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JOHNSON'S *RELATIONS*: VISIONS OF GLOBAL ORDER, 1601-1630

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Abstract:

*This paper investigates the seven English editions of Giovanni Botero's *Relationi Universali*, produced by London merchant Robert Johnson in the context of the growing rivalry between Britain and Spain concerning international expansion, imperialism and trade. By examining each edition in its unique historical context, two important conclusions can be drawn. First, it becomes immediately clear that Johnson was doing much more than translating Botero; he was making a specific intervention in these debates, arguing for a British international presence to rival and curb that of the Spanish. Second, Johnson made elaborate changes to Botero's work in order to present his case, and as such to treat these texts as translations of the *Relationi*, as many historians have done, obscures their rich contextual history.*

Keywords: Giovanni Botero, Robert Johnson, imperialism, Elizabeth I, Philip II, Philip III, James I, Prince Henry, George Abbot, Jean Bodin

In the opening decades of the seventeenth century, European thinkers were faced with a world of disorder and conflict. The internecine wars in Europe were ongoing and expansive, deepening the divisions that would culminate in the Thirty Years' War. Significantly, these hostilities also spilled over into European colonial territories, expanding in tandem with the limits of the known world. Underlying and intensifying these pressures was the

growing understanding amongst political thinkers, drawing particularly on Machiavelli, that internal and external policy could not be divided, a view most clearly articulated in Giovanni Botero's *Ragione di Stato* (1589).¹ Reason of state, for Botero, informs not only how a state² may be 'founded [and] preserved' but also 'expanded', for without this expansion, preservation is impossible.³ For Botero, enlargement requires an understanding not only of what occurs *within* the state, but also of its relations with other nations, which is why shortly after the publication of the *Ragione*, Botero published his *Relationi Universali* (1591-96).⁴

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¹ As Mancke 2002, pp. 175-95 suggests, the understanding of how 'early modern empire building affected British state formation' has not been given sufficient attention, as the two are often treated 'as quite distinct phenomena', despite both their interdependency and the contemporary acknowledgement of their connection; see Armitage 2000; Braddick 2000.

² Defined as a 'stable rule over a people'; Botero 1956, p. 1.

³ Botero 1956, p. 1.

⁴ The first part was published in Rome in 1591, with subsequent parts in 1592, 1595 and 1596; Bireley 1990, p. 48. During this period Botero was serving as secretary to the archbishop of Milan and he later served as adviser to the Duke of Savoy (from 1599-1610). Both were clients of Spain; Fitzmaurice 2007, p. 797. The work was widely published and translated: into German as *Allgemeine Weltbeschreibung* (1596), Latin as *Theatrum Principum Orbis Uniuersi* (1596), Spanish as *Relaciones Vniuersales del Mundo* (1603a) and Polish as *Relatae Powszechne* (1609); see Headley 2000, p. 1134. The Polish translator of the *Relationi*, Father Pawel Leczycki, was associated with the powerful Mniszech, Olesnicki and Lubomirski families, all of which were involved in the invasion of Russia during the Polish-Muscovite War (1605-18). Jansson 1994, pp. 76, 85, 88, 90, 91. Perrie, 1995, pp. 22 ff. Orchard 1997, pp. iii, 28, 41, 68.

Botero's arguments for expansion underpinned a view of world order based on the establishment of a Spanish Catholic universal monarchy, replacing the perceived universalism of the Roman Empire and the Catholic Church.⁵ This article details the ways in which Botero's work – specifically the *Relationi* – was put to work in Britain to support a directly opposed vision of global order, countering Spanish conquest with British expansion and imperialism. Although there was no contemporary printed English translation of Botero's *Ragione*,⁶ the *Relationi Universali* went through seven English print editions in this period: twice in 1601, then again in 1603, 1608, 1611, 1616, and finally 1630.⁷ Close examination of these editions within the context of British international policies and politics allows us to understand the ways in which these texts were not just translations of Botero, but were attempts to intervene in British international policy-making by putting forward a specific vision of global order as maintained by a British empire balancing that of the Spanish in the years from 1601 to 1630.

⁵ Fitzmaurice 2007, p. 797.

⁶ There exists, however, an abridged English translation in manuscript, Sl. MS. 1065, prepared by the landowner Sir Richard Etherington, between 1613 and 1625, and far more likely between 1621 and 1625. This MS has been transcribed and analysed in Paul 2013 (unpublished). *Ragione di Stato* was also quickly translated into Spanish as *Diez Libros de la Razon de Estado* (1593), German as *Grundlicher Bericht von Anordnung guter Policeyen und Regiments* (1596), French as *Raison et gouvernement d'Etat* (1599) and Latin as *Ioannis Boteri... Tractatus duo* (1602); see Burke 1991, p. 479.

⁷ Despite their popularity and importance, only two analyses of these texts exist. Shackleton 1948, pp. 405-9 surveys the works, noting many of the sources from which Johnson draws, but without consideration of context. Fitzmaurice 2007, pp. 791-820, on the other hand, seeks to place Johnson's translations in the context of contemporary thought and politics, but does not make reference to the changes in the texts noted by Shackleton. This paper thus brings these perspectives together, as well as adding further analysis of the texts and new contextual considerations.

The first six English editions of the text were produced by essayist and leading London merchant Robert Johnson. Johnson was part of a powerful anti-Spanish faction which used Botero's theories in an effort to influence English policy.⁸ Such a strategy found particular resonance amongst those with colonial interests, and Johnson was no different; he served as deputy treasurer of the Virginia Company, deputy governor of the Bermuda Company, director of the Levant and East India companies and was also the son-in-law of the merchant prince Sir Thomas Smith, governor of the East India and treasurer of the Virginia companies.⁹ For

⁸ Fitzmaurice 2007, pp. 798, 799.

⁹ Fitzmaurice 2007, p. 795. Johnson's father-in-law, Sir Thomas Smith, had been an associate of Robert Devereux, second Earl of Essex, who had a powerful sense of his divinely ordained mission to wage war on the Spanish Empire. Smith's father, Thomas 'Customer' Smith, had likewise been closely associated with William Cecil, Lord Burghley, and Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, both of whom had been leading figures in the Calvinist alliance against Habsburg Spain. Thomas Smith the Younger's membership in the Spanish Company (1605), however, suggests that he personally valued commerce over outright confrontation. Nevertheless, Johnson's business and familial ties would eventually bring him into contact with the staunchly anti-Spanish faction of George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury, who published his popular *Briefe description of the whole world* in 1599. Abbot's *Description* was probably modelled on Botero's *Relationi*. Christophers (1966), p. 5. Maurice Abbot, the Archbishop's brother, collaborated with Johnson and Smith in the Levant, East India and Virginia companies for over a decade, and the Archbishop himself invested £400 in a voyage during Smith's governorship of the East India Company. Significantly, Archbishop Abbot was the patron of the Hungarian scholar Petrus Eusenius Maxai, whose 'The Estate of *Gabriel Bethlen*' was included in the final edition of Johnson's *Relations*, as detailed below. Archbishop Abbot was also the patron of Samuel Purchas, another important figure within the context of Botero's reception in England. Purchas had ties to the East India Company, and acknowledged both Sir Thomas Smith and Maurice Abbot's favour for allowing him to consult the Company's 'Iournals'. He also received £100 from the Company for completing his monumental *Pilgrimes* (1625). Andrew Fitzmaurice has

Johnson, such enterprises held the key to the establishment of international order, and the continued preservation of domestic stability.¹⁰

It is perhaps then no surprise that Johnson produces his first translations of the *Relations* in 1601 on the heels of a significant debate over the East India Company charter, which Elizabeth I had

previously noted the *Pilgrimes'* debt to Botero's *Relationi*. Purchas and Johnson were likewise dedicated to promoting the interests of the Virginia Company. For Sir Thomas Smith and the Earl of Essex see Hammer 1999; Lefevre 2010; *History of Parliament: House of Commons, 1558-1603*, online edition, <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/smythe-thomas-ii-1558-1625> (accessed 29 May 2013). For Thomas 'Customer' Smith, the Earl of Leicester and Lord Burghley see Mimardiere 1981; Prestwich 1985; Adams 2002, pp. 176-95. For Robert Johnson and Archbishop Abbot see Beaven 1913, p. 54; Welsby 1962; Brenner 1993, pp. 101, 224; Ogborn 2007, p. 113; Thrush 2010. For Archbishop Abbot, Petrus Eusenius Maxai, Samuel Purchas and the East India Company see Purchas 1626, sig. 2T, 5r; Boon 1982, pp. 155, 156; Basa 1995, p. 207; Ogborn 2007, p. 127. For Purchas, Johnson and the Virginia Company see Johnson 1609; Johnson 1612; Fitzmaurice 2003, p. 63; Fitzmaurice 2007, p. 799.

¹⁰ As he writes in his 1612 *New Life of Virginea* (sig. B, 2r), God's destruction of the Tower of Babel had caused to spring up '(as weeds in solitarie places) such a barbarous and vnfruitful race of mankinde, that euen to this day (as is very probable) many huge and spatious Countries and corners of the world [are] vnknown', but God's 'eternall purpose' was to reunite man, and so he sends his people – the English – into these remote areas of America to bring order to the 'outgrowne wilderness of humaine nature'. For Botero greatness derived primarily from a Ciceronian unification of profit and virtue, with the result that, for many readers, Botero 'used reasons or interests of state to subordinate liberty and virtue to wealth, money, and commerce' (Fitzmaurice 2003, pp. 797, 813). Johnson was likewise firmly committed to profit and wealth as one of the principal causes of greatness, as evidenced by his role in the maximisation of profits from tobacco plantations in America during his association with the Virginia Company. Kingsbury 1906-35, vols. 1-4, *passim*; Brenner 1993, pp. 92-112; Fitzmaurice 2003, pp. 148-57; cf. Headley 2000, pp. 1121, 1137 on the ideology of the Spanish Empire.

initially refused to sign, citing fears of Spanish hostilities.¹¹ The Company had been formed shortly after the triumphant return of the Dutch admiral Jacob van Neck from the East Indies in 1599. Van Neck had successfully led a fleet of ships belonging to the precursor of the Dutch East India Company, the *Compagnie van Verre*, or Long-Distance Company, and his voyage had yielded a profit of over 100% to the original investors based in Amsterdam.¹² The founders of the English East India Company 'induced by the successe of the viage pformed by the Duches nation', and 'beinge informed that the duchemen prepare for a newe viage', petitioned the lords of the Privy Council for a charter of incorporation in late September.¹³ The lords 'havinge red the same and favoringe thenterprise' promised to pass the request on to Elizabeth. However, the Company had received no response over a month later and were forced to 'solicite ther honors againe for her Ma[iesti]es *answer* to the said Petition and articles' in late October 1599.¹⁴ The negotiators appointed to meet with the lords of the Privy Council argued that their voyage 'shuld not be staied when their shipping was p[re]pared', but received answer that the matter had to be put on hold on account of a 'treatye of peace in hand between the Queenes Ma[iesti]es and the kinge of Spaine'. This was a matter of priorities; the lords thought it '*more* beneficiall for the generall state of m[er]chaundize to enterteine a peace then that the same shuld be hindred by the standing w[i]th the spanishe Comissioners for the mainteyning of this trade [to the East Indies] to forgoe the oportunety of the concluding of the peace.'¹⁵ Peace ought to come before overseas enterprise and exploration. Johnson's proximity to the first governor of the East India

¹¹ Fitzmaurice 2007, p. 805.

¹² Van Neck 1599; Van Neck 1601; Andrews 1984, pp. 260-61.

¹³ Stevens 1886, p. 8.

¹⁴ Stevens 1886, p. 9.

¹⁵ Stevens 1886, pp. 10-11; Andrews 1984, p. 256.

Company, his father-in-law Thomas Smith the Younger, would have made him acutely aware of the government's reluctance to jeopardise the peace negotiations with Spain on behalf of the Company. Furthermore, he would also have been aware of the aggressive Dutch encroachment on Spain's former monopoly of eastern trade as he prepared the first edition of his translation of the *Relationi* for publication.

The first edition of 1601, titled the *Travellers Breviat*, is taken from the second part of the *Relationi*, produced in 1592, and contains simply 'A generall description of the World' – detailing the most powerful countries in Europe and Asia.¹⁶ It provides preliminary information for any of those wishing participate in international affairs, but does little else.

It is in the second edition produced in 1601 that the specific purpose of Johnson's use of the *Relationi* is made clear. Entitled the *The World*, it adds Botero's proem to the bare description of the *Breviat*.¹⁷ This introduction stresses the importance of knowing 'the causes, from whence the enlarging & greatnes of... estates do proceed.'¹⁸ A prince overcomes another, the preface goes on to explain, by advantage either of greater population, valour, situation (*i.e.* geography) or – most importantly – occasion, defined as 'a meeting and concurring of diuerse circumstances, which at one instant do make a matter very easie, which at another time, those circumstances being *ouerslipped*, it will be impossible, or very hard, to bring to effect'.¹⁹ All other factors are to 'small purpose' without this

¹⁶ Shackleton 1948, p. 405.

¹⁷ Shackleton 1948, p. 407.

¹⁸ Botero 1601b, p. 1.

¹⁹ Botero 1601b, p. 9. This issue of 'occasion' or '*occasione*' was foundational to Botero, as it had been for Machiavelli; see Paul 2014 (forthcoming). As Etherington writes in his *Abstract* of the *Ragione*, a prince ought to 'Study to know the occasion of the imprese in hand, & embrace the fitt opportunity nothing being of more moment. Opportunity being no

last.²⁰ Whereas the other causes – population, valour and geography – were inward-looking, knowing occasion requires an intimate understanding of the affairs of other states, primarily ‘the baseness and negligence’, ‘the deuision’ and ‘the variance & iarring of the adioyning princes’.²¹ Thus the proem smoothly transitions from a discussion of occasion as the primary causal factor in the greatness of states, to the general description of potent nations.²² In these relations, it is made clear that its conflicts with England have left Spain heavily in debt and without reputation amongst other European states, underlining the need for England to seize the occasion it has created and expand its overseas outposts and colonies without fear of Spanish retaliation.²³

The anti-Spanish tenor of Johnson's editions only increases with the accession of James I in 1603. James had a vision of a global order predicated on European peace and concord; upon his arrival in London, he ordered an immediate ceasefire against the Spanish, and quickly entered into treaty negotiations.²⁴ Such actions did not

other thinge, saue onely a period of tyme, wherein there is the concourse of circumstances w^{ch} maketh the busines easie’ (Sl. MS fol. 12^r). This is a skill at which the Spanish excel, according to this second 1601 edition: ‘the first [virtue of the Spanish] is temporising: for no people can readier finde the occasion, and sooner take it or refuse it when it is offered’ (p. 44).

²⁰ Botero 1601b, p. 9.

²¹ Botero 1601b, p. 9.

²² Botero 1601b, p. 10.

²³ Botero 1601b, p. 47: ‘But let vs marke and consider their fortunes, sithence they vnsheathed their swords against the Christian world, as we shall soone see, that their treasures, their Armadas, their long experienced Infanterie, and their conquered prouinces, haue little or nothing augmented.... The world seeth more cleere then day light... sithence the English haue delt with them’.

²⁴ Patterson 1997, p. 53. As Patterson 1997, p. 91 points out, such attempts at peace-making were not in James's own interests; a view which Allen 2000, p. 138 confirms.

sit well with the anti-Spanish faction, as the 1603 edition of the *Relationi* by Johnson makes clear.

In addition to the inclusion of nations not included in the first two editions, Johnson also adds a strongly polemical second 'relation of the State of Spain' to the end of this third text. It is described as an ambassadorial report addressed by Francisco Vendramin [Francesco Vendramino], Venetian ambassador in Spain to his 'masters' in Venice during 1595, and appears to have been based on a genuine '*relazione*'.²⁵ Vendramino's report is *blatantly* anti-Spanish, and once again emphasises the need for

²⁵ Certainly Vendramino *was* the Venetian ambassador in Spain from 1592-95, and could have written the tract as a summary-report of his observations upon his return, which was then passed along networks of interested diplomats and politicians in Venice and England (which would explain why a copy in the original Italian can still be found in the British Library - Add MS 10186. See also SP 94/5, fol. 71). Venetian ambassadors returning to the Republic were expected to provide the Senate with a detailed report or *relazione*. These relations were originally verbal reports when first instituted in 1268, but were later written down and preserved in the chancellery from the 1530's. The Venetian *relazioni* were expected to provide the government with 'a full picture of the geography, politics and society of the territory from which the ambassador had returned, as well as the nature and relative success of Venetian policy in relation to it.' Foreign dignitaries were not allowed to be present during ambassadors' presentation of *relazioni* to the Senate. Nevertheless, they were sometimes able to get hold of copies through bribing the secretaries employed at the Senate, which could explain how a copy of Vendramino's *relazione* found its way into Johnson's *Relations*. The presence of a copy of Vendramino's relation among the papers of the Secretary of State (presumably Sir William Cecil, Lord Burghley or his son, Sir Robert Cecil) provides a glimpse of the networks amongst whom it would have been circulating. See Miranda 1998-2013, <http://www2.fiu.edu/~mirandas/bios1615.htm> (accessed 29 May 2013); Fitzmaurice 2007, p. 800. Alberi 1861, p. 443. Hamilton and Langhorne 1995, p. 53. On the development of ambassadorial *relazioni* and their history see Queller 1973, pp. 174-96; Benzoni 1990, pp. 45-57; Dursteler 2011, pp. 231-48; cf. also SP 94/5, fol. 71.

British policy to take into account the dire machinations of the Spanish and to answer them in kind. Vendramino paints a picture of Spain as a 'spacious Empire' with a strong and intelligent prince, who 'vnderstandeth perfectly all matters of state'.²⁶ Spain, he suggests, is well fortified to withstand attacks from any force, including from the Royal Navy: 'for the English armada his maiesty hath many ships which serue for that purpose, and he to that end of late hath taken into pay Ragusean mariners'.²⁷

Spain's highest goal is to obtain 'the Monarchy of the whole World', a venture which also requires 'another interprize for the kingdome of England' because of 'the dammages that they [Spaniards] daielye receiue by their fleetes at sea... as also for hauing subministred continuall supplies both of men and money, to their neighbors in flanders [*i.e.* the Netherlands]'.²⁸ Vendramino declares that 'The greatest enemy to the Crowne of Spain, is now the crown of England', and Philip 'liues in hope to make one day some demonstration of his so many receiued wrongs; and for that purpose keepe those coales still alieue raked vppe in the embers of secrecie... hoping that one day they shall breake forth into flames of sedition and ciuill dissention', and for that reason 'willinglie intertaineth all the mal-contented, and such fugitives of that kingdom'.²⁹ The message is clear. Spain continues to plot secretly

²⁶ Botero 1603b, p. 238.

²⁷ Botero 1603b, p. 242. This is a reference to the Republic of Ragusa, otherwise known as Dubrovnik, a city state under the protection of the Ottoman Empire which in the late sixteenth century placed its marine resources at the disposal of the Spanish Empire; see Faroqhi, et al., eds. 1997, p. 511. cf. also Kuncevic (2013), pp. 91-121.

²⁸ Botero 1603b, pp. 266; 254; a conquest which he suggests was Philip II's 'last consultation' upon his deathbed. The latter part refers to England's military and financial support of the Netherlands during the Eighty Years' War (1568-1648).

²⁹ Botero 1603b, p. 262. Johnson conflates the figure of King Philip II (r. 1554-1598) with that of his son King Philip III (r. 1598-1621) through his

against England, and so to make peace is to invite sedition or invasion, leading to Spain's triumph over England and the Calvinist alliance. Were it not for the conflict with Britain and the Netherlands which keeps Spain 'very poor and smally stored with wealth', Spain would have the resources to dominate the rest of Europe; peace would disrupt rather than lead to global order.³⁰

However, Johnson's anti-Spanish faction was a minority and royal policy prevailed; in 1604 James signed a landmark peace treaty with Spain, although he continued his support in the Netherlands.³¹ Within a few years, however, Spain was looking to end this expensive conflict as well; by 1607 a ceasefire was in place and a peace conference began early in 1608. It is in this context that Johnson produces his fourth edition of the *Relationi* and he takes this opportunity to significantly reorganise the text, so that it begins with a treatment of the territories belonging to Britain before moving on to discuss other European states. This reorientation of the text towards British affairs is paralleled in his treatment of Habsburg Spain, which now includes Vendramino's relation, not as a separate addendum, but quietly smuggled into the main content of the description without any declaration of its original source.

incorporation of Vendramino's relation as a postscript to the translation, thereby creating a sense of continuity and enduring hostility between Spain and England. (cf. Johnson's incorporation of the supposed final instructions given by Philip II to Philip III in the fourth edition of the *Relations* discussed below). Furthermore, Vendramino's account of Philip II's secret machinations and support for political dissidents in England would have played on fears of the Spaniards' supposed excellence at temporising and seizing the occasion in their pursuit of greatness. cf. above, n. 19 and 'Sir Charles Cornwallis to the Earles of Dorsett, Nottingham, Suffolk, Northampton and Salisburie [dated from Madrid?, Anno 1606]'; Sawyer 1725, vol. II, p. 274; Meshkat 2013, ch. 2.

³⁰ Botero 1603b, p. 248. As Allen 2000, p. 138 points out, this analysis is correct in that Spain benefitted far more from the peace than England did.

³¹ Patterson 1997, p. 53.

Johnson, however, was not interested in subtlety alone. He adds in 1608 yet *another* amendment to his description of Spain – the ‘most weighty, secret, and last instructions giuen by *Phillip* the second... to his Sonne *Phillip* the third’.³² Echoing the lessons about occasion noted in Botero’s proem, Philip II tells his son to ‘Alwaies looke well to the charges and alterations of other states and Countries, to the end you make vse, and reape good profit thereby, as occasion shall serue’.³³ In particular, Philip ought to ‘hold in league with the Prouince of the *Netherlands*’, precisely the policy Spain was advancing in 1608.³⁴ By making peace with the Dutch, Philip II suggests that his son will be able to preserve Spanish control over trade to the Indies from English attempts to advance their imperial interests at Spain’s expense. Just as Philip III was considering a peace treaty with the Netherlands, Johnson’s new edition of the *Relationi* powerfully demonstrates once again how

³² Botero 1608, sig. M, 2^v. Philip II’s advice to his son is an elaborate piece of invented political propaganda, an early example of the kind of literature of which the *secretissima instructio* texts detailed by Malcolm 2007 remain the prime example. The author of the text stealthily appropriates Philip’s voice and authority, claiming that he had ordered the ‘transcript or last scribbled Copy of these remembrances being in diuers places interlined, amended, and altered, to be cast into the fire’ on 17 September 1598 (Philip II had died on 13 September following a protracted illness). The printed version of the text is presented by Johnson as having been ‘brought to light by a seruant of *Don Christopher di Mora* [Cristobal de Moura, Philip II’s trusted advisor] called *Rederigodst* [!]’ after being ‘saued out of those notes and writings which were *seene to be burned*’ (emphasis added). Johnson probably knew that Philip’s ‘advice’ to his son was a forgery, but nevertheless ‘thought good to publish [it] for the common benefit’, so that ‘the world may see how iudicially this manuscripts of the Kinges *owne hand* agreeth with these [i.e. Johnson’s own] relations’ (emphasis added). Botero 1608, sig. M, 4^v; M, 2^v. Kamen 1997, pp. 301-17; Williams 2001, pp. 228-53; Parker 2002, pp. 178-199. A manuscript version of Philip II’s advice to his son is extant in the National Archives, SP 94/6.

³³ Botero 1608, sig. M, 3^r.

³⁴ Botero 1608, sig. M, 3^r.

peace with Spain satisfies a Spanish plot to hinder English colonial aspirations and preserve the interests of the Spanish Empire:

If you perceiue the Englishmen prepare to bereaue you of these [Indian] commodities, as being strong both in shipping and Marriners (for the French I make small account) see that you strengthe[n] yourselfe with the *Netherlands*... with condition that they shall haue full liberty to vtter all theyr commodities in *Spaine* and *Italy*, paying theyr royall Incomes... and all duties belonging vnto you: and then also you may graunt vnto them passage to trauayle and trade vnto your East and West Indies, prouided that... vpon their returne from the Indies, they shall arriue in some part of *Spaine*... Mine opinion is, that they will neuer refuse to accept of this easie condition, and to accomplish the same; and by these meanes shall the *Indies* and *Spanish* be lincked and knit to the *Netherlandish* Trade: and *England* and *France* must then liue vpon their owne purses.³⁵

Johnson's next edition, published in 1611, takes on a very different tone, one more interested in fleshing out the theoretical basis to his global vision, rather than advancing similarly strong anti-Spanish sentiments. By this time, such views had obtained an official voice within the court, as well as a patron and figurehead, in the young Prince Henry, who had been created Prince of Wales the year before.³⁶ Henry intended to personally lead the Calvinist alliance

³⁵ Botero 1608, sig. M, 4^{r-v}.

³⁶ This is probably why Johnson at last feels confident enough to claim full credit for his translation. King James was showing signs of suffering from the gout and a litany of other ailments, whereas Henry was at the height of his standing and popularity in 1611. Green 1858, pp. 161, 168, 198, 214, 395, 518, 526; Sutton 2008, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.urlls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/12961?docPos=2> (accessed 29 May 2013); cf. Croft 1992, pp. 177-93; Meshkat 2013, chs. 1 and 4.

against the Habsburgs, was an enthusiastic supporter of the Virginia plantation and was also involved in the planning for the expedition of Thomas Button to discover the North West Passage. As the Venetian ambassador to England, Antonio Foscarini, would comment the following year:

[Henry] was athirst for glory if ever any prince was. He lent fire to the King in the affairs of Germany, and aspired to be head of the confederate princes who include fourteen of the Hanseatic towns. Many predictions centred round his person, and he seemed marked out for great events. His whole talk was of arms and war. His authority was great, and he was obeyed and lauded by the military party. He protected the colony of Virginia, and under his auspices the ships sailed for the north-west passage to the Indies. He had begun to put the navy in order and raised the number of sailors. He was hostile to Spain and had claims in France... His designs were vast... His household was but little inferior to the King's and kept in excellent order. He had few equals in the handling of arms, be it on horse or on foot; in fine all the hopes of these kingdoms were built on his high qualities.³⁷

The 1611 edition also sees a significant reorganisation, with the addition of an entirely new first book under the heading 'Of Obseruation'. Johnson begins the first chapter by making clear some of the novel elements of the work:

Being to relate of the *Customes, Manners, and Potencies of Nations* and great *Princes*; my Scope shall neyther be, to trouble your readings with such Authors, as are to be accounted verie

³⁷ Brown 1905, pp. 441-54; cf. Rundall 1849, p. 82; Barbour 1969, pp. 104-6; Hunt 1990, pp. 206-17; Trim 2007, pp. 239-58, and Meshkat 2013, chs. 1 and 4.

ancient (for of these Themes they were ignorant, by reason of indiscoverie:) Neyther will I wholly refer you to Historyes, because their Caueats are infinite; some are growne out of vse, some are temporarie, some opposite, and others mutable... whereof no profitable vse can be expected.³⁸

In a few lines of text, Johnson rejects completely the centuries-old foundations of political thought – classical philosophy and history – as these will not suit the changing times. The classical authorities had no knowledge of many of the nations of the world, and were therefore of no use in attempting to conceptualise and approximate a truly *global* order. Histories are not only contradictory, but also biased. Instead, Johnson will ‘lay downe some few obseruations, arising from the immutable prouidence of Nature’ upon which to base seventeenth-century international politics.

Such observations, Johnson writes, are of two kinds. The first are ‘stable and are never changed’, drawn from an understanding of the nature of men according to their geography.³⁹ Here, Johnson departs from his reliance on Botero, and transforms his text from translation to collection. He is ‘borrowing’ from Jean Bodin’s *Methodus ad facilem historiarum cognitionem*, first printed in 1566 and with no other contemporary English translation.⁴⁰ In it, Bodin establishes that there is good reason to ‘impugn history, or to withhold agreement’ for ‘those who ought to have had the highest standards’ have not always ‘had regard for truth and trustworthiness’ and so we find that they ‘contradict themselves’.⁴¹ To determine which histories are to be trusted, and how best to interpret them, Bodin ‘make[s] some generalizations as to the nature of all peoples or at least of the better known’, which cannot

³⁸ Botero 1611, p. 1.

³⁹ Bodin 1945, p. 110.

⁴⁰ Shackleton 1948, p. 408.

⁴¹ Bodin 1945, p. 110.

be learnt from classical or historical sources, for on this topic 'the ancients could write nothing' and were therefore compelled to judge 'by inferences of probability', rather than fact.⁴² Johnson takes Bodin's treatment of the various peoples of the globe, set out to evaluate history, and presents it to his own audience as a superior method for the establishment of political knowledge.

Whereas this first type of observation is constant and never-changing, Johnson's 'seco[n]d branch of Obseruation' is defined by its ability to vary with the times, keeping up with the rise and fall of great states.⁴³ This is the knowledge of 'the greatest Princes and Potentates, which at this day sway the world', the section taken from Botero's proem which Johnson had included since his second edition in 1601.⁴⁴ But Johnson is not content simply with such bare description, and so adds a final chapter to this first book, instructing his readers on the knowledge which underpins this type of observation: 'Of Trauell'. Here, Johnson once again discredits the use of ancient and historical knowledge, replacing it with the information gleaned from first-hand observation of other states. As tradition is 'A Sandy foundation either in matter of Science, or Conscience', there is 'nothing fitter' than travel for 'the bettering of our vnderstanding', 'by the Eie-sight of those things, which otherwise a man cannot attain vnto but by Tradition'.⁴⁵ Johnson's source here is neither Botero nor Bodin, but an English text, Robert Dallington's *Method for Trauell* of 1605, which notes that, for any traveller, 'the end of his *Trauell* is his ripening in knowledge; and the end of his knowledge is the seruice of his countrie' which is 'done by... *Obseruation* of what he heares and sees in his traueilling'.⁴⁶

⁴² Bodin 1945, p. 110.

⁴³ Botero 1611, p. 14.

⁴⁴ Botero 1611, p. 14.

⁴⁵ Botero 1611, p. 23.

⁴⁶ Dallington 1605, sig. B, 1r; see Shackleton 1948, p. 407. Dallington accompanied Roger Manners, 5th Earl of Rutland on the latter's

Johnson's insistence on the importance, especially the *political* importance, of travel, places the 1611 text within a rapidly-growing literature of the early seventeenth century, primarily associated with Prince Henry's dynamic and popular court.⁴⁷ Thomas Palmer, whose son was Henry's cupbearer, dedicated his *Essays of the meanes how to make our trauales more profitable* of 1606 to the prince, telling his readers that 'of all voluntarie Commendable actions that of traailing into forraine States... is the most behoueable & to be regarded in this Common-weale'.⁴⁸ The knowledge gained by the traveller is 'the meanes whereon all policie is grownded' and the

continental tour to Holland, Germany, Switzerland, Italy and France from 1595 to 1597, concerning which Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex had addressed three private letters of travel advice to Rutland. These were later reworked by the Essex secretariat, or more specifically Sir Francis Bacon, into the widely-circulated 'The Advice to the Earl of Rutland in his Travels'; Hammer 1995, pp. 317-26; Vickers 2002, pp. 69 ff; Hammer 2004; Meshkat 2013, ch. 1.

⁴⁷ This seventeenth-century literature had its roots in works produced in the late sixteenth century, particularly William Thomas's *The Historie of Italie* (1549), William Bourne's *Treasure for traueilers* (1578) and the works of Richard Hakluyt; see Stagl 1995; Hadfield 1998; Hadfield, ed. 2001; Hulme and Youngs, eds. 2002; Irving 2008; Keller 2012, pp. 189-212. As Hadfield 1998 points out, even these early works emphasised the need for 'an English empire to counteract the success of the Spanish' (2) and were consciously written 'as a vehicle to explore contemporary political problems' (135). Hakluyt claimed to follow Ptolemy's lead in choosing 'Peregrinationis historia' as the practice which must 'bring vs to the certayne and full discouerie of the world.' Richard Willes had made a similar statement twelve years earlier in his translation of Pietro Martire d'Anghiera's account of Spanish discoveries. Hakluyt modelled his *Principall Navigations* on the work of the Venetian Giovanni Battista Ramusio, who likewise closely followed news of Spanish discoveries in the New World; Hakluyt 1589, sig. 3v; Willes 1577, sig. 2H1r; Parks 1974, p. 97; Diamond 2012; Fuchs 2013.

⁴⁸ Palmer 1606, A, 1r; O'Callaghan 2007, note 1, p. 101.

'vtenils, and materialls of States men'.⁴⁹ The acquisition of this wisdom marks the difference between 'the home States man... & the compleate Trauailer' for the former 'is fed by aduertisements only, and is ledde by other mens eyes'.⁵⁰ Drawing on the critique of philosophy we have already encountered, Palmer suggests that such a difference is like that between the soldier, who has real experience, and the theorist, 'whose booke rules, in accidentall things, faile many times as in particular motions'.⁵¹ Direct observation is the key: 'For, the eye hath a more perfect sense in iudgement then the eare'.⁵²

Perhaps the greatest example of such interest is provided by Thomas Coryate in *Coryat's Crudities*, an extraordinarily detailed travel account which was, like Johnson's latest edition, published at the height of Henry's power in 1611.⁵³ Coryate opens his text with a translation of an oration by the German philosopher Hermann Kirchner, in which Kirchner argues that 'there can be no nearer way to the attayning of true wisdome and all experience of a ciuill life, no speedier way to aspire to the gouernement of a Commonweale... then [by] trauell'.⁵⁴ There is thus no one more suited to be 'aduanced to the sterne of a Common weale' than such a traveller, 'For this Counsellor is like that opticke Glasse, wherein not onely the space of three or tenne miles, but also of a whole

⁴⁹ Palmer 1606, p. 53. Palmer was advocating foreign travel as an essential part of a courtier and aspiring counsellor's education; O'Callaghan 2007, p. 88.

⁵⁰ Palmer 1606, p. 53.

⁵¹ Palmer 1606, p. 53.

⁵² Palmer 1606, p. 53.

⁵³ Not only was Coryat's work dedicated to the prince, but he sponsored its creation, and his copy is still extant in the British Library; O'Callaghan 2007, p. 86.

⁵⁴ Coryate 1611, sig. B, 1r; B, 2r.

Prouince, yea and of the whole world it selfe may be represented'.⁵⁵ Henry was not only a figurehead of the type of policy which Johnson had been espousing for over a decade, but also a rising monarch with the power to raise similarly-minded men to positions of power upon his anticipated triumphant accession to the throne, finally implementing the bellicose, expansionist policies of the anti-Spanish faction. Johnson, like Palmer and Coryate, was not going to let such an opportunity pass him by.

Of course, such plans were to come to naught, as Henry died only a year after the publication of Johnson and Coryate's works. Without their champion, Johnson and his fellows were once again a marginal interest at the English court, a position exacerbated by the arrival of the wily Spanish ambassador, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña, Count of Gondomar in 1613. Gondomar's purpose in England (among other things) was to keep James out of European conflicts, as well as away from Spanish interests in the Americas, policies which appealed to James's view of himself as peace-maker, and Gondomar managed to quickly establish himself as one of the king's closest friends.⁵⁶

It is in this context, in 1616, that Johnson once again attempts to sway policy through his publication of the *Relations*, this time by adding not to the description of Spain – which was perhaps sufficiently incriminating – but rather to the account of Great Britain. First, he includes a lengthy passage favourably comparing the English 'husbandman' with his counterparts in other European nations. The most biting comparison is, unsurprisingly, saved for the Spanish, whose husbandmen are 'esteemed almost as the Asses,

⁵⁵ Coryate 1611, sig. B, 8r; C, 2r. John Day, William Rowley and George Wilkins had previously represented the idea on stage in 1607; Parr 1995, p. 133.

⁵⁶ Redworth 2004, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.urls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/69257> (accessed 23 May 2013). Smuts 2002, pp. 371-88; Kershaw 2011, *passim*.

that bring their Cabages, Melons, and such like trash to the Markets'.⁵⁷ Second, he adds a further section addressing 'What other Nations conceiue of vs'.⁵⁸ Whereas France holds back for fear of British power, and Turkey continues to persist in a state of remote ignorance, Spain 'both knowes vs, and hath of late had some feeling of vs', referring to the accumulation of wealth and past examples of British military prowess.⁵⁹ The Spanish king, Johnson suggests, has reason to fear English aggression and so 'he will continue correspondency amongst vs, and corroborat his friendship whatsoeuer it cost', but without forgetting the English frustration of Spanish designs.⁶⁰ Johnson's text makes clear that Gondomar is in England simply to breed complacency amongst the British, so that his king can plot the right time for revenge.

This is Johnson's last edition of the text, and we can only surmise that he dies sometime shortly thereafter, for this is the end of his publishing history. There is, however, a further reprint of Johnson's *Relations*, which comes fourteen years later in 1630. Making reference to only *two* previous translations – presumably those of 1611 and 1616 – the unidentified editors condemn Johnson for not naming the original author to whom they attribute the entire text.⁶¹ Acknowledging Botero's pro-Spanish sentiments, they nevertheless praise him for his novelty of writing, suggesting that he 'deserves rather to bee numbred among the Politicians, than amongst the Historians or *Geographers*', praise we might now think better suited to Johnson, rather than Botero.⁶²

Despite their apparent ignorance of Johnson's changes to Botero's work, the editors continue in the tradition he had

⁵⁷ Botero 1616, p. 54.

⁵⁸ Botero 1616, p. 60.

⁵⁹ Botero 1616, p. 60.

⁶⁰ Botero 1616, p. 60.

⁶¹ Botero 1630, sig. A, 2^v.

⁶² Botero 1630, sig. A, 3^v.

established, publishing it ‘inlarged according to moderne observations’, and advancing the same vision of a global order maintained by British involvement in European affairs through their own amendments to the text, which place it once again in the context of contemporary disputes. The year before the appearance of this new edition, Britain had withdrawn its involvement in the Thirty Years’ War, which had engulfed Europe during the past decade. Previously, British attention had been strongly focused on the anti-Hapsburg and pro-Protestant policies of the King of Hungary and Prince of Transylvania, Gabriel Bethlen, who between 1619 and 1626 conducted a series of raids against the Hapsburgs. In 1626, Charles I had entered into an alliance with Bethlen. However, Bethlen died in 1629, and his plans to unite Protestant communities in Hungary and Transylvania died with him.⁶³

The 1630 edition of the *Relations* adds to the account of Hungary ‘The Estate of *Gabriel Bethlen*’, originally written by Petrus Eusenius Maxai, a Transylvanian scholar who had studied in England under the patronage of George Abbot, Archbishop of Canterbury.⁶⁴ The account gives details of the events of the 1620s, painting Bethlen as a ‘man much talked of, but little knowne’.⁶⁵ It is written to answer ‘his Traducers’ by detailing his courage and favour amongst princes.⁶⁶ Interestingly, the chronicle ends with Bethlen’s illness, but

⁶³ Parker 1997, *passim*; Kopeczi 1994, vol. 2; Foster 2012.

⁶⁴ Botero 1630, p. 399; Basa 1995, p. 207. Interestingly, much of the negotiations with Bethlen were conducted by Sir Thomas Roe, who was associated with the Virginia Company, Prince Henry, the East India Company and Archbishop Abbot. Strachan 2004, <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.catalogue.ulrls.lon.ac.uk/view/article/23943?docPos=1> (accessed 29 May 2013), and Roe 1740, vol. 1, *passim*.

⁶⁵ Botero 1630, p. 408.

⁶⁶ Botero 1630, p. 408. Maxai’s account is taken as the basis for an apology to defend Bethlen against accusations that ‘he was basely borne, that he was a Turke in Religion... and an hundred other Iesuiticall knaveries’. It

the reassurance that 'we haue heard newes of his safe recovery'.⁶⁷ It remains unclear if its inclusion was designed to support continued alliance with Bethlen during his illness, or to inspire the continuation of Protestant opposition to Hapsburg control following his death. Either way, it puts forward a view of global order in the context of the Thirty Year's War consistent with that of Johnson's three decades before, based on a British expansionist world order, to rival that of a Spanish universal empire.

It has been the purpose of this article to demonstrate that the seven English editions of Botero's *Relationi universali* published between 1601 and 1630 were produced in order to make direct interventions in the formulation of British foreign policy of the time, advancing a view of British-led expansion to counteract and curb Spanish conquest. In so doing, this paper itself has sought to make a number of more contemporary interventions. First and foremost, it must be accepted that the use of these texts as straightforward translations of Botero is deeply flawed. Although there remain sections taken from Botero's original, these are heavily diluted and amended by Johnson's recurring attempts to keep up-to-date and to comment on British foreign policy. Second, it becomes clear that without an understanding of Johnson's interests and context, it is impossible to understand his changes to Botero's text and their import. Rejecting moral philosophy and history, Johnson's views of the relations between nations was built on attempts to understand the nature of diverse peoples, and the understanding of

was also intended to address reservations that 'he [Bethlen] had still not bene ready to doe as we would have him in England, since these infortunate warres of Bohemia', such that 'even we good Protestants have thought that hee hath hitherto done nothing.' Botero, 1630, p. 403. cf. the language associating 'cruell Dacia' with the Ottomans in the aftermath of the Battle of Cecora (1620); Ossolinsky 1621, sig. B, 3v; Rutkowski 2008, pp. 183-96.

⁶⁷ Botero 1630, p. 407.

contemporary affairs through the collection of eye-witness accounts. Although more comparative and contextual work needs to be done to fully unlock the importance of these texts, what these editions of Botero demonstrate is that there was a genuine attempt in the opening decades of the seventeenth century to generate visions and theories of global order, as a means to grapple with the growing complexities of world affairs.

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