

SUMMARY: The document below is a petition dated 16 June 1581 from Michael Lok (c.1532–1620x22) to the Privy Council requesting release from the Fleet prison to which he had been committed for debt in connection with his purchase of the bark *Judith* from William Borough on behalf of the investors in the Frobisher voyages in the years 1576-8. Lok accompanied his petition with 10 supporting documents, also transcribed below.

The background to the Frobisher voyages is given in this extract from the entry for Lok in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, available online:

[Lok] continued to practise his mercery trade in London, and from 1571 to 1576 he was London agent of the Russia Company (Willan, 26–7). In 1574 he was approached by Martin Frobisher, with whom he may have had a prior acquaintance through his brothers' involvement in the Guinea voyage of 1554, in which Frobisher had sailed as a young man. Together they prepared a proposal to the privy council, to discover a sea route to 'Cathay' via the north-west. They secured a licence to attempt this from the Russia Company, whose charter privileges they were technically infringing, and secured investors from the city and court. For want of sufficient funds to dispatch a voyage during 1576, Lok was obliged to provide loans of over £800 from his own pocket. Two further voyages to Baffin Island followed, in which the queen herself invested, but the enterprise degenerated into a search for gold, incurring large losses (most spectacularly for Lok himself). Frobisher turned violently against Lok, whom he blamed for his own misfortunes, and led moves to impeach him for alleged financial irregularities. Effectively bankrupted, with his name on transactions entered into on behalf of his fellow adventurers, Lok was cynically abandoned to fight a series of creditors' suits. He went to debtors' prison upon at least eight occasions, and claimed to have seen the inside of every London gaol save the Fleet—to which he was also committed subsequently.

The largest investors in the Frobisher voyages were the Queen, who invested £4000, and Edward de Vere (1550-1604), 17th Earl of Oxford, who invested £2520, according to the auditors' report and according to Lok's own statement in the document below:

He hath not cozened nor deceived the right honourable the Earl of Oxford of one penny, but hath dealt justly with his Honour in the said voyages, wherein his Honour is venturer for his own account £2520, whereof his Honour hath paid £2000.

Oxford wrote to the Commissioners on 21 May 1578 offering to subscribe £1000 or more, to be secured by a bond (see f. 108v below). Oxford also privately purchased a half share in Lok's investment in the three Frobisher's voyages (see below). However Lok's statements as to exactly how much he himself had invested and what Oxford's half share amounted to differ slightly from document to document. In f. 101v below, Lok states that the third Frobisher voyage:

did cost £15,000, wherein my Lord of Oxford and Michael Lok alone do bear venture of £5000.

In f. 102v below, a statement apparently compiled at the same time as Lok's petition to the Privy Council of 16 June 1581, Lok states that Oxford's half share amounted to £2520:

Honour is venturer for his own account £2520, whereof his Honour hath paid £2000.

In another document, TNA SP 12/126/34, ff. 65-6, apparently prepared circa October 1578, Lok again gives slightly different figures, stating that his total investment in the three Frobisher voyages was £4270, of which Oxford became partner with him for £2000.

And note that of the foresaid sum of £4270 of his venture, the Earl of Oxford became partner with him for £2000 in such order and manner as himself was and is venturer.

However the auditors' report filed in Chancery in compliance with a writ of certiorari dated 6 May 1583 states that Oxford's total investment was £2520, of which £450 was still owing, and this would appear to be the most reliable statement on the matter.

In connection with Oxford's investment, it is also worth noting that Michael Lok's nephew, Henry Lok, who was in Oxford's service from circa 1570-1590, wrote to Lord Burghley on 6 November 1590 stating that Oxford was persuaded to invest by Martin Frobisher. See TNA SP 12/234/6, ff. 8-9.

I must be ready by oath and otherwise to prove what I affirm and his Honour knoweth for true, that Sir Martin Frobisher persuaded it, Edward Fenton writ letters, and William Walters carried them between my Lord and my uncle till all was concluded during my absence in Lincolnshire with my Lord Willoughby.

Some of the documents included below concern matters for which Lok was being held liable years after the event, including the hire (termed 'freight') of some of the ships which sailed on the third Frobisher voyage, and the purchase of the bark Judith from William Borough. As indicated in the Privy Council's letter of 6 May 1578 below, it was the Privy Council itself which had ordered Lok, as treasurer of the Company, to stand bound on behalf of the Company for the payment of the charges for the hire of the ships on their return to England. And as indicated in the testimony of the auditors dated 22 January 1580, Lok has also purchased the bark Judith from William Borough on behalf of the Company. Neither of these debts should thus have been Lok's personal responsibility, and it seems clear that he was unjustly imprisoned for them. Moreover his accounts as treasurer for the Company were audited four times before the Privy Council reluctantly concluded that he had not acted improperly in any respect in connection with his handling of the Company's funds. (It should be noted in passing that there are discrepancies in the auditors' own account below).

Prominent investors, including the Queen, members of the Privy Council and important London merchants lost large sums in the Frobisher voyages when the ore brought back from Baffin Island ultimately proved worthless. It seems to have been necessary to find a scapegoat, and Martin Frobisher's baseless allegations that Lok had defrauded the

Company were given credence. By the time Frobisher's allegations were disproved by the four audits of Lok's accounts, Lok had been ruined, both financially and in reputation.

Because the Privy Council itself directed the operations of the joint-stock Company in the last two Frobisher voyages, and because Michael Lok's accounts were the subject of four audits ordered by the Privy Council, over 700 pages of documents concerning the organization and financing of the voyages are preserved among the Exchequer papers in the National Archives (see McDermott, James, ed., *The Third Voyage of Martin Frobisher to Baffin Island 1578* (London: Hakluyt Society, 2001), p. x).

Individuals mentioned in the documents below include:

Agnello, Giovanni Baptista
 Baynham, William
 Borough, William (bap. 1536, d. 1598)
 Broad, John
 Cecil, William (1520/21-1598), 1st Baron Burghley
 Clinton, Edward Fiennes de (1512-1585), 1st Earl of Lincoln
 Cole, Humphrey
 Conyers, John
 Dee, John (1527-1609)
 Denham, Robert
 De Vere, Edward (1550-1604), 17th Earl of Oxford
 Duckett, Sir Lionel (d. 1587)
 Dudley, Ambrose (c.1530-1590), Earl of Warwick
 Dudley, Robert (1532/3-1588), Earl of Leicester
 Dyer, Sir Edward (1543-1607)
 Fenton, Edward (d.1603)
 Frobisher, Sir Martin (1535?-1594)
 Gresham, Sir Thomas (c.1581-1579)
 Hogan, Edmund
 Knollys, Sir Francis (1511/12-1596)
 Kranich, Burchard [known as Dr Burcot] (d. 1578)
 Lee, Francis
 Lok, Michael (c.1532-1620x22)
 Neale, Thomas
 Palmer, Andrew
 Pelham, Sir William (d.1587)
 Radcliffe, Thomas (1526/7-1583), 3rd Earl of Sussex
 Randolph, Thomas (1525/6-1590)
 Schutz, Christopher [known as Jonah, Jonas] (1521–1592)
 Turville [=Turberville?], Geoffrey
 Walsingham, Sir Francis (c.1532-1590)
 Wilson, Thomas (1523/4-1581)
 Winter, Sir William (c.1525-1589)

Yorke, Gilbert

For the Frobisher voyages generally, see:

Inuit and Englishmen; The Nunavut Voyages of Martin Frobisher, at http://www.museevirtuel-virtualmuseum.ca/Search.do?ex=on&R=VE_403&lang=en.

f. 98r

- fo. 1. The supplication of Michael Lok
2. The auditors' certificate of th' accounts
 3. The value of the ore
 4. The causes of the 3 voyages
 - 4, 5. The informations against Michael Lok
 - 5, 6. The charges & petitions of Michael Lok
 7. The account of Captain Frobisher
 8. The letter to freight ships in name of Michael Lok
 10. The commission to make the third voyage
 10. The testimony of the debt to William Borough
 11. The letter of my Lord Oxford to be a venturer

f. 99r

To the right honourable my Lords and others of the Queen's Majesty's most honourable
Privy Council

Most humbly I beseech your Honours for God's sake to have consideration of my present poor state, I being now prisoner in the Fleet, condemned in the Court of Exchequer at the suit of William Borough for the sum of two hundred pounds which he pretendeth to be owing to him for a ship bought of him for the last voyage of Captain Frobisher to the north-west parts, which ship the Company of the adventurers have, and for the which they do owe him £95, and no more, which is not my debt, as appeareth by the certificate thereof made by the auditors;

Furthermore, whereas by your Honours' commandments mine accounts of the three voyages of Captain Frobisher to the north-west parts have been audited 4 several times by four several companies of auditors and commissioners appointed thereto by your Honours within the space of these three years last past, the state of which accounts is now again lastly certified by Mr Thomas Neale and William Baynham, which herewithal I do exhibit to your Honours, whereby it doth appear that I have dealt justly and truly in my said accounts and in all other business of the said voyages committed to my charge;

And also therein appeareth that there is yet still owing by the Company of the venturers of the said voyages the sum of two thousand seven hundred fourscore and sixteen pounds [=£2796] which is due to divers persons for the freights of the ships hired in the said last voyage and for divers things bought for the furniture of the same, for the payment of which said sum I do stand bound for the Company unto the creditors by the commandment of your Honours and by the order of the Commissioners of that voyage, by reason whereof I have sustained great troubles, many imprisonments, and extreme losses and damage, to my utter undoing, by attending thereon by the space of these three years last past continually, not being able in this meantime to follow any other business whereby to get one penny towards my living to maintain my great family of 15 children;

In consideration whereof most humbly I beseech your Honours for God's sake to call before your Honours the said William Borough and to cause him to discharge his said execution against me, or otherwise to direct your honourable letters unto the Warden of the Fleet whereby I may be released out of prison;

And also that it would please your Honours that I may have a quietus est for my discharge for my said account whereby my bonds of four thousand pounds which do remain in the Queen's Majesty's Court of Exchequer for her Majesty's money adventured in the said voyage may be cancelled and restored unto me;

And also that it would please your Honours to grant unto me a sufficient warrant of protection to keep me quiet from further trouble hereafter for the said debts owing by the said Company of the adventurers, whereby I may have liberty again to travail for my living to maintain my said great family, which otherwise do rest in extreme evil state;

And I and all mine according to our bounden duty shall pray to God continually for all your Honours' prosperous estates to continue and increase in all happiness.

Your Honours' most humble poor servant,

Michael Lok,
prisoner in the Fleet, the 16 June 1581

f. 100r

LM: Copy

An answer to such articles concerning Michael Lok his account and the voyage of Martin Frobisher to the north-west parts as your Honours did appoint us to examine and certify

First, that the whole adventure of the said voyage as in the accounts
the adventurers be assessed amounteth to £20,345

Item, of the said sum, the adventurers have already disbursed, viz.:

to Michael Lok	£16,404 6s 8d	
to Thomas Allen	£ 491	
and to William Borough	£ 235	
in all amounting to the sum of		£17,630 6s 8d

Item, there is remaining yet unpaid of the said adventurers £ 2,714

Item, of the said £16,404 6s 8d received by Michael Lok there
is remaining upon his account £ 1,208

For discharge whereof he hath exhibited his petitions of charges
disbursed to be considered by your Honours

Item, there doth remain in Thomas Allen his hands due upon
his account £ 2,096 17s

which sum he stayeth in his hands as parcel of his
freight not fully discharged

Item, that Michael Lok is further charged with the price of wares
and provisions sold, parcel of the goods that did come home
with the ships £ 467 12s

which sum he hath disbursed for the discharge of the
said ships, payment of wages and other things, as
appeareth by his account which we have seen

Item, there is yet due by the Company of th' adventurers:

for freight of 6 ships	£2,208	
and to other persons	£ 504 8s	
as appeareth by particulars		£ 2,796

26th May 1581

Per nos, Thomas Neale, William Baynham

f. 101r

LM: Copy

Th' account taken at the Muscovy House the 8th of March 1577 of 200 weight of the ore brought by Mr Frobisher molten and tried by Jonas Schutz, Almain, assisted by three Englishmen, viz., Humphrey Cole, John Brode [=Broad?] & Robert Denham

Of the said 200 weight of ore so molten & tried as aforesaid, there proceeded in silver 6 ounces 7 pennyweight 13 grains, which valued at 5s the ounce maketh in money the sum of 31s 10-1/2d

And of the same ore proceeded in gold 5 pennyweight 5 grains, which at 3s the pennyweight maketh 15s 7-1/2d

Sum 47s 6d

So at that rate a ton of the said ore will make in money the sum of £23 15s

The charges of getting and fetching the said ore into the realm, as by particulars delivered by Mr Frobisher, will not exceed the ton £ 8

And of every ton thereof the said Jonas undertaketh to make good th' account aforesaid at the worst, and not to spend in all charges about the same for a ton above the sum of £10 15s

Sum £18 15s

So upon view of this account, for every £8 to be disbursed by the venturers they shall gain £5, which ariseth upon every 100 pounds of venture to gain clear above the sum of £60

Commissioners subscribed

William Winter	Richard Young
Edward Dyer	Matthew Field
John Dee	Edmund Hogan
Martin Frobisher	Michael Lok
	Andrew Palmer

f. 101v

The causes & foundation of the 3 voyages of Captain Frobisher

The first voyage made anno 1576 had foundation upon the venturers' money and their goodwills, being desirous to discover a passage by sea north-westwards to Cathay, which voyage did cost £1600, wherein Michael Lok alone was forced to bear venture of £900 for lack of the supply of the other venturers.

The second voyage made anno 1577 had foundation upon the work of John Baptista Agnello, Italian, Jonas Schutz, Almain, and Robert Denham, Englishman, which they made of the stone of ore found and brought home in the first voyage, which stone was vouched by their handwriting delivered to Mr Secretary Walsingham by Michael Lok to be of a mine of gold worth more than £60 the ton, and was so certified and justified to their Honours by Sir William Winter after that the information thereof given before by Michael Lok was by their Honours discredited & utterly rejected, upon which certificate of Sir William Winter only this voyage was made by the order of their Honours' letters written to the Commissioners of London, which voyage cost more than £4000, wherein Michael Lok alone was forced to bear venture of £1800 for lack of the supply of the other venturers.

The third voyage made anno 1578 had foundation upon the writing aforesaid of the Commissioners of the value of the ore brought in the second voyage dated the 18th of March 1577, which was then delivered to their Honours, and upon the bonds of Doctor Burcot made to their Honours for the performance of the same value procured by the means of Captain Frobisher only, whereupon their Honours did give order for this voyage by their letters written unto the Commissioners aforesaid, which voyage did cost £15,000, wherein my Lord of Oxford and Michael Lok alone do bear venture of £5000.

Thus briefly appeareth plainly the very true cause & foundation of these 3 voyages of Captain Frobisher, wherefore in the faults that are now found let not the blame be laid on a wrong man, but as equity and justice requireth let each party be called to answer unto his own doings, which are set down in writing at large in a book made by me, Michael Lok, entitled Quo warranto exhibited to their Honours, which their Honours have committed to the report of Thomas Neale and William Baynham, auditors of th' accounts of these voyages, who be good friends to Captain Frobisher, and also can report the truth. So shall God prosper the proceedings of this Company & of the venturers.

f. 102r

The slanderous & untrue informations given by Captain Frobisher, Thomas Allen, William Borough & Francis Lee against Michael Lok, treasurer of the north-west voyages, touching his accounts and doings of the same voyages

- 1 That he hath made false accounts of the said voyages, and therein hath deceived the Company of the venturers the sum of £3000
- 2 That he is in debt to the said Company upon his said accounts the sum of £2000
- 3 That he is not venturer in the said voyages for one groat sum
- 4 That he did practise with Jonas & the workmen to deceive the Company of their money ventured, whereof it cometh that he only is a gainer in these voyages, and they all be losers therein
- 5 That he hath cozened the right honourable the Earl of Oxford in his venture in the said voyages the sum of £1000
- 6 That he did know the ore brought home by Captain Frobisher in the second voyage to be naught when he did sell away part of his venture to my Lord of Oxford

f. 102v

The answer of Michael Lok to the foresaid untrue informations, which answer is made by the auditors of his accounts and by the Commissioners of the said voyages, namely Sir William Winter, Mr Thomas Randolph, Mr Edward Dyer, John Dee, Thomas Neale, John Conyers, William Baynham and Sir Thomas Gresham, Sir Lionel Duckett, Geoffrey Turville, Edward Fenton, Gilbert Yorke, Richard Young, Matthew Field, Edmund Hogan [+and] Andrew Palmer at 4 several audits of Michael Lok's accounts certified under their own handwritings dated in July 1577, in September 1578, in February 1578 & in May 1581 as followeth:

1 He hath made accounts of all the said three voyages of Captain Frobisher to the north-west[sic?] parts justly and truly, appearing by four several audits thereof made by us, whereby we do find that he hath not deceived the Company of venturers one penny, but hath dealt justly and truly with them in the said business committed to his charge.

2 He is not in debt to the Company one penny, but the charges which he hath disbursed for their said business appearing in his said accounts being allowed to him, he hath paid them all his duty.

3 He is venturer in the said voyages for his own account the sum of £2380, which sum he hath all paid, besides the sum of £2600 more for charges which he hath paid also out of his own purse in these 3 years voyages which is not charged in the Company's accounts, and besides the sum of my Lord of Oxford's venture.

4 He did not practise with the workmen in any manner of deceit, for that would have turned to his own loss in his own great venture of money in the voyages, but dutifully he did declare their works and doings to his knowledge to the Commissioners from time to time, which he believed to be good and true, as the Commissioners did believe, which turned to his own greatest loss of all the venturers.

5 He hath not cozened nor deceived the right honourable the Earl of Oxford of one penny, but hath dealt justly with his Honour in the said voyages, wherein his Honour is venturer for his own account £2520, whereof his Honour hath paid £2000.

6 He did not know the ore to be naught when he sold the part of his venture to my Lord of Oxford, for the sale thereof was made in May 1578 before the ships went out on the third voyage, at what time it was certified by the Commissioners' handwriting dated the 8 March 1577 upon the account taken by them of Jonas and his workmen and upon the bonds of Doctor Burcot procured by the means of Captain Frobisher that the ore was worth £24 15s the ton, whereupon that great voyage was made, and my Lord of Oxford made earnest request by his own letter dated the 21 May 1578 written to the Commissioners to be such a great venturer therein, hoping to be a great gainer thereby, as the rest of the venturers did hope upon the certificate and bonds aforesaid.

f. 103r

A brief note of the charges and expenses paid by me, Michael Lok, in 3 years in the service and for th' affairs of the Company of venturers of the north-west voyages, as appeareth particularly in my books of accounts, which I will show and justify to be true, as followeth.

	Household charges	Interests of money
Anno 1576	£ 223 15s 8d	£196 2s 6d
Anno 1577	£ 384 2s 10d	£232 6s 1d
Anno 1578	£ 394 5s 1d	£280 11s 9d
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Sum	£1002 3s 7d	£709 0s 4d

Which is togethers sum paid £1711 3s 11d, for the which said sum of £1711 3s 11d which I have paid out of my purse I do ask allowance of the Company in mine accounts but £1200, to say:

For my riding charges 3 years to the court in divers places for collection of the money of the venturers & for letters, commissions & directions of the Queen's Majesty's Honourable Privy Council	£120
For my riding charges to Dartford weekly and expenses there among the workmen in 8 months' time to finish the buildings there	£ 60
For my boat-hire to the court & aboard ships in 3 years for this business	£ 20
For the table diet of the Commissioners, auditors, captains & others at my house daily to furnish the 3 voyages	£150
For interests of money taken up to dispatch the ships on their voyages for lack of the venturers' money in due time	£250
Sum of this	£600

And for th' expenses of household & wages for the great travail of myself and my servants hired for this business & accounts in 3 years, besides that having thereby given over mine office of Muscovy business which gave me £200 yearly, sum	£600
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Sum of all	£1200, which is set down at the foot of mine accounts audited
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And more I have paid out of my purse also as followeth:

Anno 1579, Anno 1580: More than £1000 charges & damages sustained by the too too much trouble & vexation for this business, having been imprisoned 7 times in all the prisons of London except Newgate for the debts owing by the Company to divers men not yet paid which I stand still bound for, and by my continual giving attendance on the auditors of mine accounts these last 3 years continually to my utter undoing, not being able in all this meantime to follow any manner other business whereby to get one penny towards my living for to maintain my great family of 15 children, for the which said charges & damages I have not yet charged the accounts of the Company with one penny, hoping that they will consider of me according to equity and to my dutiful service done to them in all this great troublesome business, which I have done according to commission & commandment given to me from time to time, whatsoever loss fall out by these voyages through other men's faults, which are declared in my book of Quo warranto which remaineth with the auditors.

f. 103v

Reason in account set down to prove that the said Company are at charges but of one for a hundred of their stock by year for the said parcel of £600 set down by me, Michael Lok, at the end of my accounts for my great charges of household, travail & service done in these said 3 years' voyages of Captain Frobisher

	Stock of the Company	Wages for 3 years
The Queen's Majesty	£ 4000	£120
Her Majesty's honourable Privy Council	£ 3740	£111
The Earl of Oxford	£ 2520	£ 73
The rest of the venturers	£ 7705	£226
Michael Lok alone	£ 2380	£ 70
	—————	—————
Sum of all	£20,345	£600

The whole stock of all the venturers is £20,345, which is to pay £600 for the wages & service of Michael Lok in the 3 years' voyages, which cometh to 3 for 100 in 3 years, which is but one for 100 in one year.

Memorandum: That it is common and usual daily among all merchants to pay and allow unto their factors of their business for Flanders, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal and Spain for the taking of the charge of their business & accounts after the rate of 50s for £100 of their stock employed outwards, and also more 50s for £100 of their same stock employed and returned homewards in all manner goods and things, as also for Candia, Chio and Levants £5 for £100 of the stock outwards, and more £5 for £100 of the same stock homewards, as often as it is employed, though it were twice or thrice in one year, which is for the only travail, industry and maintenance of the factor, which among merchants is termed provision or factorage, besides all manner charges of custom, freight & other charges ordinary growing upon the same goods, and beside all other extraordinary charges and expenses growing only upon that business, to say, interestes of money, riding charges from their dwelling-place to any other place about that business, suits of law, suits of friendship, entertainment of men for that business alone, and other suchlike matters happening for that business.

And if I did demand after this rate of factorage which is paid to all men in like cases, I should have £3000, for the which I have set down but £600 as aforesaid.

f. 104r

The humble petitions of me, Michael Lok, to the right honourable my Lords and others of the Queen's Majesty's most honourable Privy Council which are venturers in the north-west voyages of Captain Frobisher

That it would please your (blank) Honours to consider of me, your poor servant, according to equity and to my dutiful meaning in my service done in these three voyages to the north-west parts.

That sith mine accounts by so many auditings are found to be just and true, I may have a quietus est for the same, and also my bonds which remain in th' Exchequer for £4000 of the Queen's Majesty's money ventured in these voyages to be cancelled and restored to me.

That I may have a warrant to keep me from further trouble hereafter for the debts owing by the Company to divers men for the freights of the ships and other things, which is almost £3000 yet unpaid, appearing by the auditors' last certificate, for the which I stand bound to the creditors by the commandment of your Honours and the Commissioners.

That your Honours (blank) would determine for the ore and houses at Dartford whereof I delivered to your (blank) Honours certain articles one year past whereunto I hear none answer as yet.

That I may have liberty to travail again for my living to maintain my great family of 15 children which are now utterly undone through my losses and troubles by these unhappy voyages of Captain Frobisher.

f. 104v

Th' accounts of Captain Frobisher not yet audited

Captain Frobisher doth owe to the Company of the venturers of the north-west voyages upon his account as followeth:

For the rest of £1600 of money paid to him to furnish the ship Ayde and to press miners for the third voyage outwards in May 1578	£ 645 18s
For money which he received of certain of the venturers, and wares he had in that voyage	£ 349 5s 4d
For his own stock and venture in the three voyages not yet paid	£ 270

Sum of all	£1265 3s 4d

Whereof is due to him

For money he paid for men's wages, victuals and other things by his account delivered in April 1579	£526 5s 8d
For the rest of his wages for 7 months ending the last of December 1578 at £25 the month, by the Commissioners	£175

Sum hereof	£701 5s 8d

And so he doth rest owing to the Company by this account, sum

£563 17s 8d

Memorandum: That besides his debt abovesaid, he hath had of the Company in money for his own wages & entertainment, appearing in former accounts, as followeth:

For the first voyage made anno 1576	£ 80
For the second voyage made anno 1577	£250
For the third voyage outwards anno 1578	£428

Sum of his own wages

£ 758

And more, for the wages and entertainment of his 15 serving-men

for 2 years placed in the name of soldiers, mariners and miners,
which have cost the Company more than £ 400

Sum of his entertainment by accounts
audited by Commissioners £1158

f. 105r

Memorandum: Also that Captain Frobisher hath endamaged the Company by his evil service and prodigalities as followeth:

For the charges of 25 men taken with him in the second voyage
anno 1577 above number of commission, and 30 more entertained
for a time, which cost the company £ 400

For the charges of 100 men taken with him in the third voyage
1578 above the number by commission appointed, sum £1600

For the freight of 2 ships returned home of the 4 ships taken
with him in the third voyage above the number of commission £1000

For the spoil & pilfery of the tackle, implements & goods of
the ships' furniture in these three voyages pilfered and consumed
by evil men in the ships and evil government therein without
any account thereof made £1200

For the furniture & provisions for the 100 men to fortify and
remain there, which he vaingloriously caused to be provided for
the conquest of his new kingdom, and afterwards in that
country utterly he did overthrow the same by his malice and
envy against Captain Fenton, which cost £6000

Sum of this damage £10,200

And his other evil service done contrary to commission in making wars under promise of peace with the people of that strange country, in not suffering the passage through the straits to be discovered, in not helping Captain Fenton to inhabit nor plant his men there, in carrying of 8 ships of the fleet to an unknown place in great danger of wreck by the space of 18 days through his obstinate ignorance and his other evil government doth appear at large in my said book entitled Quo warranto.

f. 106r

LM: Copy

To our very loving friends Sir William Winter, knight, Thomas Randolph, Edward Dyer, esquire, John Dee, Richard Young, Edmund Hogan and the rest of the Commissioners appointed for the matters of the voyage into the north-west parts

After our right hearty commendations, forasmuch as the time of the year being so fair & seasonable, we are very desirous that the ships which are to be employed in the north-west parts under Martin Frobisher shall be dispatched with as much expedition as might be, although we hope that you are not unmindful thereof yourselves, yet for the more surety we have thought convenient to recommend the same matter unto you, and to require you to use the best diligence ye be able for the furthering of the departure of the said ships as soon as may be;

And whereas we understand that of late some question hath been moved by some of the owners of the ships which are freighted for that voyage touching the payment of their hire at their return, we shall desire you to call the said owners before you and to signify unto them in our names that forasmuch as by the general assent of the venturers Michael Lok is appointed to be treasurer of the Company, we think it most convenient that the charter-parties of the freightment of the said ships shall be made in his name in the behalf of the whole Company;

And for the better certainty & assurance of the owners of the ships you may tell them that upon their return we will not fail to give order that all such payments & covenants of the charter-parties of freightment which shall be agreed on between them, the said Michael Lok and any three of you shall be performed unto them, so as they shall have no cause to be discontented therewith, and therefore we trust that both you & they will use forthwith the most expedition herein that you can;

And so bid you heartily farewell from Greenwich the 6 of May 1578,

Your very loving friends,

Thomas Sussex
Ambrose Warwick
Robert Leicester
Francis Knollys
Francis Walsingham
Thomas Wilson

f. 107r

LM: Copy

The original copy of all the charter-parties of all the ships are subscribed with the own hands of the Commissioners as followeth:

The 16 of May 1578

We of the Commissioners whose names are subscribed according to the order taken by her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council by their letters to us in that behalf directed do allow of the charter-parties for the voyage aforesaid to pass in form before-written.

Thomas Randolph
John Dee
Edmund Hogan
Andrew Palmer

f. 107v

LM: Copy

Testimony of the auditors for the debt of William Borough

Forasmuch as equity bindeth to declare the truth (being thereunto required) in matters in controversy, therefore this is to certify that Michael Lok of London, mercer, being the treasurer and officer appointed for the Company of the adventurers of the north-west voyages lately made by Martin Frobisher, general Captain thereof, hath given up his accounts of all his doings in the said business for the said Company of the said adventurers;

In which accounts it is declared that he, the said Michael Lok, did bargain & buy of William Borough of Limehouse one ship named the Judith with her furniture for the sum of £320 for the use & behoof of the said Company, whereof is paid to the said William Borough by the said Michael Lok £90 in ready money, and also is paid & defalked the sum of £135 for the stock & adventure of the said William Borough due in the said voyages as one of the Company of the said adventurers, and so remaineth due to the said William Borough by the said Company of adventurers the sum of £95, as may appear by the said Michael Lok's accounts;

Which accounts have been considered & examined by Sir Thomas Gresham, knight, Sir Lionel Duckett, knight, Thomas Neale & John Conyers, two of her Majesty's auditors, Geoffrey Turville & divers others appointed thereunto by virtue of the letters of the Lords of her Majesty's most honourable Privy Council;

And in the accounts of the said Michael Lok [-the said Michael Lok] the said sum of £95 doth still remain owing to the said William Borough by the said Company of adventurers & not by the said Michael Lok;

In witness whereof to these presents we have set our hands the 20 day of January in the 22 year of her Majesty's reign anno 1579 [=1580].

Lionel Duckett
Thomas Neale, auditor
Richard Young
Matthew Field
Edmund Hogan

f. 108r

LM: Copy

To our very loving friends Sir William Winter, knight, Edward Dyer, Martin Frobisher, esquire, Richard Young, Matthew Field, Edmund Hogan, Michael Lok and Andrew Palmer

After our very hearty commendations, upon our good consideration of your proceedings & diligence in the matter of the voyage intended to be continued again this year unto the north-west, having laid down in writing under your hands the course & order which you think meet to be observed, as well for the shipping as also for all things necessary for one hundred men thought good to be left & settled there, & other things requisite for the said voyage, we allow very well of your doings in that behalf, and as you have wisely conceived the same, so weighing that the year passing fast on presseth much the hastening of that voyage, as yourselves by good experience can well judge;

Therefore we do very earnestly require & pray you to proceed with as convenient speed as ye may to the execution of that which ye have so well conceived & subscribed, both for the speedy having in a readiness of so much good shipping as may be able to bring hither 800 tons of ore, as for the procuring & having in readiness against a prefixed time the said 100 men to be left to inhabit in those west parts and for all things meet for them for the time agreed upon of their abode there upon this present shipping, & generally of all other things requisite for this voyage so far-forth as your notes do import, and yet not sparing (upon important cause) to use your discretion for other necessary things, if any such be yet unconsidered of, which we doubt not but that in respect of the generality, & namely for your particular, having interest therein, you will see well husbanded;

And so we bid you heartily farewell from Greenwich the 12 day of March 1577 [=1578].

Your loving friends,

William Burghley
Edward Lincoln
Thomas Sussex
Ambrose Warwick
Robert Leicester
Francis Walsingham
Thomas Wilson

f. 108v

LM: Copy

To my very loving friends William Pelham & Thomas Randolph, esquires, Mr Young, Mr Lok, Mr Hogan, Mr Field, & others the Commissioners for the voyage to
Meta Incognita

After my very hearty commendations. Understanding of the wise proceeding & orderly dealing for the continuing of the voyage for the discovery of Cathay by the north-west which this bearer, my friend Mr Frobisher, hath already very honourably attempted, and is now eftsoons to be employed for the better achieving thereof;

And the rather induced, as well for the great liking her Majesty hath to have the same passage discovered, as also for the special good favour I bear to Mr Frobisher, to offer unto you to be an adventurer therein for the sum of one thousand pounds or more, if you like to admit thereof;

Which sum or sums, upon your certificate of admittance, I will enter into bond shall be paid for that use unto you upon Michaelmas day next coming;

Requesting your answers therein, I bid you heartily farewell from the court the 21 of May, 1578.

Your loving friend,
Edward Oxenford