur, well supported by the award

of a house, five slaves, a horse, and a daily wage of six shillings. This was about five times more than the average daily wage of a skilled tradesman in England in the 1590s.⁴⁸ Akbar, whose patronage of craftsmanship was well known, possibly thought Leedes's experience as a jeweler could be put to good use. James Story, the painter, who was not employed by the promoters of the voyage, extricated himself from the English party's conflicts with Jesuits by joining their convent as a lay brother, applying his skills for the decoration of the church.⁴⁹ The experiences and fortunes of English traders as beneficiaries of Mughal imperial privileges were thus divergent, as were their individual routes of travel across the domains of the Mughals and their competitors. But between them, the Englishmen who entered India on this early venture covered key regions of the empire in the north and northwest, the lately conquered east, and contested regions southward across the Deccan frontier. Fitch's account, therefore, merges linear chronicling (the temporal pattern of his narrative) with more pragmatic elements of chorography, or the construction of multiple narrative strands based on the gathering of topographic, demographic, and anthropological knowledge.

This meant certain formulaic, survey-like elements became embedded in the travelogues of early mercantile endeavors. Fitch typically attended to the nature of local resources, main trades in the region, markets and

distances to them, domestic resources of communities living in areas he traveled, access to water, local consumption patterns, and customs that could help readers build local awareness. Pragmatic needs of travel and trade drove the accounts. Fitch and his companions sometimes chose to avoid regular travel routes for fear of thieves and were forced to move through regions with few villages and "almost all wildernes" (482). Fitch is closely attentive to the topography of rivers that travel routes relied on, and he adapts to their changing courses. Journeying for five months from Agra down the rivers Jamuna and Ganges to reach Bengal, he arrives in Tanda (near Gaur) and observes that, in the past, the overflowing Ganges regularly drowned the region, but now Tanda stands a league away from the present route of the river as "the old way which the river Ganges was woont to run remaineth drie" (481). In years to come, ever-changing routes of rivers and tributaries, especially in fertile Bengal, would be a preoccupation of East India Company surveyors and cartographers.⁵⁰ In Fitch's moment, it was already observed as having an impact on mercantile movements and local settlements. This kind of practical information was based on direct observation, some immediate recording, and recollection: Fitch must have kept notes on regions he traveled. In the final printed version of the narrative, this was combined with his reading of Federici's account, especially where their

routes overlapped. Thus, the earliest English travelers in the 1580s not only relied on knowledge drawn from European travel accounts to supplement their observations, the incorporation of knowledge from their reading with observed detail and practice suggests that the production of the travelogue was a conscious creation of a repository of plentiful information—a cornucopia of grounded local knowledge, as well as a document of Mughal plenty.

However, by the very nature of the travelers' endeavors, ambivalent elements entered the narrative, resisting the smooth linearity and knowledge-gathering mission of travelogues. The land itself, with its complex networks of local trade and competitive structures of political authority, generated this resistance. Fitch's travels—from the western port of Diu, via the Deccan, to the eastern ports of regions corresponding to modern day Orissa, West Bengal, and Bangladesh—covered a route along which frontiers of trade and territory intertwined, and his observations identify the consequent volatility of political authority and exchange of goods in the regions. After he escapes from Goa to the Adil Shahi center of Bijapur, he moves swiftly on to Golconda ruled by Muhammad Quli Qutb Shah, then to Bidar, still an independent state under Ibrahim Barid Shah (whom Fitch misnames "King of Bread"), before making his way through Balapur in Berar (by this time annexed to Ahmednagar by

its current shah Murtaza) and finally reaching the Mughal frontier domain of Burhanpur. During his stays at these various sultanate kingdoms of southern India, Fitch notes their mixed religious culture, cultivation patterns, and natural resources, governed by their own logic and not necessarily by political boundaries. It is this logic of space which often guides Fitch's gaze, for example, when he eyes nearby port towns, observing the the strategic significance of Masulipatnam on the east coast of the Golconda kingdom, giving access to the Bengal gulf. Although Fitch himself does not travel to Masulipatnam, and only reaches Pegu and Malaysia later in his travels through Bengal, his mercantile gaze reaches out from the southern frontier to the eastern one in such moments. There are many occasions in his journey when he calibrates for his own use, from a particular place, the expansive spaces of trade.

When Fitch does reach the Bengal frontier by land, crossing a largely intractable wilderness, with "many buffes, swine and deere, grasse longer then a man, and very many tigers," Fitch arrives at "Angeli" [Hijili] in Orissa, at the mouth of the Rasulpur River, where cargoes landed for transport up the river Hugli (482). He accurately records the crucial position of Orissa and the political contests over this region, conquered by the Afghan kings of Bengal in 1568, and taken over by Akbar in 1575, though not fully subjugated by the Mughals until

1592. In the moment of Fitch's visit, it was contested territory and valuable for its channeling of local goods—such as rice, cotton, herba cloth made from rhea (“like a silk”)—to other regions of India and beyond. Fitch comments on the arrival of ships to Hijili “out of India, Negapatan, Sumatra, Malacca, and divers other places” to carry off “great store of rice, and much cloth of cotton wooll, much sugar, and long pepper, great store of butter, and other victuals for India” (482–83). He points out local markets that used riverine networks to transport rice on boats. The narrative clarifies various local demands on the distribution of this “plenty” and the longstanding political competition to gain control of its sources. This complicates the English mission to trade in an environment already subject to the needs, wants, and ambitions of local players. Moreover, as Fitch and his companions learned from their imprisonment and narrow escape in Goa, their aim of remedying English wants via trade with the East Indies meant navigating competing needs of other European missions—political, economic, and religious—which had consolidated considerably more power in India than the English. In Fitch's comparative vision, not only did the newly established Mughal strongholds of Agra and Fatehpur seem “much greater then London,” the nascent state of English trading networks in the region, compared to other more entrenched and powerful regional and international

groups, was all too apparent. The English were, in a sense, distant from the Eastern plenty around them, yet frustratingly close to it. This impression reoriented the notion of the English commonwealth as a great power, and the English nation seemed a humbler entity than imagined to be from within its own geographical boundaries.

William Hawkins: Courtly exchanges

When William Hawkins and William Finch reached India in 1608, palpable changes had taken place, both in English policy regarding the East Indies, and in Mughal imperial attitudes to the English. As Elizabeth's letter of 1600 hinted, a discernible policy concerning trade with the East Indies was emerging, as opposed to the formative gestures of her earlier letter to Akbar carried by Fitch. East India Company committees had begun to differentiate between the regional potential of markets in the East, noting that Far Eastern markets provided limited openings for English goods, though these might be more readily sold in India or Arabian ports frequented by Indian traders.⁵¹ Hawkins's prior experience as a Levant merchant, his familiarity with the Turkish language (in which he communicated with the Mughal emperor Jahangir) were considered assets. Indeed, he proved an effective presence in many ways in the Mughal court, and his account is written in a different mode from that of

Fitch. While Fitch's account is shaped by constant mobility, Hawkins focuses on the key spaces of the Surat port and the Mughal court. His vessel was the first to display the English flag on the Indian coast, as it anchored at the entrance to the Tapti River on August 24, 1608. Hawkins and his men found themselves at a new, safer harbor and center of trade with the Red Sea, as the old rival harbor of Cambay had begun to silt up.⁵² Customs at both ports of Surat and Cambay were controlled by the imperial favorite and mutasaddi (governor) Muqarrab Khan, who becomes a major actor in Hawkins's story.⁵³

Khan's favorable position in court was founded on his success as a political and commercial entrepreneur who owned vessels and traded privately, backed by a powerful family network supporting his ability to garner imperial wealth from the coastal trade in Gujarat.⁵⁴ He was an expert manipulator of rivalries between the different groups of firangis (Europeans) and had made it a practice to seize goods that he could pass on as curiosities and presents for the emperor. The arrival of a ship from a relatively unfamiliar European nation was therefore of interest to Khan. The cargo was also of interest, however, to the Portuguese frigates monitoring the river ways, which captured goods Hawkins had bought locally to sell at Bantam. Local merchant networks complained that Hawkins had been granted permission to trade on the assumption that he would sell Indian goods

in England, and not "cut their . . . throates" at Priam and Bantam.⁵⁵ In the meantime, Muqarrab Khan arrived in Surat and bought goods from Hawkins, refusing to pay more than his offered price. Hawkins claims Khan and a Jesuit plotted to murder him (6–9). Left on land with Finch and two English servants, Hawkins felt shorthanded and troubled by threats and intrigues of the Portuguese, Surat merchants who traded in the area, and local Mughal officials like Khan who were wary of how the new English presence might impact their own position in court. The Portuguese had far more experience negotiating with merchants and mutasaddis and were aware of the trouble uncooperative mediators could cause. Indeed, Khan remained a constant thorn in Hawkins's side. Despite possessing royal letters, Hawkins was forced to arrive in court with just broadcloth to offer as a gift to Jahangir, since Khan had seized the rest of his goods (11). His account of these initial events shows how this voyage marked the beginnings of English engagement with local networks of power in India.

Hawkins's report on Surat maps political interests that affected mercantile negotiations within the spaces of western ports.⁵⁶ In this context, Anglo-Spanish rivalries played out in strange ways. Hawkins learned that a Portuguese captain had seized his cargo, "most vilely abusing His Majestie [king of England], tearing him King of Fishermen, and of an iland of no import, and

a fart for his commission" (5). Complaints about the treatment of the king of England's subjects elicited the response that Indian seas belonged to the king of Portugal and none should trade here without his license. Hawkins replies, "the King of Englands license was as good as the King of Spaines, and as free for his subjects as for the King of Spaines, and he that saith the contrary is a traytor and a villaine" (5). The fast-accelerating animosity, and quick conflation of Portugal with Spain in the English perspective, showed how international political conflicts could be enacted within local spaces of ports and affect coastal trade. In this altercation, the letter from James I assumed multiple meanings. For the Portuguese, it appeared a threat to their longstanding hegemony in Indian seas and coasts, a kind of invasion authorized by the English king; for the Mughal courtier, it allowed an English trader to potentially undermine his authority; and for the Jesuit interpreter tasked with reading a Spanish translation of the letter and conveying its contents to Jahangir, it provided opportunity to criticize and misrepresent English courtly practices (11-12). For Hawkins, nevertheless, the letter offered entry into the Mughal court and was used for all kinds of micronegotiations long before the missive reached the emperor himself. The symbolic presence of the royal letter became a means of protection against competitive resistance.

In Jahangir's view, the letter seemed a formality requiring gracious acknowledgment, not much more. The emperor was keen to see what the English cargo might add to his treasury and received Hawkins in the dīwān-i-ām, the chamber of public audience. As he conversed with Jahangir in Turkish, Hawkins was soon invited to the dīwān-i-khās, the private chamber where Jahangir consulted with close courtiers. He astutely appealed for imperial "protection," was offered lodgings with a courtier, and asked to appear daily before the emperor. Jahangir's intention seems to have been to gather intelligence about England, its political place and critical perspectives on Europe, especially the Spanish and Portuguese, as he intended "to send an ambassador to the King of England at the coming of the next shipping" (13). Hawkins quotes Jahangir asking him to remain in court: "Thy staying would be highly for the benefit of thy nation" (13). The generous terms Hawkins was offered— an annuity of £3200 and an annual increment of horses up to a thousand—placed him on par with other courtiers and was considerably more than he could have gained from continuing to Bantam. Hawkins observes that Jahangir, owing to difficulties with pronouncing English names, called him "English Chan [Khan]," a title reserved for Mughal nobility.

Hawkins emerges as a meticulous, if powerless, assessor of the spaces of courtly intrigue, governance,

and economic structure of the Mughal Empire. Despite his unprecedented entry into imperial favor, the narrative conveys the fragility of favor and uncertain status of the English nation in Mughal eyes. When Muqarrab Khan, the Surat merchants, and the Portuguese presented a united front, and conveyed to Jahangir the displeasure of the king of Portugal at favors being granted to the English, the emperor quickly retracted his support. Jahangir, as well known for his vacillations as his English counterpart James, remained ambiguous on the question of trading concessions to the English. Hawkins comments with an apt mercantile metaphor, "Thus was I tossed and tumbled in the kind of a rich merchant adventuring all he had in one bottome, and by casualtie of stormes or pirates lost it all at once" (21). Finding a safe route to access Indian plenty literally meant discovering a secure harbor, as the discovery of Swally Hole by Sir Henry Middleton a few months later would confirm (27). Securing rights to trade and establishing a factory in a port like Surat with its convoluted power networks would require a demonstration of superior English maritime power. This occurred in 1612 when Middleton defeated Portuguese squadrons off the Surat coast and seized Gujarati ships in the Red Sea.⁵⁷ In the meantime, Hawkins had secured an insider's view of the Mughal court and its operations.

His account thus ends with a "briefe discourse of the strength, wealth, and government with some customes of the Great Mogol, which I have both seene and gathered by his chiefe officers and over-seers of all his estate" (29–51). The title's emphasis on personal witnessing and intelligence gathering suggests that for early travelers the mercantile mission itself—the securing of trading concessions—was complemented by the need to understand the new environment, its population and politics. But the modes of these ethnographic and demographic objectives were still subject to shifting perspectives. Hawkins's discourse had two main aims. It attempted to explain the Mughal court's structure and governance by analogy with English structures. "I begin," he writes, "with his princes, dukes, marquesses, Earles, viscounts, barons, knights, esquires, gentlemen, and yeomen. As Christian princes use their degrees by titles, so they have their degrees and titles by their number of horses." In a precise account of the categories, privileges, and positions of Mughal courtiers, those of higher ranks are listed by name, and staff paid monthly listed by profession, giving a sense of the range of employees in the imperial household: porters, gunners, watermen, lackeys, tent men, cooks, light bearers, gardeners, and keepers of horses, elephants, and other animals. Analogies with English degrees are far from exact, and precision is not the aim. The analogies with England

function as a tool for understanding through difference as well as similarity. Hawkins's more important intention is to assess Mughal imperial income, geographical expanse, treasury, coinage, jewels, weapons, animals, and other furniture of courtly display. As the discourse turns into an inventory of Mughal wealth and courtly practices, Hawkins estimates annual imperial income from all sources at 50 crore rupees, around 56 million pounds at the contemporary value of 2s 3d for a rupee. According to William Foster, England's annual public revenue at the time was about £425,000.⁵⁸ The Mughal Empire's geographical reach is presented with Agra as "the heart of all his kingdoms." Five regional divisions and their capitals are named: Punjab, Bengal, Malwa, Gujarat, and the Deccan. Hawkins locates six main castles: Agra, Gwalior, Narwar, Ranthambhor, Asir, and Rohtas; and he identifies three "arch-enemies or rebels": Malik Ambar in the Deccan, Bahadur Shah (son of Muzaffar Shah) in Gujarat, and Amar Singh of Udaipur. Hawkins's broad outlines of Mughal domains correspond to Fitch's observations as he traveled across these regions when Mughal authority was being consolidated over them, but lack the regional details Fitch was able to provide.

The discourse, from the perspective of an English merchant traveler patronized by the Mughal court, offers a remarkably centrifugal imagination of Indian space at the turn of the century. Hawkins drops the comparison

with England when it becomes apparent that the sheer scale of Mughal wealth and territory was beyond English imagination: "This king is thought to be the greatest emperour of the East for wealth, land, and force of men." During an imperial progress or hunt, "the compasse of his tents may be as much as the compasse of London and more." Even in a state of mobility, the emperor "is provided for as for a citie" (35–36). This was not far from the truth, and yet may have seemed hyperbolic from the perspective of English readers who had remained at home. The point, however, was not simply to define the authority of the Mughal emperor as an oriental despot; this prescriptive ethnographic aim of the East India Company was sharpened in later decades.⁵⁹ Hawkins knew only too well from his experience of Jahangir's vacillations and negotiations with Muqarrab Khan and other merchants that Mughal emperors' powers were not, in practice, as all-encompassing as the system claimed. He seems more interested in charting the extent and disbursement of Mughal wealth and in how this might prompt an international assessment of England's wealth. Ironically, even tentative attempts at comparison suggested that such an assessment could leave the English economy looking inconsequential.

William Finch: Practical chorography

This perception was reinforced, albeit differently, in the account of William Finch, consigned to travel the land while Hawkins remained in court. In Finch's view from the ground, local gossip and mundane exchanges mediated information about local needs and wants, exacerbated by current political conflicts between the Portuguese and the Dutch, the spoiling of the Malabar coast, Malik Ambar's siege of Ahmadnagar, and the southern invasions and wars that ensued along the Mughal frontiers.⁶⁰ Finch's style was adapted to this kind of news gathering, organized by dates on which the information was gathered, as the author weathered the complications of local intrigue and found ways of survival in often sharply alternating periods of dearth and plenty. His approach from Surat to Agra in 1610 is described with precise enumeration of routes, rivers, markets, and towns. Local climatic differences, timings of seasons, particularly the monsoons, are noted meticulously while traveling a route which would become a familiar one for English and European traders over the next couple of decades.⁶¹ Beginning in Surat, Finch traveled east toward the imperial seat in Burhanpur, passing through villages and towns close to the Tapti River and its tributaries. He then moved north to Mandu, crossing the Narmada River, toward Ujjain, traveling through the fertile Malwa region to Sironj. From here, the route turned more sharply north to Agra, via Gwalior,

thus avoiding travel through drier western regions. If this pattern of topography, weather, and climate dictated the route taken, Finch's account of local details, as he moves from one town or village to another, indicates that the availability of basic resources such as food, water, access to markets, safe transport, and resting places, could be highly variable. Each microregion or locality offered its own opportunities and challenges, which Finch became adept at navigating. Like most travelers through Malwa, he notes the fertility of its soil and abundant cultivation of opium. At his next stop, in the small village of Kanasia, he "enquired the price of opium" (35). The next day, having travelled eight kōs (fourteen miles) across stony terrain to Sunera, his kāfila (caravan) crossed paths with the locally notorious grāssia, collectors of illegal tolls imposed by Rajputs and Kolis (35–36). Journeying by road with others gave Finch a chance to observe the movements of the imperial army engaged in major maneuvers. He observes how his kāfila passed the "great minion" (imperial favorite) Khan Jahan's entourage, dispatched to the Deccan "with ten thousand horse, many elephants, and boats carried on carts, going for Bramport [Burhanpur]" (35). The hum of war constantly loomed in the background, even for those like Finch who were not directly involved in it. That the travails of the journey could bring unpredictable changes

of circumstance is evident from the most condensed account of his itinerary:

The sixteenth, 7 c. [kos] to Cuckra [Kakarwar], a great countrey towne abounding with all sorts of graine, victuall, and Mewa wine; at 4 c. Lyeth Berroul [Bora], a great aldea. The seventeenth, 12 c. to Delout, a great aldea; the way for the five last coses theevish, hilly, stony; the other pleasant plaines. The eighteenth, 7 c. to Burrow [Barrai], a small towne, but plentifull of victuall, except flesh, which is scarce all this way; the way dangerous. The nineteenth, 7 c. to Sukesera, a small ragged towne. The twentieth, to Syrange [Sironj] 9 c., a very great towne, where there are many betele gardens. (36)

This kind of itemizing of day-to-day volatility, interspersed with elaborate description, suggests that Finch was working from notes maintained on the move and elaborating upon them from memory. It was a chorographic practice familiar in accounts of English domestic travel, where factual observation and personal elaboration combined to map out both the route itself and wider knowledge of the land.⁶²

The practice encompassed ways of writing and seeing that allowed Finch to record ironies arising from the imperial management and subjugation of regions. After leaving Burhanpur, overrun with soldiers belonging to the

armies of Prince Parvez and Raja Mansingh fighting in the Deccan, Finch arrived at the Asirgarh fort, taken by Akbar from Bahadur Khan, the last of the Faruki kings of Khandesh, in 1600. Possibly informed by local memory, Finch describes the process of Akbar's siege warfare:

The Acabar besieged it a long time, circling it on all sides, and at length tooke it by composition. For it is said, that there bred such an innumerable sort of Emmets or other small Wormes in all the waters, that the people swelled and burst with drinking thereof: which mortalitie caused him to compound and deliver it, being by meere humane force invincible. (33)

The act of seizing power by utilizing the "compounding" impact of a mortality crisis is a crucial observation, made more poignant by the comment that the fort was otherwise invincible "by meere humane force." Finch simultaneously notes the limitations of military force and its insidiously unjust instruments. He complains repeatedly of the difficulty of "trusting" the environment and his mediators. English merchants in Finch's position, thrown in the midst of Deccan wars and Mughal military maneuvers were becoming keenly aware of not only the exigencies of negotiating literally difficult terrain in India—with its mix of heavy monsoon rain, floods, rocky mountains, and arid deserts—but also of how ill-equipped English authorities (in India and at

home) were to engage with the complex networks of power, injustice, and conflict in these lands. Only a few days later, news came of the Mughal army's failure to raise the siege of Ahmadnagar and secure the Deccan frontier, as they were "forced through famine and drought, to make their retreat for Bramport, whereupon the Citie, after much miserie indured, was lost" (39). Local networks of both power and rebellion had become adept at instrumentalizing dearth and mortality in ways that the English in India would become cognizant and guilty of in years to come.

The narratives of Fitch, Hawkins, and Finch illustrate how early English travelers encountered pressures of defining needs and wants from multiple, often incompatible, standpoints: the commissioning English authorities whose discourse of English "wants" and "amity" with the East Indies were filtered through royal letters; the Mughal empire's economic and territorial ambitions; and the localized political conflicts and conditions faced on the ground as they moved across an unfamiliar land. The latter attuned them to the complex particularities of Indian conditions, but also resonated with local experiences of dearth in England and in English domestic travel writing. As the seventeenth-century water carrier and poet John Taylor observed in his ironic narratives of local travails, a traveler's unrelenting mobility made it a necessity to

"learn" from "Wit's whetstone, Want."⁶³ Thus chorographic principles familiar to English travel writers were applied and reinvented in their new context. Their descriptions were not limited to the voyage itself but focused, rather, on practical chorography as a means of understanding intransigent geographies of the foreign land. This experience gradually disrupted the monolithic authorized imaginings of the East Indies as a homogenized locus of plenty, or repository of "marvels" and "curiosities."⁶⁴ In Fitch's writing, the focus on plenty was occasionally shifted by warning signs of dearth. Passing through Khambayat, he observes that when there were famines in this large and populous city, "people will sell their children for very little" (Principal Navigations, 469). The remark was made in passing by Fitch, but a couple of decades later, in the moment when Hawkins and Finch were writing, economic crises and their political implications were more difficult to gloss over. This is one of the reasons why early English exchanges with India need reassessment—they mark a crucial moment of transformation in English perceptions of trading with and in India, which valuable scholarly studies of more "successful" voyages by elite figures like Henry Middleton or Thomas Roe have tended to overlook on account of their concerted emphasis on how the corporatization of overseas trade and travel drove the emergence of English capitalist markets and ideologies.

Travel to India motivated by trade, especially in its nascent stages, also exposed the radical uncertainties and injustices of global markets ultimately reliant on local intricacies and micropolitics. Finch's account, read alongside Hawkins's, illuminates how corporate injunctions regarding justice, civility, credit, thrift, and trust, which drove exchanges of knowledge and goods in the contemporary English economy, had to be reconfigured when displaced to India and confronted with the inexorable anxieties generated by customs, practices, and frontiers of the early modern Indian marketplace.

Peter Mundy: Finding famine

The ironies were never more vivid than when English factors, especially from relatively humble backgrounds, encountered horrific famine in their newfound land of plenty. Possibly the most powerful transformation of English perspectives on "needs and wants"—in Mughal India and their own kingdom—can be seen in the copious travel journal of the East India Company factor Peter Mundy, who traveled the same route (Surat to Agra) later in 1630–31, during the notorious Gujarat famine. His experience of a full-blown famine threw into sharp relief the economic vulnerabilities, competitions, and connections that earlier accounts gestured toward. Mundy, the son of a pilchard merchant in Cornwall who joined the East India

Company following the failure of his local fishing trade due to competition from across the channel, belonged to itinerant communities who were motivated by the need to find innovative ways of stretching limited resources. Such communities possessed a literary, pragmatic, and political discourse of their own, adapting modes and debates in domestic travel writing. When these modes of writing entered accounts of travel in India, new mixed modes were created.⁶⁵ Mundy's attempts to use figures of plenty, for example, were repeatedly frustrated by the sheer scale of Indian famines. The crisis he narrates began with a drought in 1630, attacks on crops by mice and locusts the following year, and then excessive rain. Famine and water-borne diseases created high mortality: three million died in Gujarat in 1631, and another million in Ahmadnagar, as the famine cut across the Deccan frontier. Dead bodies of people migrating to less affected areas blocked the roads. Grotesque consumption patterns emerged: cattle hide was eaten, dead men's bones were ground with flour, cannibalism was frequent, and people fed on corpses.⁶⁶ Carts belonging to banjāras transporting grain from more productive regions of Malwa were intercepted and supplies diverted to the royal army in Burhanpur.⁶⁷ The pre-famine price of wheat was approximately one mahmūdi per man; in September 1631 it had risen to sixteen mahmūdīs.⁶⁸ Imperial charitable practices of opening free kitchens and offering revenue

remission had limited effect. Gujarat was one of the main production centers for calico cloth, and trade was badly affected by the death and migration of weavers.⁶⁹

Mundy's itinerary shows how English traders navigated this environment, which was conflicted with ecological, socioeconomic, and political disparities and anxieties. The itinerary format in British domestic travel writing emphasized that the nation depended on the circulation of people, commodities, and information across local communities. Mundy constructs his itinerary acutely aware of the dynamics of local mobility in his new setting. He notes not only the broad contrast between the fertile Malwa region and deprived localities below the Narmada River, as Finch had done, but complicates it by identifying tensions between localities. There was a concentration of food supplies in Viara, "fortefied with a good Castle and accommodated with a very prettie pond or Talao stored with fish and fowle," and market towns such as Chopda, Navi, and Bahadurpur (40). Yet between them, Mundy itemizes places badly affected by famine. Just fourteen miles from Viara was a poor town, "halfe burnt upp and almost voyd of Inhabitants, the most part fledd, the rest dead, lyeing in the Streets and on the Tombes" (40-41). In Daita, children were sold (42). Mundy's party had difficulty pitching their tent at Nandarbar because the town was congested with dead bodies. They were overwhelmed by smells "from a great

pitt, wherein were throwne 30 or 40 persons, men, woemen, and children, old and young confusedly tumbled in together without order or Coveringe" and sights of "poore people scrapeinge on the dunghills for food . . . in the very excrements of beasts belonging to Travellers, for graine that perchance might come undigested from them." People looked like "anatomies, with life, but scarce strength enough to remove themselves from under mens feet" (43-44). Mundy's prose style, very unlike the cryptic notes in Finch, is deliberately evocative of local suffering. The dead and starving seem to shape the landscape from Surat onward, lying along highways and near towns, piled outside city gates where bodies were dragged and left. His analogies and images highlight the way control over the landscape was frustrated by famine, which challenged the fixity of quantification and the regulation of boundaries demarcating spaces such as markets, towns, cities, estates, roads, rivers, or even frontier zones. Famine facilitated the collapse of recognizable spatial units, and if cornucopia was the primary literary strategy of describing space in Anglo-Indian travel writing, Mundy's description here offers an inverted cornucopia of images of acute dearth. Literary form was modified because the space demanded it.

Mundy's language demands attention, because when describing the unpleasant, moral or aesthetic disgust is complicated by empathy, shaped by communal conditions of

travel. As his kāfila grew longer, from 150 people in Surat to 1800 by Nimgul, joined daily by people escaping famine, Mundy was part of the flow of migrants toward Burhanpur, the location of the new emperor Shahjahan's castle and estate, the center of prosperity. Mundy's narrative shows how the market towns leading to it brought into view palpable contradictions between the "plentifull Bazaar" and starved bodies in streets, obstructing trade and travel; and it exposes Burhanpur as a site of imported and tentative plenty. It was "plentifully stored" and "supplied with all things from all parts, farr and neere," "by reason of the Kinges being here." Otherwise, he notes, it "would feele the same Calamitie with her Neighbour Townes, for their is litle or nothings growes neere it for many miles" (50–51). We thus see a fundamental difference from the narrations of the travel accounts previously analyzed: the enumeration of plenty is explicitly countervailed by recalling the politics of dearth from the diffused migratory viewpoint of local and foreign travelers and traders. Mundy feels removed from the resources consumed by the imperial centers he ambiguously admires and undermines. He especially notes the banjāras' (local carriers or drovers) standard route-carrying provisions from the fertile Malwa region to the more arid western towns he had just passed—being diverted southward by imperial command to provision armies engaged in

territorial wars in the Deccan. Mundy wistfully observes, "all the face of the earth, as farr and distant as wee could descerne, covered with greene Corne. But of all this aboundance poore Guzeratt was never the neere, where there was most neede, it being all to Brampore to supplie the kings Laskarrie (or Armie) lyeing there against Decan" (55–56). Rather than speaking as an English factor on a national mission to trade with Mughal India, Mundy often speaks as a member of his kāfila, a mobile community that survived the shortage-driven landscape by exchanging valuable information about the availability of resources with seasoned local traders, like Mundy's associate Mirza, for whom mobility was also an endemic condition. The narrative's focus is thus diverted from the mission at hand to the banjāras in Mughal Sarai, whose trade served and depended on mobility.⁷⁰ Their tanda (local term for a caravan of banjāras and their cattle) was a mile and a half long, and "carrie[d] all their howsehold along with them." It consisted of 600 to 700 men, women, and children, and 14,000 oxen "all layden with graine, as wheat, rice, etts.; each Oxe, one with another, carryeinge 4 great Maunds, each Maund neere 16 Gallons is 112,000 bushells London measure" (95–96). The groups traveled slowly and "dispersedly," journeying no more than six or seven miles a day.⁷¹ Mundy takes interest in their ownership of mobile capital, like cattle, and their flexible exchange mechanisms; and he compares them

with the endemic mobility of English carriers: "Their course of life is somewhat like Carriers, continually driveing from place to place" (96). The awareness that mobility was their condition of life made traveling communities and networks in India seem closer to the immediate conditions of East India Company factors themselves. There were moments when, along with their modes and routes of travel, their needs and wants could be held in common, explicitly distinguished from those of Mughal and English courtly enterprises.

* * *

If we examine the textures of travel (not just that of procured goods) undertaken by the English in India, we find these were complicated, first, by global and local entanglements that impacted trade in Indian coastal regions. As the travelers themselves moved across coastal spaces, landed regions, and frontier zones, the contexts recovered by scholarship on the connected histories of Indian Ocean trade need to be contrasted and merged with more region-centered analyses of early modern India, especially its ever-mutating internal borders and consequent challenges to Mughal state formation. When Fitch and his companions arrived in India, they used the route opened by recent English success in Turkish dominions, and it may be tempting to see these journeys as evidence of Ottoman trade networks acting to stimulate

and expand English and European capitalist enterprise.⁷² However, Indian spaces exerted their own uneven momentum. Fitch's original intention of progressing from Basra to Bashir on the Persian coast by boat, and then to India by land, was upset by the failure to procure an interpreter. This local crisis of mediation caused an unexpected deflection of the prescribed route, sending the English unwillingly southward to Goa, into the arms of the hostile Portuguese, and conditions on the ground necessitated a further deflection into the lands of Deccan rulers. From here, Fitch's movements, choices, and observations were, in a manner similar to Finch, governed by radical uncertainty generated by constantly changing local conditions.

For those, like Hawkins, who remained focused on a central courtly space of plenty, the impression of Mughal wealth controlled by a despotic oriental monarch, with whom his English counterpart could confer by mediation of English merchants, was simultaneously reinforced and distorted by disruptions caused by the insidious powers of figures like the mutasaddi Muqarrab Khan, or the Jesuit (mis)interpreter of the English royal missive, or counterpressure from other European and local merchant groups. At the same time, the desirable self-image of triumphant English mercantile nationhood, propelled by their Ottoman success, was countervailed by a sense of global inadequacy. These multilayered early experiences

of India had two other consequences. They destabilized the prescriptive search for certain kinds of trade and goods, and they disrupted prescribed ethnographic forms of writing about travel that were seen to underpin evolving corporate structures of the East India Company. It is well known that the composition of East India Company imports altered across the seventeenth century, from early imports of pepper, expanding to other spices, to later cargoes comprising indigo, saltpeter, calicoes, cotton piece-goods, and silk. The pace of this trade and assimilation of goods were, arguably, slow and gradual.⁷³ The earliest travel accounts, however, did not limit attention to information-gathering about such commodities. They were as attentive to local supplies of basic foods, especially grains and rice, and their inter-regional transport and availability. Hence, Fitch charted the course of trade in rice and other food along the southern and eastern coasts of India and across Malacca, Sumatra, and Ceylon; and Mundy was able to locate precisely the disruption of local food supply chains between Malwa and Gujarat. The travelers themselves were reliant on these supply lines in their itinerant state. Regional disparities were consistently noted, not only by Mundy, who made his observations on famine conditions when such disparities were exacerbated and more visible.

Many aspects of experience and observation in uncertain and unpredictable circumstances strained the

scope of ethnographic prescriptions, preconceived ways of reading Indian demography, and formal injunctions on how to write about their travels. In such moments, travelers deployed the flexibility of familiar local English chorographic modes. The merchants whose works are discussed here no doubt contributed, in compiled form, to what might be called a new commercial genre of writing about place. Though instructed to see their voyages as voyages of the English nation, when we read their writings as diverse accounts of journeys as they were experienced, we need to also see them outside the enterprise of Anglocentric compilation. The voices and activities of the merchants themselves could respond in ambivalent ways to the nascent colonial imaginary. This grew out of their engagement with complex structures of other populations, especially, in the cases discussed here, the difficult terrains of early modern Indian needs and wants, and their confrontation with the repeated failures or inadequacies of categories and ideologies they were expected to serve.

Notes

¹ George Birdwood and William Foster, eds., The Register of Letters etc. of the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies, 1600–1619

(London, 1893) 19–20, n. 2.

² Birdwood and Foster, 19–20.

³ Stephen Alford, Kingship and Politics in the Reign of Edward VI (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 5–31, 194.

⁴ Richard Helgerson, Forms of Nationhood: The Elizabethan Writing of England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 151.

⁵ Andrew McRae, Literature and Domestic Travel in Early Modern England (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Julie Sanders, The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620–1650 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Philip Schwyzer, Literature, Nationalism, and Memory in Early Modern England and Wales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶ Helgerson, Forms of Nationhood, 181.

⁷ Guido Van Meersbergen, Ethnography and Encounter: The Dutch and English in Seventeenth-Century South-Asia (Leiden: Brill, 2022); Adam Cluclow and Tristan Mostert, eds., The Dutch and English East India Companies: Diplomacy, Trade, and Violence in Early Modern Asia (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2018); A. Pettigrew and David Veevers, eds., The Corporation as Protagonist in Global History, c. 1550–1750 (Leiden: Brill, 2019); Aske Laursen Brock, Guido van Meersbergen, and Edmond Smith, eds., Trading Companies and Travel Knowledge in the Early Modern World (Abingdon: Routledge, 2022).

⁸ Philip J. Stern, The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); David Veevers, The Origins of the British Empire in Asia, 1600–1750 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020). On Indian mediators, see Anna Winterbottom, Hybrid Knowledge in the Early East India Company World (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016); Amrita Sen, “Searching for the Indian in the English East India Company Archives: The Case of Jadow the Broker and Early Seventeenth-Century Anglo-Mughal Trade,” Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies 17, no. 3 (2017): 37–58.

⁹ Van Meersbergen, Ethnography and Encounter, 6.

¹⁰ This phrase was used, for example, in Brian Melbancke’s Philotimus (London, 1583), 18; and Ben Jonson, Epicoene, in Works (London, 1616), V.163.

¹¹ A study of Eurasian trade in luxuries, attentive to changes across the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, is Maxine Berg, ed., Goods from the East, 1600–1800: Trading Eurasia (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

¹² On the ideology of the monarchy as “ultimate actor,” see, Helgerson, Forms of Nationhood, 152; cf. Richard Hakluyt, The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation, 12 vols. (Glasgow: J. MacLehose and Sons, 1903–5), 1:xxxix; Samuel Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes, 20 vols. (Glasgow: MacLehose, 1905–7) 1:xxxvii–xxxviii.

¹³ See recent studies of the Deccan: Roy Fischel, Local States in an Imperial World: Identity, Society, and Politics in the Early Modern Deccan (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020); and Lennart Bes, The Heirs of Vijayanagara: Court Politics in Early Modern South India (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2022). Earlier studies demonstrated the lack of assimilation of southern local rulers and the Deccan's role as frontier with Safavid Iran: J. F. Richards, "The Imperial Crisis in the Deccan," Journal of Asian Studies 35, no. 2 (1976): 237–56; Muzaffar Alam and Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "The Deccan Frontier and Mughal Expansion, ca. 1600: Contemporary Perspectives," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 47, no. 3 (2004): 357–89. On the fluid borderlands and courtly negotiations of Portuguese regions, see Jorge Flores, Unwanted Neighbours: The Mughals, the Portuguese, and Their Frontier Zones (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2018); João Vicente Melo, Jesuit and English Experiences at the Mughal Court, c. 1580–1615 (Cham: Springer Nature, 2022). On the role of mercantile, Sufi, and Islamic networks in the making of Gujarat into a Mughal province, see Jyoti Gulati Balachandran, Narrative Pasts: The Making of a Muslim Community in Gujarat, c. 1400–1650 (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹⁴ I use "traveler" in its different contemporary significations, including those officially backed by the

East India Company and those who received partial or limited support from English authorities.

¹⁵ Helgerson, Forms of Nationhood, 153.

¹⁶ Hugh Platt, Sundrie new and Artificiall remedies against Famine (London, 1596), sig. A2r.

¹⁷ The letter is in London, British Library, IOR/B/2, on fols. 13r–14v; the emphasis in the quotation is my own.

¹⁸ The notion of distributional justice as sanctioned by God is close to Hakluyt's emphasis on "Godliness" as "great riches," or to long-term benefits from Eastern commerce as opposed to short-term "gain," noted in the dedication to Philip Sidney in Divers voyages touching the discoverie of America (London, 1582), sig. ¶2v.

¹⁹ Ayesha Mukherjee, Penury into Plenty: Dearth and the Making of Knowledge in Early Modern England (London: Routledge, 2015). On health and charity during the 1590s dearth and famine, see John Walter and Roger Schofield, eds., Famine, Disease, and the Social Order in Early Modern Society (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Steve Hindle, "Dearth, Fasting, and Alms: The Campaign for General Hospitality in Late Elizabethan England," Past & Present, no. 172 (Aug. 2001): 44–86; and Hindle, On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England, c. 1550–1750 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²⁰ Richmond Barbour argues that the English were "utterly incidental" to the Mughal court, in Before Orientalism:

London's Theatre of the East, 1576-1626 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 146. Sanjay Subrahmanyam's analysis of Thomas Roe's embassy notes that while the English ambassador compared at length the political systems of England and India, the emperor Jahangir found "little of interest in Roe"; see "Frank Submissions: The Company and the Mughals between Sir Thomas Roe and Sir William Norris," in The Worlds of the East India Company, ed. H. V. Bowen, Margarete Lincoln, and Nigel Rigby (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2002), 69-96, at 82.

²¹ "The First Voyage Made to East India," in The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster, Kt., to the East Indies, ed. Clements R. Markham (London, 1877), 57-107, at 57-58. Miles Ogborn shows that the carriage, dissemination, and exchanges of such letters illuminated the negotiations between the East India Company and Asian rulers in the early seventeenth century; see "Writing Travels: Royal Letters and the Mercantile Encounter," in Indian Ink: Script and Print in the Making of the English East India Company (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 27-66. However, relatively little attention is paid to Elizabethan negotiations as archival records of Anglo-Indian encounter are more copious from the reigns of Jahangir and James I onwards.

²² "First Voyage Made to East India," in Voyages of Sir James Lancaster, 74.

²³ "First Voyage Made to East India," 78.

²⁴ "First Voyage Made to East India," 79.

²⁵ Richard Hakluyt, "A Discourse of the Commodity of the Taking of the Strait of Magellanus" (1580), in The Original Writings and Correspondence of the Two Richard Hakluyts, ed. E. G. R. Taylor, 2 vols. (London: Hakluyt Society, 1935), 1:139–46.

²⁶ Letter from John Mildenhall to Richard Staper, in Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes, 2:300.

²⁷ Mildenhall returned to England in 1608 and made another journey to India, where he died (buried in Agra) in 1614. E. A. H. Blunt, "The Tomb of John Mildenhall," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (Apr. 1910): 495–98.

²⁸ On the letter's reuse in 1604 and 1608 during the voyages of Middleton and Sharpeigh, see Voyage of Sir Henry Middleton, ed. Bolton Corney (London, 1855), 22; Ogborn, Indian Ink, 27.

²⁹ Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, 5:450.

³⁰ Gerald MacLean and Nabil Matar, Britain and the Islamic World, 1558–1713 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 66–68.

³¹ Nandini Das, "Elizabeth and India," in The Foreign Relations of Elizabeth I, ed. Charles Beem (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 201–28, at 210.

³² Hugh Platt, A Discoverie of Certaine English wants (London, 1595), sig. B1v.

³³ On Platt's knowledge-making practices and the overlap between his famine remedies and experiments with food for voyages, see Mukherjee, Penury into Plenty, 39–42, 63–92. Platt's treatise on famine was a coherent attempt to define and organize pragmatic dearth-time remedies within the wider contemporary discourse of causes and measures.

³⁴ Platt, Sundrie new and Artificiall remedies against Famine, sig. A2r.

³⁵ Patricia Fumerton calls sailors and soldiers "familiar peripatetic types," signifying unsettledness and hardship. She analyzes their "unsettled subjectivity," assessing the psychological impact of their vagrant status and self-definition. See Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 1–11. However, their pragmatic relationships with "settled" households are also revealing since they offered, as Platt's experiments demonstrate, specialized knowledge of survival with perpetually limited resources.

³⁶ Hugh Platt, Certaine Philosophical Preparations of Foode and Beuerage for Sea-men (London, 1607).

³⁷ Hugh Platt, The Jewell House of Art and Nature (London, 1594), 74–76.

³⁸ Hugh Platt, in British Library, Sloane MS 2244, fol. 29v; Sloane MS 2216, fol. 112v; and Sloane MS 2189, fols. 118v and 126r.

³⁹ Mukherjee, Penury and Plenty, 85–92.

⁴⁰ A copy of trading privileges gained from Aceh was carried by Alexander Sharpeigh on his 1608 commission (Ogborn, Indian Ink, 34), suggesting that letters and privileges had long-term value and were reused.

⁴¹ “First Voyage Made to East India,” in Voyages of Sir James Lancaster, 95, my emphasis. This letter is reported in English translation, however, not in the original.

⁴² Ogborn, Indian Ink, 45.

⁴³ Ralph Fitch, “The voyage of M. Ralph Fitch marchant of London,” in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, 5:465.

⁴⁴ See the historical geography of Mughal India curated from contemporary sources and maps: Irfan Habib, An Atlas of the Mughal Empire (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴⁵ On the complicated linguistic geography of the Deccan, see Fischel, Local States in an Imperial World, 26–65; on Bengal, see Richard M. Eaton, The Rise of Islam and the Bengal Frontier, 1204–1760 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

⁴⁶ Fitch, “Voyage of M. Ralph Fitch marchant of London,” in Hakluyt, Principal Navigations, 5:469. Further citations are cited by page numbers in vol. 5.

⁴⁷ Fitch, 473. Needs of Asian economies like those of India and China are thought to have been served by an influx of European silver, stimulating early modern English moral arguments against draining reserves in return for luxurious frivolities. However, Jan De Vries's calculations show that large-scale monetization of silver entering Asian economies was unlikely. Quantities remained low in the first half of the seventeenth century, especially if compared to bullion flows into Europe from the New World. See De Vries, "Understanding Eurasian Trade in the Era of the Trading Companies," in Goods from the East, ed. Berg, 7–39, at 24–25. For arguments asserting Indian "need" for silver, see Prasannan Parthasarathi, Why Europe Grew Rich and Asia Did Not: Global Economic Divergence, 1600–1850 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 182. Fitch's region-specific observation seems to accord with De Vries's doubts about the scale of Asian need and monetization of silver.

⁴⁸ Fitch, "Voyage of M. Ralph Fitch marchant of London," in Hackluyt, Principal Navigations, 475. On the sharp fall in late sixteenth-century wages, see E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, The Population History of England, 1541–1871 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 418.

⁴⁹ Story's career is traced in William Foster, ed., Early Travels in India, 1583–1619 (London: Humphrey Milford, 1921), 3.

⁵⁰ Thomas Bowrey, A Geographical Account of the Countries around the Bay of Bengal, 1669–1679, ed. R. C. Temple (Cambridge: Hakluyt Society, 1905); James Rennell and Andrew Dury, An Actual Survey of the Provinces of Bengal, Bahar, etc. (London, 1776).

⁵¹ George Birdwood, ed., First Letter Book of the East India Company, 1600–1619 (London, 1893), 111, 114.

⁵² By this time, Surat was a prominent center of transshipment, drawing merchants from southeast and west Asia. Sanjay Subrahmanyam, "A Note on the Rise of Surat in the Sixteenth Century," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 43, no. 1 (2000): 23–33.

⁵³ On Khan's manifold roles and extensive powers as a member of Jahangir's inner circle, see Jorge Flores, "The Sea and the World of the Mutasaddi: A Profile of Port Officials from Mughal Gujarat (c. 1600–1650)," Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society 21, no. 1 (2011): 55–71. Cf. M. Athar Ali, The Apparatus of Empire: Awards of Ranks, Offices, and Titles to the Mughal Nobility (1574–1658) (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1985).

⁵⁴ According to Farhat Hasan, the Mughal state was obliged to incorporate merchants into a political system of imperial sovereignty by rewarding them with honors and rights; see State and Locality in Mughal India: Power

Relations in Western India, c. 1572–1730 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 41.

⁵⁵ William Hawkins, "Relations," in Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes, 3:3. Further references are cited by page numbers in vol. 3.

⁵⁶ Ghulam A. Nadri, "The Maritime Merchants of Surat: A Long-Term Perspective," Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient 50, no. 2/3 (2007): 235–58; Farhat Hasan, "Anglo-Mughal Commercial Relations at Surat, until the First Half of the Seventeenth Century," Proceedings of the Indian History Congress 51 (1990): 272–81; M. N. Pearson, Merchants and Rulers in Gujarat: The Response to the Portuguese in the Sixteenth Century (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976).

⁵⁷ I. Bruce Watson, "The Establishment of English Commerce in North-western India in the Early Seventeenth Century," Indian Economic and Social History Review 13, no. 3 (1976): 375–91. Kenneth R. Andrews, Trade, Plunder, and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480–1630 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), and Van Meersbergen, Ethnography and Encounter, 101–2, see this event as the main reason for the Mughal government's decision to give the English trading rights.

⁵⁸ Foster, Early Travels in India, 100. The estimate included earnings from all sources, not just land revenue. Cf. J. F. Richards, "Mughal State Finance and

the Premodern World Economy," Comparative Studies in Society and History 23, no. 2 (1981): 285-308; and Richards, The Mughal Empire (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 138-39.

⁵⁹ James D. Tracy demonstrates such complexities in the VOC: "Asian Despotism? Mughal Government as Seen from the Dutch East India Company Factory in Surat," Journal of Early Modern History 3, no. 3 (1999): 256-80. Van Meersbergen, however, sees Hawkins's remarks on revenue collection as reinforcing prescriptive notions of "tyrannical rule" (Ethnography and Encounter, 56-57). I concur with Tracy's analysis, which can also apply to the East India Company at this stage when its prescriptions were formative, and practical experience told a more complex story.

⁶⁰ William Finch, "Observations of William Finch, Merchant," in Purchas, Hakluytus Posthumus, or Purchas His Pilgrimes, 4:21-25. Further references are cited by page numbers in vol. 4.

⁶¹ See, for example, the accounts of Thomas Roe, Peter Mundy, John Jourdain, and Jean Tavernier.

⁶² McRae, Literature and Domestic Travel, 7-18.

⁶³ John Taylor, The Pennyles Pilgrimage, or The Moneylesse perambulation of Iohn Taylor (London, 1618), 6.

⁶⁴ Studies of English and European configurations of the marvelous and curious in the New World and the East Indies are plentiful: e.g., Stephen Greenblatt,

Marvellous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World

(Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017); Jonathan Gil Harris, Indography: Writing the "Indian" in Early Modern England (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Pramod K. Nayar, "Marvellous Excesses: English Travel Writing and India, 1608-1727," Journal of British Studies 44, no. 2 (2005): 213-38.

⁶⁵ These new modes of writing are elaborated in Mukherjee, "Famine Chorography: Peter Mundy and the Gujarat Famine, 1630-32," in A Cultural History of Famine: Food Security and the Environment in India and Britain, ed. Ayesha Mukherjee (London: Routledge, 2019), 73-92.

⁶⁶ Mughal chronicles record the famine: Amin Qazwini, Pādshāh Nāma, in British Library, Add. MS 20734, fols. 218r-19v; and MS Or. 173, fols. 220v-21r; Sadiq Khan, Tawārīkh-i-Shāhjahāni, in British Library, MS Or. 174, fols. 29r-32r; and MS Or. 1671, fols. 17r-18v; 'Abd Al-Hamid Lahauri, Bādshāh Nāmah, ed. 'Abd Al-Rahim, Kabir Al-Din Ahmad, and W. Nassau Lees, 3 vols. (Calcutta, 1867-68), 1:362-63. It is also copiously discussed in East India Company records and travel narratives: William Foster, The English Factories in India, 13 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906-27), 4:73, 134-96, 203-68; and 5:40; Peter Mundy, The Travels of Peter Mundy, in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667, 5 vols., ed. Richard Carnac Temple and Lavinia Mary Anstey (London: Hakluyt Society, 1907-36), 2:38-70, 276 (further references are cited by page

numbers in vol. 2); Johan Van Twist, "Johan van Twist's Description of India," trans. W. H. Moreland, Journal of Indian History 16, no. 1 (1937): 63-77. See Irfan Habib, The Agrarian System of Mughal India (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 112-22, for a wider chronology of Mughal famines.

⁶⁷ Mundy, Travels of Peter Mundy, 56; Foster, English Factories in India, 4:165.

⁶⁸ "Johan van Twist's Description of India," trans. Moreland, 68; Foster, English Factories in India, 4:165, 196.

⁶⁹ Mundy, Travels of Peter Mundy, 276; Foster, English Factories in India, 4:180.

⁷⁰ Habib, Agrarian System of Mughal India, 69-70; and Irfan Habib, "Merchant Communities in Pre-Colonial India," in The Rise of Merchant Empires: Long Distance Trade in the Early Modern World, 1350-1750, ed. James D. Tracy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 371-99; cf. Tanuja Kothiyal, Nomadic Narratives: A History of Mobility and Identity in the Great Indian Desert (New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁷¹ The word tanda connotes a joint exercise binding groups together during mobility.

⁷² See Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism (London: Pluto Press, 2015), 91-120.

⁷³ De Vries, "Understanding Eurasian Trade," 7.