



# Drake's Circumnavigation of the Globe, 1577-80

## The factor of... Personal Motivations



1558

1568

1588

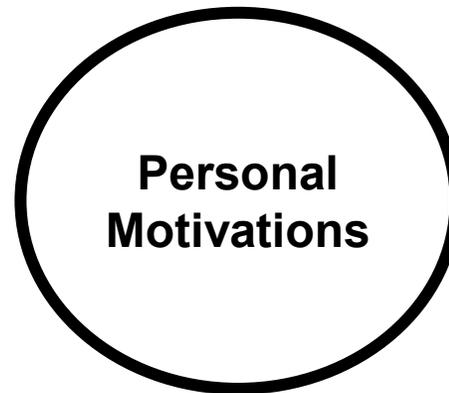
1603

### **Motivations – for Drake**

- Francis Drake was the son of a poor tenant farmer. He was partly raised by his wealthier relatives, the Hawkins, who participated in piracy. Becoming a privateer was a novel way for Drake to climb the Great Chain of Being;
- After 1568, English privateers had moved from trading with Spanish colonies in the New World, to raiding them;
- Drake and Hawkins were unhappy with the Spanish Catholic monopoly on trade and were determined to muscle in;
- Drake knew that Spanish towns on the Pacific coast of South America were vulnerable, with the possibility of stealing significant amounts of gold and silver;
- Drake was determined to find an opening to the Strait of Anian (a fabled North-West passage) to make future trading routes with Asia safer for English ships.

### **Motivations – for Elizabeth and her Court**

- Using English privateers to carry out raids on the Spanish was a cheap way of conducting foreign policy. Elizabeth could also deny any involvement in Drake's behaviour because her support was unofficial;
- Any treasures returned to England would automatically be Elizabeth's property, as she had granted Drake a privateering license;
- Elizabeth was keen for England to be at the forefront of European exploration to compete with Spain;
- Patrons such as Hatton, Walsingham and Dudley invested in Drake's voyage to demonstrated their renaissance credentials and in doing so, impress Elizabeth, as well as receiving a return on their investment.



### **Consequences – for Drake**

- Drake became the richest gentlemen in the land when he returned to England;
- He was able to buy a house in London to attend Court frequently, and was granted the purchase of Buckland Abbey in Devon;
- Drake had Elizabeth's favour now. She requested a 6 hour meeting to discuss his journey in depth. In 1581, as a New Year's gift, Drake gave the Queen an emerald studded crown and diamond cross worth 50,000 ducats;
- Elizabeth had Drake knighted aboard the Golden Hind;
- Drake's reputation amongst the Spanish became legendary – he was known as 'El Draque'.

### **Consequences – for Elizabeth and her Court**

- Elizabeth could pay off her debts with the treasure Drake returned with (over £500 million equivalent today), although she had to keep her support for Drake secret so as not to annoy Philip II and his ambassador to England, Mendoza;
- Hatton's reputation rose – during the voyage the Pelican was renamed the Golden Hind after him. Patrons got richer;
- But Drake had to deal with resentment from some, like Lord Burghley, who accused him of theft, and Lords Sussex and Arundel who felt Drake's arrogance was unbecoming of a low born man;
- It didn't matter though – Drake had Elizabeth's support, and she could claim (tenuously) of having an Empire in the Americas (Nova Albion)/

# Factor of Personal Motivations Questions

- Between 1577-1580, Sir Francis Drake became the first Englishman to lead a circumnavigation of the world (a round the world trip) by boat.
- Read through the takeaway sheet and answer these questions:

## **Motivations:**

Q1) Drake became rich because of his voyage. Why might his family background explain why he was motivated by gaining money and respect?

Q2) The Spanish had a monopoly (meaning only they could trade in the Americas) in the New World. What products had they got from here and why might this motivate Drake?

Q3) Queen Elizabeth unofficially supported Drake in the voyage. Why would she finance the voyage?

## **Consequences:**

Q4) How do you know that Drake became a favourite of Elizabeth I when he returned from his voyage?

Q5) Why didn't all members of Elizabeth's Court (household) support Drake in what he had done?