

A Study on Concept of Navigational History

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I. Introduction

Recently Navigational History¹⁾ is frequently discussed in the internal of Korea Institute of Navigation. Although some scholars have mentioned Navigational History and wrote articles about it, they have no concern for 'what is Navigational History itself?' and 'what is the significance of studying Navigational History?' yet.

I have long been interested in Maritime History. Maritime History is not history that simply treats maritime affairs, but is a branch of history that inquires into inter-relations between maritime affairs and inland affairs.²⁾ Maritime History constitutes of History of Naval War, History of Shipping, History of Fishing, History of Marine Development, History of Ocean Exploration & etc. Navigational History is a premise to constitute Maritime History. Because it is indispensable for naval war, shipping, fishing, marine development and ocean exploration to go by sea.

The main theme in this paper is to present 'what is Navigational History' and 'what is the significance of studying it'. In order to embody objectives mentioned above, I will examine the meaning of history as a branch of science at chapter II, then will inquire into 'what kind of navigation can be a subject of history' at chapter III and will offer the presentation of a concept of Navigational History in the level of proposal at chapter IV. Finally I will present the significance of studying Navigational History.

II. Meaning of History

Generally speaking, history has two meanings. First, it indicates events that 'broke out in the past',

1) Guangqi Sun transcribed it into Navigation History. But in consideration of Economic History, Political History, Cultural History, and Intellectual History, it is reasonable to transcribe it into Navigational history. ref. Guangqi Sun, A Research into the Sea Routes between Silla and Tang from the 8th Century to the 9th Century, Korean Institute of Navigation, 1996 Korea-China International Nautical Science Symposium, Oct., 1996, p. 23.

2) ref. Alfred Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History 1660-1783*(1890), 12ed.(Boston ; Little, Brown and Company) and *Influence of Sea Power upon French Revolution and Empire 1793-1812*(Boston ; Little, Brown and Company, 1892).

that is, Geschehen or Begebenheit in German. Secondly, it is used to signify history as a branch of science, that is, Geschichte.³⁾ Here I will regard history as the second meaning.

The most important element of history is time(Die Zeit). Then, what is time mentioned in history? Some scholars criticize history as a curious(antiquarisch) science, for the time that history mainly deals with is the past.⁴⁾ But history is not all that reconstitutes the past as Leopold von Ranke(1795~1885), 'father of objective history'⁵⁾, who mentioned that "historian just do his job by describing how it really was(wie es eigentlich gewesen ist)"⁶⁾. But history is also the present according to E.H. Carr(1892~1982) who said that "history is a continuous dialogue between the past and the present"⁷⁾. Because E.H. Carr acknowledged a proposition which Benedetto Croce(1866~1952) formularized that "all true history is history of the present(Jede wahre Geschichte ist Geschichte der Gegenwart⁸⁾)".⁹⁾ Furthermore, when Carr mentioned that "history is a dialogue between the events of the past and progressively emerging future ends"¹⁰⁾, he stressed the importance of the future-consciousness in history. Therefore, time which history deals with is the future as well as the past and the present.

History also studies human beings as a research-subject. Marc Bloch(1886~1944) stated that a research-subject of history is "originally human being, strictly human beings(l'homme, les hommes)"¹¹⁾. And he added that it was "human societies and organized masses rather than isolated an human being".¹²⁾ Therefore, history is a study of various activities of human beings in society, that is to say, political, economic, cultural, and intellectual activities of human beings.

One of the essential elements of history that has been often overlooked is a spatial background. I would like to divide space that is a field of human activities into the mainland and the ocean. Until now, many historians have overlooked the importance of the ocean that consists of 71%¹³⁾ of the earth. Fernand Braudel(1902~1985), who was one of the greatest historians of the Annales school that has risen against traditional political history, showed his interest in matters of the

3) Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesung über die Philosophie der Geschichte*(Frammannes Verlag, 1928), trans. by J.H. Kim, p. 121; E. Bernheim, *Einleitung in der Geschichtswissenschaft*(1912), trans. by K.S. Park, p. 15.

4) F.W. Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*(Reclam Stuttgart, 1973), s. 24 quoted from S.S. Lee, *Yeoksahakgaeron*(Seoul, 1994), p. 53.

5) Helmut Berding, Leopold von Ranke, in *Historiker I*, hrs. von H. Wehler(Vandenhoeck-Ruprecht; Göttingen, 1971), p. 7.

6) Leopold von Ranke, *Geschichte der romanischen und germanischen Völker*, Vorrede quoted from S.S. Lee, *Seoyangsaaksa*(Seoul, 1993), p. 451

7) E.H. Carr, *What is History?*(Cambridge, 1961), trans. by H.M. Ghil(Seoul, 1996), p. 39.

8) Benedetto Croce, *Zur Theorie und Geschichte der Historiographie*(Tübingen, 1915), trans. by S.S. Lee(Seoul, 1987), p. 12.

9) E.H. Carr, *op. cit.*, p. 39.

10) E.H. Carr, *Ibid.*, p. 194.

11) Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour, ou métier d'historien*(Paris, 1941), trans. by N.K. Jung(Seoul, 1981), p. 43.

12) Lucien Febvre, *La Terre et l'évolution humaine*, p. 201; quoted from Marc Bloch, *Ibid.*, p. 44.

13) ref. Peter K. Weyl, *Oceanography*(1969), trans by J.M. Yang(Pusan, 1976), p. v.

ocean in his great work *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip I* (14). But he never dealt with the ocean itself. He just treated the Mediterranean that consisted of geographical backgrounds as a sort of long-term structure that remained unrelated with political events like the battle of Lepanto(1571) or the Holy League(1566~1570) & etc.¹⁵⁾

As Alfred Mahan(1840~1914) properly pointed out, the main reason why traditional history has overlooked matters of the ocean is that “generally historians have been unfamiliar with the conditions of the sea,”¹⁶⁾ and “naval historians have limited themselves generally to the duty of simple chroniclers of naval occurrences”¹⁷⁾. The significance of studying Maritime History will be in rehabilitating the ocean, the lost space of history.

Bloch defined history as a science on human beings in time(*des hommes dans le temps*)¹⁸⁾. But as previously examined, history will be defined as a science on human beings in both space and time(*des hommes dans le temps et l'espace*).

III. 'Navigation' as a Subject of History

Then, what kind of 'navigation' can be a subject of history? In English there are three words to indicate 'go by sea'. Those are as follows; navigate, sail and voyage.

First of all, navigate stemmed from Latin that combined *navis*(*navis*) indicating a ship with *agere* meaning to guide, or drive.¹⁹⁾ It historically has been used as three meanings. First, it has been used for indicating 'to go from one place to another in a ship'²⁰⁾, secondly, 'to sail, to direct, or to manage a ship'²¹⁾, and thirdly, 'to convoy goods by water'²²⁾.

While navigate is a word from Southern European language²³⁾, sail is a word from Northern European language. Historically sail was first used to indicate 'sail' as a noun in 888, and in 893 was used as a verb to signify 'to travel on water in a vessel propelled by action of the wind upon sails'.²⁴⁾ In addition, sail has been used to mean 'to glide on the surface of water or through air, either by the impulsion of wind or without any visible effort', or 'to move or go in stately or

14) Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II*, rev. ed.(1966), trans. by Siân Reynolds, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*(Harper & Row, Publishers ; N.Y., 1973).

15) ref. F. Braudel, *Ibid.*, Part One ; The Role of the Environment.

16) Alfred Mahan, *op. cit.*, p. iii.

17) *Ibid.*, p. v.

18) M. Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 45.

19) *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed.(Clarendon Press, 1989), vol. X, p. 259.

20) This usage appeared first in 1588. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

21) This usage appeared first in 1670. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

22) This usage appeared first in 1795. *Ibid.*, p. 259.

23) Sasawasenpei(佐波宣平), *Maritime English*(『海の英語』)(Tokyo, 1972), p. 296.

24) *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. XIV, p. 371, 373.

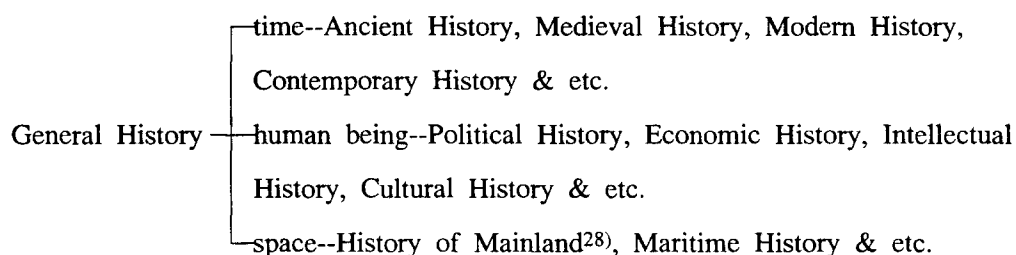
dignified manner, suggestive of the movement of a ship under sail', or 'to provide with sails'.²⁵⁾ As above observed, the word sail has been used for implying 'passive and noncommercial sailing'. On the other hand voyage stemmed from Latin via that means road.²⁶⁾ At first, it was used to signify 'to journey by land' and then, was gradually diverted to indicate 'to make a voyage, or 'to cross or travel over'.²⁷⁾ Recently, voyage has been used to mean 'a journey by land', 'an expedition undertaken with a military purpose', or 'journey by sea'. Therefore voyage is a word to indicate 'travel in a general sense' that includes navigate and sail.

As above examined, a research-subject of history must be navigation rather than sail or voyage. From above reason, I transcribed Navigational History rather than Sailing History or History of Voyage.

Examples of a subject of Navigational History are as follows; Maritime activities of Jang Bo-go(張保臯, ?~841?); Seven voyages of Cheng Ho(鄭和, 1373~1434); Sailing of Christopher Columbus(1451?~1506); Voyages to the Indies by Vasco da Gama(1469?~1524); Circumnavigation of Ferdinando Magellan(1480?~1521); Maritime activities of Francis Drake(1540?~1596); Research Navigations of Captain James Cook(1728~1779) & etc.

IV. Concept of Navigational History

I stated elements of history as time, human beings and space. Branches of history on the basis of above mentioned elements are divided as follows.



As above observed, Maritime History is a branch of General History which is classified on the basis of space. Therefore, Maritime History will be defined as a branch of history to examine 'inter-relations between maritime affairs and inland affairs'. To explain them more concretely, we will mainly analyze 'influence of Sea-Power upon history'. Navigational History is a premise to

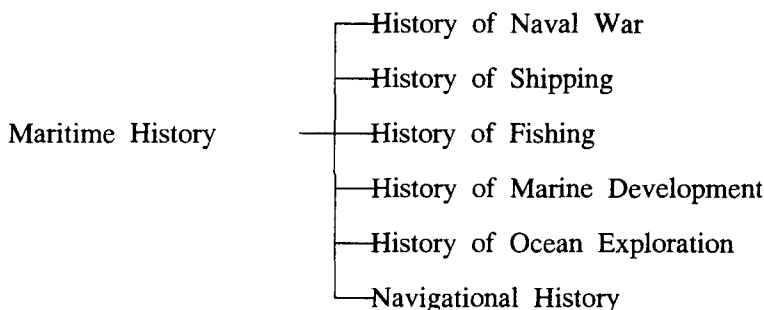
25) *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. XIV, p. 373.

26) Sasawasenpei, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

27) *Oxford English Dictionary*, vol. XIX, p. 778~9.

28) Until now, most of historians have studied General History focusing on the mainland Therefore, history of mainland has equaled to General History.

compose Maritime History. Branches of Maritime History are classified as follows;



As above classified, Navigational History composing Maritime History will be defined as 'a branch of history to study the process of development of nautical science relating to methods of ship-positioning and seamanship in the historical background'. This is a narrow definition of Navigational History, which shares an important part of History of Science and Technique.²⁹⁾

But when Navigational History will be defined in a narrow sense, human elements can not be put in Navigational History. Because today instruments of navigation like ARPA, GPS, Total Navigator & etc have been developed so highly, the role of marine officers has been reduced greatly compared with the past. As history is also a science of human beings, we have to consider human elements in studying Navigational History. Therefore, we will need to define Navigational History in a broad sense.

Then, what is Navigational History in a broad sense? Navigational History in a broad sense will be defined as a branch of history to study 'effects of historical navigation upon history'.³⁰⁾ Until now History of Navigation of Western Europe has been a history of the process to enlarge their view of the world.³¹⁾ Accordingly Navigational History in a broad sense is indispensably concerned

29) Examples of Navigational History in a narrow sense are as follows ; Stewart, Glenn, San Salvador Is. to Cuba ; A Cruise in the track of Columbus, *Geographical Review*, XXI, 1931.

Sun, Guangqi, A Research into the Sea Routes between Silla and Tang from the 8th century to the 9th century, Korean Institute of Navigation, 1996 Korea-China International Scientific Symposium, Sept., 1996.

Hugh, Ihl, Revisit to the Ennin's Diary, 1996 Korea-China International Scientific Symposium, Nov., 1996.

30) Examples of Navigational History in a broad sense are as follows;

Davies, Arthur, Loss of Santa Maria, *American Historical Review*, vol. LVIII, no. 4, Jul., 1953

Washburn, Willcomb, Meaning of Discovery in the 15th and 16th centuries, *American Historical Review*, vol. LXVIII, no. 1, Oct., 1962

Andrew, K.R., Aims of Drake's Expedition of 1577-1580, *American Historical Review*, vol. LXXIII, no. 3, Feb., 1968

Han, Sangbok, La Pérouse's Voyage Round the World and His Survey in Korean Waters, *Journal of Korean Scientific History*, vol. 2, no. 1, 1980

Kim, Sung June, A Study on the European Expansion in the 15th Century ; Focused on Columbus's Sailing, Master's Thesis at Korea University, Aug., 1996

with Geographical History.

Also, Navigational History in a broad sense is to attribute its concern to sea distresses. Big sea distresses like the wreck of the Titanic and the Exxon Valdez & etc have a fatal effect upon marine environment and economic activities of human beings as well as crews and shipping companies themselves. Therefore, a field of today's sea distresses must be included in Maritime History and Navigational History.

In conclusion, Navigational History in a narrow sense is to be a field of studying 'process of development of nautical science and seamanship on the side of History of Science and Technique, whereas Navigational History in a broad sense is to be a field of analyzing 'effects of historical navigation upon history on the side of General History.

V. Conclusion

Then, what is the significance of studying Navigational History? On studying Navigational History in a narrow sense, there are significances of disclosing what the development of nautical instruments and arts of navigation have played a role in history. On the other hand, History of Naval War and History of Ocean Exploration will be key positions in studying Navigational History in a broad sense. While History of Shipping, History of Fishing or History of Marine Development lack in human element, the human element itself has played an important role in History of Naval War or History of Ocean Exploration. As Alfred Mahan pointed out, naval war played a key role in a development of history,³²⁾ and ocean exploration is a branch to highlight positive activities of human beings like the exploration of Christopher Columbus.

But there is not any further place to explore in this world, and the naval war of today is much affected by excellent instruments and arms rather than the human elements. In that case there will not be any further field to study in history of naval war or history of ocean exploration. As previously mentioned, history lasts forever with time. But if there is not any field to study, the study of that field will cease.

Therefore, a field to concern from the side of Navigational History in a broad sense would be sea distresses. Sea distresses in a sense may disclose faults of mariners. However, history need not always record glories and victories. It rather can teach us lessons of history by revealing causes of failures and disgraces. Therefore, today it is important to study Navigational History in a broad sense focusing on both causes of sea distresses and countermeasures to them.

31) ref. R. A. Skelton, *Explorer's Maps, Charters in the Cartographic Record of Geographical Discovery*(1958).

32) ref. Alfred T. Mahan, *Influence of Sea Power upon History: 1660-1783 & Influence of Sea Power upon French Revolution and Empire 1793-1812*(Boston ; Little, Brown and Company, 1892).

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