Roving in Troubled Waters: The Fairy Tale of Alonso Ramírez as an Alternative Narrative to Dampier's New Voyage*?*

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Abstract
Long considered a pure fiction, the Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, a small work published in Mexico in 1690, chronicles the misfortunes of a Spaniard who was held captive by a gang of English pirates traveling in the Asiatic seas for about two years. Over the past twenty years, this work has been the subject of several studies, which tend to demonstrate that it is a partially true story. Accordingly, some scholars posited that its author was a prisoner aboard the* Cygnet*, a ship on which the famous William Dampier served, as well as in the same capacity aboard a second pirate ship called* The Good Hope*. However, Ramírez's account is replete with so many half-truths and lies that it is difficult, if not almost impossible, to arrive at any certainty, and this reduces its historical importance. But reading the scholars who have examined the* Infortunios *so far, one could believe the opposite and consider it a valuable testimony for the study of 17th-century piracy. In fact, this erroneous perception comes directly from their failure to paint a relatively complete and fair picture of the adventures of the historical pirates they assimilated to those of Ramírez's account, an essential point in order to draw reasonable hypotheses about his* Infortunios*. This text will attempt to fill that gap. The exercise will be done not only using the unavoidable narratives of Dampier and documents from the Archivo General de Indias relating to the Philippines, but above all using other ones coming mainly from the archives of the defunct Dutch East India Company, which were not very accessible or little used until now. In doing so, new (and better) foundations will be laid for the future study of the historicity of Ramírez's "Misfortunes", which will be, in any case, particularly difficult. It will also be an opportunity, in the light of the same sources, to reassess the voyage of the* Cygnet *in Asia, as well as the less known one of Captain John Eaton's company, to which some of the pirates of the* Good Hope *had belonged.*

Keywords
Alonso Ramírez, William Dampier, piracy, history, travels, mythomania, hoax.

Résumé
Longtemps considéré comme une pure fiction, les Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, petit ouvrage publié à Mexico en 1690, raconte les mésaventures d'un Espagnol qui fut prisonnier, pendant environ deux ans, d'une bande de pirates anglais voyageant dans les mers asiatiques. Depuis une vingtaine d'années, cet ouvrage a fait l'objet de plusieurs études qui tendent à démontrer qu'il s'agit d'un récit partiellement véridique. C'est ainsi que des spécialistes ont déterminé que son auteur aurait été prisonnier du* Cygnet*, navire à bord duquel servait le fameux William Dampier, et peut-être aussi à bord d'un second bâtiment pirate nommé* The Good Hope*. Toutefois, le récit de Ramírez fourmille de tant de mensonges et de demi-vérités qu'il est difficile, voire quasiment impossible, d'arriver à quelque certitude, et cela réduit d'autant son importance historique. Pourtant, à lire les divers spécialistes qui se sont penchés jusqu'ici sur les* Infortunios*, on pourrait croire le contraire et le considérer comme un témoignage important pour l'étude de la piraterie du XVIIe siècle. En fait, cette perception erronée provient directement de leur échec à avoir pu brosser un tableau relativement complet et juste des aventures des pirates historiques qu'ils ont assimilé à ceux du récit de Ramírez, point essentiel afin de pouvoir tirer des hypothèses raisonnables à propos de ses* Infortunios*. Le présent texte tentera de pallier à cette lacune. Cet exercice sera fait non seulement en utilisant les incontournables relations de Dampier et les documents de l'Archivo General de Indias relatifs aux Philippines, mais aussi et surtout d'autres provenant principalement des archives de la défunte Compagnie néerlandaise des Indes orientales, jusqu'ici peu accessibles ou peu utilisés. Ce faisant, de nouvelles (et de meilleures) bases seront jetées pour l'étude future de l'historicité des « Infortunes » de Ramírez, qui s'annoncera, dans tous les cas, particulièrement difficile. Ce sera aussi l'occasion, à la lumière des mêmes sources, de revisiter le périple du* Cygnet *en Asie, et celui moins connu de la compagnie du capitaine John Eaton, d'où sont issus une partie des pirates du* Good Hope*.*

Mots-clés
Alonso Ramírez, William Dampier, piraterie, histoire, relations de voyage, mythomanie, canular.

Resumen
Considerados durante mucho tiempo pura ficción, los Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, una pequeña obra publicada en México en 1690, relata las desgracias de un Español que fue prisionero, durante unos dos años, de una banda de piratas ingleses que viajaban por los mares asiáticos. Durante los últimos veinte años, esta obra ha sido objeto de varios estudios que tienden a demostrar que se trata de una historia parcialmente verdadera. Fue así como algunos estudiosos determinaron que su autor habría estado prisionero del* Cygnet*, barco en el que sirvió el famoso William Dampier, y quizás también a bordo de un segundo barco pirata llamado* The Good Hope*. Sin embargo, el relato de Ramírez está lleno de tantas mentiras y verdades a medias que es difícil, si no casi imposible, llegar a alguna certeza, y esto reduce su importancia histórica. Sin embargo, leyendo a los diversos estudiosos que han estudiado los* Infortunios *hasta ahora, se podría creer lo contrario y considerarlo como un testimonio importante para el estudio de la piratería del siglo XVII. De hecho, esta percepción errónea proviene directamente de su incapacidad para pintar un cuadro relativamente completo y justo de las aventuras de los piratas históricos que asimilaron a las del relato de Ramírez, punto esencial para poder extraer hipótesis razonables sobre sus* Infortunios*. Este texto intentará llenar este vacío. Este ejercicio se hará no sólo utilizando las relaciones esenciales de Dampier y los documentos del Archivo General de Indias relativos a Filipinas, sino también, y sobre todo, otras procedentes principalmente de los archivos de la extinta Compañía Holandesa de las Indias Orientales, hasta ahora poco accesible o poco usado. De este modo se sentarán nuevas (y mejores) bases para el futuro estudio de la historicidad de las* Infortunios *de Ramírez, que será, en cualquier caso, especialmente difícil. También será una oportunidad, a la luz de las mismas fuentes, de reevaluar el viaje del Cygnet en Asia, y el menos conocido de la compañía del capitán John Eaton, de la que procedían algunos de los piratas del* Good Hope*.*

Palabras clave
Alonso Ramírez, William Dampier, piratería, historia, viajes, mitomanía, broma.

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1.1	04/04/2024	R. Laprise	Spelling and typos corrections. A reference added about Capt. Ferrer's career prior to his capture by the pirates.
1.2	05/19/2024	R. Laprise	The complete documentation from the inquisitorial trial of Bernardo de Uriarte has been used to revise the information regarding Miguel de Medina, the alleged model of the cruel Miguel the Sevillan of the *Infortunios*. In previous versions, only a summary of the trial, which lacked important details, had been used. Consequently, some conclusions have been modified.
1.3	11/11/2024	R. Laprise	A precision added in the part wherein the pirates' names of the *Infortunios* are compared to those appearing in Francisco de Seijas' writings.
1.4	05/24/2025	R. Laprise	Correction of the the first name of Captain Woollery, commander of the first Red Sea pirates; in the previous versions, he was incorrectly called William.

Abbreviations for Manuscript Sources

AHNOB	Archivo Histórico de la Nobleza (Toledo, Spain). https://pares.culturaydeporte.gob.es
AGI	Archivo General de Indias (Seville, Spain). https://pares.culturaydeporte.gob.es
AGN-México	Archivo General de la Nación (Mexico City, Mexico). https://www.gob.mx/agn
BL	The British Library (London, United Kingdom). https://www.bl.uk/
Huntington Library	The Huntington Library, Art Museum and Botanical Gardens (San Marino, CA, USA) https://huntington.org/
ID-ANRI	Arsip Nasional Republik Indonesia (Jakarta, Indonesia). https://sejarah-nusantara.anri.go.id/
MO AH	Arquivo de Macau (Macau, China). https://www.archives.gov.mo
Longleat House CO	Longleat House Library and Archives (Warminster, United Kingdom): The Coventry Papers. https://www.longleat.co.uk/library-and-archive
LPL	Lambeth Palace Library (London, United Kingdom). https://www.lambethpalacelibrary.info/
M-Ar	The Massachusetts Archives (Boston, MA, USA). https://www.sec.state.ma.us/arc/
NL-HaNA	Nationaal Archief (The Hague, Nederlands). https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/
NYSA	New York State Archives (Albany, NY, USA). https://www.archives.nysed.gov/
PT AHU	Arquivo Histórico Ultramarino (Lisbon, Portugal). https://ahu.dglab.gov.pt/
SHG Archives	St Helena Government Archives (Jamestown, Saint Helena). https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP524
TNA	The National Archives of the United Kingdom (Kew, United Kingdom). https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/
ViWC Blathwayt Papers	Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, John D. Rockefeller Jr. Library (Williamsburg, VA, USA): MS 1946.2 William Blathwayt Papers 1680-1700. https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/

Le Diable Volant

Roving in Troubled Waters: The Fairy Tale of Alonso Ramírez as an Alternative Narrative to Dampier's *New Voyage*?

by **Raynald Laprise**

In June 1690, a short adventure story was printed in Mexico with the authorization of the Count of Galve, the then viceroy of New Spain. Entitled *Infortunios que Alonso Ramirez, natural de la ciudad de S. Juan de Puerto Rico, padeció*,[1] it recounts the vicissitudes of a Spanish Creole captured in the Philippines by English pirates who kept him prisoner for about two years. This pamphlet, which was signed by Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora, a cosmographer and mathematician as well as a man of letters, remains problematic in many respects, more than a century after its rediscovery.[2] Over the past twenty years or so, at least three scholars have established that it was not a simple picaresque novel, as was initially believed, but rather an adventure story with a historical basis.[3] However, the work is filled with so many lies and half-truths that the conclusions of these experts are equal to the adventures of their subject: many hypotheses, sometimes even far-fetched or totally improbable, and yet lacking any certainty. The problem here lies above all in the historian's work, which was done partially in all cases and, sad to say, often very poorly done, and paired with insufficient understanding of the sources consulted, the whole often results in erroneous interpretations.[4] I do not intend here to correct all the errors of my predecessors, but rather to set out the facts regarding the English pirates with whom, as it now seems accepted, Ramírez was able to travel in the Asiatic seas, and to compare them with what the Spaniard told about them. By undertaking this task, I hope to lay new (and better) foundations for the future study of his "Misfortunes". In any case, studying Ramírez will remain particularly challenging as, historically speaking, his narrative is of little significance in the present situation, unless one considers it as a political pamphlet.

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[1] *Infortunios que Alonso Ramirez, natural de la Ciudad de S. Juan de Puerto Rico, padeció, assi en poder de Ingleses Piratas que lo apresaron en las Islas Philipinas, como navegando por si solo, y sin derrota, hasta varar en la Costa de Iucatan, consiguiendo por este medio dar vuelta al Mundo, descrivelos D. Carlos de Siguenca y Gorgona, Cosmographo, y Cathedratico de Mathematicas del Rey N. Señor en la Academia Mexicana* (Mexico: Estate of the widow of Bernardo Calderón, 1690), 42 fol. There are three known copies of this narrative. They are respectively held by the Hispanic Society of America Library (class number unavailable), by the University of Texas Library, Benson Latin American Collection (GZ 040 OP7), and by the Cornell University Library (F2161 .S57 1690a).

[2] Pedro Vindel (ed.), *Colección de Libros Raros y Curiosos que traten de America, tomo XX*: *Infortunios de Alonso Ramirez descríbelos D. Carlos de Sigüenza y Góngora; Relación de la America Septentrional por el P. Luis Hennepin* (Madrid, 1902), p. 17-132. For the purposes of this study, I have used this first "modern" re-edition.

[3] Each of the three following scholars (one historian and two philologists) has written his own critical edition of the *Infortunios*: Fabio López Lázaro (ed.), *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez: The True Adventures of a Spanish American with 17th Century Pirates* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 240 p.; José Francisco Buscaglia-Salgado (ed.), *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (Madrid: Polifemo, 2011), 256 p.; Antonio Lorente Medina (ed.), *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (Madrid, Iberoamericana-Vervuert, 2017), 150 p. Over the past decades, the *Infortunios* have been the subject of other critical editions as well as numerous papers and articles, but only these three works are relevant for the purposes of the present study.

[4] None of the three Ramírez specialists listed in the preceding note are exempted from it. The most blameworthy is undoubtedly López Lázaro, the only professional historian of the three, who was too prompt to confirm his revisionist thesis that William Dampier was the main torturer of Ramírez. To support his statements, he extensively relied on the documents making up AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60, albeit with a highly selective, if not frankly erroneous, reading. Despite the favorable reviews that his book has received, certain scholars have already observed that many of the hypotheses he proposes would not stand up to meticulous scrutiny. For further information on this topic, I refer the reader to F. Andrew Smith and Sue Paul, "More Light on Thomas Gullock's Ambitions for Trade with Borneo at the End of the Seventeenth Century and on the Man Himself," *Borneo Research Bulletin*, vol. 49 (2018), p. 35-52. To be fair to López Lazaro, he is the sole Ramírez expert who has attempted to contextualize the adventures of his subject, albeit with limited success. The works of his two philological colleagues suffer from other defects. Thus, even if Buscaglia provides additional evidence regarding the existence of Ramírez, his book is as much riddled with errors of interpretation as it is tinged with anti-English revisionism. As to Lorente Medina, he does not bring much new, since he often relies on the other two to draw his own conclusions, which, however, remain more sober than those of his colleagues.

Nonetheless it is evident that Alonso Ramírez did indeed exist, as substantiated by the Viceroy of New Spain's private correspondence, contemporary with the return of this great traveler in spite of himself to Spanish territory. Three months before Ramírez's arrival in Mexico, the Count de Galve had indeed already been informed of the broad outlines of the misadventures of the Puerto Rican Creole, whose frigate had been wrecked on the north-east coast of Yucatan at the end of the previous year. Reporting in substance the information he had just received from the governor of this province, he wrote that the castaway had commanded a king's frigate in the Philippines with a crew of 25 men, which had been taken off Manila by two English vessels three years earlier. These pirates made several prizes on the Portuguese before directing their course towards the Bay of Bengal, and from there to Madagascar. Departing from this island, they had rounded the Cape of Good Hope in order to cross the Atlantic. Upon their arrival in Brazil, they had released Ramírez and seven other Spanish subjects and gave them back the frigate on which they had been captured, enabling them to sail to Puerto Rico. However, due to their fear of encountering other English ships at sea, the eight men decided to go to Yucatan.[5] The viceroy was so impressed by this story that he entrusted Sigüenza with the responsibility of editing Ramírez's account shortly after the latter's arrival in Mexico. The decision to print the final text was primarily a political gesture. The Count of Galve intended, in fact, to distribute most of the copies of the *Infortunios* to his family's friends and allies in Spain. To this end, he sent 20 to his older brother, the Duke of Infantado, and another one personally to the Marquis of Los Vélez, the president of the Council of the Indies.[6]

Beyond the summary that the viceroy provided to his brother, what does the *Infortunios* have to say about the English pirates who captured Ramírez and his companions? According to the Spaniard, there were 150 of them, divided into two ships with twenty guns each. Commanded by captains named Bell[7] and Donkin, these pirates passed into the South Sea (the name given to the Pacific Ocean at the time) through the Strait of Le Maire. Having been unable to plunder the Spaniards on the coasts of Chile and Peru because of bad weather, they had crossed the great ocean. After a stopover in the Marianas, they entered the South China Sea via the far north of Luzon, the main Philippine island. There they had plundered some small vessels manned by Filipino Indians and Chinese before arriving at Mariveles, which marks the mouth of Manila Bay to the north-west. It was there that Captains Bell and Donkin boarded a frigate coming back from the province of Ilocos with provisions for the garrison of Cavite, a neighboring port of Manila. Governor General of the Philippines and President of the Royal Audience of Manila Gabriel de Curucelaegui had entrusted her command to Ramírez, who specifies that this event occurred on March 4, 1687, the only date he gives in his whole account before relating his arrival in Mérida de Yucatan 32 months later. The pirates went with this prize to the Capones Islands, where they set ashore the majority of the Filipino Indians who had belonged to a small junk they had captured the previous day. Taking Ramírez's frigate and her entire crew with them, they then headed towards Pulo Condore, a small archipelago off the coast of Cambodia. They remained there for four months, spending most of the time careening their two ships. After burning Ramírez's frigate, they set sail again, and in the same area, they took four other ships. They were in order: a sampan (a sort of small junk) with a pepper cargo, a ship carrying a Siamese ambassador to Manila, the third one, Portuguese, coming from Macau mainly laden with silk, and the last one, a second Portuguese ship with another ambassador, this time sent by the Viceroy of Goa to the King of Siam. The first of

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[5] AHNOB OSUNA/CT.55/D.11/2, letter of the Count of Galve to the Duke of Infantado, Mexico, 27 January 1690; cited in López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 5-6.

[6] AHNOB OSUNA/CT.55/D.61, letter of the Count of Galve to the Duke of the Infantado, Mexico, 1 July 1690; transcribed verbatim in Fabio López Lázaro, "La mentira histórica de un pirata caribeño: el descubrimiento del trasfondo histórico de los Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez (1690)," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos*, 64, 2 (July-December 2007), p. 87-104. It is not for me here to determine what the political motivations of the viceroy were. This would be irrelevant, considering the already ambitious objective of this text. I therefore refer the reader to what López Lazaro, Lorente Medina and Buscaglia tell in their respective works about that matter. For a further study of the *Infortunios*' historical context, see also the excellent thesis of Leonor M. Taiano Campoverde, *Entre mecenazgo y piratería. Una re-contextualización histórica e ideológica de Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, PhD thesis, UiT Norges Artiske Universitet, 2013 [online] https://hdl.handle.net/10037/5766 (accessed 10 February 2024).

[7] In the original, the name is written "Bel". I have chosen here to anglicize the spelling.

these prizes was sent adrift to the coast of Cambodia, where the crew was also left. As for the three others, they were burned, and their sailors and passengers disembarked on Pulau Ubi, along with eight of Ramirez's men. From there, the pirates passed through the Riau Archiepalgo. They first stopped at Pulau Siantan in order to deal with the locals for supplies. Pursuing their course towards Borneo, they did the same at Pulau Tambelan, then reached Sukadana, a seaport on the west coast of the big island. Under pretext of trading, they plundered the place and got their hands on a large quantity of diamonds. When they reached Pulau Tioman, off the coast of the Sultanate of Johor, in Malaysia, they released the notables of Sukadana whom they had taken prisoner. Afterward, they headed towards the coast of Bengal, and at a place that is difficult to locate, they took two large Moorish ships that they burned after having plundered them. Without knowing which course they followed, they would then have returned to the part of the South China Sea that is bounded by the Malay Peninsula, Sumatra and Borneo. Descrying four vessels there, which they presumed to be Dutch pursuing them, they went to water on Pulau Aur, south-east of Tioman, then resolved to leave these waters by the Strait of Singapore. There, they made a last prize, a frigate laden with rice, which they brought away with them and which they would keep almost until the end of their voyage. Twenty-five days after departing the strait, they saw an island, but believing it was inhabited by the Portuguese, they did not stop there. Instead, they pushed on to New Holland (present-day Australia), which they reached with their two ships and their rice-prize after more than three months of navigation. They remained there for an additional four months, before setting sail for the great island of Saint Lawrence, another name for Madagascar at the time. Upon reaching their destination, they dealt with the inhabitants of a port on this island, which is not specified. Shortly thereafter, an English interloper joined them, and the pirates bought wine and brandy from him. Captain Bell would have liked to seize this vessel, but the English merchant who commanded her was vigilant enough to prevent any such attempt. From Madagascar, Bell and Donkin, still accompanied by their rice-prize, set sail for Brazil, a journey that lasted four and a half months. Two weeks after reaching the other side of the Atlantic, at a river Ramírez assumes to be the Amazon, the pirates gave him and seven of his former men their rice-prize, so they could reach some Spanish colony. After a passage through the Lesser and Greater Antilles, Ramírez wrecked his frigate somewhere on the coast of Bacalar, in the northeastern part of the Yucatan Peninsula. It took several weeks of difficult travel by land before the author reached Mérida, the capital of this province, on December 8, 1689.

These are the adventures of the English pirates with whom Ramírez claims to have sailed for about two years. We will already note some differences with the initial report the Count of Galve wrote to his brother Infantado. Besides this, his *Infortunios* contains details, although they are considerably exaggerated, regarding the brutality and cruelty of Captains Bell and Donkin and their men. Indeed, in almost all the inhabited areas where these pirates made a stopover, they would have slaughtered the local populations, namely on Pulo Condore, Siantan and Tambelan islands, and finally in Sukadana, and not satisfied with sinking and burning captured ships, they would also have, on occasion, killed the crews. There were also the humiliations and tortures that Ramírez claims to have suffered from his captors. However, some English pirates would have shown him compassion, namely a master gunner whom he calls Nicpat, as well as one Dick, who was Captain Bell's quartermaster, and even the latter's associate, Captain Donkin. Among these pirates, there was also a Spaniard, who had renounced Catholicism and was particularly nasty towards Ramírez. This renegade, a native of Seville named Miguel, is a main character in his story, and that is why I will return to him later.

Let's say it from the outset: there was no privateer or pirate captain named Bell or Donkin who sailed in the Asiatic Seas in 1687 and 1688, at least together. However, some elements of the *Infortunios* have led historians to conclude, perhaps a little too quickly, that Ramírez was held captive aboard a ship called *The Cygnet*, and less certain, aboard another, *The Good Hope*, a ketch that formerly belonged to the East India Company, whose respective crews actually, and independently (an essential detail), committed some piracies in Asia during the course of these two years. It was the date of Tuesday March 4, 1687, that put historians on the trail of the *Cygnet*,

aboard which the famous Dampier[8] was then traveling. Indeed, this privateer ship, which was returning from plundering the Spaniards on the Pacific coasts of the Americas, seized two Spanish ships (a sampan and a small royal frigate named *Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu*) on this very day in the vicinity of Manila Bay, although under circumstances slightly different from those described by Ramírez. The fact that the *Cygnet* then went to Pulo Condore, that she made a few prizes there, and above all, that she later came to New Holland (Australia) before ending her journey in Madagascar, all of which appeared to be ample evidence indicating that Ramírez had been a prisoner aboard this ship. However, most part of the *Infortunios* did not agree with what Dampier and contemporary Spanish documents report about this ship's voyage. Even today, these problematic elements still do not agree, as I will demonstrate and confirm here in the light of unpublished sources relating to the *Cygnet*, mainly from the archives of the Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (hereinafter "VOC"), the powerful chartered company holding the Dutch trade monopoly in all of Asia[9]. So, is it possible that Ramirez had also traveled aboard a second pirate ship? This is another hypothesis that also seems to be corroborated by the Spaniard's account. For this particular scenario, the only possible candidate appears to be the *Good Hope*, a ketch whose crew turned pirates in Bengal in May 1687. Similar to those of Ramírez and the *Cygnet*'s, this other gang of sea rovers, although much less numerous, had prowled from Pulo Condore before going to cruise in the South China Sea, between Malaysia, Sumatra and Borneo. It appears also that they stopped at Sukadana, and their captain, at least at the end of their voyage, was one Duncan Macintosh. And incidentally, this mariner's first name is a perfect phonetic homonym of that of Captain Donkin, one of the two *Infortunios* pirate leaders. Moreover, about a third of *Good Hope*'s men had arrived in the Asiatic Pacific in 1685 as members of the company of one John Eaton, under circumstances similar to those of Ramírez's pirates. However, here again, a close analysis of the available sources will demonstrate that, although it remains much more likely that Ramírez found himself aboard this other ship rather than aboard the *Cygnet*, his *Infortunios* contains so many inconsistencies, or rather lies, that it is very difficult to settle the question definitively.

The Privateering Trade

Before focusing on the pirates who allegedly served as models for those of the *Infortunios*, it is appropriate to determine what was then meant by the word "pirates", or rather "privateers", as these men, at least those of *Cygnet*, called themselves, and even the representatives of the British Crown had used to call them until then. This preliminary question is necessary to understand the exact nature of this trade in its "American" context, transposed here into an Asiatic one. Scholars who have studied Ramírez have failed to properly understand this context, and therefore they have come to confuse this activity with Anglo-American piracy of the early 18th century. Certainly, the latter shares several characteristics with the former, of which it is, in some way, the heir. However, it is taking a very great historical shortcut, without providing all the necessary nuances, to qualify these men as plain pirates or rather "outlaws at sea" because, for instance, they did not own written permission (commonly known as commissions, but also styled "letters of reprisals" or "letters of marque") to prey on shipping as well as to perform land raids, or because such a license

[8] William Dampier (1651-1715) was a privateer in the Americas for a few months in 1676, and then almost continuously from 1679 to 1688, without ever holding a position of authority. A decade later, he made a voyage of exploration to Australia in command of a Royal Navy ship (1699-1701). In the War of the Spanish Succession, he returned to the South Sea twice, first as commander in chief of an English privateering expedition against the Spaniards (1703-1707), and then as chief pilot of a second one (1708-1711), completing his second and third world circumnavigations on these occasions. He is best known for writing four books combining travel narratives and observations relating to natural sciences and navigation. During his lifetime, these works were immensely successful, and today, they are still important historical references on many subjects. In this study, I will use his first two books, especially *A New Voyage Round the World* (London: James Knapton, 1697), as well as the only known preliminary version of this book, annotated by Dampier himself and preserved under BL Sloane MS 3236, 233 fol., and to a lesser extent, *Voyages and Descriptions Vol. II. in three Parts* (London: James Knapton, 1699).

[9] These Dutch records are essential for any researcher studying the history of Europeans in Asia in the 17th and 18th centuries.

was of doubtful validity. The reality was much more complex.[10]

Jamaica, for about fifteen years after its conquest by the English in 1655, was the main center of the privateering practiced in the Americas against the Spanish. The origins of this particular form of piracy dated back to the failed diplomatic negotiations between France and Spain following the Treaty of the Cateau-Cambrésis (1559). To mark the part of the world where the French would be forbidden from sailing, trading, exploring and settling, the Spaniards wanted to impose on them demarcation lines similar to those established by the papal bulls separating between Spain and Portugal the possession of new lands discovered and to be discovered.[11] The French then turned this principle to their advantage to justify their attacks in the Americas against Spanish shipping and territories in peacetime, and this as long as they would be denied freedom of navigation and trade on the other side of the Atlantic. They were soon imitated by the English, then by the Dutch, and the adventurers of these three nations were thus able to seek their fortune, whether through smuggling or piracy, at their own risk beyond the so-called "Lines of Friendships and Alliances", either south of the Tropic of Cancer and west of the meridian passing through the Canary Island of Hierro, and from the 1620s, they even did so from the colonies that they founded in the Americas.[12] In European diplomacy, it came to be agreed that the upholding or not of this trans-Atlantic piracy in peacetime was linked to the recognition by Spain of the other States' right to trade freely in the Americas and to occupy territories there.[13] These things therefore had to be settled by treaty, as did successively the United Provinces of the Netherlands (1648), England (1670), and France (1684). However, it was not as simple for England. The particular treaty concluded in Madrid for settling the affairs in the Americas, signed by both nations in July 1670, encountered great difficulties in application. Thus, although the King of England forbade his subjects from engaging in any act of hostilities against the Spanish in the Americas, the Jamaican privateers continued to prosper for at least another decade. This situation can be explained by several factors.

First, there was a sort of symbiosis at this level between Jamaica and its French neighbor, the colony of Saint-Domingue, where a formal ban on privateering against the Spanish in peacetime came only into effect about fifteen years later. Several Jamaican captains subsequently embarked on maritimes expeditions under French commissions granted by the governor of Saint-Domingue. In return, these renegades and the authentic French privateers found in Jamaica all the things necessary to fit their ships at fair prices, men to complete their crews, and finally a good market to sell their prizes.[14] In order to end this practice, a law was passed by the Assembly of Jamaica in 1677, prohibiting any resident of the island from serving any foreign Prince or State on pain of death. However, its enforcement depended on the politics of the moment, whether it was in the context of a conflict between the governor and his constituents, or it was necessary to demonstrate

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[10] At the time, privateering was considered a legal form of piracy, provided that those who practiced it should be licensed to do so by a lawful authority, and they followed certain rules. However, it is not enough to say that a "privateer" was a kind of legal pirate, since depending on the context, the situation was not that simple, especially in the West Indies or Americas, as we will see below. Furthermore, the term "privateer" was a relatively new one in English, coined around 1650. On these topics, see Nicholas A. M. Rodger, "The Law and Language of Private Naval Warfare", *The Mariner's Mirror*, 100, no. 1 (February 2014), p. 5–16.

[11] *Archivo documental español, Tomo I: Negociaciones con Francia, 1559-1560* (Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 1950), p. 37-38.

[12] All this is very well explained in the contemporaneous study of Thomas Le Fèvre, sieur de Grand-Hamel, *Discours sommaire de la navigation et du commerce, jugements et pratique d'iceux* (Rouen: Julien Courant, 1650), p. 42-43, 59, 64, 88, 97-100, 183-186.

[13] See, among other sources, *The Right Honourable the Earl of Arlington's letters* (London: Thomas Bennet, 1701), vol. I, p. 395, and vol. II, p. 48.

[14] In this regard, the documents produced and the witnesses heard before the Council of Jamaica in August 1676 in the case opposing Governor John, Lord Vaughan to his deputy Morgan and the latter's brother-in-law, are particularly instructive: TNA CO/140/3/fol. 474-511, *An exemplification of all the proceedings upon the citation of Sir Henry Morgan and Robert Byndlos, esquire*.

to the Spaniards that the English did not encourage these pirates.[15] The fact that some governors of Jamaica ordered the privateers who lacked his protection to be hunted down, or that they had some of them tried and executed did not deceive anyone, especially not the Spaniards.[16] However, the root of the issue was elsewhere. If England was relatively conciliatory towards these privateers, it was primarily due to the fact that, notwithstanding the 1670 treaty, the Spaniards still seized English ships, here because one was transporting goods from the Spanish colonies, and there simply because another was sailing too close to their coasts or ports. It is important to note here that the Spanish gave a fairly broad definition to the concept of piracy with regard to their American possessions. This is how the English who cut logwood in uninhabited territories of the Yucatan peninsula, which were undoubtedly owned by the King of Spain, were treated like pirates. The same was true for the Jamaican vessels that did a little smuggling throughout the West Indies, with the French, the Dutch, and especially the Spanish. Even crews fishing for turtles in the Caymans or in the South Keys of Cuba were not safe from being seized for this reason.[17] However, there was a constant apprehension that, in the event that these logwood cutters, traders and fishermen, many of whom were former privateers, were unable to carry out these legitimate activities, they would engage in war against the Spaniards, and this is indeed what often happened.[18] Thus, after the Spanish had destroyed, in 1680, during a vast punitive operation, all the logwood cutters' camps in the Bay of Campeche and on that side of Yucatán overlooking the Gulf of Honduras (present-day Belize),[19] several of the English who avoided capture or who later managed to make their escape joined the French in the infamous raid against the great port of Veracruz three years later.[20] On the other hand, the Spanish were not entirely wrong when they equated logwood cutting with privateering. Under the guise of carrying out the first of these two activities, the Jamaican authorities had allowed former privateers, who were more or less reliable men, to go to sea again, and this with full knowledge of the facts. All this demonstrated great hypocrisy from the governor of Jamaica, who, together with his political allies, financially benefited from the plunder of these sea rovers.[21] However, in the same year 1680, a few hundred Jamaican privateers, undoubtedly overestimating the support they had in the colony, went much too far: they crossed the Isthmus of Panama by land and undertook to attack the Spaniards in the South Sea.[22] This action strengthened the influence of those in England who were determined to break this circle of violence that was harming trade. Hence, among other reasons, the appointment of Sir Thomas Lynch as governor of Jamaica, who did much to attempt to eradicate privateers, who from then on sought refuge in the Bahamas, in Carolina, in Virginia and even in New England, and, if

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[15] TNA CO/1/41/no. 48, letter of Peter Beckford to Secretary of State Sir Joseph Williamson, Jamaica, 1/11 August 1677. Although the assembly of an English colony appears to be replica of the House of Commons, the laws that it passed, once sanctioned by the governor, were not permanent and unless authorized by the king, they had to be renewed periodically. This was the case in 1681 and 1683 with this particular law that even had to be revised because it did not comply with English law. For a general background, see the "Case of the Constitution of the Island of Jamaica," in T. B. Howell, *A Complete Collection of State Trials* (London: Longman et al., 1816), vol. VI, p. 1350-1401.

[16] AGI INDIFERENTE/2578/petition of Benito Rodríguez, Tolu, 24 April 1682.

[17] Spanish aggressions against Englishmen who were not privateers, committed after the Treaty of Madrid, lasted for two decades until both nations became allies against France during the Nine Years' War. If we consider all the acts of hostilities committed before this peace, it amounts to nearly half a century of continuous Spanish violence against the English in the Americas.

[18] Longleat House CO/VOL. LXXV/fol. 279-280, letter of Governor Earl of Carlisle to Secretary of State Henry Coventry, Saint Jago de la Vega, 26 January/5 February 1679.

[19] TNA CO/1/47/no. 95, narrative of Jonas Clough and annexed depositions; and AGI MEXICO/52/N.10A, *Testimonio de autos y diligencias tocantes a las dos fragatas que apresó el capitán Pedro de Castro*.

[20] On this subject, see in particular some depositions in AGI PATRONATO/243/R.2/(2), *Testimonio a la letra del cuaderno de la sumaria de la causa que se fulminó contra Don Luiz Bartholome de Córdova, corregidor que fue de la ciudad de la Nueva Veracruz*; as well as Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), part. II, p. 126.

[21] BL Add MS 12429, depositions exhibited by Samuel Long in his case against the Earl of Carlisle, transcribed in *Interesting Tracts relating to the Island of Jamaica* (St. Jago de la Vega: Lewis, Lunan & Jones, 1800), p. 150-167.

[22] BL Sloane MS 2724, fol. 213-214, draft answers of the Earl of Carlisle to the memoirs of the Spanish ambassador, 1680.

not, in foreign colonies.[23]

From the above, mainly because of this kind of political vagueness maintained for a decade and more, we understand better why Dampier and others like him sincerely believed that privateering against the Spanish in the Americas was, in some way or another, lawful, or at very least that they did not run the risk of being hanged for exercising it.[24] Furthermore, there was always the possibility that their nation would once again engage in war against Spain. This was highly plausible during the early 1680s, when anti-Catholic sentiment in England was particularly virulent, not only against the French but also against the Spanish. As proof, when a handful of South Sea privateers arrived clandestinely in England in 1682, they were almost hailed as national heroes during the trial for piracy that their chief Bartholomew Sharpe and two other members of their company had to undergo at the instance of the Spanish ambassador.[25] In the following years, the adventures extracted from logbooks and narratives written by some of them, were even published, and they enjoyed great success.[26] Perhaps a sign that a change in mentality was nevertheless taking place: one of these former privateers whose journal was published, Basil Ringrose, understood that the true interest of going into the South Sea would not be in plundering the Spanish there, but rather in trading with them. At last, he even convinced a group of prominent London merchants to undertake such a venture, and as a result, the *Cygnet* was dispatched to that part of the world.[27]

From Merchant to Pirate: the *Cygnet* Odyssey

The merchants who invested in the venture as proposed by Ringrose were seven in total. Sir John Buckworth was chief among them.[28] He had extensive experience in trade with the Ottoman Empire, and since 1672, he was even deputy governor of the Levant Company. He had also held the same functions for the Royal African Company, under the Duke of York, brother and heir presumptive of King Charles II, who was its titular governor. He was also a key member of a group of London merchants who were supporters of the King, and had just been appointed as one of the aldermen of the London council following the revocation of the city's charter.[29] Therefore, it was

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[23] To find out more on this subject, see Raynald Laprise, "Fake news chez les flibustiers," *Le Diable Volant* [online] https://diable-volant.github.io/flibuste/blog/GdF2019-fakenews.pdf (accessed 10 February 2024). What I write above about Jamaican privateering comes largely from this text.

[24] This is also why, in this study, I consider these terms "privateers" and "pirates" to be interchangeable. Moreover, in the final version of that law passed by the Assembly of Jamaica to prevent hostilities against the Spanish, these two words are synonymous. For its full text, see *The Laws of Jamaica passed by the Assembly, and confirmed by His Majesty in Council, Feb. 23. 1683* (London: Charles Harper, 1683), p. 46-54. In fact, on the English side, there were no real distinctions between words such as "freebooter", "privateer" or "sea-rover", all of them being used to designate a pirate. For an example, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 10714, Cape of Good Hope daily register, 26 April 1687. In addition, I also avoid the term "buccaneers", which Jamaican privateers considered an insult. It comes from the French "*boucaniers*", and before becoming synonymous with "pirates" in English colonies, it designated for a long time the inhabitants of the western part of Saint-Domingue, mostly French people who lived from hunting wild cattle for their hides and planting tobacco, and who were rebels against all forms of authority. It was only in the 1680s that this word also and gradually took on the meaning of "pirate" in English.

[25] AGI INDIFERENTE/2578/*Deducción de lo que ha pasado en el proceso de los piratas que se determinó en Londres, sábado 20 de junio 1682*.

[26] A comprehensive list of these journals (originals, handwritten copies, and printed versions) is given in Derek Howse and Norman J. W. Thrower, *A Buccaneer's Atlas: Basil Ringrose's South Sea waggoner* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 267-268.

[27] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 51r.

[28] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter in Dutch of Charles Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, 16/26 February 1687.

[29] About Buckworth, see in particular Alfred P. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London Temp. Henry III - 1912* (London: The Corporation of the City of London, 1908), vol. II, p. 109-110; and John Roger Woodhead, *The Rulers of London 1660-1689: A Biographical Record of the Aldermen and Common Councilmen of the City of London* (London: London & Middlesex Archaeological Society, 1965), p. 41.

quite easy for Buckworth and his associates to obtain all the necessary authorizations, both from the King himself and from his brother the Duke of York, for this trading (rather smuggling) venture with the Spanish in the South Sea.[30] For the purpose of the voyage, they had acquired an old ship, formerly called *The Little England*, which had recently been rebuilt, and which they renamed *The Cygnet*. Approximately £5,000 worth of various goods were loaded onto board, including arms, ammunition, fabrics, hardware, lead and iron. A crew of 36 men was recruited to navigate her, and her command was given to one Charles Swan,[31] a merchant captain with extensive experience in the Jamaican trade.[32] Furthermore, the true destination of the *Cygnet* had to remain secret in order to avoid protests from the Spanish ambassador. Officially, the ship was going to Jamaica. On board, except for her captain and Ringrose, who was the chief merchant or supercargo of the expedition, only the latter's two colleagues, the merchants John Hartop (the younger brother of one of the investors) and George Smith (an experienced trader in Canary Islands who was to be the main Spanish interpreter), were likely aware that they were going to the South Sea, and among the sea officers, perhaps Captain Josiah Teat, chief or first mate of Swan, whom he would have succeeded as ship's commander in the event of death or incapacity. The rest of the crew learned of this on November 12, 1683, two weeks after their departure from London, after noticing that they had gone too far south of the Canaries to go to the West Indies.[33] While the *Cygnet* was sailing towards the Straits of Magellan, through which she was to enter the South Sea, news of her voyage had also crossed the Atlantic. In Jamaica, many people were already aware of this. Indeed, when it was later learned that a privateer of Saint-Domingue had found aboard a Spanish vessel letters from Peru stating that two foreign ships were in the South Sea, the governor of Jamaica remarked that they might be Captain Swan and his... consort.[34] But to which consort was this official referring? Indeed, it is certain from the logbook of the second mate of the *Cygnet*, Francis Nelly, that this ship traveled alone from the Canary Islands to the Straits of Magellan.[35] Apparently, this so-called consort, at least this other English captain who went to the South Sea about the same time, was a mariner named Eaton.[36]

In the Straits of Magellan, in February 1684, the *Cygnet* had actually encountered another English ship commanded by John Eaton, who had left England a few months before her for the same destination, but with much less peaceful intentions. In fact, Eaton attempted to convince Swan to

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[30] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter of Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, 16/26 February 1687. These authorizations, either a passport or a let-pass, or both, do not appear to have survived. Apart from what Swan, the captain of the *Cygnet*, himself says in the above letter, the little we know about these documents comes from Dampier. Indeed, the latter writes in his manuscript (BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 85v) that Swan had an order from his shipowners, who themselves had received it from the King, to the effect that no violence should be committed against the Spaniards, but that none should be suffered from them. In his book, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 192, he corrects himself by saying that this order was from the Duke of York, and was directed to Swan himself.

[31] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 46v.

[32] For examples of his travels to Jamaica, see Longleat House CO/VOL. LXXIV/fol. 142-143, letter of Governor Lord Vaughan to Secretary of State Henry Coventry, Jamaica, 12/22 December 1675, and *idem*/VOL. LXXV/fol. 334, letter of Governor Earl of Carlisle to the same, Saint Jago de la Vega, 24 September/4 October 1679. For another to the same destination, coupled with a slave trade in West Africa, see TNA T/70/1216/p. 1-14, logbook of the *Carlisle*, Captain Charles Swan, September 1680 to September 1681. Previously, Swan has briefly been commander of a small Jamaican privateer in Henry Morgan's fleet during the Panama Expedition in 1670. On this last point, see among others TNA CO/1/26/no. 51, report of Admiral Morgan, Jamaica, 20/30 April 1671.

[33] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Francis Nelly's logbook, translated from English into Dutch (reference p. 527). For the attribution of authorship of this sea journal (which is otherwise with no author's name in the Dutch archives) to Nelly, who served as Swan's second mate on the *Cygnet*, see Andrew F. Smith and Raynald Laprise, "Thomas Gullock's arrival in the East Indies," *Borneo Research Bulletin*, vol. 50 (2019), p. 25-31. In addition, the reader should be aware that I have converted all the English dates given in this study according to the old Julian calendar (Old Style dating) into the Gregorian calendar (New Style dating), then used by almost all European nations, except in the notes wherein I use dual dating for English documents.

[34] ViWC Blathwayt Papers/XXIV/5/letter of Governor Sir Thomas Lynch to William Blathwayt, Jamaica, 2/12 June 1684.

[35] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook. We also know this from other sources, including Dampier, and various Spanish documents.

[36] TNA CO/1/57/no. 56, letter of Lieutenant Governor Hender Molesworth to the Secretary of State Earl of Sunderland, Jamaica, 15/25 March 1685.

join forces with him in order to make hostilities against the Spanish in the South Sea. However, they were separated by a storm that happened as they were leaving the strait. Otherwise, Swan would not have been able to resist being enrolled against his will in Eaton's scheme for long, given that the latter had three times as many men as he did. The *Cygnet* nevertheless lost eight or nine of her crew who remained with Eaton, and therefore, Swan arrived in Valdivia, in Chile, in April, with barely 25 men. According to the proposal Ringrose had made to their shipowners, this was the first port where they were to endeavor to trade with the Spanish, but the attempt turned into a tragedy. The launch carrying Ringrose and the two other merchants of the *Cygnet* fell into an ambush set up by the Spanish governor, resulting in the deaths of two English sailors and the injury of several others. Following this incident, Swan had to go at the neighboring island of Mocha, where he traded with Indians for food supply. According to Dampier, he then began to repent of having accepted the command of this venture, and he held Ringrose personally responsible for having made it appear in England that trading in Valdivia would be easy, although he had never been there himself.[37]

After a stopover at the uninhabited islands of Juan-Fernández, the *Cygnet* set sail for Costa Rica. Swan was to make his second attempt at trading in this province, specifically at Nicoya, a poor Indian village, still according to Ringrose's proposals. Here again, things did not go as planned. Upon his arrival in August 1684, instead of Indians, Swan had to deal with a hundred English privateers, embarked in three small vessels captured from the Spanish. These men, led by one Peter Harris, came from Jamaica. Five weeks earlier, they had entered the South Sea through the lands of Darien, in the Isthmus of Panama, with the help of the Indians of this country, who had just revolted against the Spaniards for the second time in four years. Harris first considered proposing to Swan that he rent the *Cygnet* in order to pursue his piracies. Having, however, been advised by some crew members of that ship that their captain would refuse, he proceeded with more subtlety without harming the rights of the eminent owners of the *Cygnet*, as well as those of the King and his brother in this venture. There were now only 25 men aboard the ship, and barely half of them were experienced sailors. The Valdivia affair had frightened many of them, as it showed them how real the possibility of being captured or even killed by the Spanish was. None of them wanted to end up like those men of Sir John Narborough, who had fallen into their hands some fifteen years earlier during the previous secretive English voyage in the South Sea, and who were never heard from again. They would be much safer among these Jamaican privateers, who were experienced men of war and had proven to be successful, as evidenced by their booty. In fact, the lure of profit played no lesser role than fear in convincing the *Cygnet*'s sailors: Harris and his men owned a large quantity of gold powder from their looting of the mining camp of Santa María and a Spanish ship anchored in the Darien River. Deserted by most of his men, and being pressed by his principal officers, namely his mates Teat and Nelly, Swan had to resign himself to joining forces with Harris and his men, but he did it on the express condition of being their captain to all. That way, he retained control of his ship. This association also promised to be highly profitable for Swan and his sponsors because Ringrose and his two fellow merchants sold guns, powder, lead, black velvet caps, serges, silks, ribbons and knives to Harris' men for gold powder. On the other hand, Swan's first enterprise as a privateer captain was less successful: having wanted to seize the town of Nicoya, he was forced to return to his ship due to the great resistance from both the Spaniards and the Indians. The subsequent capture of a Spanish vessel, followed by

[37] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook (especially p. 538-556); and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter of Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, February 16/26, 1687. See also Dampier's summary of these events extracted out from both Swan's and Teat's own logbooks that he was able to consult, in BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 47v-53r. Touching the encounter with Eaton, see also AGI LIMA/85/declaration of Crisanto Martín, Callao, 13 April 1685, and other sources I will cite a little further in the present study. For a Spanish version of the Valdivia affair, see AGI LIMA/85/*Noticias ciertas del enemigo que entró en esta mar del Sur*, attached to the letter of the Viceroy of Peru to the Duke of Medinaceli, dated 4 September 1684.

the sack of the village of Manta, in Peru, swiftly erased this initial disappointment.[38]

In October 1684, at the island of La Plata, Swan met with a second company of privateers with whom he had to associate. It was that of the *Bachelors Delight*, Captain Edward Davis, who had came to this sea rounding Tierra del Fuego, and then counting Dampier among its members. Their association lasted for almost a year. Swan thus became vice-admiral of a fleet that numbered up to ten vessels, almost all Spanish prizes, and carried a thousand men or so, both French and English, most of them having come by the Darien akin to Harris and his men.[39] News soon reached Jamaica that the merchant captain was one of the chief leaders of the "South Sea pirates" as these men began to be called.[40] But Swan was not going to let such noise spread without justifying his actions. In the spring of 1685, when he and Davis were in the Bay of Panama, at the time several gangs of privateers were coming down to join them via the Darien, he took advantage of this opportunity to send, by the Indians, to the other side of Panama, in the Caribbean Sea, a rather moving and very sincere letter addressed to one of his friends in England.[41] A few months later, this letter came into the hand of his main shipowner Buckworth, and the Duke of York, who had since become king under the name of James II, even asked for a copy.[42] There is no doubt that Swan played the rogue against his will. He and his merchants, when they were able, even informed their Spanish prisoners that they had been forced to do so.[43] Did Swan do more than that? For some privateers, he would have made them miss the taking of several Spanish places, but this was put down to Swan's bad behavior, and some did not hesitate to say that their vice-admiral did it by cowardice.[44] It was probably exaggerated. Indeed, Swan considered himself, or he had convinced himself, to be in his right because of the Valdivia incident. So, when Captain François Groniet, the chief commander of the French privateers who had all come by the lands of Darien, offered him and Davis a copy of his commission to wage war against the Spanish, he refused. He argued that the instructions he had received from the late King and the Duke of York authorized him to revenge himself, by right of reprisals, for the affront suffered at Valdivia.[45]

In September 1685, after the taking of the city of León and the town of Realejo, in Nicaragua, Swan broke off his association with Davis, who wanted to return to Peru, while he and another captain named Francis Townley wanted to continue their exploration of the coastline further to the north-west. Dampier left Davis on this occasion to embark himself with Swan. Even if he did not seem completely tired of the privateer trade yet, he wanted above all to perfect his nautical knowledge of this part of the Americas, from Guatemala to California, which was unknown to him

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[38] For these events, see among other sources NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook (particularly p. 556-560, 501-509, in this order because the pages of this journal were mixed and then numbered out of order); *idem*/p. 451-469, incomplete narrative of his comrade Kerril Roffey, also only available in Dutch translation; BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 53v-62v; AGI LIMA/85/*Declaraciones de diferentes prisioneros, hecha en Guayaquil, en que está Don Gabriel Gómez de Guzman, cabo del barco luengo que apresaron los 100 piratas que entraron por el Darién*, Guayaquil, December 1684; NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter of Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, 16/26 February 1687; and Huntington Library, mssBL 327, deposition of Richard Arnold, Jamaica, 4/14 August 1686.

[39] For an overview of Swan's activities as a privateer from his association with Harris' company until March 1686 when he undertook to cross the Pacific, the best sources remain BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 46v-94v, 119r-174v; and Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 137-278. What that these narratives contain is all confirmed by contemporaneous Spanish documents.

[40] ViWC Blathwayt Papers/XXV/6/letter of Lieutenant Governor Hender Molesworth to William Blathwayt, Jamaïque, 27 April/7 May 1685.

[41] TNA CO/1/57/no. 69, letter of Charles Swan to Captain John Wise, Panama road, 4/14 March 1685.

[42] TNA SP/31/5/fol. 16, letter addressed to Sir John Buckworth, dated Windsor, 18/28 August 1685.

[43] AGI PANAMA/96/*Declaración de unos prisioneros que tuvo el enemigo en la ciudad de León, provincia de Nicaragua, en que expresen la fuerza con se hallan los piratas, sus embarcaciones y designios*, September 1685.

[44] Huntington Library, mssBL 327, deposition of Richard Arnold, Jamaica, 4/14 August 1686.

[45] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 85v; and Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 191-192.

as well as to all these privateers.[46] Swan, for his part, intended to plunder towns not far inland, as this region of New Spain was reputed to be rich in gold mines. As for his partner Townley, he was only interested in capturing the Manila galleon, which ensured the trade link between New Spain and the Philippines.[47] Things did not go as planned, and in January 1686, in the Bay of Banderas, the two captains separated. While Townley and his men were returning to Nicaragua, Swan remained on the coasts of New Biscay and New Galicia with 200 men, divided between the *Cygnet* and a small Spanish bark. However, the following month, after taking the town of Sentispac for food supplies, he lost a quarter of his men, including Ringrose, who, while returning to the ships, were ambushed by the Spaniards and slaughtered until the last. This incident discouraged many, but Swan then proposed to the 150 men who remained under his command to cross the Pacific in the hope of seizing the famous Manila galleon among the Philippines. However, their captain was not intending to keep this promise and pursue this piratical way of life in that other part of the world. He had repeatedly assured Dampier, who was now a member of his intimate circle, that upon their arrival in the East Indies, he would find the opportunity to return to England with his ship without engaging in any further hostilities.[48]

Departing from Cape Corrientes on April 10, 1686, the *Cygnet* and her bark began their journey across the Pacific. After 41 days of navigation, both ships arrived in Guam, in the Mariana archipelago, not without their crews having much suffered from hunger. There, Swan was able to purchase food supplies from the Spanish, as Eaton had done the previous year, which we will see later. These transactions, which were generally cordial, were facilitated by the capture of a Jesuit who came to visit the *Cygnet*, believing she was the patache of the Manila galleon from Acapulco. In fact, this Jesuit was held as a hostage by the privateers throughout their stay. He and other Guam residents informed them that they would find more supplies in Mindanao, whose inhabitants were Muslims. Since the western monsoon was due to begin soon, and that they had to winter in some port anyway, the privateers resolved to go there. They were further encouraged in this design as the same Spanish sources told them that the inhabitants of Mindanao, especially those of the Sultanate of Maguindanao, were at war with the Spaniards, a claim that ultimately proved to be untrue. Now, since the privateers then seemed reluctant to continue their piracies without any commission, they believed that the sultan of Maguindanao would authorize them to capture Spanish vessels heading to Manila and make Mindanao their port of call. Swan was not opposed to this plan, since it did not thwart his own, which consisted of reaching some East India Company factory. The *Cygnet* was the first of their two ships to drop anchor there on July 28, 1686; she was followed a few days later by her bark, commanded by Captain Teat. The privateers were very well received by Sultan Barahaman who allowed them to stay in his country until the monsoon was ended. This friendly reception had been facilitated by the passage, a few months earlier, of the very first English merchant ship, commanded by William Goodlad, to ever come to Maguindanao to trade, and this at the Sultan's own request.[49]

This stopover at the Simoay River, upstream of which was the capital of Maguindanao, lasted almost six months. Swan had to deal with Prince Kahar ud-Din Kuda, brother and principal minister of the Sultan and the most powerful man in the kingdom after him. For at least fifteen years, this prince held the highest military position in the sultanate, namely that of *kapitan laut*, literally "admiral of the fleet". He had been one of the contenders to succeed their father Kudarat and the

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[46] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 223-224; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 128v. For 17-century people, California meant what is now called Baja California, in Mexico.

[47] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 260-261.

[48] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 270-272, 276-278.

[49] For this part of their voyage, see Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 279-309, 346-360; NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook (reference p. 561-573); NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 179r-191r.

candidate favored by the Governor of the Philippines,[50] and when, later, the rumor circulated in Manila that his brother Sultan Barahaman had hoped to have him assassinated due to Kuda's refusal to break peace with Spain, Manilla officials were worried about losing such a valuable ally.[51] Swan undoubtedly overestimated his abilities to negotiate with this highly intelligent and subtle Muslim prince, who was accustomed to dealing with other Asiatic potentates as well as with the VOC officials in the Moluccas and the Spaniards in the Philippines. He realized, too late, that what mainly interested his host was to make him spend all the gold that he and his merchants had amassed by dealing with Harris' privateers in the South Sea, even if that meant forcing the Englishman to remain in the sultanate until there was nothing left. In hindsight, several privateers even accused Prince Kuda, the "General" as they styled him, of deliberately showing them an anchorage, situated upstream of the Simoay River, swarming with shipworms to winter their two vessels, with the clear intent of preventing their departure. In fact, their bark did not resist this wintering, and she was so worm-eaten that she had to be scuttled, and the *Cygnet* only escaped the same fate thanks to her sheathed bottom. Besides this, there was some jealousy between those of the company who had the means (in other words, who had gold) to live on land with the locals, and those who did not. Therefore, the richest ones, a little less than a third of the company, were well housed and fed by interested hosts, who also prostituted their female servants to them. This minority of people were obviously not in a hurry to leave, unlike the penniless who, tired of doing nothing, wished to depart from this country as soon as possible. Lastly, the attitude of Swan himself displeased many. In fact, in Mindanao, he proved himself to be a lesser cautious commander than he had been before, and too obsequious towards the people or Moros of Maguindanao, especially towards Prince Kuda.[52]

Now, all the elements were in place for a revolt, with only the pretext missing. The curiosity of a young privateer from Bristol provided this pretext. Upon secretly perusing his captain's logbook to compare it with his own, he discovered on that Swan had written therein very harsh comments towards some members of their company,[53] especially against those who had complained the most about the lack of food during the crossing of the Pacific up to the Marianas.[54] Dampier does not specify what these very hard words were, but they consisted of having his crew arrested and tried as pirates in the first English port where they would come in. This was what the ringleaders of the malcontents, namely John Damarell, Thomas Crawford, John Oliver, John Read and Henry Moore, told to the merchant John Hartop and the newly appointed chief mate Nelly, who were sent on board by their captain on January 24, 1687 after the latter had seen the day before, the *Cygnet* setting sail without his authorization, then coming back and dropping anchor in front of the river's mouth.[55] According to Dampier, Captain Teat was very glad with the turn events were taking, and he even encouraged the malcontents in their resolution to dismiss their captain. At that time, he felt great resentment towards Swan. Indeed, at the end of December, after the *Cygnet* had been brought back from the river to the road, Swan had ordered Teat be whipped, tied to a coconut tree, for no apparent reason, or at the very least to show their hosts, particularly the general (Prince Kuda, brother of the Sultan), all the authority he had over his men. Dampier only adds that Swan

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[50] AGI FILIPINAS/10/R.1/N.7, letter of Governor Manuel de León to the King of Spain, Manilla, 15 June 1671, and AGI FILIPINAS/331/L.7/fol. 23v-24r, 83r-84r, order and decree of the King of Spain, 6 September 1672 and 25 July 1674.

[51] AGI FILIPINAS/14/R.2/N.15A, letter of Judge Alonso de Abella Fuertes to the King of Spain, Manilla, 20 June 1690.

[52] For this stopover, see Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 356, 365, 369-374, 444-445; BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 189v-197r; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 497-575, Nelly's logbook (reference p. 572-573). Swan's long stay in Maguindanao until his murder there in January 1689 deserves a separate study. Certainly, this subject was treated in the work of Ruurdje Laarhoven, *Triumph of Moro Diplomacy: The Maguindanao Sultanate in the 17th Century* (Quezon City: New Day Publishers, 1989), 267 p. Unfortunately, this author was so mixed up in interpreting the numerous reports relating to the *Cygnet* preserved in the VOC archives, particularly on dates, that it is impossible to trust her work.

[53] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 371-372.

[54] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 197.

[55] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 371-373; BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 197r-199r; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 497-575, Nelly's logbook (reference p. 574).

punished Teat, as well as other of their comrades, in that manner to take revenge on them. But what was their captain seeking revenge for, and above all, what exactly did he blame these men for?[56] Swan himself indirectly provides the answer to these questions when he writes that after their arrival at Maguindanao, he was informed that Teat had twice plotted against him to force him to associate with privateers. Thus, Teat would have facilitated the departure of the nine men from the *Cygnet* who had joined Eaton in the Strait of Magellan, and next, and this was much more serious, he would have acted similarly while meeting with Harris and his men at Nicoya, this time allowing the whole crew to visit the privateers. Regardless of the authenticity of these revelations, made by an anonymous informant, Swan held Teat accountable for his misfortunes, which is why he had dismissed him as chief mate in favor of Nelly.[57] Officially, he had him beaten, as Dampier reports, undoubtedly for a peccadillo having no connection with what he considered him guilty of. Indeed, a Dutchman who was one of the malcontents later claims that the chief mate of their ship was beaten on their captain's orders because he had secretly bought the small boat on which a dozen of them wanted to reach the English trading post that was falsely believed to be established in Borneo.[58] Swan was persuaded that Teat was the chief malcontent, and that he had succeeded him as the captain of the *Cygnet*.[59] It was not Teat, however, who was elected captain, but one John Read, of Jamaica, a former logwood cutter and a seasoned privateer. Teat was nevertheless appointed master of the ship, that is to say he was in charge of her navigation, which was a promotion since he had previously only been Swan's second in the capacity of his first or chief mate.[60]

A First Link with the *Infortunios*?

According to various testimonies, 70 to 72 people were on board the *Cygnet* when she set sail from Maguindanao on January 24, 1687.[61] They intended to cruise off the port of Manila in order to seize some Spanish vessels. First, towards the western tip of Mindanao, they stopped briefly at Zamboanga, where a ruined Spanish fortress stood, in order to capture cattle, but they found only their tracks. From there, they headed north along the west coast of Mindanao, and upon arriving at a small sandy bay, they encountered two proas (a sort of outrigger boat going under sail), which were returning to the Sultanate of Jolo with a cargo of cloth loaded in Manila. According to Dampier, the privateers wanted to speak with them, but the Moro sailors who manned these two vessels stranded them on the coast and then took refuge ashore.[62] The incident took place near Quipít, a village on the western coast of Mindanao, opposite Bayagan Island. However, according to another version, these Moros of Jolo only had one boat, and the pirates, feigning friendship, attacked them in order to plunder them, killing one of them and wounding two others in the process.[63] Furthermore, the privateers captured one of these Moro sailors and kept him prisoner for

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[56] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 357, 364, 372; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 199.

[57] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter of Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, 16/26 February 1687.

[58] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688. This witness does not give the name of Teat. He only says that the officer thus punished was the chief mate of the *Cygnet*. About the design of these men to go to Borneo, see also Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 370-371; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 197r.

[59] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter of Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, February 16/26, 1687; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 581-582, Dutch translation of a letter of Ambrose Moody and Francis Brough to President-Governor Elihu Yale, Mindanao, 12/22 January 1689.

[60] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 380; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 199r. Usually, the officer commanding a vessel was both her master and captain, but particularly on warships or large merchant vessels, these two functions were often separated and occupied by two different individuals.

[61] NL-HaNA VOC/1437/fol. 198v-200v, 202v-205r, letter of Swan to the Governor of Moluccas, Mindanao, 16/26 February 1687, and declaration of Matthijs Abrahamszoon, Ternate, 16 March 1687.

[62] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 376-379; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 199v-200r.

[63] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 1v-3r, declarations of Juan Quijano and José de Figueroa, Cebú, 1 September 1687.

several months. After his release, this man declared that there were ten in total aboard the proa to which he belonged and that his nine companions, upon witnessing this attack, had all thrown themselves into the sea.[64] After this encounter, the privateers anchored in a bay on the west coast of Cebú Island. They stayed there for a week, while their carpenters razed the quarterdeck of the *Cygnet* to make her a better sailer. In this bay, they also encountered a proa carrying six Filipino Indians, from whom they were unable to learn anything because these men did not speak Spanish. They had better luck with four others who were sailing another proa, whom they seized on the north-west coast of Mindoro Island. However, if the latter understood the language, they were so shy that the privateers were unable to get any information from them. And so they continued their journey to Manila Bay, and even beyond.[65]

On March 5, 1687, in the southwestern part of Luzon, just north of Manila Bay, the new masters of the *Cygnet* made their only two prizes on the Spaniards. In the morning, after two hours of hunting her down, they first caught a bark coming from Manila and bound to Pangasinan, in the northern part of Luzon. They found nothing on board that might interest them, and they let her go. Later the same day, they seized a three-mast vessel of about 100 tons, with a crew of 25 men, which was heading in the opposite direction. She was commanded by an officer who had been boatswain of a galleon that, coming back from Acapulco to Manila, had stopped at Guam the previous year while the *Cygnet* was there. Moreover, she was loaded with 190 pieces of cotton canvas to make sails for the Manila galleon, but above all with rice intended for the subsistence of her crew during her stay in the Philippines. This is what Dampier tells.[66] According to one of his comrades, who corroborate the whole affair, but with lesser details, this second ship had so much rice on board that there would have been enough to reach England without going hungry![67]

Many Spanish testimonies allow us to identify these two ships correctly, better than Dampier does, even though the second one was actually laden with a large quantity of rice. However, they place these events on Tuesday March 4, 1687, while Dampier dates them from Wednesday February 23, but this is an "Old Style" English date according to the Julian calendar. When this Old Style date is converted into the Gregorian calendar, which was in use by nearly all European nations (including Spain), it corresponds to Wednesday March 5. This one-day difference is easily explained: in the Philippines, as well as in the Marianas, the Spaniards observed the same time calculation as in New Spain, unlike the Portuguese, Dutch, French and English living in Asia.[68] Now, according to this calendar particularity, it is on this date of March 4, 1687 that Ramírez places the capture of his frigate near Mariveles, on the outskirts of Manila Bay, by the pirates Bell and Donkin. However, it appears that the resemblance between his case and that of the *Cygnet* is solely restricted to this particular date. Before discussing this issue, it is essential to examine the facts.

The *Cygnet*'s first prize was not a bark, but a sampan, a kind of small junk. As Dampier asserts,

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[64] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 29v-31v, declaration of Asam, Manila, 3 February 1688. López Lázaro regards this man's testimony as crucial... in substantiating one of his theories that the frigate *Aránzazu* was not burned by the privateers at Pulo Condore, although the latter actually did it, as we shall see. However, this testimony is of no interest, other than to confirm what Dampier reports about the taking of this Jolo vessel. Indeed, Asam says nothing about the fate of the Spanish frigate, and an absence of testimony on a given event cannot constitute definitive evidence to invalidate or confirm this event. This is especially true here, as this witness was confined below deck during almost his entire captivity. Furthermore, he was ignorant of the Spanish language, and therefore unable to understand what his fellow prisoners and their captors told, and because of this, he had to testify through an interpreter once in Manila.

[65] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 379-383; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 200v-202v.

[66] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 383-384; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 203. There are some differences between the two versions. For example, the manuscript gives further details about the second prize. Also, as for the first prize, Dampier says here that she was going from Manila to Pangasinan, whereas in his printed book, it is the opposite, this second statement being incorrect. Furthermore, in his book, Dampier writes that these two ships were seized off the southwest coast of Luzon, 7 to 8 leagues from Manila, which is impossible as we will see a little further.

[67] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688. This witness also mentions the first prize without giving further details.

[68] On this subject, see Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 376-377, and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 233r. For a complete explanation of this phenomenon, see López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 33-34.

she did indeed come from Manila. She belonged to Captain Francisco de Alzaga, former alcalde mayor (or governor) of Pangasinan, and she brought to this province the family, servants and property of the latter's successor, Captain Alonso del Castillo. The privateers captured her among the Capones Islands, off the coast of the province of Zambales, and then plundered her. Finally, they sank her after having transported all of her crew and passengers, about fifty people, on board the *Cygnet*. The second prize was made later on the same day Tuesday, March 4, or Wednesday, March 5 depending on the calendar that is followed. She was a sloop belonging to the King of Spain, coming from the province of Ilocos (north to that of Pangasinan) and returning to Manila.[69] More precisely, she was a small frigate named *Nuestra Señora de Aránzazu*.[70] At the end of January, she had left Cavite, bound to Ilocos, under the command of one Captain Felipe Ferrer with a crew of 24 people, including 16 sailors and 8 boys. There, they were to take provisions and other necessities for the royal storehouses of the Cavite arsenal, as they actually did at the port of Curemas (present-day Currimao), where they loaded 2001 baskets of rice, about 2000 locally made cloths and a little cotton thread. Upon returning to Manila, on Tuesday, March 4 (or Wednesday, March 5), Ferrer was off the side of the largest island of the Capones overlooking the coast of Luzon when the wind calmed down. At about half past four in the afternoon, he saw the foreign ship, a frigate armed with 16 great guns and four bronze swivel guns. A boat came out of this frigate and headed towards the *Aránzazu.* One of the 30 men in the boat ordered the Spaniards to strike sail. Captain Ferrer told them to come in and to do it themselves. According to witnesses, a fight ensued and lasted for about three hours, during which time four privateers and two *Aránzazu* men were injured. In the end, Ferrer was forced to surrender as much because he was running out of ammunition as because the enemy, whose ship was now very close to his own, threatened to take him by boarding. When the pirates made themselves masters of the Spanish frigate, Ferrer and five of his mariners were transported on board the foreign-built frigate and questioned about the forces of Manila and Cavite. The following day, Wednesday, March 5 (or Thursday 6), the pirates set ashore on the main Capones island 52 prisoners, including 10 sailors and boys from Ferrer's crew, along with the majority of Filipino Indians who belonged to the sampan that had been sunk the previous day in the morning. Ferrer, nine of his sailors and five of his boys remained prisoners aboard the pirate ship, which set sail on Thursday 6 (or Friday 7), accompanied by the *Aránzazu*.[71] Captain Read and his men had resolved to bring this prize with them to the Pulo Condore archipelago, where they were to careen the *Cygnet*, in anticipation to returning to the Philippines in May in order to attempt the Manila galleon.[72] So, eleven privateers were assigned to the *Aránzazu* as a prize crew, and among them, Dampier was appointed to be her pilot.[73]

Despite the apparent resemblance between this act of piracy and the one Ramírez alleges to have been a victim of, there exist significant discrepancies between the two that raise doubts about his capture by Captain Read and his men. Firstly, it is highly unlikely that a man who commanded a vessel in the Philippines, and was supposed to possess knowledge of the navigation in these islands, could have made such a grave error regarding the location where his frigate was taken. Indeed, there is no doubt about it: in the beginning of March 1687, the *Cygnet* took the sampan belonging to Captain Alzaga, then the *Aránzazu* towards the Capones Islands, and not towards Mariveles a place located much further south on Luzon, forming the tip of the Baatan Peninsula and

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[69] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60A, fol. 1, letter of Bartolome Prieto y Córdoba to the Governor of Philippines, Bagac, 12 March 1687.

[70] That ship's name is only given in the second series of acts touching this affair, namely AGI PHILIPPINES/12/R.1/N.60C, *Testimonio a la letra de los autos del enemigo pirata en relación de las declaraciones recibidas a los prisioneros de la fragata del cargo del capitán Phelipe Ferrer que los echó dicho enemigo en las Islas de los Batanes, junto a Babuyanes*, Manila, April 30, 1688, 32 fol.

[71] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60A, fol. 2v-17r, declarations of Bartolome Luis, José Baltazar, Luis Angel, Miguel Flores and Antonio de Guevara, Manila, 13 March 1687. Despite some minor variations, these witnesses all say almost the same things.

[72] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 389.

[73] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 203v. According to Dampier, all their prisoners were on board the prize, which is unlikely, considering that they were about thirty from both the *Aránzazu* and Alzaga's sampan.

marking the western entrance to Manila Bay, where Ramírez alleges that his frigate was captured.[74] If Ramírez's story here is not pure fiction, then how can we explain this error, given that the initial reports that circulated in Asia regarding this affair clearly indicate that the *Aránzazu* and the sampan were taken among the Capones, and even to the north of this small archipelago in the case of the second vessel?[75]

The disparities with the historical account of the *Aránzazu*'s capture are even more evident when considering the quantity and quality of the pirates involved in the corresponding incident depicted in the *Infortunios*, namely 150 men in two ships commanded by Captains Bell and Donkin. Ramírez specialists have gone to great lengths to explicate these significant differences.[76] For instance, it was envisioned that Ramírez had assumed the identity of Captain Ferrer, the confabulator knowingly covering his tracks in telling anything.[77] The keystone of this theory, and other similar ones, is this assertion made by Dampier, as previously mentioned, that the Spaniard (Captain Ferrer) who commanded the rice prize (the *Aránzazu*) had previously served as the boatswain of that galleon returning to Manila that had called at Guam shortly before the *Cygnet* departed from that island.[78] Here is the first error of Dampier, or a lie from his interlocutor, depending on the point of view. Captain Ferrer had indeed served as a sea officer of a galleon, namely *El Santo Niño*, at least in 1684-1685, during a return voyage from Manila to Acapulco, although not in the capacity of boatswain. He was rather her "*contramaestre*",[79] which at the time, was the equivalent of the English "master's mate" or "chief mate", whereas the Spanish equivalent of "boatswain" was rather "*guardían*", although it could also be translated as "master's second mate".[80] But in retrospect, the more serious flaw in Dampier's statement comes from the fact that the galleon that the privateers had almost encountered in Guam was not the *Santo Niño*, but a different one named *Santa Rosa*.[81] It is still possible, however, that Ferrer may have served as an officer aboard this other galleon, which had indeed returned to the Philippines in July 1686, and to Manila itself the following October.[82] It's a nice theory, but it doesn't work out chronologically. In January 1686, Ferrer was in Manila, and presenting himself as someone with some expertise in military architecture, he proposed to enhance the fortifications of Cavite, where he was at the time residing, provided that it

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[74] In addition to the sources previously cited, see AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui to the King of Spain, Manila, 27 December 1687, with addendum of 22 May 1688. For a late confirmation, see AGI FILIPINAS/163/N.37/*Testimonio autentico de los autos hechos en conformidad de la Real Cédula de Su Majestad, en que se manda fenezca y determine conform a justicia la causa que el señor Don Gabriel de Curuzelaegui fulminó contra tres hombres que declararon haber andado en navíos de piratas*/fol. 12r-14v, declaration of the Augustinian friar Francisco Álvarez, Manila, 22 March 1698. This monk testifies that he was then on board the *Aránzazu*. This is a proof that there was at least one passenger on that frigate, which is not, however, mentioned in contemporaneous accounts of her capture.

[75] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688, [p. 1363-1367] declaration of Jan Dirksen, 6 January 1688. This is without counting the previously cited letter from the governor of the Philippines, as well as all the acts about the capture of *Aránzazu*.

[76] See in particular López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 34-46.

[77] Buscaglia, *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (2011), p. 144-145.

[78] Dampier, A *New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 384; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 203r.

[79] AGI FILIPINAS/33/N.2/D.88/fol. 1r-2r, act concerning the *media-anata* (an office tax) due by various officers for the year 1684, Manila, 8 October 1693. See also AGN-México Instituciones Coloniales/Indiferente Virreinal/Caja 1567/[Exp. 8/]fol. 1r-2r, bill of sale for two Mozambique slaves, drawn by Felipe Ferrer, "*contramaestre del galeón Santo Niño de Zebu*", Acapulco, 20 March 1685; transcribed in Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva (ed.), *Mexico, Slavery, Freedom: A Bilingual Documentary History, 1520–1829* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2024), p. 101-102.

[80] *The Spanish Rule of Trade to the West Indies: containing an account of the Casa de Contratacion... written in Spanish by D. Joseph de Veitia Linage... made English by Capt. John Stevens* (London: Samuel Crouch, 1702), p. 182-183. Compare with the Spanish original: José de Veitia Linaje, *Norte de la Contratacion de las Indias Occidentales* (Seville: Juan Francisco de Blas, 1672), p. 38.

[81] See in particular AGI FILIPINAS/13/R.1/N.9F, *Testimonio de los autos criminales sobre la venida del sargento mayor Don Damian de Esplana, gobernador de las Islas Marianas, a éstas sin licencia, dejando su gobierno a cargo del sargento mayor de aquella plaza.*

[82] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.50, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui to the King of Spain, Manila, 12 July 1686, with addendum of 3 December 1686.

would be given him the necessary workforce and materials.[83] The proposal was approved by the authorities, but the capture of its author by pirates put an end to the project.[84] Now, the alleged identity theft perpetrated by Ramírez at Ferrer's expense is founded on precisely these inconsistencies, namely between Dampier's account and contemporaneous Spanish sources pertaining to Ferrer and his service records, as well as the fundamental assumption that the latter had passed away. Without a source containing the names of *Santa Rosa* officers, among which that of Alonso Ramírez could be found, this is only a fine theory, at worst an unfounded supposition. It is more logical and comparatively much simpler to admit that Dampier misunderstood or did not recall accurately what Ferrer had declared to the *Cygnet* privateers during his captivity. Indeed, if Dampier understood Spanish, his knowledge of this language was overall limited, which he himself acknowledged elsewhere.[85]

Unfortunately, the *Infortunios* specialists did not stop here in distorting historical facts in order to give face to Ramírez's rantings. Much more worrying is the role they wanted to make Dampier play in the Spaniard's drama. One of them goes very strong in his assertions concerning the involvement of the Englishman, whom he equates with the fictitious Captain Bell. This is particularly surprising given that the evidence he presents on this matter in his preliminary study of Ramírez's account is itself comparatively weak.

First, his observation:

> "The archival evidence also demonstrates that the famous English pirate and naturalist William Dampier was in fact the man who took Ramírez captive near the Philippine Islands in 1687."[86]

Here is his conclusion:

> "Because Ramírez traveled with Dampier, one of the most famous English pirates of all time, their accounts can no longer be read separately. Ramírez's book offers important new insights into pirate history as well as regional histories. English scholars, for example, will find that their views of Dampier's activities need to be revised."[87]

Without going so far as to assimilate Dampier to Captain Bell, one of his scholarly colleagues also sees Ramírez's account as an alternative narrative to what Dampier reports in his first work, *A New Voyage Round the World*. At the same time, this other scholar dismantles the former privateer from the pedestal on which generations of English-speaking authors have placed him:

> "Then there is the unmasking of Dampier in the *Misfortunes* as a mutineer and pirate. Even though he is never mentioned by name, Ramírez's account makes it clear that the pirates were all members of a cohesive community of depraved and cruel men. Dampier generally escapes being characterized as a member of a band of murderers and rapists thanks to the fact that he documented the voyage in a book that contains very valuable intelligence and curious facts and lays claim to the first English landing on Australia. For that, he has always figured as a prominent name in British imperial mythology and its early nationalist imaginary."[88]

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[83] AGI FILIPINAS/13/R.1/N.2B/fol. 25v-28v.

[84] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui to the King of Spain, Manila, 27 December 1687, with addendum of 22 May 1688.

[85] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), part. I, p. 94.

[86] López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 7.

[87] *Idem*, p. 8.

[88] Buscaglia (ed.), *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (2011), p. 178; the quote is from the bilingual edition of the same work: Buscaglia (ed.), *Infortunios de Alonso Ramirez / The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (Rutgers University Press, 2018).

This is a piece of a fierce revisionism to say the least. Since the main interested party is no longer alive to do so, I will attempt to address the insult by answering the following questions. Were the *Cygnet* privateers, as a group, truly cruel men, rapists, murderers and mutineers? And incidentally, may these qualifiers be applied to Dampier himself?

Let's examine the charges of cruelty and inhumanity, which include rape. As in recent past, pirates were glorified for their supposedly "libertarian" spirit and their "pre-democratic" customs[89], today we are witnessing an opposite outcome, wherein they are only viewed through their darkest aspects. It is not a matter of idealizing piracy again, but rather of presenting the facts as they are, without even attempting to determine, in this instance, whether the activities of the *Cygnet* men, or other similar privateers, were legal or not. What is important is the perception that these men had of themselves and their activities, even more than that of their victims or their enemies. This matter has already been discussed: Dampier and his comrades were heirs to a long-standing tradition of piracy committed against the Spanish in the Americas, primarily in the Caribbean Sea. Those who practiced this piracy considered it to be part of the profession of arms, similar to serving in a royal army or navy, with the main difference that they did it at their own expense as well as at their own risks and perils, and in this perspective, they appear, and they considered themselves moreover, to be true war entrepreneurs. This is the reason why many of these pirates, or rather privateers as they were called, often referred to themselves as "gentlemen of fortune".

Now, it is important to consider the following premise. The study of human history leads to an almost constant and inevitable observation regarding the profession of arms, regardless whether or not it is exercised with the approval of a lawful authority: it is an essentially violent profession, even in wars that may appear to us to be the most just, despite all the legal guidelines that may be associated with warfare. This inherent violence generates its share of atrocities, cruelties, various abuses as tortures and rapes and other crimes that, in any civil society, are generally condemned and harshly punished, yet can be justified, if not encouraged, during times of war.[90] Therefore, privateers and pirates were neither worse nor better than their contemporaries, or ours, serving in national armies or in mercenary troops. So yes, they committed all kinds of "crimes", but in varying degrees. Some were therefore, either individually or collectively, more violent than others. So, did the *Cygnet* privateers, including Dampier, belong to the category of the most barbaric? Were they really a gang of cruel and debauched men? Were they murderers and rapists?

During the South Sea expeditions, aside from the fairly common torture sessions to which prisoners were subjected in order to obtain intelligence and to set ransoms, there was no inconsiderate violence on the part of the privateers,[91] except for one single instance. The incident occurred during the second half of 1686, in the Bay of Amapala. Not content with raping some women, French privateers disfigured them and cut off their breasts, before leaving them for dead on desert islands. Captain Groniet, their commander-in-chief, was unable to stop them.[92] In living memory, the Spanish had never seen such barbarity in this part of the Americas.[93] These atrocities

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[89] Especially following the works of the American activist Marcus Rediker.

[90] Without enumerating all the armed conflicts of the last hundred years wherein this violence was perpetrated despite international treaties and conventions, it will suffice to mention the current Russo-Ukrainian war. Even more recently, in October 2023, the attack by the Hamas against Kibbutz Re'im was accompany by numerous acts of rare barbarity. This incident, which was the starting point of a real war between the State of Israel and this terrorist group, bears a striking resemblance to historical massacres, such as that of Saint-Barthélémy in France in 1572, during the religious wars between Catholics and Protestants, or the worst episodes of the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) in Germany.

[91] For examples, see AGI LIMA/85/declaration of Antonio de Rodea, Puira, 28 October 1684; and AGI PANAMA/159/fol. 66r-86v, declaration of Juan de Molina, Trujillo, 13 May 1686. It is worth noting that torture was institutionalized in matters of criminal justice in 17th-century European nations, with the notable exception of England, as part of the inquisitorial procedure. Moreover, in wartime, national armies and mercenaries applied it for the same reasons as privateers did in the West Indies.

[92] Huntington Library, mssHM 58286, *Extrait du journal de Me Charles, Dieppois, flibustier, sur son voyage dans la mer du Sud*.

[93] AGI PANAMA/99/letter of President Pedro de Pontefranca to the King of Spain, Panama, 16 August 1687.

left such an impression on people that the story was still being told twenty years later.[94] The men of Davis or Swan did nothing comparable. Although Dampier cites two cases of gratuitous violence while he was traveling under the orders of the latter captain, the perpetrators were among those for whom he had little or no respect and whom he styled "bloody-minded fellows", that is to say, bloodthirsty men who also stood out by their lack of professionalism when it came to fighting. In the first case, the victim, an Indian who did not know Spanish, was killed solely due to his inability to answer to the inquiries of those who had seized him. In the second case, a Spanish Mulatto, who had been abducted in Salagua, was murdered aboard the ship, without knowing for what reason or who had given the order.[95] He could have added what appears to be the sole instance of gratuitous violence committed by the *Cygnet* men in Asia: they threw a Chinese captain overboard, bound hand and foot, under circumstances that we will examine in due course.[96]

Regarding the mutiny, it is imperative to consider that the men of the *Cygnet* were not hired sailors, but rather a group of individuals (or "private men of war" as we can literally style them) who had rented a ship from the representative of her owners, in order to wage war against the Spaniards, and who also chose this representative, Swan, to command them. This is what the *Cygnet* charter party or rather agreement indicates.[97] Considering themselves wronged by Swan's procrastination, which resulted in the loss of opportunities for taking ships and consequently potential profits, a majority of dissatisfied privateers unilaterally breached the agreement they had made with the chief they had chosen, as was customary in the West Indies.[98] It nevertheless appears that the privateers did not want to break all links with the *Cygnet*'s owners in England. Just before leaving Maguindanao, the ringleaders of this so-called mutiny attempted to uphold this particular connection by offering to one of the owners' brother, namely the merchant Hartop, to command them, but the latter refused, out of respect for Swan.[99] Therefore, strictly speaking, or even legally, it was not a question of mutiny, at best perhaps a hypothetic theft of a ship by former partners. However, for the sake of argument, let us still consider the accusation of mutiny with regard to Dampier. We should remember that the latter was not a supporter, much less one of the ringleaders, of this "mutiny". He had been on board the *Cygnet* at the wrong time. He had wanted to accompany a former comrade of the *Delight*, Surgeon Mate Harman Coppinger, who was himself lured there under false pretense. The malcontents, who had no one among them to care for the wounded or sick, then refused to let Coppinger go again. Similarly, his comrade Dampier was forbidden from returning ashore due to the lack of competent pilots.[100] It was in this sole capacity of pilot that he was entrusted with the task of bringing the *Aránzazu*, as previously mentioned, to Pulo Condore, and so the true command of this prize would have been given to another officer. In fact, the new masters of the *Cygnet*, the Damarell, Crawford, Oliver, Read, Moore and Teat, had no confidence in Dampier, whose talents they could certainly appreciate, but who had been one of

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[94] William Funnell, *A Voyage Round the Word, containing an Account of Captain Dampier's Expedition into the South-Seas in the Ship* St George*, in the Years 1703 and 1704* (London: James Knapton, 1707), p. 108.

[95] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 141v, 157r. This comes from marginal notes by Dampier in his manuscript, and this information was not retained for the final version of his book. Additionally, a Spaniard mentioned that three of his fellow prisoners, two Mulatos and one Indian, were killed on Captain Swan's order in February 1686, after the slaughter of 50 privateers near Sentispac. These three men were accused of not informing their captors about the forces that the Spaniards could raise in this province. About this affair, see AGN-México Inquisición/ Vol. 526/[Exp. 5/]fol. 259r-267v, voluntary statement of Uriarte, Mexico, 9 and 10 March 1693.

[96] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2300r-2301v, narrative of two Chinese sailors, Amoy, 12 November 1687.

[97] NL-HaNA/VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 495-496, Dutch translation of the charter-party between Captain Charles Swan and the former company of Captain Peter Harris, 5/15 August 1684.

[98] For a relatively contemporaneous example, although less drastic, see Raveneau de Lussan, *Journal du voyage fait à la mer du Sud avec les flibustiers de l'Amérique en 1684 et années suivantes* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste Coignard, 1689), p. 28-29.

[99] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 199. These privateers, most of them having formerly belonged to Captain Harris' company, had still then a true concern as for the property of the *Cygnet*, especially since the shipowners were very important people in England, and furthermore because their venture had been backed by the late King Charles and the new one. However, that will be another matter later.

[100] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 373-374, 402; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 198v-199r.

their former captain's intimates.[101] Even when Dampier was allowed by Captain Read to leave the ship at the Nicobar Islands the following year, Damarell and Teat initially expressed opposition to it, presumably based on the belief that this man could divulge information that would be detrimental to them if he reached an English trading post in India. Previously, during their stopover in Australia, Dampier had also been threatened with being marooned in that desolate country, if he continued to raise doubt among their comrades regarding the relevance of their voyage.[102] Ultimately, Chief Mate Nelly, who visited the malcontents on the very day of their departure from Maguindanao, cleared Dampier of this accusation of "mutiny", without however naming him. In fact, he confirms that some of the men then on board the ship were worried about the turn events were taking, and they wanted to return to shore, but that the chief malcontents opposed their departure.[103]

Certainly, Dampier adapted to the circumstances once compelled to remain aboard. Although he demonstrated pragmatism, he remained firmly resolved to leave that company at the first opportunity, but in accordance with the rules, that is to say after having obtained leave from his captain. There was no point in doing otherwise, as Coppinger's failed escape on Pulo Condore showed him.[104] Finally, between two evils, this one was no worse than remaining without means under the yoke of the "Mohammedins" in Mindanao.[105] And considering what happened to Swan and those who were left with him in Maguindanao, it seems that chance or fortune worked out well for Dampier. Did he not write in one of his manuscripts, although retroactively, just before telling the story of the *Aránzazu*'s capture, while they were in the vicinity of Manila Bay:

> "Our business there was to get some of those rich commodities, and therefore we cruised off the city for ships either bound in or out, by which means I had the opportunity to take a draft of the land, for seeing I could not as yet get from amongst those that at present I was with, I made the best use of my time to improve my knowledge in those parts that, if ever it should please God to release me from this course of life, I might be able to give a relation of my travels to my countrymen, which may in time conduce to the profit of my Nation, the only thing that I aimed at."[106]

However, in his *New Voyage*, there is nothing of the sort, but revealing his feelings shortly after leaving the *Cygnet*, during another terrible storm that he and his two comrades had to face and that he almost foresaw as a sign of redemption, he acknowledged:

> "...I made very sad reflections on my former life, and looked back with horror and detestation on actions which before I disliked but now I trembled at the remembrance of. I had long before this repented me of that roving course of life but never with such concern as now."[107]

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[101] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 203v. It is from this confidence of Dampier, to the effect that he had to pilot this prize in the South China Sea, that López Lázaro infers that he is the cruel Captain Bell of the *Infortunios*.

[102] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 469, 486; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 226v-227v.

[103] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook (reference p. 574). The master of a Dutch sloop who was in Maguindanao at the time of the *Cygnet*'s departure, drew up an approximate list of the 113 men then belonging or having belonged to her company, based on information provided by five former privateers who accompanied him to Ternate. Dampier's name appears in 8th place in this list, before all the ringleaders (Damarell being in 10th, Read in 13th, Crawford in 15th, Oliver in 21st, and Moore in 42nd), with the exception of Teat, who is in 2nd place in his former capacity as chief mate. See NL-HaNA VOC/1437/fol. 200v-202r, list of the *Cygnet*'s crew, February 1687. Considering Dampier's position in this list and the names preceding and following his own, it is possible that he was one of the ship's officers. He could therefore have succeeded Nelly as second mate when the latter was promoted to chief mate in the room of Teat, but this remains unlikely, because he himself does not write anywhere that he held any official position on board. In any case, based on his position, he was assuredly one of the main company members, or at the very least one of the best known.

[104] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 402.

[105] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 199r. This reference is absent from his *New Voyage*.

[106] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 202v-203r.

[107] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 497.

Despite all of this, given that we have, so to speak, no other evidence than his own words, should we question Dampier's honesty or sincerity? This question brings up another one from which the former is almost inseparable and to which it is much easier to provide an answer. What level of credibility should be given to his writings, especially considering the events in which he participated or witnessed? For the purposes of this study, it is specifically his *New Voyage* and the sole preliminary manuscript version of this book that has survived. Regarding the events or sequences of events reported in these texts, spanning the period of 1680-1688, they are largely confirmed by contemporaneous Spanish, French, English and Dutch records, and the present study provides many instances of this. Nothing like that with the *Infortunios*, a collection of lies and incoherent rumors that some people would like to portray as an alternative to Dampier's work! Clearly, we will have to look for something else to demonize the latter than to confront him with a patent liar.[108]

Little Piracies in South China Sea

After having reconnoitred Pulo Zapata, close to Cambodia's coast,[109] the *Cygnet* and her prize *Aránzazu* arrived on March 23 at Pulo Condore, the largest island of the archipelago of the same name, about 20 leagues from Cambodia River (the Mekong). A few days later, the privateers found a suitable harbor to careen their ship, and they stopped there.[110] On the same day, they also descried a sail. Captain Read, with 20 men in the *Cygnet*'s two boats, went to hunt her down, and about noon, they came alongside a 500-ton junk, but her sides were so high that Read and his people were unable to board her. A few days later, the same two boats were more successful in capturing a small junk from Champa bound for Malacca with a rice cargo, despite the presence of 30 well-armed mariners. These men were landed on a key, while their captain was transported aboard the *Cygnet*, but the following day, when the privateers went to see them, they fled far inland. The captain of the junk then asked for permission to search for them, which Read granted, but he too fled once ashore.[111] These were apparently the sole warlike actions undertaken by the privateers throughout the entire month they were careening the *Cygnet*. In the interim, they traded fruit, pork and turtle with the inhabitants of the island for rice with which their prize was laden. These islanders were of Cochinchinese origin, and according to an old custom of their native country, they prostituted their wives and daughters to those of these foreigners who wanted women and who could afford to pay for them. Before his departure, Captain Read had the majority of the rice from his prize loaded aboard the Cygnet, and subsequently abandoned her as a wreck on the island. This is what Dampier says.[112] In the following year, former sailors from the *Aránzazu* testified in Manila that the Spanish frigate was actually burned. This is especially likely because on this occasion, the privateers left Captain Ferrer and 18 other of their prisoners on the largest Pulo Condore island, which would have been enough people to man the frigate if she had still been seaworthy. However, the privateers retained with them nine other men from this prize and Alzaga's

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[108] Unfortunately, our times don't care about this. Any historical figure of European origin from the last six centuries, in other words since the so-called "Age of Discovery", especially if he is an Englishman, is now suspected of having contributed to the inequalities of yesterday and today between peoples, as well as racism through slavery. Thus, it is to be feared that Dampier's literary production will no longer be studied for what it is, but rather to explain the origins of some of these inequalities. For a recent example, see Liz Conor, "'I write for my Countrymen': William Dampier and the birth of a racist trope," *Overland*, August 23, 2023 [online] https://overland.org.au/2023/08/i-write-for-my-countrymen-william-dampier-and-the-birth-of-a-racist-trope/ (accessed 10 February 2024).

[109] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

[110] Dampier, A *New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 389, 397; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 203v-204r. This archipelago (now called Côn Đảo, in Vietnam) was then a part of Cambodia, which is why Dampier asserts that it lies on the coast of this kingdom. The main island, where the privateers anchored, is today known as Côn Son in Vietnamese.

[111] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 204.

[112] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p.394-395, 397-398.

sampan.[113]

After that, the privateers returned to the north side of the island, where the *Cygnet* had first anchored upon their arrival. At this location, Captain Read hired a Cochinchinese mariner to act as his coastal pilot in the Bay of Siam (present-day Gulf of Thailand). This man had boasted of possessing knowledge of certain islands where fishermen would be capable of providing the foreigners with salted fish, and the latter had consented to travel to those islands, as they were currently dependant solely on rice for sustenance. Finally, on May 1, the *Cygnet* set sail from Pulo Condore bound for the Bay of Siam.[114] The following day, the privateers arrived at Pulo Ubi, which is situated about 40 leagues west of Pulo Condore and the main island of the small archipelago of the same name (present-day Hon Khoai, in Vietnam). They boarded two small barks at the anchorage, both of which coming from Cambodia with a cargo of rice.[115] They then proceeded towards the Bay of Siam, and upon their arrival, they headed towards the islands identified by their Cochinchinese pilot. But the latter caused the *Cygnet* to run aground, without however damaging her. After refloating their ship, the privateers went down to these islands but found only a poor fishing village.[116] The Spanish prisoners present aboard the *Cygnet* at that time confirm these events, and they also highlight what appears to be the genuine cause for this brief voyage in the Bay of Siam. In fact, the privateers hoped to capture a ship that they had learned was supposed to be there. The running aground of the *Cygnet* ended this design, and for this reason, after the ship was refloated, the privateers had set their sights on a coastal village, where one man was captured and taken away by them.[117]

After this unsuccessful expedition, the *Cygnet* returned to Pulo Ubi. On the eastern side of the island, the privateers discovered two small vessels laden with rice and lacquer. One of them came from the Cambodia River and was bound for Malacca, but it appears that due to the presence of the other vessel, they did not attempt to attack them. Indeed, the forty men who formed the crew of this second ship were all well-equipped with swords, curtanas, spears, and a few guns, and like those people with whom they had previously encountered difficulties in Pulo Condore, they were Malay mariners from Champa who had no fear whatsoever.[118] Also, due to a storm, the *Cygnet* was forced to remain in Pulo Ubi for a longer duration than expected. The day following their departure, the privateers sighted another sail, which they gave chase to. They took her the next day, June 2, 1687. She was a 300-ton junk, coming from Palembang with a cargo of pepper and bound for the Bay of Siam, where her master did not want to enter because of bad weather.[119] Now, the capture of this junk is important when we analyze the exploits of the imaginary pirates of the *Infortunios*. Indeed, the latter also seized a junk with a pepper cargo, which was in fact a sampan, a type of small junk, as previously mentioned. This was the first of four ships they took at Pulo Condore or its environs. However, it is noteworthy that this marks the end of any resemblance with the prizes made by the *Cygnet* privateers in the same area. Furthermore, this junk can be identified thanks to the VOC archives, unlike the other ships seized by Captain Read and his men since their arrival in this part of the South China Sea.

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[113] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

[114] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 398-399; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 207r.

[115] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 399. It is only in his other book that he confirms the capture of these two ships: *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), part. I, p. 105.

[116] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 400. In his manuscript he remains silent about these events, saying that they did nothing worthy of mention. See BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 207.

[117] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

[118] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 400-401. He does not mention this encounter in his manuscript.

[119] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 401; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 207v.

As Dampier reports, this large junk came from Palembang, in the southeastern part of Sumatra. She had set sail from there on April 30, 1687, a month before her capture. Her captain or master, a Chinese named Limsinko, held a passport from the Governor General of the Dutch East Indies residing in Batavia, where he was also expected to return with the 2000 pikols of pepper he had loaded in Palembang. However, even before his departure, rumors had been circulating that his intention was to go instead to the Riau Archipelago, Aceh or even Siam, all places where the illicit pepper trade was very prosperous.[120] It was later known that Limsinko had even written to the chief of the Chinese nation in Batavia to inform him that he would not be able to return as intended, falsely arguing contrary winds, and that consequently he had asked him to be granted a new Dutch passport in order to travel to Malacca.[121] Thus, in contravention of the Dutch governor general's original leave, he had headed towards Siam in order to smuggle his pepper.[122] But passing through Pulo Condore, he had been boarded by English pirates. What happened next probably took place in the days following the return of these pirates to the island. The pirate captain then inquired of Limsinko if there was any money aboard, to which the latter replied no, protesting that if the English were to discover any, he could cut off his head. Unfortunately, while searching the junk, the pirates discovered 80 rijksdaalders (or Dutch dollars) in a chest belonging to him. The Chinese captain was then thrown overboard, and he drowned.[123] Moreover, it was claimed that the supercargo of the junk, with whom the pirates would have tied Limsinko up, would have shared the fate of his captain. Besides that money, the pirates only took out of the junk a little pepper, as well as calambac (agar-wood) and rattan, with which goods she was also laden.[124]

Before this incident, on their return to Pulo Condore with this junk, on June 3, the day after her capture, the privateers found a small Malay bark. Captain Read immediately sent a boat to reconnoiter her. However, contrary to the instructions he had received, Quartermaster Henry More, who commanded the boat, boarded the bark with his men. They were immediately attacked by about twenty well-armed Malays, who wounded five or six privateers with their knives on the spot and killed five others, including More himself. In order to avenge this affront, Captain Read went there with this same boat and another one, but as the English were coming, the Malay mariners scuttled their bark and fled ashore, where they could not be caught. Until their departure about ten days later, there were only two additional noteworthy events. First, the Cochinchinese pilot who had guided them so badly in the Bay of Siam was dismissed. Second, Coppinger, the newly appointed surgeon of the *Cygnet*, who had been compelled to follow the malcontents, sought refuge with a Cochinchinese family on Pulo Condore, but Read promptly had him brought back aboard.[125]

On June 14, the *Cygnet* set sail from Pulo Condore bound for Manila. The privateers brought along a Portuguese mestizo, a former crew member of the pepper junk, due to his proficiency in Asiatic countries and languages. In regards to the junk herself, Dampier writes in his book that her crew remained in Pulo Condore, awaiting for easterly winds to transport them to Siam.[126] In fact, the Chinese sailors had to initially refloat their vessel, which had been stranded on the main island by

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[120] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 354v-356r, letter of Willem Sabelaar and Ripperd Pelle to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies in Batavia, Palembang, 17 June 1687.

[121] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688, [p. 1397-1398] information dated 26 January 1688.

[122] NL-HaNA VOC/1432/fol. 14r-206v, letter of Governor General Johannes Camphuys and the Council of the Indies to the Council of XVII, Batavia, 13 March 1688.

[123] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688, [p. 1397-1398] information dated 26 January 1688.

[124] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2300r-2301v, narrative of two Chinese sailors, Amoy, 12 November 1687.

[125] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 401-402; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 207v-209r.

[126] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 404-405. According to his manuscript (BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 209v), they left two days earlier.

the privateers before they left. However, the favorable winds they had expected to bring them to Siam did not come. Rather, they headed towards Champa, where they sold their pepper to the Cochinchinese merchants who controlled trade in this small kingdom, which was landlocked between Cambodia and Cochinchina, and from there, they headed to Canton, where they arrived around mid-November.[127] Captain Ferrer and the 18 other prisoners, both from the *Aránzazu* and Alzaga's sampan, were left on Pulo Condore too, after the privateers had been kind enough to give them some clothes, tobacco and other things taken out from one of their last prizes.[128] Could these individuals have accompanied the Chinese aboard the junk of the late Limsinko? It is highly unlikely that this scenario would have occurred, as VOC agents and officers in Malacca and Canton would have reported the matter. Furthermore, the same sources do not mention that these pirates would have slaughtered the Cochinchinese people of Pulo Condore, as Captains Bell and Donkin's men of the *Infortunios* did. Once again, if such barbarity had been committed, it would have been known.[129]

After passing the shoals of Pulo Cecir (present-day Phú Quý), off the coast of Champa,[130] the privateers began crossing the South China Sea once more. After carefully skirting the dangerous Paracel Bank, they had to renounce their design of returning to the Philippines due to contrary winds. They wished instead to visit the Prata Islands, located almost equidistant from the coast of Canton, Formosa and Luzon. This was also a futile effort as the prevailing winds compelled them to go to the coast of Canton. They came to an anchor at a harbor on São João Island (present-day Shangchuan), situated west of Macau. They remained there for about a week, dealing with the Chinese for food supplies.[131] However, shortly before mid-July, upon departing the island, a severe storm arose, one of the most violent that the entire crew of the *Cygnet* had ever witnessed. When the weather calmed down, they resolved to go to the Pescadores Islands, otherwise called Penghu, situated off the coast of Formosa Island.[132]

Just after their departure from São João Island and after this storm, but before seeing the coast of Formosa, we should place the last prize of the *Cygnet* in the South China Sea. It is noteworthy that Dampier's writings do not mention the capture of this vessel. She was yet another Chinese junk from Batavia, this time bound for Japan, and she was captured off an unspecified place on the coast of Canton.[133] She had departed from Batavia about May last, laden with silks and other commodities for the Japan trade. This ship was hailed by the interpreter of the privateers, who was characterized as a half-breed from Banta, presumably the Portuguese mestizo who, according to Dampier, had been embarked at Pulo Condore. Read and his men plundered her of everything they considered valuable, and they are likely to have released her the same day as her capture. From

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[127] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688, [p. 1397-1398] information dated 26 January 1688. The first news brought to Canton about Limsinko were that the latter's junk had been burned in Pulo Condore and her crew was left on that island. All of this proved false and was later denied. On this subject, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, 2304v-2309v, letters of Merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Dutch Indies, Maserican Bay (off the coast of Canton), 24 October and 11 November 1687.

[128] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688. It is worth noting that, even if these witnesses claim that the privateers seized vessels during their stay in Pulo Condore and its environs, they do not specify which vessels they are talking about.

[129] See the sources cited previously regarding the junk of Limsinko.

[130] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

[131] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 405-406; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 209. This stopover on the coast of Canton, though without any exact location being specified, and the trade that the privateers then made with the Chinese are confirmed in AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

[132] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 413-416; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 209v-210v.

[133] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

her crew and passengers of 54 individuals, only two helmsmen were held captive, the one being a Chinese from Amoy and the other a Sino-Cochinchinese halfbreed.[134] It is possible that this vessel may be the junk that departed from Batavia on the previous June 6, bound for Japan, and whose master named Zionko was the bearer of a letter addressed to the VOC agents in that country.[135] However, her identity is still uncertain.[136] The facts remain that the ship belonged to two Chinese, residents of Batavia, namely Theoinio and Tansinko, and that the pirates did indeed release her, as she had sought refuge in Canon Bay at the latest in mid-August, to await for the northern monsoon before being able to return to Batavia. It was reported at the time that she had been taken by a frigate manned by English and Blacks, just after a storm had forced her crew to watch over her masts. It was still said that everything that these pirates did not rob had been thrown overboard, leaving the Chinese crew with only a little sugar, buffalo hides and a few cloves that could have been hidden. They had, moreover, kept four Chinese sailors prisoner, exchanging them for four others from their previous prize, the Limsinko junk.[137] Later, one of the latter's men and another from the Japan-bound junk testified that this last ship had been captured in the beginning of the last week of July, near Ainam, a large island delimiting the Gulf of Tonquin to the east. Before allowing the junk to leave, the pirates had looted the silks, pepper, linen, buffalo hides and other goods she was carrying. As these witnesses were able to learn, the pirate ship, which would have been armed with 30 great guns, came from Sillebar, on the north coast of Sumatra, and she was commanded by about ten Englishmen, the rest of the crew being composed of Mores, Blacks and other people of the same kind.[138] It will be noted, however, that this testimony agrees more or less with the facts.[139] Nonetheless, it is unquestionable that the aggressor was indeed the *Cygnet*, whose crew was then numbering about sixty men, most of them Englishmen, and whose commander was a captain named John Read, as the prisoners from the *Aránzazu* who were still aboard her will later declare.[140] So, how can we explain this difference in the description of these pirates according to the various witnesses? Were the men of the *Cygnet* so tanned by the sun, or were they so dirty, that they could have passed for naturally dark-skinned people? In any case, it is unlikely that they could be mistaken for African Blacks, but maybe for Moro or Malay mariners. Finally, if one of the two Chinese witnesses certainly did not have the time to clearly see who their attackers were, since he was traveling on the junk bound for Japan, the same cannot be said for the other who had been a member of Limsinko's crew and had been held captive for 50 days! In the case of this man, we must attribute his mistake either to the fact that he was confined between decks without any meaningful interaction with his captors, akin to the Jolo sailor who was captured

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[134] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 24v-29v, declarations of these two helmsmen named Enco and Chingco, Manila, 3 February 1688.

[135] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/2502/p. 370, Batavia daily register, 6 June 1687; and NL-HaNA Nederlandse Factorij Japan/inv. nr. 318/copy of a letter of Secretary Abraham van Riebeek to Chief Merchant Constantin Ranst and the Japan factory council, Batavia, June 6, 1687. She had arrived on March 18 from Hoksieu (or Fuzhu, Fujian province); ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/2502/p. 189, Batavia daily register, 18 March 1687.

[136] Indeed, VOC agents in Japan mention having received the letter Zionko was carrying at the end of October, while the latter was in Canton at the same time. On this subject, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 747v-758r, letter of Chief Merchant Constantin Ranst, junior, and the Japan factory council to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Nagasaki, 24 October 1687; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2304v-2309v, letter of merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Maserican Bay, 11 November 1687.

[137] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, letter of Merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Maserican Bay (in front of Canton), 24 October 1687, with postscript of the following day 25.

[138] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2300r-2301v, narrative of two Chinese sailors, Amoy, 12 November 1687.

[139] For example, and above all, it is almost impossible that this junk was taken near Ainam, that is much further west than São João Island (Shangchuan), and far from Macau, at which island Dampier says, as we have seen, the *Cygnet* made a stopover before the storm. There can be no confusion between these islands, since Dampier knew them both and differentiated them in his works: *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 174, 406, and *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), part. I, p. 8-9. Finally, the Spanish subjects then prisoners on the *Cygnet* say that this junk was seized off the coast of Canton after their stopover there to resupply. Furthermore, Ainam was not considered as being on that coast.

[140] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

before the *Cygnet*'s arrival in the vicinity of Manila, or alternatively, the pirates may have made him work so hard that limited his time to contemplate their faces.

After facing the violent storm in the last days of July, the privateers decided to go to the Pescadores Islands, also known as Penghu. They anchored between the two main islands of this archipelago, and then they sent their new quartermaster, John Oliver, to Magong, the easternmost island and seat of a Tartar, in other words, Manchu, garrison. After an exchange of gifts and civilities, the military governor who commanded these islands for the Emperor of China granted authorization to the privateers, who posed as merchants routed by bad weather, to buy food and what they needed to pursue their voyage. They stayed there for about a week then set sail again, heading towards another archipelago, the Batanes, which is located to the south-east of Formosa, almost equidistant between this island and that of Luzon. Upon their arrival at the easternmost island, which Dampier names Bashi (possibly present-day Basco), they were warmly received by the inhabitants. They took advantage of their stay, which lasted several weeks, to careen the *Cygnet* and make provisions for the following part of their voyage.[141]

At the beginning of October, as the privateers were preparing to depart from this island, another violent storm arose and pushed their ship into the open sea. It also forced them to leave behind a boat with six of their comrades. Fortunately, after three days, when the weather calmed down, they were able to come back to anchor and recover these six men.[142] They also took the opportunity to release the majority of the prisoners from the various prizes made since their departure from Maguindanao, nine men in all, namely six Spanish subjects, two Chinese and one Moro.[143] The reason for this sudden decision was very simple. The presence of these individuals aboard now appeared to be an unnecessary burden, for the privateers had renounced their design of cruising off Manila Bay. Although less violent than the previous one, this last storm had disenchanted many, and no one wanted to return there. Captains Read and Teat instead convinced the company to sail to Cape Comorin, at the southernmost point of India, and once there they would tell them more about their intentions, which were, as Dampier writes a posteriori, to go pirating in the Red Sea. The best way to accomplish it would have been to go through the Strait of Malacca, but Teat proposed rounding the Philippines to the east, heading south to the Moluccas, then turning towards Timor Island to enter the Indian Ocean. This navigation had the advantage of preventing them from encountering English or Dutch ships in the Strait of Malacca. This was their greatest fear, as it could mean they would be arrested and tried for piracy.[144] For this, they were ready to continue navigating these foreign waters, where none of them had ever sailed before, with only the nautical instructions contained in the copy of Seller's sea book in their possession as a guide, as well as the draft of a map of the Indian Ocean.[145]

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[141] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 416-437; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 210v-215v. It should be noted that eight prisoners released a few months later by the privateers do not mention the stopover at Pescadores. They are content only to say that they saw the coast of Formosa before reaching the Batanes. See AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, declarations made in Manila, 2 and 3 February 1688, 31 fol.

[142] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 438-439.

[143] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, declarations of eight of these nine prisoners made in Manila, 2 and 3 February 1688, 31 fol. Again, there is no reference in Dampier to these prisoners or their release. As previously observed, the two Chinese sailors came from their last prize. For this number of four sailors leaving the junk going to Japan, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, letter of Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Maserican Bay, 24 October 1687. The other two remained prisoner of the pirates, along with two other Chinese from Limsinko's junk. For a confirmation that there were four Chinese remaining on board the *Cygnet* in 1688, see Alfred Martineau, *Mémoires de François Martin, fondateur de Pondichéry, 1665-1696* (Paris: Société de l'histoire des colonies françaises, 1934), vol. II, p. 547-549.

[144] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 438-439. I point out again here that although he gives the reasons for this change of destination, Dampier does not mention the released prisoners.

[145] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 226r. The sea book or *rutter* to which Dampier refers is that of John Seller, *The English Pilot, the Third Book, Describing the Sea-Coasts, Capes, Headlands, Straits, Soundings, Shoals, Rocks, & Dangers, the Islands, Bays, Roads, Harbors and Ports in the Oriental Navigation* (London, 1675), 24 p.

Which prisoners on board?

At this stage of the study, it is important to attempt to determine who could have been the Spanish prisoners who were on board the *Cygnet* so far. This will be the opportunity to return to the cruel Miguel the Sevillan, who had taken sides with the *Infortunios* pirates, English and heretics, and who worried Ramírez so much. Likewise, it will be appropriate to question whether or not the first and the second could have voluntarily joined this company.

As previously mentioned, the majority of those seized on Alzaga's sampan and the *Aránzazu* were released within 24 hours of their capture. There were 52 of them, mostly passengers on the sampan with no maritime experience and, in any case, people of no great importance from whom no ransom could be obtained. In short, they were useless mouths to feed. Among them, however, were also sailors and passengers from the *Aránzazu*. The latter declared that 15 of their comrades from the frigate, including their captain, had remained prisoners of the pirates. However, it appears that Captain Read retained a much larger number of captives from these two prizes, almost double. This is what emerges from the testimony of five out of six other Spanish subjects who were also seized aboard the *Aránzazu* and released in the Batanes. Thus, when they appeared before Governor Curucealegui a few months later, they all declared, individually, that the pirates left on Pulo Condore Captain Ferrer and 18 other prisoners both from their frigate and the sampan. Nine others, including themselves, who were seized on the same ships, were forced to remain aboard the *Cygnet*. Hence, before this separation, the total number of prisoners was 29, comprising Spaniards, Filipino Indians and mestizos, although it is not possible to say in what proportion. They were either sailors, or passengers, or even servants of one or the other. Fifteen of them had previously belonged to the *Aránzazu*, and the rest (14, by deduction) to the sampan.[146]

Where does Ramírez fit into all this, assuming that he was indeed taken by pirates in March 1687, as he asserts, and therefore his captors could only be the privateers of the *Cygnet*? It would be reasonable to admit that he was among the 19 prisoners released on Pulo Condore. Likewise, given the circumstances of his capture, as he describes them, are significantly different from those of the *Aránzazu*'s, he might have belonged to the half of these prisoners who came from the sampan. Regardless of which ship he was seized on, he should be considered an unimportant character, since no witness mentions him. We shall nonetheless examine all the possibilities, even if the *Infortunios* appear to automatically disqualify them. Indeed, apart from the stay in Australia, Ramírez's account does not fit with the major part of the Asiatic voyage of the *Cygnet*, which spans a full year, commencing from the departure of the ship from Pulo Condore and concluding, as we shall see, with her arrival on the coast of Coromandel. After this clarification has been made, we notice a curious fact: the last witnesses say that nine prisoners from the two prizes remained on the *Cygnet*, whereas only six of them were released in the Batanes. What happened to the three other people? Did they die during the journey from Cambodia to the Philippines? Did they remain aboard, and if so, what was the reason for the witnesses' silence regarding it? Were they Filipino Indians or were they people who were not Spanish subjects? Or could the witnesses have simply been mistaken in their count? Would they have included among the nine prisoners the three men who were released along with themselves in the Batanes, namely the Moro of Jolo and the two Chinese sailors? This scenario is plausible, as they have officially testified several months after their release, and certain details may have been misconstrued. Furthermore, it is plausible that the resulting error may have been repeated from one testimony to the next, as the witnesses were evidently questioned in the presence of each other, given the striking ressemblance between their statements. In the contrary, if there were indeed three prisoners whose fate was unknown, could one of them be Ramírez? When we compare all the documentation regarding the voyage of the *Cygnet* to the content of the *Infortunios*, the answer can only be negative.

However, for the sake of this demonstration, we can hypothesize that three Spanish prisoners did indeed remain on board the *Cygnet*. Could they then have done it without their captors' consent?

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[146] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688. The sixth former Spanish prisoner, named Francisco Dacosta, was unable to make it to Manila because he was ill at the time.

Traditionally, in the West Indies, privateers only kept captive people who could be useful to them, either to obtain a ransom, sell them as slaves, make them work on board the ship, or serve them as guides or pilots. It is certain that there have been instances wherein prisoners have expressed a spontaneous desire to join privateers, or alternatively, they were invited to do so by the captors themselves after a while. However, in the case under study, Captain Read and his men were simply pragmatic. With a total of over 60 men, their company was large enough to ensure the ship's service and successfully attempt all boardings, as they had demonstrated until that point. So, any unnecessary mouths had to be released as soon as possible. Besides this, we should consider that admitting new members into the company would have meant proportionately smaller shares of booty for the old ones. We assume that for these reasons, the privateers had released these nine prisoners in the Batanes, and also, as we have just seen, because they had given up their initial design of another cruise off Manila Bay.

Finally, the Spanish authorities, everywhere, were always diligent in knowing the names of their fellow countrymen who, whether voluntarily or not, took up arms with the English and French privateers, and the longer a Spanish subject remained in their custody, the greater the risk of being suspected of treason upon his arrival in a Spanish port.[147] Even though Governor Curucealegui does not seem to have formally posed a question regarding this topic to the five men who appeared before him in February 1688, this does not mean that it was not posed informally. In this particular instance, the occurrence of negative answers to this question may provide an explanation for its absence during the formal interrogations. On the other hand, Governor Curucealegui inquired as to which Spanish subjects were already aboard the *Cygnet* in March 1687, when the *Aránzazu* was taken. The witnesses all gave the same answer to this question: there was one named Miguel, from Seville, and three other men from Chile.[148]

This now brings us to the cruel Miguel the Sevillan, of the *Infortunios*, who had, as we can see here, a namesake aboard the *Cygnet*. Indeed, given the conclusion we have reached regarding the presence of Ramírez aboard this ship, it could be through a man of this name, or at the very least through a man who had been held captive for a significantly long duration, that Ramírez was able to acquire knowledge regarding the *Cygnet*'s stay in Australia, which information he subsequently incorporated into his story, along with numerous other events that he was not present to. In order to identify this man, we must revisit the *Cygnet*'s stay in Maguindanao and call on an important witness who had rather equivocal relations with his captors, in any case enough to get him into serious trouble with the Inquisition.

When Captain Swan set out to cross the Pacific, his main Spanish prisoner was an old man from Lequeitio, in Biscay, named Bernardo de Uriarte. He had been captured in mid-February 1686, shortly before the departure of the *Cygnet*, at the mouth of the Piaxtla River, in New Biscay, a province of New Spain situated in the present-day northwestern region of Mexico.[149] Although Dampier does not give his name, he describes him as "a very intelligent old gentleman" who had extensively traveled throughout New Spain and possessed a comprehensive knowledge of several Indian languages.[150] Nelly, who was still the *Cygnet*'s second mate during the events, also withheld the identity of the old Biscayan, but he reveals a different aspect of the man, which may be the reason he was so friendly towards the privateers. Uriarte informed them of his serious grievances against his fellow citizens, the Creoles of Copal, who regarded him with contempt and lacked respect for him. Therefore, he voluntarily led the English to wherever they desired to go. He even requested a firearm to engage in combat alongside them, but there is no indication that Captain

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[147] Among the many examples preserved in the Spanish archives, see AGI INDIFERENTE/2578/*Testimonio de la relación de los autos criminales fulminados contra unos Españoles que andaban con piratas extranjeros en el ejercicio de tales en estas costas*, attached to the letter of Lieutenant General Domingo de Rochaferrer to the King of Spain, Cartagena, 2 May 1682.

[148] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C/fol. 1v-24v, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna, Juan del Pilar and Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688.

[149] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 24v-28r, declaration of Bernardo de Uriarte, 16 January 1688.

[150] BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 165v-166r, 170v-171v, 178; and Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 272-273.

Swan allowed him to do so.[151] Despite this, less than three weeks after the *Cygnet*'s arrival in Maguindanao, he fled and put himself under the protection of Sultan Barahaman. Considering that the old man would cause them harm if he were to reach Manila, by divulging their weaknesses and their designs, the privateers made all possible representations to get him back, but the Sultan refused to hand him over.[152] Ultimately, in October 1687, Uriarte was sent to Cebu, to his compatriots, in the company of two ambassadors from the Sultan. He informed the governor of this province that, upon the *Cygnet*'s departure from Maguindanao, the following Spanish subjects remained aboard as prisoners: Miguel de Medina, a native of Seville, and three mestizos, one from Panama and the other two from Peru, along with two young Peruvian Indians and a black slave.[153] The two ambassadors accompanying the old Biscayan also confirmed that the latter and an Andalusian from Seville named Miguel de Medina were the sole two prisoners from Old Spain held by the English pirates when they arrived in Maguindanao.[154] Now, months later, the Spanish subjects released in the Batanes gave a similar count as Uriarte, namely Miguel the Sevillan and three men either of mixed race or native Indians of Chile.[155] One of these witnesses, who was a slave of Captain Ferrer, went further by giving the first names of the three Chileans: two Miguels and one Andrés.[156]

By following what happened to Uriarte, it is possible to learn more about at least two of these four prisoners, including the famous Miguel de Medina. By a chance that proved to be unfavorable to him, the old Biscayan had been preceded to Cebu by four of the former *Cygnet* privateers of those who were left by Captains Read and Teat in Maguindanao with Swan. The four men had escaped from the Sultanate by stealing a small boat, but there were now only three, namely two Englishmen and one Irishman, given that the fourth died shortly after their arrival in Spanish territory. The Irishman, named John Fitzgerald, was sufficiently clever and devious to convince Governor Curucealegui that he had been a merchant aboard the *Cygnet* since her departure from London, that he and his captain had been compelled to join the pirates, and that as a result, they had been held captive.[157] He was thus able to settle in Manila, marry a rich widow, and be employed as a medicine doctor at the Royal Hospital.[158] In reality, before embarking on the *Cygnet*, Fitzgerald had belonged to the crew of the *Bachelors Delight*, and he had changed companies at

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[151] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook (reference p. 489-491).

[152] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 24v-30r, declaration of Bernardo de Uriarte and those of the sultan's two envoys, Manila, 16 and 26 January 1688; and AGN-México Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5/]fol. 259r-267v, voluntary statement of Uriarte, Mexico, 9 and 10 March 1693.

[153] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 18v-24v, letter of Alcalde Mayor Joaquín de Eguía to the Governor and Captain General of the Philippines, Cebú, 14 November 1687. In the declaration he made in Manila a few months later (*idem*/fol. 24v-28r), he gave another count of prisoners, but this one concerns those who were aboard the *Cygnet* before crossing the Pacific.

[154] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 18v-24v, fol. 28r-30r, letter of Alcalde Mayor Eguía, Cebú, 14 November 1687, and declarations of the two envoys of the Sultan of Maguindanao, Manila, 26 January 1688. Sultan Barahaman had also tried to take Medina out of the hands of the pirates, but they refused to hand him over this second Spaniard. See AGN-México Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5/]fol. 259r-267v, voluntary statement of Uriarte, Mexico, 9 and 10 March 1693.

[155] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 1v-20r, declarations of Mateo Francisco, Diego Rendón, Alonso de Luna and Juan del Pilar, Manila, February 2, 1688. Even though it is stated here that the three mestizos were from Chile, it must be understood that when Uriarte or other witnesses mention them as being Peruvian or from Peru, this simply means that they came from territories belonging to the Viceroyalty of Peru, which then included Chile.

[156] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60C, fol. 20r-24v, declaration of Silvestro Mojica, Manila, 2 February 1688. It should be also noted that this witness and the four others did not mention that Miguel de Medina was a cruel man, unlike his alleged counterpart in the *Infortunios*. As we will see a little further, the Chilean Andrés' family name was Salazar.

[157] On this subject, see among other acts copied in AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B, the Irishman's declaration made in Cebu on September 1, 1687 (fol. 3r-9r), and his confession made in Manila on the following May 2 (fol. 58r-63r).

[158] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 388; AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 680/[Exp. 35] fol. 255v, opinion of the Dominican father Baltasar de Santa Cruz, Manila, June 1690; and AGI FILIPINAS/163/N.37/*Testimonio autentico de los autos hechos en conformidad de la Real Cédula de Su Majestad, en que se manda fenezca y determine conforme a justicia la causa que el señor Don Gabriel de Curuzelaegui fulminó contra tres hombres que declararon haber andado en navíos de piratas*, 29 fol.

the same time as his comrades Dampier and Coppinger in September 1685![159] Now, upon his arrival in Cebu, Uriarte was informed of what this Irishman had said, and he had warned the governor of the province that Fitzgerald was a notorious rascal and that his word should not be trusted.[160] The Irishman took revenge later for these slanders in a very cruel way. This occurred more than a year after the departure of Uriarte, who was back to New Spain at the time. In April 1690, Fitzgerald officially denounced the old Biscayan as a heretic before the commissioner of the Holy Office in Manila. His two former English comrades followed his example and also testified against Uriarte, probably to obtain their release from the prison where they were still held.[161] In addition, Fitzgerald mentioned that another Spaniard, who was also a prisoner of the pirates at the time, could provide confirmation of his statements. This fourth witness was none other than Miguel de Medina, of Seville, but he was then serving at sea aboard a merchant ship captained by a Don Teodoro de São Lucas.[162] The 28-year-old Sevillan mariner came back to Manila only in the second half of the following year, along with this captain, of whom he was the first mate (*contramaestre*). He too testified against Uriarte, and in his statement, he specifically declared that a former fellow prisoner, named Andrés de Salazar, of Chile, who was also currently at sea, could provide a comparable testimony.[163]

This digression allows us to establish that Miguel de Medina and at least one of his three companions in captivity remained aboard the *Cygnet* for a long period of time. It is also possible that the first one testified against Uriarte because he himself had indeed taken up arms with the pirates, but certainly not before Read was awarded the command of the ship.[164] It is too early at this stage to determine the likelihood of this hypothesis and when Medina and his comrade Salazar were released from captivity. However, it can be already inferred that it occurred after Dampier was himself allowed to leave the *Cygnet* in April 1688. I will return to this when we will examine what happened to the ship and her crew. For the moment, let them go to Madagascar, their destination only known to Captains Read and Teat and a few others, via Mindanao, the Celebes, Australia, Sumatra and Ceylon, and let us go back a little in time, during their stopover at the Penghu or Pescadores islands.

A false Siamese Track

It will be remembered that, upon his arrival at Magong, situated on the main of these islands, on the penultimate or last day of July, Captain Read had dispatched Quartermaster Oliver to the Tartar governor of the Penghu Islands. The latter, assuming that the privateers were merchants, had initially advised Oliver that if they desired to trade, they should do so in Amoy, on the mainland, on the coast of the province of Hokkien (also known as Fujian), one of the few Chinese ports where foreigners were permitted to conduct business. He even told Oliver that two other English vessels

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[159] For a confirmation of his presence on board the *Delight* where he helped Dampier prevent the dismissal of their captain, Edward Davis, see BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 85.

[160] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 18v-24v, letter of Alcalde Mayor Joaquín de Eguía to the Governor and Captain General of the Philippines, Cebú, 14 November 1687.

[161] AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 680/[Exp. 35] fol. 253r-255r, testimonies and ratifications of John Fitzgerald, Thomas Balls and William Banckes, Manila, 24 April to 21 May 1690. Due to the distance and the lengthy of the procedures in such a case, Uriarte was not arrested until the end of 1692. Imprisoned in a Mexico jail while awaiting the outcome of his trial, he languished there for three years until his poor health and the lack of conclusive evidence against him encouraged the inquisitors to be lenient. He died in June 1696, just a few months after his release. Among other sources, see AGN-México/Inquisición/Vol. 539/[Exp. 24] fol. 324-361, summary of the trial of faith of Bernardo de Uriarte. It should be noted that, given the secret nature of the proceedings in such a trial, the accused had to be unaware of the identities of both his denouncers and the witnesses, and consequently, their names does not appears in this trial summary.

[162] AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 680/[Exp. 35] fol. 253r, denunciation of John Fitzgerald, Manila, 24 April 1690.

[163] AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5] fol. 360v-362, declaration of Miguel de Medina, Cavite, 29 November 1691. As to Andrés de Salazar, he seems to have disappeared, because five years later, the commissioner of the Inquisition in Manila acknowledged that he had been unable to find him. See *idem*/fol. 356, letter of Baltasar de Santa Cruz to the Inquisitors of Mexico, Manila, 8 April 1696.

[164] Indeed, there is nothing to suggest that he was anything other than a simple prisoner before the *Cygnet* left Maguindanao.

were already there.[165] These ships, the *Saint George*, Captain Henry White, and the *Moulsford*, Captain Edward Inglish, had been privately fitted out by the officials of the East India Company in Madras and had arrived in Amoy via Malacca.[166] Before mid-August, they were joined by two Company's ships, coming from Bombay under the overall command of Chief Agent John Gladman.[167] The capture of the two Chinese junks by Read and his men had almost put all these English merchants in serious trouble. As we have seen, the Batavia junk bound for Japan had arrived in the Bay of Canton immediately after her release by the privateers. The Chinese authorities, eager to punish the culprit, sent two sailors from this junk to Amoy to see if they would not recognize the pirate among the four English ships anchored there.[168] It was pointless, as these two Chinese formally declared that the English pirate who robbed them was not among them.[169]

As a further coincidence, there were also two Siamese warships in Canton Bay, *The Petchburi* and *The Lopburi*, the one of 40 guns and the other of 20, whose crews numbered 160 men, of which a quarter were Europeans. They were also commanded by two English captains, Anthony Williams and James Howell. The Portuguese of Macau saw these two Englishmen and their men as nothing more than pirates, just like those who, they had recently learned from Manila, had seized a Spanish ship with a rice cargo in the Philippines, a clear reference to the capture of the *Aránzazu* by the *Cygnet*.[170] Indeed, at the end of June, Williams and Howell were forced into Macau instead of returning to Siam, due to contrary winds. They had said that they were coming from Cambodia, where King Narai of Siam had sent them to dislodge Chinese pirates who were disturbing this allied kingdom, and from where they had also brought away several prisoners. The Portuguese authorities had refused them leave to stay in port under the pretext of the Emperor of China's orders about Macau, and therefore, they had referred them to the Regents of Canton.[171] However, the story of the Englishmen was true. In the last days of the previous month of February, they had left the Bay of Bangkok, with express orders to end the raids of Chinese exiles who had fled their homeland following the Tatars' conquest. In April, they had reached the Mekong delta, and going up the river to the settlement of these pirates, who had been ravaging this part of Cambodia for years, they had destroyed it and slaughtered part of the inhabitants.[172] In 1690, a long time after leaving the *Cygnet*, Dampier met in Madras one of the two leaders of this punitive raid, Captain Howell, who told him the whole story. However, it seems that the former privateer was not aware that his interlocutor and Captain Williams had found themselves, in April and May 1687, almost in the same area as the *Cygnet*... without necessarily having crossed paths.[173] In any case, although

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[165] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 418; BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 211r.

[166] Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1687* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 63, 69; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 857v-872v, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies in Batavia, Malacca, 24 October, 1687.

[167] *Report relative to the trade with the East Indies and China from the Select Committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the means of extending and securing the foreign trade of the country and to report to the House, together with the minutes of evidence taken in sessions 1820 and 1821 before the said Committee, 11 April 1821* (London: House of Commons, 1829), p. 364.

[168] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, letter of Merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Bay of Maserican, 24 October 1687, with postscript of the following day 25.

[169] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2300r-2301v, narrative of two Chinese sailors, Amoy, 12 November 1687.

[170] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, letter of Merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Maserican Bay, 24 October 1687. The news concerning the piracy of the *Cygnet* in March 1687 was probably brought to Macau by two Portuguese ships returning from Manila, where they had been employed to pursue, in vain, the pirate. On this subject, see AGI FILIPINAS/122/N.3, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui to the King of Spain, Manila, 15 May 1688.

[171] MO AH/LS/531/fol. 14v-15v, 16r-17r, resolutions of the Senate of Macau, 20 June and 23 July 1687.

[172] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, letter of Merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Maserican Bay, 24 October 1687; and *idem*/fol. 2225r-2240v, letter of Chief Merchant Johannes Keijts and the Siam factory council to the same, Juthia, 1 November 1687.

[173] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), part. I, p. 105-108.

these two Englishmen in the King of Siam's service had presented their rebel captives as gifts, the Regents of Canton nevertheless suspected them of being pirates for several weeks. Finally, in the last days of the year, they were allowed to leave Canton and even trade there before going back to Siam.[174]

This digression about the affairs of Siam is not trivial because Ramírez's specialists have presumed that the men of the *Cygnet*, assimilated to the pirates of Bell and Donkin, had been capable of attacking these two ships, or at least of encountering them at sea.[175] In regard of the first of these two possibilities, it is also important to remember that when Captain Read and his company departed from Mindanao, they were unaware of the existence of a war between the English, or rather the East India Company, and Siam, contrary to what some have asserted.[176] Even though there had already been conflicts on the side of the Indian Ocean, news of a formal war declaration did not reach the Malay Peninsula, or any other region in the South China Sea, nor possibly in the Philippines until well after.[177] It was during the unofficial period of the conflict that the English company, acting on its own authority, seized some Siamese ships, including one in Bengal commanded by another Englishman, the same Edward Inglish who now commanded the *Moulsford*, one of the four merchant English ships anchoring in Amoy.[178]

Another event is of greater significance when pertaining to Ramirez's account. At the end of the year 1687, another Madras ship brought to Canton the news of a true act of piracy committed in the area of the port of Malacca. A small ship manned by both English and Blacks had seized a Portuguese vessel coming from Siam, but they had released most of her crew, allowing them to return to Malacca. According to the Portugueses, the chief of these pirates was the same individual who was able to sell his ship in Batavia to the Dutch company in the previous year, even though he was already suspected of being a sea rover at the time, and this particular Englishman had since gone to Bengal.[179] They referred to Captain Eaton, whom Swan had encountered in the Straits of Magellan, and who subsequently engaged in piracy on the Pacific coasts of Spanish America.[180] Captains Inglish and White, who commanded, respectively, the *Moulsford* and the *Saint George*, which departed from Amoy in December, gained further insight into this matter during their stopover at Malacca the following month.[181] They found there Samuel Baron, a renowned trader of Dutch and Tonkinese descent, who was employed by the East India Company for its operations in Amoy. Upon his return from this Chinese port, Baron had been persuaded by the Dutch governor of Malacca to sell his cargo here and then return to Amoy. Nonetheless, in the first days of July, the junk that brought him back to Amoy was attacked by English pirates manning an East India

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[174] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2311v-2318r, report of Merchants Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Batavia Road, 31 January 1688.

[175] López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 63-65; reproduced with other details by Lorente Medina (ed.), *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (2017), p. 22-32. Furthermore, these two authors are mistaken about the identity of the two Siamese ships mentioned in the deliberations of the Macau Senate.

[176] López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 48-55.

[177] Among numerous documents attesting that this declaration of war was only known in Siam and other Southeast Asiatic countries about mid-1687, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2241v-2250r, Dutch translation of a letter of the President-Governor and Council of Fort Saint George to the King of Siam, Madras, 25 April/5 May 1687, and that of the publication of the King of England's declaration of war, made in Lavo in August 1687.

[178] See notably Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1686* (Madras: Government Press, 1913), p. 15, 27-28, 35-37, 47-48, 53, 95, 109; and *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1687* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 20, 36, 38, 68.

[179] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2266r-2280r, letter of Merchants Gijsbert van der Heijden, Gerard Drijver and Adolph de Bartrij to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Maserican Bay, 24 October 1687.

[180] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/fol. 11-479, letter of Governor General Johannes Camphuys and the Council of the Indies to the Council of XVII, Batavia, 13 December 1686.

[181] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688, [p. 1371, 1380] arrivals and departures of the *Moulsford* and the *Saint George*.

Company ketch called *The Good Hope*, which they had stolen from Bengal. She had been taken and sunk, but not before Baron and three Chinese were able to escape and reach Malacca in a rowboat.[182]

Discoverers of those Strange Parts of the World

As previously demonstrated, it is highly unlikely, if not impossible, that Ramírez would have found himself, prisoner or not, aboard the *Cygnet* after that ship left Pulo Condore, where, what appears most likely, he will have been landed with Captain Ferrer and other captives of the *Aránzazu* and Captain Alzaga's sampan. However, his subsequent adventures with Captains Bell and Donkin could correspond to the cruise of the *Good Hope*, which also came to Pulo Condore, but several weeks after the departure of the *Cygnet*. To fully understand the implications of this other hypothesis, or complementary hypothesis, which will lead us to postulate a third, brand new and frankly daring one, we must go back to the origins of the presence in Asia of these other pirates, at least those of them who had come here with Captain Eaton.

In June 1683, three months before the *Cygnet*, an excellent sailing ship called *The Nicholas* had departed from London for the same destination, the Spanish colonies on the Pacific coasts of the Americas. Her owners were, however, of a lesser status, being merchants who used to be engaged in a triangular trade between England, Madeira or the Canary Islands, and the British colonies in North America. One of them, John Eaton, who was also a master of ships with fifteen years of experience, was selected to command her. As with the *Cygnet*, the destination of the *Nicholas* and the true purpose of her voyage were kept private. After clearing customs at Gravesend, just before leaving the Thames, a contingent of 75 additional men were embarked on the *Nicholas*, bringing her crew to 94 men. Similarly, a large quantity of weapons and ammunition of all kinds were loaded on board. With such things as her only goods and three times as many men as needed to sail such a ship, the objective was evidently not to engage in peaceful trade or smuggling.[183] Eaton would later say that he was sent out "to discover new lands", as in the time of Francis Drake and other English adventurers of the previous century, which was a nice euphemism for piracy.[184] In London, it was then only suspected that he was going to smuggle goods for slaves on the Coast of Guinea in contravention of the Royal African Company's monopoly in the region.[185] If he had not met one George Bond in the Cape Verde Islands and enlisted him in his venture, his true destination would have remained unknown for a long time. Captain Bond appeared to be a valuable associate at first glance. He was a merchant who had turned privateer, or rather pirate, under the auspices of the governor of the Danish colony on Saint Thomas Island, and he too was heading to the South Sea. However, after they had crossed the Atlantic together, Eaton wanted his associate's frigate to be sunk because she was going so poorly under sail that she was delaying their voyage.

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[182] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 785r-800v, 847r-850r, 857v-872v, letters of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and Council of the Indies in Batavia, Malacca, dated 10 May, 7 August and 24 October 1687; and Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 25-26, consultation of the President-Governor and the Council of Fort Saint George, in Madras, 9/19 February 1688.

[183] See among other sources AGI LIMA/85/declaration of Crisanto Martín, Callao, 13 April 1685. This declaration, that of a Canarian mariner, then master gunner of the *Nicholas*, is the essential source for Eaton's voyage before this captain crossed the Pacific. It constitutes, moreover, one of the finest examples of a truthful account of a Spanish subject who traveled, against his will, with privateers enemies of his nation, and its accuracy, unlike Ramírez's imaginary account, is confirmed by numerous sources.

[184] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 580-583, 591-598, examinations of Clement Bellamy and John Eaton, Batavia, 1 and 2 May 1686. This is also what is indicated as the reason for their voyage in the leaves that Eaton issued to about fifteen of his men who separated from him in Java three years later. See NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1409/fol. 1387r and 1388r, two leaves of Captain Eaton for 14 of his men, Cheribon, 20/30 January 1686.

[185] TNA SP/29/442/no. 85, petition of the Royal Company of Africa to the King of England, undated; and TNA SP/29/359/fol. 59v-60r, minute of Royal Warrant dated 13/23 June 1685 ordering the Law Officers of the Crown to bring the matter promptly before the High Court of the Admiralty to prevent the *Nicholas* from leaving the Thames.

Bond was so angry by this demand that he immediately parted ways with Eaton.[186] He then went directly to Portobelo, in Panama, to inform the Spanish that Eaton had attempted to compel him in his hostile venture against them in the South Sea. Furthermore, Bond's statement made before the Spaniards revealed information that was absent from all other sources about Eaton's voyage: a second ship, with about 30 guns and 200 men, was about to leave London in order to join the *Nicholas*. Sadly, the Spanish who questioned Bond recorded phonetically the name of the individual who was to command this second ship, one *Coje Vrringlos*.[187] It is hard today to restore this name in its original form, but Bond may be referring to Sir Edward Winter, the most prestigious of the owners of the *Nicholas*, who held a sixteenth share in Eaton's enterprise.[188] To all intents and purposes, this story of a second vessel is likely a boast from Eaton aimed at impressing Bond into winning him over without violence. In the interim, despite his partner's hasty departure, Eaton gained a pilot for the South Sea in the person of Richard Morton, one of those who had come back to the West Indies with Captain Sharpe in 1682. If Dampier is to be trusted, this man was the one who convinced Bond to go roving on the coast of Peru.[189] Once on the coast of Brazil, where Eaton took some ships from the Portuguese, he even gave Morton command of one of them, which was to serve as a tender for the *Nicholas* in the Pacific.[190] As we have already seen, in February 1684, the two ships encountered the *Cygnet* in the Straits of Magellan. Eaton then attempted to persuade Swan to join forces with him by claiming to be the holder of a commission from the Elector of Brandenburg to seize Spanish vessels.[191] Faced with the latter's refusal, he considered forcing him to do so through trickery. However, while they were going out of the strait together, a storm separated them from each other, and not only did Eaton lose the opportunity to associate Swan, willingly or by force, with his projects, but he also lost the Portuguese bark commanded by his pilot Morton, which was never heard again.[192] Upon his arrival on the coast of Chile, he was able to recoup this loss through his encounter with the *Bachelors Delight*, a privateer from the West Indies, with whom he associated himself. This ship, then commanded by John Cook, and upon his death a few months later by Davis, had also just entered the South Sea, but via Cape Horn. From March to October 1684, the two companies operated together while they were traveling from Peru to Nicaragua. They seized four Spanish ships and conducted some land raids, primarily for provisions, at Nicoya and Realejo, as well as among the islands of the Gulf of Amapala where they caused the most havoc, plundering churches and Indian villages. At last, as the two companies did not agree on the sharing of the spoils, they broke off their association. After their separation, Eaton grabbed a last Spanish ship, and after consulting with his men, it was resolved to pursue their "discoveries"

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[186] AGI LIMA/85/declaration of Crisanto Martín, Callao, 13 April 1685. Concerning Bond's previous piracies, carried out under the protection of Adolf Esmit, governor of St. Thomas, in the Virgin Islands, see Abstracts of the documents from the British archives in J. W. Fortescue (ed.), *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and West Indies, 1681-1685* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1898), nos. 1188, 1312, 1471-1474, 1504, 1535, 1731.

[187] AGI LIMA/85/*Noticias ciertas del enemigo que entró en esta mar del Sur*, which includes an abstract of the declaration that Bond made in Portobelo on January 28, 1684.

[188] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 580-583, 591-598, examinations of Clement Bellamy and John Eaton, Batavia, 1 and 2 May 1686. A former officer and agent of the East India Company, Winter had ambitions at the time to obtain the government of Jamaica. On this subject, see among other sources ViWC Blathwayt Papers/XXIV/3/letter of Governor Sir Thomas Lynch to William Blathwayt, Jamaica, 15/25 November 1683.

[189] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 190. Bond had hired Morton on Saint Thomas Island.

[190] LPL MS 642, p. 441, 443, summary of Captain Eaton's voyage to the South Sea.

[191] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1437/fol. 198v-200v, letter of Swan to the Governor of the Moluccas, Mindanao, 16/26 February 1687. In the early 1680s, the Elector of Brandenburg had actually fitted some warships, and allowed their commanders to grant commissions by reprisals against the Spaniards to compensate himself for sums he claimed be due to him as reward for his participation, alongside them, in their last war against France (1673-1678). There is no evidence, however, that Eaton received any of these commissions, and if he had one, he would have exhibited it to the VOC authorities in Batavia when he had great difficulty proving that he was not a pirate, which we will discuss a little further.

[192] In addition to Swan's letter cited in the previous note, see for further details BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 47v-48r; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1483/p. 471-575, Nelly's logbook (reference p. 538-547).

at the expense of the Spaniards, on the other side of the Pacific, in the Philippines.[193]

This detail pertaining to the initial phase of the *Nicholas*' voyage is necessary, as it appears to directly refer to Captains Bell and Donkin, if Eaton and Swan are indeed their models in reality. However, this assumption poses a lot of problems. Like the two real-life pirates, the two fictitious ones also ventured into the South Sea together, but they had entered the Pacific through the Strait of Le Maire instead of the Straits of Magellan. However, the only privateer ship that passed through the first of these straits, rounding Cape Horn, was the *Bachelors Delight*, then commanded by Cook, and on board which Dampier served.[194] Furthermore, Ramírez said he was unable to know where his two pirates came from. However, another Spaniard, his contemporary, claimed to have the answer! As Ramírez, the individual in question, Captain Francisco de Seijas y Lobera, appears to have been straight out of a picaresque novel, with the notable distinction of being of minor nobility and very well-educated. He moved to New Spain a few years after the *Infortunios* were published. He was a mariner and cosmographer of some talent, already the author of two hydrographic and geographical works. He portrayed himself as a great traveler, having sailed with the Dutch, the English and the French, in almost all the seas. Among other subjects, this expert on everything and nothing claimed to know a lot about the South Sea pirates. In a lengthy memoir, which he intended to publish, but which remained in manuscript form, he wrote what he claimed to know about these pirates in general, and about Captains Bell and Donkin in particular. He asserts that in 1684, while in London, he witnessed the fitting out of five ships for the South Sea, which were under the command of three captains named Juan Velche [certainly a John Welch], Guillermo Bel [William Bell] and Tomás Donkin [Thomas Donkin]. He further adds that he immediately notified Ambassador Pedro Ronquillo, who was unable to stop them. Except for the largest one, which was wrecked in the Strait of Le Maire before entering the South Sea, he posited that these ships were the same that pirated on the coast of Peru in 1685 and 1686. However, two of them, the ones commanded by Bell and Donkin, had not been able to commit hostilities there, and they had gone to the East Indies as reported, Seijas takes care to specify, by Alonso Ramírez who had been their prisoner![195] If we forget the names of the captains and the year of their departure from England, then the venture described by Seijas is more similar to that of Thomas Hewetson than any other one. In September 1688, this captain left London with five ships to go smuggling in Chile and Peru, but once in Brazil, he gave up on continuing to the Straits of Magellan and he headed for the West Indies, where he distinguished himself in the beginning of the Nine Years' War against the French.[196] However, there is still more. At the onset of 1683, in Sevilla, the president of the Casa de la Contratación was informed that four vessels were undergoing preparations in England for the South Sea. His informant was a mysterious foreigner. The War Council of the Indies then advised the King of Spain that this official provide the name of his source and further details about this English venture, and that Ambassador Ronquillo discreetly investigate in London to find out if this news was true or not.[197] It appears that neither of these two steps has produced tangible results, for example, no royal decree was transmitted to the Spanish governors on this subject. Therefore, it was only a simple rumor.[198] As a result, Seijas' story also appears to be nothing more than a web of lies. In fact, just like Ramírez, he probably embroidered around sailors' gossip and some true facts to make a sort of fairy tale, of which he himself was the hero, because he alone was aware of

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[193] For this part of Eaton's journey, see AGI LIMA/85/declaration of Crisanto Martín, Callao, 13 April 1685; BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 32r-45v; and Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 83-133.

[194] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 81-83.

[195] Clayton McCarl (ed.), *Piratas y Contrabandistas de Ambas Indias y Estado Presente de Ellas (1693), por Francisco de Seyxas y Lovera* (Coruña: Fundación Barrié, 2011), p. 159, 161.

[196] About this expedition, see among other sources, TNA T/1/25/no. 34, petition of the Earl of Clare and other owners of the ship *The Lion*, 1693.

[197] AGI INDIFERENTE/2578/representation of the War Council of the Indies to the King, Madrid, 26 March 1683. This president was then Juan Jiménez de Montalvo.

[198] At that time all news concerning foreign ventures in the Americas, that were judged sufficiently important or dangerous, were forwarded by the King to his governors there by that mean.

all this and he alone informed the Spanish authorities, who did nothing.[199] Later, he experienced serious problems with the law in New Spain and Peru before being forced to seek refuge in France. The Viceroy of Peru at the time had already judged the individual well, and his opinion was clear: Seijas was only a smooth-talker who spoke on all subjects like an expert, coupled with a slanderer and a liar who absolutely could not be trusted. In short, he was either a downright rogue or a mythomaniac.[200] These are qualifiers that would be very tempting to also apply to Ramírez... but let's continue with the *Nicholas*, because we are still far from the mark with the lies of this other Spanish rascal.

For the crew of the *Nicholas*, the crossing of the Pacific was almost a nightmare. It appears that Eaton had not planned enough fresh provisions to reach the Mariana Islands, a necessary stopover for such a voyage. The entire company was afflicted with scurvy, and some of them even died from it. Upon their arrival at Guam, believing the Spanish would not warmly welcome them because they were English and Protestant, Eaton chose to pass himself and his men off as Catholic Frenchmen.[201] He introduced himself as Captain Thomas Liège, who had left Bordeaux... evidently to discover new lands! The ship's clerk, who was apparently a true Frenchman, also confided to a Flemish Jesuit, who came to visit the *Nicholas*, that four other ships had left the same port for the same purpose, but each of them had taken a different course! The perceptive Jesuit quickly realized that the crew was only jabbering French, and that even a significant number of them were heretics. He rightly concluded that they were English and of a particular type, since they were all well versed in the handling of weapons and, as usual for pirates, the quarterdeck of their 26-gun frigate had been razed to improve her sailing speed.[202] Like all reputable, albeit irregular mariners, the *Nicholas*' men knew how to practice disinformation, as much out of constraint as out of... simple pleasure, as evidenced by the following other anecdote. They had convinced a Black Peruvian, the only Spanish subject they kept prisoner with them as far as the Philippines, that their captain and his former associate Davis were in fact two brothers from Seville named Juan and Pedro Rivera, a falsehood that the poor man was quick to repeat once freed![203] Ultimately, even though the Spanish of Guam were not fooled by the English captain's lies, Eaton had no difficulty in purchasing provisions from them to continue his voyage, in exchange for arms and ammunition. Indeed, Governor Damian de Esplana, the same Spanish official who received Swan and his men the following year, had enough on his hands with the violence perpetrated by the Chamorros, the native people of the Marianas, to worry about these curious foreigners, who themselves experienced the warlike nature of the islanders during their stay in the archipelago.[204]

We now proceed to the part of Eaton's voyage that closely resembles the actions of the *Infortunios* pirates before their capture of Ramírez's frigate. Indeed, having been unable to attack Spanish ships in Peru and Chile, the fictional Captains Bell and Donkin had crossed the Pacific, stopped at the Marianas, and then reached Luzon. Setting their course via the Engaño and Bojeador Capes on the north side of the island, they had entered the South China Sea. They had seized here a few junks and sampans manned by Indian and Chinese mariners. The only difference with Eaton is that, as previously stated, the latter had captured Spanish ships in Peru and that he did the same upon his arrival on the northwest coast of Luzon after rounding the two before-mentioned capes. In the first part of May 1685, he indeed seized two sampans in Agno Bay, on the west coast of Pangasinan Province, within a few hours of each other. The first one, under the command of a

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[199] Richard J. Campbell, Peter T. Bradley and Joyce Lorimer (ed.), *The Voyage of Captain John Narbrough to the Strait of Magellan and the South Sea in his Majesty's ship Sweepstakes, 1669-1671* (London: The Hakluyt Society, 2018), p. 56-57.

[200] AGI LIMA/91/letter of Viceroy Count of La Monclova to the King of Spain, Lima, 20 January 1699. The exact words are: "*hablador, incapaz de ser atendido para nada*" and "*hombre mentiroso y maldiciente e indignos de crédito sus escritos*."

[201] BL Sloane MS 54, p. 24-52 (logbook of William Cowley, then master of the *Nicholas*, from 5/15 January to 2/12 April 1685).

[202] AGI FILIPINAS/13/R.1/N.9A, letter of Father Gérard Bouwens to the King of Spain, Guam, 28 May 1685.

[203] AGI FILIPINAS/13/R.1/N.15A/fol. 27r-35r, declaration of Antonio Marques Toribio, Manila, 8 June 1686. These two anecdotes demonstrate, if necessary, that a good number of falsehoods were circulating in ports and aboard ships at that time.

[204] BL Sloane MS 54, p. 46-52 (Cowley's logbook from 14/24 March to 2/12 April 1685).

master of Greek origin named Nicolás Antonio, came from Lingayen, capital of the province, at the bottom of the gulf of the same name. She carried 52 people between sailors and passengers, along with a rice cargo for the royal storehouses of Cavite. Additionally, there were 2000 pieces of eight, which the privateers seized on the spot. The second, which was of a lesser size, was manned by some Pangasinan Indians. Both vessels were sunk, and their crews and passengers were subsequently transported as prisoners aboard the *Nicholas*. For about twenty days, the privateers cruised along the coast heading north without really knowing where they were going. They would have first arrived at a desert island in a bay they believed to be that of Canton. On July 9, while returning towards the north of Luzon, in the vicinity of Camiguin Island, one of the Babuyanes archipelago, they captured a merchant junk belonging to the Grand Admiral of China. This ship was en route to Japan from Manilla when the pirates attacked her by throwing grenades from the largest boat of the *Nicholas*, which was meanwhile anchored in Camiguin. During this action, 16 Chinese were killed and nearly as many were injured. As a result, the junk was surrendered and plundered. While her master was being held captive by the privateers, Eaton allowed the remaining 28 men to leave with the ship, with express orders not to go anywhere else than Amoy, their home port. Otherwise, if he caught them again in the vicinity of Luzon, he would sink them. From there, the privateers went to another Babuyan, Calayan, an uninhabited island similar to Camiguin. They then released all the prisoners who had been captured on the two Pangasinan sampans.[205] Only the master of the first sampan, this Nicolás Antonio, remained with Eaton, and his comrades in misfortune later reported that he had even taken sides with the pirates.[206] Furthermore, during their previous visit to Camiguin, the latter had learned from two Filipino Indians whom they had captured there that on Fuga, the southernmost island of the archipelago, there was a village and a mission. Thus, on August 14, the privateers landed on this other island, took the village and made prisoner the vicar of the place and the two missionaries who assisted him. Finally, they robbed the church of all its gold and silver objects.[207]

At the beginning of October, after this last piracy and after releasing his remaining prisoners, Eaton left the Philippines. He was determined to disarm at the trading post that the East India Company owned at Bantam, on the far west coast of Java. Nevertheless, from the end of that month until December 1, he and his men made a long stay in the Sultanate of Burnei, in the northern part of Borneo, posing as Spaniards with whom this Malay kingdom then had a treaty of friendship. A little over a week after their departure, after crossing the Natuna archipelago, while at anchor at Pulau Tioman, a large island off the coast of Johor, there was a rift within the company. The master of the *Nicholas*, William Cowley, and therefore her main pilot and chief sailing officer, along with 20 other privateers purchased a small boat from the Tioman inhabitants to go to Java by themselves.[208] They were tired of their captain's indecision regarding the course to pursue, and maybe also of this piratical way of life. Indeed, upon their departing from Borneo, it had been agreed upon to prey on ships from Manila bound for Persia in the Strait of Malacca, but now Eaton no longer really knew what to do.[209] Leaving these 21 malcontents to their fate on Tioman Island, Eaton also headed for Java! There, he first met with a small Dutch ship, whose master told him that it was useless to go to Bantam because the VOC had driven the English company out of there a few years earlier. Soon

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[205] This sequence of events is reconstructed from AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60D/fol. 26v-29v, declaration of Juan Antonio, Manila, 31 October 1685; NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/ fol. 991-994, declaration of Tsiap Hoeko, Batavia, May 10, 1686; and AGI FILIPINAS/13/R.1/N.15A/fol. 27r-35r, declaration of Antonio Marques Toribio, Manila, 8 June 1686. Here Cowley's logbook (BL Sloane MS 54, p. 58-61, 64-65) is frankly unreliable. If the English pilot mentions these three prizes, he places the second after having been in the port which he thinks was that of Canton, and the third, the Chinese junk, in September 1685, that is to say after their stay in the Babuyanes archipelago. It must be said that, during this cruise, the privateers were still very much tormented by hunger. Cowley himself may have been ill at the time and unable to keep correctly his daily journal.

[206] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60D/fol. 11v-13r, letter of Dominican Father Bartolomé Marrón to the Governor and Captain General of the Philippines, Lingayen, 3 October 1685.

[207] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60D/fol. 1v-6v, letter from Dominican Father Jerónimo de Ulloa to Provincial Vicar Agustín García, Babuyanes, August 19, 1685; and BL Sloane MS 54, p. 61-62.

[208] BL Sloane MS 54, p. 61-73.

[209] LPL MS 642, p. 477, 479 (*The Voyage of Capt. Cowley, Papist*, p. 18-19).

thereafter, Cowley and the other 20 malcontents joined them. Altogether, they reached Cheribon, a Dutch company trading post east of the large port of Batavia, the famous Dutch East Indies capital, on January 12, 1685.[210] The master and owner of the Dutch vessel, the merchant Jacob Langener, had lured these foreigners there in the hope of taking advantage of them. Thus, he secretly sold his vessel to eight of Eaton's company dissidents for 600 rijksdaalders (or Dutch dollars) to take them to Batavia. Cowley and five others rented another one for the same purpose. Seven of their comrades, unsure of what to do with the Malay boat purchased on Tioman, which needed repairs, remained in Cheribon.[211] Eaton took the high road towards all these deserters by granting them formal leaves in writing.[212] The first two groups left Cheribon on January 30, the same day as the *Nicholas*, which then had only 40 men aboard. At Cheribon, Eaton had told the VOC officials his usual narrative, that is to say, he had left London to discover new lands beyond the Strait of Magellan. The latter was not fooled, since the English ship carried only a few goods that were supposed to come from the illicit trade that her captain claimed to have done on the coast of New Spain. Furthermore, the Dutch were aware that the gold and silver that these English had in their possession had been stolen from the Chinese and that a portion had been used to buy Langener's ship.[213] Within a few days of each other, the 15 former privateers of the *Nicholas* arrived in Batavia in the first half of February.[214] These men then addressed four requests to Governor General Johannes Camphuys aiming, depending on the case, to be repatriated to Europe, or to be transported to an East India Company factory, or to be employed by the VOC.[215] Those who had acquired the vessel that Langener had sold to them in violation of regulations prohibiting the sale of Dutch vessels to foreigners, were not allowed to leave until the fiscal advocate of the Dutch East Indies had conducted an investigation into the matter.[216] Cowley was the first to leave Batavia for the Netherlands, without the necessity of submitting an official request, unlike his comrades. He had been granted preferential treatment, due to his acquaintance with one of the VOC accountants in Batavia, whom he had previously known in Germany. To justify this privilege, it was alleged that he was married in Flushing (in Zealand) and that he was going to see his wife again.[217] He left Batavia on March 11, just as his former captain was entering the harbor.[218]

Upon his arrival in Batavia, Eaton sought permission to carry out extensive carpentry work on the *Nicholas* in order to continue his voyage. His petition was initially received favorably by Governor

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[210] BL Sloane MS 54, p. 73-76.

[211] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1417/fol. 1916v-1918r, 1937v-1939r, letters of Adriaan Willemszoon and Jan van Heyst to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Cheribon, 31 January and 14 February, 1686.

[212] See NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1409/fol. 1387-1389, leave for Ingraham Woollet, Nathaniel Battenham, Charles Todd, Robert Hill, Samuel Hart, Richard Hopper, Nicholas Burton, Gregory Turner, further leave for John Yeats, William Cowley, Emmanuel May, Robert Sunderland, Thomas Goodread and John Bush as well as a third for Thomas Flemming, Cheribon, all dated January 20/30, 1686. Two other men (Lewis Jetsom and Caleb Hathan) also received such a leave from their captain, but unlike their comrades, they reached the East India Company factory in Bencolen, on the west coast of Sumatra. For these two men, see Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1686* (Madras: Government Press, 1913), p. 47, consultation of the president-governor and the council of Fort Saint George, in Madras, 11/21 June 1686. The latter two were probably among the seven who remained at Cheribon because they are not subsequently mentioned in the proceedings undertaken against Eaton in Batavia.

[213] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1417/fol. 1916v-1918r, 1937v-1939r, letters of Adriaan Willemszoon and Jan van Heyst to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Cheribon, 31 January and 14 February, 1686.

[214] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 101, 119, arrival of six Englishmen in Batavia on February 7, 1686, and that of nine others on the 10th of the same month.

[215] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1409/fol. 1390-1393.

[216] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 76-77, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies on four requests addressed by 11 Englishmen, 19 February 1686.

[217] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 79-80, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies authorizing William Cowley, married in Flushing, to be transported to the Netherlands, Batavia, 22 February 1686; and BL Sloane MS 54, p. 75-76.

[218] BL Sloane MS 54, p. 76.

General Camphuys and the Batavia Council, but not for long.[219] When the Englishman asked a few weeks later to employ VOC carpenters, he was ordered to produce the leave or passport under which he was sailing. Eaton could only produce a clearance issued by a Custom officer at Gravesend, stating that the *Nicholas* was going to Madeira and Barbados. This was very insufficient and even suspicious, at least contrary to Dutch maritime laws.[220] The suspicions that Eaton had been a pirate were reinforced by the news from Malacca carried there by Portuguese ships returning from Manila. These news told of attacks committed in the Philippines by a supposedly French pirate who had come to the South Sea through the Straits of Magellan. A more serious report was received from Canton, claiming that a Chinese junk going to Japan had been plundered by an English sea rover. Now, these events occurred about the same time that Eaton said to have visited the area and dealt peacefully with the Chinese. As a result, the *Nicholas* and everything on board her were immediately sequestered, and all the men belonging or having belonged to her crew were arrested. The case was assigned to a special judicial committee made up of the fiscal advocate of the Dutch Indies and two additional members of the Council of Justice.[221] After conducting an inventory of all that was on board the *Nicholas*,[222] the committee began the following day the interrogations of 38 men who were serving or who had served on the *Nicholas* and were still in Batavia. It was not strictly speaking a criminal trial for piracy, but rather a preliminary investigation into the issue. Moreover, several of the Englishmen were interrogated in the presence of their captain. They all told similar half-truths. They said they had left London to discover new lands in the company of a small vessel, which they had lost while coming out of the Straits of Magellan during a violent storm, a clear reference to the Portuguese prize commanded by their late pilot Morton. After dealing alongside Peru with a Spanish ship, they had crossed the Pacific, making a stopover at Guam along the way. Afterward, they had made various cruises on the west coast of Luzon and towards the China mainland, trading with Chinese vessels before going to Borneo and then to Java. Since none of Eaton's men wanted to testify against their captain, the Dutch magistrates attempted unsuccessfully to determine that such a voyage could not have been undertaken without proper leave or authorization of some sort, and that this incidentally proved Eaton's pirate status.[223] They were unsuccessful due to the testimony of an English merchant captain who happened to be in Batavia at the time. This Englishman confirmed that indeed, the interlopers of his nation, that is to say, the ships going to trade overseas in violation of the monopolies of both the Royal Company of Africa and the East India Company, used to not carry passports or leaves. Moreover, after clearing customs at Gravesend, no document was required to leave the Thames, but a captain thus leaving the river could be required to defend himself in court if anyone filed a complaint against him on his return.[224] The three Dutch magistrates arrived at the conclusion that Eaton and his men could not be accused of piracy, despite the uncertainty surrounding certain aspects regarding their voyage, and despite this absence of leave or passport, which still annoyed them so much.[225] Therefore, Governor General Camphuys and his council ordered the release of these foreigners. However, they turned down a request from Eaton for financial assistance to repair his ship, because they judged the Englishman would be unable to provide a sufficient guarantee due to the remoteness of his owners. Nevertheless, he was allowed to sell the *Nicholas* in order to cover the costs incurred so far for the maintenance of his men and himself, as well as for their likely transportation to English factories in India.[226] Meanwhile, one of the passengers of the Chinese junk plundered by Eaton in July of the previous year had arrived in

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[219] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 116-117, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 15 March 1686.

[220] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 144-145, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 5 April 1686.

[221] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 168-173, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 20 April 1686.

[222] D-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 500-503, survey of the ship *The Nicholas*, 22 April 1686.

[223] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 553-601, examination of the crewmen of the *Nicholas*, Batavia, 27 April to 3 May 1686.

[224] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/ fol. 970-971, declaration of Captain John Strangways, Batavia, 29 April 1686.

[225] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 203, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 10 May 1686.

[226] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 215-217, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 17 May 1686.

Batavia, and he had made an affidavit attesting to the piracy of these Englishmen.[227] Even without this testimony, the VOC authorities were firmly convinced of their guilt. They, however, preferred to play it safe rather than engage in a trial whose outcome remained uncertain, particularly due to the absence of witnesses. Judging these men on such insufficient evidence could have unfortunate consequences both in Asia and Europe as far as Anglo-Dutch relations were concerned. Therefore, Governor General Camphuys and his council decided to disperse this gang of sea rovers in order to prevent them from causing further harm.[228] Thus, 25 of the Englishmen embarked on three VOC ships, two going to Bengal and the third to the coast of Coromandel to transport them to the English trading posts in these parts of India.[229] Regarding the *Nicholas*, her artillery, as well as all the remaining weapons and ammunitions on board, the whole was valued at 1959 rijksdaalders, and Eaton agreed to sell everything to the VOC at that price.[230] It is unknown what happened to Eaton afterward, but before the end of the year he had left the capital of the Dutch East Indies, as did those few of his men who had remained with him in Batavia for longer than the others.[231]

The Mutineers of the *Good Hope*

The circumstances of the mutiny that occurred in Bengal on board the East India Company ketch *The Good Hope*, the year following Eaton's troubles in Batavia, are known thanks to the narrative that three former members of her crew made two years later. In fact, the only author of this report is one Henry Watson, who then served as surgeon on board, while the other two alleged authors only approved its content by affixing their signatures. This narrative is an invaluable source for the subsequent adventures of that ship as a pirate. Among other things, it reveals that the principal mutineers were former members of Captain Eaton's company. We have their names from an informal roster of the *Good Hope* crew at the time of the mutiny, a two-column list that was appended to Watson's account. They appear therein, six in number, in the left column under a heading entitled "Eaton's men".[232] However, it appears that one of them, John Dunkston, did not serve under Eaton's command, as his name is absent from the proceedings initiated against this captain in Batavia, and it is even more surprising that a little more than forty *Nicholas*' men are named in these proceedings.[233] As for the others, we have the most information about the second on the list, Nicholas Burton, a native of Dover.[234] He was among the 21 men who parted ways with Eaton at Tioman Island, then among those who purchased Langener's ship, and finally among those who petitioned Governor General Camphuys to be transported to an English trading post.[235] *Infortunios* specialists identified him as the kind master gunner Nicpat, the principal pirate of the few who defended Ramírez against the evil Captain Bell, and whom the Spaniard also calls "his protector". It would also be possible to identify another English ally of Ramírez, Dick, the quartermaster of Bell's company, as one of the two Richards, Dick being the English diminutive of

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[227] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/ fol. 991-994, declaration of Tsiap Hoeko, Batavia, 10 May 1686.

[228] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/fol. 11-479, letter of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies to the Council of XVII, Batavia, 13 December 1686.

[229] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 233-235, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 24 May 1686.

[230] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 257-259, 268, resolutions of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, 31 May and 11 June 1686.

[231] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/fol. 11-479, letter of Governor General Camphuys and the Council of the Indies to the Council of XVII, Batavia, 13 December 1686. Here we definitively lose track of Eaton: we don't know where he went, or whether he died or not.

[232] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-28 and fol. 29-30, narrative of Henry Watson, George Robinson and Francis Cook, in two undated copies but probably made shortly after their arrival in Madras in January 1689.

[233] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nrs. 701, 1409 and 1418.

[234] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 565-566, examination of Nicholas Burton, Batavia, April 29, 1686.

[235] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1409/fol. 1387, 1392, leave for Ingraham Woollet and seven other Englishmen, Cheribon, 20/30 January 1686, and petition of Ingraham Woollet and six other Englishmen to Governor General Camphuys.

this first name, from the list appended to Watson's narrative.[236] Indeed, we find Richard Webb, of Milford, and Richard Potter, a Yorkshire-man, in the fourth and fifth positions on the roster.[237] There was also John Parnell, of Huntington, about whom no further information is available.[238] The latter and the three preceding ones, namely Burton, Webb and Potter, were among those that Governor General Camphuys ordered to be transported to Bengal aboard two VOC ships, with the last three named being embarked on the same vessel.[239] Last but not least, because he is at the top of the list, and he is the only one of these former Eaton's men who was later hanged for piracy: Walter Beard, a native of Gloucester.[240] Contrary to the others, it is unknown when he left Batavia. However, he appears to have been one of the *Nicholas*' petty officers, or at least one of Eaton's trusted men. Indeed, he is mentioned in the transactions conducted both by Eaton's chief mate William Mordin and the merchant Clement Bellemy, who was also one of the ship's owners, with a Portuguese captain who was then in Batavia to liquidate the most incriminating portion of their loot.[241] It is reasonable to assume that he was the chief among the *Good Hope* mutineers. Some specialists of the *Infortunios* also consider that Beard is the historical pirate on whom the character of "master Bel", the cruel captain of Ramírez, was based.[242]

The *Good Hope* mutiny occurred while the East India Company was in open conflict with the Great Mughal in Bengal. In February 1687, after the imperial governor of this kingdom had sent an army to Ougly in violation of an armistice concluded with the agents of the Company a few weeks earlier, the English had retaliated by attacking and pillaging a salt depot and a fort belonging to the Great Mughal. East India Company's vessels under the command of Captain John Nicholson, along with a few hundred soldiers mainly raised in Madras, then established their base on Hijli Island. Following the subsequent English blockade, the *Good Hope* was assigned to coastal guard duty in front of Ougly River. In April, her captain, Chief Pilot Samuel Heron, received orders from Job Charnock, the chief Company's agent in Bengal, to gather three other Company's ships anchored at Balasore and to take them to Hijli. Once this task was accomplished, Heron was required to go cruising in the Bay of Bengal. For this other task, his ketch was provided with two-month provisions.[243] At dawn on May 12, 1687, two days after the arrival of the *Good Hope* in Balasore Road, some members of her crew, who were former Captain Eaton's men, surprised Captain Heron and Surgeon Watson in the great cabin and tied them up. They then proposed to the rest of the crew to go roving on their own account. Besides the two prisoners, there were 19 men on board the ketch, and everyone, except for one George Robinson, agreed. Before setting sail, the mutiny ringleaders proposed to get rid of their two prisoners by marooning them on the Andaman Islands, whose inhabitants were reputed to be cannibals. However, the majority disagreed with the idea, and the pirates headed towards the neighboring archipelago of Nicobar. After having made wood and water on one of these

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[236] López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 58, and Lorente Medina, *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez*, p 33.

[237] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 567, 570-571, examinations of Richard Webb and Richard Potter, Batavia, 29 and 30 April 29 1686.

[238] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 571-572, examination of John Parnell, Batavia, 30 April 1686.

[239] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 701/p. 233-235, resolution of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Batavia, 24 May 1686.

[240] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2500/p. 579-580, examination of Walter Beard, Batavia, 1 May 1686.

[241] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1418/fol. 975-976, declaration of Wira, Batavia, 1 May 1686.

[242] This reasonable opinion is that of Lorente Medina, *Infortunios de Alonso Ramírez* (2017), p 32-35, but not of López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 57-58. Indeed, if the latter admits that Ramírez could have traveled aboard the *Good Hope*, he considers that, despite the phonetic resemblance between the two names, Bell cannot be assimilated to Beard. He rather believes that behind this fictitious pirate hides... Dampier, based on the hypothetical diminutive of the latter's first name, "Bill". There are two issues with this theory. Firstly, William's pet name at the time was more likely to be "Will", which would have been phonetically rendered into Spanish as "*Vuil*" or "*Huil*", rather than "*Bel*". Secondly, it appears that Dampier was solely known on board the *Cygnet* by his surname. This is what seems to be demonstrated by the list of that ship's crew drawn up in Maguindanao by a Dutch master (NL-HaNA VOC/1437/fol. 200v-202r), wherein Dampier is listed with an incorrect first name, "James".

[243] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 91-96, report of Job Charnock and Francis Ellis to Captain General Sir John Child and the Council in Bombay, Little Tana, 10/20 September 1687.

islands, the mutineers directed their course towards the Strait of Malacca. Before entering the strait, they committed their first act of piracy by seizing a prao off the coast of Aceh. They released her immediately after putting one of their two prisoners, Captain Heron, aboard. However, they refused to allow Watson to leave as well as Robinson, who, as he was about to embark on the Malay vessel, was compelled to return to the *Good Hope* and threatened with death by the mutineers if he attempted such a thing again.[244] These events occurred in the penultimate week of June. Heron had remained a prisoner for six weeks. He arrived in Aceh two days later, but the news of the mutiny did not reach Bengal until the end of the following August.[245] Meanwhile, the *Good Hope* had made what appears to be her only two other prizes of her entire voyage.

On the afternoon of July 3, 1687, the new pirates captured the first of these two ships, between the Formosa River on the Malay coast and Pulau Pisang, a little to the north-west of the Strait of Singapore. She was a junk, commanded by a Chinese named Boncqua, that had just left Malacca and was returning to Amoy.[246] They boarded her without firing a single shot. One of her two Portuguese pilots and a Chinese merchant voluntarily came aboard the *Good Hope* to present the VOC passport under which they were sailing, perhaps naively believing that the presentation of this document would clear up any misunderstanding. They were held captives while some of the pirates were going to take possession of the junk. As there was no money aboard this vessel, and her sandalwood cargo did not interest them, the pirates seized only a chest of silks and some clothes. They then breached the junk's hull and sank her. In the meantime, most of the Chinese sailors and passengers were transferred aboard the *Good Hope* as prisoners.[247] It is likely that before the pirates took possession of the junk that the merchant Baron, previously mentioned, and three Chinese fled in a small boat.[248] This act of piracy was known in Malacca two days later, and was further confirmed on July 6 upon the arrival of two of these Chinese who were indeed able to leave the junk before the pirates seized her. The following day, the governor of Malacca sent two small VOC ships and two others belonging to individuals to attempt to take the pirate, who appeared to be heading towards the Strait of Singapore.[249]

Meanwhile, according to Watson, the pirates had been informed by the two pilots captured on the junk that a Portuguese ship had departed from Malacca before them. Upon hearing this news, they immediately set sail for the Strait of Singapore to seize her.[250] This ship from Goa, named *Nossa Senhora da Esperança e Santo Antônio*, and commanded by Captain Francisco Boto Pacheco, had left Malacca on June 29 bound for Macau. Despite what the English surgeon reports, it was not this Portuguese ship that the pirates took shortly after, but another one named *Nossa Senhora do Rosário e Santo Antônio*, which had left Malacca on July 4, a day after the junk. Just like her near-namesake, she was a Goa ship. She was commanded by her owner, Domingos Lopes, along with 30 sailors and passengers. She was returning to Siam with a cargo of rattan, woven palm, gelatine,

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[244] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

[245] Sir Richard Carnac Temple (ed.), *A Geographical Account of Countries Round the Bay of Bengal, 1669 to 1679, by Thomas Bowrey* (Cambridge: The Hakluyt Society, 1905), p. xxxvii. Such a case of mutiny on a company ship is not unique. A few months later, on the coast of Coromandel, 16 men of the *Royal James* deserted their post, and they began to pirate on that coast in a small boat. They were less fortunate than the *Good Hope* mutineers, because they were recaptured by the authorities. On this subject, see Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1687* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 152, 165, 172-173, consultations of President-Governor Elihu Yale and the council of Fort Saint George, 24 September/3 October, 29 September/8 October 8, 21/31 October, 7/17 November 1687.

[246] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 850r, memorandum of Governor Thomas Slicher to Lieutenant Jan Rosdom and other officers of the yacht *Malacca* and the sloop *Fortuin*, Malacca, 7 July 1687.

[247] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

[248] Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 25-26, consultation of the President-Governor and the Council of Fort Saint George, in Madras, 9/19 February 1688.

[249] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 850r, memorandum of Governor Thomas Slicher to Lieutenant Jan Rosdom and other officers of the yacht *Malacca* and the sloop *Fortuin*, Malacca, 7 July 1687.

[250] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

and sago flour, which had been loaded in Malacca, but there was something much more interesting on board than these goods: 400 rijksdaalders in cash.[251] This second prize was made under the English flag, and it only took three cannon shots to stop her: the first cannonball hit the topgallant sails, the second the topsails, and with the third, the Portuguese broke down. The captain (Domingos Lopes) and a few of his merchants subsequently came aboard the ketch, where they were held prisoner, like the Chinese before them. Using the Portuguese longboat, some of the pirates made themselves masters of the ship, sending most of her crew towards the *Good Hope*. The Chinese who were captured a few days earlier were also embarked on this longboat, and all of these people were left to their fate with only a bag of rice and a little beef. Along with their new Portuguese prize, the *Good Hope* then set sail for Pulau Aur.[252] This second prize was made on July 11, at the exit of the Singapore Strait, towards one of the Riau Islands. The pirates kept with them 27 prisoners, between Portuguese and *Toepas*, a term used in India to denote mixed-race Portuguese Christians. A year later, two of these prisoners, namely one of the two Chinese junk pilots and the boatswain of Lopes' ship, made a declaration in Batavia. Although their testimony is much shorter than that of Watson, which they essentially confirm, it contains, as here, some previously unknown details regarding the *Good Hope* and her subsequent cruises.[253] For instance, while the reports reaching Malacca stated that the *Good Hope* had 12 guns and a crew of 30 to 35 pirates, these witnesses only counted about 20 or so men but 14 mounted guns.[254]

Once at Pulau Aur, the pirates removed all the silver and jewels they could find from their Portuguese prize, and then set her on fire. While the ship was still burning, they set sail north, bound for Pulo Condore.[255] Soon after, three of the four ships sent out by the governor of Malacca to find them arrived at Pulau Aur. They saw the charred wreck of the *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*. The Malays who resided on the island informed the Dutch captains that the pirates had fired at them while they were trying to put out the fire in order to recover the ship's goods, and then that they were heading north.[256] By going to Pulo Condore, the pirates intended to wait until the time of the year when ships from Manila would pass near the archipelago, as well as two large junks going yearly to Japan. Watson does not indicate how long this stopover lasted, but the pirates had enough time to turn their ketch into a pink by adding her a new mast.[257] The two Portuguese prisoners confirm that the pirates carried out carpentry work on their ship there, without specifying the nature of it, but they give the duration of their stay in Pulo Condore: four months.[258] And this is exactly the duration that Ramírez gives for the stopover of his pirates on the same island!

The date of the arrival of the *Good Hope* pirates at Pulo Condore remains unknown. However, we know that they departed from this island during the second half of December.[259] If we subtract four

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[251] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 857v-872v, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies in Batavia, Malacca, 24 October 1687.

[252] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

[253] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

[254] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 847r-850r, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies in Batavia, Malacca, 7 August 1687.

[255] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689. The stopover at this island, the burning of the prize and the pirates' destination are also confirmed in ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

[256] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 853r-855r, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies in Batavia, Malacca, 24 September 1687. These pirate hunters returned empty-handed to Malacca on August 30.

[257] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

[258] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

[259] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688, [p. 1362-1365] declaration of Mateo de Rocha, 5 January 1688.

months from this date, it implies that they arrived in Pulo Condore in mid-August 1687. This is roughly two months after the departure of the *Cygnet,* which set sail from there, according to Dampier, on June 14.[260] After all this time, is it reasonable to assert that prisoners who were released by Captain Read were still on this island? We are faced with an impasse here, since neither Watson nor the two Portuguese mariners mention that any Europeans were present on Pulo Condore during their stay there. Could these former prisoners have reached neighboring countries on the mainland, such as Cambodia, Champa, or even Cochinchina, in the interim? In any case, there is no news about them in Siam, neither in Malacca, Macau nor Canton, not even apparently in the Philippines. At least no archival document has been found that could provide information as to the fate of these men, other than a few late references concerning the principal of them, and also the only one whose name is known, Captain Ferrer.[261] If none of these former *Cygnet* prisoners were present on the island when the *Good Hope* arrived, then the hypothesis that Ramírez sailed aboard the first of these two pirate ships is seriously undermined. If this is indeed the case, the primary hypothesis, which holds that the Spaniard was captured by the *Cygnet*, would also cease to be valid. It is, indeed, evident that the *Infortunios* contain a greater number of allusions to the voyage of the *Good Hope* than to that of the *Cygnet*, as we shall observe again throughout the remainder of this study. In fact, only three events reported by Ramírez could correspond to the actions of Captain Read and his company: the capture of the two small Spanish vessels near Manila in March 1687, that of the pepper junk captained by Limsinko taken near Pulo Condore, and lastly their stay in Australia. There is nothing else. This is why I propose an alternative, somewhat daring hypothesis: Ramírez would have been on board the *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*, Captain Domingos Lopes, owner and master, which had just been seized by the *Good Hope* pirates in July 1687.

This hypothesis, which I style as "Portuguese", should not be overlooked. It would first provide an explanation for Ramírez's capacity to travel to Macau, Batavia, Malacca, and Madras, as well as, most likely, Siam, provided that he does not also fabricate his journeys to these places. It would also, and above all, explain why his story contradicts the facts when the actions of his pirates seem to be closely related to those of Captain Read and his men. My hypothesis is based on the following elements. At that time, Spanish-owned ships in the Philippines, and throughout Southeast Asia, were predominantly employed for navigation and commerce within the archipelago itself. For the 1680s, the decade that interests us here, the daily registers that were kept in the two largest Dutch seaports in Asia, namely Batavia (for which these registers are complete for the whole decade) and Malacca (partially complete), contain details of all the ships that came in and out of these two harbors. However, when we look at Malacca, one of the busiest ports in Asia and a mandatory port of call for any ship traversing the aforementioned strait, we notice numerous ships from India going to the Philippines. These are mainly Portuguese-owned vessels, whose home ports were Goa, Porto Novo and São Tomé de Meliapor (in Madras), sometimes also Moorish ships, but none of them are Spanish-owned. In Manila itself, during a period of nine years in the preceding decade (1672-1680), of the 108 foreign ships that cleared the Royal Customs at Cavite, 22 were Portuguese, with the majority hailing from Indian ports, notably Madras and Goa, with a few from Siam or neighboring kingdoms, as well as Macau, despite the fact that trading with the latter Portuguese port was prohibited.[262] However, this prohibition did not prevent Macau vessels from regularly coming to Manila. This occasionally proved to be very useful for the Spanish authorities in the Philippines, especially in these troubled times when English privateers from the South Sea were roving around the archipelago. So, in that year 1687, Governor Curucelaegui and his war council requisitioned two Macau ships, which had been in Cavite harbor for more than six months, in order to hunt down the *Cygnet* in company with the galleon *Santo Niño*.[263] Two years earlier, another

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[260] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 404-405.

[261] AGI FILIPINAS/33/N.2/D.88/fol. 1r-2r, act concerning the *media-anata* due by various officers for the year 1684, Manila, 8 October 1693. In this document, Ferrer is given as dead, without knowing where or at which time he died.

[262] AGI FILIPINAS/24/R.2/N.14A, copy of documents attesting of ships having cleared the Royal Customs House in Cavite from 1620 to 1681.

[263] AGI FILIPINAS/122/N.3, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui to the King of Spain, Manila, 15 May 1688, filed with a testimony of acts relating to the arrival of two Macau ships, 355 fol.

one, the *São Pedro e Santa Cruz*, had been employed for a comparable purpose, this time against John Eaton's *Nicholas*. Her captain, Manuel Rodríguez de Fonseca, had spontaneously offered to pursue the pirate, a proposal that was immediately agreed upon by the Spanish governor and the officers of his council. This does not prevent this captain from lying and from violating Spanish commercial regulations. Upon his arrival in Cavite in August 1685, Captain Fonseca claimed to have fitted out from Goa, which was a half-truth because his passport had been issued by the Governor General of Macau, his true home port. He also said to have been diverted from Macau, his alleged destination, by bad weather and contrary winds. However, his cargo of more than 150 black slaves appeared suspect to the Spanish authorities,[264] and with good reason, as upon his arrival at Malacca, coming from Goa, Captain Rodríguez de Fonseca had declared Manila as his destination![265]

If we proceed with further investigation of this Portuguese hypothesis, it is plausible to propose that Ramírez embarked himself as a sailor or in another capacity aboard a ship such as that of Fonseca, to go to Macau, and from there, passing from one ship to another, traveling to Batavia, Malacca and Madras for several months, and ultimately arriving in Siam at the end of 1686, aboard the *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*. The movements of this ship preceding her capture provide some clues in this direction. Under the command of her owner, Captain Domingos Lopes, she had left Goa in May 1686. She was laden with salt, but also with luxury products such as perfumed liquid balm, incense, and shark fins, although in small quantities. However, she carried an unusually large number of people aboard, 70, which was more than double the number required to sail a ship of her size, 80 tons. Were this surplus people simply passengers or a few dozen slaves? Unfortunately, the documents I was able to consult do not specify this. Another curiosity: when Lopes arrived in Malacca, he declared Manila as his destination, but upon his departure, the Dutch official who kept the Malacca register recorded that the Portuguese captain was bound to Siam instead. Did Lopes change his mind during his stopover, or did the Malacca harbormaster misunderstand or incorrectly write down what the Portuguese said to him? Again, it's impossible to say,[266] but we know for certain that he went to Siam. He loaded there sappan wood, coconut oil, and rice, and at the end of February 1687, he left to come back to Malacca, where he had to sell these commodities.[267] Before his departure, probably due to a lack of cash money, Captain Lopes was unable to pay all the duties required by Siamese customs officials to allow him to leave port. However, he knew that the king's favorite, the all-powerful and famous Phaulkon, this adventurer of Greek origin whom Ramírez describes as a Genoese in his story without giving his name, owed sums to the VOC. He then offered to pay on behalf of Phaulkon to the Dutch company's accounts chamber in Malacca a sum equivalent to the balance of his unpaid customs duties, which amounted to 4 catties 5 13/16 taels, and the proposal was accepted.[268] Captain Lopes arrived in Malacca on April 9, and a few weeks later he paid to the VOC, as agreed, a portion of the debt contracted by Phaulkon on behalf of the Siamese Crown. This payment made in Spanish money was equivalent to 214 rijksdaalders

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[264] AGI FILIPINAS/13/R.1/N.1 and N.1A, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui to the King of Spain, Manila, 26 May 1686, and certified copy of acts concerning the arrival of a Goa ship in Cavite, 124 fol.

[265] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1413/p. 763-1061, Malacca daily register from December 1, 1684 to August 31, 1685, [p. 975, 987] arrival and departure of the *São Pedro e Santa Cruz*, 1 and 11 July 1685. It is interesting to note that a case of Mozambique slaves brought by a Portuguese captain named Mateo de Rocha involved indirectly Captain Ferrer, of the *Aránzazu* while he was *contramaestre* of the galleon *Santo Niño*. In September 1683, in Cavite, three of these slaves were purchased by Sebastián de la Oliva. In January 1684, the latter sold them back to the judge Pedro Sebastián de Bolivar y Mena, member of the Royal Audiencia, who entrusted them to Captain Ferrer to be sold in New Spain. See AGN-México Instituciones Coloniales/Indiferente Virreinal/Caja 1567/[Exp. 8/]fol. 1r-2r, bill of sale drawn by Felipe Ferrer, Acapulco, 20 March 1685; transcribed in Sierra Silva (ed.), *Mexico, Slavery, Freedom*, p. 101-102.

[266] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1426/p. 1113-1523, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1685 to September 29, 1686, [p. 1470, 1502] arrival and departure of the *Nossa Senhora do Rosário*, 3 August and 7 September 1686.

[267] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 785r-800v, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of Indies, Malacca, 10 May 1687. For this period, no copy of the Malacca daily register has survived, but in his official correspondence with Batavia, the governor of Malacca always gave a list of the most important foreign ships that came in and out the port with marginal notes for each one. It will also be noted that Lopes left Siam about the same time as the two Siamese frigates under Captains Williams and Howell's command were going to Cambodia against Chinese pirates.

[268] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2225r-2240v, letter of Johannes Keijts and the Siam factory council to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Juthia, 1 November 1687.

31 ⅛ stuivers.[269] The subsequent capture of his ship by the pirates totally ruined Lopes, and evidently, he was unable to bring back within due time the receipt given to him by the VOC accountant in Malacca, proving partial payment of the sums owed to the Company by Phaulkon in the name of the Siamese crown. The news was known in Siam in September 1687.[270] And when the season permitted, Phaulkon sent two small ships to hunt down these English pirates towards Pulau Ubi and Pulo Condore, but without success, since the latter, as we will soon see, were no longer there and did not return.[271] Even after the revolution that then occurred in Siam, resulting in particular to the fall of Phaulkon and to his subsequent execution, the Company credited the Siamese crown with the sum that Lopes had paid in Malacca, which was a little more than 643 guilders (gulden) in Dutch currency.[272] This affair did not end there, since the new Siamese power took this piracy against poor Lopes as a pretext to seize, in February 1690, an English ship coming from Tonquin that stopped in Siam. Her captain was only able to get his ship back after paying a penalty of 40 catties, equivalent to 2000 dollars or pieces of eight, which was the amount of the estimated losses suffered by the Portuguese captain.[273]

From the above, we understand that Captain Lopes was esteemed by the Siamese authorities. Could the misadventure of the *Nossa Senhora do Rosário* have served as a model for the Portuguese ship that Ramírez says was sent to Siam by the Viceroy of Goa with an ambassador, which ship was the third prize made by the *Infortunios* pirates in the area of Pulau Ubi and Pulo Condore? In any case, it would be worthwhile exploring this Portuguese hypothesis further before dismissing it altogether. So, let us proceed with the continuation of the adventures of *Good Hope* and their correspondences in Ramírez's story.

Unlike the pirates of the *Infortunios*, those of the *Good Hope*, as well as those of the *Cygnet*, did not slaughter the Cochinchinese inhabitants of Pulo Condore when they left the island. The matter would have been known, and furthermore, neither Watson nor the two Portuguese mariners whose testimony completes the former's account did not even mention such an event.[274] While the then pink-rigged *Good Hope* was ready to set sail again from the southernmost part of the island, the pirates sighted a ship, which they pursued. The crew of this ship defended themselves valiantly, even killing one of the English pirates whose first name was Thomas. Finally, the sea became so heavy that the pirates were forced to let their prey escape from them in open sea. That is Watson's version of the incident.[275] The two Portuguese witnesses, on their part, say that the fight lasted from noon until late in the evening, and they clearly indicate that what really forced the pirates to withdraw was the great resistance of their opponent, a Portuguese ship coming from Macau.[276] This

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[269] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 785r-800v, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Malacca, 10 May 1687.

[270] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1440/fol. 2225r-2240v, letter of Johannes Keijts and the Siam factory council to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Juthia, 1 November 1687.

[271] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1453/fol. 238v-256r, letter of Johannes Keijts, Pieter van den Hoorn and others of the Siam factory council to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Juthia, 5 December 1688.

[272] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1485/fol. 100r-124r, letter of Pieter van den Hoorn and the Siam factory council to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies, Juthia, 5 February 1690.

[273] BL IOR/G/36/110/p. 76, extract of a letter of Lemuel Blackmore to the Council of the East India Company at Surat, Malacca, 2/12 April 1691.

[274] The only massacre that took place in the area was that carried out, as we have previously seen, by Captains Williams and Howell, on the King of Siam's orders, when they plundered the Chinese pirate settlement upstream of the Mekong, in Cambodia. Could Ramírez have been a member of the company of one of these two English captains whose combined forces are very similar to those of the *Infortunios* pirates? I do not have analyzed this possibility in detail because Williams and Howell returned to Siam at the very end of 1688 or early 1689, which would not agree with the chronology of the *Infortunios*.

[275] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689. In this account, Watson does not give the nationality of the ship attacked, but we deduce it from the list of the *Good Hope* crew that is annexed to it, in which next to this pirate named Thomas (of whom we do not have the full name), it is written: "killed by the Portuguese."

[276] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

fight took place on December 23, 1687, and the target of the pirates was indeed a Macau ship named *São Paolo*, which had departed from there a week earlier and was bound for Aceh. She was a 100-ton vessel, with 8 guns and 52 sailors and passengers. According to Mateo de Rocha, who commanded this ship, the pirate was anchored in a small cove on Pulo Condore, but, he adds, they were hoisting the flag of the Prince of Orange. Accordingly, assuming that she was indeed a Dutch vessel, Captain Rocha made the mistake of waiting for her, and shortly after noon, the fight began. Rocha himself and one of his men were injured, and an English pilot, who was one of the *São Paolo*'s passengers, stood out for his courage, which cost him his life. Before this Englishman died, he had confided to Rocha that their opponent was indeed an English ship that had been sent out from the coast of Coromandel to Bengal, where her crew had mutinied and stole away with her. Still according to Rocha's account, the fight even turned in favor of the Portuguese, who pursued the pirate, smashing part of his foresail with a cannonball shot. Additionally, Rocha was able to see a glimpse of the man who apparently commanded this pirate, whom he described as a sturdy man wearing linen clothing and a cap, who was encouraging his people while hiding on the mizzen mast's sides.[277]

After this first failure, the pirates continued to cruise towards Pulau Ubi. On their arrival at that island, they discovered a Malay prao. They sent their longboat to command the master of this small vessel to come aboard the *Good Hope*, but the Malay replied that he would come the following morning, since it was already dusk. At this answer, Richard Webb, who appears to have commanded the launch, discharged his firearm towards the prao. The Malays immediately responded with their own firearms, killing two pirates — a carpenter named Marcus and a one Lawrence France — as well as wounding three others. The pirate longboat then had to retreat towards the ketch. When the Malays saw this, they immediately jumped into their own boats and pursued the ketch until they were within range of her artillery. Like the pirates of the *Cygnet*, those of the *Good Hope* had just been confronted with the fierce mariners of the kingdom of Champa. If Watson is to be trusted, what happened next was not much better, although this time without the loss of men. To the windward of Pulo Condore, they chased a junk that they assumed to be Japanese and whose crew, finding it impossible to free themselves otherwise, directed their course straight towards them. The *Good Hope* would inevitably have been rammed if her crew had not immediately released their mainsheet to dodge the junk. Nevertheless, the pirates followed her from Pulo Condore to Pulau Ubi without being able to take up with her. After anchoring on the second of these islands, they saw another Japanese junk — or so they still believed —, but they did not pursue her for long, fearing to be driven too far into the Bay of Siam and no longer being able to come back to Pulo Condore.[278]

Despite these setbacks and the fact that the ships they were unable to capture would undoubtedly report their presence in the large neighboring ports, notably in Siam and Malacca, the *Good Hope* men persisted in prowling between the two islands until they were forced to go elsewhere due to lack of food.[279] They then headed southwards, stopping first at Pulau Siantan, in the Riau archipelago. From there, they reached Tambelan, the main island of the archipelago of the same name, off the west coast of Borneo.[280] Watson claims that the chiefs of the pirates had chosen this island, one day's sail from the port of Sukadana in Borneo, because they had previously been there with Captain Eaton. As we have seen from studying the latter's voyage in the South China Sea, Eaton instead called at the northern coast of Borneo, and then at Pulau Tioman on his way to Java, although it is not entirely ruled out that he passed through the Tambelan archipelago without halting there. Regardless, it was on this island that Watson plotted to take control of the ship. It is probable that due to the failure of their last cruise, he was able to rally seven to eight pirates, that

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[277] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register, [p. 1362-1364, 1369] declarations of Mateo de Rocha made on January 6, 1688.

[278] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Henry Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689. Note that the two former Portuguese prisoners Gomes and Rodrigo do not mention any other encounter at sea after the Macau ship, although they say they went to Pulo Ubi.

[279] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

[280] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

is to say, almost half of the crew. However, his mutiny was cut short when a Dutch carpenter, whom he regarded as one of his most trusted supporters up until this point, denounced the plot to their chiefs. In his account, Watson does not disclose the name of this betrayer, but in the list of the *Good Hope*'s twenty men annexed to his account, we find, still alive at that time, two Dutchmen, one simply referred to as Henrik, and the other named Cornelis Pietersen. It is precisely because the full name of the latter is given that he is probably the one who betrayed Watson's plot.[281] Now, we find a similarity to this aborted mutiny in the *Infortunios*, with the exception that here Ramírez plays the role of Watson, and that the action takes place in an unspecified location, perhaps in Pulau Ubi, perhaps in Australia. In the *Infortunios*, the betrayer is also named Cornelis, or rather Cornelius because it is said to be English. However, unlike what happened to Watson and the real-life mutineers, those of Ramírez were severely whipped by their comrades. After such punishment, one of them named Henry voluntarily marooned himself once in Madagascar. The *Infortunios* specialists believed that this character derived from the Dutchman Henrik, from Watson's list. However, it is noteworthy that the resemblance between this fictional plot and that of Watson is solely based on the supposition that Cornelio (in the Spanish original) or Cornelius equates with Cornelis Pietersen, if the latter was, in fact, the *Good Hope* crew member who deceived the surgeon, a matter that remains uncertain.

Watson's fate was, overall, less cruel than that suffered by the imaginary mutineers of the *Infortunios*. On the very day his plot was discovered, he was marooned on the uninhabited island of Tambelan. All those who wished to share his fate, or to speak clearly, all those who had wanted to take control of the ship, were allowed to leave the company. Accordingly, six of them departed from the *Good Hope*, namely George Robinson, Francis Cooke, John Linch, Thomas Steele, Matthew Curtis and Anthony Buddart. Besides the three who had been killed by the Portuguese and the Malays, there remained only ten original crew members, who were Walter Beard, Nicholas Burton, the two Richard Webb and Potter, John Dunketon, John Parnell, Duncan Macintosh, James Williamson and the two Dutchmen mentioned above. The following morning, probably aware of the weak position in which so many deserters placed them, Beard and company came to ask their seven former comrades if they would like to come back on board. All refused, and so, while the *Good Hope* set sail, they were left without any means of transportation on Tambelan.[282]

The date of this attempted mutiny is unknown, but it is possible to approximate it by following the information given by Watson on what happened next to him and his six companions in misfortune. He first says that they spent six weeks on Tambelan, then six months on another island in the Riau archipelago. Next, they moved on to Johor, where Watson, Robinson and Cooke embarked themselves on board a Dutch sloop that transported them to Malacca. They found there the frigate *The Pearl*, Captain James Perriman, bringing one of the two English ambassadors sent to Siam, namely John Hill, back to Madras.[283] In fact, this frigate, coming from Aceh and going back to Madras, stayed in Malacca from September 3 to December 6, 1688.[284] Thus, six weeks in Tambelan, giving two and a half months, plus six months in the Riau Islands, equates to eight and a half months since Watson had separated from the pirates. If we consider the dates of the *Pearl*'s stopover at Malaca, it is probable that the aborted mutiny occurred sometime between mid-January and mid-March 1688. This seems plausible, given that the two Portuguese mariners who were captured in July 1687, a few days apart, declared that they were prisoners of the pirates for 10 and a half months, resulting in their release in the second half of May 1688.

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[281] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689. The list annexed to this report is not an official muster roll. It was surely drawn up by Watson himself. Indeed, for three sailors, only the first names are given.

[282] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689. The marooning of these seven Englishmen on Tambelan is also confirmed in ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

[283] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

[284] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1459/fol. 346-565, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1688 to August 31, 1689, [fol. 347v and 404v] arrival and departure of the *Pearl*, 3 September and 6 December 1688.

These two Portuguese in fact remained aboard the *Good Hope* for a slightly longer period of time than Watson, and their testimony provides important information about what the pirates then did, as well as their number and quality. Let us examine the first of these two points. They claimed to have been freed with two other prisoners, subsequent to the seven Englishmen, on one of the small islands off the coast of Sukadana.[285] Hence, as some scholars had already suggested by comparing the *Infortunios* with Watson's account, the *Good Hope* pirates had indeed called at Sukadana.[286] However, any similarities end there. First of all, Ramírez mentions that his pirates were aware that the sultan of this place (whom he describes only as a governor under a so-called king of Borneo) had made offers to the English to come in and trade. Actually, this proposal from the Sultan was made to a merchant named Samuel Glover only during the second half of 1687. Indeed, the latter and a few other European merchants had sought refuge in Sukadana after the Sultan of Benjarmasin, another Muslim kingdom in the southeastern part of Borneo, had their ship destroyed, along with one belonging to the Dutch and two others to the Siamese.[287] Having contact with the Sukadana people was the only way for Beard, Macintosh, and company to learn about these happenings. It is possible that they received diamonds from them in exchange for some goods from their only two prizes, which would explain why they were later found in Madagascar in possession of a lot of these precious stones.[288] Furthermore, unlike Bell and Donkin of the *Infortunios*, they did not commit any violence against the inhabitants of the small sultanate, no kidnappings or anything else. As a proof of this, the four prisoners they released during their stay there were brought to Batavia by a vessel belonging to the *shahbandar* (in other words, the harbormaster) of Sukadana, and no complaints were lodged by her master at that time. Therefore, there is nothing about hypothetical hostilities that these pirates may have committed, neither in the Batavia daily register, nor in the contemporary correspondence of the Governor General and the Council of the Indies where the passages of this insignificant gang of pirates in Borneo are not even mentioned. These pirates were certainly insignificant, because although their ketch-turned-pink was armed with 14 guns, they did not even have enough people to operate this artillery. With the release of the two Portuguese and two more prisoners, a mere 13 English people remained on board, along with 11 prisoners, who were a mix of Portuguese and of these half-breed Asiatic Christians, commonly known as Toepas in India.[289] Thirteen Englishmen? This number does not correspond to the one that can be inferred from the list annexed to Watson's narrative, as it has been observe that the count from this list only yields ten Englishmen, or at least ten Northern Europeans. If the two Portuguese witnesses were not mistaken in their count, then who could these three additional "Englishmen" be? Some boys of this nation? Three other Europeans who could have been embarked at Pulo Condore, or people from one of the two prizes of the *Good Hope*? If the answer is yes in this case, could Ramírez have been considered an Englishman by the Portuguese? If not, this brings us back to my "Portuguese" hypothesis, which suggests that Ramírez was traveling aboard Domingos Lopes' ship, because a Spaniard speaking Portuguese could well have passed for Portuguese.

In any case, it is now established that in mid-May 1688, the *Good Hope* was almost ready to put to sea again, having made wood and water at Sukadana. We also know what her destination was: the pirates were going back to cruise towards the Strait of Singapore.[290] Afterward, there was nothing

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[285] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

[286] F. Andrew Smith and Sue Paul, "More Light on Thomas Gullock's Ambitions for Trade with Borneo at the End of the Seventeenth Century and on the Man Himself," *Borneo Research Bulletin*, vol. 49 (2018), p. 35-52. These authors do it with all the restraint that is required, unlike López Lázaro, *The Misfortunes of Alonso Ramirez* (2011), p. 67.

[287] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/fol. 22-23, narrative of Samuel Glover, William Griffin and Benjamin Phips, Batavia, 8 January 1688; and Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 85, 87, 91, consultations of President-Governor Elihu Yale and the Council of Fort Saint George, Madras, 27 August/6 September 1688.

[288] BL IOR/E/3/48/fol. 93r-98r, narrative of Captain William Freke, Bombay, December 1689.

[289] D-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

[290] ID-ANRI Hoge Regering/inv. nr. 2503/p. 255-256, narrative of Amaro Gomes and Miguel Rodrigo, Batavia, 14 June 1688.

more until they were reported in Madagascar early the following year.[291] Were they able to reach Australia like the *Cygnet* men and the pirates of the *Infortunios*? Let's save this question for later; we will attempt to answer it in due course. In the interim, let's return to the *Cygnet*'s voyage.

From New Holland to St. Lawrence Island

We previously left the *Cygnet* as she was departing from the Batanes Islands, just north of Luzon, where Captain Read had released his last *Aránzazu* prisoners still on board. Before her arrival on the west coast of Australia about mid-January 1688, nothing of interest marked her voyage, except a stopover at Buton Island, in the Celebes.[292] It is difficult to determine exactly how much time Captain Read and his men spent in Australia. Indeed, Dampier gives in his book from January 15 to March 22, 1688, or nine weeks, but in his only surviving manuscript, from January 15 to February 22, or five weeks.[293] This is probably the manuscript that contains the most accurate count, since a Dutchman then a member of the *Cygnet* crew at that time states, for his part, that they stayed there for only three weeks. Furthermore, the brief account that this Dutchman provides of their stopover at this place is completely consistent with Dampier's more extensive texts on the same subject.[294] Clearly, these two testimonies have nothing to do with Ramírez's story, where the sojourn of his pirates in Australia is described in just a few words. After departing from the north-west coast of the Austral continent and then sailing in the open sea to Sumatra, the *Cygnet* proceeded along the south-west coast of this island. Subsequently, she stopped at the largest of the Nicobar Islands, where Dampier was finally allowed to leave the ship along with two of his comrades.[295]

When these three men left, and possibly even earlier, Captains Read and Teat revealed their destination to the company: Madagascar. They therefore proceeded towards Ceylon. However, when they reached the vicinity of this island, they were uncertain what to do or where to go for several days. Dissatisfied with all that useless navigation, a third of the company then requested to be landed on the coast of Coromandel. This group of 24 men wanted to try their luck as mercenaries in the Great Mughal's army. According to their wishes, they were disembarked at Trimlevas (present-day Thirumullaivasal), a port on the southern part of the coast.[296] This incident occurred in the second half of May.[297] A few days later, around June 1, Captain Read and his 44 remaining men, including four Chinese prisoners, made the richest prize of their entire cruise: the *São Antonio*, going from Goa to São Tomé de Meliapore and carrying a substantial sum of cash money to be delivered to Macau, his final destination. This Portuguese ship was seized within sight of the northern coast of Ceylon.[298] Dampier, who relates these two events based on information he later obtained from Coppinger and another of his former comrades, specifies that Read's design was to go to the Red Sea, but due to contrary westerly winds, the *Cygnet* was forced to head

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[291] BL IOR/E/3/48/fol. 93r-98r, narrative of Captain William Freke, Bombay, December 1689.

[292] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 442-462; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 216r-220v.

[293] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 462-472; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 220v-223v.

[294] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688.

[295] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 472-484; and BL Sloane MS 3236, fol. 223v-227v.

[296] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688.

[297] Henry Dodwell (ed.), Records *of Fort St. George: Letters from Fort St. George for 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1918), p. 24-25, letter of President-Governor Elihu Yale and the Council of Fort Saint George to Agent John Nicks and the council at Cuddalore, Madras, 23 May/2 June 1688.

[298] Alfred Martineau, *Mémoires de François Martin, fondateur de Pondichéry, 1665-1696* (Paris: Société de l'histoire des colonies françaises, 1934), vol. II, p. 547-549; NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4026/fol. 1084-1093, letter of Director François Martin to the Directors of the Compagnie des Indes orientales, Pondicherry, 16 February 1689; and Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 85, 87, 91, consultations of President-Governor Elihu Yale and the Council of Fort Saint George, Madras, 27 May/6 June, 31 May/10 June and 7/17 June 1688.

towards Madagascar. However, as we have just seen, this stopover was already planned, and a cruise to the northern part of the Indian Ocean was not mentioned at the time.[299] Moreover, in August 1688, while en route to Madagascar, the *Cygnet* took refuge in Mauritius, then a Dutch colony, in order to let a storm pass. After being informed that another English ship was already anchored on the opposite side of that island, Read deemed it prudent to weigh anchor. He justified his hasty departure by claiming that he was an interloper and feared being arrested by an English company ship. He then reached the neighboring island of Bourbon (present-day La Réunion), a French possession. Unfortunately, the other English ship, *The Tonquin Merchant*, which was returning to England, followed him from Mauritius. Her captain, Robert Knox[300], believed, in fact, that the *Cygnet* needed help, but when he arrived at Bourbon, he was informed that they were West Indian privateers who had arrived in Asia by the South Sea. Three or four days after Knox's arrival, the *Cygnet* set sail for Cape Saint Mary, the southernmost point of Madagascar. Knox counted that there were then 40 men on board the *Cygnet*, who were reinforced at Bourbon by 14 others between Portuguese, English and Dutch. Some of these new recruits were themselves former privateers. They had belonged to another West Indian company that had taken, two and a half years earlier, on the Madagascar west coast, *De Westerwijk*, a VOC flyboat that had come there to trade slaves.[301]

A few words are necessary about the company to which some of these recruits had belonged, because it was perhaps — and this says with great caution — after hearing reports of their exploits that Ramírez inserted into his story the capture of two Moorish ships in the Strait of Singapore. Indeed, their former company was that of the very first "Red Sea pirates", as would be called a few years later these privateers who, in the hope of better profits, would come from the English and French colonies in the Americas to plunder Moor ships in the Indian Ocean. Initially, at least, they were led by Captain Thomas Woollery, and they had arrived late in 1685. They had undertaken two voyages in the Arabian Sea, one towards the Gulf of Oman and the other towards the Gulf of Aden, from where they reached the Red Sea, disrupting shipping between Mocha and Surat. Between these two cruises, during a stay in Madagascar, in February 1686, they had captured the *Westerwijk*. For their second expedition in these waters, they even teamed up with another gang of privateers from the West Indies, led by Captain Thomas Handley. Ultimately, having amassed a very rich booty, and subsequent to a brief stopover at Bourbon, they reached the Bahamas in May 1687. There, they burned the *Westerwijk* and dispersed to other English colonies, especially Massachusetts and Jamaica.[302] As for Captain Handley's company, they remained in the Indian Ocean for a longer time than Woollery's. They, too, had made good prizes near the entrance of the Red Sea, and while the *Cygnet* was heading towards Madagascar, Handley, commanding one of his last Moorish prizes, sailed along the coast of Ceylon, with the intention of preying on ships coming from Manilla that might be in the Strait of Malacca. But, in October 1688, Handley arrived at Kedah, on the western coast of the Malay Peninsula, and sold his ship to the sultan of that place.

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[299] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), 506-510. From the declaration of the Dutchman Eibokken, one of those who landed at Trimlevas, we know that their official destination was indeed Madagascar, not the Red Sea.

[300] Robert Knox (1641-1720) was a famous sea captain and trader in the East Indies. He is best known for having been a prisoner of the King of Kandy for 20 years, and for the work he wrote based on this unfortunate experience: *An Historical Relation of the Island Ceylon in the East-Indies* (London: Royal Society, 1681), 189 p.

[301] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4026/fol. 1294-1295, letter of Governor Simon van der Stel and the Council of the Cape of Good Hope to the Council of the XVII, 11 October 1688. The same account was recorded, upon Knox's arrival at the Cape, in NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 10442/fol. 567, Cape Colony daily register for October 3, 1688. Knox had left Mauritius on or shortly after August 11, 1688, since the VOC officers commanding on that island then gave him a letter of this date addressed to the Governor of the Cape, a copy of which can be found in NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4026/fol. 1296-1297.

[302] There are several documents relating to the pirates who seized the *Westerwijk*. The main ones are: NL-HaNA/VOC/inv. nr. 1420/fol. 553r-558r, declaration of Michiel de Vries, Colombo, 9 August 1686; ViWC Blathwayt Papers/XXV/6/letters of Lieutenant Governor Hender Molesworth to William Blathwayt, Jamaica, 7/17 December 1687 and 3/13 February 1688. For their disarmament in the Bahamas, see among others M-Ar Massachusetts Archives Collection/Vol. 127/fol. 186, 191, deposition of John Danson, Boston, 9/19 August 1687, and letter of Thomas Bridge to Governor General of New England Sir Edmund Andros, New Providence, 6/16 October 1687.

His company then split, with one part going to Malacca and the other to Aceh.[303] However, Woollery's men and Handley's were the only West Indian privateers who made Arab or Moorish prizes in Asia during the time that Ramírez claims to have been a prisoner of his imaginary pirates. And none of those prizes, let us point out, were made toward the Strait of Singapore, nor in that of Malacca, which, let us also remember once again, could not have escaped the Dutch who controlled these straits and were very well aware of all that was happening there, as we have seen. Therefore, we can assume that Ramírez would have heard of their exploits, particularly those of Woollery's gang, which were widely known throughout Asia by the end of 1686. So, his informants would have been the *Good Hope* pirates, or those of the *Cygnet*, if we take for granted, of course, that these two companies gathered together at the end of 1688 or the beginning of 1689 in Madagascar. It is this very last point that I will now attempt to determine.

Rendezvous in the Bay of St. Augustine

A reliable source indicates that the *Good Hope* was in the Bay of Saint Augustin, on the Madagascar south-west coast, at the beginning of 1689, at least before the month of May. This source is William Freke, commander of the private-owned ship *The Anne*, of London, who was licensed by the English company to trade in India.[304] As we will see, he had personally encountered the *Cygnet*, but he obtained his information regarding the *Good Hope* from another merchant captain. Before mid-October 1688, the *Anne* had left Madras, where she had arrived from England a week earlier. She was to load slaves at an Indian port a little further north, namely Trivatore (present-day Tiruvottiyur), with the intention of reselling them in Aceh.[305] Either Captain Freke had changed his mind, or he did not find in Trivatore what he was looking for, as we found him no later than January 1689 in Morondava, on the western coast of Madagascar, negotiating the purchase of slaves with the local king. It had been agreed that the English captain would return to take delivery of this cargo within three months. In the meantime, he had gone to Delagoa Bay, on the coast of Natal, to trade. He met with another private London slave ship, *The John and Mary*, coming from Surat, although we cannot say whether this other vessel was already there or whether he arrived after the *Anne*. Her captain, William Deerow, a veteran of the Malagasy slave trade, informed Freke that he had encountered the ketch *The Good Hope*, in the Bay of Saint Augustine Bay. She was commanded by her former chief mate, Duncan Macintosh, who went by the name of Captain Thompson. Deerow also noticed that, despite the modest size of her crew, there was a substantial quantity of gold and diamonds aboard.[306]

Could Deerow be the archetype of this English merchant that Captains Donkin and Bell of the *Infortunios* met with in Madagascar, and who prevented the second of these pirates from capturing his ship? Furthermore, given that Macintosh and Beard (the latter being clearly the most important of Eaton's former men and thus the true leader of the *Good Hope*'s company) were later the only two members of her crew to be hanged for piracy, at an undetermined date in Guinea, would it not be plausible that they served as models for Captains Donkin and Bell?[307] These are supplementary evidence that support the theory that Ramírez actually traveled aboard the *Good Hope*. Now, is it

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[303] Like Woollery's cruise, Handley's must be reconstructed from a wide variety of sources, the main ones being: NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1459/fol. 346-565, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1688 to August 31, 1689, especially the entry for January 26, 1689, fol. 450r-455v; *idem*/fol. 222v-225r, letter of Joost de Jonge to his wife Joanna Claasen, Kedah, 12 November 1688; and *idem*/fol. 292v-322v, report of Commissioners Jan Dop and Sibrand Sibenius, Malacca, 17 April 1689; as well as BL IOR/E/3/45/fol. 170-171, narrative of Charles Hopkins, Madras, March 1689.

[304] BL IOR/E/3/48/fol. 99r-108r, letter of President-Governor Sir John Child and the Bombay Council to the East India Company, 26 December 1689/5 January 1690.

[305] Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 136, 147, consultations of the President-Governor and the Council of Fort Saint George, in Madras, 26 August/5 September and 2/12 October 1688.

[306] BL IOR/E/3/48/fol. 93r-98r, narrative of Captain William Freke, Bombay, December 1689.

[307] BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-30, Watson's narrative in two copies, Madras, January 1689.

possible to further specify when Deerow encountered this pirate ship? On the one hand, it is known that Freke sailed from Delagoa on May 4, 1689, with the intention of returning to Morondava, and that Deerow was to follow him shortly thereafter.[308] On the other hand, it is also known that the latter had set sail from Surat to Madagascar on December 21, 1688 or a few days later.[309] Therefore, it can be inferred that this encounter took place sometime in February or March 1689, but the *Good Hope* should have been in the Bay of Saint Augustine long before that time.

We left this pirate ship in mid-May 1688, ready to depart from Sukadana bound for the Strait of Singapore or its surroundings, while the *Cygnet* was on the coast of Coromandel. If we were to compare her company to the pirates of the *Infortunios*, it would be absurd to put forward the hypothesis that she could have gone to Australia. It was a land that was virtually unexplored and unfrequented, and there were no ships to be seized and plundered. In fact, Macintosh and Beard had two options available to them to come back to the Indian Ocean, namely either through the Strait of Malacca or through that of Sunda, which runs between Java and Sumatra. It would have been frankly risky for them to choose the first option, since the governor of Malacca had repeatedly dispatched small coastguard vessels to patrol the strait after that Captain Mateo de Rocha had informed him about the pirates' cruises towards Pulo Condore.[310] On the other hand, the second option, namely passing through the Strait of Sunda, would have allowed them to go along the western coastline of Sumatra, as the *Cygnet* had done before. With only 25 men aboard, half of whom being prisoners or former prisoners, whatever course they would have taken, they had to be extremely cautious, even more than their predecessors, in order to avoid any ship that could overpower them. Also, the island that the pirates of the *Infortunios* did not want to call at when going to Australia because they believed it to be inhabited by Portuguese, if for this episode we have to assimilate them to those of the *Good Hope*, this island could be one of the Mascarenes, originally discovered by the Portuguese (*Ilhas Mascarenhas*), perhaps Mauritius, or perhaps Bourbon, where the *Cygnet* had made a stopover.

Regarding the possibility of the *Good Hope* and the *Cygnet* actually gathering together on the Madagascar west coast, it appears that there is preliminary confirmation in the testimony given by an Anglican pastor, John Ovington, in his narrative recounting his own adventures in India. In 1690, during a stopover at St. Helena Island, while en route from England to Surat aboard the East India Company ship *The* Benjamin, he heard of three pirates (two English and one Dutch) who had gathered in the Bay of Saint Augustine following their various cruises in the Red Sea. The master of a New York slave ship who brought the news to Saint Helena also claimed that the three were laden with silks from the plunder of vessels trading between Mocha and Indian ports, mainly Surat.[311] Was all this true, simply probable, or did Ovington misinterpret or misunderstand what he heard, or even did his memory fail him? We know that the *Benjamin* remained in Saint Helena for the majority of January 1690.[312] Following her departure, another Company ship, namely *The Berkeley Castle*, coming from Bombay and bound for England, arrived there on February 24 and actually found a New York pink anchored in the island's main harbor. She carried a cargo of slaves

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[308] BL IOR/E/3/48/fol. 93r-98r, narrative of Captain Freke, Bombay, December 1689. It is noteworthy to mention that a Dutch galiote, dispatched from the Cape Colony, discovered, upon her arrival at Delagoa on November 15, 1688, an English ship engaged in trading with the locals. The Dutch first mistook this vessel for a Portuguese. However, it is chronologically impossible, as we see here, for this mysterious English ship to be the *John and Mary* or the *Anne*. On this subject, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4027/fol. 104r-171, logbook of the voyage of the galiote *De Noord* to Delagoa Bay, from 19 October 1688 to 15 February 1689, copied into the Cape Colony daily register. On the other hand, could this mysterious ship have been the *Good Hope*? It is not impossible, but unlikely.

[309] SHG Archives EIC/4/3/p. 227, letter of John Child and John Gladman to the Governor and Council of St. Helena Island, aboard the frigate *Worcester*, at Swally Hole (Surat), 11/21 December 1688.

[310] See entries after January 1688 in NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from September 1, 1687 to August 31, 1688.

[311] J. Ovington, *A Voyage To Suratt in the Year 1689, giving a large Account of that City and its Inhabitants, and of the English Factory there* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1696), p. 102-103.

[312] SHG Archives EIC 1/3/p. 146-151, consultation of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 6/16 and 16/26 January 1690.

purchased in Madagascar, and a man named Barré commanded her.[313] This captain, or rather merchant, whose full name was James Barré, was a Huguenot who had been living in New York for about ten years. He had previous trading experience in the West Indies and the Gulf of Mexico, notably with the English logwood cutters in the Laguna de Términos, and incidentally with privateers, as he brought Indian captives from this region to New York on at least one occasion for the purpose of selling them as slaves.[314] More importantly, for eight years, he had been sometimes captain and sometimes supercargo of the ship that some merchants of the New York colony almost yearly dispatched to Madagascar west coast to purchase slaves.[315] However, it is not easy to determine when exactly he was in Madagascar during his 1689-1690 voyage, since no source explicitly mentions him. To do this, although in a very approximate manner, it is necessary to call for several documents. It is first known that James Barré was in New York in June 1688 when he dressed up the estate inventory of a man who had died in Madagascar, at the request of the owners of a pink called *The Marguerite*.[316] Barré had indeed been supercargo of this other vessel, then commanded by one William Dearing, during his previous voyage to Madagascar.[317] However, a pink also christened *Marguerite* had left New York in November 1688 for the same destination, and she had stopped at the Cape of Good Hope from March 25 to April 4, 1689.[318] Is this the pink whose commander was Barré and that called at Saint Helena in January 1690? Here, we are faced with a first problem since, during Barré's stopover in Saint Helena, his pink was called *The Charles*.[319] And there is the second issue: Barré would not have stopped at the Cape on his way to Madagascar. Indeed, on his arrival in Saint Helena in the first days of August 1689, Captain John Bromwell, the commander of the *Rochester*, another East India Company vessel bound for England, reported that he had met at sea Captain Barré, who informed him that his shipowners had instructed him not to stop in the Dutch colony, because when he had left New York, there were rumors of war between England and the United Provinces of the Netherlands.[320] Unfortunately, it remains unknown when and where Captain Bromwell may have encountered Barré's pink. Two, three, or four weeks before his own stopover in Saint Helena? Was it in the South Atlantic or in the Indian Ocean?[321] In all cases, we can estimate that Barré was present in Madagascar between July and December 1689. It was far too late for him to have been able to meet with the *Good Hope* that was there at the beginning of the year, and it is the same for the *Cygnet* that, as we will discover soon, was no longer there either. So, it is reasonable to say that Ovington's memory played tricks

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[313] BL IOR/L/MAR/A/LXXXII, fol. 92r, *Berkeley Castle* logbook, kept by Philip Leigh, for 14/24 February 1690.

[314] NYSA New York Colony Council Papers/Vol. 28/no. 172, list of Spanish Indians imported and sold in New York, and *idem*/Vol. 29/no. 166, deposition of James Barré, 26 July/5 August 1680.

[315] His first voyage was in 1681-1683. See NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4018/fol. 171-194, extract from James Barré's journal kept in Madagascar on board the *Philip*, April to September 1682. According to the customs registers of the English colonies available for this period (Barbados and Jamaica), the Cape Colony daily registers and the St. Helena archives that I have consulted for the whole decade, it seems in fact never to have had more than two New York ships to make this voyage each year, most often only one.

[316] NYSA Wills and Probates from the Prerogative and later Probate Courts/Vol. 14A/p. 25, inventory of John Duvall's estate, New York, 19/29 June 1688.

[317] SHG Archives EIC/1/2/p. 386-388, 390-391, consultations of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 24 November/4 December and 3/13 December, 1687. Let us specify that a second New York pink also named *Marguerite* or *Margaret*, under Oliver Cransborough's command, also made a voyage to Madagascar almost at the same time. About the journey of this other *Marguerite* that took place from November 1686 to April 1688, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4029/no. 6; BL Sloane MS 3672, fol. 70, letter of Richard Salwey, Anjouan, 22 October/1 November, 1687; TNA CO/142/13/fol. 33-48, 192; TNA CO/142/13/fol. 39, 192; and NYSA New York Colony Council Papers/Vol. 34/Part 2/nos. 66 and 74-76, Vice-Admiralty Court session of 5/15 May 1688, and judgment and other documents in the case East India Company vs. Cransborough.

[318] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 4028/fol 64b, list of ships that came in and out the Cape in 1689.

[319] SHG Archives EIC/1/3/p. 156-157, consultation of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 17/27 February 1690.

[320] SHG Archives EIC/1/3/p. 121, consultation of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 24 July/3 August 1689.

[321] As a general rule, vessels from New York going to Madagascar undertook this journey after the hurricane season, in other words from the end of October onwards.

on him, and that Barré did not encounter three pirate ships in the Bay of Saint Augustine, but that he heard they had been there before his arrival. Moreover, when he called at Saint Helena on his way to New York, Barré had with him at least two excellent informants, two former *Cygnet* privateers, whom he had taken as passengers in Madagascar.

No one would have known about these two men if one of them, Isaac Bedwell, had not gone ashore to rent a room in a cabaret during the *Charles*' stopover at Saint Helena, and if the other, John Adroall, while going to visit his comrade, had not foolishly lost 313 pieces of eight in Spanish money in the same room. Within a few days, the matter was brought to the attention of the governor of Saint Helena, who deemed it highly suspicious that a man claiming to be a carpenter, possibly a castaway, possessed such a substantial sum of money.[322] Adroall was quick to confess that he was a former crew member of Captain Swan's ship, and that after Captain Read had taken command of her at Mindanao, they had gone to Madagascar, where seven or eight of the crew, including Bedwell and himself, had been left.[323] The governor then convened his council and all the captains of the East India Company ships and those of others licensed by the Company then present on Saint Helena, and unanimously they resolved that the two men, with their booty, should be sent to England to be tried as pirates.[324]

The testimony of these two men, at least that of Adroall, since he is the most explicit on that point, seems to both confirm and refute Dampier's account of the adventures of Captain Read and those who had followed him in Madagascar. Indeed, according to Dampier, his former comrades and their captain entered the service of a Malagasy king to assist him in a war that pitted him against one of his neighbors. In the meantime, a New York ship, which was coming to buy slaves, anchored in the harbor where the *Cygnet* was. When they returned, Read and five or six of his men discreetly embarked themselves on that slaver, and the privateers who remained in Madagascar appointed Teat to command the *Cygnet*.[325] Thus, that amounts to six or seven men, which is only one less than Adroall's stated figure of seven or eight. It is likely that we are dealing with the same group. However, Adroall does not say that they left the majority of their company, but that they were left in Madagascar by them, implying that the latter had departed with the ship. This would imply that the New York slave ship, if indeed she is the pink *The Charles*, Captain James Barré, would have arrived after the *Cygnet*'s departure. This is also what we know regarding this last ship's courses for the year 1689, according, among other documents, to Captain Freke's report, to which we now need to return.

We had left Freke departing from Delagoa Bay, in Natal, in the first days of May 1689, while he was preparing to return to Morondava. Before the end of that month, his ship, *The Anne*, ran aground somewhere on Madagascar's west coast. With a small sloop serving as a tender for the *Anne* and a rowboat, he and his men were able to reach Morondava, where they were aware Captain Deerow would eventually arrive. But considering that the latter's ship would be too small to accommodate all the castaways, in addition to the slaves that her captain would load there, Freke decided to go to the island of Anjouan and attempt to reach Surat or Bombay from there. On June 19, nine days after his arrival on this island, he was joined by two ships. He recognized one of them as the ship formerly called *The Little England*, which was dispatched about six years before by the late Sir John Buckworth to trade in the South Sea under Captain Swan's command, and whose crew had since

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[322] SHG Archives EIC/1/3/p. 156-157, consultation of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 17/27 February 1690.

[323] SHG Archives EIC/1/3/p. 157-159, consultation of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 19 February/1 March 1690. Adroall's words are recorded as follows: "that... he [had] joined with a party of men and went overland into the South Seas, where they took a ship of the Spaniards, and afterward joined with Captain Swan, commander of a pirate, and was with him in that way of living some years together, then they came to an island called Mindano, upon the Coast of China, where they left the said Captain Swan, and one Captain Reed took the command of the said ship, and brought it to Madagascar, where seven or eight of the said ship was left, whereof the said Adroall was one, and Isaac Bodwell an other."

[324] SHG Archives EIC/1/3/p. 159-160, consultation of Governor John Blackwell and the Council of Saint Helena Island, 22 February/4 March 1690. Among the sea captains who took part in the council was Deerow, who was returning to England.

[325] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 510.

turned pirate. The second vessel was a New England brigantine, which the first had encountered in the Bay of Saint Augustine, where their crews had joined forces. The two pirates had been sailing together on the coast of Sofala in Mozambique. There, they had taken a first Portuguese vessel and deprived her of all the ivory, ambergris and other goods she had aboard. Upon reaching the island of Moheli, they captured a second Portuguese, whose captain they killed, and as they had done for the first one, they relieved her of the best of her cargo, especially cloth, and afterward they cut of all her masts before releasing her. Eight of Freke's men voluntarily joined these pirates, including Surgeon Mate John Humes, who was one of Dampier's informants regarding the *Cygnet*'s adventures in the Indian Ocean. Two days later, on June 21, the two pirate ships left Freke and those of his crew who had remained with him, heading north, therefore likely towards the Red Sea.[326]

Captain Freke's important testimony complements and confirms Dampier's much shorter account based on what Surgeon Mate Humes reported to him. The only thing Dampier adds that is of any interest is the name of the commander of the New England brigantine, a captain Knight, whose first name he does not give, and the fact that Knight too came especially to Madagascar to play the rogue in the Red Sea.[327] Another interesting fact is that this brigantine would have been captured by those who now navigated her either on the Dutch or another European nation in the West Indies.[328] It appears that this is confirmed by the presence on board this ship of a Dutchman who claimed to have been kidnapped in the Bahamas by this gang of pirates.[329] This brings us back to Ovington's report concerning the three pirates, two English and one Dutch, who were alleged to have been present in Saint Augustine's in 1689. So, here, the nationalities would not apply to the captains or crews, but rather to the build of the vessels.[330] At this point, in light of the sources concerning the passages of all these pirates in Madagascar, it is possible to establish a fairly reasonable chronology of events. Initially, the analysis of these sources reveals that the *Cygnet* was indeed the first to arrive in Saint Augustine, around October 1688. Before the beginning of the next year, her crew would have waged war on behalf of a local king. On the return of this venture, half a dozen of the privateers, including their captain Read, as well as Adroall and Bedwell, refused to re-embark and remained at the port, awaiting the arrival of a merchant vessel capable of transporting them back to America. Shortly after or around the same time, it is said that the brigantine captained by Knight stopped at Saint Augustine and her company joined forces with that of the *Cygnet*, now commanded by Captain Josiah Teat. Both ships would have gone together to cruise on the coast of Sofala. It is possible that before their departure, the *Good Hope* would have arrived in the bay in turn. So, we would have the three pirates mentioned by Ovington: two English-built ships (the *Cygnet* and the *Good Hope*) and one Dutch-built ship (Knight's brigantine).[331] Then, in February or March, Captain Deerow would have stopped there and met the *Good Hope*, the few pirates still aboard trying to pass her off as a merchant ship. Ultimately, after the departure of this third and final pirate, Captain Barré would have been the next visitor in the second half of 1689. He would have taken aboard Read and those who had remained with him in Saint Augustine, or at the very least, Adroall and Bedwell. Accordingly, the New York merchant would have learned from these former crew members of the *Cygnet* that three pirate ships had previously been present in the bay. Evidently, it is possible to make several variations on this

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[326] BL IOR/E/3/48/fol. 93r-98r, narrative of Captain William Freke, Bombay, December 1689. Note that Freke does not give the names of the captains of these pirates.

[327] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 510.

[328] Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1691* (Madras: Government Press, 1917), p. 22, resolution of the President-Governor Elihu Yale and the Council of Fort Saint George, Madras, 15/25 May 1691.

[329] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1473/fol. 403r-422v, letter from Chief Merchant Joan Fauconnier and the Masulipatnam factory council to the Governor and Council of the Coromandel Coast, Masulipatnam, 15 January 1690.

[330] J. Ovington, *A Voyage To Suratt in the year 1689* (1696), p. 102-103.

[331] There is a possibility that a Dutch-born captain named George Peterson (Joris Pietersen, in Dutch), who commanded a majority of Englishmen, coming from the West Indies via New England and Newfoundland, was in the vicinity of Madagascar in 1689. However, incorporating this additional possibility, which raises more questions than it answers, is beyond the scope of this study.

hypothetical timeline. For example, Read and others could have sailed with Deerow (which is unlikely since this captain had to return to England), or aboard a New York slave ship, other than Barré's pink, which would have stopped there too. And for this other pink, we have a candidate, namely *The Marguerite*, who stopped at the Cape in March 1689, on her way to Madagascar, but concerning which, we have no further information.

Conclusion: in the event that Ramírez was indeed traveling aboard the *Good Hope*, he could have met with former *Cygnet* privateers in Saint Augustine Bay, around the close of 1688 or at the beginning of the next year. If Miguel de Medina had been his informant regarding the navigation of the latter ship from Pulo Condore onwards, it is unlikely that this other Spaniard remained on Madagascar as a prisoner of Captain Read. Indeed, the latter and those who accompanied him departed from the island to return to America, whereas Medina had reached the Philippines, sometime before April 1690, as we have seen and as I will analyze hereafter. There is still the possibility that the *Good Hope* arrived at Saint Augustine before the *Cygnet* and Knight's brigantine left that bay together to cruise off Mozambique. This is yet another speculation to be added to the already busy file of the *Infortunios*. Finally, and just to ensure that we have examined all the possibilities regarding the *Cygnet*, and to determine when Miguel de Medina was allowed to leave the ship, let us examine the courses this ship took after leaving Anjouan in June 1689 in company with the brigantine of Knight.

According to Dampier, who still relies on the narrative of Surgeon Humes, after they left Freke and the other castaways of the *Anne*, Captains Teat and Knight headed for the Red Sea, but the *Cygnet* was sailing so badly that Knight parted company with her one night, and changing course, he headed towards Aceh. The *Cygnet* was, in fact, in such poor condition, and the winds were so contrary, that Teat resolved to reach the coast of Coromandel. He and all the experienced privateers of his company landed there with the intention of enlisting in the service of the Great Mughal. Only the new recruits from the *Anne* remained aboard the *Cygnet*, and they had hope of bringing the ship back to England.[332] Once again, apart from a few details, Dampier was well-informed. Indeed, in September 1689, the *Cygnet* had stopped at Coringa (present-day Korangi), on the far north of Coromandel. Upon her arrival, the local authorities suspected that this English ship was a pirate.[333] However, the 28 men who disembarked from her were able to travel to the neighboring town of Datcheron, but when they were about to leave for the Mughal army camp, they were arrested.[334] Nevertheless, they were all released in November, and some of them went further south to the trading post that the French company owned in Masulipatnam. Another one, a Dutchman named Jacob Sijbrantsen, found himself as far north as Vizagapatam, and he revealed that the *Westerwijk*'s surgeon mate was aboard the pirate.[335] He also stated that he himself had arrived in Madagascar as a prisoner on a small English ship coming from the Bahamas. There, the latter had met with another pirate of the same nation of about 120 tons and 8 guns, which could only be the *Cygnet*. Sijbrantsen then went aboard this second ship, where the *Westerwijk*'s former surgeon mate was, and where there were 48 men in total. Because of a storm, this pirate ship was unable to reach the Red Sea, and as a result she arrived at Coringa, where 26 white men disembarked from her. Finally, the rest of the company, numbering 22, went to sea again, with the

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[332] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 510-511.

[333] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1472/fol. 961r-970v, letter of Chief Merchant Joan Fauconnier and the Masulipatnam factory council to the Governor and council of the Coromandel Coast, Masulipatnam, 20 September 1689.

[334] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1472/fol. 5-76, letter of Governor Laurens Pit and the Council of the Coast of Coromandel to the Council of XVII, Paliacate, 6 January 1690.

[335] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1472/fol. 997v-1004v, letter of Chief Merchant Joan Fauconnier and the Masulipatnam factory council to the Governor and Council of the Coast of Coromandel, Masulipatnam, 27 November 1689.

intention of returning to Madagascar.[336] In fact, if these men reached their destination, they ran the *Cygnet* aground in the Bay of Saint Augustine. It was there that Captain Knox saw her wreck, as he told Dampier when the two met in England a few years later.[337] In fact, in his autobiographical sketch *Concerning Severall Remarkable Passags of my Life that hath hap'ned since my Deliverance out of my Captivity*, Knox mentions that, towards the end of the first half of 1691, on his arrival on Madagascar west coast, he found not one, but three wrecks of pirate ships.[338]

Now, we shall return to Miguel de Medina. Was he, along with Andrés de Salazar or other Spanish prisoners, authorized to leave the *Cygnet* at Coringa at the same time that Captain Teat and half of the privateers did it themselves? At first glance, this seems likely, since we know from the testimony of the Irishman Fitzgerald that the Sevillan mariner had come to Manila before April 1690 as chief mate of Don Teodoro de São Lucas Zakreuski's ship.[339] At the time, this Polish adventurer, who pretended to be a nobleman and was married to a Spanish woman from the Canaries, lived among the Portuguese in Porto Novo (present-day Parangipettai), in the southernmost part of the coast of Coromandel. For several years, he had commanded the *Boavista*, a Portuguese ship that traded with Manila annually.[340] He was indeed in the great Philippine port during the last months of 1689, before departing for India within the first days of the following year.[341] This confirms Fitzgerald's testimony that Medina was sailing abord São Lucas' ship at the beginning of 1690. However, the Polish captain had undertaken this voyage, departing from Madras on July 11, 1689.[342] Therefore, it is chronologically impossible that Medina was on board the *Cygnet* when this ship stopped, as we have just seen, at Coringa, in the far north of the same coast, in August or September 1689. So, he was released significantly earlier.

The only other possibility is that Medina disembarked from the *Cygnet* in May 1688 at Trimlevas, as the case of another man from that ship suggests. Among the 25 privateers or so who then left Captain Read, two of them, namely the surgeon Coppinger and a John Morgan, had travelled by foot to the Danish trading post at Tranquebar (present-day Tharangambadi).[343] Upon reaching their destination, Coppinger embarked himself aboard the *Boavista* with Captain Teodoro de São Lucas,

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[336] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1473/fol. 403r-422v, letter of Chief Merchant Joan Fauconnier and the Masulipatnam factory council to the Governor and Council of the Coast of Coromandel, Masulipatnam, 15 January 1690. Although neither the name of Captain Teat nor that of the *Cygnet* are never mentioned in these various reports, we are indeed dealing with the same, among other things, because some former crew members of the *Westerwijk* are mentioned to be then with these English pirates, and because it will be remembered that Read had taken some of them on board during his stopover at Bourbon the previous year.

[337] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 511.

[338] Bodleian Library, MS Rawl. Q. c. 15, fol. 34, transcribed in James Ryan (ed.), *An Historical Relation of Ceylon: Together with Somewhat Concerning Severall Remarkeable Passages of my Life by Robert Knox* (Glasgow: James MacLehose and Sons, 1911), p. 344.

[339] AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 680/[Exp. 35] fol. 253r, denunciation of John Fitzgerald, Manila, 24 April 1690.

[340] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1453/fol. 343v-347r, letter of Governor Thomas Slicher and the Council of Malacca to the Governor General and the Council of the Indies in Batavia, Malacca, 23 February 1688; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1438/fol. 355, petition of Teodoro de São Lucas Zakreuski to the same, Malacca, 16 August 1687.

[341] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1484/p. 70-425, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1689 to 31 August 1690, [p. 223-224, 237-238] arrival and departure of the *Boavista* coming from Manila, bound to Porto Novo, 25 January and 9 February 1690.

[342] Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1689* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 56, 61, Fort Saint George daily register under 4/14 June and 1/11 July 1689; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1459/fol. 346-565, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1688 to 31 August 1689, [fol. 556r, 561r] arrival and departure of the ships *Boavista* and *São Tomé*, coming from Madras and bound to Manila, 11 and 17 August 1689.

[343] Dampier, *A New Voyage round the World* (1697), p. 507. For a Dutch source, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688; if this witness mentions the two privateers going to Tranquebar, he does not give their names.

who took him to Madras, where they arrived on June 14, 1688.[344] Now, from Dampier's narrative, we know that Coppinger then made a voyage aboard a Portuguese ship from Porto Novo to Manila, where he met their former comrade from the *Bachelors' Delight*, Fitzgerald, who had regained his freedom, married a rich widow, and was practicing medicine.[345] It is even possible to place this voyage in time and identify the captain he was serving. Dampier received Coppinger's confidences on this matter, in Malacca, in October 1689, while the surgeon was aboard a Danish ship from Tranquebar going to Johor,[346] the *Dansborg*, Captain Christian Mulder.[347] However, before this date, the only voyage to Manila that Coppinger could have made aboard a Portuguese ship from Porto Novo was that made by the *Boavista*, whose owner and commander was Teodoro de São Lucas, and it was barely a month after the Pole had brought him from Tranquebar to Madras.[348] As was customary for this type of trading voyage, the *Boavista* reached Manila during the final third of the year, and departed around December 19, 1688.[349]

There is therefore no longer any possible doubt. Miguel de Medina has followed the same course as Coppinger. After leaving the *Cygnet* at Trimlevas, he proceeded to Tranquebar, where he embarked with São Lucas. He then accompanied the latter to Madras, Malacca, and finally Manila, undertaking at the same time his first of at least four voyages to the Philippines under the orders of the Polish

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[344] Henry Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Letters from Fort St. George for 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1918), p. 33, letter of President-Governor Elihu Yale and his council to Simon Holcomb and John Devet, Company's agents at Conimere, 16/26 June 1688; and Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 91, arrival of the *Boavista*, and Harman Coppinger's delivery of his narrative to President Yale and the Council, 4/14 and 9/19 June 1688.

[345] Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (1697), p. 383. According to their former comrade, Fitzgerald had been in Manila for 18 months when Coppinger saw him again. However, this is unlikely. The Irishman had indeed arrived in Manila at the beginning of October 1687, as reported in AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B/fol. 16r-17r, act of the Governor Curuzealegui, Manila, 8 October 1687. And as I will demonstrate, Coppinger met him about a year later. A few months prior to this reunion, or at least after June 1688, Fitzgerald had been admitted as a full resident of Manila. For a confirmation, see AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 680/[Exp. 35] fol. 255v, opinion of Baltasar de Santa Cruz, Manila, June 1690.

[346] Dampier, *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), part. I, p. 157-159, 164.

[347] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1484/p. 70-425, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1689 to 31 August 1690, [p. 103, 112] arrival and departure of the *Dansborg*, 17 and 24 October 1689. John Coventry, commander of the sloop *Good Hope*, with whom Dampier came from Aceh to Malacca, stopped here from October 15 to November 23, 1689 (*idem*, p. 103, 143). Dampier mentions that he met Coppinger once again upon the latter's return from Johor, although it is uncertain when exactly. Indeed, the *Dansborg*, returning from Johor, left Malacca to return to Tranquebar on January 17, 1690 (*idem*, 199, 204), while Dampier claims to have left Aceh with Coventry around January 11 for Madras, where they arrived after three weeks of travel (*Voyages and Descriptions*, part. I, p. 178-179). It is highly probable that Coventry's sloop and the *Dansborg* encountered each other at sea prior to reaching the coast of Coromandel, which would have provided Dampier with the opportunity to converse with Coppinger for a second time.

[348] Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1688* (Madras: Government Press, 1916), p. 101, 103, granting of a leave to Captain São Lucas for the *Boavista* and departure of this ship bound to Manila, 25 June/5 July and 28 June/8 July 1688. See also NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1452/p. 1244-1600, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1687 to 31 August 1688, [p. 1567-1568], arrival and departure of the *Boavista*, 12 and 15 August 1688. It is also chronologically impossible for Coppinger to have taken part in the next voyage of the *Boavista* departing from Madras on July 11, 1689, of which I previously spoke, and in which Miguel de Medina was a participant, because the surgeon was then traveling aboard the *Dansborg*.

[349] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1459/fol. 346-565, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1688 to 31 August 1689, [fol. 431r and 446r] arrival and departure of the *Boavista*, 5 and 17 January 1689.

captain.[350] It should also be noted that neither Dampier nor Dutch sources[351] include Medina among the number of privateers who separated from Captain Read, which indicates that he had indeed remained their prisoner. Furthermore, since the Sevillan mariner was in Manila during the second part of 1688, it is certain that it was then that the Spanish authorities in the Philippines learned of the continuation of the wanderings of the privateers who had taken the *Aránzazu*, including their stopover in Australia.

So, when did all this news reach New Spain? Or, to make it clear, when was the viceroy Count of Galve informed of it? It is necessary to first know that, after the return of the *Santa Rosa* to Manila in 1686, the same galleon whose crew had spotted the *Cygnet* in the Marianas, the governor of the Philippines had forbidden the dispatch of another galleon to Acapulco for the moment. He had employed all fit vessels, including those capable of making the voyage to New Spain, in order to patrol among the Philippines and pursue the *Cygnet*.[352] It was only in May 1688 that he decided to send another galleon across the Pacific, the *Santo Cristo de Burgos*, a brand-new vessel that had just been equipped for her first sea voyage.[353] It was aboard this ship that Bernardo de Uriarte, Captain Swan's other former prisoner from Old Spain, returned home to New Spain.[354] The galleon arrived at Acapulco in the first days of March 1689.[355] Uriarte, who was then ill, was forced to seek treatment at one of the Mexico's hospitals, instead of returning home. During his convalescence there, he had the opportunity to be introduced to the Count of Galve in person. He even told him about his misadventures in the hands of English pirates and in the service of the Sultan of Maguindanao. Ultimately, the viceroy awarded him a coastal pilot's certificate to serve aboard the flagship of the flotilla that set sail from Acapulco in mid-July 1689 to pursue French pirates believed to be found on the northern coasts towards Sinaloa.[356] Apart from the personal testimony of the old Biscayan, the Count of Galve must have gained further details regarding the *Cygnet*, including the capture of Ferrer's frigate, by perusing the dispatches that his subordinate, the governor of the Philippines, addressed to the King of Spain, and which were carried to New Spain by the galleon

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[350] His second voyage was that of 1689-1690, as we have seen. The third would be that of 1690-1691, but we do not have formal proof that Medina was on board the *Boavista* as for the others; for this particular voyage, see Dodwell (ed.), *Records of Fort St. George: Diary and Consultation Book of 1690* (Madras: Government Press, 1917), p. 38, 53, Fort Saint George daily register under 5/15 June and 4/14 July 1690; NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1484/p. 70-425, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1689 to 31 August 1690, [p. 416 and 419-420] arrival and departure of the *Boavista*, 21 and 24 August 1690; and NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1498/fol. 340v-341r, Dutch translation of a letter of the governor of Philippines to that of Malacca, Manila, 8 January 1691. The fourth is that of 1691-1692, during which he testified before the commissioner of the Inquisition Baltasar de Santa Cruz; AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5] fol. 360v-362, declaration of Miguel de Medina, Cavite, 29 November 1691. Concerning this fourth voyage, see NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1514/p. 953-1176, Malacca daily register from 1 September 1691 to 31 August 1692, [p. 954, 1030] departure of the *Boavista* bound for Manila, 3 September 1691, and his arrival coming back from this Spanish port, 18 January 1692. Finally, Medina made a fifth voyage (1692-1693) on the *Boavista*, but under the orders of a captain other than São Lucas, who still owned the ship. A document specifically mentions that he was still first mate of the ship*;* NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1534/p. 955-957, Dutch translation of an act of Governor Fausto Cruzat, Manila, 28 January 1693.

[351] NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688.

[352] AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui, Manila, 27 December 1687, with addenda of 22 May 1688.

[353] AGI FILIPINAS/24/R.9/N.45, letter of Governor Gabriel de Curucelaegui, Manila, 21 May 1688.

[354] AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5] fol. 315-319, information made in Acapulco at the request of Bernardo de Uriarte, 4 April 1689.

[355] AGI MEXICO/58/R.1/N.13 et N.13A, letter of Viceroy Count of Galve to the King of Spain, Mexico, 22 March 1689, and resolution regarding the patache *Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Zaragoza*, 18 of the same month; and AGI MEXICO/59/R.3/N.6, letter of the same to the same, Mexico, 2 January 1690.

[356] AGN-México Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5/]fol. 259r-267v, voluntary statement of Uriarte, Mexico, 9 and 10 March 1693. See also AGI MEXICO/59/R.3/N.14/*Testimonio de las segundas diligencias en busca del pirata que infesta las costas de Guadalajara, ejecutadas por el gobernador Don Andrés de Arriola*/fol. 1r-13v. During this voyage, in accordance with the viceroy's orders, Uriarte was landed near his home at the port of Mazatlan. See AGN-Mexico Inquisición/Vol. 526/[Exp. 5] fol. 320r, leave of Captain Andrés de Arriola to Bernardo de Uriarte, at sea, 11 October 1689.

Santo Cristo.[357] As for what Miguel de Medina could have verbally reported regarding the subsequent movements of the pirate ship during his first visit to Manila in 1688, it was not known until the arrival of the next galleon, the *Santo Niño*, in Acapulco in December 1689.[358] From the above, it appears evident that the Count of Galve was not unaware of what the *Cygnet* privateers had done on the other side of the Pacific when he heard Alonso Ramírez telling him about his own adventures, and subsequently directed Sigüenza to put the narrative into writing. Finally, if the resulting little book was indeed faithful to Ramírez's words, then the viceroy certainly did not fail to observed disturbing lies, or at the very least, significant discrepancies with the news he had received from the Philippines.

Ultimately, in the event that anyone would claim that the ship stranded by Ramírez in Yucatan in late 1689 was the *Cygnet*, we see here that this is absolutely impossible chronologically. Could it be otherwise with the *Good Hope*? Sadly, the last official mention of this ship is to be found in Deerow's oral report to Freke in May 1689. We do not know much about what happened to this pirate, except what reveal two annotations in the list of her original crew attached to Watson's account. It is indeed noted here, both against the name of Duncan Macintosh and that of Walter Beard: "hanged in Guinea." This suggests that the *Good Hope* ended her course in West Africa and that the two leaders of her company were arrested there, tried as pirates and then executed as such. Despite researching the few remaining archives of the Royal African Company and those of the Geoctroyeerde Westindische Compagnie (the Dutch company with trading posts in Guinea), I was unable to find anything on this subject.[359] It is possible that the *Good Hope* traveled to Guinea, or perhaps she did not. Indeed, Macintosh and Beard could have left their ship as a wreck in Madagascar, and like Read, Adroall, Bedwell and a few others of the *Cygnet*, they would have embarked on a passing slave ship, and then, they would have been recognized as the former *Good Hope* chief pirates in Guinea, during a stopover of the ship that brought them back to England or elsewhere. It is also possible that they followed, still on board the *Good Hope*, the same course as the pirates of the *Infortunios*, since it was the course to reach the West Indies.

Whatever it was, in light of everything we have seen so far, one might even doubt that Ramírez brought a frigate given to him by pirates on the Yucatan north-east coast. Moreover, it has yet to be discovered any documents corroborating the assertion that the frigate was indeed stranded and sunk in that location, with the exception of a single letter from the private correspondence of Viceroy Count of Galve, who obtained his information exclusively from the Puerto Rican Creole. It would not be surprising if Ramirez and his companions of misfortune were even brought there by Englishmen, whether privateers or not. Indeed, this coast, just north of the keys of present-day Belize, was then more frequented by the English than by the Spanish.[360] An incident that occurred in the area, albeit three years earlier, also seems to echo the alleged shipwreck of Ramírez. In December 1686, Captains Robert Allison (himself a former privateer) and Robert Glover, who came to load logwood in Belize, found on one key the wreck of a Portuguese-built ship with a large quantity of ivory, beeswax and a few surviving black slaves. Given her cargo, this ship came from West Africa, and probably, she was brought here by some privateer who could have taken her,

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[357] Among the documents transmitted by Governor Curucelaegui on this occasion were copies of all the acts about Fiztgerald and his three English comrades who had surrendered themselves to the Spaniards, and all those relating to the capture of the *Aranzazu*. The endorsement of his letter of 22 May 1688 (AGI FILIPINAS/12/R.1/N.60B) mentioned that the letter and all its attachments were received in Spain on 28 December 1689, by the way of the mercury ships coming from Veracruz.

[358] AGI MEXICO/59/R.3/N.6, letter of Viceroy Count of Galve to the King of Spain, Mexico, 2 January 1690.

[359] The two surviving copies of Watson's account were forwarded to the Company board of directors in England, possibly at their own request, by the President-Governor and Council of Fort Saint George in Madras. One was sent by the *Scepter* and received on 29 July/9 August 1698 (BL IOR/E/3/47/fol. 27-28) and the other by the *Tonquin Merchant* and received on 28 January/7 February 1697 (*idem*/fol. 29-30). Therefore, both men were hanged before the beginning of 1697, and it would appear that the marginal notes concerning their execution were added in Madras, and not upon receipt of these documents in England.

[360] For this particular item, see the shipping lists for Jamaica and New England during the second half of the 1680s, preserved in TNA CO5/848 and CO/142/13.

either in Guinea, or in Brazil.[361] Moreover, the course of the *Infortunios* pirates to reach the West Indies from Madagascar corresponds to that taken in the following decade by the privateers coming back from the Red Sea, with stopovers at Ascension Island and then at that of Fernando de Noronha, off the coast of Brazil.[362] Likewise, in the first half of 1690, we note that on Cabo Frio, the Portuguese seized 10 Englishmen belonging to a ship that was pirating on the coasts of Brazil, and that had already made some prizes there.[363] Let us be clear: I am not insinuating here that these were *Good Hope* men. In fact, the names of the English pirates taken prisoner by the Portuguese on this occasion do not correspond to those of Macintosh, Beard and company. I only want to demonstrate that it still remains to explore the old Portuguese colonial archives, especially those relating to Brazil, Mozambique, and Goa, in India, in order to try to learn more about the travels of the *Cygnet* and *Good Hope*, and perhaps also about the lies of the *Infortunios*.

Some Final Thoughts about a Hoax

It's now time to provide a summary of the significant events of *Infortunios* involving the imaginary pirates Bell and Donkin one by one, and in their chronological order, and then to attempt to establish a correspondence in reality for each:

1. The entrance of Captain Bel and Donkin into the South Sea through the Strait of Le Maire. — Possible correspondence with the *Bachelors Delight*, Captain John Cook, who entered through this strait in early 1684.

2. A stopover in the Marianas, rounding both Capes Engaño and Bojeador on Luzon north coast, then the taking of a few junks and sampans with Chinese and Folipino Indian crews and passengers. — Almost identical to the navigations and actions of the *Nicholas*, Captain Eaton, in 1685.

3. Towards Mariveles, the taking of a junk manned by Filipino Indians, and the next day, March 4, 1687 (dating according to New Spain comput), that of a royal frigate commanded by Ramírez. — The taking of a sampan and of the frigate *Aránzazu*, in the Capones Islands, the same day, by the *Cygnet*, Captain John Read.

4. A four-month stopover at Pulo Condore. — Exact time of the stay of the *Good Hope*'s company on the same island, in the second half of 1687.

5. Departure from Pulo Condore, and taking of a sampan with a cargo of pepper. — Capture of the Limsinko's junk by the *Cygnet*, June 1687.

6. At Pulo Ubi, taking of a Siamese ship carrying an ambassador for Manila. — No equivalence found.

7. At Pulo Ubi, taking of a Portuguese ship, coming from Macau and going to Goa, mainly laden with silk. — Whether the capture of a Portuguese ship coming from Goa by the *Cygnet*, May 1688, off Ceylon, or the fight between the *Good Hope* and Mateo de Rocha's ship, coming from Macau, in December 1687.

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[361] NYSA New York Colony Council Papers/Vol. 34/Part 2/nos. 77-78, Vice-Admiralty Court documents relating to the case Royal African Company vs. Robert Allison, September 1687.

[362] On this subject, see my texts: *De la mer du Sud à la mer Rouge : l'affaire des deux Bachelors Delight (1683-1692)* [online] https://diable-volant.github.io/flibuste/blog/GdF2022b-bachelors-delight.pdf, and *Le premier voyage de Thomas Tew en mer Rouge (1693) : une réévaluation selon de nouveaux documents* [online] https://diable-volant.github.io/flibuste/blog/GdF2021-thomas-tew.pdf (accessed 10 February 2024).

[363] PT AHU CU/RIO DE JANEIRO-CA/Cx. 9/D. 1777-1778, consultations of the Overseas Council touching 10 English pirates captured at Cabo Frio, Lisbon, 17 October 1690 and 18 September 1691.

8. At Pulo Ubi, taking of another Portuguese ship, belonging to the Viceroy of Goa, and carrying an ambassador to Siam. — Capture of Domingos Lopes' ship by the *Good Hope* in the Strait of Malacca, July 1687.

9. Stopover at Pulau Siantan. — *Good Hope*, early 1688.

10. Stopover at Pulau Tambelan, and aborted mutiny of some of the pirates. — *Good Hope*, early 1688.

11. Stopover in Sukadana. — *Good Hope*, April and May 1688.

12. On the coast of Bengal, taking of two large Moorish ships, both burned. — The Moorish prizes made by Captain Woollery and his company in the northern part of the Indian Ocean, in late 1685.

13. Meeting with four ships which they think are Dutch. — Four ships sent by the governor of Malacca in July 1687 against the *Good Hope*.

14. Stopover at Pulau Aur. —*Good Hope*, July 1687.

15. In the Strait of Singapore, taking of a frigate laden with rice that they kept with them. — No equivalence found.

16. Passage off an island that they thought was inhabited by Portuguese. — This is undoubtedly one of the Mascarenes, where the *Cygnet* stopped, and through which the *Good Hope* probably passed.

17. Stopover in Australia. — The *Cygnet*, February 1688.

18. Stopover in Madagascar, and encounter with an English merchant ship. — Either the *Cygnet*, late 1688, or the *Good Hope*, early 1689.

If we absolutely want to give some historical consistency to the *Infortunios*, two scenarios emerge following the documentary evidence analyzed throughout this study.

The first would be to admit that Ramírez was indeed captured near Manila in March 1687, but that he would have been on board the sampan belonging to Captain Alzaga, and not on the small royal frigate commanded by Captain Ferrer. He would then have been among the 19 prisoners from these two prizes, who were left on Pulo Condore by the *Cygnet* privateers. When the *Good Hope* arrived there in her turn, he would have embarked himself on board this second pirate. Once in Madagascar, he would have met some former privateer or prisoner of the *Cygnet* who could have told him about that ship's stopover in Australia. Against this scenario, we have the testimonies of Watson and the two Portuguese mariners in Batavia, neither of whom mention that European people were living on Pulo Condore at the time of the *Good Hope*'s stopover there, nor that such men could have then joined the pirates of that ship.

Hence, this second scenario: Ramírez would rather have been a crew member or passenger of Domingos Lopes' ship when she was taken by the *Good Hope* in the Strait of Malacca, in July 1687. During the stopover of this pirate at Pulo Condore, he would have encountered a former prisoner of the *Cygnet* who could have told him the circumstances of the *Aránzazu* and Alzaga sampan's capture, which had occurred several months earlier. As in the preceding scenario, once in Madagascar, he would have learned of the *Cygnet*'s stopover in Australia. This scenario would have the advantage of explaining, if it is indeed true, the visits that Ramírez claims to have made in Batavia, Malacca, Madras and Macau.

However, none of these scenarios explain the fact that in late 1688 or early 1689, somewhere in Madagascar, pirates allegedly had a prize that upon reaching the coast of Brazil, they could have

given to former prisoners. Moreover, we have no documentary evidence to support this. So, what seems most likely at the moment would be that Ramírez and his companions remained aboard the *Good Hope* or another English ship, perhaps as far as Yucatan, if not as far as Brazil.

Why so much confusion, exaggerations, half-truths and lies? Did someone intentionally attempt to cover his tracks? If so, Ramírez would be the obvious culprit, but it is difficult to understand why he would have acted this way. To conceal the fact that, at some point during his wanderings, he had become one of those terrible pirates he describes in his story? However, it would have been possible for him to tell only part of the truth, as many others did before and after him, without falling into a novel.[364] Otherwise, he was definitively a mad man... unless the person whom all appearances point to as the confabulator is not the true culprit of the deception. After all, was Sigüenza only content to transcribe and to put into form what Ramírez told him? Would he not have embellished the story by incorporating information from the gossips the Spanish sailor had gathered about English pirates in Asia or elsewhere, or from the news about them that was received in Mexico from Manila? Worse, could the Viceroy Count of Galve himself have been the mastermind behind what more than ever appears to be a hoax? Whatever the degree of participation of each of these three men in the development of the *Infortunios*, the fact remains that today the results are deprived of any historical coherence. Only the discovery, for example, of the initial statements that Ramírez and his four companions in misfortune should have made before the Governor of Yucatan (if these still exist of course, and provided also they actually ever existed), or the discovery of any other significant testimony, only such findings, I say, could restore some logic and interest to this story. Unless that happens, this little work will remain only small matter for professors of literature or sociology. In the meantime, the historian of piracy cannot go any further: he must consider Alonso Ramirez's adventures as worthless as those of the imaginary Captain Misson in his utopian Libertalia[365], and with some regret, he must place the *Infortunios* on his library shelves alongside *Robinson Crusoe*[366], *Treasure Island*[367] and the *Cahiers du capitaine Borgnefesse*[368].

Raynald Laprise, "Roving in Troubled Waters: The Fairy Tale of Alonso Ramírez as an Alternative Narrative to Dampier's *New Voyage*?", ***Le Diable Volant***, 2024 [online] https://diable-volant.github.io/flibuste/blog/GdF2024-roving-in-troubled-waters.pdf

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[364] Such an example is given by the own testimony of a former *Cygnet* privateer: NL-HaNA VOC/inv. nr. 1463/fol. 334r-348v, narrative of Gijsbert Matthijsen Eibokken, Paliacate, 1 December 1688. This Dutchman provides a detailed and accurate account of his adventures on the Pacific coasts of the Americas under Captain Swan's command, since the hostilities they committed there were directed against the Spaniards, and these particular hostilities were then considered, even by the VOC officials in Asia, to be of little consequence. But in recounting the Asiatic part of their voyage under Captain Read, he very briefly narrates what happened, and at this stage of his adventures, he presents himself as a victim of his fellow English companions, as Dampier did. However, he is less convincing in this regard than Dampier, notably because he was one of those who left the ship in order to serve in the Mughal Army, where he pursued his former lifestyle on land, engaging in combat, slaughtering, and plundering for several months, before resigning from this service due to unpaid wages! Among other reasons, this is the discovery of Eibokken's narrative in the VOC archives that prompted me to write this study.

[365] Charles Johnson, *The General History of the Pyrates... Vol II* (London: Thomas Woodward, 1728), p. 1-48, 81-109.

[366] *The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Robinson Crusoe, of York, Mariner, Who lived Eight and Twenty years, all alone in an un-inhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River of Oroonoque... Written by himself* (London: William Taylor, 1719), 364 p.

[367] Robert L. Stevenson, *Treasure Island* (London: Cassel & Co., 1883), 292 p.

[368] Gustave Alaux and Albert t'Serstevens, *Cahiers de Louis-Adhémar-Timothée Le Golif, dit Borgnefesse, capitaine de la flibuste* (Paris: Grasset, 1952), 222 p. This little book is a very fine and funny modern hoax.