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ROYAL PROTECTORS, EXPLORERS, AND THIEVES:
PIRATES OF THE ELIZABETHAN COLD WAR,
1558-1585

AN UNDERGRADUATE THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF HISTORY
IN THE CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
BACHELOR OF ARTS IN HISTORY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

BY

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Abstract

Within this paper, I intend to explain the significance of Elizabethan pirates as financial and defensive assets to Elizabethan England. Because the pirates existed as plunderers and thieves, outright state support of their ventures by Parliament and the Queen is difficult to determine. Evidence indicates, however, that Queen Elizabeth I developed relationships with specific pirates, chiefly Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake. Elizabeth entrusted Hawkins and Drake to employ cold war tactics against Spain and secure England's financial stability with stolen goods. Through state documents, primary accounts, biographies, and secondary sources, I aim to explain certain aspects of the complex relationship and its significance in and influence on Elizabethan England.

Introduction

On 4 April 1581, Queen Elizabeth I knighted Francis Drake aboard his ship the *Golden Hind* which in the previous autumn had docked in Plymouth, ending Drake's circumnavigation of the world. To his Queen, patrons, and the English people Drake had emerged as a national hero. His curiosity and imagination led him to oceans which few English men and women knew and even fewer saw. Furthermore, Drake sailed with intentions to disrupt Spanish shipping from the Americas to Europe and steal Spanish silver and gold for England's financial benefit and his own. Every Spanish ship Drake pirated, the English prized. The Spanish, however, viewed Drake's actions as blatant acts of aggression and theft, and demanded reparations.

Sir Francis Drake, the explorer and the pirate, presented a paradox to Elizabeth. His journey was a success, but it only widened the gap between England and Spain. Why the Queen knighted Drake while relations with Spain faltered remains unclear. The public support and praise she gave him in 1581 was bold and most likely intended as a purposeful insult to Spain.

During Elizabeth I's reign, 1558-1603, the international atmosphere allowed for blatant acts of piracy. These violent and untrustworthy acts between the agents of rival nations arose from a combination of religious differences and the search for economic

prosperity. For decades, England faced religious, political, and economic unrest because of the struggle between Protestants and Catholics, halfhearted wars, and difficult rulers like Mary Tudor. Elizabeth and her closest advisor, William Cecil, sought to remedy the internal religious strife and end the external threat from England's close and powerful neighbors, France and Spain.

Throughout most of Elizabeth's first decade, the Queen and her advisors focused primarily on restoring the Protestant religion in England through the Act of Uniformity and a revised Book of Common Prayer. Although these policies were chiefly domestic in nature, they had external consequences. France remained a Catholic nation that, until 1560, militarily and financially supported England's northern neighbor, Scotland. More importantly, Philip II, King of Spain, was an ardent Roman Catholic who referred to Elizabeth as a heretic. Because Spain was one of few nations not heavily influenced by the Protestant Reformation, fear and persecution of Protestantism ran rampant. Philip II and the leaders of the Inquisition resented the Protestant queen and her Church of England. Consequently, Spain threatened England's religion and sovereignty.

Religion remained the passionate dividing force between England and her Catholic counterparts; however Elizabeth's search for economic stability and prosperity divided the nations further. After years of domestic unrest, Elizabeth and her advisors intended to rebuild the nation financially and to strengthen England's economic and military position in Europe. At the beginning of Elizabeth's reign, England was a weak nation and Spain ruled the most powerful empire in the world. King Philip II governed

Spain, the Netherlands, provinces in Italy, and some of Latin America. Two of those areas, the Netherlands and the Americas, concerned England. Spanish control of the Netherlands threatened the security of England's southern coast and its commerce with the port city of Antwerp, England's primary trading entrepôt on the continent. America's excess of gold and silver intrigued English explorers such as John Hawkins and Francis Drake. With some trepidation, wealthy patrons, the Queen, and her advisors encouraged these adventures to relieve Spain of its fortune.

The Elizabethan pirates complemented and complicated an already anxious atmosphere. On one hand, Spanish America was defenseless compared to European states at the time. England took advantage of the open seas and insecure lands to gain financial stability and weaken Spain. On the other hand, Elizabeth feared the impact of pirating on her relationship with Philip II. Although England's navy increased in stature, Spain's navy was unrivaled. Elizabeth feared open war with a nation that desired her crown and had the strength to conquer England.

Different circumstances converged to produce a unique relationship between Queen Elizabeth and her pirates. The New World's vast lands and abundance of natural resources intrigued the European world. England and other European nations sought to benefit from the New World's wealth; but Spain controlled nearly all of it. Beyond the states' interest in the Americas, private merchants and explorers began to covet Spanish America's assets. These men desired trade with the colonists, but Spain rejected pleas for open trade between Spanish America and England. In these moments of rejection

merchants and explorers sometimes became pirates. John Hawkins's expeditions first sought trade accessibility, then plundered to gain profit. Francis Drake's expeditions, however, were nearly all piratical in nature. Religion and politics played a role in the voyages of Hawkins and Drake, although the quest for wealth was their primary concern.

The potential results of English pirating the seas and shores of Spanish America engaged Elizabeth. She recognized the potential wealth Hawkins's and Drake's expeditions could yield, the potential repercussions and losses Spain could endure, and the potential power England could generate. In addition to merchants, members of joint-stock companies, wealthy patrons, and the Queen's advisors support of piratical expeditions, Elizabeth secretly offered her moral and financial support. By supporting Hawkins and Drake in this manner she benefited economically and politically, and Philip II endured serious economic losses. This strategy became an intelligent form of cold war.

Not until 1581, when Elizabeth knighted Francis Drake, did she openly support English pirating against Spain. Her relationship with the pirates proved crucial to her success over Philip. Drake and Hawkins brought England wealth while weakening Spain, expanding geographical boundaries, and defending England in the open seas. The pirates' aspirations of wealth at Spain's expense complemented those of the Queen. With Elizabeth's support, the pirates helped define the age.

Queen Elizabeth I's Foreign Policy in Regards to Spain

The Elizabethan Age was one of rapidly expanding horizons, economic, cultural, and geographical, an age to stir the imagination and incite the energies of the people. A court, the structure of policies based on faction and emulation, kept life intense and vigorous. Though sordid in many of

its details, it was transformed into romance by the personality of the Queen and disciplined by her masterful character, backed by an acute and highly trained intelligence.¹

-J. E. Neale

Elizabeth I inherited a nation torn apart by national and foreign conflict. As J.E. Neale alludes, however, this masterful queen transformed a weak, broken nation into a centralized, strong, ambitious force on the national and international front. Elizabeth's strong sense of self and independence, her impeccable judgment of character, her reliance upon competent advisors, and her political genius made her England's greatest Queen. Throughout her reign, Elizabeth relied heavily on her advisors, William Cecil, Robert Dudley, and Francis Walsingham. With help from her advisors, Elizabeth faced her kingdom's two most difficult problems, religious strife and foreign threats to England's sovereignty. Elizabeth and her councilors realized the significance of a stable, centralized government in dealing with these challenges. Trust and faith between the Queen and her Privy Council proved crucial to the survival of Elizabeth's crown.² After she and her chief advisors established a strong, centralized core, the Queen was able to strengthen her kingdom internationally and reduce external threats.

Elizabeth took the throne in 1558 as a young woman inexperienced in the ways of politics. She quickly learned to rely on her advisors, primarily her chief councilor, William Cecil. Her advisors, known in a collective group (of about twenty) as the Privy Council, offered advice on religious, economic, and foreign matters and emphasized

¹ J.E. Neale, *The Elizabethan Age* (London: The Athlone Press, 1957), 18.

² Wallace T. MacCaffery, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), 19.

administrative details rather than policy.³ Fulke Grevill, a contemporary of William

Cecil, wrote:

Her Council Board (as an abridgement of all other jurisdictions) she held up in due honour, propounded not her great business of the state to them with any prejudicate resolution which, once discovered, suppresseth the freedom both of spirit and judgement, but opens herself clearly, hears them with respect, observes number and reason in their voices and makes a quintessence of all their concords and discords within herself, whence the resolutions and directions came suddenly and secretly forth for execution.⁴

Elizabeth's Privy Council was her greatest asset, with its intelligent, motivated, and dedicated members. J.E. Neale maintains that her council was the most efficient council England ever witnessed.⁵ Elizabeth implemented an ingenious political tactic of balancing gentry and nobles. Individuals from both groups were or became key advisors and statesmen, but their different backgrounds provided balance to the council, never allowing any member or group to become too powerful. Furthermore, the Queen governed through factions that developed over different issues of the court. She utilized, supported, and dissolved these factions to stabilize her position as monarch and keep advisors as her subordinates.⁶

Within the Privy Council existed a small group of men Elizabeth trusted on a more intimate level. For the most part William Cecil, Lord Burghley; Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester; and Sir Francis Walsingham composed this group. Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Christopher Hatton, and the Earl of Essex additionally held the Queen's trust, but it

³ Conyers Read, *The Government of England under Elizabeth* (Amherst: Folger Books, 1979), 16.

⁴ Quoted in R.B. Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1588-1603* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 4.

⁵ Neale, *The Elizabethan Age*, 16.

⁶ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, 9.

was Cecil, Dudley, and Walsingham who advised the Queen on the most pressing issues.⁷ Most of Elizabeth's closest advisors were members of the gentry rather than noble class. Unlike many monarchs, she gave few peerages during her reign; however she made Cecil and Dudley peers and knighted Walsingham. Her advisors held her trust and for the most part her respect at a time when a few powerful Catholic nobles wanted her dead. Furthermore, without the advice and support of advisors such as Walsingham, Dudley, and Essex, Hawkins and Drake would not have received the level of support she offered them.

Of Elizabeth's forty-five years as queen of England, William Cecil served as her closest and most cherished advisor for forty. He died only five years before the Queen, respected and loved by the English people, chiefly the English Protestants. In an obituary written in 1598, Cecil's good friend, William Camden, described him as "a most excellent man who...was fashioned by nature and advanced with learning, a singular man for honesty, gravity, temperance, industry and justice....the Queen was most happy in so Great a Councillor and to his wholesome counsels the state of England for ever shall be beholden."⁸ Her people held only the Queen in higher regard than the man upon whom she bestowed the title, Lord Burghley.⁹ He served as Elizabeth's Principal Secretary until 1572, when she appointed him High Treasurer. As Principal Secretary, Burghley influenced chiefly foreign policy and conducted most matters of importance including

⁷ Ibid., 8.

⁸ Conyers Read, *Lord Burghley and Queen Elizabeth* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1960), 546.

⁹ J.E Neale, *Queen Elizabeth I* (Garden City: Double Day Anchor Books, 1957), 364.

correspondence between the Queen and foreign ambassadors, supervising the secret service and military units abroad, and writing Elizabeth's letters and speeches.¹⁰

Even after 1572 Elizabeth never executed her decisions without Burghley's advice.¹¹ Burghley was an upright, cautious, goodhearted advisor. His righteous character provoked conflicts with Robert Dudley, a man more concerned with personal advantage rather than the benefit of the Queen and England.¹² Disagreements erupted over Elizabeth's marriage proposals and the crown's support of Drake's and Hawkins's expeditions to the Americas. So far as any historical document shows, Burghley never clearly supported piracy in the Americas, unless it served a strong political purpose. It was an issue upon which he and the Queen disagreed, for his moral character would not support theft at the hands of pirates, even at the expense of Spain.

Different sources dispute whether the Queen held the political advice of Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester or Sir Francis Walsingham's in higher esteem. Her feelings for Robert Dudley were far more intimate. Dudley affected Elizabeth emotionally, whereas Walsingham positively influenced her position's stability and power. Walsingham proved to be a crucial asset to the Queen, much more so than Dudley; nevertheless Dudley played a dominant role in Elizabeth's life and her court. Both men strongly supported Hawkins's and Drake's piracy for reasons of wealth and detriment to Spain.¹³ Evidence of their support suggests that Elizabeth respected their advice and

¹⁰ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, 6.

¹¹ Read, *The Government of England under Elizabeth*, 16.

¹² *Ibid.*, 17.

¹³ D.B. Quinn and A.N. Ryan, *England's Sea Empire, 1550-1642* (London: George Allen and Lenwin, 1983), 31.

acted without Burghley's support from time to time. The Drake and Hawkins voyages depended on it.

There is no doubt that the Privy Council dominated the Elizabethan government. Elizabeth, however, held the royal prerogative to make all final decisions. She not only dismissed and accepted proposals, but revised them as she wished. Her rule was supreme under God and her advisors acknowledged her strength and capability to rule England.¹⁴ Wallace T. MacCaffery writes, "By 1572 [Duke of Norfolk's death] the question of survival had been settled and the very struggle for survival had molded the regime into a form which would endure almost as long as Queen Elizabeth lived."¹⁵ England was secure as long as Elizabeth ruled; her powerful presence never faltered.

Of all her responsibilities as Queen, Elizabeth held primary control over foreign affairs. Burghley and Walsingham were and remained heavily involved in international affairs, but the Queen relied on her final judgment when faced with France and Spain. From 1558, Elizabeth encountered serious threats from France and Spain, both of which wanted her Protestant crown. To the north stood a gateway for French invasion through Scotland, a longtime French ally. Furthermore, Mary Queen of Scots had recently married the heir to the French throne. The marriage renewed hope for English, Scottish, and French Catholics that France would overthrow the Protestant queen. The Netherlands provinces, including Europe's most prosperous commercial city, Antwerp, remained under Spanish control. Two powerful, officially Roman Catholic countries

¹⁴ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, 4.

¹⁵ MacCaffery, *The Shaping of the Elizabethan Regime*, 4.

held land in close proximity to the “Protestant middleweight,” as R.B. Wernham terms sixteenth-century England.¹⁶

As a Protestant queen, Elizabeth trusted neither France nor Spain. They were Catholic enemies who wanted to destroy her religion and her nation’s sovereignty. By the time of Elizabeth’s coronation, France and Spain had depleted large amounts of money in nearly half a century of foreign wars. In the meantime England confronted religious conflicts within its own boundaries. Despite their losses, both nations remained more powerful than England, especially Spain which counteracted its war debts with imported silver and gold from its South American colonies. Although England had smaller lands, less money, and fewer people than her Catholic counterparts, Elizabeth used her political genius to encourage discontent within France and the Spanish Netherlands. She supported Protestant rebellions in each region, successfully preoccupying her enemies without causing serious friction.¹⁷ Subsequently, England’s dependence on France and Spain dwindled and both nations sought the Queen’s friendship, at least on the surface.

It became clear in the early 1560s that France served as a more probable ally than Spain, although Elizabeth realized for the most part that she would have to stand on her own. Because of Philip II’s ardent Catholic beliefs, his control of the Netherlands, and his substantial income from Spanish America, Spain represented a more militarily and financially viable threat to England. Lord Burghley observed in May 1589, “The state of

¹⁶ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 44.

the world is marvelously changed when we true Englishmen have cause for our own quietness to wish good success to a French King and a King of Scots' and ill to a King of Spain."¹⁸ Although Burghley made this statement near the latter part of Elizabeth's reign, he accurately described the foreign atmosphere from 1564 onward. France never served as a trusted ally during Elizabeth's reign; nevertheless Elizabeth's correspondence with France's Queen Mother, Catherine de Medici, mended the nations' relationship. Catherine de Medici sought to secure friendship with Elizabeth as she abandoned Mary Stuart and her nation's prospect of the English crown.¹⁹ Elizabeth refused substantial support to the Protestant Huguenots, realizing that France and England may combine forces against Spain.

Every aspect of Spain threatened England as long as King Philip II, a fervent Roman Catholic and an imperial leader, governed the empire. Above all, Philip believed the Spanish Empire existed in the name of God and the Catholic religion. In 1559, he professed before a crowd of 200,000 Spaniards and the Inquisitor General that he would "demonstrate the royal determination never to live to be a king of heretics and to defend the Holy Catholic Faith with all the strength of his empire."²⁰ In his eyes and those of his country, Elizabeth was a morally profligate Queen, a heretic who served a religion and nation against his God. He and Elizabeth knew neutrality was an option that could never serve either of their interests.

¹⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4, 27-28.

²⁰ 200,000 Spaniards attended the auto-da-fe to celebrate Philip's return from abroad. Quoted in Lacey Baldwin Smith, *The Elizabethan World* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972), 144.

This religious tension served as the political basis for Elizabeth's support of the piracy against Spain. Drake, more so than Hawkins, was a strong Protestant who had first faced religious persecution under Mary Tudor. Although the quest for wealth served as Drake's main objective during his voyages, his plunders were made personal by Spanish persecution of Protestants and Philip II's discrimination against English merchants. James A. Williamson describes Drake as personally "at war with Spain, one obscure man against an empire."²¹

Piracy relied on the foundation of tension between England and Spain; its purpose, however, was found in the consequences of the religious differences. Because Elizabeth and her advisors mistrusted Philip II as much as he did them, the gap between the nations widened. As a result, Spain secured its grasp on the Netherlands and England lost temporary trading access in 1564 and from 1569-1573. Before Philip's father, Emperor Charles V, abdicated the throne in 1556, the Netherlands enjoyed open trade with most European nations. Trade with Antwerp functioned as England's financial lifeline to and from the continent. It exported mainly cloth products, which produced a total gross profit in 1564 (before Philip denied trade access) of 1,020,000 pounds and net profit of 274,000 pounds, nearly equaling the Queen's annual revenue.²² With access closed, Elizabeth, Burghley, and Walsingham searched for additional trading ports in Germany, Africa, and the Americas. Furthermore, Elizabeth and Walsingham relied on westward exploration to find new ports and Hawkins's and Drake's piracies to offset

²¹ James A. Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake* (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 22.

²² Quinn and Ryan, *England's Sea Empire*, 24.

England's economic losses. Hawkins was the first to attempt trade in the Americas by selling African slaves to the Spanish colonists. This venture created more problems with Spain, though it warned Philip that denying England access to Antwerp would lead to harsh and effective reactions.²³

Although Elizabeth supported profitable ventures outside of Antwerp, she and her advisors remained attentive to the situation in the Netherlands. The situation created apprehension, for the Netherlands currently stood as extensions of Spain rather than a loose confederation of oligarchic states. Only the North Sea separated England from Philip II's troops in the Netherlands. Furthermore, Philip feared the remarkable risks Elizabeth took to ensure her religion and her crown. As a result of these risks, Elizabeth hoped Philip would loosen his control over the Netherlands, but her strategy failed.²⁴ Therefore she continued to support Dutch Calvinists and refuse to punish Hawkins and Drake for piracy in the Americas. Early in the Queen's reign, Spanish Cardinal Granville believed she was the leader of an international Protestant conspiracy. England, however, merely protected its own interests, as did Spain, through brinkmanship and cold war tactics that were both effective and diplomatically denied.

After 1567 Elizabethan policy towards the Spanish Netherlands had three purposes in mind.²⁵ Primarily, England sought to weaken the Spanish military and expel them from the Netherlands. Diplomatic officials and pirates aided in this endeavor.

²³ Ibid., 29.

²⁴ Wallace T. MacCaffery, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy, 1572-1588* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981), 216.

²⁵ Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy, 1588-1603*, 4.

Secondly, in weakening Spain, the English did not want the French army to gain control of the Netherlands. One powerful state in exchange for the other did not serve English interests. Finally, Elizabeth preferred the Netherlands to remain under Spanish “protection.” As the head of a monarchial state, Elizabeth in no way intended the Netherlands entirely rule themselves, rather she preferred the amount of self-rule Spain’s former King, Emperor Charles V, previously allowed the Netherlands. Nevertheless, self-rule entirely ended in 1567, when King Phillip II appointed the Duke of Alva as governor of the Netherlands, sent 10,000 soldiers to the region, and ordered the repression of Calvinist-based uprisings and beliefs. Alva’s troops wreaked havoc in the Netherlands, causing a flood of Protestant refugees to the English borders. He achieved his goals of religious persecution, but for the most part he induced severe hatred for Philip among the Dutch citizens.

In 1567 Elizabeth and her advisors devised a daring and clever move against Spain. The consequence was a blatant act of piracy. On 29 November 1567, Elizabeth, upon request, granted Spanish ambassador Don Guerau de Spes permission for Spanish sailors to dock a ship carrying large amounts of money at the English ports in Cornwall and Devon. The Spanish sought to protect the ship from the Dutch Pirates, known as the Seabeggars, who supported the Protestant cause.²⁶ Both England and Spain agreed on this much. Evidence fails to reveal the rest of the incident.

²⁶Arthur F. Kinney, *Elizabethan Backgrounds: Historical Documents of the Age of Elizabeth I* (Hamden: Archon Books, 1975), 89.

The Spanish claimed that the money on the ship, which belonged to Italian merchants, was forcefully brought ashore through the intimidation of Spanish sailors. The English claimed, however, that the sailors willingly brought the money ashore under de Spes's orders to ensure its safety. Elizabeth states in the *Proclamation against the Traffic in Spanish Countries (1568)*

And yet because her majestie hath no other meanyng herein, but to have the persons of the sayde kynge's subjectes and their goods put in safetie by this arrest, for the preservation of their owne good subjectes and their goodes...she wyllleth and chargeth all manner of her officers, ministers, and subjectes, that no violence be used to the hurt of the person's of any of the sayde kynge's subject by reason's of this arrest...neither that any spoyle, waste, or damage be done to their goodes and marchaundizes, but only to cause them to be put in safetie.²⁷

De Spes informed the Queen that the money belonged to Italian merchants rather than Philip and asked that the money be returned to the ship. Elizabeth, by now fully aware of the situation, told the ambassador she would consider his plea. She stated,

And during this time, whylest this was in ordering, the Spanishe ambassadour came to her majestie about the .xxix. of December, brynging with him from the Duke of Alva a short letter, only of credence, and therupon required, that the vessels and money stayed in the ports might be put to libertie, as belonging to the kyng his maister. To whom her majestie aunswered, that she had her doynge (if it were the kynge's) shrewed hym great pleasure to save it frome the Frenche, shewing hym therein some particularities of the diligence of her officers, but she was informed that it belonged to marchauntes, and herein within foure or five dayes she shoulde understand/moretherof, and assured hym on her honor, that nothyng shoulde be herein done, that in reason should miscontent the kyng her good brother, as he should also knowe within foure or five dayes at his next coming.²⁸

Conflict emerged, however, as Alva arrested English sailors in the Low Countries (Netherlands) and confiscated English goods and ships in retaliation. As a result,

²⁷ Written in Old English as it appeared in the original document. Quoted in Ibid., 93.

²⁸ Quoted in Ibid., 96.

Elizabeth released the 1568 proclamation to the Spanish government, blaming the debacle on Alva and keeping the money for herself. She proclaimed,

The first intelligence to her majestie (without any returne of the ambassador) was, that all her subjects, goodes, marchaundizes, and shippes, were arrested, taken, and kept at Andwerpe as prysoners, the very same present xxix, day that the ambassador was with her majestie, so as it falleth out to every man's understanding, that howsoever her majestie had then satisfied the ambassadour the same xxix. day, all her subjects and their goods had ben neverthesse arrested, as they were at Andwerpe the same day. Whereupon her majestie nowe leaveth it to the judgement of al the worlde, to consider not only whether such a pretence was sufficient to cause so sodaine, so violent, and so general arrest to made with force...but also in whom any default shalbe founde, whatsoever may folowe hereof, her majestie havying had no intention to miscontent the kyng of Spayne, no to possese anything beliongyng to his subjectes, otherwise then with their good wylle, upon juste, resonable, and usuall conditions.²⁹

Despite the seemingly harmless title of the 1568 proclamation, its content is, as Arthur Kinney states, "a deliberate act of state propaganda masking the Queen's true purposes to gain necessary money and to weaken Philip's position in the Netherlands—and cloaking a sharp change in foreign policy."³⁰ Elizabeth and Secretary of State William Cecil devised a political move with the help of John Hawkins's brother William, and subsequently released a document that expressed England's willingness to challenge Spain and protect itself. The document listed Spain's acts of aggression in hopes of creating sympathy for England.³¹ Cecil seized a unique opportunity to empower England, weaken Spain, and diplomatically excuse the crown's actions of piracy. Furthermore, members of the Privy Council supported the siege on behalf of the endangered Protestant religion. More so than ever before, England and Spain faced a

²⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 96-97.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 88.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 90.

dangerous and destructive relationship, supported by cold war tactics. Elizabeth employed acts of aggression and crime to enhance England's power without committing to war. John Hawkins's and Drake's piracy corresponded precisely with this element of the Queen's foreign policy.

England clearly struck at Spain in 1568. Elizabeth, however, refused to stop there. Previously she supported John Hawkins's piratical expeditions in the Spanish Americas and the Protestant rebellions in the Netherlands; now she realized her nation's possibilities. The Queen, Cecil, and Walsingham recognized the treasure they denied Alva and the losses Spain endured. In addition, they acknowledged England's abilities to torment Spain and withstand its power. Following the infamous shipping incident, Elizabeth attempted to balance piracy, secret service strategies, and the support of the internal upheaval in the Netherlands with diplomacy. England and France ratified the Treaty of Bois in 1572, which formed a weak defensive alliance between the two nations against Spain. Catherine de Medici's relationship with Elizabeth reduced the threat of an Anglo-Spanish war. Subsequently, Elizabeth signed the Treaty of Bristol on 21 August 1574, which attempted to reestablish the broken relationship between England and Spain through the restoration of open trade between the two nations and between England and Spanish-controlled Antwerp. Trade had been disrupted from 1569-1573 on account of the Queen's support of the rebelling Protestants in the Netherlands. From the beginning of Elizabeth's reign until she signed the treaty, England aided the Protestant nobles who strove to abolish the Spanish Inquisition and demanded that Philip II govern all religious

matters through the States-General.³² Furthermore, she endorsed the Dutch Seabeggars' piratical war against Spanish merchants in the North Sea.

Elizabeth's diplomatic intentions ceased in 1576 when Spanish troops sacked Antwerp because of their insufficient wages from the Spanish Crown. As a result, the Netherlands revolted against the Spaniards for two years with Queen Elizabeth's moral and financial support. In 1577, a year before his death Antwerp's Governor, Don John of Austria, proclaimed to Philip II, "the only remedy for the disorders of the Netherlands is that England should be ruled by someone devoted to our Majesty [Philip]."³³ He was right on all accounts. Although Elizabeth and her advisors attempted to act diplomatically, they endorsed every opportunity to strike at Philip through assisting rebellions in the Netherlands, employing Walsingham's secret service agents in Spain and the Netherlands, and contributing to Hawkins's and Drake's piratical escapades in the Atlantic and the Americas.

For the most part Philip II and his advisors dealt with England's piratical raids in Spanish America through diplomatically strategies. English and Spanish ambassadors handled the correspondence between Elizabeth and Philip and tried to remedy the piracy situation. The efforts from both nations failed. Elizabeth continued to endorse Hawkins and Drake while Philip objected profusely.

On 23 February 1563 Sir Thomas Challoner, the English ambassador to Spain, sent Elizabeth a list of King Philip II's concerns with the English government; the final

³² Lacey Baldwin Smith, *The Elizabethan World*, 156.

³³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 160.

item declaring “The last point, of breaking off...Hawkins, matter.”³⁴ By this time, John Hawkins had completed one voyage to the Americas where he sold slaves he had obtained in Portugal’s African territory. For the most part, the expedition was successful. The hot and humid temperatures in the West Indies increased the demand for field workers; the African slaves supplied work that Spanish Americans required for financial survival. Spanish laws at this point prohibited trade between the Americas and any nation but Spain. As a result, Philip ordered the confiscation of Hawkins’s earnings, declaring the merchant’s actions illegal. Hawkins quickly sent the goods to England and Philip tightened his control over American trade.

Hawkins’s first expedition appeared to have been a private venture. However, his 1564 and 1567 expeditions enjoyed endorsements from patrons, Privy Councilors including Sir Francis Walsingham and Robert Dudley, the Earl of Leicester, and Queen Elizabeth. Hawkins made his second westward journey primarily to trade in the West Indies and Latin America, but upon Philip II’s request American governors denied him trade access. As a result, he forced the governors to trade. In exchange for slaves Hawkins received goods and gold he believed rightfully belonged to him. He returned in a third expedition in which he used force as the chief impetus of trading. When asked to punish or merely restrain Hawkins from illegal trade and plundering Spanish territory, Elizabeth generally ignored Spanish pleas, cautiously declaring she held no previous

³⁴ Great Britain. Public Record Office. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth...* 1560-1589 (v. 1-23: 1558/1560-1589), 1564-1565, 190.

knowledge of the piracy and retained less jurisdiction over her subjects during their time at sea or in far off lands such as the Americas and Africa.³⁵

The Queen succeeded in utilizing Hawkins's expeditions as a cold war tactic to bind Philip II in a paradoxical situation. On one hand, American affairs and European affairs constituted different reactions because events in Europe provoked more immediate consequences than those in the Americas.³⁶ On the other hand, the King and his advisors correctly assumed that the Queen endorsed Hawkins's expeditions, which he perceived as piratical acts against Spain.³⁷ Philip faced precarious circumstances, for he was uncertain how to respond to English involvement in the Americas. He permanently denied England trading rights in the Americas and temporarily in Antwerp during 1564 and 1569-73. His only other options were diplomacy and open war.

Although the Spanish Empire was more than capable of engaging in open war with England, Philip II relied on diplomacy. At this point, England's adversarial presence existed strongly in the Netherlands and moderately in the Caribbean and the Americas. Philip recognized Elizabeth's bold moves against his crown, but for the most part Elizabeth remained cautious and covered any trace of her involvement, especially in the Americas. For now, the King and his advisors relied on diplomacy to respond to England's acts of piracy. On 22 August 1564, the Spanish Ambassador, Guzman di Silva, wrote the Queen a letter concerning Hawkins's second voyage. Great Britain's Calendar State Papers summarized his letter in English. He implored, "Having learnt

³⁵ Wallace T. MacCaffery, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy*, 331.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*

since his departure from London that certain vessels are being armed in her realm under Hawkins of Plymouth (Archines De Plemua,) he begs that they may be restrained, so that his master's subjects may not suffer the same losses as they formerly have done."³⁸

Elizabeth did nothing.

For over a decade and a half, Spain's diplomatic efforts provoked little if any response from Elizabeth. As a result, Philip II primarily focused on the situation in the Low Countries until Sir Francis Drake's circumnavigation of the world, 1577-1580. Spain feared "Drake the Dragon" who furiously plundered the American coasts during his expeditions. Hawkins proved to be a nuisance to Spanish shipping and commerce, but Drake was fierce and his piracy was much more substantial. The Spanish Ambassador to England, Bernardino de Mendoza, became very aware of Drake's piracy in Spanish territories and on 29 October 1579 demanded Elizabeth restrain him. Philip ordered Mendoza to keep strict watch over the proceedings surrounding Drake's expedition around the world.³⁹ The ambassador replied to a speech delivered by her Clerk Robert Beale, for the Queen, regarding Drake's piracy. He wrote:

Touching Drake, he has information from the King, his Council of the Indies, and other good proofs, that Drake had spoiled his Majesty's subjects, which he holds to be so sure that cannot be denied.

The spoil is of great importance; a great quantity of bullion and pearls taken in Mar del Sur, appertaining partly to the King, partly to his subjects.

In fight Drake has cut off the hands of some of his Majesty's subjects; cut the cables of some ships in Porto de Linoa....

Young Winter's report of his spoils done upon the Portugals on his way out, the 'interest' and right of which is not come to the king, is enough to prove his piracy, and to demand justice.

³⁸ Contemporary English summary of Guzman di Silva's letter to Queen Elizabeth, 22 August 1564. Great Britain. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth*, 1564-1565, 629.

³⁹ MacCaffery, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy*, 319.

Hereupon he has said that in honour and justice her Majesty is bound by 'league' to have him punished and restitution made, as he thinks she would. He knows she loves not troubles; and it is very hard, for the enriching Drake and some individuals, to so soon ended; the event is doubtful, And yet sometimes 'wars have been moved upon less occasions.'⁴⁰

Although Elizabeth and her advisors assured Mendoza and Philip in 1579 that the Drake situation was under control, Drake continued his piratical raids in the Americas until 1581. On 5 May 1582, Mendoza wrote a letter to the Earl of Essex pleading,

It is many months since the judge of the Admiralty came and asked me in her Majesty's name to hand him the papers which I had touching the robberies of Francis Drake, I did so; and it will be months since Secretary Walsingham told me that an answer would be given me upon which I was expecting, and a month since he sent to me finally to say that although the answer had been made out the Queen had seen it and wanted to look into the matter, and that I should have a little patience and the Queen would give it me. I beg you to do me the favour of signifying this to the Queen, and letting me know when she will be pleased to give me the answer, and an audience to hear it, that I may advise the king my master of its nature.⁴¹

By 1582, the year of this letter, Elizabeth had publicly knighted Drake upon the *Golden Hind*. Through her dismissal of Spain's complaints and her praise of Drake's success, Elizabeth signified her involvement in and patronage of the successful English expedition, as well as her dislike for Mendoza and Philip II.⁴² With Drake at the helm, piracy returned large profits for the Queen and severe losses for Spanish Empire. Spain revealed its vulnerability. It remained the most powerful empire in the world, but Philip now recognized Elizabeth's small island as a legitimate adversary.⁴³ Elizabeth's keen political tactics combined with Hawkins's and Drake's grand ambitions challenged

⁴⁰ Great Britain. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth*, 1579-80, 474.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1582, 7.

⁴² MacCaffery, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy*, 333-334.

⁴³ Quinn and Ryan, *England's Sea Empire*, 29.

Spain's international position and spiritually, politically, militarily, and financially empowered England.

English Piracy in Spanish America

Humanity had enjoyed even its weariness and had gloried in the vanity of life, because the great feats of heroism had not been solely for reasons of greed and egotism. Insatiable curiosity, the excitement of discovery, and above all the very element that Sidney deplored most—imagination—had urged Drake on round the world...lust for glory, plunder, and immortality drove them on, but so did the wonderful romance and secret fear of new worlds to conquer, new universes to comprehend, new gods to worship, and new horizons to lure them ever onwards to the discovery of things which were hidden from other men.⁴⁴

-Lacey Baldwin Smith

Heroes of the Elizabethan Age attained world recognition primarily as a result of their personal aspirations. The Elizabethan pirates embarked on westward expeditions for the chief purpose of gaining wealth. Philip II referred to his Catholic empire as "God's obvious design."⁴⁵ Between the years of 1580 and 1585 the Indies alone brought Philip II 16,890,000 pounds net profit. English merchants and explorers realized the extant wealth in the Americas and sought financial benefit from Spain's rich and resourceful land. With the quest for wealth came glory, excitement, romance, and for Hawkins and Drake immortality through the pages of firsthand accounts in *Hakluyt's Voyages*.⁴⁶ Although the pirates sought to strengthen Protestant England at Spain's expense, Lacey Baldwin Smith proclaims, "They [pirates, explorers] required of God

⁴⁴ Smith, *The Elizabethan World*, 233.

⁴⁵ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 160.

⁴⁶ Hakluyt's *Voyages* is a compilation of firsthand accounts of and letters from European voyages in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Richard Hakluyt, the editor of the series, wrote many of the firsthand accounts himself. Hakluyt, Richard. *The Principle Voyages of the English Nation*, vols. 1-12 (London: J.M. Dent & Co., 1906).

only that He grant them the chance to show their true mettle, forged in the fire of their egotism.”⁴⁷ There is little doubt that Hawkins and Drake yearned for personal glory throughout their westward expeditions; however with the support of the Queen and her advisors their personal aspirations found additional purposes.

Economic and political benefits surrounded the expeditions. Elizabeth and her advisors realized the possibilities for land expansion, military strength at sea, a secured Protestant religion, and heightened international power as a result of the successful piratical raids against Spain. Open war with Spain was the Crown’s only serious concern. Elizabeth and her pirates took that gamble and for the most part succeeded. Anglo-Spanish policy politically justified the Queen’s support of Hawkins and Drake; however personal aspirations of wealth and power served as the primary impetus behind Elizabethan piracy.

Atlantic commerce was prosperous in the sixteenth century only for Portugal and Spain. As a result of a papal bull in 1493, the two Catholic nations enjoyed economic opportunities in Africa and America while England and France were excluded. In an effort to subdue the Spanish-Portuguese rivalry for new land in the Americas, Pope Alexander VI drew an imaginary line that vertically divided the Atlantic Ocean. Spain held claim to the undiscovered lands west of the line and Portugal claimed those to the east. Subsequently, the two nations signed the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494, which moved the line westward and conceded Portugal’s claim to Brazil. For the most part,

⁴⁷ Smith, *The Elizabethan World*, 207.

Spain and Portugal monopolized trade to and from the newfound continents, although English and French merchants such as John Hawkins's father, William Hawkins Sr., attempted commercial ventures in both Africa and Spanish America. Merchants of the two excluded nations journeyed to the Guinea coast of Portuguese-claimed west Africa to exchange European goods for African slaves. Early in the sixteenth century, English merchants secretly secured trading factors in the Antilles of the Caribbean and obtained slaves from the Canary Islands off the northwestern coast of Africa, while France assaulted Spanish ships in the Caribbean and plundered the Spanish Americas with only slight benefit.⁴⁸ Before English naval captains like Hawkins and Drake successfully pirated Portuguese Africa and Spanish America, merchants and pirates attempted similar fetes. James A. Williamson states that at the time of Hawkins's first expedition Spanish America "had been racked and scourged by a whole generation of the French rover...the empire of Phillip II was wellnigh bleeding to death."⁴⁹

In October 1562, Sir John Hawkins, following in his father William Hawkins's footsteps, journeyed to Guinea and the Indies in search of financial profit. The Plymouth merchant planned to obtain slaves in Guinea and sell them to the colonists in the Indies.

Richard Hakluyt observes of Hawkins and his expedition:

And being amongst other particulars assured, that Negroes were very good marchandis in Hispaniola...resolved himselfe to make triall thereof, and communicated that devise with his worshipfull friends of London: namely with Sir Lionell Ducket, sir Thomas Lodge, M. Gunson his father in law, sir William Winter, M. Bromfield, and others...they became liberall contributors and

⁴⁸ James A Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man* (Westport: Greenwood Press, Publishers, 1970), 72.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 77.

adventures in the action. For which there were three good ships immediately provided...⁵⁰

Hawkins received endorsements from numerous patrons and with nearly one hundred men sailed west on the 120-ton *Salomon*, 100-ton *Swallow*, and 40-ton *Jonas*.

As a fair-minded man, he planned to trade with the colonists and defend their seas from the French pirates, gaining profit and strengthening the extant Anglo-Spanish alliance.⁵¹ He returned to Plymouth in September 1563 after successfully selling 300 African slaves in the port of Isabella, Puerto de Plata, and Monte Christi and receiving in exchange hides, ginger, sugars, and pearls which he secured on his own ships.⁵² Commodities of lesser value went to Spain in an effort to appease Philip II who ordered the confiscation of Hawkins's earnings. Hakluyt observes, "And so with prosperous success and much gain to himselefe [Hawkins] and the aforesayde adventurers, he came home."⁵³ With little difficulty, Hawkins succeeded on a personal level. As for Philip opening trade in the Indies in exchange for protection in the Caribbean, Hawkins's intentions failed. He returned a year later with less peaceful intentions.

Upon Hawkins's return to England in 1563, the financial possibilities in America became evident to patrons and what is more, to Elizabeth. As a Protestant Queen, Elizabeth found no reason to accept the papal division of hemispheres. With some persuasion from her advisors, primarily Leicester and Walsingham, she offered Hawkins

⁵⁰ Irwin R. Blacker, ed., *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages: The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation* (New York: The Viking Press, 1968), 113.

⁵¹ Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man*, 77.

⁵² Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages*, 114.

⁵³ Quoted in *Ibid*.

one navy ship, the 700-ton *Jesus of Lubek*, in 1564 and two ships in 1567. The list of patrons contained the names “dated 3 March 1564—the Earl of Pembroke, Lord Robert Dudley (created Earl of Leicester in the summer 1564), Lord Clinton (Lord Admiral), Sir William Cecil,⁵⁴ Sir William Garrard, Sir William Chester, Benjamin Gonson, Edward Castlyn, John Hawkins, and William Winter.”⁵⁵ Furthermore, Hawkins met with Elizabeth before he left for Guinea and vowed to represent her in the Indies (in 1577 he wrote, “in thirteen years past” he began service for the Queen).⁵⁶ Hawkins claims Elizabeth authorized him to use her name for leverage with Spanish American governors.⁵⁷

By 1564, Hawkins’s voyages to the West Indies provoked admiration for the explorer in England and concern for the thief in Spain. The English Ambassador to Spain, Sir Thomas Challoner, sent Elizabeth on 23 February 1563 a list of Philip II’s grievances against the English Crown, including the “Hawkins’ matter.” On the 5 July 1564, he wrote John Hawkins a letter asking him to compromise with Philip II on the reparations from his 1562 expedition. He ended with, “Parkhurst, who returns, is desirous to come in time to go with him [Hawkins] in his next voyage.”⁵⁸ The Ambassador then received a letter from Leonard Chilton, a concerned observer, on 2 September 1564 that states, “There is great preparations in England of fifteen or sixteen

⁵⁴ William Cecil denied his involvement in the expedition to the Spanish Ambassador. There is little evidence suggesting that Cecil supported piracy. He may have supported trade in the Spanish Americas.

⁵⁵ Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man*, 92.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 93.

⁵⁷ MacCaffery, *Queen Elizabeth and the Making of Policy*, 330-331.

⁵⁸ Summarized in the Great Britain. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth*, 1564-1565, 545.

ships to go to Guinea, and Mr. Hawkins for captain; they will be ready to depart the 15th inst.”⁵⁹ Challoner recognized the precarious Anglo-Spanish relationship and attempted to satisfy Philip’s requests to restrain Hawkins, while he expressed his admiration for the merchant-pirate. After one successful voyage and on the verge of another, Hawkins held the Queen’s support, Philip’s fears, and England’s admiration. Piracy seemed inevitable.

John Sparke recorded Hawkins’s departure from Plymouth on 18 October 1564 and his return to Padstow on 20 September of the following year. The expedition endured the loss of twenty men and enjoyed the profit of gold, silver and pearls.⁶⁰ In February 1565, the *Jesus of Lubek*, the *Salomon*, the *Tiger*, and the *Swallow* landed on Margarita Island with ships abundant with African slaves, only to find the Island deserted. When news of the planned expedition had reached Spain, Philip II and his advisors had informed the Spanish colonists of Hawkins’s impending voyage. John Hawkins faced a more difficult task in 1565 than in his previous voyage. From the Caribbean Islands, the four ships sailed to the Spanish Main, which extended from the northern region of South America to the Isthmus of Panama, and landed in the village of Borburata. Sparke maintained that Hawkins landed, declared himself an Englishman, and then endeavored to trade with the colonists.⁶¹ The colonists refused on account of the King’s severe orders forbidding any foreign nation trade access to the Americas. Hawkins replied, “that his necessitie was such, as he might not so do: for being in one of the Queens Armadas of England, and having many souldiours in them, hee had neede

⁵⁹ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 649.

⁶⁰ Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt’s Voyages*, 160.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

both of refreshing for them, and of victuals, and of money also, without which he could not depart....”⁶² The settlers allowed him to come ashore, only to flee into the interior. The governor, however, granted license to trade. Trade lasted until 4 May, after which Hawkins sailed to Rio de la Hacha where he forced the governor to grant him a fair trading license. Although he used force during the expedition, Hawkins never pirated the colonies. Sparke wrote of Hawkins’s response to the unjust exchange that the Governor of Rio de la Hacha first suggested,

...the captain wrote them a letter, that they dealt too rigorously with him, to go about to cut his throte in the price of his commidities, which were so reasonably rated....And therefore in the morning being the 21 May, hee shot off a whole Culvering to summon the town, and preparing one hundred men in armour, went a shore....At every shot they fell flat to the ground, and a wee approached near unto them they broke their aray, and dispersed themselves so much for feare of the Ordinance....⁶³

For the most part, Hawkins’s voyage succeeded. It was clear, however, that Hawkins’s intentions became more aggressive; with the Queen’s backing he was determined to achieve results.

On account of his success during the 1562 and 1564 expeditions, Hawkins received government endorsements for his final, individually commanded, westward voyage in 1567. Hakluyt titled this voyage his “Third Troublesome Voyage.”⁶⁴ By 1567, Philip II had placed severe restrictions on the colonies’ trading policies and tightened Spain’s trade monopoly. He had proclaimed John Hawkins a pirate and

⁶² Quoted in *Ibid.*

⁶³ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 161.

demanding his subjects refuse trade and expel the criminal.⁶⁵ Hawkins and his patrons, however, persisted with their plans in hopes of gaining wealth and destroying Spanish interests. In preparation for this voyage, the Queen offered Hawkins two royal Navy ships, the *Minion* and the *Jesus of Lubeck*, which served as the chief ship of the expedition. Four of Hawkins's privately owned ships, the *Judith*, the *Swallow*, the *Angel*, and the *William and John* (named for Hawkins and his brother William) accompanied the two royal ships. With a fleet of six ships and a crew of 500 men, including Francis Drake as the commander of the *Judith*, Hawkins's 1567-1568 expedition set sail from Plymouth on 2 October 1567.

After a minor tribal skirmish in Sierra Leone, Hawkins obtained 500 African slaves and departed for the West Indies on 3 February 1568. On 27 March, the 1000 sailors and slaves landed on the island of Dominica and then Margarita Island where Hawkins sought trade. Hakluyt's version of Hawkins's personal account states, "from thence [Dominica] we coasted from place to place, making out traffike with the Spaniards as we might, somewhat hardly, because the king had straightly commanded all his Governors in those parts, by no means suffer any trade with us: notwithstanding we had reasonable trade, and courteous entertainment...."⁶⁶ James A. Williamson, however, asserts that Hakluyt's version edited much of the actual journey and "must be read chiefly as a piece of propaganda, written with an eye to English relations with Spain and Portugal."⁶⁷ Williamson relies heavily on the Cotton MSS, collection of first hand

⁶⁵ Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 16.

⁶⁶ Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages*, 163.

⁶⁷ Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man*, 142-143.

accounts of the voyage and cites a commonly used letter written by Hawkins, in this case, to the Governor of Borburata. Before entering the colony, Hawkins sent the following letter:

‘Worshipful,

This voyage on the which I [am bound was ordered by] the Queen’s Majesty of England, my mistress, another [way and not intended for th]ese parts, and the charges being made in E[ngland, before I was ready to] set sail the pretence was forcibly overturned. [Nevertheless I was] commanded by the Queen’s Majesty my mistress to seek [some other] traffic with the wares which I already had and negroes [which I should] procure in Guinea to lighten the great charges h[azarded] in the setting out of this navy. I know the [King of] Spain your master, unto to whom I have also been a servant, and I am commanded by the Queen my mistress to serve with my navy [as need] required, hath forbidden that you shall give lice[nce to any] stranger to traffic. I will not therefor request any su[ch] thing at your hand, but that you will licence me to se[ll 60] negroes only and a parcel of my wares which in all is but little [for] the payment of the soldiers I have in my ships. In this you shall not break the commandment of your prince, but do him good service and avoid divers inconveniences which happen often times through being too precise in observing precepts without consideration. If you may, I most instantly desire you that you will take the pains to come hither that I might confer with you myself; truly it would be lieber to me that 10,000 ducats. If you come you should not find me ingrateful nor count your travail lo[st].⁶⁸

In this letter Hawkins remains diplomatic, but he utilizes his six-ship “navy” and his duty to the Queen to caution the governor and to justify his actions. The man who wrote this letter is not violent and immoral in nature, quite the opposite. After approximately a month of stalling the Borburata Governor allowed Hawkins trading access.

While Hawkins finished his slave trade in Borburata, the *Judith*, commanded by Francis Drake, and the *Angel* sailed to Rio de la Hacha to trade slaves. Upon arrival, the

⁶⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 169.

two English ships and the Spanish colonists exchanged fire. Drake fired at the treasurer's house, blockaded the shore until Hawkins arrived, and captured a caravel from San Domingo.⁶⁹ His apprehension of the San Domingo ship exists as the first recorded capture of a Spanish ship during this expedition. When Hawkins arrived he simply used a diplomatic gesture to gain Treasurer Castilianos's attention; he sent a letter. Through their different methods of penetration, Hawkins's and Drake's distinct personalities and naval tactics surfaced. After receiving Hawkins's letter, the treasurer assembled a small army to impede the English sailors; however Hawkins and his men charged the shore and intimidated the Spaniards into fleeing. The treasurer remained unmoved by the English force and refused Hawkins for a second and then third time. Hakluyt refers the Rio de la Hacha affair, but fails to discuss the events of Drake's arrival and the details of the English's penetration. He states

...in a town called Rio de la Hacha (from whence came all the pearls) the treasurer who had the charge there, would by no meanes agree to any trade, or suffer us to take water, he had fortified his towne with divers bulwarkers in all places where it might be entered, and furnished himselfe with an hundred Hargabuziers, so that he thought by famine to have inforced us to have put a land our Negroes: of which purpose he had not greatly failed, unlesse we had by force entred the towne: which we were enforced to doe, and so with two hundred men brake in upon the bulwarks, and entred the towne with the losse of onely two men of our partes, and no hurt done to the Spaniards because...they all fled....Thus having the towne with some circumstance, as partly by the Spaniards desire of Negroes...we obtained secret trade.⁷⁰

Hawkins's description of his presence in Rio de la Hacha offers some perspective of the circumstances in the colony; nevertheless Job Hortop, a member of the crew offers

⁶⁹ Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man*, 173.

⁷⁰ Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages*, 163.

a more detailed account. After Hawkins charged the town, nearly all the Spaniards fled. In response to the treasurer's refusal to trade, Hawkins's men, without order from their commander, burned down houses. Hawkins then ordered the house fires extinguished and persuaded the colonists to convince the treasurer to trade. As a result, he traded approximately two hundred slaves and left sixty in compensation for the damaged houses.⁷¹ Phillip II pointed to piracy at the hand of John Hawkins. Hawkins, however, compensated the town for losses, for he was determined to act fairly until violently provoked.

From Rio de la Hacha, the fleet landed in Santa Marta where the governor traded on the condition that Hawkins create a pretence of forced trade. The governor would then appear to yield under pressure and as a result both him and Hawkins would benefit.⁷² The trading purposes of the voyage ended in Cartagena, where Hawkins attempted to trade and the governor refused. Unwilling to use force, Hawkins sailed from the Cartagena coast with fifty-seven slaves on board (the slaves were worth nearly 9,120 pounds).⁷³ While near the Florida coast, the fleet encountered four days of fierce winds and rain. The *Jesus of Lubeck* suffered greatly, but Hawkins refused to leave it and miraculously kept it afloat. As expressed by a crewmember in the Cotton accounts, he saved the royal ship "because that she [*Jesus*] was the Queen's Majesty's ship and that she should not perish under his [Hawkins] hands."⁷⁴ The chivalrous Hawkins understood

⁷¹ Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man*, 173-177.

⁷² Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 19.

⁷³ Williamson, *Sir John Hawkins: The Time and the Man*, 179.

⁷⁴ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 182.

his duty to the Queen and the loss of the *Jesus* would undermine his responsibility to her and to England.

The last phase of the expedition chiefly deserves Hakluyt's reference "troublesome voyage." On 11 September 1568 a storm forced the English fleet far into the Gulf of Mexico where it encountered Spanish ships that informed Hawkins of the twenty-sail Spanish fleet stationed in San Juan de Ulua, the closest harbor. Without choice, Hawkins sailed to San Juan de Ulua while keeping the three Spanish vessels at his side. The fleet anchored at port, where Hawkins hoped to exchange the Spanish ships and their passengers in return for victuals. The residents of the port believed the English fleet to be Spanish and boarded the ships only to find Englishmen.⁷⁵ The next morning, on 17 September 1568, thirteen Spanish ships sailed toward the San Juan de Ulua harbor. Hawkins sent warning to the General of the Spanish fleet informing him of the English fleet's presence in the harbor. He had no choice but to allow the Spanish in the harbor, for if the English naval ships fired at the Spanish naval fleet, England would commit an act of war.⁷⁶ He proposed terms of peace upon entering the harbor. In Hakluyt's account, Hawkins maintains:

I sent immediately to advertise the Generall of the fleete of my being there, doing him to understand, that before I would suffer them to enter the Port, these should some order of conditions passe betweene us for our safe being there, and maintenance of peace. Now it is to be understood that this port is made by a little Iland of stones...there is no remedie for these North windes but death....and here I beganne to bewaile that which after followed, for now, said I, I am in two dangers, and forced to receive the one of them...I must have kept out the fleete from entring the Port, the which with Gods helpe I was very well able to doe, or

⁷⁵ Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages*, 164.

⁷⁶ Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 21.

else suffer them to entre in with their accustomed treason... The uncertaine doubt I account was their treason which by good policie I hoped might be prevented, and therefore as chusing that least mischief I proceeded to conditions.⁷⁷

The list of the conditions required victuals in return for money, a license to trade wares, and twelve hostages to ensure peace. Hawkins further demanded that no Spaniard come ashore with weapons.⁷⁸ After some compromising the viceroy of the fleet, Don Martin Enrriquez, signed the document and the Spanish fleet entered the harbor. On 23 September 1568, the Spanish betrayed their agreement, attacked the English fleet, killed the Englishmen on land, and boarded the *Jesus*, cut its masts and yards, destroyed the ship, and killed its men. The *Minion* survived an attack and remained the only ship afloat in the harbor when Drake's *Judith* sailed back to England. Hawkins claimed that Drake, "forsooke us in our great miserie."⁷⁹ Jon Hortop reports, however, that Drake sailed along side the *Minion* to retrieve some of its men, but failed to succeed and only then sailed out to sea.⁸⁰ Hawkins and about fifty men stored as much of the earnings as the *Minion* could endure and furiously sailed out of the harbor with enough bullion and pearls to recover some of the patrons' investments. After much hardship, the royal ship landed in Cornwall on 25 January 1569.⁸¹

Following his return Hawkins wrote, "If all miseries and troublesome affairs of this sorrowful voyage should be perfectly and thoroughly written, there should need a painful man with his pen, and as great a time as he had that wrote the lives and deaths of

⁷⁷ Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages*, 164-165.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 165-166

⁷⁹ Quoted in Harry Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake: The Queen's Pirate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 39.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 38-39.

⁸¹ Blacker, *The Portable Hakluyt's Voyages*, 166-170.

the Martyrs.”⁸² The voyage was a severe disappointment to Hawkins, his patrons, and the Queen. Brutal failure followed years of success. Hawkins remained in Elizabeth’s and her council’s good graces, but the Queen refused to support another westward expedition until 1577, the year Francis Drake began his circumnavigation of the world.

The lack of the Queen’s support did not impede Drake’s return to Spanish America. Walsingham, Leicester, and members of joint-stock companies continued to support westward expeditions such as Drake’s first self-commanded, piratical voyage to Panama in 1571. After an embarrassing defeat in San Juan de Ulua, John Hawkins sought to lead a new American expedition against the Spaniards to compensate for the losses he suffered in 1568. Junior Captain Francis Drake, however, sailed in Hawkins’s place because Hawkins’s position as Chief Naval Commander required his service at home. A fierce and skilled navigator, Drake quickly assembled his crew and equipped one ship, the 25 ton *Swan* for the journey. The *Swan* and two additional vessels commanded by John Hawkins’s brother, William, the *Dragon* and the *Brave*, sailed together in a 1570 expedition. The lack of Spanish complaint implies that this small expedition sailed for trading purposes only; however Drake’s knowledge of piratical escapades greatly expanded during his observations of the English and French pirates in the Caribbean.⁸³ He later utilized this knowledge during his 1571 and 1572 expeditions and his three-year voyage around the world.

⁸² Quoted in *Ibid.*, 170.

⁸³ Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, 45.

The *Swan* set sail from Plymouth in January 1571 with financial backing from both the Hawkins and the Wynter brothers. Drake's expedition sailed directly to the Americas, rather than landing in Guinea to capture slaves. He had no intention of trading with the Spaniards. The expedition was purely piratical in nature, for Drake planned to return to England with stolen goods. Furthermore, he utilized the voyage to learn the topography and waterways around the Panama Isthmus, the chief route of Spanish gold and silver transportation. The Spanish shipped silver and gold from Peru to the Pacific coast of the scarcely populated Panama Isthmus, carried the treasure across the land, and shipped it from the Atlantic coast to Spain. Drake realized that securing the Isthmus would permit him to intercept the Peruvian treasure before it sailed to its motherland. In early February the *Swan* joined French pirates in the Rio Chagres of the Isthmus and in the Spring traveled inland toward the port of Nombre de Dios.⁸⁴ The pirates seized Spanish vessels, stole goods, and sank ships. After seizing a Spanish frigate off the coast of Nombre de Dios, Drake and his men exchanged fire with the Spanish sailors and looted the ship. The pirates left a letter translated into Spanish for the crewmembers of the frigate. Drake most likely composed the following letter:

Captain and others of this ship.

We are surprised that you ran from us in that fashion and later refused to come to talk to us under our flag of truce, knowing us, and having seen evidence a few days past that we do ill to no one under our flag of truce. We only wished to speak with you. And since you will not come courteously to talk with us, without evil or damage, you will find your frigate spoiled by your own fault. And to any who courteously may come talk with us, we will do no harm, under our flag. And whoever does not come will bear the blame.

⁸⁴ See maps.

And do not think we were afraid of those ships, not of others. By the help of God it shall cost them their lives before they prevail over us....

Done by the English who are well disposed, if there be no cause to the contrary. If there be cause, we will be devils rather than men.⁸⁵

Drake returned to Plymouth in the June 1571 with the *Swan* and two additional ships loaded with Spanish booty. The Queen said nothing of the piracy and Drake kept his share of the profits, which was sufficient to finance his small independent fleet in 1572.⁸⁶

Preparations for the new voyage began a few months before departure. Drake and two ship captains, John Garret and James Raunse, planned to meet at Port Pheasant, Panama in the summer of 1572. Drake discovered the abandoned port during his 1571 expedition and planned to land his ships in port for safety during his next voyage. He left Plymouth on 24 May 1572 with two ships, the *Swan* and the *Pascoe*, seventy-three men, adequate victuals, and three unassembled pinnaces named *Lion*, *Minion*, and *Bear*.⁸⁷ The men, all but one under thirty years of age, landed in unoccupied Guadeloupe (part of the Antilles in the West Indies) and then sailed to Port Pheasant on 12 July 1572 where they found a message Captain Garret left behind. He wrote,

Captain Drake, if you fortune to come to this Port, mak hast away, for the Spaniards which you had with you here last yeere have bewrayed this place, and taken away all that you left here [reserves]. I departed from hence, this present 7. of July, 1572.

Your verie loveing friend
John Garret⁸⁸

Despite Garret's advice, Drake anchored the *Swan* and *Pascoe* and assembled the pinnaces. The diversely talented crew included carpenters, blacksmiths, and sail makers;

⁸⁵ Quoted in Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, 48.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁸⁸ Quoted in *Ibid.*

within days the pinnaces were assembled.⁸⁹ On 13 July Raunse and approximately thirty men arrived at the port and the two captains prepared for the invasion of Nombre de Dios.

Drake and nearly seventy men sailed to Nombre de Dios early in the dark morning of 29 July. The men, armed with weapons, stood in three different companies; one accompanied Drake to the shore while the other two protected the pinnaces. In his account, Hakluyt recorded four pinnaces, one hundred and fifty men on land, seventy men secured in a fort, and eighty accompanied Drake to the town.⁹⁰ The fourth pinnace was Raunse's, but Hakluyt overestimated the manpower behind the attack. Drake and about thirty men entered the town and soon exchanged shots with the villagers. He and his men fired ammunition from the south side of the village, while the pinnaces fired their guns toward the center. The villagers retaliated, killed the English trumpeter, and wounded others including Drake.⁹¹ After attempting to steal a non-existent treasure, Drake and his men departed from Nombre de Dios empty handed. Drake and his men were unprepared and had been misinformed by untrustworthy natives. As a result, Raunse withdrew his men from the expedition and Drake sailed independently. Subsequently, Drake captured Spanish ships of no value off the coast off Cartagena on the Spanish Main and burned two dispatch boats from Nombre de Dios that intended to inform the Main of Drake's whereabouts. Through his pirating of Spanish ships near the

⁸⁹ Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 27.

⁹⁰ Hakluyt, *The Principle Voyages of the English Nation* vol. 7, 62.

⁹¹ Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, 54-55.

Main, Drake created the pretence of abandoned intentions of raiding the Isthmus.⁹² An obdurate man in nature, Drake failed to forsake his aspirations of gold booty and soon headed back toward the Isthmus.

Before heading toward the Isthmus, Drake based operations from a new port his men referred to as Port Plenty. In port, Drake purposely ordered a crew carpenter, Thomas Moone, to sink the *Swan*, believing the expedition was more effective with one ship and the pinnaces. After two weeks of rest, Drake and the healthiest of his men traveled to the Venta de Cruces where he intended to ambush the treasure train from Lima.⁹³ Aided by thirty Cimarrones (African slaves who escaped Spanish captivity), Drake led the ambush, but no gold could be found; the pirates had been discovered. Immovable in his quest, Drake tried one last time to ambush the treasure train and intercept the gold. He combined efforts with the French Huguenot, Guillaume Le Testu, and with fifteen Englishmen, twenty-five Frenchmen, and twenty-five Cimarrones. Drake's pinnaces landed in the San Francisco River and the men marched inland to intercept the gold. During the night the pirates ambushed the train, protected by approximately forty-five Spaniards, and stole as much gold and silver as they could carry. Le Testu died a violent death at the hands of the Spanish, but Drake managed to escape and for the most part succeeded in his efforts. He returned to Plymouth in August 1573 with nearly a 30,000 pounds profit.⁹⁴ Although he lost his brothers, John and Joseph, and

⁹² Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 29.

⁹³ See maps.

⁹⁴ Quinn and Ryan, *England's Sea Empire*, 31.

a significant amount of booty during the expedition, Drake realized he had struck at Spain in the name of Protestant England and that counted for something.⁹⁵

After his return to England in 1573, Drake was forced to flee England on account of a seemingly stable Anglo-Spanish relationship. In 1575 he assisted the Earl of Essex with the campaign against the Scots in Ireland. He later returned to England in 1576, where he planned his voyage around the world. Subsequently, Walsingham and Leicester became aware of Drake's plans and convinced the Queen to secretly endorse the venture. James A Williamson states, "In Francis Drake she [Elizabeth] saw the best of England, the man of the sea, of bold plans and distant enterprise, the world his workshop."⁹⁶ Whether this is right or not, Elizabeth appeared to trust Drake enough to secretly endorse his voyage at a time when open war with Spain was conceivable. The two constructed their plan in secrecy and that is where it remained. The Queen commanded secrecy, "and of all men my Lord Treasurer [Lord Burghley] is not to know it."⁹⁷ Burghley refused to support criminal ventures that would induce war with Spain.

With the support of Walsingham, Leicester, the Queen, and other patrons Drake's five-ship fleet departed from Plymouth on 15 November 1577. One hundred and thirty-four men, of whom many thought the voyage was to Alexandria, Egypt, manned five ships, the *Pelican*, later named the *Golden Hind*, commanded by Drake, the *Elizabeth*, the *Marigold*, the *Swan*, and the *Christopher*. Drake employed primarily sailors and military captains such as John Wynter and Thomas Doughty to employ the vessels. Harry Kesley

⁹⁵ Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 40.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 43.

⁹⁷ Quoted in *Ibid.*, 44.

maintains that at least the Captains of the five vessels had prior knowledge of Drake's piratical intentions, although they would later deny it.⁹⁸ Early in the voyage Drake and his crew experienced damaging storms and returned to Plymouth on 28 November 1577, after which the fleet departed from Plymouth for a second time on 13 December 1577. The fleet sailed to Cape Cantine on the northwestern coast of Africa where the men rested, fished, and constructed a raiding pinnace.⁹⁹ From there they sailed to Caba Agadir where they captured three Spanish fishing vessels and to Cape Bajador and Cape Blanco where Drake seized three Portuguese caravels.¹⁰⁰ One of the 40-ton Spanish caravels permanently remained with the English fleet in exchange for the 15-ton *Christopher*; the others were liberated after the English pirates stole their goods. Drake and his men then sailed to the series of islands west of Africa. On 30 January 1578, off the coast of Sao Tiago, Drake captured a Portuguese merchant ship, the *Santa Maria*, and in February he, his ships and crew, the *Santa Maria*, and its captain, Nuno de Silva, departed across the Atlantic to Spanish America.

The English fleet landed on the coast of Brazil on 5 April 1578. Francis Drake writes in his account of the voyage:

During which long passage on the vast gulph, where nothing but sea beneath vs and aire aboue us was to be seene, as our eies did behold the wonderfule workes of God in His creatures, which he hath made innumerable both small and great beasts, in the and wide seas...as if He had commanded and enjoyed the most profitable and glorious workes of His hand to waite vopn vs....Passing thus, in

⁹⁸ Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, 95-96.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 93-94.

¹⁰⁰ Seer maps.

beholding the most excellent works of the eternall God in the seas, as if we had beene in a garden of pleasure, April 5, we fell with the Coast of Brasill....¹⁰¹

From Brazil, Drake sailed down the South American coast to the Straits of Magellan.¹⁰² During the journey down the coast, Drake faced dissention within the ranks. As a result, he had Captain Thomas Doughty beheaded. On 21 August 1578, Drake and his three fighting ships, the *Golden Hind* (new name for the *Pelican*), the *Elizabeth*, and the *Marigold* entered the Straits of Magellan and after sixteen days and significant deaths from the cold they sailed into the Pacific. At this point in the expedition, the Queen's plans consisted of Drake discovering an unknown continent which did not exist, and trading with its inhabitants. Drake ignored the strategy and continued northward. On 30 September the *Marigold* ran aground and was lost to the expedition. Furthermore, John Wynter and the *Elizabeth* sailed back through the Strait onward to England on account of rough seas and dissention within his crew.¹⁰³ After serious navigational difficulties, the *Golden Hind* landed alone on the island of Mocha, off the coast of Spanish-claimed Chile on 25 November 1578.

The coasts of Chile proved to be the extremely profitable during the expedition, providing Drake with some fortune. Drake and his men sailed from Mocha to the Santiago seaport and then to the Valparaíso port on 5 December where they captured the Spanish ship, *La Capitana* and stole 24, 000 pesos worth of gold and other commodities including wine and sawed lumber. The English official register reported Drake stole

¹⁰¹ Quoted in Sir Francis Drake, *The World Encompassed...*, collated with an unpublished manuscript by Francis Fletcher, Chaplain to the expedition, edited with introduction by W.S.W. Vaux (London: Hakluyt Society, 1854; reprint New York: Burt Franklin, 1963), 28-34.

¹⁰² See maps.

¹⁰³ Williamson, *Sir Francis Drake*, 51.

24,000 pesos, however the Spanish claimed he pirated 200,000 pesos worth of gold.

Francis Drake writes about the adventures in the port:

This harbor of the Spaniards cal Valiperizo, and the tonwe adioyning Saint *Iames* [James] of *Chili*; it stands in 35 deg. 40 min., where albeit, we neither met with our ships [the *Marigold* and *Elizabeth*] nor heard of them; there was no good thing which the place afforded, or which our necessities indeed for the present required, but we the same in great abundance, among other things we found in the towne diuerse storehouses of the wines of *Chilie*; and in the harbour, a ship called the *Captaine of Moriall*, of the *Grand Captain of the South, Admirall to the Ilands of Salomon*, loaden for the most part with the same kind of liquors; onely there was besides a certain quantity of the fine gold of Baldina and a great crosse of gold beset with emeraulds, on which was nailed a god of the same mettall.¹⁰⁴

The most valuable of the booty stolen at Valparaiso was the derrotero of the pilot and master Juan Griego.¹⁰⁵ Drake used the charts and sailing instructions for the ports of the American Pacific coasts during his journey.

The *Golden Hind* and *La Capitana* continued up the coast to the port of Bahia Salada where the men rested, restored the ships, and constructed a raiding pinnace from the materials on the *Golden Hind*. Although fifteen sailors were forced to repel a few Indians, for the most part the time in Bahia Salada was successful and well spent. The crew of the *Golden Hind* left the port on 19 January 1579 with eighteen bronze and cast iron guns, some on deck and some below, two cast iron guns in the poop, and two guns in the bow.¹⁰⁶ Harry Kelsey maintains, "There was nothing like it on the pacific coast."¹⁰⁷ For a nearly two weeks Drake discovered little booty until he landing in the port of Arica on 5 February 1579. There he captured two ships and three fishing boats, one ship

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in Drake, *The World Encompassed*..., 40-41.

¹⁰⁵ Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, 142.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

carrying thirty to forty bars of silver. The next day, Drake intended to go ashore, but instead fled the bay as a result of nearly sixty Spanish horseman, haquebusiers, and archers on shore ready to defend their coast.¹⁰⁸ Continuing up the coast, Drake released the captured ships and their men, except for pilots and black slaves skillful in the topography of the Pacific coast. The *Golden Hind* and a pinnace sailed alone again, which is what Drake preferred.

The English ship encountered three inconsequential Spanish ships near Lima. Drake forced valuable information from their pilots who informed him of ships laden with silver from Panama landing in Callao, the port of Lima, Peru. On 13 February 1579, the English crew anchored in Callao, the official port for ships carrying goods between Spain and Peru and Chile. The expected Spanish ships sailed near the port, but turned around after spotting the pirate ship. As a result, the *Golden Hind* and its pinnace sailed northward passed the ports of Trujillo and Paita to Los Quijimes beyond the Gulf of Guayaquil.¹⁰⁹ After two weeks of little success, the English captured a substantial treasure in Los Quijimes, Diaz Bravo's ship. In his account, Drake listed the booty: "fruit, conserues, sugars, meale, and other victuals, and (that which was the especiallest cause of her heauy and slow sayling) a certaine quantitie of iewals and precious stones, 13 chests of ryals of plate, 80 pound waight in gold, 26 tunne of vncoyned silver, to very faire gilt siluer drinking boules, and the like trifles, valued at bout 360,000 pezoos."¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 148.

¹⁰⁹ See maps.

¹¹⁰ Quoted in Drake, *The World Encompassed*..., 111.

Soon after the successful raid of Bravo's ship, Drake and his crew spotted San Juan de Anton's ship sailing toward the port. The pirates quickly lowered the raiding pinnace and sailed up along side Anton's ship. After Anton ordered Drake to lower the *Hind's* sails in the name of the king of Spain, Drake replied, "You must strike your sails in the name of the queen of England."¹¹¹ Subsequently, the English and Spanish exchanged fire, Drake's men boarded the Spanish vessel, captured Anton, and stole approximately 362,000 pesos worth of treasure, of which 160,000 pesos belonged to the Philip II.¹¹² The Spanish government furiously demanded reparations from this raid, for the booty from Anton's ship was worth more than Drake ever imagined. These significant acts of piracy brought Drake and his many patrons a considerable amount of wealth and crowned the voyage as successful.

From Los Quijimes, The *Golden Hind* sailed Cabo de San Francisco, passed Panama and Mexico on to Guataulco where Drake restored the ship and departed across the Pacific in March 1579. The pirate and his crew sailed through the South Pacific, around islands north of what is now, Australia, through the Indian Ocean where he opened English trade in India, around the Cape of Good Hope, up the western African and European coasts to England, where he landed in Plymouth on 26 September 1580. In less than a year the Queen publicly knighted Drake on the famous *Golden Hind*.

¹¹¹Quoted in Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake*, 156-157.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 157.

Sir John Hawkins's and Sir Francis Drake's International Significance

After considerable success in the Americas, both Hawkins and Drake gained a reputation throughout Europe. In 1598 a German wrote, "The English are good sailors and better pirates, cunning, treacherous, and thievish."¹¹³ For over thirty years Hawkins and Drake impacted the international atmosphere. Above all Spain felt the force of Hawkins's and Drake's navigational and piratical skill; however other European nations were additionally influenced. Hawkins and Drake induced respect for and fear of England's naval capabilities. Both men commanded units of the Navy and utilized the large ships for both defense and piratical raids. The Queen promoted the combination of naval and piratical pursuits because each pursuit protected England from Spanish dominance. Furthermore, Elizabeth encouraged and depended upon the influence of Hawkins's and Drake's fierce reputations. She recognized their international significance as pirates, naval officers, and English symbols of skill and strength.

Both Drake and Hawkins held high positions in the English Navy. John Hawkins held the position of Chief Naval Commander and Treasurer of the Navy and Drake was a Captain. During Henry VIII's reign, the King strengthened the Navy through the construction of dockyards and effective ships equipped with heavy guns. However, during the reigns of Edward VI and Mary Tudor the Navy was neglected. Through the efforts of Elizabeth, William Cecil, and John Hawkins the Navy once again became a powerful force. Early in Elizabeth's reign, John Hawkins transformed the Navy from one

¹¹³ Quoted in Wernham, *The Making of Elizabethan Foreign Policy*, 61.

of coast defense to one of high-seas capabilities.¹¹⁴ Ships of high caliber and endurance were able to withstand the long-distanced voyages and harsh weather of the high seas.¹¹⁵ Furthermore, naval captains such as Hawkins and Drake commanded these ships all over the Atlantic Ocean. As a result of their merchant-pirate adventures, Drake and Hawkins skillfully navigated across the Atlantic, around islands, through straits, storms, and battles. The piratical expeditions prepared these men for war and Elizabeth relied on them when she sent Drake to fight the Spanish Armada in 1588. Until their deaths in 1595 and 1596 respectively, both Hawkins and Drake substantially contributed to the war effort against Spain.

Drake became an international hero of the Protestant cause and the conflict with Spain. Lacey Baldwin Smith proclaims, "Drake's ruddy and belligerent features and tublike frame hung in the portrait galleries of innumerable Protestant princes throughout Germany and Holland."¹¹⁶ In the name of Protestant England, Drake the Dragon weakened Europe's most powerful and ardently Catholic nation. Protestants throughout Europe admired and idolized the English pirate. Catholics had reason to admire him as well. Portugal and France, both Catholic nations, relied on Elizabeth and Drake for assistance against Spain. In 1578, Philip laid his claim to the Portuguese throne and in 1580 annexed Portugal. Subsequently, England recognized Don Antonio, the pretender to the Portuguese throne, as king of Portugal. In a letter to Queen Elizabeth, Diego Botelho, advisor to Don Antonio, writes:

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 13.

¹¹⁵ James A. Williamson, *The Age of Drake* (Cleveland: Meridian Books, 1965), 253.

¹¹⁶ Smith, *The Elizabethan World*, 211.

I have appealed to you, assuring myself as much of the friendship and kindness which you have shown my master [Antonio] and all who come from him, that you will not allow him to lack a remedy for his afflicted realm of Portugal, which always in all its afflictions has been succoured by your predecessors....the king came to see you at his first refuge, and that when he took leave of you, you assured him that when aided by France, you would not fail to aid him with like and greater succour....You are not now aiding him with it, and you refuse permission to Francis Drake to accompany him [Antonio] secretly on the voyage, at no cost of yourself...."¹¹⁷

Botelho pleaded with the Queen to support Antonio's endeavor against Philip with naval ships and Captain Drake. Furthermore, France willingly supported the venture, on the basis that Drake and Antonio would lead the expedition. As a result of Drake's piracy in Spanish America, he established a name for himself throughout Europe. Portugal and France depended on the skillful pirate to resurrect Portugal's sovereignty and weaken Spain. Elizabeth finally supported a Portugal expedition in 1589; Drake was at the helm.

Conclusion

On 23 August 1595, Sir John Hawkins and Sir Francis Drake commanded an expedition to Spanish America, chiefly Panama. England and Spain remained at war in Europe; therefore the Queen and her advisors took advantage of the what they assumed would be a defenseless America. Hawkins and Drake left Plymouth with six of the Queen's ship, twenty-one private vessels, and 2500 men. In December of that year, Hawkins died from disease and Drake followed in January 1596. The voyage claimed the lives of both men; England never witnessed anything like them again. The men were merchants, explorers, defenders, and pirates. Elizabeth recognized their versatility and

¹¹⁷ Great Britain. *Calendar of State Papers, Foreign Series of the Reign of Elizabeth*, 1581-1582, 530.

strengths at sea and used them to strengthen her crown. For the most part, Hawkins and Drake succeeded in empowering England. The pirates brought wealth to England while weakening Spain at a time when it threatened England's sovereignty most. Furthermore, the Queen, Burghley, Hawkins, and Drake strengthened the Navy as a result of the piratical ventures. Through the advancements of the Navy, England held strength at sea that now rivaled Spain's and led to the defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588. The Elizabethan pirates first ventured to Spanish America on account of personal wealth and aspirations, but their ventures' successes and failures became England's. Drake and Hawkins sailed, plundered, and fought for the Queen and her people who greatly admired them.

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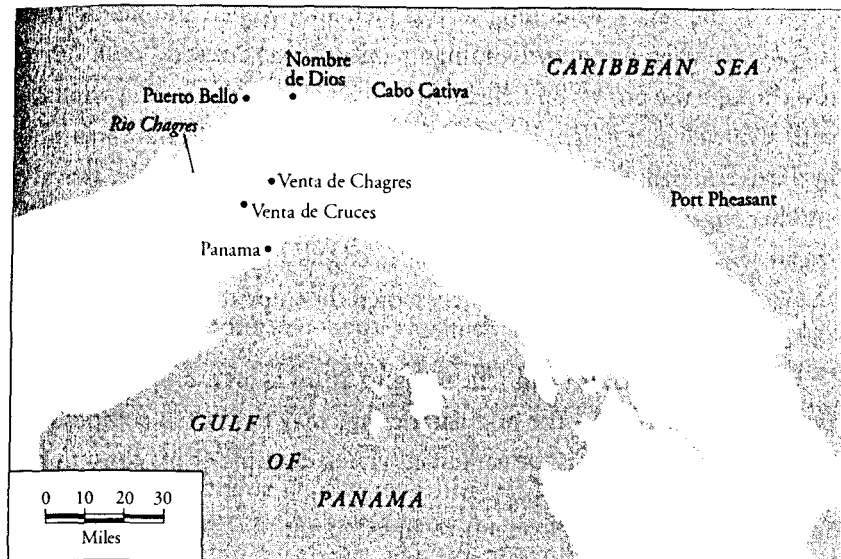
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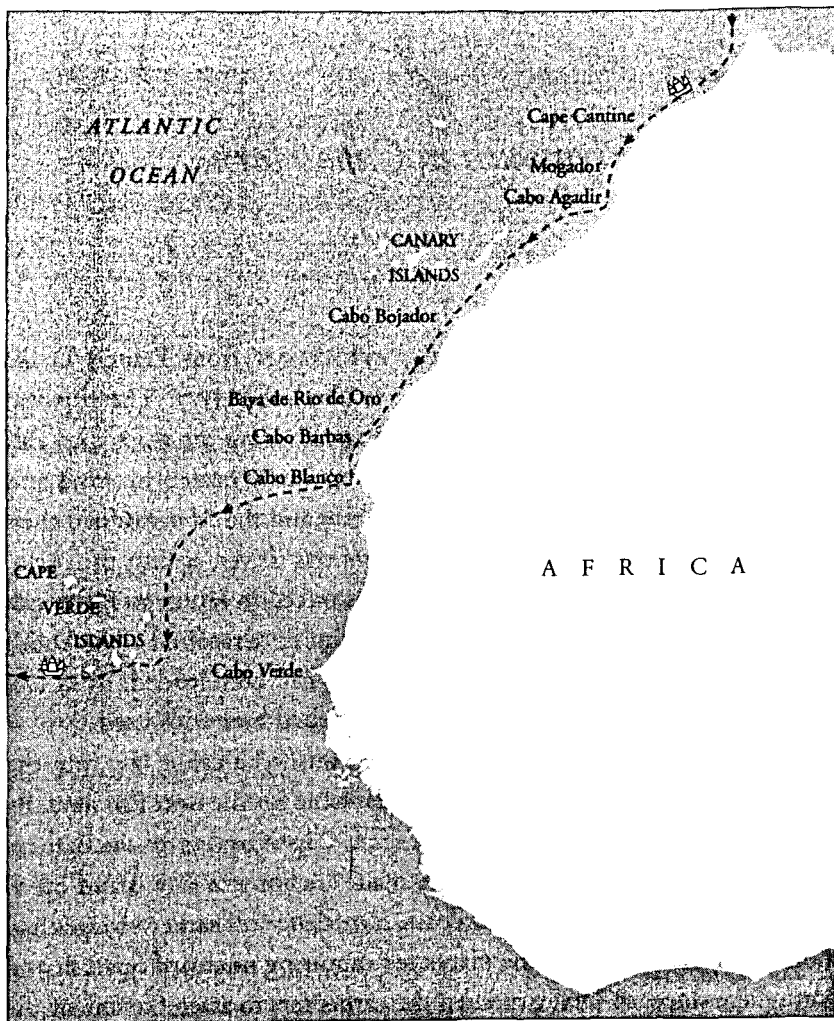


Drake in Panama, 1571

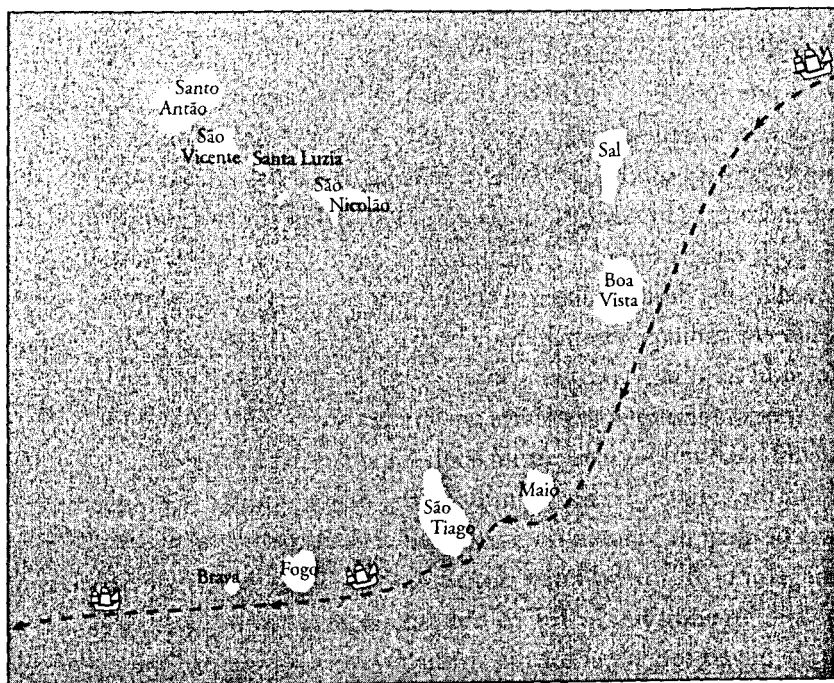


Drake's raids in the Caribbean, 1572-73

Harry Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake: The Queen's Pirate* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 47, 52, 94, 96, 101, 114, 117, 139, 141, 144, 147, 150, 154, 163.



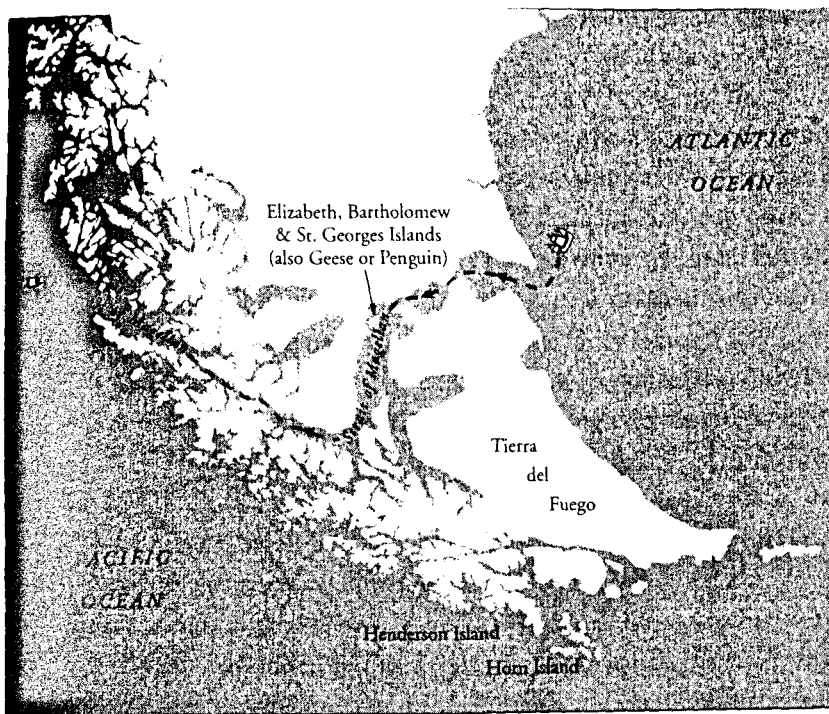
Drake's route along the coast of Africa, 1577



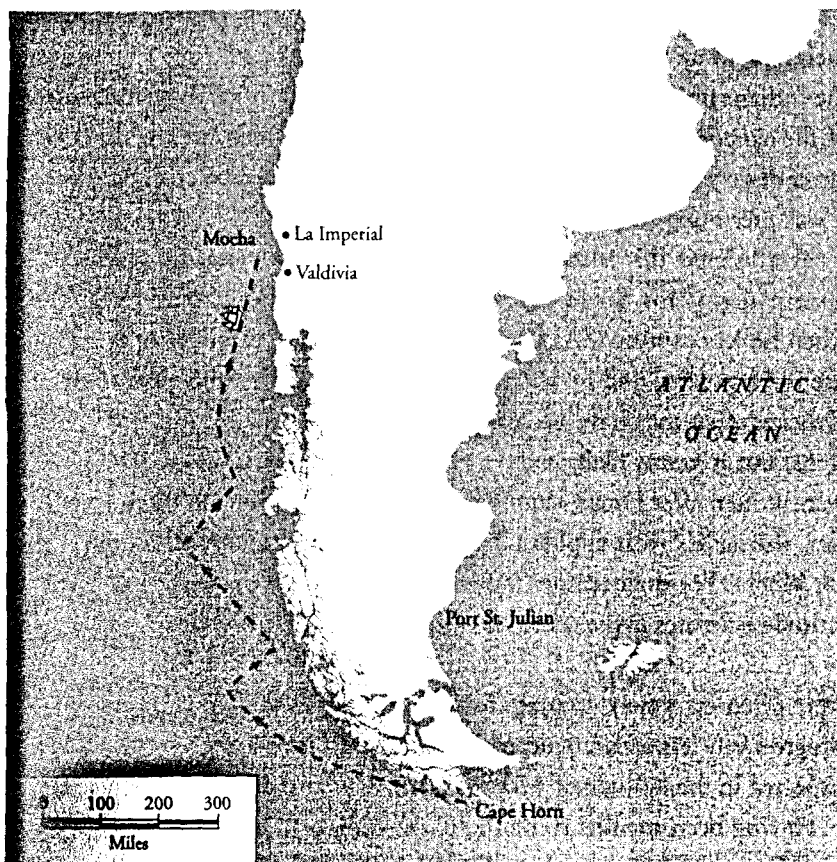
Drake's route through the Cape Verde Islands



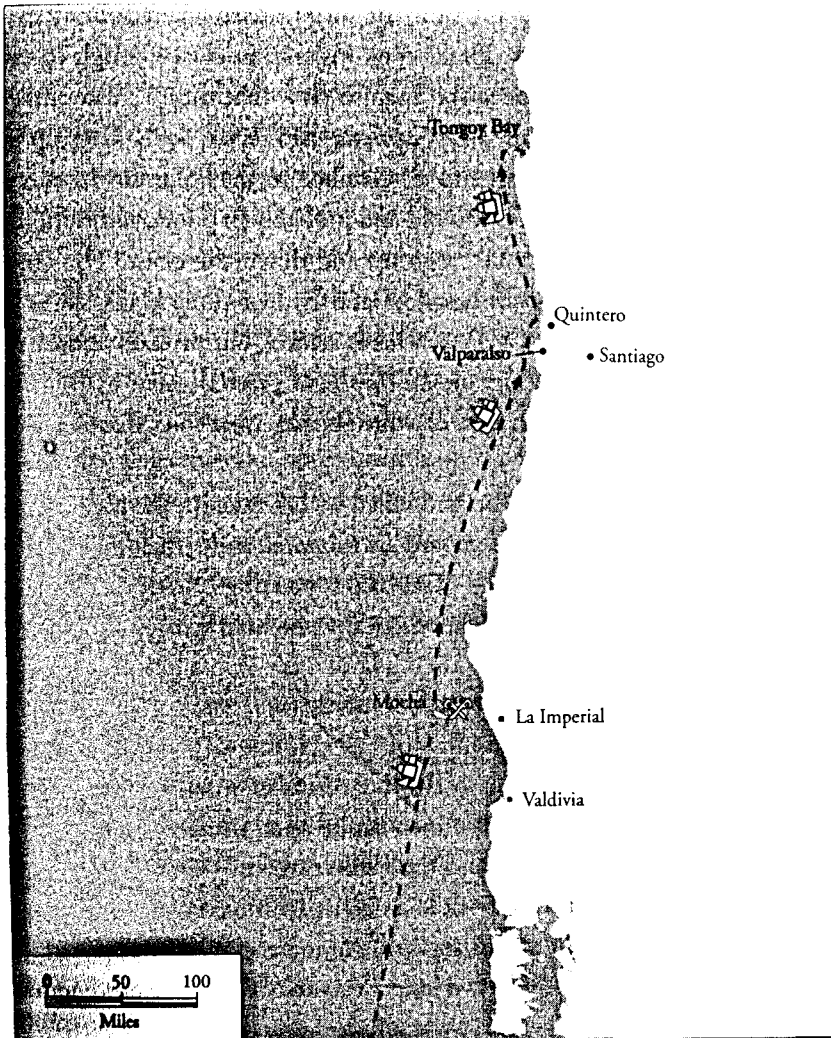
Drake's route to the Strait of Magellan



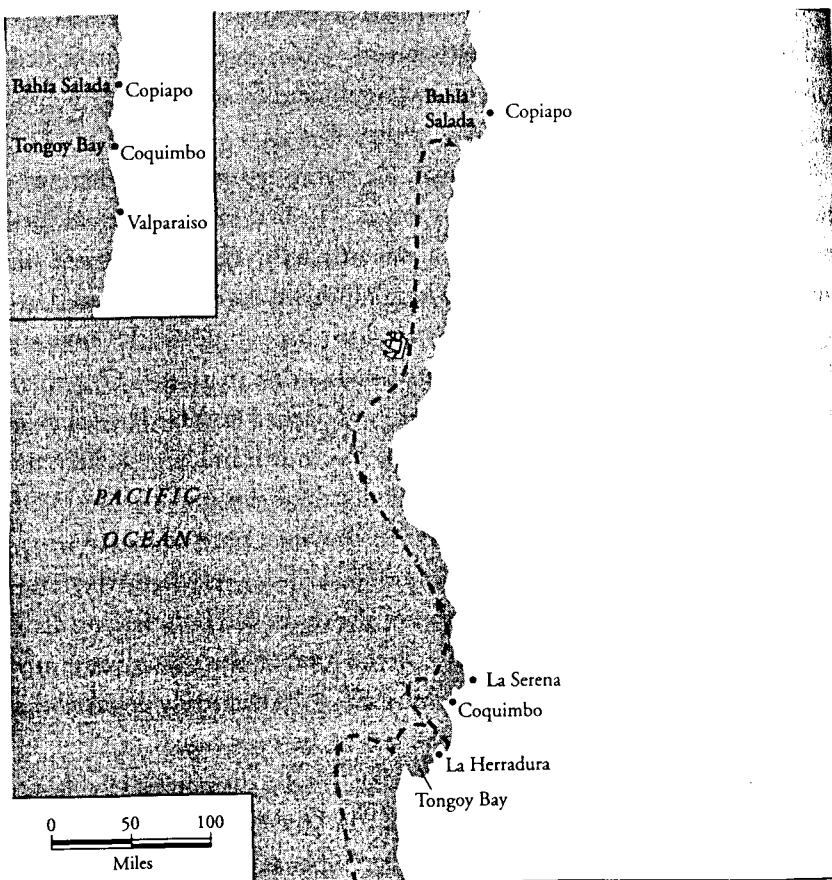
Drake's route through the Strait of Magellan



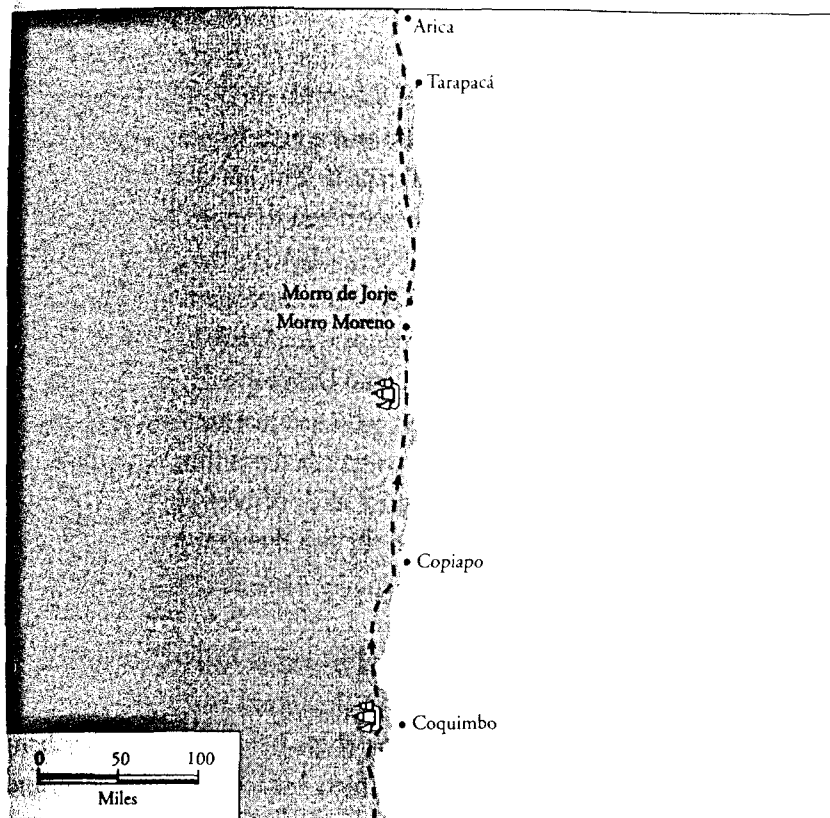
Drake's first landfall after leaving the Strait of Magellan was at the island of Mocha.



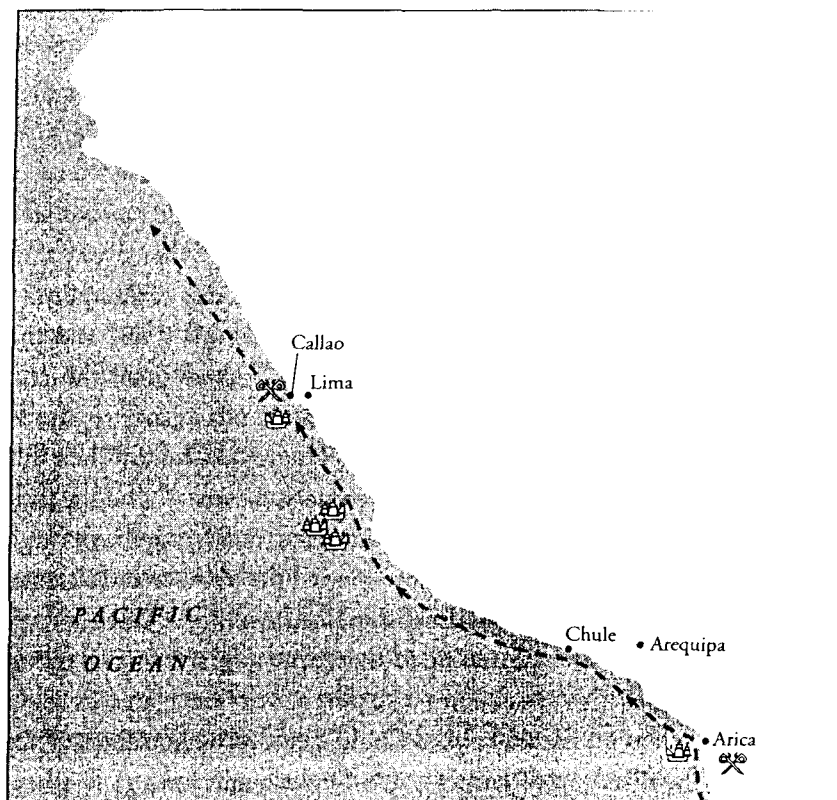
Drake's raids along the central coast of Chile



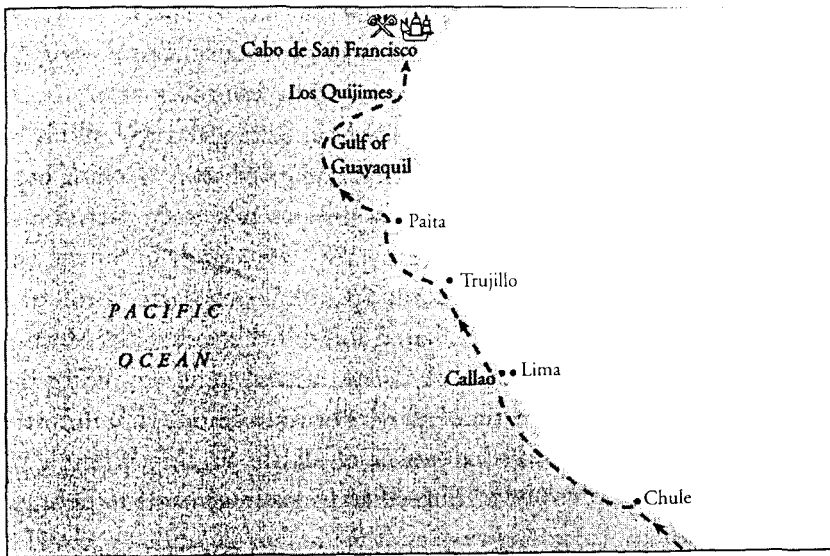
Drake's raids along the northern coast of Chile



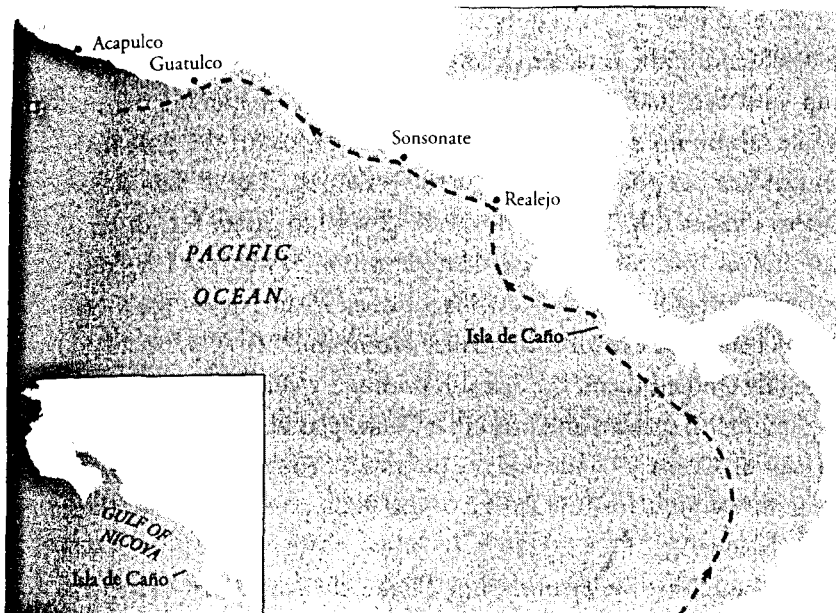
Drake's raids on the desert ports of northern Chile



Drake's raids on the southern coast of Peru



Drake's raids along the coasts of Peru and Ecuador



Drake's raids from the coast of Ecuador to Guatulco