

APPENDIX B : *The Letters patents of the Queenes Majestie, graunted to Master Adrian Gylbert and others, for the search and discoverie of the North-west Passage to China.* Included by Albert Hastings Markham in *The Voyages and Works of John Davis, the Navigator.* Hakluyt Society, London, 1880 : 368–373

[FACSIMILE]

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ELIZABETH, by the grace of God of England, Fraunce, and Ireland, Queene, defender of the faythe, etc. To all to whome these presents shall come, greeting : Forasmuch as our trustie and well-beloved subject, Adrian Gylbert, of Sandridge, in the Countie of Devon, Gentleman, to his great costes and charges, hath greatly and earnestly travailed and sought, and yet doth travel and seeke, and by divers meanes indevoureth and laboureth, that the Passage unto China and the Iles of Molluccas, by the Northwestward, Northeastwarde, or Northwarde, unto which part or partes of the worlde, none of our Loyall subjectes have hitherto had any traffike or trade, may be discovered, knowen, and frequented by the subjects of this our Realme : know ye therefore that for the considerations aforesayd, and for divers other good considerations¹ us thereunto specially moving. We of our grace especiall, certaine knowledge and meere motion, have given and graunted, and by these presents for us, our heires and successors, doe give and graunt free libertie, power, and full authoritie to the sayd Adrian Gylbert, and to any other person by him or his heires to be assigned, and to those his Associates and assistants, whose names are written in a sedule hereunto

¹ Probably the “divers other good considerations” refer to the share in the profits which Her Majesty intended to claim.

annexed, and to their heires, and to one assignee of eche of them, and ech of their heires at all times, and at any time or times after the date of these presents, under our Banners and Ensignes freely, without let, interruption, or restraint of us, our heires or successors, any lawe, statute, proclamation, patent, charter, or proviso to the contrary notwithstanding, to sayle, make voyage, and by any maner of meanes to passe and to depart out of this our Realme of Englande, or any our Realmes, Dominions, or Territories into all or any Iles, Countries, Regions, Provinces, Territories, Seas, Rivers, Portes, Bayes, Creekes, armes of the Sea, and all Havens, and all manor of other places whatsoever, that by the sayd Northwestward, Northeastward, or Northward, is to be by him, his associates or assignees discovered, and for and in the sayde sayling, voyage, and passage, to have and use so many ships, Barks, Pinnesses, or other vessels of any quantitie or burthen, with all the furniture of men, victuals, and all manor of necessary provision, armour, weapons, ordinance, targets, and appurtenances whatsoever, as to such a voyage shall or may be requisite, convenient or commodious, any lawe, statute, ordinance or proviso to the contrarie thereof notwithstanding. And also we doe give and graunt to the sayde Adrian Gylbert, and his said associates, and to such assignee of him and his heires and to the heires and one assignee of every of his sayde associates for ever, full power and absolute authoritie to trade and make their resiance in any of the sayd Iles, Countries, Regions, Provinces, Territories, Seas, Rivers, Portes, Bayes, and Havens, and all maner of other places whatsoever, with all commodities, profites, and emoluments in the sayd place or any of them, growing and arising, with all maner of privileges, prerogatives, jurisdictions, and royalties both by sea and land whatsoever, yeelding and paying therefore unto us, our heires and successors, the tenth part of all such

golde and silver oare, pearles, jewels, and precious stones, or the value thereof, as the sayd Adrian Gylbert and his sayd associates, their heires and assignees, servants, factors, or workemen, and every or any of them shall finde, the sayd tenth to be delivered duely to our customer, or other officers by us, our heires or successors thereunto assigned, in the Portes of London, Dartmouth, or Plymmouth, at which three places onely the sayd Adrian Gylbert, and his sayd associates, their sayd heires and assignes, shall lade, charge, arrive, and discharge all maner of wares, goods, and marchandizes whatsoever to the sayd voyage, and newe trade belonging or appertaining. And moreover, we have given, graunted, and authorized, and by these presents for us, our heires and successors, of our grace especiall, certaine knowledge, and meere motion, doe give, graunt, and authorize the sayd Adrian Gylbert, and his sayd associates for ever, their heires, and their sayde assignes and every of them, that if the aforesayd Iles, Countries, Regions, Provinces, Territories, Seas, Rivers, Portes, Bayes, or Havens, or any other of the premisses by the sayd Adrian Gilbert or his associates, their heires and their sayd assignes, or any of them to be found by them discovered and traffiked unto by any trade as aforesayde, shall be by any other our subjects visited, frequented, haunted, traded unto or inhabited by the wayes aforesayd, without the speciall licence in writing of the sayd Adrian Gilbert and his associates, and their heires and assignes for ever, or by the most part of them, so that the sayd Adrian Gylbert, his heires or assignes be one of them, that then as well their shippe, or shippes, in any such voyage or voyages used, as all and singular their goods, wares, and marchandizes, or any other things whatsoever, from or to any of the places aforesayd transported, that so shal presume to visit, frequent, haunt, trade unto, or inhabite, shal be forfeited and confiscated *ipso facto*, the one halfe of the

same goods and marchandizes, or other things whatsoever, or the value thereof to be to the use of us, our heires or successours, and the other moytie thereof, to be to the use of the said Adrian Gylbert, and his said associates, their heires and assignes wee impose, give, assigne, create and confirme this name peculiar to be named by, to sue and to be sued by, that is to wit, by the name of the colleagues of the fellowship for the discoverie of the Northwest passage and them for us, our heires and successours by that name doe incorporate, and do erect and create as one body corporate to have continuance for ever. Moreover unto the sayd Adrian Gylbert, and his sayd associates, and unto their heires and their sayd assignes for ever, by name of the colleagues of the fellowship, for the discoverie of the Northwest passage, we have given, graunted, and confirmed, and doe by these presents give, graunt, and confirme full power and authoritie from time to time, and at all times hereafter, to make, order, decree, and enact, constitute and ordeine and appoint all such ordinances, orders, decrees, lawes, and acts, as the sayd newe corporation or body politique, colleagues of the fellowship for the discoverie of the Northwest passage, shall thinke meete, necessary, and convenient so that they or any of them be not contrary to the lawes of this realme, and of this our present graunt.

And wee by our Royall prerogative, and fulnesse of our authoritie of our grace especiall, certaine knowledge and meere motion, doe establish, confirme and ratifie all such ordinances, orders, decrees, lawes and acts to be in so full and great power and authoritie, as we, our heires or successours may or can in any such case graunt, confirme, or ratifie. And farther, for the better incouragement of our loving subjects in this discoverie, wee by our Royall prerogative, and fulnesse of our authoritie, for us, our heires and successours, doe give, graunt, establish, confirme, ordeine, ratifie and allowe by these presents, to the sayd

Adrian Gylbert and to his associates, and to the heires and assignes of them and every of them for ever, and to all other person or persons of our loving subjects whatsoever that shall hereafter travell, sayle, discover, or make voyage as aforesayd to any (of) the Iles, Mainlands, Countries, or Territories whatsoever, by virtue of this our graunt to be discovered, that the heires and assignes of them and every of them being come within any of the Iles, Mainlands and Countries, or Territories whatsoever before mentioned, shall have and enjoy all the privileges of free Denizens, as persons native borne within this our Realme of England, or within our allegiance for ever, in such like ample maner and forme, as if they were or had been borne and personally resiant within our sayde Realme, any lawe, statute, proclamation, custome, or usage to the contrarie hereof in any wise notwithstanding. Moreover, for the consideration aforesayde by virtue hereof, wee give and graunt unto the sayde Adrian Gylbert, his heires and assignes for ever, free libertie, licence and privilege, that during the space of five yeeres next and immediately ensuing the date hereof, it shal not be lawfull for any person or persons whatsoever, to visite, haunt, frequent, trade, or make voyage to any Iles, Mainlands, Countries, Regions, Provinces, Territories, Seas, Rivers, Portes, Bayes, and Havens, nor to any other Havens or places whatsoever hitherto not yet discovered, by any of our subjects by vertue of this graunt to be traded unto, without the speciall consent and good liking of the sayd Adrian Gylbert, his heires and assignes first had in writing. And if any person or persons of the associates of the sayde Adrian, his heires or assignes, or any other person or persons whatsoever, free of this discoverie, shall doe any act or acts contrary to the tenour and true meaning hereof, during the space of the sayde five yeeres, that then the partie and parties so offending, they and their heires for ever, shall loose *ipso facto* the benefite and

privilege of this our graunt, and shall stand and remaine to all intents and purposes as persons exempted out of this graunt : And further, by vertue hereof, we give and graunt for us, our heires and successours, at all times during the space of five yeeres next ensuing the date hereof, free libertie and licence, and full authoritie to the sayd Adrian Gylbert, and his heires and assignes, that if it shall happen any one or moe in any shippe or shippes sayling on their sayde voyage, to become mutinous, seditious, disorderly, or any way unruly, to the prejudice or hinderance of the hope for successe in the attempt or prosecution of this discoverie or trade intended, to use or execute upon him or them so offending, such punishment, correction, or execution as the cause shall be found in justice to require by the verdict of twelve of the companie sworne thereunto, as in such case appertaineth. That expresse mention of the certainetie of the premises, or of other giftes or graunts by us to the sayde Adrian Gylbert and his associates before this time made is not mentioned in these presents, or any other lawe, act, statute, proviso, graunt, or proclamation, heretofore made or hereafter to be made, to the contrary hereof, in any wise notwithstanding.

In wittesse whereof we have caused these our Letters to be made patents.

Wittesse our selfe at Westminster, the sixt day of Februarie, in the sixe and twentie yeere of our Reigne.

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Also included by Albert Hastings Markham were two letters sent by John Davis to William Sanderson on his return from his second and third voyages in search of the Northwest Passage.

[2ND Voyage]

MAISTER DAVIS *being arrived, wrote his letter to M. WILLIAM SANDERSON of London, concerning his voyage, as followeth.*

Sir,—The *Sunneshine* came into Dartmouth the fourth of this moneth : she hath beene at Island¹ and from thence to Groenland, and so to Estotiland,² from thence to Desolation, and to our merchants, where she made trade with the people, staying in the countrey twenty dayes. They have brought home five hundred seale skinnes, and an hundred and forty halfe skinnes, and pieces of skinnes. I stand in great doubt of the pinnesse. God be mercifull unto the poore men, and preserve them, if it be his blessed will.

I have now full experience of much of the Northwest part of the world, and have brought the passage to that certainty, as that I am sure it must be in one of foure places, or els not at all. And further, I can assure you upon the perill of my life, that this voyage may be performed without further charge, nay, with certaine profit to the adventurers, if I may have but your favour in the action. Surely, it shall cost me all my hope of welfare, and my portion of Sandridge, but I will, by Gods mercy, see an end of these businesses. I hope I shall finde favour with you to see your card.³ I pray God it be so true as the card shall be which I will bring to you : and I hope in God, that your skill in navigation shall be gainefull unto you, although, at the first, it hath not proved so. And thus, with my most humble commendations, I commit you to God, desiring no longer to live then I shall be yours most faithfully to command. Exon this 14 of October, 1586.

Yours, with my heart, body, and life, to command,

JOHN DAVIS.

¹ Iceland. ² Newfoundland. [ERRATA: read “Labrador”{?}]

³ Davis must here be alluding to a new chart, projected under the superintendence of Mr. Sanderson.

[3RD Voyage]

A letter of the sayd M. JOHN DAVIS, written to M. SANDERSON, of London, concerning his forewritten voyage.

Good M. Sanderson, with Gods great mercy I have made my safe returne in health, with all my companie, and have sailed threescore leagues further then my determination at my departure. I have bene in 73 degrees, finding the Sea all open, and forty leagues between land and land.

The passage is most probable, the execution easie, as at my comming you shall fully know.

Yesterday, the 15 of September, I landed all wearie, therefore I pray you pardon my shortnesse.

Sandridge, this 16 of September, anno 1587.

Yours equall as mine owne, which by triall you shall best know,

JOHN DAVIS.

Davis, John. *The Voyages and Works of John Davis the Navigator*, The Hakluyt Society, No LIX, London, 1880:32, 59. Letter sent by John Davies to M. William Sanderson on his return from "The Third Voyage Northwestward for the Discoverie of a passage to the Isles of the Molucca, or the coast of China, in the yeere 1587."

John Davis the Navigator:

<i>Selections from the Works & Voyages of John Davis.</i>	(PDF; 27 kb)
<i>Introduction to John Davis the Navigator.</i>	(PDF; 664 kb)
<i>Seaman's Secrets</i>, (Dedication & Book I).	(PDF; 1.33 mb)
<i>Seaman's Secrets</i>, (Book II).	(PDF; 1.46 mb)
<i>The Worlde's Hydrographical Description.</i>	(PDF; 558 kb)

Material transcribed & transformed from the *GOOGLE Digital* PDF/JPG version of *The Voyages and Works of John Davis, the Navigator*. The Hakluyt Society, No. LIX, London, 1880.