

**Pirates, Merchants, and Imperial Authority
in the British Atlantic, 1716-1726**

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Abstract

Between 1716 and 1726, there was a surge in piracy in the Caribbean Sea, North America, Africa, and the Indian Ocean. British state, colonial, and local responses to increased reports of piracy differed across these colonial and geographical divides. British mercantile groups with stakes in the Caribbean sugar, Virginian tobacco, and African slave trade lobbied when these markets were impacted by piracy. Likewise, the East India Company exerted extensive influence when piratical operations spread to the Indian Ocean. The British state, moved by these groups, responded with multiple initiatives to stem the impact of piracy on important commercial areas. At the same time, colonial agents both supplied pirates and subsidised local campaigns against piracy. This project explores the multifaceted nature of the suppression of piracy within colonial and metropolitan contexts to explain that multiple participants operating in distant but connected theatres influenced and shaped anti-piracy campaigns. Such an examination challenges current understanding of the war against piracy, while providing novel insight into imperial authority, state-empire relations, and the multilateral Atlantic economy. In this way, both pirate ships and the ships that hunted them are the lens through which to observe and understand the British Atlantic world in the early eighteenth century.

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Abbreviations

AC - High Court of Admiralty of Scotland Records, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh

Add. MSS - Additional Manuscripts, British Library, London

ADM - Admiralty Records, The National Archives, Kew

AGI - Archivo General de Indias, Seville, Spain

BOE - Bank of England Archives, London, United Kingdom

BOT - Board of Trade

BL - British Library, London, United Kingdom

C - Chancery Records, The National Archives, Kew

CO - Colonial Office, The National Archives, Kew

EIC - East India Company

HCA - High Court of Admiralty and Colonial Vice-Admiralty Court Records, The National Archives, Kew

HSP - Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, United States

IOR - India Office Records and Private Papers, British Library, London

MssCol - Manuscript Collection, New York Public Library, New York

Mss Collection - Manuscript Collection, New York Historical Society, New York

NRAS - National Register of Archives in Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

NRS - National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh, United Kingdom

NYHS - New York Historical Society, New York, United States

NYPL - New York Public Library, New York, United States

RAC - Royal African Company

SC - Scottish Sheriff Court Records, National Records of Scotland, Edinburgh

SSC - South Sea Company

T - Treasury Records, The National Archives, Kew

TNA - The National Archives, Kew, United Kingdom

WO - War Office Records, The National Archives, Kew

Introduction

“...the said Pirates becoming Masters of those seas have one after another Risen up like Mushrooms, under the very noses of our said men of Warr, for near nine years together, and we never heard that they took more then two of them in America, while those Vermine have taken deeprout...”¹

Anonymous (1724)

In April 1722, eight bodies hung in chains on the hills surrounding Cape Coast Castle, the Royal African Company’s chief fortification on Africa’s Gold Coast. These were members of Bartholomew Robert’s pirate crew who had plundered numerous ships throughout the Atlantic Ocean before being captured off the African coast, executed, and placed in conspicuous locations that were easily observable by passing ships in order to serve as a “terror to future depredators of the same class.”² The defeat and capture of Roberts’ crew by Royal Navy Captain Chaloner Ogle resulted in the death of Roberts and the judicial hanging of fifty-two mariners, making it the most substantial victory against pirates during the surge of Atlantic piracy that occurred between 1716 and 1726.³ On his return in 1723, Ogle was knighted for his conduct and became the first naval captain to receive a title for triumph over pirates.⁴

Roberts’ defeat was one of only a handful of naval victories during the so-called war on pirates in the early eighteenth century. In fact, it was the only quantifiable success against pirates in 1722. This was despite the fact that, in 1722, there were on

¹ TNA, CO 388/24, No. 155. Anonymous paper on the Sugar trade, [22 July] 1724.

² Additional bodies were hung at each of the Company’s other Gold Coast settlements. *Daily Courant*, 1 September 1722; J. Charnock, *Biographia navalis*, Vol. 3 (London, 1795), 403.

³ See Chapter Five, 181-220.

⁴ Charnock, *Biographia*, 403; Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), 143.

average twenty-four Royal Navy ships assigned to extra-European spaces where pirates operated.⁵ That same year also witnessed the outfitting of two private vessels from Rhode Island to chase pirates preying on local trade, whilst a small sloop was hired in Jamaica to guard the coast from piratical attacks.⁶ These activities coincided with new anti-piracy legislation as the British state attempted to effect change by introducing further regulations on Atlantic maritime activity. Yet, whereas Ogle's victory is continually retold as evidence of British naval supremacy over pirates, these other measures have received little or no discussion due to their lack of tangible success. All these measures, however, were vital components in motivating the decline of piracy in the third decade of the eighteenth century as each provided further deterrence to active pirates. Even the events leading up to Ogle's expedition have been overlooked in order to tell the swashbuckling story of the engagement itself, despite the fact that assessing the motivations behind the expedition are vital to understanding its subsequent success.⁷ Rather than focusing solely on the successful engagements against pirates, this thesis reconsiders the campaigns that sought to suppress Atlantic pirates and put an end to their collective impact on British colonial trade by placing the importance on understanding where and why marine defence was prepared against piracy, even when these measures did not result in the direct execution of pirates. It is only through the evaluation of this overall process that it is possible to assess the means by which piracy was gradually suppressed in the early eighteenth century. This evaluation, in turn, questions the ability of British state and colonial centres to effectively regulate the vast expanses of the early-eighteenth-century Atlantic Ocean.

⁵ See Appendix 7: Table 7.1.

⁶ For a description of different ship types, including sloops, see Appendix 1: Table 1.1.

⁷ See Chapter Five, 181-220.

Three distinct phases have been identified in the period that is referred to as the “golden age” of piracy. The first of these, occurring from approximately 1660 to 1680, witnessed buccaneering raids of predominantly English, French, and Dutch colonists from the Caribbean against Spanish America.⁸ The second phase occurred between 1688 and 1701 when Atlantic pirates, sponsored by North American colonists, voyaged to the Indian Ocean, established a trading outpost on Madagascar, and raided the largely undefended shipping routes between the Red Sea and Malabar coast.⁹ The third and final phase occurred between 1716 and 1726 when there was a rapid increase in Atlantic piracy throughout the Caribbean, North America, and Africa, with a small number of pirates cruising as far as the Arabian Sea. After 1722, Atlantic piracy declined to the extent that it is generally declared that the “golden age” of piracy ended in 1726.¹⁰ It is on this third phase, when the number of Atlantic pirates operating rapidly increased and decreased over a ten-year period, that this thesis concentrates.

Several general histories of piracy have focused on the narratives of the rise of the buccaneers in the Caribbean, the emergence of the Red Sea pirates in the 1690s, and the spread of Atlantic piracy after the Treaty of Utrecht (1713). In these studies, pirates are positioned as an ‘other’ in the Atlantic world and are observed as operating beyond the fringes of colonial society.¹¹ Similarly, the social and cultural history of piracy, when

⁸ See Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 102-143; Nuala Zahedieh, ‘Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-89’, *The Economic History Review*, 39:2 (1986), 205-222; Nuala Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 43:4 (1986), 570-593.

⁹ See Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 183-221; Kevin P. McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World* (California, 2015); Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, 1986).

¹⁰ See Arne Bialuschewski, ‘Pirates, markets and imperial authority: economic aspects of maritime depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716-1726’, *Global Crime*, 9:1 (2008), 52-65; Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 183-208; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 365-415; Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 127-147.

¹¹ See Joel Baer, *Pirates* (Gloucestershire, 2007); Clinton V. Black, *Pirates of the West Indies* (Cambridge, 1989); George Francis Dow and John Henry Edmonds, *The Pirates of the New England Coast, 1630-1730* (New York, 1996); Philip Gosse, *A History of Piracy* (New York, 1932); Angus Konstam, *Piracy: The Complete History* (Oxford, 2008); Colin Woodard, *The Republic of the Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down* (New York, 2007).

not interwoven with general histories, has produced some radical accounts of liberal, democratic, and anti-state mariners who rejected their nations to create utopian communities of equality and justice. This interpretation is accredited primarily to Rediker who argues that class-based antagonisms were the primary motivations for mariners turning to piracy. In this analysis, piracy offered freedom from the authoritarian rule found on board merchant and naval vessels. This was achieved through the adoption of articles of regulation that established rules and customs of an alternative social order; what Rediker refers to as the pirate ship 'turned upside down'. These articles established democracies on board pirate ships that limited the authority of captains, distributed justice, elected officers, and divided loot equally. This helped maintain a multicultural, multiracial, and multinational social order.¹² The idea that pirates rejected social and cultural norms to create an alternative social order has continued this theory of 'otherness' which has added to the romantic nuances of piracy and, in the process, misinterpreted the role that piracy played in the development of the Atlantic world.

The otherness of piracy is quickly dismissed when analysed within an economic context. In their studies of the global history of piracy, both Anderson and Starkey argue that the primary causal factors of piracy are episodic wars and fluctuating economies. Intermittent wars generate an unstable labour market that in turn causes the initial rise and sustenance of piracy through demand for black-market trading for provisions. These predatory societies are only suppressed when markets become stable,

¹² Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Deep Blue Sea* (Cambridge, 1987), 254-287; Marcus Rediker, 'Hydrachy and Libertalia: The Utopian Dimensions of Atlantic Piracy in the Early Eighteenth Century' in David J. Starkey, E.S. Van Eyck Van Heslinga, and J.A. De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter, 1997), 29-46. See also Peter T. Leeson, 'An-arrgh-chy: The Law and Economics of Pirate Organization', *Journal of Political Economy*, 115:6 (2007), 1049-1094; Kenneth J. Kinkor, 'Black Men under the Black Flag' in C. R. Pennell (ed.), *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader* (New York, 2001), 195-210.

trade increases, and piracy becomes a hindrance rather than an advantage to maritime communities.¹³ Comparably, Bialuschewski and Zahedieh have evaluated the economic conditions that encouraged the rise and decline of piracy in specific periods.¹⁴ Zahedieh focuses on the plunder-based economy of Jamaica under the governorship of Thomas Modyford in the latter seventeenth century and argues that Jamaica relied on piracy to fund the expansion of local commerce and the development of a plantation economy.¹⁵ Likewise, Bialuschewski, in an overview of the economic aspects that drove piracy between 1716 and 1726, concluded that piracy only flourished when it was integrated with the established economic system; it was the lack of access to colonial markets that facilitated piracy's decline.¹⁶ In all of these studies, the connection between trader and pirate is vital in understanding how piracy persisted. Pirates needed markets to sell plundered goods in exchange for supplies that enabled them to continue their activities, while traders provided supplies at inflated prices in exchange for plundered goods that they otherwise had little or no access to. Piracy could not be sustained unless it was an integrated part of the Atlantic economy and, therefore, pirates operated on and within the fringes of colonial society.

Two studies in particular have repositioned the study of piracy to align with the wider political and economic framework of the English (then British) Atlantic world by analysing the extensive integration of pirates with landed colonial communities and the subsequent influence these connections had on colonial development and English imperial politics. The first study, by Ritchie, examined the development of Saint Marie's Island, Madagascar, as a hub of illicit trade between Anglo-American pirates and New

¹³ John L. Anderson, 'Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation' in Pennell, *Bandits at Sea*, 82-106; David J. Starkey, 'Pirates and Markets' in Pennell, *Bandits at Sea*, 107-124.

¹⁴ Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority', 52-65; Zahedieh, 'Early English Jamaica, 1655-89', 205-222; Zahedieh, 'Merchants of Port Royal', 570-593.

¹⁵ Zahedieh, 'Early English Jamaica', 205-222; Zahedieh, 'Merchants of Port Royal', 570-593.

¹⁶ Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority', 52-65.

York slave traders in the 1690s. Anglo-American pirates operated from Saint Marie's Island whilst raiding Mughal shipping in the Indian Ocean at the same time that New York slave traders utilised the island to trade for Malagasy slaves. New York merchants welcomed and encouraged the pirate trade as a lucrative auxiliary branch of their Indian Ocean commerce. Ritchie's study examined how Saint Marie's Island became a centre of dispute between metropolitan and colonial interests when the East India Company's trade was obstructed by the actions of Anglo-American pirates in the Indian Ocean. Ritchie charts the ill-fated voyage of Captain William Kidd, who was sponsored by the English political elite to remove the pirate presence from the Indian Ocean, to show that the events surrounding this voyage, and the rise and decline of the Madagascar pirates in general, featured a complex intertwining of political and economic interests in metropolitan and colonial localities. Ritchie demonstrated that it is necessary to examine these events within their immediate contexts in order to understand the factors that drove metropolitan and colonial interests, whilst also analysing how these interests diverged or connected at the transnational level.¹⁷ The second study, by Hanna, explored a much wider period, analysing the role that piracy and "pirate nests" played in the history of British colonial development. Hanna provides extensive evidence of the importance of piratical activities to early colonial endeavours and in sustaining the developing economies of English colonies throughout the seventeenth century. Pirates were integral to the development of these maritime communities and were fully embedded in local colonial economies.¹⁸ Both Hanna and Ritchie demonstrate that the process through which piracy emerged, persisted, and declined needs to be analysed within a wider Atlantic framework.

¹⁷ Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*.

¹⁸ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*.

While this research has firmly recast pirates as an integrated component of the seventeenth-century Atlantic world, the rise and decline of piracy in the period from 1716 to 1726 has not received the same level of scrutiny. Instead, it is suggested that eighteenth-century pirates operated within a hostile Atlantic world that no longer supported illicit maritime predation. From this perspective, piracy declined because of state manoeuvres that delegitimized peacetime commerce raiding, destroyed pirates, and stimulated the decline of colonial sponsorship of piracy. Mabee, Ritchie, and Starkey focus their discussions on the legal parameters that separated privateering and piracy, and assess that the line between the two acts became clearer in the early eighteenth century as privateering was brought under stricter state control. Private violence became an integrated part of state marine power and was incorporated as a necessary part of naval strategy, particularly for the protection of merchant shipping. In their analyses, state control over privateering removed any ambiguities surrounding piracies committed under privateering commissions.¹⁹ Bialuschewski, Hanna and Perotin-Dumon all indicate the importance of the changing relationship between merchant and state in the early eighteenth century as the primary driving factor of the suppression of piracy. Hanna, in particular, charts the process through which colonies transformed from pirate nests into productive and self-sustaining communities as colonists turned their backs on illicit maritime predation and became further connected to the metropole. This change took place as colonies developed and colonial merchants gained legal access to markets that had previously fallen under monopolistic control, particularly the African slave trade, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Due to these changes,

¹⁹ Bryan Mabee, 'Pirates, privateers and the political economy of private violence', *Global Change, Peace & Security*, 21:2 (2009), 139-152; David J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter, 1990); Robert C. Ritchie, 'Government Measures against Piracy and Privateering in the Atlantic Area, 1750-1850' in Starkey et al. (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers*, 10-28. For a discussion of how these measures remained ineffective for separating piracy and privateering see Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness* (Boston, 2014), 27-50.

piracy was no longer a necessary and integrated part of the Atlantic economy and could not be sustained. This scholarship, while providing well-evidenced and analysed arguments that explicit and open sponsorship of piracy by British colonies had mostly ended by the first decade of the eighteenth century, emphasises the transformation of pirate nests as the determining factor in the decline of eighteenth-century Atlantic piracy without providing analysis of the actual process through which pirates were suppressed after 1716. As a result, the effective subdual of Atlantic piracy ten years later is evaluated as evidence of the extension of British state authority over the Atlantic world, the consequence of a more united and coherent British Atlantic Empire.²⁰

This suggestion is problematic when considered alongside the historiography of British Atlantic imperialism in which British state authority over both colonial administration and trade remained reliant on peripheral approval and support. As the colonizing project had been predominantly undertaken by private individuals, either organised through chartered trading companies or proprietorships, the colonies that were established developed as autonomous centres of governmental power. Greene, Mancke, Olson, Speck and Yirush discuss that the process through which these autonomous centres became more connected to the metropole throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was shaped through continuous negotiation between centre and periphery. As the British state was either reluctant or unable to provide the resources necessary to impose central authority over peripheral governments, the extension of authority across the Atlantic relied on the compliance and consent of each individual locality.²¹ Similarly, Greene, Olson, and Steele have

²⁰ Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority', 52-65; Anne Perotin-Dumon, 'The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and the Law of the Seas, 1450-1850' in Pennell (ed.), *Bandits at Sea*, 25-54; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 222-415.

²¹ Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (Athens, 1986); Jack. P. Greene, 'Transatlantic Colonization and the

shown that elected colonial assemblies became the primary centres of power in the colonies. Through these assemblies, local elites dominated colonial politics to the extent that royally-appointed colonial governors needed to negotiate their directives with assemblies, which considerably diminished gubernatorial power and influence.²²

Instead, as Armitage, McCusker, Menard, and Price argue, the primary embodiment of British state authority were the Navigation Acts, established and developed throughout the seventeenth century, that created a closed system within which only English (then British) subjects had the right to trade with English colonies. These acts provided clear jurisdiction of the state over the colonies as colonial products had to be carried to British ports in British ships.²³ It was this focus on safeguarding the economic benefits of colonial possessions that has led to the use of mercantilism as a blanket term to describe a multitude of dynamic and incoherent approaches to the economic development of Atlantic empires. Due to the inconsistent policies of the British state towards the imperial economy, there has been wide debate surrounding the ever-changing nature of mercantilism. Yet, these studies have all implied that there was one apparent principle at the core of mercantilism that characterized state considerations of the colonies: that colonial possessions should benefit the mother country. There was great ideological divergence about how this benefit should accrue

Redefinition of Empire in the Early Modern Era' in Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (eds.), *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820* (New York, 2002), 267-282; Elizabeth Mancke, 'Negotiating an Empire: Britain and Its Overseas Peripheries, c. 1550-1780' in Daniels and Kennedy (eds.), *Negotiated Empires*, 235-266; Alison Gilbert Olson, *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690-1790* (Cambridge, 1992); W. A. Speck, 'The International and Imperial Context' in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore, 1984), 384-407; Craig Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory, 1675-1775* (Cambridge, 2011).

²² Greene, *Peripheries and Center*; Olson, *Making the Empire Work*; Ian K. Steele, 'The Anointed, the Appointed, and the Elected' in P. J. Marshall, Elaine Low, and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 105-127.

²³ David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 2000); John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607-1789* (Chapel Hill, 1991); Jacob M. Price, 'The Imperial Economy, 1700-1776' in Marshall et al. (eds.), *Eighteenth Century*, 78-104.

but, despite these conflicts, all strove to achieve this one fundamental objective.²⁴ It was the commercial value of the colonies that represented the importance of colonial possessions to Britain and, consequently, the empire that had emerged by the end of the seventeenth century was one of semi-autonomous colonies connected with the metropole first and foremost through commercial regulations.

While Davis suggests that the Navigation Acts had successfully shaped American commercial trends by the early eighteenth century as colonial trade grew accustomed to trading with British sources and selling through British factors, Zahedieh challenges this view by proposing that the acts failed to create a colonial dependency on empire. Far from developing dependencies, it was the colonies that influenced British consumption patterns through the promotion of cash crops like tobacco and sugar.²⁵ Hancock furthers this view by showing that Atlantic commercial networks were created through the creativity and opportunism of individual actors. A centralised Atlantic economy did not develop through commercial regulations and preconditions, but rather transatlantic and transimperial markets and connections emerged through the decentralized actions and initiatives of individuals. These markets and connections were continually altered as states and individuals attempted to organise and gain from the evolving Atlantic system.²⁶ Furthermore, Andreas, Chet, Koot, and Zahedieh demonstrate that illicit trade continued in the colonies despite the Navigation Acts. Planters, colonists, and merchants from across the colonial theatre continually violated

²⁴ For recent considerations of mercantilism see Jonathan Barth, 'Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 73:2 (April 2016), 257-290; Cathy Matson, 'Imperial Political Economy: An Ideological Debate and Shifting Practices', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 69:1 (January 2012), 35-40; Steve Pincus, 'Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 69:1 (January 2012), 3-34; Philip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind, 'Introduction' in Philip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind (eds.), *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire* (Oxford, 2014), 3-22.

²⁵ Ralph Davis, 'English Foreign Trade, 1700-1774', *The Economic History Review*, 15: 2 (1962), 285-303; Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies* (Cambridge, 2010).

²⁶ David Hancock, *Oceans of Wine: Madeira and the Emergence of American Trade and Taste* (New Haven, 2009).

the acts in order to obtain maximum profits by utilising inter-colonial and inter-imperial trade. Far from a general acquiescence by the eighteenth century then, colonial acceptance of the acts only occurred when the protected home market proved profitable to colonial interests. Importantly, colonists continued to circumvent the navigation system when it proved beneficial. Throughout the eighteenth century, colonists operated both within and outside of the imperial commercial framework legislated by the metropolitan state, and this was dependent on individual interest.²⁷ Thus, while the Navigation Acts were the dominant apparatus of state authority, the success of the system centred on peripheral acceptance by the individual rather than imperial enforcement.

Compliance, then, relied on colonial support of imperial policy as the British state was never in a position to effectively impose centralised administration over their Atlantic dominions. This is a fact that Hanna recognises, showing that pirate nests transformed only as peripheral communities accepted their place as part of a wider Atlantic empire. However, Hanna's analysis that the subsequent suppression of piracy in the early eighteenth century occurred due to the wide-ranging change of perception towards piracy in the colonies overestimates both state and colonial ability to effectively regulate maritime activity throughout the Atlantic Ocean.²⁸ Baugh, Buchet, Rodger, and Satsuma have evaluated the role of British naval resources in defending colonial trade in the eighteenth century. Rodger states that while small cruisers were dispatched overseas to protect colonial trade, the navy's focus was always on maintaining a strong fleet in British waters to guard against invasion. As a result, the state could only dispatch a handful of frigates to the colonies that were intended to convoy merchant shipping

²⁷ Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* (Oxford, 2013); Chet, *Ocean is a Wilderness*; Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York, 2011); Zahedieh, *Capital and the Colonies*.

²⁸ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*.

rather than undertake offensive operations; the ships were too small and too scattered to achieve this.²⁹ Moreover, although North American royal colonies received some naval assistance, Baugh, Rodger, and Satsuma agree that the focus of British overseas squadrons was in the Caribbean Sea as the trade of Caribbean colonies provided the most benefit to state revenue.³⁰ Although Baugh and Rodger see some naval success in protecting Caribbean trade from the maritime predation of pirates and rival European powers, Buchet has argued that the ability of naval captains to carry out their instructions was heavily obstructed by the results of disease, shipworms, and a shortage of naval materials in the colonial theatre. Brunsman provides further evidence of this through his discussion of the difficulties of manning naval vessels in the colonies due to the complexities of extending naval impressment practices to the periphery.³¹ These studies highlight the limits of state naval resources, which were scattered throughout the vast expanse of the colonial theatre, and indicate the state's inability to effectively regulate maritime activity throughout the Atlantic beyond convoying merchant shipping in important commercial regions. Instead, the colonies that received little or no metropolitan naval support, had to utilise local resources to protect local trade from pirates. This, in turn, impacted the overall ability of colonial governments to suppress pirates as each colony had unequal access to maritime defence and had to use local revenues to support any anti-piracy operations. As such, these operations remained small-scale and reactive as there was neither the naval nor local resources available to

²⁹ See N. A. M. Rodger, 'Sea-Power and Empire, 1688-1793' in Marshall et al., *The Eighteenth Century*, 169-183.

³⁰ Daniel A. Baugh, 'Maritime Strength and Atlantic Commerce: The uses of 'a grand marine empire'' in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689-1815* (London, 1994), 185-223; N. A. M. Rodger, 'Sea-Power and Empire, 1688-1793', 169-183; N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2006); Shinsuke Satsuma, *Britain and Colonial Maritime War in the Early Eighteenth Century: Silver, Seapower and the Atlantic* (Woodbridge, 2013).

³¹ Christian Buchet, 'The Royal Navy and the Caribbean, 1689-1763', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 80:1 (February, 1994), 30-44; Denver Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Virginia, 2013).

coordinate an anti-piracy campaign that went beyond protecting the immediate vicinities of individual colonies. The state was not in a position to provide direct control or oversight over an Atlantic anti-piracy campaign and colonial operations remained pragmatic and fragmented. Therefore, although perceptions of piracy changed in the centres of colonial power, the actual authority of these centres over Atlantic maritime activity differed from colony to colony and did not extend far beyond their coastlines.

The inability of either metropolitan or colonial centres to effectively control Atlantic maritime activity is best demonstrated in Chet, Enthoven, Koot, and Jarvis' examinations of inter-imperial and inter-colonial maritime trade. Chet has shown that smuggling remained prevalent throughout the Atlantic during the eighteenth century despite state efforts to curtail it. He argues that the activities of smugglers and those who aided them lay beyond the practical reach of state enforcers.³² Similarly, Koot's study of Anglo-Dutch trade throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth century demonstrates the futility of state efforts to restrain intercolonial trade.³³ This is supported by Enthoven's examination of Sint Eustatius, a Dutch outpost in the Lesser Antilles, which North American traders utilised as a conduit for inter-imperial trade throughout the eighteenth century.³⁴ Jarvis, especially, has shown the limits of both state and colonial abilities to effectively regulate maritime activity. He demonstrates that Bermudian traders were integrated into Atlantic markets that existed in the extranational maritime spaces that lay unclaimed or contested; regions which he refers to as the Atlantic Commons. Jarvis evidences that an almost invisible population of sojourning men worked within the Atlantic Commons, in unclaimed islands such as the Turks, Caicos, and Cayman Islands or contested regions such as Campeche, Belize, and

³² Chet, *Ocean is a Wilderness*, 66-91.

³³ Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*.

³⁴ Victor Enthoven, "'That Abominable Nest of Pirates': St. Eustatius and the North Americas, 1680-1780", *Early American Studies* (Spring 2012), 239-301.

Honduras where no European imperial officials resided to enforce imperial policy and restrictions. Here mariners periodically voyaged, and sometimes settled, in order to rake salt, salvage wrecks, hunt turtles, harvest timber and other marine resources, and smuggle goods. These activities and settlements, while fully integrated into the decentralised and self-organised Atlantic economy, took place beyond the oversight of state or colonial officials and remain largely overlooked in considerations of the Atlantic world, both then and now. This is despite the fact that these regions and activities generated significant wealth and provided raw materials that proved vital to the sustenance of the Atlantic maritime economy. Jarvis' study highlights the importance of recognising that vast expanses of the Atlantic lay outside of the reach of European authority, which did not extend far beyond official colonial towns and outposts.³⁵ For this reason, although pirate nests declined, eighteenth-century pirates remained an embedded part of the Atlantic economy as new markets and connections were established between pirates and colonial traders in the areas of the Americas, Africa, and Indian Ocean where neither state nor colonial maritime resources effectively patrolled. The process through which specific areas of the Atlantic Commons were subsequently policed in the eighteenth century, after piracy was no longer supported in centres of colonial power, needs to be analysed or else the effectiveness of both state and colonial authority is overestimated. Perceptions changed and pirate nests declined, but piracy continued to be supported in the abandoned inlets and islands of the Atlantic Commons where neither state nor colonial authority extended.

While peripheral acceptance of British imperial policy was required to ensure compliance, it is crucial to recognise the fundamental role of metropolitan mercantile interest groups in shaping imperial policy over Atlantic trade, and the subsequent effect

³⁵ Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1793* (Chapel Hill, 2010).

that this had on state and colonial authority over Atlantic maritime activity. Brenner's examination of the role of merchant groups in the investment and development of colonial trade in the first half of the seventeenth century determined that London's merchant elite stopped participating in colonial commerce after their initial failures to gain profit through colonial development. This vacuum of commercial activity allowed the development of a new group of merchants – who Brenner terms 'new merchants' – consisting of domestic tradesmen, sea captains, shopkeepers and returned colonial traders and planters who capitalised on the opportunities offered by the nascent colonial trades. In time, a colonial entrepreneurial leadership, termed 'merchant-councillors', emerged from this group whose authority extended from this loose collective of colonial traders to influence colonial and parliamentary leadership. Indeed, these leading merchants provided a key mediator between metropolitan and colonial interests whilst also advancing their own aims concerning Atlantic commerce.³⁶ Building on Brenner's examination, Zahedieh has shown that after the Restoration, the influence of leading colonial merchants became increasingly entrenched whilst the number of lesser merchants – the equivalents to Brenner's 'new merchants' - dwindled. Similarly, Bradburn, Price, and Clemens have surveyed the transformation of the Chesapeake tobacco trade between the mid-seventeenth and early eighteenth century when the trade became dominated by large specialist merchant houses in London.³⁷ Not just restricted to the tobacco trade, Zahedieh provides evidence that increased specialisation and domination by large London merchants was a trend occurring across various branches of colonial trades in the late seventeenth century. Of 170 merchants based in London

³⁶ Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550-1653* (Cambridge, 1993).

³⁷ Douglas Bradburn, 'The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade in War and the Purpose of Empire, 1690-1717', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 68:3 (July 2011), 361-386; Jacob M. Price and P. G. E. Clemens, 'A revolution of scale in overseas trade: British firms in the Chesapeake trade, 1675-1775', *The Journal of Economic History*, 47:1 (1987), 1-43.

carrying on substantial trade to the colonies, two-thirds focused on Caribbean trade, one-third focused on North American trade, and only a fifth traded with both regions.³⁸ Gauci, Olson, Pettigrew, and Rawley have shown that the increasing concentration of colonial trade into the hands of specialised London merchants by the early eighteenth century had led to the development of four significant groups of influential metropolitan merchants whose interests lay in safeguarding specific commodities of Atlantic trade: fish, sugar, slaves, and tobacco.³⁹

These mercantile interest groups, as Gauci evidences, were often organised by regional interests, with prominence given to merchants handling Virginian and Maryland tobacco, Newfoundland fish, and Jamaican and Barbadian sugar. These groups regularly worked together, despite their differing commercial concerns, when there was shared resonance with a particular issue, most commonly those concerning the protection of trade or the advancement of Atlantic trade in general.⁴⁰ In his study of the politics surrounding the slave trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Pettigrew found that tobacco merchants were active supporters of independent slave traders during their campaign to remove the Royal African Company's monopoly over the African slave trade.⁴¹ Gauci and Pettigrew concur that the Glorious Revolution created new opportunities for mercantile interest groups to influence commercial politics through the enhanced role of Parliament over commercial regulation, which meant that Parliament came to represent an important forum for commercial debate, alongside the

³⁸ Zahedieh, *Capital and the Colonies*, 62.

³⁹ Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001); Perry Gauci, "Learning the Ropes of Sand": The West India Lobby, 1714-16' in Perry Gauci (ed.), *Regulating the British Economy, 1660-1850* (Farnham, 2011), 107-122; Alison G. Olson, 'The Virginia Merchants of London: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Interest-Group Politics', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 40:3 (July, 1983), 363-388; William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill, 2013); James A. Rawley, *London, Metropolis of the Slave Trade* (Columbia, 2003); James A. Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (London, 1981).

⁴⁰ Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 107-155.

⁴¹ Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*.

creation of the BOT in 1696 which provided a focus for mercantile lobbying and clearing house for mercantile petitions.⁴² Likewise, Rawley evidences that these lobbies often had specific influential spokespersons amongst their ranks who would represent their collective interest before the BOT and Parliament. Furthermore, merchants who operated from cities other than London would often rely on these unofficial representatives to advance their interests before government. Due to their close proximity to and long-standing connections with leading government officials in London, these mercantile groups were able to actively petition governmental bodies to protect their Atlantic trading interests and, in the process, exert considerable influence over state policy concerning Atlantic trade.⁴³

At the same time, these metropolitan mercantile lobbies formed close transatlantic connections with colonies that produced key colonial exports, primarily the sugar and tobacco colonies. Olson has evidenced that colonial planters and merchants utilised their links with London merchants to gain assistance in obtaining state patronage and approval of provincial acts. In this way, London merchants, when they were not in competition with these same merchants, became the spokesmen for provincial American interests.⁴⁴ Dunn, Harley, Horn, and Johnson have shown that this further entrenched the emergence of different colonial relationships in which colonies were connected with the state to varying degrees, determined primarily by their ability to call on metropolitan connections to advance colonial interests. Dunn explains this for the sugar-producing Caribbean colonies in which absentee planters, who had amassed enough fortune through their sugar plantations to return to England, joined forces with

⁴² Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 195-233; William Pettigrew, 'Regulatory Inertia and National Economic Growth: An African Trade Case Study, 1660-1714' in Gauci (ed.), *Regulating the British Economy*, 25-40.

⁴³ Rawley, *Metropolis of the Slave Trade*; Rawley, *Transatlantic Slave Trade*.

⁴⁴ Alison G. Olson, 'The Board of Trade and London-American Interest Groups in the Eighteenth Century', in A. J. R. Russell-Wood (ed.), *Government and Governance of European Empires, 1450-1800, Part II* (Aldershot, 2000), 575-592.

London sugar merchants to lobby on behalf of the Caribbean sugar interest. Horn demonstrates that a similar connection emerged between the Virginian planter elite and the large tobacco merchant houses of London, in which the planter elite utilised London merchants to advance and represent their interests. Johnson has shown that this was not just a trend for tobacco- and sugar-producing regions, but that North American colonies frequently sent or employed agents in London to negotiate on behalf of colonial interests. Similarly, North American merchants trading to and visiting London would petition the crown in support of particular commercial or political measures. Nevertheless, the North American colonies did not have the same level of connection with London's mercantile elite in the early eighteenth century and, as such, their lobbying efforts were more fragmented and less persistent than the sugar and tobacco interests. This fact has led Dunn to argue that two varieties of colonial relationship emerged - a West Indian kind and a North American kind - in which the West Indian relationship was tailored by elite sugar planters and merchants closely linked to and dependent on the metropolitan state while the North American relationship was looser and less politically and economically dependent. Harley has shown that this distinctive North American relationship existed for the middle and Northern American colonies whose commerce rested on local shipping and commercial activities alongside an intercolonial trade to the Caribbean plantations, which financed the import of manufactured goods from Britain.⁴⁵ However, as Burnard has suggested, rather than distinctive West Indian and North American relationships, there developed

⁴⁵ Richard S. Dunn, 'The Glorious Revolution and America' in Nicholas Canny (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume I: The Origins of Empire: British Overseas Enterprise to the Close of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 445-466; James Horn, 'Transformations of Virginia: Tobacco, Slavery and Empire: Introduction', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 68:3 (July 2011), 327-331; C. Knick Harley, 'Trade: discovery, mercantilism and technology' in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol I: Industrialisation, 1700-1860* (Cambridge, 2004), 175-203; Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (Leicester, 1981).

distinctive relationships between Britain and the chief slaveholding, cash-crop producing regions, and between Britain and colonies whose commodities did not attract the same significant amounts of British mercantile and maritime capital.⁴⁶ Even so, certain colonies had closer ties to the metropole than others due to the strength of their transatlantic links, particularly Virginia and Jamaica.⁴⁷

Metropolitan mercantile lobbies, and the colonial interests that they often represented, continually influenced state measures to regulate maritime activity by pressing that limited state resources focus on specific areas over others. This created further inequalities between each colony's ability to suppress pirates as the chief sugar and tobacco colonies received the focus of state measures while other colonies were overlooked and had to enact their own pragmatic campaigns. These transatlantic connections between colonial groups and London merchants compounded the already fragmented nature of Atlantic imperial relationships and further impeded the abilities of state and colonial governments to effectively regulate Atlantic maritime activity beyond immediate colonial localities or areas of significant commercial importance. To complicate matters, these loose collectives of London-Atlantic merchants were not the only mercantile groups influencing state policies over maritime trade.

Brewer, Carruthers, and Dickson discuss that the cost of wars at the turn of the century, the War of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697) and War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), created the need to raise taxes and increase British governmental borrowing. This led to improvements in public borrowing that provided

⁴⁶ Trevor Burnard, 'The British Atlantic' in Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan (eds.), *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (Oxford, 2009), 111-136.

⁴⁷ Olson, 'Virginia Merchants', 363-388; Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 107-155; Gauci, 'West India Lobby', 107-122.

the foundations of a financial revolution.⁴⁸ One consequence of this financial revolution was the intertwining of parliamentary and joint-stock company interests. Carruthers observes that joint-stock companies such as the Bank of England, EIC and SSC were granted special privileges and monopoly powers by the state in exchange for significant financial contributions. Governmental reliance on loans from the mercantile elite increased the influence of this elite and linked public finance to private finance.⁴⁹ Lawson's examination of the EIC provides a similar conclusion. The EIC maintained an influential position, particularly between 1709 and 1748, due to its extensive loans to government. Through this position, the fortunes of the state, the EIC and its shareholders were linked and the EIC became embedded in the fiscal life of the state.⁵⁰ Murphy and Wennerlind offer the same opinion when discussing that loans from the EIC and the SSC were used to immediately raise capital while outstanding debts were exchanged for shares in these same companies. This in turn meant that the empowered company elite could manipulate and influence the political atmosphere due to their close relationship with the state. The state, which was responsible for regulating these companies, benefitted from this close relationship and this meant regulation became problematic to implement.⁵¹ Influential joint-stock trading companies provided an additional obstruction to state and colonial authority over maritime activity as the state had a clear stake in safeguarding the trade of these companies. In turn, these companies provided additional pressure over where naval resources were dispatched when piracy

⁴⁸ John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York, 1989); Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996); P. G. M. Dickson, *The Financial Revolution in England: a study in the development of public credit, 1688-1756* (London, 1967).

⁴⁹ Carruthers, *City of Capital*.

⁵⁰ Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London, 1993).

⁵¹ Anne L. Murphy, 'Financial Markets: The Limits of Economic Regulation in Early Modern England' in Stern and Wennerlind (eds.), *Mercantilism Reimagined*, 263-281; Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit: The English Financial Revolution, 1620-1720* (Cambridge, 2011).

impacted company commerce. This was yet another constraint on the ability to direct effective and cohesive anti-piracy operations in the British Atlantic.

It is important to acknowledge that although metropolitan mercantile and company interests significantly influenced state policy, they did not dictate it. Recent studies have pointed to two themes that are often overlooked in considerations of the British Atlantic world: the role of political economy in shaping metropolitan imperial policy, and the prevalence of European affairs in determining British foreign policy. Pincus had shown that, by the late seventeenth century, two ideologically opposed visions of political economy, closely related to the two political parties, had emerged which influenced metropolitan approaches to imperial policy depending on which party held power.⁵² He identifies that the primary distinction was that the Tories thought “economic value was based in land and therefore foreign trade was a violent zero-sum game” while the Whigs thought “value was constituted by labor and that therefore trade was potentially infinitely expandable.”⁵³ Pincus and Dudley have shown that these ideologies, in turn, created two distinctive imperial visions: the Tories advocated the necessity of economic gain at the expense of other nations through imperial territorial expansion and the re-export trade, while the Whigs argued for the importance of integrating new and existing colonial markets for British manufactures.⁵⁴ Dudley argues that Whig supremacy after 1715 meant that the Whig view of political economy dominated; although there continued to be debate over economic initiatives, these increasingly occurred within a pro-manufacturing framework. Consequently, throughout the period discussed in this thesis, the political economy of manufacturing dominated

⁵² See Pincus, ‘Rethinking Mercantilism’, 3-34; Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009), 366-399; Steve Pincus, ‘Addison’s Empire: Whig Conceptions of Empire in the Early 18th Century’, *Parliamentary History*, 31:1 (February 2012), 99-117.

⁵³ Pincus, ‘Rethinking Mercantilism’, 28.

⁵⁴ Christopher Dudley, ‘Party politics, political economy, and economic development in early eighteenth-century Britain’, *Economic History Review*, 66:4 (2013), 1084-1100; Pincus, ‘Addison’s Empire’, 100-110.

considerations of economic development and imperial policy.⁵⁵ Barth agrees with both Pincus and Dudley in his assessment that two distinct brands of mercantilism developed by the late seventeenth century: industrial-capital mercantilism and monopoly mercantilism, associated with the Whigs and Tories respectively. Industrial-capital mercantilists highlighted the importance of domestic production of manufactured goods for export whilst also eliminating dependence on imported articles, whereas monopoly mercantilism emphasized the importance of a well-organized trade with the East Indies and Spanish America, believing the re-export sector to be the most profitable branch of overseas commerce. Barth argues that it was industrial-capital mercantilism, which placed emphasis on state-protected manufacturing, banking, capital, and labor, that characterized imperial policy for much of the long eighteenth century.⁵⁶ It is necessary to study these political economic considerations, alongside mercantile petitions, to adequately assess metropolitan responses to Atlantic piracy in the early eighteenth century. Likewise, studies by Black, Conway, and Simms have stressed that more attention needs to be paid to the European contexts of the eighteenth century whilst examining the British Atlantic world. These studies emphasise the importance of European considerations in shaping foreign policy during the early eighteenth century. Of particular importance is that each study points to the fact that the Royal Navy was concentrated in European waters for the majority of the eighteenth century as evidence of the importance of continental, rather than colonial, affairs in determining foreign policy.⁵⁷ As such, it is vital to consider how foreign policy demands impeded the ability of the British state to respond to mercantile lobbying and Atlantic piracy whilst naval

⁵⁵ Dudley, 'Party politics', 1084-1100.

⁵⁶ Barth, 'Reconstructing Mercantilism', 257-290.

⁵⁷ Jeremy Black, *A System of Ambition? British Foreign Policy 1660-1793* (Stroud, 2000); Stephen Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2011); Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire* (London, 2008).

resources were engaged in European operations. There is a necessity, then, to consider the impact that political economy and European foreign policy had on the ability of state and colonial actors to regulate maritime activity as both issues shaped considerations of where finite naval resources should be concentrated and which regions, in particular, should be protected.

Overall, it is clear that multiple relationships and connections existed between state and colony, colony and merchant, and merchant and state, which all hindered and influenced state and colonial capacity to regulate maritime activity. The commercial relationship between state and colony created these connections and placed the emphasis on trade and commerce whilst leaving the actual administration of the colonies to semi-autonomous colonial governments. The detached centres of power in the metropole and colonies may have aligned in their views towards piracy by the early eighteenth century, but they could not coordinate a state or colonial campaign against pirates. Neither was in a position to regulate maritime activity beyond colonial localities and regions of specific commercial value. The campaigns to suppress piracy in the early eighteenth century were, therefore, much more pragmatic than has been heretofore recognised. These were reactive and fragmented measures shaped by immediate concerns facing state, commercial, and colonial interests. Far from providing evidence of a more coherent and united British Empire, there were in fact two unique contexts to the suppression of Atlantic piracy. The first was the colonial context in which suppression relied on the compliance and abilities of colonial governments, merchants, and settlers, with unequal access to naval resources, to discourage and subdue piracy. The second was the metropolitan context in which a variety of influential commercial interests lobbied the state for the same limited resources in order to protect their shipping and commerce from pirates. Meanwhile state actors, confronted with these

interests, also had to consider their own agendas, underpinned by the imperial visions of the ruling political elite alongside considerations of European foreign policy, concerning which trades and regions needed to be protected at any given time. These two contexts sometimes aligned and sometimes conflicted, but they were always highly fragmented.

To examine the distinct contexts of the British suppression of piracy, it is necessary to observe these campaigns from multiple vantage points. In order to do so, the methodology of this study draws from both Atlantic and imperial histories. In particular, this project employs a hybrid of Armitage's cis-Atlantic approach and Jarvis' concept of seeing the world from the deck of a ship. Armitage defines the cis-Atlantic approach as the study of "particular places as unique locations within an Atlantic world" in which such uniqueness is defined "as the result of the interactions between local particularity and a wider web of connections (and comparisons)."⁵⁸ This approach is primarily applied to study the history of one particular place and its relation to the wider Atlantic world.⁵⁹ However, rather than study one place, this thesis examines the connections of multiple places throughout the Atlantic world and assesses how these connections shaped responses to piracy in the surrounding waters. By moving beyond a static cis-Atlantic approach, this study considers an Atlantic world in motion in which pirate ships, the ships of their victims, and the ships of their pursuers provide the lens to evaluate and compare the multilateral web of connections that existed across disparate places and shaped the development of British imperial authority.⁶⁰

In keeping with this methodological approach, the evidence and information discussed throughout this thesis derives from diverse sources originating from multiple vantage points that have been compared, contrasted, and tested against each other. In

⁵⁸ David Armitage, 'Three Concepts of Atlantic History' in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick, *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Hampshire, 2009), 23.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁶⁰ Jarvis, *Eye of All Trade*, 1.

doing so, this thesis utilises a variety of records that have been overlooked in studies of eighteenth-century Atlantic piracy, while also reinterpreting the conventional sources employed within the historiography. Sources that have been previously neglected include: the minutes of colonial assemblies and councils in the British Caribbean and North American colonies; the records of RAC and EIC company agents operating from settlements in Africa and India; and reports written by Spanish imperial officials in the Caribbean. These sources are critical to evaluating local responses to piracy and the means through which anti-piracy campaigns were facilitated in the periphery, as well as to provide novel perspectives on the local conflicts that shaped the rise and decline of Atlantic piracy in the early eighteenth century. Alongside the identification and integration of these neglected sources, conventional sources – primarily letters between colonial governors, naval officials, and imperial administrative bodies – have been reconsidered within a broader context. Heretofore, these sources have been examined in isolation and utilised as evidence of a coordinated anti-piracy campaign. Within this thesis, these sources are reinterpreted and employed alongside corresponding information from other vantage points in order to assess the immediate contexts driving the accounts and actions of actors operating in different regions with distinctive concerns.

The sources utilised for this thesis can be grouped into three general viewpoints: those originating from ‘centre’, ‘peripheral centres’, and ‘peripheral margins’. As this study focuses on the British suppression campaigns, sources from the centre were predominantly compiled in London by imperial administrative bodies, particularly the BOT and Admiralty, and the representatives of merchant lobbies and companies. Using these sources, it is possible to examine the process through which imperial policy was formulated in London. Yet, these groups relied on the availability of information

supplied from the periphery and the validity of such information is not always certain, particularly where corresponding evidence has not survived. Similarly, the information that was employed to formulate policy could be carefully selected or skewed by these groups in order to advance specific agendas, particularly in instances where merchant lobbies implored for maritime defence for particular regions. As such, it is vital to compare these with sources that originated from 'peripheral centres' which, in turn, informed the centre of activities occurring throughout the empire.

Sources from peripheral centres were compiled primarily by groups within the British Atlantic that were vested with imperial authority, namely naval officers, colonial governors, colonial councils, and colonial assemblies functioning in the Caribbean and North America, as well as by RAC and EIC company agents in Africa and India. The letters, reports, and transcripts compiled by these groups are crucial when evaluating the activities and events occurring throughout the extra-European theatre, which then informed central administrative bodies and merchant lobbies in London. These are vital sources of information not only to evaluate the impact of piracy on specific trades but also to assess the means through which British anti-piracy directives were implemented in extra-European spaces, and what detached measures were employed against piracy by these same groups. Again, however, such sources are not reliable in isolation as they contain a host of hidden agendas, primarily driven by the multifaceted rivalries that existed within these regions. In particular, there were rivalries between naval and colonial officials; between colonial governors, councils, and assemblies; and between company agents and local competitors, and all of these influenced the information that was provided to the centre. Yet, by examining the records that each of these groups produced, rather than focusing primarily on the one-sided reports of one or the other, these rivalries are easily identified and care has been taken to highlight specific evidence

that is uncorroborated and needs to be considered cautiously in light of local conflicts. Likewise, wherever sources from peripheral centres mention rivalries occurring across imperial divides, particularly between British and Spanish imperial subjects, the activities complained of have been verified with accounts originating from Spanish peripheral centres. Although reports from peripheral centres provide a wealth of information related to events occurring within the British Atlantic world, these remain limited by the scope of their intended audience which was almost always imperial administrators in London. This meant that these focused on events of particular consequence to imperial administrators and did not regularly inform on the day-to-day activities occurring within colonial and maritime settings that are crucial to understanding the rise and decline of Atlantic piracy.

To move beyond information compiled in domestic and colonial centres, this thesis also employs sources originating from, or informed by, peripheral margins. This focuses on the inclusion and evaluation of: accounts provided by colonial merchants and captains operating in contested or uncontrolled maritime spaces; the testimonies of captains, mariners, and settlers who encountered and interacted with Atlantic pirates or who suffered at their hands; and the depositions of pirates captured and interrogated. These accounts are found within various sources including merchant letters, newspapers, printed pamphlets, trial transcripts, and enclosures in reports sent from peripheral centres. Although these accounts provide specific information of individual encounters or interactions, which are impossible to confirm unless multiple corresponding accounts exist, these can be evaluated collectively to offer a clear view of the decentralised maritime world that merchants, mariners, settlers, and pirates exploited. Thus, these sources are vital to understanding where and why piracy occurred, and how this was sustained or contested in maritime spaces.

By examining the suppression of piracy across multiple vantage points throughout the British Atlantic world, it becomes clear that there was no one campaign against piracy. Instead, several small-scale measures taking place on land and at sea, and shaped by localised concerns and events in metropolitan and colonial theatres, gradually produced a decline of piratical activity in the eighteenth-century Atlantic. This is argued across seven chapters. The first three chapters discuss the rise of and responses to piracy in the Caribbean and surrounding Atlantic islands. Chapter 1 examines the specific events that led to the isolation of a large body of mariners who then turned to piracy, arguing that this was the result of local colonial and inter-imperial conflicts in the Caribbean. Chapter 2 considers the metropolitan and colonial responses to piracy in the Caribbean theatre, outlining the role of the sugar lobby in driving these measures, and then assessing their significance. Chapter 3 considers the expedition by Woodes Rogers to dislodge pirates from the Bahamas and establish crown control over the region. This is shown to be a private enterprise that was motivated by the desire to profit from colonial development rather than a state-organised campaign inspired by the necessity to suppress pirates utilising the islands. The next three chapters examine the impact of piracy on the wider Atlantic world as pirates were dislodged from the Bahamas and spread to new hunting grounds. Chapter 4 examines metropolitan and colonial responses to piracy in North America and compares these with responses in the Caribbean to argue that state resources were focused on protecting key colonial trades that were backed by strong metropolitan interest groups, in this case the tobacco lobby, whereas the vast majority of the North American coastline was left vulnerable and required local endeavours to deter pirates from unprotected proximities. Chapter 5 considers the role of slave traders in the early-eighteenth-century suppression of piracy showing how two distinct groups, the separate traders and the Royal African Company,

shaped the naval dispatches assigned to Africa and enabled Chaloner Ogle's subsequent success against Bartholomew Roberts. Chapter 6 provides an explanation as to the reasons why the East India Company were able to gain the largest naval squadron sent against pirates during this period, despite the fact that only four pirate crews made it to the Indian Ocean. This was the result of various concerns that lay beyond the actual issue of Atlantic piracy and entangled the Madagascan slave trade, the disruption of Indian pirates on Bombay trade, and the import of Indian textiles to Britain. Finally, Chapter 7 assesses the diminishing impact of piracy after 1722, outlining how the measures discussed in the previous chapters alongside new measures introduced after 1722 created additional conditions that motivated the drop in piratical activity. Throughout these seven chapters, the sheer lack of state and colonial capacity to organise or coordinate anything beyond pragmatic and detached campaigns against Atlantic piracy will become clear. Nevertheless, these campaigns did stimulate a decline of piracy in the early eighteenth century. Thus, while the vast expanse of the Atlantic Ocean lay beyond the margins of imperial control, it was possible to effect change in the maritime activity of imperial subjects using the limited resources of state and colonial centres.

I

CARIBBEAN AND ATLANTIC ISLANDS

Chapter One: The Rise of Piracy Considered, 1714-1716

"Here I beg to observe, that these Proceedings (though they will not justify, for nothing can justify so abominable, so execrable a Villany, yet certainly they were the true Cause that) occasion'd the Rise of the English Pyrates, and laid the Foundation of all the Mischiefs which have happened by their Means."⁶¹

Anonymous, *The State of the Island of Jamaica* (1726)

On 31 July 1715, the Spanish plate fleet carrying treasures to the value of more than £12,000,000 was struck by a hurricane off Cape Canaveral, Florida. Shortly after news of the shipwreck spread, wrecking crews from various British colonies, particularly Jamaica, travelled to Florida in order to fish for submerged wealth. Consequently, the treasure hunting sensation created by this shipwreck was one of the primary precursors of the surge of piracy in this period. Although the events surrounding this shipwreck were central to the subsequent increase in active pirate crews, the historiography has provided little explanation of why wrecking crews eventually turned to outright piracy. Instead, Hanna and Rediker have suggested that a surplus of mariners following European peace in 1713 resulted in mass unemployment which encouraged a rise in piracy as sailors sought to gain an income through illicit endeavour.⁶² Although post-war unemployment was certainly a factor, neither study considers the impact of specific local events that encouraged the idle mariner population to turn to piracy after 1716.

⁶¹ Anon, *The State of the Island of Jamaica. Chiefly in Relation to its Commerce, and the Conduct of the Spaniards in the West Indies* (London, 1726), 8.

⁶² This aligns with the views of Anderson and Starkey who argue that episodic wars and fluctuating economies generate an unstable labour market that in turn encourages piracy. John L. Anderson, 'Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation' in C. R. Pennell (ed.), *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader* (New York, 2001), 82-106; Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 366-367; Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), 23-24; David J. Starkey, 'Pirates and Markets' in Pennell, *Bandits at Sea*, 107-124.

Likewise, although Bialuschewski and Earle recognise the role of the treasure hunting frenzy created by the Florida wrecks, neither identifies the role of local conflicts in creating the inevitability of this episode. The narrative provided suggests that the Jamaican governor, Archibald Hamilton, commissioned privateers to piratically-raid the Spanish salvager camp on Florida. This, in turn, instigated the rise of piracy after Hamilton was arrested and accused of committing several abuses against the treaties between Spain and Great Britain, and the Jamaican privateers, who faced prosecution, did not return to Jamaica but turned to outright piracy.⁶³ This simplified narrative overlooks the complex interplay of local and inter-imperial conflicts in the colonial theatre that shaped the isolation of a large population of colonial seafarers in 1716. Without analysing how various colonial actors, primarily operating from Spanish Cuba and British Jamaica, contributed to these events, the circumstances that motivated a number of crews to turn pirate in this period are misinterpreted. By closely examining the records surrounding these events, particularly reports originating from Jamaica and Cuba, this chapter argues that the surge in piracy after 1716 can only be understood as an unintended consequence of a variety of local and inter-imperial conflicts that were shaped and dictated by the geopolitical climate of the early eighteenth-century Caribbean.

First, this chapter examines the impact of the Spanish guardacostas, or coastguards, that committed piratical attacks on Jamaican shipping from 1714 onwards. The role of the guardacosta is vital to understanding the subsequent events as their actions provided both the justification for Hamilton's commissions, which were meant to provide defence for Jamaican merchant vessels against guardacostas, and for

⁶³ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 173-175; Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 160-161.

wrecking crews, who felt they were due reparation from the Spanish wrecks as compensation for guardacosta depredations. Despite their central role, no study has acknowledged the importance of the guardacosta in these events. Second, the Jamaican privateers' raid on the Spanish salvager camp is outlined in order to assess Hamilton's complicity in the attack. Third, the role of Jamaican interest groups in shaping Hamilton's recall is analysed to show that it was a Jamaican faction, who sought to replace Hamilton with one of their partisans as governor, that promoted the idea that Hamilton had sanctioned the illicit actions of the privateers. Like the guardacosta, the role of this faction has not been recognised by the historiography despite the fact that it was their manoeuvring that led to Hamilton's removal and the notion that he had intentionally promoted piratical operations. Lastly, the chapter demonstrates how all of the events discussed led to the isolation of a sizeable seafaring community that congregated at the Bahamas and turned to piracy. It is only by understanding the nuances of these interrelated events, that occurred on both land and at sea, that the rise of piracy in the early eighteenth century is explained.

Guardacosta Depredations and Jamaican Shipping

Between November and December 1715, Hamilton commissioned ten privateers which were sanctioned to "Execute all manner of Acts of Hostility against pyrates according to the Law of Arms."⁶⁴ Their instructions contained explicit commands not to attack anyone except pirates.⁶⁵ Paradoxically, it was these commissions against pirates that ultimately shaped the rise of piracy in the early eighteenth century. Whilst these

⁶⁴ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16ii. List of vessels commissioned by Hamilton; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 7. Copy of instructions to commanders commissioned against pirates, 12 June 1716.

⁶⁵ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 7. Copy of instructions to commanders commissioned against pirates, 12 June 1716.

commissions have been inadequately judged as a façade that Hamilton employed in order to endorse privateering raids on the flotilla wrecks, it is crucial to understand the immediate circumstances that led Hamilton to issue them. Hamilton stated that a petition from several merchants of Jamaica in June 1714 induced these commissions. The merchants implored that “upon the Departure of the Men of War, his Lordship would take proper Methods from the Protection of the Trade of the Island, then in Danger, from Pirates.”⁶⁶ Crucially, the pirates that Jamaican merchants complained of were in fact Spanish guardacostas.

The guardacosta became a constant source of complaint for Jamaican merchants after the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714) when guardacosta were commissioned to guard Spanish colonial coasts and prevent contraband trading with subjects of other nations. A thriving contraband trade between Jamaica and the Spanish Central American coast had flourished in the second half of the seventeenth century which was vital for the development of the Jamaican plantation economy. Both merchants and economic theorists alike supported this illicit commerce as the balance of trade favoured England (Britain after 1707) and supplied the necessary bullion for trade to the Baltic, the Levant and the East Indies.⁶⁷ Moreover, Hamilton's instructions, stipulated when he was made governor in 1710, stated that trade with Spanish America was so advantageous that it was to be permitted despite the fact that the two states were officially at war. All subjects were authorised to freely and openly trade with any place or territory under the dominion of Spain in America; only those commodities encompassed within the Navigations Acts and stores of war and ammunition were

⁶⁶ Archibald Hamilton, *An Answer to an Anonymous Libel Entitled, Articles exhibited against Lord Archibald Hamilton, late Governour of Jamaica; with sundry Depositions and Proofs relating to the same* (London, 1718), 31.

⁶⁷ Nuala Zahedieh, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 43:4 (1986), 570-593.

prohibited.⁶⁸ It was hoped that this trade would flourish after peace was declared but Jamaican colonists found that trade declined due to the intrusion of French vessels that were illicitly supplying the Spanish colonies.⁶⁹ In addition, guardacosta depredations further obstructed this diminishing trade. Yet, it is important to note that trading with Spanish America was prohibited except under the terms of the *asiento* granted to the SSC in the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) and, as such, the guardacosta were commissioned as legitimate enforcers of these restrictions.⁷⁰ Nevertheless, the complaints of Jamaican merchants focused on the actions of guardacosta, particularly those operating from Cuban ports, who acted beyond their commissions in order to commit piratical depredations on British shipping.

Although their commissions were to prevent inter-imperial trade on Spanish colonial coasts, guardacostas continually exploited their commissions to capture prizes under any pretence of trading with the Spanish coast. Hamilton wrote that "a Piece of Eight, or Spanish Pistol, which is the current Coin of all our own Colonies, found on board any English Vessel, was called Counterband Goods, and a sufficient Cause of Seizure."⁷¹ Other goods such as logwood and snuff were employed as evidence of illicit trading, regardless of where they had been loaded.⁷² Some of these privateers abandoned all pretence and seized vessels containing goods such as rum, sugar, and other commodities produced on Jamaica.⁷³ In one such case, a Jamaican vessel was taken on

⁶⁸ TNA, CO 138/12, 190-281. BOT to Dartmouth, 25 August 1710.

⁶⁹ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 51. Hamilton to BOT, 22 March 1714; Jean O. McLachlan, *Trade and Peace with Old Spain 1667-1750: A study on the influence of commerce on Anglo-Spanish Diplomacy in the first half of the eighteenth century* (Cambridge, 1940), 61.

⁷⁰ The *asiento* was an exclusive contract that granted the right to trade slaves to the Spanish colonies. The SSC secured the right to send one ship of 500 tons each year to the same port that was visited by the annual Spanish merchant fleet as part of the Asiento agreement. McLachlan, *Trade and Peace with Old Spain*, 59-60.

⁷¹ Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 43-44.

⁷² 'Deposition of James Francis Targeir, 3 Aug 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 54; 'Deposition of William Musto, 9 Aug 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 61.

⁷³ 'The Deposition of Thomas Fag, 25 Sept 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 56-57.

the French coast of Hispaniola. When asked what premise the captain had for apprehending the vessel, he responded, "Hispaniola was the Spanish Coast, and that the King of Spain never gave it to the French."⁷⁴ He continued that if he had met the ship on the Jamaican coast, he would have taken it for the same reason.⁷⁵ It is clear that guardacostas commissioned from Cuba primarily targeted Jamaican shipping. This is confirmed by Henry Comb, master of the *Penelope* of Philadelphia, who recounted that the crew of the guardacosta who seized his ship stated they "acted by Virtue of a Commission from the Governor of Trinidad; and they would take all Vessels they met and could overcome, particularly Vessels going to, or coming from, Jamaica."⁷⁶ In 1714 alone, Spanish privateers commandeered at least ten vessels from Jamaica and carried them to Trinidad, Santiago de Cuba, Santo Domingo, and Cartagena where they were condemned as legal prizes.⁷⁷

Spanish imperial officials in these regions, particularly Trinidad and Santiago de Cuba, were reported to have sanctioned the actions of those privateers who violated their commissions to commit piratical acts on British shipping.⁷⁸ When Comb travelled to Santiago de Cuba in order to demand justice, his complaints were completely ignored by the governor. Even when he sighted two of his captors, the governor took no notice of his grievance.⁷⁹ The accounts of other victims who made attempts to gain reparation reflect this sentiment. For example, Thomas Fag was told that his sloop had been condemned and the money distributed which meant there was no way to administer

⁷⁴ 'The Deposition of Thomas Fag, 3 Sept 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 59-60.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

⁷⁶ 'The Deposition of Henry Comb, late Master of the Penelope of Philadelphia, 25 Sept 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 57-59.

⁷⁷ 'A List of Ships taken by the Spaniards, in the West Indies, since the Peace with Spain, in 1712, not including any that were taken in the last war' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 49-51.

⁷⁸ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 22i. Heywood to Governor of Havana, 16 August 1716; TNA, CO 137/12, 22ii. Heywood to Congas, 24 August 1716.

⁷⁹ 'The Deposition of Henry Comb, late Master of the Penelope of Philadelphia, 25 Sept 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 57-59.

restitution. He was informed that if wanted the sloop restored then he would have to purchase it from the new owner.⁸⁰ Hamilton met with similar disappointment when he wrote to the Cuban governors demanding reparation for those who had been unjustly captured.⁸¹ Such reports do not only appear in British accounts. In 1716, the governor of Havana complained that officials in Trinidad actively issued commissions to non-Spanish crews despite the fact that such action was forbidden by Spanish royal decree. For this reason, Trinidad developed into a hub of illicitly-sponsored maritime predation in the second decade of the eighteenth century where predatory crews of various nations gained patronage, protection, and markets.⁸² The actions of both the guardacosta and certain Spanish officials reflect the ambiguities that could be employed concerning maritime traffic in the Atlantic Commons. It is evident that contraband trade between Jamaica and the Spanish colonies was systemic so any complaints by merchants who had been wrongfully taken by guardacostas could easily be disregarded as the grumblings of guilty parties.

Guardacosta depredations, whether legal or illegal, were detrimental to the already declining Jamaican economy. In March 1714, Hamilton complained that trade with the Spanish coast had deteriorated in peacetime.⁸³ Again in May, he wrote complaining of dry weather which had proved prejudicial for the planters, and stated that trade remained at a standstill.⁸⁴ This meant that the two vital components of the Jamaican economy - trade and planting - were stagnating in the post-war period. The

⁸⁰ 'The Deposition of Thomas Fag, 3 Sept 1716' in Anon, *State of the Island of Jamaica*, 59-60. See also 'Deposition of James Francis Targeir, 3 Aug 1716', 54; 'Deposition of William Musto, 9 Aug 1716', 61; 'Deposition of David Johnson, 9 Aug 1716', 54-55.

⁸¹ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 79. Hamilton to BOT, 26 April 1715.

⁸² AGI, Santo Domingo 337. El Rey al Gobernador de la Habana, 16 de octubre de 1716; Jean-Pierre Moreau, *Piratas: Filibusterismo y piratería en el Caribe y en los Mares del Sur (1522-1725)* (Madrid, 2012), 179-181.

⁸³ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 51. Hamilton to BOT, 22 March 1714. British colonial merchants who shipped goods to the Spanish Central American coast also confirm this decline. HSP, #0379 Volume 9, 301-306. Logan to Unspecified, 17 August 1715; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to [Gale], 10 December 1717.

⁸⁴ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 62. Hamilton to BOT, 5 May 1714.

continual depredations of the guardacostas were an unwelcome addition to these difficulties. According to Hamilton, these attacks meant "it was no longer practicable for them [Jamaican merchants] to continue their Commerce of any kind, unless they might have Commissions granted them, to defend themselves against Pirates."⁸⁵ As a consequence of increased guardacosta depredations, there was a necessity to provide for the protection of merchant vessels, particularly at a time when there was no substantial naval defence for Jamaican trade. Although there were two Royal Navy vessels stationed at Jamaica, both had been ordered to return to Britain. Even if this had not been the case, their hulls were greatly fouled which rendered them unfit to make a voyage against the guardacostas.⁸⁶ Without effective naval protection, privateering commissions provided a necessary line of defence for Jamaican shipping against guardacosta depredations.

Rather than being a front for illicit activity, there was a clear requirement to provide privateering commissions to Jamaican merchant shipping in order to counter the impact of the guardacosta. This was a response to the local conditions in the Caribbean where there was a limited range of measures available to offset the increase of Spanish depredations, particularly at a time when there was an overall lack of available maritime defence for Jamaican trade. There was little option but to provide a line of defence for Jamaican shipping against Spanish depredations by issuing privateering commissions that enabled retaliation against piratical attacks by the guardacosta. Thus, Hamilton's commissions appear to have been intended as a means to protect merchant shipping from the very real threat of the guardacosta. Notwithstanding this apparent purpose, the motivations for these commissions must be

⁸⁵ Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 44-45.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 47-48. For further discussion of the limits of the Royal Navy in the Caribbean see Chapter Two, 69-78.

further considered as they were issued shortly after news reached Jamaica that the Spanish flotilla had been shipwrecked off the coast of Florida.

Jamaican Privateers and the Spanish Flotilla Wreck of 1715

On 24 July 1715, the Spanish flotilla set sail from Havana, Cuba. The flotilla consisted of 11 vessels loaded with bullion, dyestuffs, tobacco and other treasures to the value of more than £12,000,000 to be carried back to Spain. Seven days later, the fleet was struck by a hurricane off Cape Canaveral, Florida. Ten of the ships were lost: two disappeared beneath the open seas while the remaining eight crashed into the shallow waters off the Florida coast. General Ubilla, the commander of the fleet, and more than a thousand sailors lost their lives.⁸⁷ The survivors assembled on the beach adjacent to the hulks of two of the ships, the *Capitana* and *Almiranta*, that lay in fairly shallow water. They sent to the nearby Spanish colony of St. Augustine for food, clothes and tools to begin to salvage the wrecks. Havana learned of the loss two weeks later and immediately dispatched a relief expedition to aid survivors and recover as much of the lost cargo as possible.⁸⁸

Crucially, news of the flotilla shipwreck reached Jamaica before Hamilton issued the first three commissions in November.⁸⁹ At least two of these vessels, the *Eagle* and *Bersheba* commanded by John Wills and Henry Jennings respectively, sailed directly to Florida after they received their commissions. On arrival, they landed on the coast and raided the Spanish storehouse that contained salvaged treasure. This earned them

⁸⁷ Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 173; Marion Clayton Link, 'The Spanish Camp Site and the 1715 Plate Fleet Wreck', *Tequesta*, Vol. 26 (1966), 24; Kris E. Lane, *Blood & Silver: A History of Piracy in the Caribbean and Central America* (Oxford, 1999), 188.

⁸⁸ *The Boston News-Letter*, 27 August 1716.

⁸⁹ Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 49.

approximately 120,000 pieces of eight, which they carried back to Jamaica in January 1716.⁹⁰ This aggressive, piratical act has led to a general acquiescence that Hamilton's commissions were a façade and it was always intended that the Jamaican privateers would make an expedition to raid the flotilla shipwreck.⁹¹ Yet, there is evidence that this was not entirely the case. Firstly, as has been discussed, there was the very real threat the depredations by the guardacostas posed to Jamaican commerce. Hamilton claimed that although the commissions had not been issued before news of the flotilla arrived, they had been ordered.⁹² This is problematic as it is contained in a pamphlet prepared by Hamilton in an attempt to assert his innocence after he had been recalled. There is no additional evidence to support this statement. While Hamilton's actions after the privateers returned to Jamaica indicate that he did not sanction an all-out incursion on the Spanish storehouse, it is evident that he had known the privateers intended to voyage to the wrecks.

When the privateers returned to Jamaica from Florida, Hamilton refused to accept the shares that he was owed from both vessels affirming "he would have nothing to do with it, for that he had heard it was taken from the Shore."⁹³ Hamilton had been invested in both the *Eagle* and *Bersheba* although this was not uncharacteristic. Both John Beswick and John Cavalier, part owners of the *Eagle* and *Bersheba* respectively, declared he was normally concerned in vessels which they outfitted to trade to Central America. The fact Hamilton declined his shares in both vessels supports the argument that he had not sanctioned, nor was he complicit in, the raid on the Spanish camp. Nevertheless,

⁹⁰AGI, Santo Domingo 378. Diego de Cordoba Lasso de la Vega al Rey, 23 de abril de 1716; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16iii. Memorial of Valle to Hamilton, 19 May 1716; Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 160. One Spanish report suggested that as many as 14 vessels carrying 3,000 men had sailed to the wreck site in December 1715 and committed the attack. AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 15 de diciembre de 1716.

⁹¹ Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 160; Lane, *Blood & Silver*, 188.

⁹² Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 49.

⁹³ 'Deposition of John Beswick' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited Against Lord Archibald Hamilton, Late Governour of Jamaica With Sundry Depositions and Proofs relating to the same* (London, 1717), 16.

both testimonies accounted that the vessels had been purposely outfitted for a voyage to the wrecks, and that Hamilton had agreed to be invested in such an expedition.⁹⁴ This collusion was further voiced by John Balchen, captain of the *HMS Diamond* which was stationed at Jamaica, who wrote:

...there was two Sloops fitted out of Jamaica, One belonging to Capt Edward James the other to Capt Jennings wch had my Lord Hamiltons Comission for suppressing of Piracys... But this Design as they said themselves was upon the Wrecks.⁹⁵

Furthermore, there was an account in *The Boston News-Letter* a few weeks after Jennings and Wills departed reporting that two or three vessels had departed from Jamaica to go “a Trading on the Spanish Wreck”.⁹⁶ By these accounts it is clear that the voyage to the wrecks was intended and this was openly disclosed. Captain Jonathan Barnet, of the *Tiger Snow* commissioned in December 1715, stated that Hamilton had known his design was for the wrecks and had opined, “if he [Barnet] was stronger than the Spaniards, then [he] might take the Mony he could get up.”⁹⁷ This view was confirmed by Lewis Galdy, a merchant concerned in the *Tiger Snow*, who wrote that Hamilton’s view was “that it was free for every body to take the Mony out of the Water” and that “the strongest ought to keep the possession of the Wreck.”⁹⁸ This appears to be a true representation of Hamilton’s opinion as in a letter to the Governor of Havana he alleged:

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 15-16; ‘Deposition of John Cavalier’ in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 17-20.

⁹⁵ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16iv. Balchen to Burchet, 13 May 1716.

⁹⁶ *The Boston News-Letter*, 19 December 1715.

⁹⁷ ‘Deposition of Captain Jonathan Barnet’ in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 8.

⁹⁸ ‘Deposition of Lewis Galdy’ in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 8.

...that the Dispossessioners [Jennings and Wills] are Robbers, and ought to be treated as such; but conceive such part of the said Flota, if any, lying Derelict, from which the Subjects of his Catholic Majesty were not drove and forc'd out of Possession, belonged to the first Occupant.⁹⁹

Hamilton stated that the first claimant could legitimately salvage those wrecks that were not already being worked by the Spanish. This was a contestable stance, and employed ambiguities concerning maritime jurisdiction, but it was not unusual for wrecking expeditions to be fitted out in the Caribbean.¹⁰⁰ The situation was even more uncertain as it was thought that some of the wrecks lay nearer to the Bahamas Islands which was part of the British American dominions.¹⁰¹ Therefore, Hamilton knew the privateers intended to voyage to the wrecks and he sanctioned the legitimacy of their planned wrecking operations; perhaps welcoming the influx of Spanish treasure to Jamaica that such endeavours might generate.

This is not, however, evidence that Hamilton sanctioned an attack on the Spanish storehouse, which was clearly an unjustifiable act. Nor does it seem likely that the commissions he issued were ever intended to be utilised as pretence for such depredations. These commissions could not be employed for that purpose as they explicitly stated that only pirates could be lawfully seized.¹⁰² Instead, it is probable that the commissions were to protect privateers from potential piratical attacks from Spanish vessels whilst they fished the wrecks. Jamaican merchants had previously petitioned Hamilton to grant commissions to protect their vessels from pirates while trading on

⁹⁹ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 10. Hamilton to Governor of Havana, 27 February 1716.

¹⁰⁰ See TNA, CO 37/10, 214–19. Description of Bermuda, 1722; Jarvis, *Eye of All Trade*, 80-81.

¹⁰¹ 'Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 9 February 1715/16' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 78.

¹⁰² TNA, CO 137/12, No. 7. Copy of instructions to commanders commissioned against pirates, 12 June 1716.

the Central American coast.¹⁰³ Hamilton permitted this for the voyages to the Spanish wrecks, which he perceived as a legitimate practice.¹⁰⁴ Rather than empowering an unjustifiable assault on the Spanish camp, Hamilton in fact utilised these wrecking expeditions, which were already being fitted out, for two analogous endeavours: to stimulate the Jamaican economy with salvaged bullion and to discourage the guardacostas that hindered this economy. Unmistakably, these commissions explicitly forbade piratical action and Hamilton's refusal to receive his share on the privateers' return confirms that he did not authorise or support an assault on the Spanish camp.

Jennings and Wills' arrival with their illicitly-acquired fortune created a sensation in Jamaica.¹⁰⁵ John Balchen, a navy captain stationed at Jamaica, wrote that at least twenty sloops were organised for a voyage to the wrecks after their return and complained that he lost ten men from his own ship "being all mad to go a wrecking."¹⁰⁶ Although exact details of how many vessels voyaged from Jamaica to the wrecks, and how many merchants were concerned in these expeditions does not exist, it is evident that there was a widespread opinion in Jamaica that the Spaniards were indebted to the island due to the attacks of the guardacostas and, therefore, that they had a right to take reprisals from the wreck.¹⁰⁷ It is certain that a large number of vessels would have been outfitted to fish on the wrecks in the hope of recovering quantities of Spanish gold. Although Jamaican buccaneering interests – whose raids on the Spanish Americas had provided a strong contingent of Jamaican commerce in the seventeenth century - had been suppressed by planters by the end of the century, a sizeable seafaring community continued to operate from Jamaica. Moreover, a number of Jamaican sailors were left

¹⁰³ Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 44-45.

¹⁰⁴ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 10. Hamilton to Governor of Havana, 27 February 1716.

¹⁰⁵ Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 174.

¹⁰⁶ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16iv. Balchen to Burchet, 13 May 1716.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 27. Hamilton to BOT, 12 June 1716; 'S. Morris and Pratter to Archibald Hamilton, 25 May 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 86.

idle and unemployed as Spanish depredations hindered the contraband trade and merchants remained reluctant to outfit trading voyages.¹⁰⁸ This community welcomed news of the shipwreck as it provided opportunity for a number of vessels. Although Hamilton did not commission any more privateers after December 1715, several more ships went from Jamaica to the wrecks without commissions. Hamilton acknowledged the voyages of Jamaican vessels to the Florida coast but wrote that it “was not in my Power to hinder, but by a general Embargo.”¹⁰⁹ Whilst Jennings and Wills’ actions were unjustifiable, Hamilton could not stop other vessels from voyaging to the Florida coast to fish the wrecks. These vessels were undertaking lawful wrecking voyages and, as Hamilton recognised, there was little he could do to stop them departing.

Assertions that Hamilton encouraged Jennings and Wills’ raid on the Spanish storehouse are unfounded. While it is clear that Hamilton knew of and endorsed the privateers’ plan to work the flotilla wrecks, this does not then mean that he permitted any form of piratical assault. These commissions were stimulated primarily by the immediate situation in the Caribbean in which inter-imperial maritime conflict continued in peace through the depredations of guardacostas on Jamaican shipping. The opportunities presented by the flotilla shipwreck enabled Jamaican merchants and ship-owners to reciprocate and, in turn, encouraged the actions of the privateers and non-commissioned wreckers. Although Hamilton did not sanction these undertakings, his fate became intertwined with the events that followed as his local enemies utilised the situation to secure his recall.

Spanish Complaints and Jamaican Politics

¹⁰⁸ McLachlan, *Trade and Peace*, 65-66.

¹⁰⁹ Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 49.

In early January 1716, the Marquis de Casa Torres, the Governor of Havana, dispatched Don Juan del Valle, the Deputy of the Governor and Council of Commerce, to Jamaica after receiving news that vessels intended to salvage the flotilla shipwreck. Valle was to deliver a message from Torres demanding the Jamaican privateers' withdrawal from Florida as they did not have a claim to Spanish possessions.¹¹⁰ Shortly after delivering the message, Valle delivered a memorial to Hamilton regarding the arrival of the *Eagle* and *Bersheba*. He requested that Hamilton issue a proclamation to recall the vessels that had proceeded to the wrecks and to prohibit all other salvaging attempts. Moreover, he demanded repayment of all the effects taken.¹¹¹ In his response to Torres, Hamilton first complained of the depredations of the guardacostas deeming that the Spaniards were the first aggressors in this case. Nevertheless, he condemned the privateers' actions.¹¹² He wrote that he had advised Valle that a proclamation:

...may not probably deter others that are still out, and may have been upon the wrecks from returning to this Island, and be a means of putting them upon desperate attempts of more pernicious consequence to the Crown, and whether deterring prosecution until the return of all or most part of the vessels suspected to have committed any unlawful act, may not upon that account be most advisable...¹¹³

Despite this warning, Hamilton specified that it was Valle's right to undertake any criminal prosecution on the felonious parties. It appeared at this juncture that the situation would be resolved as Valle accepted Hamilton's recommendation. Not wanting to be blamed for any of the possible consequences outlined, Valle would wait for those

¹¹⁰ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 9. Torres to Hamilton, 3 January 1716.

¹¹¹ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16iii. Memorial of Valle to Hamilton, 19 May 1716; AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 15 de diciembre de 1716.

¹¹² TNA, CO 137/12, No. 10. Hamilton to Governor of Havana, 27 February 1716.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

who had been to the wrecks to return with their plunder before proceeding against them.¹¹⁴ This compromise did not last long due to the actions of Jamaican interests that opposed Hamilton.

On his arrival in Jamaica, Hamilton found himself quickly opposed by a Jamaican faction who primarily operated from within the colonial assembly.¹¹⁵ Colonial assemblies were elected representative bodies which were responsible for making all local laws and ordinances, and for approving new taxes and colonial government budgets. As a result, colonial governors needed to cultivate strong relationships with provincial interests to remain in a favourable position.¹¹⁶ This was not always possible and Hamilton's tenure was wrought with letters of complaints regarding the Jamaican assembly's refusal to comply with the orders he received from London.¹¹⁷ In October 1713, he complained of "ye factious indeavours of a few, who have never been satisfy'd with any Government" and described these assembly members as "a seed brought here with ye first settlers that has never been intirely rooted out."¹¹⁸ Peter Beckford, the speaker of the assembly from 1707 to 1713, was one of the prominent members of the group that opposed Hamilton. The preceding governor, Thomas Handasyd had also complained about the Beckford family. In 1706, Handasyd complained that the Jamaican assembly were "Creolians" who "cannot bear English Government" and reported that "the chief ffomentors of all this work are Col. Beckford and his two sons [Peter and Thomas], whom he has got into the House; they have been both tried for murder, and, I am of opinion, were both guilty, tho[ugh] the Jury would not find it

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial.

¹¹⁶ Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (Athens, 1986), 28-42; Alison Gilbert Olson, *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690-1790* (Cambridge, 1992), 76-92; Ian K. Steele, 'The Anointed, the Appointed, and the Elected' in P. J. Marshall, Elaine Low, and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 105-127.

¹¹⁷ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial.

¹¹⁸ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 35. Hamilton to BOT, 27 October 1713.

so.”¹¹⁹ Colonel Beckford was a prominent Jamaican planter during the seventeenth and early eighteenth century and served as lieutenant-governor of Jamaica for eight months in 1702. It was later written that he was a ruthless and violent man; traits that he shared with his sons. On his death in 1710, he was reputed to have owned twenty estates, 1200 slaves, and £1,500,000 in bank stock. The majority of his estate was bequeathed to Peter Beckford, the speaker of the assembly and chief opposition to Hamilton.¹²⁰ In 1717, a Philadelphia merchant with close ties to Jamaica, and writing on the disputes there, stated that “Peter [Beckford] hath a great forereach that [th]e other will hardly get [th]e windward of him.”¹²¹ Thus, Hamilton found himself opposed by a faction that included one of the most substantial and wealthiest planters of early-eighteenth-century Jamaica. Less is known about the other members of the faction but it is clear that this was a group of influential Jamaican planters who held positions in both the elected assembly and appointed council, and who were supported by associates in Jamaica and London.¹²²

The initial manifestation of the faction’s discontent was Hamilton’s instructions to preserve the regiments stationed on Jamaica during the War of the Spanish Succession. During the war, there had been continual difficulties obtaining assembly funds to quarter and subsist the soldiers dispatched to Jamaica.¹²³ This dispute continued in peacetime as a number of assembly members refused to provide provision for the maintenance of these troops, as they did not believe they were necessary in

¹¹⁹ TNA, CO 137/7, No. 36. Handasyd to BOT, 27 December 1706.

¹²⁰ On his death, Peter Beckford Junior was the sole owner of nine sugar plantations and part owner of seven more. He was the wealthiest planter in Jamaica. Richard B. Sheridan, ‘Beckford, Peter (*bap.* 1643, *d.* 1710)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004); Richard B. Sheridan, ‘Beckford, Peter (1672/3-1735)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

¹²¹ Dickinson was here referring to potential disputes between Beckford and the newly appointed governor of Jamaica, Nicholas Lawes. HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to [Gale], 9 December 1717.

¹²² TNA, CO 137/10, No. 10. Hamilton to BOT, 22 November 1712; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 19. Aylmer, March, and Beckford to BOT; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 25. Planters and Merchants concerned in Jamaica to BOT, [6 August 1713]; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 69iii. Hamilton to Orkney, 15 November 1714; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 79. Hamilton to BOT, 26 April 1715; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 5. Hamilton to Stanhope, 12 June 1716; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton’s Memorial.

¹²³ TNA, CO 137/7, No. 36. Handasyd to BOT, 27 December 1706; TNA, CO 137/8, No. 27. Handasyd to BOT, 27 October 1708; TNA, CO 137/9, No. 44. Handasyd to BOT, 16 July 1711.

peacetime. In October 1713, Hamilton called the assembly but when debates turned to the issue of maintaining the soldiers, several members obstructed the session, and delayed the decision, by walking out. Hamilton dissolved the assembly, expecting that calling a new assembly would resolve the issue.¹²⁴ However, the new assembly continued to act outside of their authority by adjourning themselves for one month without requesting Hamilton's leave as required.¹²⁵ Hamilton dissolved this assembly and called another election but the election returned a small majority of the same opposing faction.¹²⁶ Hamilton commented that this faction:

...who call themselves the Country party, have had no small encouragem[en]t from the intelligence they have had of my not being supported from home, as I might have expected, consequently gave them hopes of my being recalled. To obtaine which, by seemingly to make it necessary, all supplys for support of Govern[men]t are to be opposed, and the Island represented to be in so low and poor a condition, as not to be able to support the expence of a Capt[ai]n Generall, that a Lieutenant Gov[erno]r might answer the end better, and who so proper for that, as one of themselves.¹²⁷

The faction were not simply opposed to the subsistence of soldiers but wanted to use their power in the assembly to further their own ends by obstructing government in order to replace Hamilton with one of its own members who would be dedicated to

¹²⁴ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 35. Hamilton to BOT, 27 October 1713; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 12. Memorial by March and others to BOT, 21 February 1716.

¹²⁵ It was the governor's prerogative to call and dissolve assemblies. TNA, CO 138/13, 167-188. BOT to Dartmouth, 21 July 1710; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 51. Hamilton to BOT, 22 March 1714.

¹²⁶ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 69iii. Hamilton to Orkney, 15 November 1714.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*

maintaining the faction's local concerns as opposed to metropolitan priorities.¹²⁸ Although Hamilton succeeded in having two of the so-called "Country party" members removed from the Jamaican council, which was an appointed body, there was little he could do to impede their majority in the assembly.¹²⁹ Consequently, although the council initially advanced a small sum to aid in the expense, Hamilton was forced to sustain the company of soldiers using his own private wealth.¹³⁰

That it was the faction's intent to advance their overall supremacy in Jamaica by utilising their influence, as both assembly members and substantial planters, is further evidenced by their campaigns against three of their rivals who were also members of Hamilton's council: William Brodrick, the Attorney General of Jamaica; Richard Rigby, the Secretary of Jamaica; and Dr John Stewart, Hamilton's physician. The faction targeted these three officials because they had supported the previous governor and had opposed the faction's endeavours in previous assemblies.¹³¹ This led Hamilton to write that the faction's activities in the assembly were not driven by political opposition to specific legislation but rather "ye real ground of difference was personall picques and animositys."¹³² Brodrick, Rigby and Stewart supported Hamilton throughout his tenure and, as such, the faction continually manoeuvred to counter their influence.¹³³ For example, throughout 1712 and 1713, the faction made a significant clamour over the fact that Rigby held two offices in Jamaica as both the Provost Marshal and Secretary.

¹²⁸ This misconduct was not isolated to Jamaica, but was a recurring theme in the American colonies during the period. There are reports of assemblies of several colonies assuming new privileges and powers. For example see TNA, CO 5/4, No. 13. BOT to Stanhope, 17 February 1716.

¹²⁹ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 69iii. Hamilton to Orkney, 15 November 1714; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 5. Hamilton to Stanhope, 12 June 1716; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial.

¹³⁰ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 69ii. Hamilton to Orkney, 10 December 1714; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 79. Hamilton to BOT, 26 April 1715.

¹³¹ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 7. Hamilton to BOT, 8 March 1712; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 26. Handasyd to BOT, 6 August 1713.

¹³² TNA, CO 137/10, No. 35. Hamilton to BOT, 27 October 1713.

¹³³ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 9. Hamilton to BOT, 10 October 1712; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16vii. Stanhope to BOT, 19 May 1716.

In fact, Rigby only held the patent for the office of Provost Marshal whilst John Baker held the office of Secretary. Baker had delegated the office of Secretary to Rigby who in turn delegated the office of Provost Marshal to another official. Hence, Rigby executed the office of Secretary despite being the patentee of the office of Provost Marshal. Importantly, the custom of delegating patent-offices had previously been judged as a legal practice by the Attorney General in Britain.¹³⁴ The assembly attempted to hinder Rigby's income and reputation by passing an act to prevent any person from holding two or more offices of profit in Jamaica. Whitgift Aylmer, Francis March, and Thomas Beckford, Jamaican inhabitants and associates of the faction who were in London in 1713, attempted to gain support for this act by soliciting its approval in London. They also drew on the support of influential London merchants concerned in Jamaican trade and aligned to the faction, such as Gilbert Heathcote, who petitioned the BOT in support of the act.¹³⁵ In the end the Attorney General provided the same opinion that delegation of patent-offices was a legal practice and asserted that the act was unacceptable as its only purpose was "to deprive Mr. Rigby of his deputation which Mr. Baker might lawfully make and he lawfully accept."¹³⁶ Likewise, the faction continually claimed that Broderick, Rigby and Stewart were involved in bribery and election fraud which they seemingly undertook to maintain the governor's interest; it was often implied that Hamilton was complicit in these acts.¹³⁷ In one such case, the faction used their authority in the assembly to arrest Brodrick and several other persons after an election in December 1713 in order to question them about showing the title of the

¹³⁴ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 7. Hamilton to BOT, 8 March 1712; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 7i. List of patent-offices in Jamaica; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 26. Handasyd to BOT, 6 August 1713.

¹³⁵ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 22. Aylmer, March, and Beckford to BOT, [28 July 1713]; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 25. Planters and Merchants concerned in Jamaica to BOT, [6 August 1713].

¹³⁶ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 24. Attorney General to BOT, 6 August 1713.

¹³⁷ TNA, CO 137/9, No. 75. Mackenzie to BOT, 8 October 1712; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 22. Aylmer, March, and Beckford to BOT, [28 July 1713]; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 50. Hamilton to BOT, 26 December 1713; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 12. Memorial presented by March and others to BOT, 21 February 1716; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16xi. Representation of Jamaican Assembly to the King.

proposed act for subsisting soldiers to potential voters. After holding them for a considerable time, they were made to pay fines and then released.¹³⁸ There was little evidence for many of faction's serious accusations and it is apparent that all of their actions were undertaken with the sole purpose of undermining and discrediting their rivals. This highlights that the faction was willing to utilise their influence in the assembly and able to draw upon a network of support in both London and Jamaica in order to attack local adversaries who obstructed their supremacy. It was using these same methods that the faction manipulated the clamour over the privateering raids to secure Hamilton's removal and place one of their own as governor. Hamilton's fate, and the subsequent rise of piracy, became entwined with the development of an increasingly influential and powerful Jamaican faction.

Hamilton stated that the faction influenced Don Juan del Valle's decision to issue a second memorial complaining of Jamaican depredations on the flotilla shipwreck. One piece of evidence to support this assessment is the fact that Valle sanctioned the *Tiger Snow*, the vessel that occasioned the first complaint by Torres and Valle's subsequent arrival and which was owned entirely by members of the faction, to sail again at the request of the faction. Although they did not need to seek Valle's authorisation to fit out the *Tiger Snow*, the fact that the faction did so and that he permitted it while complaining that the *Bersheba* had done likewise is evidence of their developing relationship.¹³⁹ It appears that the faction manoeuvred to persuade Valle that Hamilton was supportive of the privateers and complicit in their activities.¹⁴⁰ In his second memorial, Valle's primary complaint was that those privateers who had returned to Jamaica were permitted to sail again with the same commissions to repeat the same

¹³⁸ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 50. Hamilton to BOT, 26 December 1713.

¹³⁹ Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 55-56.

¹⁴⁰ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16i. Extract of letter from Valle to Monteleon, 18 March 1716.

crimes.¹⁴¹ Hamilton's defence was that the *Eagle* had only been permitted to depart under the same commission after several merchants requested that it be ordered to pursue a pirate that had recently taken a Jamaican trading vessel. This proved a success after the *Eagle* ran the pirate aground on the south side of Cuba and returned to Jamaica. With regards to the *Bersheba*, Hamilton reported that it sailed under pretence of a trading voyage and it was not within his power, except by legal proceeding, to stop it; he had, however, requested that Jennings' commission be returned before the *Bersheba* sailed. According to Hamilton and Valle's arrangement, no litigations were to take place until the other privateers returned. If Valle had changed his opinion regarding this, then it was his prerogative to commence prosecution against the privateers. This could be undertaken even when the vessels were at sea as the plundered money had been ordered to be left ashore.¹⁴² Valle's second complaint regarded the seizure of a Spanish vessel by one of the privateers who had returned to Jamaica after the first memorial. This seizure provided the faction with the evidence they needed to proceed against Hamilton.¹⁴³

Francisco Fernandez, commander of the *Bennett* commissioned in December 1715, captured a Spanish ship, which had sailed from Vera Cruz with a sizeable cargo of silver, off the coast of Havana in February 1716. It was brought to Jamaica and condemned as a legal prize on 16 March 1716. Hamilton received five bags of silver from his share in the vessel.¹⁴⁴ Valle portrayed this as an outright piratical attack on an

¹⁴¹ 'Memorial of Captain Don Juan del Valle, Deputy of, and of the Council of Commerce of his Catholick Majesty, and of the Flota lately under the Command of Don Juan Estebano de Uvelia, Knight of the Order of St. James' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 12-15.

¹⁴² TNA, CO 137/12, No. 78v. Remarks on list of vessels commissioned by Hamilton, 5 October 1717; 'The Deposition of John Cavalier' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 19-20; Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 55-60.

¹⁴³ 'Memorial of Captain Don Juan del Valle, Deputy of, and of the Council of Commerce of his Catholick Majesty, and of the Flota lately under the Command of Don Juan Estebano de Uvelia, Knight of the Order of St. James' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 12-15.

¹⁴⁴ AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 21 de junio de 1716; AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 15 de diciembre de 1716; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16i. Extract of letter from Valle to Monteleon, 18 March 1716; TNA, CO 137/11, 16vii. Representation of merchants against Hamilton; TNA, CO 137/12, No.

innocent Spanish vessel.¹⁴⁵ Yet, the ship apprehended was the *Kensington* sloop, formerly belonging to the Receiver-General of Kingston and taken by a guardacosta after peace had been declared. The ship had not been legally condemned and therefore it could be perceived as a legitimate prize under Fernandez's commission.¹⁴⁶ This would have been a lawful seizure if Fernandez had acted accordingly. Contrary to legal practice, he transferred the money and the most valuable goods out of the vessel before sending it into Jamaica. He then refused to enter Jamaica until the sloop was condemned and he was assured that the plundered goods would not be confiscated. Hamilton's request that the SSC factors stationed at Jamaica send their brigantine, assisted with fifty soldiers, to seize the *Bennett* and the goods withheld confirms that he did not approve of Fernandez's conduct.¹⁴⁷ The factors were unable to provide this support stating that they would be unable to obtain the number of trusted seamen required to make this expedition as "there is so many of our Townsmen concern'd in the *Bennet*."¹⁴⁸ Unable to arrest Fernandez, Hamilton publicly declared his disapproval, deposited his share to the Council, and appointed a court to reverse the condemnation. On the 5th of August, the day prior to court meeting, however, Hamilton was replaced by Peter Heywood as

67i. Hamilton's Memorial; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16ii. List of vessels commissioned by Hamilton; Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 23.

¹⁴⁵ Memorial of Captain Don Juan del Valle, Deputy of, and of the Council of Commerce of his Catholick Majesty, and of the Flota lately under the Command of Don Juan Estebano de Uvelia, Knight of the Order of St. James' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 12-15.

¹⁴⁶ Hamilton later decided that this was not a lawful prize and ordered that his share be delivered to the Spanish owners of the ship. 'Copy of a Letter from Fra Fernando to Lord Archibald Hamilton, 7 January 1715' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 21; 'Copy of a Letter wrote by Lord Hamilton's Directions, by Mr. Cockburn, to Captain Fernando, 28 February 1715/16' in Anon., *Articles Exhibited*, 22; TNA, CO 324/34, 149-155. Carteret to Lawes, 14 July 1722; TNA, CO 324/34, 156. Carteret to Rigby, 14 July 1722.

¹⁴⁷ 'Lord Archibald Hamilton to Mess. Morris and Pratter, 24 May 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 84. For a description of a brigantine see Appendix 1: Table 1.1.

¹⁴⁸ 'S. Morris and Pratter to Lord Archibald Hamilton, 25 May 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 86.

Governor of Jamaica, and sent back to England in chains.¹⁴⁹ The faction had succeeded in lobbying the metropole to annul Hamilton's commission as governor.

Hamilton's removal was stimulated by the actions of two agents of the faction in London, Samuel Page, the Deputy Secretary of Jamaica, and Walter Arlington, a Jamaican merchant. Page journeyed to England in March 1716. This was a wholly unlawful departure as he deserted his office without the necessary authorisation from Hamilton.¹⁵⁰ He even went as far as to forge Hamilton's signature to a licence permitting him to leave the island.¹⁵¹ Page wrote that his excuse for leaving was "the preserving my Life which... appears to be in Danger."¹⁵² This was a complete fabrication to justify his actions on behalf of the faction. According to Hamilton, Page was "only a toole of the others."¹⁵³ It was the faction who instigated Page to sail to London to lobby for Hamilton's removal. This seems to have been a well-planned venture as the Assembly had passed a bill in December 1713 that supplied a sum of £900 for soliciting laws and other public affairs of Jamaica in Great Britain for three years.¹⁵⁴ Instead of soliciting laws, Page used this sum to make affidavits against Hamilton.¹⁵⁵ Page and Arlington delivered these to James Stanhope, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, declaring that Hamilton had encouraged the *Eagle* and *Bersheba* to raid the Spanish camp on Florida. They testified that Hamilton had received a share of the plunder from Fernandez, and had pushed through the condemnation of the entire cargo seized.¹⁵⁶ The

¹⁴⁹ 'Minutes of the Council of Jamaica, 9 June 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 88; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial; AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 21 de junio de 1716; AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 15 de diciembre de 1716.

¹⁵⁰ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial.

¹⁵¹ TNA, CO 137/12, 67iv. License to Page, 25 February 1716.

¹⁵² TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67ii. Copy of Page's letter to Hamilton, 6 March 1716.

¹⁵³ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 79. Hamilton to BOT, 26 April 1715.

¹⁵⁴ TNA, CO 137/10, No. 51. Hamilton to BOT, 22 March 1714; TNA, CO 137/10, No. 51iii. Copy of an Act of Jamaica, 15 December 1713.

¹⁵⁵ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial.

¹⁵⁶ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16v. Copy of Page's Affidavit, 15 May 1716; TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16vi. Copy of Arlington's Affidavit, 15 May 1716.

true facts behind these accusations were intentionally concealed. Indeed, in a list detailing the commissioned vessels that Page provided, he deliberately overlooked the owners of the *Tiger Snow* and *Mary* in order to protect their owners who were associates of the faction.¹⁵⁷

Around the same time of these affidavits, news reached England by way of Spain concerning Jamaican depredations on the flotilla shipwreck. These were followed by assurances from King George I that all proper means would be used to recover the sums appropriated by Jamaican pirates and satisfaction made to Spain.¹⁵⁸ Page and Arlington's affidavits, alongside complaints from Spain, prompted the annulment of Hamilton's governorship for "several abuses committed... to the prejudice of the Treaties between this Crown and that of Spain" in May 1716.¹⁵⁹ Peter Heywood, one of the leading faction members and a Jamaican plantation owner, was appointed as Hamilton's successor. This occurred despite the fact that the Jamaican Council had advised Hamilton to remove him a few months earlier for continually disrupting proceedings against the interest of the king's service. Likewise, a number of the newly named Jamaican councillors were those who had opposed Hamilton in the Assembly.¹⁶⁰ Heywood's instructions were to inquire whether Hamilton had sanctioned the abuses committed by the privateers under his commissions. If this proved true, he was to be arrested and sent to London on the first ship possible.¹⁶¹ Without carrying out the required investigation, the Jamaican Council, now controlled by the so-called Country

¹⁵⁷ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16ii. List of vessels commissioned by Hamilton; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 78v. Remarks on list of vessels commissioned by Hamilton, 5 October 1717.

¹⁵⁸ *Mercurius Politicus*, May 1716; AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 21 de junio de 1716; *Daily Courant*, 21 July 1716.

¹⁵⁹ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16. Stanhope to BOT, 19 May 1716.

¹⁶⁰ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial.

¹⁶¹ TNA, CO 5/190, 343-346. Stanhope to Heywood, 28 May 1716.

party, issued a warrant for Hamilton, arrested him without disclosing his charge, and sent him to England within a day's notice. He arrived in London in December 1716.¹⁶²

Once news spread that Hamilton had been recalled, a number of considerable merchants and planters who did not support the faction petitioned the king. These included absentee planters and merchants concerned in the Jamaican trade in England, as well as those in Jamaica.¹⁶³ They maintained that the accusations were made by "Persons of small Credit & little Interest in your Mat:ys said Island."¹⁶⁴ They decreed Hamilton had always acted in pursuance of his instructions and that the men who opposed him had continually obstructed the execution of these orders. These concerned parties were openly alarmed about powers being entrusted to the faction and requested that a suitable successor be sent immediately if Hamilton was removed.¹⁶⁵ One petitioner, Henry Thompson, proclaimed Hamilton's innocence before entreating that Page and Arlington should be made to enter security for their appearance before the Secretary of State when the case was discussed.¹⁶⁶ That these merchants and planters, who were not involved with the faction, petitioned to clear Hamilton's name and to secure a successor who was not influenced by the faction shows that the entire coup against Hamilton was motivated by a local set of interests that did not represent the entirety of Jamaica. When Hamilton's case was considered, the faction had already dropped the prosecution against him and refused to appear further on the matter. This brash manoeuvre confirmed that the case against Hamilton had been contrived to procure his recall and place Heywood at the head of Jamaican government.

¹⁶² TNA, CO 137/12, No. 67i. Hamilton's Memorial; *The Weekly Journal, Or, British Gazetteer*, 8 December 1716.

¹⁶³ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 19. Wood to BOT, 31 May 1716; TNA, CO 137/11, 19i. Petition of planters and merchants of Jamaica now in England to the King; TNA, CO 137/11, 19ii. Petition of planters, merchants and others concerned in Jamaica to the King.

¹⁶⁴ TNA, CO 137/11, 19i. Petition of planters and merchants of Jamaica now in England to the King.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid*; TNA, CO 137/11, 19ii. Petition of planters, merchants and others concerned in Jamaica to the King.

¹⁶⁶ TNA, CO 137/11, No. 25i. Petition of Thompson to the King.

Subsequently, Page was removed from his office of Deputy Secretary of Jamaica and Sir Nicholas Lawes replaced Heywood as Governor of Jamaica in 1717.¹⁶⁷ In the end, Hamilton procured a *Noli Prosequi* meaning that the entire litigation was dropped.¹⁶⁸ Hamilton's reputation was relatively unscathed by this episode; he was made Lord Commissioner of the Admiralty in 1729 and Governor of Greenwich Hospital in 1746.¹⁶⁹

Overall, then, it was the Jamaican faction who promoted the notion that Hamilton had explicitly sponsored unlawful attacks on Spanish assets in order to gain control of the colonial government. In actual fact, this was a local group of wealthy planters and their associates who wanted to safeguard their interests in local government and who sent agents to London to further their interests.¹⁷⁰ Without considering this local conflict and the extraordinary measures that the faction took to ensure Hamilton would be recalled, his complicity in these events has been misrepresented. It was this local conflict, bolstered by the ongoing inter-imperial disputes between Cuba and Jamaica, that led to the exaggeration of Hamilton's involvement and his subsequent removal. Although this was a local power struggle over the control of Jamaican political bodies, it had serious consequences that extended beyond the boundaries of Jamaica and impacted vast expanses of the Atlantic world.

Rise of the Pirates Considered

¹⁶⁷ TNA, CO 138/15, 504-508. BOT to Addison, 24 October 1717; TNA, CO 324/33. BOT to Addison, 24 October 1717.

¹⁶⁸ *The Weekly Journal, Or, British Gazetteer*, 31 August 1717.

¹⁶⁹ Frank Cundall, *The Governors of Jamaica in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1937), 64.

¹⁷⁰ This was a practice that was evident throughout the early-eighteenth-century colonial theatre as colonists actively exerted their influence in the metropole. Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: the rise of the planter class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (New York, 1973), 165; Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (Leicester, 1981), 306-362; Olson, *Making the Empire Work*, 91; Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Baltimore, 1974), 54-59.

Those who opposed Hamilton obstructed his attempts to rein in the privateers and others who had voyaged to the flotilla shipwreck and it was this obstruction that led directly to the surge of piracy in the early eighteenth century. The faction's promotion of the idea that Hamilton supported depredations against the Spanish had led to Valle's second memorial. In fact, it is probable that Page had forged a second commission for Jennings, commander of the *Bersheba*, which had been one of Valle's primary complaints in his second memorial.¹⁷¹ Valle's renewed protest prompted Hamilton to issue two proclamations, shortly before he was arrested, in an attempt to appease the Spanish. In the first proclamation, Hamilton commanded all commissioned vessels to return to Jamaica with any vessels and effects they had plundered with the clear intention that they would be tried.¹⁷² The second proclamation prohibited "all and every the Subjects of his said Britannick Majesty, to Dive or Fish upon any of the said Flota."¹⁷³ Hamilton had previously advised Valle that these proclamations would only cause further problems as the men who had gone to the wrecks would not return to Jamaica for fear of being tried and losing their plunder. As Hamilton said, these proclamations would "be a means of putting them upon desperate attempts of more pernicious consequence to the Crown."¹⁷⁴ Hamilton's analysis was correct. The consequences of these proclamations were felt immediately. The same edition of *The Boston News-Letter* that reported on Hamilton's departure from Jamaica contained an account that a pirate sloop, "one Jennings Commander", was operating near Cuba.¹⁷⁵ These proclamations instigated the isolation of Jennings and the Jamaican privateers alongside those other

¹⁷¹ Hamilton voiced this view in his pamphlet after discovering that Page had forged a license permitting his departure from Jamaica. Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 57.

¹⁷² 'By his Excellency the Governor, A Proclamation, 24 April 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 80-81.

¹⁷³ 'By his Excellency the Governor, A Proclamation, 25 April 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 82-84.

¹⁷⁴ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 10. Hamilton to Governor of Havana, 27 February 1716.

¹⁷⁵ *The Boston News-Letter*, 5 November 1716.

men who sailed without commissions but felt they were due reparation for Spanish incursions.

Although a small number of pirates had utilised the Bahamas from 1714, the number of seafarers operating from the islands grew exponentially after news of the shipwreck of the Spanish flotilla off the Florida coast spread throughout the colonies.¹⁷⁶ Alongside Jamaican privateers, a number of un-commissioned treasure hunters from various colonies attempted to salvage the wrecks. There are accounts of at least twelve vessels sailing to the wrecks from Bermuda alongside one from Philadelphia and one from Carolina, but due to the nature of these voyages it is impossible to identify the exact number of vessels that sailed from the colonies.¹⁷⁷ Although a small base on Palmar de Ays was established to facilitate wrecking operations, Spanish forces regularly arrived to contest the wreckers. Instead, the Bahamas developed as the primary base for wrecking crews as it was ideally situated near to the Florida coast; wrecking crews regularly operated from the islands throughout 1716 and, as late as January 1719, it was reported that provisions were transported from the Bahamas to wreckers operating from Palmar de Ays.¹⁷⁸ Hamilton's proclamations isolated these seafarers, who estimated to number between 5 or 600 additional men, and discouraged their return to the established colonial ports.¹⁷⁹ These segregated men continued to operate from the Bahamas, fishing the flotilla wrecks despite the prohibition decreed by Hamilton's proclamation.

¹⁷⁶ *The Boston News-Letter*, 5 April 1714; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 52. [Walker] to BOT, August 1716.

¹⁷⁷ *The Boston News-Letter*, 28 May 1716; TNA, CO 5/1416. Virginia Council Minutes, Entry 12 June 1716; AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 21 de junio de 1716; Arne Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority: economic aspects of maritime depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716-1726', *Global Crime*, 9:1 (2008), 55-6; Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 174-5.

¹⁷⁸ AGI, Indiferente 6. Consejo de Indias, 21 de junio de 1716; AGI, Santo Domingo, 338. Consejo de Indias, 18 de enero de 1719; Link, 'The Spanish Camp Site', 22.

¹⁷⁹ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 20. Burchett to Methuen, 2 November 1716; TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45i. Deposition of John Vickers.

A further influx of displaced seafarers to the Bahamas was produced by a Spanish attack on the Bay of Campeche on the Yucatán peninsula in December 1716. A community of sailors, a large number of whom were former Jamaican buccaneers, had established and maintained an autonomous settlement on Laguna de Términos where they cut logwood, a popular dyestuff. This was traded with colonial merchants, largely but not exclusively from Jamaica, for provisions. Yet, the presence of the logwood cutters challenged Spanish sovereignty in mainland Latin America, where they claimed full exclusivity. In order to avoid potential conflict, the Jamaican government practiced an ambiguous policy towards this illicit trade. While there was no enforcement of the prohibition of logwood trading in Jamaica, there was also no protection for Jamaican subjects against Spanish attacks on the loggers' outposts. The Spanish continually contested the presence of ex-buccaneering logwood cutters on Laguna de Términos who could threaten Spanish shipping, particularly due to their proximity to the Spanish ports of Campeche, Mérida, and, most importantly, Veracruz. In response, various raids were organised against the foreign settlements. In 1702, King Philip V had issued a royal *cédula* ordering the destruction of the foreign settlements in Laguna de Términos, but this order did not result in the loggers' expulsion. This was due to the fact that, until 1716, the Spanish did not commit to fortifying the region or assign any troops to prevent the return of the logwood cutting community. Instead, raids on the settlements remained small-scale, undertaken by local ships from Veracruz, Campeche, and Mérida.¹⁸⁰ Likewise, throughout their tenure on Laguna de Términos, the loggers had continued to intermittently commit depredations against Spanish shipping.¹⁸¹

¹⁸⁰ Jesse Cromwell, 'Life on the Margins: (Ex) Buccaneers and Spanish Subjects on the Campeche Logwood Periphery, 1660-1716', *Itinerario*, 33:3 (November, 2009), 43-49.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 63-64.

During 1715 and 1716, conflict in Campeche escalated as the Spanish attempted to block trading by seizing vessels that were bound to Laguna de Términos. This in turn created a scarcity of provisions for the loggers' settlements as traders, who feared capture by Spanish vessels, were deterred from voyaging there.¹⁸² Those that did continue to trade with the loggers related that the markets had declined as "ye Country people are so busie about Harvest [tha]t they have not time to bring ye goods in for a Markett or to buy serv[an]ts."¹⁸³ In response to Spanish anti-logging activities, it was also reported that the "all ye Cutters are going a pirating or [intended] to leave ye bay."¹⁸⁴ In fact, as early as August 1715, it was reported in North America that the settlements had been abandoned with one merchant even commenting that the recent loss of the Spanish treasure fleet off the Florida coast might provide employment for those "bold fellows" from the Bay of Campeche.¹⁸⁵ In response to the Spanish blockade, loggers attacked local Spanish vessels operating in the region which then encouraged further reactions by the Spanish.¹⁸⁶ The culmination of this conflict occurred on 29 November 1716 when a considerable Spanish force arrived to expel the logwood cutters and establish the Presidio del Carmen at the mouth of the Laguna de Términos. In contrast to the previous operations, this was a large interregional force supported by the Viceroy of New Spain and the Royal Treasury with the express purpose of reclaiming control over the region. This ended the loggers' presence in the immediate vicinity.¹⁸⁷ Thus, local and inter-imperial conflict over contested space in

¹⁸² BL, Add. MSS 39946. Voyage to Guinea, Antego, Bay of Campeachy, Cuba, Barbadoes, &c, 1713-1723, 26-27; NYPL, MssCol 2026. Moffat to Angier, 21 June, 1716.

¹⁸³ NYPL, MssCol 2026. Moffat to Angier, 10 August 1715.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁵ NYPL, MssCol 2026. Moffat to Angier, 16 August 1715; HSP, #0379 Volume 9, 324-330. Logan to Askew, 7 October 1715; HSP, #0379 Volume 9, 349-350. Logan to Askew, 28 October 1715.

¹⁸⁶ BL, Add. MSS 39946. Voyage to Guinea, Antego, Bay of Campeachy, Cuba, Barbadoes, &c, 1713-1723, 26-27.

¹⁸⁷ TNA, CO 152/11, 57x. Masters of vessels in the Bay of Campeachy to John Campble, 10 December 1716; Cromwell, 'Life on the Margins', 63; Gilbert M. Joseph, 'British Loggers and Spanish Governors:

Campeche created another community of displaced and isolated seafarers. While it is clear that some of these men relocated to Belize to continue logging¹⁸⁸, it was reported that “such as were not taken were mostly turn[e]d pirates or gon[e] out on ye wreck.”¹⁸⁹ It seems a portion of this community found their way to the Bahamas and bolstered the already swelling number of rovers there.¹⁹⁰

In July 1716, Governor Spotswood of Virginia warned the BOT that:

A nest of pirates are endeavouring to establish themselves at Providence and by the addition they expect of loose disorderly people from the Bay of Campeachy, Jamaica and other parts, may prove dangerous to British commerce.¹⁹¹

The “loose disorderly people” that Spotswood referred to were those seafarers who had been displaced and isolated by local and inter-imperial conflicts in the colonial theatre. These seafarers, in turn, congregated at the Bahamas, another marginal region of the Atlantic Commons, turned to outright piracy, and established the pirate haven that nurtured many of the notorious figures of the era.

Conclusion

It was local conflicts occurring in Jamaica and the surrounding waters that inadvertently caused the surge of piracy in the early eighteenth century. Crucially, rather than being

The Logwood Trade and Its Settlements in the Yucatan Peninsula: Part II, *Caribbean Studies*, 15:4 (Jan., 1976), 48.

¹⁸⁸ TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716; Cromwell, ‘Life on the Margins’, 63-64; Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 161.

¹⁸⁹ NYPL, MssCol 2026. Moffat to Angier, 21 June 1716.

¹⁹⁰ TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716; Cromwell, ‘Life on the Margins’, 63-64; Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 161.

¹⁹¹ TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716.

the result of a corrupt colonial governor and a handful of unruly crews, Hamilton's commissions and proclamations were instigated by the geopolitical conditions of the colonial theatre. The Florida wrecks provided the catalyst in which the disputes between Jamaican merchant interests and Spanish guardacosta, and between Jamaican local interests and their appointed governor, came to a head. The isolation of a sizeable seafaring community was a by-product of the intertwining conflicts between British and Spanish colonial actors in the post-war Atlantic. It was the Jamaican faction's manoeuvres that forced Hamilton to issue the proclamations that isolated British privateers and wreckers, despite his prophetic estimations that this would create an even more deplorable situation in the Caribbean. Likewise, local and inter-imperial conflict between Spanish and British colonial actors concerning the Laguna de Términos displaced a further group of ex-buccaneering crews who then bolstered the number of seafarers flocking to the Bahamas. By not assessing the specific events that led to the rise of piracy in the early eighteenth century, the historiography has provided a simplified narrative that overlooks how events in the Atlantic world were produced by simultaneous and interrelated encounters that occurred across geographical and imperial divides in connected maritime and landed settings. As a result of the specific conflicts discussed, members of displaced maritime groups and their offshoots operated throughout the Atlantic for the next ten years, impeding various sectors of Atlantic commerce and triggering responses from British metropolitan and colonial actors who all sought to more effectively regulate, police, and defend the British maritime world.

Chapter Two: Responses to Piracy in the Caribbean, 1714-1718

“A nest of pirates are endeavouring to establish themselves at Providence and by the addition they expect of loose disorderly people from the Bay of Campeachy, Jamaica and other parts, may prove dangerous to British commerce, if not timely suppressed.”¹⁹²

Alexander Spotswood (1716)

The period between 1714 and 1718 witnessed the flourishing of piracy in the Caribbean and its expansion along the North American coastline. During these years, pirates utilised the island of New Providence in the Bahamas as their primary base. From here, their operations expanded from small-scale attacks on Spanish shipping from Cuba and raiding the flotilla wreck on the Florida coast to preying on all shipping throughout the Caribbean and North America. When introducing the rise of and early responses to piracy in the Caribbean between 1714 and 1718, the historiography tends to provide little consideration of metropolitan anti-piracy measures beyond a brief discussion of the lack of naval success during these years as well as the failure of the blanket pardon issued on September 5, 1717.¹⁹³ Earle, for example, provides a detailed examination of the limits of naval forces in combatting pirates but does not discuss the factors that dictated the availability of naval resources in the colonial theatre that could be employed against pirates. As a result of this oversight, there has been no detailed analysis of the motivations that drove state responses during these years. In particular, there has been no analysis of how these early responses were shaped by metropolitan mercantile lobbies and limited by ongoing concerns in Europe. Furthermore, although Hanna has

¹⁹² TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716.

¹⁹³ TNA, CO 324/10, 117-120. BOT to Addison, 31 May 1717.

charted the shift in colonial support of piracy to colonial antipathy towards pirates at the turn of the eighteenth century, he does not discuss the practical applications of this antipathy. Indeed, there has been no discussion devoted to an evaluation of colonial responses to piracy, or the collaboration between colonial and naval actors that led to the first success against pirates in 1718, within any studies of eighteenth-century piracy. Without such analysis, the limits of state and colonial capacity and, indeed, motivation to suppress pirates during this early period is either overlooked, overestimated, or misinterpreted.¹⁹⁴

This chapter analyses the rise of piracy and the responses to this in colonial and metropolitan theatres. First, this chapter outlines the rise of pirates operating from the Bahamas and discusses the reasons that pirates expanded their operations from raiding the Florida wrecks and attacking Spanish shipping to committing depredations on all Atlantic vessels regardless of affiliation. Second, examination of the limited colonial expeditions that were undertaken in these years demonstrates that local endeavours had the sole motivation of ridding immediate vicinities of pirates rather than eradicating Atlantic piracy altogether. At the same time, the effectiveness of the few naval ships stationed in the Caribbean was obstructed by a number of issues, both unavoidable and discretionary, which meant that naval vessels were ill-equipped and naval captains unmotivated to undertake any anti-piracy operations. Likewise, the sole successful naval campaign against Caribbean pirates during this period highlights the necessity of cross-colonial coordination and financial backing to mount even a minor campaign against piracy. At the same time, colonial traders continued to transact with pirates at New

¹⁹⁴ Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 183-189; Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 365-415; See also Arne Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority: economic aspects of maritime depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716-1726', *Global Crime*, 9:1 (2008), 56-59; Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), 19-37.

Providence even when these same pirates expanded their operations to hinder British colonial trade. This, in turn, sustained pirates throughout the period. Third, this chapter analyses the reasons why state responses failed to produce significant change in the Caribbean. State initiatives to dispatch naval vessels and issue a blanket pardon were obstructed by bureaucratic process and a lack of clear instructions. Analysis of the motivations for these measures validates that these were primarily driven by the necessity to appease metropolitan mercantile interests that were lobbying for a state response against the impact of piracy on Atlantic trade. However, the capacity for state action needs to be understood within the European context during these years in which state resources were primarily focused on offsetting the effects of European conflicts. The failure of state responses to the initial rise of piracy highlights that the finite resources of the state that were directed to the colonial theatre could produce little change to the overall regulation of Atlantic maritime activity. The result was that, between 1714 and 1718, neither state nor colonial efforts to suppress pirates proved effective and piracy remained unobstructed in the Caribbean.

The Rise of Piracy in the Caribbean

Charles II first granted the Bahamas Islands to the eight Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas in October 1670. The next thirty-three years were tumultuous, with wrecking, smuggling and piracy becoming the common employment of settlers. This was encouraged by a lack of profitable alternatives, the absence of strong forces of law and the sponsorship of proprietary governors.¹⁹⁵ During the War of the Spanish Succession

¹⁹⁵ Michael Craton, *A History of the Bahamas* (London, 1968), 65-93; Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People. Volume One: From Aboriginal Times to the End of Slavery* (Georgia, 1992), 104; John Oldmixon, *The British Empire in America, Containing The History of the Discovery,*

(1701-1714), the settlements in the Bahamas, which had been disregarded by the proprietors by the turn of the century, were sacked four times between 1703 and 1706 by Spanish and French forces.¹⁹⁶ In 1706, John Graves, the former Chief Officer of Customs there, estimated that the remaining population of the Bahamas was between four and five hundred settlers scattered among Cat Island, Exuma, Eleuthera, and Harbour Island.¹⁹⁷ The situation had not improved by 1714 when Lt. Governor Pulleine of Bermuda wrote:

There are about 200 familys scatter[e]d up and down amongst them [the Bahama Islands]; but their principal residence is at Providence, Harbour Island, and Ilathera [Eleuthera]: who live without any face of form of Governm[en]t, every man doing onely what's right in his own eyes.¹⁹⁸

Throughout the war, the Lords Proprietors of Carolina provided no relief to the Bahamas settlers and effectively abandoned the colony. It was not long after the war had ended when accounts of pirates utilising the desperate and lawless conditions of the Bahamas appeared. Pulleine wrote:

They have serv[e]d, of late, as a retreat for three setts of pyrates, who committed their depredations in open boats, with about five and twenty men in a boat. They have taken from the Spaniards within these eight months, at least, to the value of three score thousand pounds: And hearing that ye Spaniards at ye

Settlement, Progress and present State of all the British Colonies on the Continent and Islands of America. The Second Volume (London, 1708), 350-60.

¹⁹⁶ Craton, *Bahamas*, 93; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70i. BOT to Stanhope, 24 March 1716.

¹⁹⁷ TNA, CO 5/1263. No. 102. Graves to BOT, 19 April 1706.

¹⁹⁸ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 4. Pulleine to BOT, 22 April 1714.

Havana were making preparations, to attack both them, and the receivers, they shar[e]d their booty and dispers[e]d. The names of two of their Captains were Cockram, and Hornygold, both of which, at present, are refug[e]d amongst those people.¹⁹⁹

The three sets of pirates discussed were led by John Cockram, Benjamin Hornigold and John West, who used the Bahamas as a base to commit raids on Spanish shipping in the surrounding area. It is not certain why these pirates focused solely on attacking the Spanish, although it is likely that these mariners had served on board British privateering vessels during the war, and piracy provided the means to continue their employment. In 1716, it was reported that a group of pirates stated “that they never consented to the Articles of Peace with the French and Spaniards” which seems to confirm this supposition.²⁰⁰ Their actions may have been encouraged by local animosity towards the Spanish due to the destruction that the Spanish had enacted on the Bahamas during the war. It is also probable that they did not expect a reaction by the British colonies if they only attacked Spanish shipping. Whatever the case, a report in *The Boston News-Letter* estimated that by 5 April 1714, the pirates had plundered 52,700 pieces of eight from raids on Spanish merchant ships and land attacks on the Florida coast and Cuba.²⁰¹

Between 1716 and 1717, New Providence developed into “a recepticall and shelter of pirates and loose fellows”.²⁰² An influx of displaced, isolated sailors, predominantly although not exclusively from Jamaica and the Bay of Campeche, augmented the small number of pirates who had already established themselves in the

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁰ *The Boston News-Letter*, 28 May 1716.

²⁰¹ *The Boston News-Letter*, 5 April 1714.

²⁰² TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 52. [Walker] to BOT, August 1716.

Bahamas.²⁰³ In October 1717, it was reported by James Logan, a prominent merchant in Philadelphia, that there were near 800 pirates operating from New Providence.²⁰⁴ The initial depredations of the Bahamas pirates were restricted to working the Florida wrecks and plundering Spanish shipping off Florida, Cuba and Hispaniola. There were few accounts of British shipping suffering at the hands of the pirates who appeared to remain disinclined to attacking their compatriots. One English captain wrote that, upon being taken by Benjamin Hornigold and his crew, “they did us no further injury than ye taking most of our Hats from us; having got drunk ye night before, as they told us, & toss’d theirs overboard.”²⁰⁵ It was even reported that the New Providence pirates made professions that they would not disturb British shipping but would “content themselves with making Prize of all French and Spaniards they meet with.”²⁰⁶ It seems the New Providence pirates expected that the British state and colonies would not respond if their piracies were restricted to non-British shipping. Nevertheless, by July 1717, there were numerous complaints of piratical attacks on British shipping across the North American coastline from the Carolinas to Newfoundland.²⁰⁷

There were two inter-related reasons behind the shifting focus from Spanish shipping to non-discriminatory depredations on all colonial shipping between the end of 1716 and July 1717. First, Archibald Hamilton’s proclamations recalling the privateers and prohibiting fishing on the Spanish wrecks in 1716 may have discouraged colonial traders who had previously voyaged to New Providence to supply provisions in

²⁰³ For an account of the events surrounding the displacement and isolation of these mariners see Chapter One, 53-58.

²⁰⁴ This information was provided to Logan by mariners who had been taken by pirates in the Delaware Bay. HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 21. Logan to Hunter, 24 October 1717.

²⁰⁵ BL, Add. MSS 39946, Voyage to Guinea, Antego, Bay of Campeachy, Cuba, Barbadoes, &c, 1713-23.

²⁰⁶ TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716.

²⁰⁷ Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 161; TNA, CO 5/1416. Virginia, Sessional Papers, Council; Assembly (1715-1719), 19 April 1717; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 73. Musson to BOT; *The Boston News-Letter*, 1 July 1717.

exchange for plundered Spanish goods and bullion.²⁰⁸ As a result of this, it is possible that pirates turned to plundering British colonial shipping out of necessity for supplies. Yet, while Hamilton's commissions may have discouraged some traders from transacting with pirates at New Providence, the prevalence of trade between colonial traders and pirates throughout the period suggests otherwise.²⁰⁹ Second, and more important to this transition, was the fact that looting the Florida wrecks became more difficult with increased Spanish presence on the Florida shore, alongside the challenges of successfully working wrecks that lay in deeper waters. Although wrecking crews continued to operate at the wreck sites as late as 1719, the prospects of substantially profiting from submerged treasures had diminished by the latter half of 1717.²¹⁰ This, in turn, meant that several crews turned to other cruising grounds to make their fortune.

In early 1718, a merchant in Philadelphia recounted that persons who had been to the Bahamas reported that the pirates "threaten the assinties [*asiento* holders] for [th]e Loss of their bread they used to have by [th]e Spanish Trade & [th]e Spaniards for preventing their benefit of Campeach [Campeche] & Honduras."²¹¹ By this report, it seems that some pirates also justified depredations on British shipping by blaming the SSC's monopoly over Spanish colonial trade, granted by the terms of the *asiento*, for the decline in British colonial trade to the Spanish Central American coast. It is apparent

²⁰⁸ 'By his Excellency the Governor, A Proclamation, 24 April 1716' in Archibald Hamilton, *An Answer to an Anonymous Libel Entitled, Articles exhibited against Lord Archibald Hamilton, late Governour of Jamaica; with sundry Depositions and Proofs relating to the same* (London, 1718), 80-81; 'By his Excellency the Governor, A Proclamation, 25 April 1716' in Hamilton, *Anonymous Libel*, 82-84.

²⁰⁹ Although there were less reports of colonial traders at New Providence in 1717 and 1718 than previously, it is unclear whether this was because of an actual decline in trade or if traders were making more effort to conceal this trade after Hamilton's proclamations. One account of a North Carolinian sloop trading at the Bahamas in 1718 appears in *The Boston News-Letter*, 24 February 1718. Likewise, Captain Pearse of the *HMS Phenix* reported that he met several traders in the harbour at New Providence when he arrived there in February 1718. TNA, ADM 51/690. Captain's Logs – *Phenix* (8 October 1715-6 October 1721), Entries 24 February 1718, 25 February 1718.

²¹⁰ AGI, Santo Domingo 338. Consejo de Indias, 18 de enero de 1719; Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority', 56-57.

²¹¹ HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85, Dickinson to Askew, 30 May 1718; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Champion, 30 May 1718.

that a number of the pirate population, particularly those who had been initially employed in Jamaican privateering vessels, would have previously found alternative employment on-board vessels engaged in contraband trade on the Spanish Central American coast.²¹² The decline of this trade, which pirates blamed on the *asiento*, provided further motivation and justification for British pirates to operating against British shipping.

Alongside the profits that could be made plundering colonial trading vessels, the pirates' later actions in Africa, Brazil and the Indian Ocean suggest that many crews' motivations for seizing colonial shipping was not driven solely by a determination for plunder or the need for supplies, but was also stimulated by a desire to gain larger ships and armaments in order to seek more substantial prizes in richer cruising grounds.²¹³ After all, this specific surge in piracy had been facilitated first and foremost by the opportunities for rapid economic gain presented by the Florida wrecks. Once the prospects of the wrecks had reduced, those crews who continued to be motivated by the potential of gaining vast riches quickly through maritime predation required large, well-armed, well-provisioned, and well-manned ships that would enable them to prey on significant prizes in Brazil and the Indian Ocean. From 1717 onwards, pirates cruised throughout the Greater Caribbean, spreading to the Lesser Antilles to ambush British, French, Dutch and Danish shipping.²¹⁴ The initial attempt to combat the spread of piracy was confined to local, colonial endeavours.

²¹² See Chapter One, 29-40. For discussion of the *asiento* and its impact on Jamaican contraband trade to the Spanish Central American coast see also Adrian Finucane, *The Temptations of Trade: Britain, Spain, and the Struggle for Empire* (Philadelphia, 2016), 21-52; Adrian J. Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763-1808* (Liverpool, 2007), 18-25.

²¹³ See Chapter Four, 138-140, and Chapter Five, 184-185.

²¹⁴ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 175; TNA, CO 152/11, No. 45. Hamilton to BOT, 14 December 1716.

Colonial Responses to the Rise of Piracy in the Caribbean

Aside from Pulleine's report, there was no wider colonial or metropolitan response to the initial presence of pirates in the Bahamas in 1714 or 1715. This was due to the fact that Hornigold, Cockram and the other Bahamian pirates had only committed depredations against the Spanish during these years. The result of this was that there were only local endeavours, carried out by a handful of dissatisfied inhabitants, to suppress the pirates on New Providence. Thomas Walker, who had been Judge of the Admiralty Court under the last proprietary governor, wrote in March 1715 that he had spent his time "takeing upp pirates and routeing them from amongst these Islands".²¹⁵ Walker, with the help of a few other inhabitants, seized one pirate who had returned to Harbour Island from Cuba after plundering a substantial sum of bullion. This pirate was sent to Jamaica to face trial but escaped en route after bribing the mate of the sloop.²¹⁶ This brief episode highlights the sheer limits of Walker and the inhabitants' capacity to effectively discourage and suppress piracy. Although the *Act for the more effectual suppression of piracy*, passed in 1700, had expanded Admiralty jurisdiction throughout the colonial theatre through the creation of vice-admiralty courts, these required effective centres of colonial authority with colonial governors who could appoint judges and courts. Walker had previously been an appointed judge but as there was no formal government in New Providence at this time, he had no actual authority to prosecute pirates.²¹⁷ Instead, he had to send captured pirates to other colonies to be prosecuted, relying on local shipping to carry out this task which, in this case, proved futile.

²¹⁵ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17. Walker to BOT, 14 March 1715.

²¹⁶ Ibid.; TNA, CO 5/1264, No. 146i. Jno Graves, An Information, May 1715; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17iv. Capt. Chace's receipt, 2 January 1715.

²¹⁷ Rebecca A. Simon, 'The problem and potential of piracy: legal changes and emerging ideas of colonial autonomy in the early modern British Atlantic, 1670-1730', *Journal for Maritime Research* (2016), 130-132.

Nonetheless, Walker's efforts to counter the effects of piracy in the Bahamas were not entirely without success. In January 1715, Walker learned that the Spanish had mounted an unsuccessful expedition to attack the Bahamas and all of the inhabitants that resided there in retaliation for their piratical attacks. The expedition had failed, either due to bad weather or bad pilots, and had returned to Havana.²¹⁸ Walker immediately set sail to explain to the Governor of Havana that not all of the inhabitants of the Bahamas were pirates and that he had endeavoured to subdue those pirates utilising the islands. Walker returned having successfully halted another Spanish assault.²¹⁹ This was the extent of his success as Walker and his family were forced to flee to the Carolinas in November 1715 after being threatened by the pirates; Benjamin Hornigold had declared to Walker's son that he would shoot and kill his father if they crossed paths.²²⁰ Although Walker had successfully stopped a Spanish assault and possible occupation of the Bahamas, he was displaced by the same men that the Spanish sought to remove; in this way, the pirates' continued existence in New Providence owed much to Walker's intervention at Havana. Thus, although Walker's efforts were short-lived, it is an important example of how local attempts to discourage pirates in the neglected corners of the colonial theatre were heavily reliant on individuals who did not have the resources necessary to effect any substantial change. It is also important to recognise that not all of the inhabitants wanted to enact such change. After all, the colony had been reliant on smuggling, wrecking, and piracy for much of its existence and, as such, there remained a general support for piracy amongst settlements scattered throughout the Bahamas.²²¹ Although not all of the inhabitants supported or encouraged the pirates' presence in the Bahamas,

²¹⁸ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17v. Hearne to Walker, 20 January 1715.

²¹⁹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17iii. Cassatorres to Walker, 15 February 1715. TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 52ii. Deposition of Richard Ward, 14 October 1715; TNA, CO 5/382, No. 18i. Anonymous letter from Carolina, dated in August 1716 relating to Pirates at Providence one of the Bahama Islands.

²²⁰ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 52i. Deposition of Thomas Walker Jr, 6 August 1716.

²²¹ Craton, *Bahamas*, 73-91.

there were no further efforts to confront the pirates by any of the local population who could not hope to displace the pirates without any form of governmental assistance.²²²

Even in 1716 and 1717 when the number of pirates increased, expanded their operations and attacked British shipping, there was no concentrated action in the Caribbean colonies. This was due to the lack of an effective naval force that could tackle the problem. After the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), 'station ships' were distributed among the American colonies.²²³ These were vessels stationed at each of the primary sugar-producing colonies in the Caribbean: Jamaica, Barbados and the Leeward Islands; and in Virginia, New York and New England in North America. These were intended to act as convoys for merchant shipping.²²⁴ The ships were either fifth-rates with between 30 and 40 guns, or sixth-rates with either 20 or 24 guns.²²⁵ Jamaica, Barbados and Virginia tended to receive the more powerful fifth-rate ships due to their commercial importance. Jamaica normally received two or three naval ships but from June 1716 to June 1717, there was only one ship assigned per station, with the exception of the Leeward Islands which had no station ship between June 1716 and February 1717 (See Appendix 2: Table 2.1).²²⁶ The shortage of station ships at this time was primarily due to naval campaigns in the Baltic and in the Mediterranean (See Appendix 2: Table 2.2).²²⁷ A lack of naval vessels explains, in part, why piracy was able to flourish unabated in 1716. Yet, even when more ships were present in 1717, they remained wholly ineffective for dealing with the surge of piracy.

²²² TNA, CO 5/1264, No. 146. Petition of Graves to BOT, [15 June 1715].

²²³ N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2006), 232.

²²⁴ Patrick Crowhurst, *The Defence of British Trade, 1689-1815* (Kent, 1977), 180.

²²⁵ For a description of the British Royal Navy rating system see Appendix 1: Table 1.2.

²²⁶ The *HMS Queenborough* was assigned to the Leeward Islands station from July 1716 but did not depart from England and was reassigned in December 1716. Instead, the *HMS Seaford* was assigned from December 1716 and departed in January 1717. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

²²⁷ The *HMS Swift*, *HMS Tryal* and *HMS Winchelsea* were also in the Caribbean but were employed to survey the region between October 1716 and June 1717 rather than act as station ships. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

There were three primary factors that obstructed the effectiveness of naval ships in the Caribbean: the condition of ships and crew on arrival; the problematic nature of hunting pirates; and the autonomy of naval captains. On arrival in America, ship hulls were generally fouled after the long voyage and rapidly deteriorated in the Caribbean due to the boring of shipworms that infested the waters there. The majority of station ships that arrived were sheathed with extra thicknesses of plank to protect their hulls but this was not particularly effective against shipworms which swiftly ate through the sheathing. It was also forbidden to careen naval ships in the Caribbean at this point which meant that ships arrived foul, quickly worsened, and could not be cleaned so that they were in no condition to catch pirate vessels that were cleaned and kept fast and effective.²²⁸ Sickness provided another hindrance to the effectiveness of station ships. Scurvy was the primary health issue due to the length of time it took to arrive at ports where fresh supplies could be obtained. When suffering from scurvy, the state of weakness further exposed sailors to other fevers such as typhoid and typhus caused by the salted food, foul water, permanent humidity, and the filth and parasites that infested their worn-out clothing. As a result, many men died en route and those who arrived did so in a feeble state that made them prone to the endemic illnesses of the Caribbean.²²⁹ Consequently, naval captains faced the issue of having to recruit more sailors on arrival at their station. The *Act for the encouragement of the Trade to America* (1708) had prohibited the impressment of mariners in the Caribbean and North America. This was motivated by the London sugar interest, who had sought to halt the effects of impressment on their trade, alongside reports that both English and colonial merchants avoided naval

²²⁸ Christian Buchet, 'The Royal Navy and the Caribbean, 1689-1763', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 80:1 (February, 1994), 30-44; Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 186-7; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, CO 152/12, No. 2. Hamilton to BOT, 15 May 1717; TNA, CO 152/11, No. 5i. Soanes to Hamilton; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, 303.

²²⁹ Buchet, 'Royal Navy and the Caribbean', 31-2.

press gangs in the Caribbean by trading to Dutch, French, and Spanish outposts. Although the Act expired after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the wording of the Act did not make this clear. Moreover, the Admiralty continued to cite the Act in instructions to naval captains stationed in the colonial theatre which meant that impressment remained forbidden. Governor Lowther described the effects of this: “the King’s shipes in America are commonly so much disabled by sickness, death, and desertion of their seamen, that they are often constrain’d to lye near two thirds of the year in harbour.”²³⁰ Naval captains found it increasingly difficult to recruit sailors while merchant shipping provided better-paid employment and piracy provided a potentially profitable alternative to the authoritarian order of naval and merchant ships.²³¹

Even without these operational complications, the vast expanse of the Caribbean and North American coastline meant chasing pirates was an incredibly difficult task. Intelligence was often out-dated by the time depositions were given which meant that locating the pirates was an arduous task. Even if pirates were discovered, naval crews were unfamiliar with the areas where pirates cruised and could not follow them amongst the shoals and rocks that surrounded the islands.²³² Furthermore, as each station ship was intended as a convoy for merchant shipping travelling to and from their specific stations, they had to undertake solitary cruises in pursuit of pirates.²³³ In isolation, these ships could do little against pirates who had acquired ships of similar or greater strength. Governor Walter Hamilton of Antigua complained that the *HMS Seaborse*, a sixth-rate with 20 guns, was little service against a pirate then preying in the

²³⁰ *Ibid.*

²³¹ TNA, CO 28/15, No. 24. Lowther to BOT, 20 July 1717; Denver Brunzman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Virginia, 2013), 108-112; Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 16-17.

²³² Bialuschewski, ‘Malacca Strait’, 175; Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 184-5; BL, Add. MSS 40806, Vernon Papers, Vol. XXXVI, f. 184. Woodes Rogers, Governor of the Bahamas: Report on the islands, 1721.

²³³ Crowhurst, *Defence of British Trade*, 180.

Leeward Islands whose ship contained 36 guns.²³⁴ Even those fifth-rate vessels stationed in Virginia and Jamaica were of little use against pirates when cruising unaided; those pirates with larger ships could almost match the firepower of fifth-rate vessels while those in smaller vessels could simply rely on speed and the ability to flee into shallower waters. Essentially, naval ships had to rely on a substantial amount of luck to encounter pirates in the right ships at the right time. This was a difficult and, more often than not, futile task. To have any hope of success, this service required the proactive cruising of naval captains determined to suppress pirates impacting the regions under their remit. Such resolve fluctuated on an individual basis.

Compounding the state of the ships and their crew, then, was the relative autonomy that naval captains enjoyed in the colonial theatre, which continually frustrated colonial governors whose requests were often ignored. The clause that specified each station ship was under the direction of the station's governor had been removed by the end of Queen Anne's reign.²³⁵ Although they were directed to advise with the governor and council of their stations, the captain determined the service of naval ships, which meant that colonial governors could only request that they undertake an expedition.²³⁶ Expeditions against pirates were often refused either due to the incapacity of the ship or crew or because such a voyage was expected to be unsuccessful. Captain Durrell of the *HMS Swift* told Peter Heywood, then governor of Jamaica, that "he dair not stir without orders from home" when requested to cruise against pirates.²³⁷ Even Heywood acknowledged that the ship had only six guns and 40 men, which was "too few to adventure on these pirates by himself, they generally going

²³⁴ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 5. Hamilton to BOT, 1 March 1716; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

²³⁵ TNA, CO 138/14, pp. 201, 202. BOT to Mr. Secretary Stanhope; G. S. Graham, "The Naval Defence of British North America 1739-1763", *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 30 (December 1948), 101.

²³⁶ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 19 June 1717; TNA, CO 138/15, 314-344. Lawes to BOT, [29 Aug 1717].

²³⁷ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 41. Heywood to BOT, 3 December 1716.

two and two, with seventy or eighty desperate rogues, and 10 or 12 gunns in each sloop”.²³⁸ Captain Soanes, who commanded the station ship at Antigua, told Governor Hamilton that it was “very unreasonable for a ship wholly uncapacitated... to go on such a frivolous errand [a voyage against pirates].”²³⁹ Moreover, Soanes left Antigua before the arrival of his replacement. This was a common occurrence throughout the colonies and meant that stations could be left for months without a naval ship.²⁴⁰ There were also protests that station ships disregarded their service in favour of self-interested enterprise, particularly the ships stationed at Jamaica. This was despite the fact that there were usually multiple station ships assigned to Jamaica and, as these tended to be the more powerful fifth-rates, they might have been able to mount a successful joint expedition against the pirates. Complaints stated that naval captains not only hindered the protection of Jamaica by leaving the station unattended but also impeded the lucrative trade with the Spanish coast. Naval captains were accused of trading on the Central American coast, which was detrimental to Jamaican trade as they could do so without the expense of wages or victualing.²⁴¹ The factors of the South Sea Company at Jamaica complained that naval ships were carrying on this trade rather than suppressing the pirates.²⁴² It was even suggested at the time that this created unemployment, as merchants were cut out of the trade and did not hire sailors, which then helped to facilitate the rise of piracy.²⁴³ The reasons that this practice was particularly predominant amongst naval crews stationed in Jamaica was likely a combination of proximity to the

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 5i. Soanes to Hamilton.

²⁴⁰ TNA, CO 137/12, Nos. 3-10. Correspondence relating to problems in Jamaica, 16 October 1716; TNA, CO 152/11, No. 6. Hamilton to BOT, 10 April 1716.

²⁴¹ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 13. Lawes to BOT, 21 June 1718; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 16iii. Address of the Council and Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 9 August 1718.

²⁴² BL, Add. MSS 25498. SSC Court Minutes, Entry 16 July 1718.

²⁴³ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 13. Lawes to BOT, 21 June 1718; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 16iii. Address of the Council and Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 9 August 1718.

smuggling epicentres of the Central American coast, and collaboration with private Jamaican merchants engaged in the smuggling trade.

Overall, then, the effectiveness of naval ships combatting Atlantic piracy was impeded by a multitude of issues arising from the natural environment, bureaucratic obstructions, and the nature of the service. Most obstructive of all, this service relied on the individual motivations of autonomous naval captains who regularly chose to pursue their own self-interest rather than undertake the largely unrewarding task of voyaging against pirates. Hence, it is unsurprising that between 1714 and 1717, only one pirate ship was destroyed in the Caribbean by a naval vessel. Even the events surrounding this solitary success demonstrates the limits of naval capacity to suppress pirates and stresses the necessity of colonial organisation to support the suppression of local piratical activity. In November 1716, Governor Hamilton of Antigua received an account that Samuel Bellamy, captain of the *Mary Anne*, and Olivier La Buse, captain of the *Postillion*, were preying on shipping in the Lesser Antilles between Saint Thomas and Saint Croix.²⁴⁴ Hamilton immediately called the Council to consult on how to deal with the pirates as it was believed that they intended to remain there to intercept vessels with provisions and exchange their sloops for a stronger ship.²⁴⁵ This was during the period that Antigua had been left without a station ship as the *HMS Seahorse* had departed without waiting for a replacement. The Assembly was called to authorise that public funds be used to hire and dispatch a ship to Barbados to request that the station ship attending there be directed to cruise for the pirates. The Assembly agreed to this request.²⁴⁶ Clearly removing pirates who intended to hinder their trade was

²⁴⁴ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 45iii. Deposition of Habbijah Savage, 30 November 1716.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.; TNA, CO 9/3. Antigua Council Minutes, Entry 30 November 1716; TNA, CO 9/4. Antigua Assembly Minutes, Entry 7 December 1716.

²⁴⁶ TNA, CO 9/3. Antigua Council Minutes, Entry 7 December 1716; TNA, CO 9/4. Antigua Assembly Minutes, Entry 7 December 1716.

advantageous to all members of the colony. Upon receiving the request, Governor Lowther of Barbados implored Captain Hume of the *HMS Scarborough* to voyage against the pirates in the Leeward Islands. Hume, in response, explained that his ship was disabled by sickness and desertion to the extent that there was not enough men to navigate her. Lowther enabled the voyage by supplying Hume with the necessary funds to hire enough men to sail the vessel.²⁴⁷ Hume arrived in Antigua on 4 January 1717. Although he was able to sail to Antigua, Hume required more men to be able to attack the pirates. The *Mary Anne* and *Postillion* were said to have between six and eight guns and between 90 and 120 men each. Further information had also been received that there were at least an additional three smaller pirate ships at St. Croix.²⁴⁸ The *Scarborough* was a larger station ship being a fifth-rate with thirty guns, which meant it was more powerful than the two larger pirate ships but a full complement of men was a necessity to ensure that they were not drastically outnumbered. Hamilton and the Council ordered that forty soldiers from the colonial regiment be sent on board. Likewise, all charges accumulated for this service were to be paid from public revenue of Antigua. In order to ensure Hume's quick departure, this was agreed to without acquiring the Assembly's consent despite the fact that they managed local revenue.²⁴⁹ Hume acquired more soldiers at Nevis and St. Kitts before proceeding to St. Croix where he managed to surprise and sink one of the pirate sloops that guarded the harbour there.²⁵⁰ Another pirate ship was run aground and set on fire during an attempt to escape at night. The majority of pirates managed to escape, either into the woods or on a small sloop, sailing

²⁴⁷ TNA, CO 9/3. Antigua Council Minutes, Entry 29 December 1716; TNA, CO 28/15, No. 24. Governor Lowther to the BOT, 20 July 1717.

²⁴⁸ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 45iii. Deposition of Habbijah Savage, 30 November 1716; TNA, CO 152/11, No. 45ii. Deposition of John Kenney; TNA CO 9/3. Antigua Council Minutes, Entry 29 December 1716.

²⁴⁹ TNA, CO 9/3. Antigua Council Minutes, Entry 5 January 1717; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

²⁵⁰ *The Boston News-Letter*, 12 August 1717.

through the shoals and narrow passages that the *HMS Scarborough* was unable to navigate.²⁵¹

Upon Hume's return to Antigua, Hamilton requested that the Assembly pay for the charges - principally the cost of provisioning the soldiers - that Hume had accrued during the service. However, as Hamilton had not called the Assembly when Hume arrived in January, the Assembly had not approved this expense. Upon hearing this request, the Assembly agreed to pay only the charges of the forces put on from Antigua on the grounds that the other islands should pay for their own. The Council's view was that this would be a great inconvenience to Hume. The Assembly accepted this and paid the full charge including a gift of £50 to Hume in acknowledgement for his service.²⁵² Thus Hume's voyage was only possible through the subsidies from the Barbados and Antigua colonies, which enabled him to man the ship with the necessary sailors and soldiers. The voyage required the cooperation of both the Council and Assembly of the Leeward Islands alongside cross-colonial coordination with Barbados that had a shared interest in dispersing pirates from the nearby seas. Despite this effort, the voyage was only a nominal success. Hume succeeded in surprising and destroying two vessels but had only managed to do so as they lay at anchor and most of the pirates escaped. If he had met with them at sea, it is doubtful that he could have caught them.²⁵³ Hamilton later reported that the remaining pirates on St. Croix were taken up by Bellamy who had acquired a ship of 26 guns and a sloop of 14 guns. There also remained two or three

²⁵¹ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 57. Hamilton to BOT, 1 March 1717; TNA, ADM 51/865. Captain's Logs - *Scarborough* (11 October 1715 to 6 October 1721), Entries 16 January 1717, 17 January 1717, 18 January 1717, 21 January 1717.

²⁵² If the Assembly had not agreed to use public funds to pay these charges then it is likely that Hamilton and the Council would have been forced to use their own private wealth to reimburse Hume. TNA, CO 9/3. Antigua Council Minutes, Entry 25 February 1717; TNA, CO 9/4. Antigua Assembly Minutes, Entry 25 February 1717.

²⁵³ TNA, CO 152/12, No. 2. Hamilton to BOT, 15 May 1717.

other formidable pirates cruising in the Leeward Islands.²⁵⁴ Therefore, Hume's expedition produced little change in the Caribbean. Still, it highlights two important points that emphasise the limits of both state and colonial ability to effectively control Atlantic maritime activity in the early eighteenth century. First, there was only one station ship available to patrol the vast expanse of the Eastern Caribbean, and even this ship required local colonial revenue to enable an anti-piracy voyage. This demonstrates the necessity for local colonial and naval cooperation and investment to mount an expedition against pirates. Second, this voyage relied on the individual diligence of Hume in agreeing to undertake the voyage. While it was reported that he had commenced the voyage "with great cheerfulness", he could have easily refused to do so due to a lack of men and supplies.²⁵⁵ These two factors, local collaboration and captain diligence, proved vital to the effective suppression of piracy throughout the period.²⁵⁶

There were no other colonial expeditions coordinated in the Caribbean to suppress pirates operating at New Providence and amongst the Leeward Islands in 1717 or 1718. This lack of force meant that piracy continued to spread throughout the Americas, and this growth was facilitated through illicit trading links with colonial merchants.²⁵⁷ A memorial from the South Sea Company to the king stated "by the Great Prices, which they [pirates] give they are supplied with Provisions & Necessarys from all Parts".²⁵⁸ During this time, the Bahamas constituted a small part of the vast expanse of the Atlantic Commons where both state and colonial centres had very little

²⁵⁴ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 57. Hamilton to BOT, 1 March 1717.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁶ Hume's diligence was again evident in July 1718 when he encountered and chased a small pirate vessel captained by La Buse. Although La Buse and the majority of his crew fled on board their sloop, Hume captured 17 of La Buse's crew and recovered a Nevis sloop that they had taken. TNA, ADM 1/1879. Hume to Admiralty, 3 July 1718; TNA, CO 28/15, No. 52. Lowther to BOT, 9 November 1718.

²⁵⁷ Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority', 56.

²⁵⁸ BL, Add. MSS 25559. SSC Memorials etc., 126-127.

surveillance.²⁵⁹ There are accounts of ships from Bermuda, Boston, North Carolina, South Carolina, Rhode Island, and Virginia trading at New Providence throughout the period of pirate occupation.²⁶⁰ Given the predominantly invisible nature of this trade, it is impossible to comprehend the volume of vessels that were trading with pirates but even the available evidence indicates that this trade was endemic. That this trade persisted is testament to the limits of both state and colonial ability to regulate Atlantic maritime activity. Although pirates no longer sailed to the established colonial centres to trade their goods as they had in the seventeenth century, this did not halt interactions between pirates and colonial traders who continued to benefit from piratical goods.²⁶¹ What did change was the fact that pirates were no longer welcome in most colonial ports and, instead, colonial traders stopped at New Providence to benefit from the plunder trade and in the process supply pirates. It is likely that many of these were the same colonial vessels that engaged in the Caribbean sloop trade, trading legitimately at Jamaica, Barbados and the Leeward Islands whilst also taking advantage of centres of forbidden inter-imperial trade such as St. Eustatius.²⁶² For a few years, New Providence provided a fleeting entrépot of illicit colonial trade where merchants from all over could trade provisions for plundered goods. This was not just treasure but every day goods

²⁵⁹ Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1793* (Chapel Hill, 2010), 212-213.

²⁶⁰ TNA, CO 5/387, No. 5. Deposition of Robert Daniell, 14 July 1716; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 73. Musson to BOT, 5 July 1717; *The Boston News-Letter*, 24 February 1718; TNA, ADM 51/690. Captain's Logs – *Phoenix* (8 October 1715 – 6 October 1721), Entries 25 February 1718, 14 March 1718.

²⁶¹ For a discussion of the decline of colonial centres as welcoming ports to pirates see Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 330-364.

²⁶² TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17i. A List of Mens Names that Sailed from Ileatheria and committed piracy upon the Spaniards, On the Coast of Cuba, Since the proclamation of Peace, 1714/15; TNA, CO 5/1264, No. 146i. Jno Graves, An Information, May 1715; TNA, CO 5/382, No. 18i. Anonymous letter from Carolina, dated in August 1716 relating to Pirates at Providence one of the Bahama Islands; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 73. Musson to BOT, 5 July 1717; TNA, CO 5/387, No 5. Deposition of Robert Daniell, 14 July 1716; TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45i. Deposition of John Vickers; Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markers and imperial authority', 57. For the role of St. Eustatius as a hub of inter-imperial commerce see Enthoven, 'Abominable Nest of Pirates', 239-301. For an evaluation of the Caribbean sloop trade see Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York, 2011), 181-213.

with comparatively low prices.²⁶³ Pirates may have been unwelcome in the established colonial ports but piracy remained a fully integrated part of the Atlantic Commons in areas where maritime activity could not be controlled and where traders travelled to engage in a high-risk, opportunistic trade. At the same time as this trade supported the growth of piracy, the various Caribbean colonial governments did not mount any significant expeditions against the pirates. Instead, they wrote to the BOT in London and relied on metropolitan influences to pressure the state into providing the necessary resources to destroy the pirates.

Metropolitan Responses to Piracy in the Caribbean

There was little metropolitan response to the numerous accounts received by the BOT concerning piracy in the Caribbean and North America until 1717. The turning point was a petition presented by the Society of Merchant Venturers of the City of Bristol²⁶⁴ to King George I on 27 May 1717 that read:

That for several Months past divers Ships belonging to us as also to others of your Majesties Subjects have been attacked, Rifled and Plundered, and their Crews very Barbarously used by Pirates; upon the open seas in the West Indies, and particularly near the Island of Jamaica... That the said Pirates (as your Petitioners are informed and believe) are still Cruising in those seas, and daily

²⁶³ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17i. A List of Mens Names that Sailed from Ileatheria and committed piracys upon the Spaniards, On the Coast of Cuba, Since the proclamation of Peace, 1714/15; TNA, CO 5/1264, No. 146i. Jno Graves, An Information, May 1715; TNA, CO 5/382, No. 18i. Anonymous letter from Carolina, dated in August 1716 relating to Pirates at Providence one of the Bahama Islands; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 73. Musson to BOT, 5 July 1717; TNA, CO 5/387, No 5. Deposition of Robert Daniell, 14 July 1716; TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45i. Deposition of John Vickers; Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markers and imperial authority', 57.

²⁶⁴ W. E. Minchinton, *Politics and the Port of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century: The Petitions of the Society of Merchant Venturers, 1698-1893* (Bristol, 1963), 9.

Commit the like Piracies and Barbarities, Insomuch that the Trade to those Parts is become Extreemly dangerous and Precarious and if not speedily protected may be impracticable. Your Petitioners therefore most humbly pray, That your Majesty will be pleased in your Great Wisdom to appoint means for suppressing the said Pyrates, and for protecting the said Trade.²⁶⁵

The principal concern for the petitioners was the effects of pirates on the Caribbean sugar trade. Bristol had developed into the second-largest port in England by 1700. While many Bristol ships engaged in triangular trades to the Caribbean via Africa or North America, a large contingent sailed directly to the Caribbean. In 1717, 77 ships sailed from Bristol to the Caribbean: 38 to Barbados, 22 to Jamaica, and 16 to St. Croix, St. Kitts, Montserrat, St. Martins and Nevis. Another 76 ships sailed to North America, many of which would have returned via the Caribbean.²⁶⁶ Both the pirates of New Providence and the *guardacostas*, who continued to commit depredations from Cuba, hindered this trade. The petition prompted the king to request the BOT to report on the necessary measures for suppressing piracy in the Caribbean.²⁶⁷ That it was the influence of Bristol merchants more so than colonial accounts that encouraged state intervention is testament to the importance of metropolitan mercantile groups in encouraging state responses to concerns in the colonial theatre that impeded both colonial actors and merchant shipping. The BOT recommended that a sufficient naval force be sent with at least one fourth-rate ship and that the king issue a pardon to pirates provided they surrendered by a certain time. The fact that a fourth-rate was requested signifies that it was understood fifth- and sixth-rate vessels could be

²⁶⁵ TNA, CO 323/7, No. 90. Petition of merchants and masters of ships of Bristol to the King, 27 May 1717.

²⁶⁶ W. E. Minchinton, *The Trade of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (Bristol, 1957), ix-xiii, 13-14.

²⁶⁷ TNA, CO 323/7, No. 89. Addison to BOT, 27 May 1717.

outmatched by pirates. Although slower and unable to venture into shallow waters in pursuit of pirates, the increased firepower of a fourth-rate – typically between 46 and 60 guns - would be indispensable against larger pirates. The better manoeuvrability of smaller fifth- and sixth-rate vessels were useful for pursuing pirates but the formidable firepower of a fourth-rate was seen as a necessity to successfully combat pirates who had acquired larger vessels. Although the fact that the BOT focused on the necessity of a fourth-rate without advancing the case of dispatching smaller vessels that were capable of chasing pirates through the shoals where they often escaped shows a distinct misunderstanding of the complexities involved in successfully subduing pirates.²⁶⁸ Lastly, the Council advised that the Island of Providence would need to be settled and secured with a fortification in order to prevent pirates establishing a permanent residence there. They specified that unless this last recommendation was implemented, then it would be impossible to suppress pirates in the Caribbean.²⁶⁹ Here, the BOT recognised the necessity of targeting the specific locale where pirates and colonial traders converged which, in turn, enabled pirates to continue their practices through the supplies provided by colonial traders. The BOT understood that pirates and colonial traders could not be discouraged unless some form of authority was established on the Bahamas, and settlement was actively encouraged, which would then lead to the development of alternative forms of commerce.²⁷⁰ Otherwise, New Providence would continue to provide a focal point for the plunder trade.

It was not until September 1717 that the king ordered the Admiralty to dispatch one fourth-rate and two fifth-rate men of war to voyage against the pirates unless they

²⁶⁸ This was a recurring issue throughout the period. See Chapter Four, 166-168, and Chapter Seven, 275-277, 280-281.

²⁶⁹ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, CO 324/10, 117-120. BOT to Addison, 31 May 1717.

²⁷⁰ Piracy had only declined in the late seventeenth century when established colonial maritime communities stopped supporting piratical activity in favour of alternative trade. See Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 330-364.

had already taken measures to provide for this.²⁷¹ It is certain that this prompt occurred due to added pressure from the SSC after two of their trading ships carrying 25,000 pieces of eight and several slaves were taken by pirates. The SSC presented a memorial in August requesting that the king give directions to rout piracy from the Caribbean.²⁷² The SSC could exert considerable influence over the government as it had been chartered for the purposes of restoring public credit by absorbing governmental debt through a debt-for-equity scheme in which short-term debt could be exchanged for stock in the company. More significantly, the SSC was given monopoly over the Anglo-Spanish slave trade granted by the *asiento* and the commodities trade this was expected to establish. Through the linking of public debt and private profit, the government had significant interest in ensuring the success of the SSC.²⁷³ In fact, a naval squadron had been assigned to the SSC until mid-1716 whilst they established a presence in Spanish America.²⁷⁴ The Admiralty, however, had already started to fit out station ships with instructions to operate against pirates.²⁷⁵ These were not additional vessels but were in fact replacements for the station ships that were returning, or had already returned, to England.²⁷⁶ In Jamaica, *HMS Swift* had joined the *HMS Adventure*. The *HMS Diamond* and *HMS Ludlow Castle* were also dispatched to Jamaica later in the 1717. In Barbados, the *HMS Scarborough* remained the sole vessel while the Leeward Islands had received the *HMS Seaford* and *HMS Tryal* earlier in 1717.²⁷⁷ All of these ships were instructed to proceed in quest of pirates as they thought fit and endeavour to seize or destroy any

²⁷¹ TNA, CO 152/12, No. 34. Addison to BOT, 3 September 1717.

²⁷² BL, Add. MSS 25497, SSC Court Minutes, Entry 14 August 1717; BL, Add. MSS 25559. SSC Memorials etc., 156-171.

²⁷³ Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996), 76-79; Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit: The English Financial Revolution, 1620-1720* (Cambridge, 2011), 197-201.

²⁷⁴ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

²⁷⁵ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 49. Burchett to Popple, 4 March 1717; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 3 September 1717.

²⁷⁶ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

²⁷⁷ *The Boston News-Letter*. 23 December 1717.

they encountered.²⁷⁸ Orders were given that the naval ships in the Caribbean were authorised to careen their ships twice a year in order to put them in a better condition to intercept pirates.²⁷⁹ Furthermore, Captain Jacob of the *HMS Diamond* was instructed to coordinate a joint effort against the pirates. He was given instructions to root out the “Nests of Robbers” on New Providence and was empowered to command all of the naval vessels dispatched to the Caribbean to support this endeavour if required.²⁸⁰

Contrary to the king’s instructions, none of the ships assigned to Caribbean stations in 1717 were fourth-rate. They were three fifth-rates (*HMS Diamond*, *HMS Scarborough*, *HMS Ludlow Castle*), one sixth-rate (*HMS Seaford*), and two sloops (*HMS Swift*, *HMS Tryal*).²⁸¹ Still, this would have been a sufficient force to dislodge the pirates from the Bahamas if they had been dispatched as a task force with a specific assignment. This was not the case as these ships were simply appointed to replace returning or returned station ships, albeit with an additional directive against pirates. Moreover, Jacob was only to proceed with the assignment if he was certain that the pirates were stationed at New Providence.²⁸² Otherwise, he was to convoy the SSC’s ship *Royal Prince* from Jamaica to Veracruz.²⁸³ The entire objective relied on the agency of the captains and, as such, the vessels continued to act autonomously upon arrival with very little oversight from colonial governors or the state. Governor Nicholas Lawes of Jamaica reported in June 1718 that the *HMS Ludlow Castle* proceeded to the Spanish coast six days after arriving at Jamaica, the *HMS Winchelsea* had not been at Jamaica since it arrived and was reported to be trading on the Spanish coast, and the

²⁷⁸ TNA, CO 152/11, No. 49. Burchett to Popple, 4 March 1717.

²⁷⁹ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 10 July 1717.

²⁸⁰ TNA, ADM 2/49, 266-269. Instructions to Jacob, 19 June 1717.

²⁸¹ The *HMS Ludlow Castle* was dispatched to replace the *HMS Adventure* at the end of 1717. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

²⁸² TNA, ADM 2/49, 266-269. Instructions to Jacob, 19 June 1717; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 12 July 1717.

²⁸³ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 12 July 1717.

HMS Diamond had sailed full of goods. The *HMS Swift* and *HMS Adventure* were preparing to return to England which meant that Jamaican trade was wholly unprotected.²⁸⁴ There were no coordinated or independent efforts against the pirates by any of these ships in 1717 or 1718. A lack of strict instructions and local oversight meant that this naval dispatch, though intended to act in concert against the pirates, was rendered ineffective.

The king observed the second recommendation by issuing a proclamation on 5 September 1717 that offered a general pardon to all pirates who surrendered on or before 5 September 1718.²⁸⁵ The initial response to the amnesty appeared promising. The lieutenant governor of Bermuda, Benjamin Bennett, sent his son with news of the pardon to New Providence where he was received favourably and a number of pirates stated their intention to surrender.²⁸⁶ The *HMS Phoenix* man-of-war, which had been dispatched to New Providence by the governor of New York, received a similar reception²⁸⁷:

They left att Providence the *Phoenix* [*Phoenix*] man of war Capt. Pierce [Pearse] Com[m]ander who had been there three weeks, and by his prudent managem[en]t and conduct had occasioned a great m[an]y of the pirates to surrender upon which he gives them certificates of their soe doing, they all tell me that there is not above 200 men (I mean pirates) att Providence and Harbour Island who are all very quiet and respectful to Capt. Pierce.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁴ TNA, CO 137/12, No. 13. Lawes to BOT, 21 June 1718.

²⁸⁵ *The Boston News-Letter*, 9 December 1717.

²⁸⁶ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 9. Bennett to BOT, 29 March 1718; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 7ii. Thomas Nichols, a pirate, to Bennett, 10 January 1718; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 7iii. F. Leslei, pirate, to Bennett, 7 January 1718.

²⁸⁷ TNA, ADM 1/2282. Pearse to Admiralty, 4 February 1718.

²⁸⁸ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 9. Bennett to BOT, 29 March 1718.

There were comparable reports from Jamaica where Heywood declared a considerable number of pirates had surrendered themselves upon the king's proclamation and others, including Hornigold, intended to do the same.²⁸⁹ This news was encouraging in the metropole. The BOT wrote in March that the proclamation "has had a very good effect"²⁹⁰ and again in April:

...we have been informed that some of the chief, as well as others, of the pirates, which were on the Island of Providence have surrendered themselves upon H.M. promise of pardon, and that there was reason to expect the rest of the pirates in those parts would soon follow that good example.²⁹¹

The Board of Admiralty ordered that an account of pirates surrendering to the *HMS Phoenix* be reported in the *Daily Courant* newspaper to inform the public of this triumph.²⁹² This apparent success was short-lived. A flurry of complaints were received between May and August relating to multiple pirate attacks in North America and the Caribbean.²⁹³ By late March the *Phoenix* had resorted to convoying merchant shipping and attempting to prevent those who resolved to leave the Bahamas to go pirating. Due to these endeavours, Pearse was threatened and forced to depart in April.²⁹⁴ By May,

²⁸⁹ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 8. Heywood to BOT, 17 March 1718; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 5i. [Capt. Hornigold and other pirates] to Heywood.

²⁹⁰ TNA, CO 29/13, pp. 454-457. BOT to Lowther, 28 March 1718.

²⁹¹ TNA, CO 153/13, 278-282. BOT to Hamilton, 4 April 1718.

²⁹² TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 27 June 1718.

²⁹³ See TNA, CO 137/13, No. 10. Lawes to BOT, 3 May 1718; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 10. Bennett to BOT, 31 May 1718; TNA, CO 5/1051, No. 70. Hunter to Popple, 3 June 1718; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 106. Johnson to BOT, 18 June 1718. TNA, CO 137/13, No. 13. Lawes to BOT, 21 June 1718; TNA, CO 5/867, No. 4. Shute to BOT, 26 June 1718.

²⁹⁴ TNA, ADM 51/690, Captain's Logs – *Phoenix* (8 October 1715-6 October 1721), Entries 23 March 1718, 24 March 1718, 1 April 1718, 2 April 1718, 4 April 1718, 11 April 1718; TNA, ADM 1/2282. Pearse to Admiralty, 3 June 1718.

several of those pirates that had previously surrendered had returned to their old activities.²⁹⁵ Pearse sent the Lords of the Admiralty a list of the names of 209 pirates who had surrendered to him during his time at New Providence. He wrote that at least 20 of these had returned to piracy, although it is certain that this number was far greater.²⁹⁶

Bennett communicated the reason for this failure to the BOT in March:

Only four [pirates] have come in. More intended by what they say but were afraid of bringing their effects with them for fear of being seized, and doe declare they will never surrender without the assurance of enjoying what they have gotten, for otherwise say they, we have ventured our necks for nothing.²⁹⁷

The proclamation proved contentious on a number of points. Primarily it contained no guarantee that pirates would retain their plundered wealth.²⁹⁸ The BOT had raised this issue to the Attorney and Solicitor General in London as early as November 1717. The official stance was that the goods of surrendered pirates would not be immediately forfeited after they had accepted the pardon, although the owners of the appropriated goods could take action against the guilty parties.²⁹⁹ This issue greatly thwarted the success of the pardon as pirates would not return to colonial society only to have their goods seized. Although the majority of pirates intended to return to colonial society after they had prospered from maritime predation, they would not return under circumstances that meant their accumulated gains would be seized and their

²⁹⁵ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 10. Bennett to BOT, 31 May 1718.

²⁹⁶ TNA, ADM 1/2282. Pearse to Admiralty, 3 June 1718; TNA, ADM 1/2282. A List of the Names of such Pirates as surrender'd themselves at Providence to Capt Vincent Pearse, [3 June 1718].

²⁹⁷ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 9. Lt. Bennett to BOT, 29 March 1718.

²⁹⁸ Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 176.

²⁹⁹ TNA, CO 323/7, No. 114. Attorney and Solicitor General to BOT, 14 November 1717.

undertakings squandered.³⁰⁰ In addition, the proclamation did not actually empower colonial governors to grant pardons but was only a promise from the king that they would be pardoned in the future; there was not a confirmed timeframe of when this could be expected. This further encouraged those who had intended to surrender to return to piracy as they would have to wait to receive amnesty. It is likely that some of these men returned to piracy as they could plunder more ships whilst they awaited the promised pardon.³⁰¹ The BOT warned about this in March 1718 but it was not until July 1718 that the necessary warrant that allowed governors to administer pardons was issued.³⁰² Yet, this did not address the issue of piratical goods and, therefore, remained ineffective. In early 1719, Lawes wrote to the BOT describing proceedings against Henry Jennings who had embraced the pardon and returned to Jamaica. Two French merchants, who had travelled to Jamaica to plead their case against Jennings, demanded restitution for the loss of their ships. The £1,500 bond that Jennings had provided when he received his commission from Lord Archibald Hamilton in 1715 was delivered to one of these merchants. Jennings contested the case on the grounds that his crimes were forgiven by the king's proclamation. Jennings' appeal was accepted in December 1719 and the bond was returned to him. Nevertheless, the proceedings were blamed for the fact that no other pirates had since arrived to take the pardon in Jamaica. This was a complicated situation as merchants who had suffered due to piracy deserved restitution but news of such trials discouraged pirates from yielding. The governors, even when empowered to pardon pirates, were unable to encourage them to surrender if there was

³⁰⁰ For a discussion of pirates' intent to return to colonial society see Mark G. Hanna, 'Well-Behaved Pirates Seldom Make History: A Reevaluation of the Golden Age of English Piracy' in Peter C. Mancall and Carole Shammas (eds.), *Governing the Sea in the Early Modern Era: Essays in Honor of Robert C. Ritchie* (California, 2015), 129-170.

³⁰¹ TNA, CO 38/7, 338-9. BOT to Craggs, 27 March 1718; TNA, CO 38/7, 343-4. BOT to Craggs, 1 July 1718; Some pirates received certificates promising future a pardon. See TNA, ADM 1/3815. Copy of Certificate of Pardon, 1718.

³⁰² TNA, CO 324/33, 170-8. H. M. Warrant to Governors of Plantations to grant pardon to pirates surrendered in accordance with the Proclamation of 5th September 1717, 11 July 1718.

a risk they would lose their accumulated wealth.³⁰³ Although the pardon was later extended to July 1719, the issue concerning plundered goods had still not been resolved and the issues persisted.³⁰⁴ That is not to say that the pardon was completely unsuccessful. Although it is impossible to give any specific number, it is evident that a portion of pirates did accept the pardon and return to colonial societies in 1718 and 1719. Crucially, much of the success of the pardon required the intercession of private interests in securing New Providence in the latter half of 1718 whilst providing alternative employment for ex-pirates and allowing them to keep their plundered goods.³⁰⁵ Simply put, the state did not provide the clarity or resources necessary for motivating the majority of pirates to accept or commit to the pardon. Besides the lack of clarity surrounding piratical goods, there was only a limited increase in naval presence and even this was concentrated in established colonial ports; there were no operations undertaken to dislodge pirates from New Providence and little increased naval presence throughout the wider Atlantic Commons. Hence, there was little additional incentive for pirates, beyond their decision to return to colonial society at that time, to commit to the pardon when it appeared that they could continue their operations with limited state interference.

It is clear that the entire state initiative in 1717 and 1718 was driven by pressure from metropolitan trading lobbies, such as the Merchant Venturers of Bristol and the South Sea Company, who were concerned about the impact of piracy on Caribbean trade. However, while pressure from Atlantic trading lobbies could influence state policy, it could not dictate it. Although colonial trade was recognised as an important

³⁰³ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 31. Lawes to BOT, 28 April 1719; TNA, CO 137/13, No. 31i. Lawes to Craggs, 28 April 1719; TNA, CO 137/13, No. 39. Lawes to BOT, 6 December 1719.

³⁰⁴ *The Boston News-Letter*, 9 December 1717; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 18 December 1718.

³⁰⁵ See Chapter Three, 128-130.

component of state revenue, the priority for British state resources for most of the eighteenth century focused on protecting the home country from invasion alongside upholding essential European trades by counteracting the commercial instability of European conflict.³⁰⁶ Crucially, state responses to lobbying relied on the availability of resources that could be diverted to the colonial theatre. Between 1716 and 1718, at the same time that merchant interests lobbied the state to respond to the surge of piratical attacks in the colonial theatre, state resources were occupied by ongoing concerns in Europe. It was this focus on the European theatre that had led to the low number of naval vessels stationed in the Caribbean in 1716 and 1717 as naval resources were engaged in the Baltic and Mediterranean. In particular, the effects of the Great Northern War (1700-1721) on Baltic trade necessitated British naval presence to protect British shipping from Swedish privateers and, crucially, to prevent disruption to the vital trade in timber and naval stores such as hemp, pitch, and tar from Scandinavia, Prussia, Poland, and Russia which was critical for the maintenance of British naval power. Furthermore, with the accession of George I in 1715, British interests in Europe inevitably expanded to include Hanoverian territorial concerns and the British navy was utilised to protect George's territorial claims in North Germany.³⁰⁷ All of this led to a significant employment of naval vessels in the Baltic Sea.³⁰⁸ There were also naval ships posted in the Mediterranean at Gibraltar and Minorca, Britain's acquisitions from the Treaty of Utrecht, as well as to cruise against Sallee Rovers obstructing Mediterranean trade (See Appendix 2: Table 2..2). All of this meant that, from 1716 to 1718, less than a fifth of the total active naval vessels were assigned to waters beyond the European theatre (See Appendix 2: Tables 2.3 & 2.4). This focus on naval operations in Europe

³⁰⁶ Stephen Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2011), 239-241.

³⁰⁷ Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire* (London, 2008), 107-121; Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe*, 57-69.

³⁰⁸ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

meant that the navy was already overstretched before mercantile pressure compelled a reaction against Atlantic piracy. While European concerns persisted, the state did not have the resources available to both replace station ships and fit out an additional task force to curtail pirates in the colonial theatre. Similarly, the safeguarding of New Providence was a relatively inconsequential issue whilst state priorities were focused on more critical regions in Europe. As a result, although naval vessels were dispatched to replace the returned station ships as soon as there were resources available, and a blanket pardon was issued in an attempt to rectify the situation without force, neither of these methods committed any additional portion of state resources to secure Caribbean trade from piracy. This was the limits of what the state could provide to appease the lobbying mercantile interests. The navy provided the primary force in maintaining these interests and, as such, there were only so many ships that could be committed to the colonial theatre at any one time.

On the whole, the state response between 1716 and 1718 was a resounding failure in tackling piracy in the Caribbean as it was restricted to the availability of finite naval resources that could be spared from European waters during those years. Even after mercantile lobbying and the dispatch of naval resources, these measures proved ineffective for suppressing pirates. The naval forces that were dispatched to Jamaica continued to act autonomously and in their own self-interest. There was no expedition mounted against the pirates at New Providence or in the Caribbean Sea. The proclamation of pardon was largely a bureaucratic disaster due to issues surrounding piratically-seized goods, which greatly thwarted the efficacy of the pardon, and the fact that those pirates who did submit were unable to receive the pardon but rather a promise of future amnesty. In turn, doubt fostered amongst those who had surrendered, particularly surrounding their plunder, and a large number of men returned to piracy

when they could not receive exoneration or confirmation that their goods would be protected. The last and most vital recommendation to settle and fortify New Providence was not undertaken by a state unwilling to finance the necessary expedition.³⁰⁹ Fundamental to this lack of success was the fact that the British state simply did not have the available resources to decisively regulate Atlantic maritime activity. Therefore, although mercantile lobbying and the subsequent metropolitan responses was an important component of the suppression of piracy, it alone could not bring about an effective decline of piracy. Such an undertaking required the participation and intercession of a range of metropolitan and colonial actors whose endeavours to counteract piracy gradually brought about its decline over the next decade.

Conclusion

There was no significant colonial or metropolitan effort to dislodge pirates from New Providence or to eradicate piracy in the Caribbean between 1714 and 1718. The two minor endeavours of the period - Thomas Walker's activities in the Bahamas and the collaboration between the governors of Barbados and the Leeward Islands with the naval captain stationed at Barbados - did little to alter the situation in the Caribbean. Crucially, both of these were local efforts driven by the motivation to rid immediate proximities of piratical threats rather than eradicating the problem of piracy in the Caribbean altogether. Such a Caribbean-wide undertaking was impossible given the available naval resources and limited colonial capacity to enact more than pragmatic operations against pirates who were directly impeding local trade. At the same time, the state response was an abject failure because of the necessity to focus state resources on

³⁰⁹ See Chapter Three, 97-103.

counteracting the effects of ongoing conflict in European regions. This meant that there was a lack of available resources to drive change in the Atlantic, either through specific naval operations or providing clarity and resources to motivate pirates to accept a pardon. Overall, metropolitan and colonial responses to the initial rise and impact of piracy on Caribbean trade highlights four themes which will be discussed throughout the following chapters: the role of mercantile lobbies in pressuring the state to react; the limits of these state responses in enacting specific change; the role of local colonial bodies in suppressing pirates operating in immediate vicinities; and the limits of both metropolitan and colonial endeavours to effectively regulate maritime activity. One specific demonstration of this last theme is the fact that colonial traders continued to trade with pirates at New Providence despite increased naval presence and the consequences of piracy on British colonial trade. Between 1714 and 1718, New Providence had developed into a hub of illicit commerce in which an unseen portion of colonial traders benefitted from the exchange of supplies for plundered goods. Neither colonial nor metropolitan centres enacted any change to this situation as they did not, and conceivably could not, direct any resources to dislodge pirates from the Bahamas despite recommendations that this was vital to curtailing Atlantic piracy. Instead, this endeavour was instigated by private metropolitan interests under the leadership of Woodes Rogers.

Chapter Three: Woodes Rogers and the Pirates of New Providence,

1718-1720

“The settlement of our colonies was never pursued upon any regular plan; but they were formed, grew, and flourished, as accidents, the nature of the climate, or the dispositions of private men, happened to operate.”³¹⁰

Edmund and William Burke (1757)

On 26 July 1718, Woodes Rogers arrived in Nassau, New Providence with four merchant vessels, three naval ships, soldiers for a garrison, and all the materials necessary for repairing the defences and securing the colony.³¹¹ After thirteen years without any form of governance and frequent lobbying by colonists, colonial and metropolitan merchants, and the BOT, the Bahamas was reconsolidated as a crown possession and Rogers appointed as the first royal governor. Although the existing historiography emphasises the weight of these events in expediting the overall suppression of piracy, this scholarship has suggested that the state resumed control of the Bahamas due to concern of the impact of piracy on colonial trade. Such assertions have mistakenly situated these developments as part of a proactive state operation to combat Atlantic piracy in the early eighteenth century.³¹² As the previous chapter explored, however, the state response to the Bahamas pirates was restricted to a naval dispatch and a royal proclamation of pardon without any effective measure taken to

³¹⁰ Edmund and William Burke, *An Account of the European Settlements in America, Vol. II* (London, 1757), 288.

³¹¹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

³¹² See Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 190-91; Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 168; Margarette Lincoln, ‘Woodes Rogers and the War Against Pirates in the Bahamas’ in Peter C. Mancall and Carole Shammas (eds.), *Governing the Sea in the Early Modern Era: Essays in Honor of Robert C. Ritchie* (California, 2015), 109-27

remove the pirate presence in the Bahamas. Instead, as this chapter demonstrates, the Bahamas was only absorbed as a crown colony in 1718 after the intercession of private enterprise under the designation ‘Co-partners for settling the Bahamas’ that financed Rogers’ expedition. By failing to recognise the role of private interests in funding and organising this project, state responses to the situation in the Bahamas and, in the process, Atlantic piracy have been significantly exaggerated. To resituate these events as the result of private initiative, this chapter employs the papers of Lord Londonderry, who played a central role in the events surrounding the Bahamas but whose correspondence has been overlooked in previous studies, alongside the documented discussions between Rogers and British state officials, which have been misinterpreted to date, to emphasise the role of private interests in soliciting, financing, and driving the restoration of the Bahamas. Distinguishing this as a private, rather than state, initiative is crucial when considering Rogers’ subsequent activities in the Bahamas. After Rogers arrived in the Bahamas as royal governor, he was abandoned by the state who took little interest in his administration. As a result, his success dislodging the pirates from the Bahamas was driven largely by his individual endeavours in Nassau. While current scholarship recognises this fact, it has been unable to provide an accurate analysis or discussion of why this occurred. The reasons become much clearer, however, when the origins of the project are understood.³¹³ The Bahamas remained a semi-private project which the state accepted little ownership over, and which the co-partners proved

³¹³ Cordingly, Craton, Riley, and Saunders all highlight the role of private investors in the origins of Rogers’ expedition, but do not discuss their influence on later developments. David Cordingly, *Spanish Gold: Captain Woodes Rogers and the Pirates of the Caribbean* (London, 2011), 132-50, 196-208; Michael Craton, *A History of the Bahamas* (London, 1968), 100-21; Sandra Riley, *Homeward Bound: A History of the Bahama Islands to 1850 with a Definitive Study of Abaco in the American Loyalist Plantation Period* (Miami, 1983), 68-85; Michael Craton and Gail Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream: A History of the Bahamian People. Volume One: From Aboriginal Times to the End of Slavery* (Georgia, 1992), 115-36; Neal has discussed the Bahamas project as part of his considerations of Londonderry’s - one of the co-partners – speculations during the South Sea and Mississippi Bubbles. However, he does not examine the impact of private enterprise on the restoration of the Bahamas colony. Larry Neal, *“I Am Not Master of Events”: The Speculations of John Law and Lord Londonderry in the Mississippi and South Sea Bubbles* (New Haven, 2012), 98-101.

unwilling to provide further investment for. The resulting neglect by both the state and the co-partners not only provides greater context for Rogers' accomplishments in the Bahamas, but also highlights the limits and general disregard of the state over the situation in the Bahamas, particularly after the outbreak of war in Europe.

This chapter first explores state perceptions of the Bahamas colony and why it was unwilling to fund a campaign against the threat of Spanish and pirate occupation throughout the first two decades of the eighteenth century. Next, the role of the co-partners in driving the restoration of the Bahamas colony is analysed to assess their commercial motivations for undertaking this expense. The process through which Rogers solicited the resumption of the Bahamas into crown control, and the agreement that was struck between the co-partners and the proprietors of the islands will also be outlined to provide clarity of the semi-private status of the Bahamas upon Rogers' departure from London. Lastly, the process through which New Providence was secured and the pirates dislodged will be examined to provide further nuance to the argument that this undertaking relied primarily on the actions of one individual. Although the organisation of the expedition required the collective support of the co-partners, state, and lords proprietors, Rogers was abandoned in the colonial frontier when the unprofitability of the project was understood by his metropolitan partners. Nevertheless, this section will emphasise the role and motivations of ex-pirates and the inhabitants of New Providence in supporting Rogers in his endeavours and discuss how Rogers' success relied as much on local cooperation as it did on his determination to secure the island.

State Considerations of the Bahamas Colony

In 1705, John Graves, the former Chief Officer of Customs in the Bahamas, presented a memorial to the House of Lords representing the ruined conditions of the Bahamas and the neglect of the proprietors therein. In this memorial he set forth reasons why the colony was of great importance to the crown. Most of these claimed that the Bahamas, if developed properly, could become a great asset.³¹⁴ According to Graves, it was ideally situated for a trade with Spain, it had a great harbour where ships travelling to and from North America could refit, and the land could produce “what ever is put into the Ground”.³¹⁵ Nonetheless, Graves’ most important representation was not related to commercial potential but to strategic importance: “Whoever was Commander of them [the Bahamas islands] and was Furnished with A Garrison and such other Strength as should be thought fit could Command the Gulph of Florida and keep the Key to sett all that comes in to the West Indies but at pleasure.”³¹⁶ The Bahamas were situated between the trade routes used by North American colonies trading to Jamaica and other West Indian colonies; enemy occupation of these islands would provide a perfect base from which to obstruct all trade passing through the gulf of Florida.³¹⁷ Moved by fear of the potential disadvantages that could arise if the Bahamas fell into enemy hands during the on-going war, the lords implored Queen Anne to take proper methods to revoke the proprietors’ charter and absorb the Bahamas into the administration of the crown.³¹⁸ This proposal was referred to the Attorney & Solicitor General who stated that the proprietors had forfeited their powers of government by deserting the islands and,

³¹⁴ TNA, CO 5/1264, No. 146ii. A Briefe State of the Proceedings by John Graves.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*

³¹⁷ John Graves, *A Memorial: Or, a Short Account of the Bahama-Islands* (London, 1708), 3-5.

³¹⁸ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70ii. Representation of BOT, 14 December 1715.

therefore, a lawsuit could be prepared to revoke their grant and reacquire the land into crown possession. Moreover, due to the apparent necessity to secure the islands during the war, the queen could lawfully appoint a governor and provide for both the civil and military government of the Bahamas before the case commenced.³¹⁹ The BOT was ordered to prepare a scheme for fortifying the Bahamas, which was submitted on 17 June 1706.³²⁰ Nothing more occurred until 1708 when several other petitions were received from merchants trading to the colonies and from colonists in North America and Jamaica complaining of the defenceless state of the Bahamas islands and their apprehension of these falling into enemy hands. Again, this was referred to the Attorney & Solicitor General and the BOT to propose the most effective way to speedily secure the Bahamas. A second proposal was laid before Queen Anne in 1710 but was not instigated.³²¹

There was no further consideration of the Bahamas colony until August 1715 when King George I requested that the BOT authorise the lords proprietors' nomination of Roger Mostyn as governor.³²² Rather than sanction this, the BOT presented the proceedings of the past ten years and recommended that the Bahamas be resumed into crown possession and a royal governor appointed.³²³ Despite this recommendation, the king approved Mostyn's appointment and ordered the BOT to prepare his commission and instructions.³²⁴ Again, the BOT discussed the previous proceedings and questioned whether a scheme would be prepared to secure the Bahamas.³²⁵ They stated that in its present condition: "We do not see how a

³¹⁹ *Ibid.*

³²⁰ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 68. BOT to Hedges, 17 June 1706.

³²¹ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70ii. Representation of BOT, 14 December 1715; TNA, CO 5/1264, No. 146ii. A Briefe State of the Proceedings by John Graves.

³²² TNA, CO 5/1265, Nos. 10, 10i. Order of King in Council, 31 August 1715.

³²³ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70ii. Representation of BOT, 14 December 1715.

³²⁴ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 19. Order of King in Council, 10 March 1716.

³²⁵ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70i. Copy of a letter from BOT to Stanhope, 24 March 1716.

Commission and Instructions can be properly prepar'd for a Govr of a Place, where there are but twelve dispers'd ffamilies".³²⁶ Although the BOT objected, Mostyn was appointed but there is no evidence that he ever reached the Bahamas. It is possible that he realised the dangers of his appointment without sufficient force and provisions to secure the islands.³²⁷ Throughout 1716 and 1717, the BOT continued to convey the situation in the Bahamas to the king, particularly after the influx of complaints concerning the pirate presence there. The key argument to all of these representations was that securing the Bahamas against any form of occupation - whether French, Spanish or pirates - would cost less than having to dislodge them once they had established their presence on the islands.³²⁸ It was not until July 1717, 12 years after Graves' original memorial, that a resolution to secure the Bahamas was urged when the BOT was asked to consider the memorial of Woodes Rogers who requested to be made governor of the Bahamas and who was endeavouring to persuade the lords proprietors to surrender their claims to the islands.³²⁹

The state reluctance to commence the restoration of the Bahamas, despite 12 years of lobbying, is partly explained in the BOT' first proposal in 1706. This advised that tools, at least a year's provisions for the inhabitants, and a collection of masons, smiths and other skilled workers were essential in order to repair the fort - which had been devastated by Spanish and French attacks between 1703 and 1706 - and construct a barracks, governor's house and storehouse.³³⁰ To secure the island, 100 soldiers and

³²⁶ *Ibid.*

³²⁷ Craton, *Bahamas*, 96.

³²⁸ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70ii. Representation of BOT, 14 December 1715; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 72. BOT to Methuen, 13 September 1716; TNA, CO 5/382, No. 18. BOT to Methuen, 17 January 1717.

³²⁹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 763. Addison to BOT, 19 July 1717; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 74i. BOT to the King, 26 July 1717.

³³⁰ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 68. BOT to Hedges, 17 June 1706; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 70i. Copy of a letter from BOT to Stanhope, 24 March 1716.

officers with arms and ammunition also needed to be dispatched with a small man-of-war.³³¹ After outlining these recommendations, the BOT wrote:

We are sensible that the proposal of fortifying this Island may be look[e]d upon as unseasonable at this time, considering H.M. other important occasions, besides that it may seem not proper for H.M. to be at the expence of fortifying a place of which she hath not the quiet and legal possession, and that it will require a considerable time to evict the title of the Proprietors by a legal process...³³²

This extract highlights the two issues that restricted action against the Bahamas colony: the cost of the war and state reluctance to fund colonial development. The British state accumulated vast amounts of debt to finance the Nine Years' War (1688 - 1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701 – 1714). It is estimated that the Bank of England, the East India Company and the South Sea Company had loaned £15.8 million to the government by 1712 which was approximately 35% of the total debt accrued.³³³ It seems that Anne, during the war, could not afford to divert funds to finance the restoration of the Bahamas. Likewise, George, faced with managing the debt in a post-war economy, may not have been able to fund the effort; in the years 1714 to 1717 between 50 and 60 per cent of the state's income was spent on interest payments.³³⁴ During the war, potential enemy occupation of the Bahamas offered a prospective threat to a key branch of British colonial trade - the provisions trade from North

³³¹ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 68. BOT to Hedges, 17 June 1706.

³³² *Ibid.*

³³³ Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996), 155

³³⁴ John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York, 1989), 122.

America that sustained the Caribbean plantation economy - but the state could not afford the cost of rebuilding a colony in wartime. After the war, peace with France and Spain meant that the Bahamas' strategic position was no longer of immediate significance, particularly as resources focused on the Baltic and Mediterranean theatres during the first six years of George's reign.³³⁵

Compounding the lack of available resources during the war and post-war period was the fact that the state was reluctant to finance colonial development, particularly in regions with little promise of specific economic benefit. Throughout the seventeenth century, the heavy financial burdens of founding and defending settlements in America had largely fallen on private adventurers who expected to reap economic and social advantages. This was necessitated by the limited state capacity to fund colonial development. It was only later, once colonies were established operational settlements and were seen to be commercially important, that they were absorbed under royal authority as crown colonies.³³⁶ The Bahamas represented a unique problem as, although it had already been established as a proprietary colony, it was abandoned except from a loose collective of colonists and, after 1713, pirates. The restoration of the Bahamas would require the full support of state expenditure to establish a new colony - albeit with some foundations and settlers already in place - which was unlikely to generate significant revenue. The lack of motivation to undertake this endeavour is further stressed by the fact that the Bahamas colony did not fit with either Whig or Tory imperial ideology. In the early eighteenth century, the Tories advocated the necessity of

³³⁵ Stephen Conway, *Britain, Ireland, and Continental Europe in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2011), 57-71; Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire* (London, 2008), 79-158.

³³⁶ Jack P. Greene, *Peripheries and Center: Constitutional Development in the Extended Politics of the British Empire and the United States, 1607-1788* (Athens, 1986), 9-11; L. H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke, 'Introduction' in L. H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke (eds.), *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500-1750* (Leiden, 2007), 1-20.

economic gain at the expense of other nations through imperial territorial expansion and the re-export trade, while the Whigs argued for the importance of integrating new and existing colonial markets for British manufactures.³³⁷ Although these two ideologies were opposed, they were both grounded in the fact that the colonies should be economically beneficial to the mother country. The Bahamas, however, did not promise to become such an asset, and neither Whig nor Tory governments appear to have had much regard for the ruined Bahamas colony. That there were more considerations of the islands during Whig supremacy before 1710 and after 1714 may align with the fact that the Bahamas were recognised as being strategically important for intercolonial trade, although this did not give rise to any state-funded initiatives to reestablish the islands. On the other hand, Tory dominance between 1710 and 1714 coincided with the period of least consideration of the Bahamas despite the promotion of territorial expansion during these years. This push for territorial acquisition centered on South America and the drive to seize South American gold and silver mines, and did not include any consideration to restore or secure the Bahamas.³³⁸ This is perhaps unsurprising as the island territories had not provided any promise of tangible economic benefit. Still, what is important is that, regardless of ideology, the restoration of the Bahamas colony found little active support amongst the party-political elite.

Therefore, although the prospect of resuming state control over the Bahamas developed as early as 1706, the state was both unwilling and unable to place the heavy financial burden of restoring a failed colony onto the public revenue even when the BOT's warning of disruptive enemy occupation was realised with the pirate presence on New Providence. The BOT had continually warned that dislodging an occupying force

³³⁷ Christopher Dudley, 'Party politics, political economy, and economic development in early eighteenth-century Britain', *Economic History Review*, 66:4 (2013), 1084-1100; Steve Pincus, 'Addison's Empire: Whig Conceptions of Empire in the Early 18th Century', *Parliamentary History*, 31:1 (February 2012), 100-110.

³³⁸ Pincus, 'Addison's Empire', 102-110.

would cost more than securing the islands before they were invaded. An early expedition to New Providence may have been an easier and potentially more successful undertaking to dislodge the pirates before they had grown in number and strength but the state did not fund such an expedition and instead sought to appease mercantile interests with additional naval ships and a blanket pardon for pirates.³³⁹ Consequently, the future of the Bahamas colony required the intercession and capital of private individuals.

Investing in the Bahamas

Woodes Rogers gained fame for his privateering voyage to the South Seas (1708-1711) where he captured one of the rich vessels of the *Galeón de Manila* that transported treasures between Acapulco, Mexico and Manila in the Spanish East Indies. The voyage was privately funded by a disparate collective of Bristol grocers, linen drapers, ship owners and slavers in response to the loss of Bristol trading vessels to Spanish and French privateers during the war. Despite the value of the captured cargo, Rogers was declared bankrupt in 1711 after on-going legal disputes about the captured vessel delayed receipt of his share. In the end, Rogers received only £1,530; the voyage had not made his fortune so he began to search for another venture.³⁴⁰ In May 1716, he wrote to the well-respected physician and collector Sir Hans Sloane³⁴¹:

³³⁹ See Chapter Two, 80-92.

³⁴⁰ Tim Beattie, 'Adventuring Your Estate: The Origins, Costs and Rewards of Woodes Rogers's Privateering Voyage of 1708-11', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 93:2 (May 2007), 143-155; Lincoln, 'Woodes Rogers', 111-112; Gail Saunders, 'Rogers, Woodes (c. 1679-1732)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004).

³⁴¹ Arthur MacGregor, 'Sloane, Sir Hans, baronet (1660-1753)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004)

S[ir] I being ambitious to promote a settle[men]t on Madagascar beg yo[ur] l[ordship] please to send me what accounts you have of that Island w[hi]ch will be a Partical[a]r favour done.³⁴²

Rogers proposed the settlement of Madagascar to Thomas Pitt Junior, a member of parliament and later first earl of Londonderry.³⁴³ It is unknown what happened to this design but by 1717 both men had become involved in a scheme to secure and settle the Bahamas.

In an account of his experience in the Bahamas, Rogers wrote that he was “obliged to join in co-partnership with four gentlemen of distinction and two merchants”.³⁴⁴ The two merchants were Samuel Buck and James Gohier; there is little information available about these men except that they were both London merchants.³⁴⁵ In April 1716, Buck sent two ships to survey the condition of the Bahamas, one of which was taken by pirates. Buck stated that after the return of the second ship, he entered into partnership with the other men.³⁴⁶ The four gentlemen mentioned were Thomas Pitt Junior, William Chetwynd, Charles Docminique, and Adam de Cardonnel.³⁴⁷ Unlike his privateering voyage which had been organised by a cooperative of Bristol merchants, this was an influential collective: Chetwynd was a member of parliament and junior Lord of the Admiralty; Docminique was the son of Paul Docminique, a leading Tory financier; and Cardonnel was the long-serving secretary of the Earl of Marlborough.³⁴⁸ It is uncertain how this group was organised but it is evident

³⁴² BL, Add. MSS 4044, f. 155. Woodes Rogers, Governor of the Bahamas: Letter to Sir H. Sloane, 1716.

³⁴³ TNA, C 108/416/12. Rogers to Pitt Junior.

³⁴⁴ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1717.

³⁴⁵ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 11. Petition of Gohier and Buck, [2 January 1719].

³⁴⁶ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 31. Co-partners to BOT, [19 May 1721].

³⁴⁷ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 35. Rogers to BOT, 25 February 1721; Neal, *Master of Events*, 99-100.

³⁴⁸ Geoffrey Treasure, ‘Cardonnel, Adam de (1663-1719)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); G. F. R. Barker, ‘Pitt, Thomas, first earl of Londonderry (c.1688-1729)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*

that they knew each other through their political network. For example, both Docminique and Chetwynd's fathers were members of the BOT.³⁴⁹ It seems that Rogers was the primary architect of the expedition, assisted by Thomas Pitt Junior who later wrote that Rogers acquainted him and his peers with the project.³⁵⁰ By 1717, Rogers was propositioning the lords proprietors of the Bahamas and the king on behalf of the collective.

The co-partners scheme relied on two arrangements: the lords proprietors agreeing to surrender civil and military government of the Bahamas to the crown, and Woodes Rogers being commissioned as governor thereafter. In order to obtain the proprietors' surrender, Rogers proposed that the proprietors forfeit the civil and military government to the crown but retain the quit rents and royalties from the land. These would be leased to the co-partners for a term of twenty-one years to reimburse the undertaking. After seven years, the co-partners would pay the proprietors £100 per annum, increasing to £200 for the last seven years. Rogers would depart with a ship of 400 tons and 34 guns with 150 men alongside smaller ships to carry all such necessities required for the new settlement. He also expected to transport soldiers and stores that the crown would provide for the security of the islands. Once there, Rogers would oversee the rebuilding of the settlement and the development of a plantation economy. The proprietors would retain their rights over the land once the lease expired. Clearly this proposal was appealing for the proprietors who had so far failed to realise any commercial benefit from the Bahamas. They would reap the rewards of the colony after

(2004); H. M. Stephens, 'Chetwynd, William Richard, third Viscount Chetwynd (1685?-1770)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (2004); Perry Gauci, 'Docminique, Paul (1643-1735)' in D. Hayton, E. Cruickshanks, S. Handley (eds.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1690-1715* (Cambridge, 2002); R. Sedgwick, 'Docminique, Charles (?1686-1745) in Hayton et al. (eds.), *History of Parliament*.

³⁴⁹ TNA, CO 388/77, No. 46. Copy of Privy Seal directing salaries to be paid to BOT.

³⁵⁰ TNA, C 108/418/16. Rogers to Pitt Junior, 13 February 1717; TNA, C 108/420/6. Londonderry to Gwyn.

twenty-one years of development at the co-partners expense.³⁵¹ As Rogers stated, “the Bahama Islands lying at present w[i]thout any form of Governm[en]t or settled Inhab[itan]ts Consequently can be of no advantage to your Lordships”.³⁵² The proprietors would gain a valuable future asset without any further investment.

Rogers’ memorial to the king laid out the proposed arrangement with the proprietors and requested the position of governor of the Bahamas if the proprietors surrendered their claim.³⁵³ He also asked that the king provide a garrison for the colony:

... less can’t be Desired from your Maj[est]y towards Carrying on and securing a Fortification in these islands than Twenty four Guns, with a suitable quantity of Powder, small arms, and other warlike stores w[i]th one years Provisions for the souldiers to begin the settlem[en]t and the Garrison to be paid and remain on the same foot your Maj[es]ties other American Garrisons now are.³⁵⁴

This was an advantageous scheme for the king. He would not have to pursue litigation against the proprietors, the pirate presence would be removed from the Bahamas, and the colony would be settled and secured with minimal public expenditure; he would only have to provide for the garrison. Furthermore, an established settlement would remove any future threat of a Spanish or French foothold in the Bahamas. Through the co-partners enterprise, colonial trade would be protected from potentially disastrous obstructions without substantial state investment.

³⁵¹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76ii. Rogers to Lords Proprietors.

³⁵² *Ibid.*

³⁵³ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76iii. Memorial of Rogers to the King.

³⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

In his proposal to the proprietors, Rogers estimated the cost of the expedition would be around £4,000.³⁵⁵ It is likely that the co-partners were encouraged to invest this considerable sum by John Graves' 1705 memorial. This had been published in London in 1708 outlining the same claims that he had made to the House of Lords about the potential profitability of the colony.³⁵⁶ The notions that it could become the "Mart of the Indies" and that "it will produce whatever is put into it" must have been appealing to those seeking a profitable venture.³⁵⁷ The co-partners expected colonists would venture from their colonies to the Bahamas once it had been fortified due to the potential for trade and the promise of arable land. The hindrances caused by pirates may have been another consideration as the co-partners stated most of them had been considerable traders to the Caribbean and North America. As such, they recognised the importance of securing the Bahamas to safeguard colonial trade, although the primary goal was to invest in the security of the colony to encourage settlement, land cultivation and the development of a plantation economy. The co-partners expected to make their returns through the land tax contracted for twenty-one years from the proprietors.³⁵⁸

Three petitions were received from merchants recommending Rogers and the importance of securing the Bahamas. Two of these petitions, from 'sundry merchants' and 'merchants trading to different parts of H. M. Dominions in America', were predominantly from London-based merchants whereas the third was addressed from Bristol merchants. These petitions contained thirty-four, fifty-five, and seventy-nine signatures respectively.³⁵⁹ One of the London petitions stated:

³⁵⁵ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76ii. Rogers to Lords Proprietors.

³⁵⁶ Graves, *A Memorial*, 3-5.

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁵⁸ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 31. Co-partners to BOT, [31 May 1721]; BL, Add. MSS 40806, Vernon Papers, Vol. XXXVI, f. 184. Rogers: Report on the islands: 1721

³⁵⁹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76iv. Petition of merchants trading to different parts of H.M. Dominions in America to the King; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76v. Sundry Merchants to Addison; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76vii. Petition of Merchants of Bristol to the King

That your Petitioners Trading to Different parts of your Maj[es]ties Dominions in America have rece[ive]d from several Months past repeated acco[un]ts of severe Losses occasioned by theirs or their fellow subjects ships being taken and Robbed by the pirates who are now grown so formidable that unless speedy and Effectual be taken to suppress them they will unavoidably Ruin our Trade thither.³⁶⁰

The petitioners then recommended that:

...the securing the Chief of those [Bahamas] Islands called Providence under your Maj[es]ties Immediate Gov[ernmen]t is of very great Consequence not only for preventing Pirates gathering together and harbouring amongst them for the future but even a security and Protection to Jamaica itself.³⁶¹

Prominent merchants concerned in the West Indian trade, such as Humphrey Morice and Richard Harris, as well as prominent merchants concerned in the North American tobacco trade, such as brothers Micajah and Richard Perry, appear amongst the fifty-five signatures of this particular petition.³⁶² The fact that these mercantile groups, who usually organised by regional specialisation rather than as a general trading lobby, coordinated to petition on the issue of the Bahamas highlights that metropolitan

³⁶⁰ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76iv. Petition of merchants trading to different parts of H.M. Dominions in America to the King.

³⁶¹ *Ibid.*

³⁶² *Ibid.*; Alison G. Olson, 'The Virginia Merchants of London: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Interest-Group Politics', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 40:3 (July, 1983), 367; William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill, 2013), 81, 157-158; James A. Rawley, *London, Metropolis of the Slave Trade* (Columbia, 2003), 56, 76-81.

mercantile groups involved in different aspects of colonial trade perceived the Bahamas pirates as being a major threat to colonial commerce. Piracy presented a common threat to Atlantic trade in general and, in response, mercantile groups coordinated to present a united front on the issue.³⁶³ The Bahamas needed to be secured in order to ensure that colonial trade was protected; it was this fact that encouraged metropolitan merchants to petition in support of Rogers' proposals to the king.³⁶⁴ The BOT also supported Rogers' expedition and appointment to the king.³⁶⁵ The king, encouraged by the prospect of securing the Bahamas with private finance whilst also motivated by these petitions, appointed Rogers as governor of the Bahamas in September 1717 and approved of the garrison requested in Rogers' proposal.³⁶⁶

Before the expedition could commence, the co-partners needed to secure the proprietors forfeit of their charter. In July 1717, Rogers wrote that he had not been able to come to any resolution with the proprietors and asked the king to intervene. It is unclear if the king did intervene but four of the six proprietors had yielded their rights by October. They had more to gain with this agreement than losing their entire grant through a lawsuit.³⁶⁷ There was a setback due to the fact that two proprietors had not signed the agreement, and Rogers' commission and instructions could not be signed until the state was in possession of the full surrender of the lands. It was stated that the two proprietors, the Duke of Beaufort and Lord Craven, were minors, which was the only reason they had not signed the agreement.³⁶⁸ Their guardians were later motivated

³⁶³ Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 127-134.

³⁶⁴ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76v. Sundry Merchants to Addison; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 76vii. Petition of Merchants of Bristol to the King

³⁶⁵ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 74i. BOT to the King, [1717].

³⁶⁶ TNA, CO 152/12, No. 34. Addison to BOT, 3 September 1717.

³⁶⁷ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 82. Copy of the Surrender from the Lord Proprietors, 28 October 1717.

³⁶⁸ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 81. Shelton to Popple, 6 November 1717; TNA, CO 5/1293, 128. Popple to Shelton, 6 November 1717; TNA, CO 24/1, 13. Popple to Attorney General, 21 November 1717; TNA,

to sign as Rogers' commission and instructions were approved on 9 January 1718.³⁶⁹ This was contested by Craven in 1720 to no avail.³⁷⁰ It had already been advanced that the proprietors had forfeited their right to govern the Bahamas. If this deal had not been secured then it is probable that the proprietors would have lost their grant in court.³⁷¹

Rogers left London in April 1718 with four ships bought and fitted out at the co-partners expense. These were the *Delitia*, 460 tons with 30 guns; the *Willing Mind*, 300 tons with 20 guns; *Samuel*, 135 tons with 6 guns; and the *Buck* sloop, 75 tons with 6 guns. They carried 250 men, provisions for 14 months, and material for repairing the fort and constructing the settlement.³⁷² The total cost of the expedition amounted to approximately £11,000, nearly triple the sum that Rogers had initially estimated.³⁷³ An independent company consisting of 112 men had also been provided for the garrison of the colony costing the state a total of £1,821 per annum.³⁷⁴ The four co-partners' ships set sail under convoy of three naval ships: the *HMS Milford*, a fifth-rate with 30 guns; the *HMS Rose*, a sixth-rate with 20 guns; and the *HMS Shark*, a sloop with 14 guns.³⁷⁵ The *HMS Milford*, *HMS Rose* and *HMS Shark* were dispatched as a task force under the command of Commodore Peter Chamberlen, the captain of the *HMS Milford*, with an explicit directive to suppress piracy in the Caribbean. First, they were to go with Rogers to New Providence and help to establish him there. Once the Bahamas were in Rogers'

CO 24/1, 2-12. BOT to Addison, 21 November 1717; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 7. Attorney General to [Pople], 10 December 1717.

³⁶⁹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 9. Order in Council, 9 January 1718; TNA, CO 24/1, 18. Pople to Attorney General, 7 March 1718.

³⁷⁰ TNA, CO 23/1, Nos. 24, 24i. Delafaye to BOT, 20 July 1720; TNA, CO 24/1, 36-47. BOT to Lords Justices, 25 July 1720.

³⁷¹ TNA, CO 24/1, 15-17. BOT to Addison, 11 December 1717.

³⁷² TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1727.

³⁷³ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 31. Co-partners to BOT, [19 May 1721]; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1727.

³⁷⁴ TNA, WO 24/89. Establishment for the Independent Company in the Island of Providence, 1718.

³⁷⁵ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

possession, the ships were to depart for whichever colony they thought best to refit before diligently seeking after any pirates that continued to operate in the Caribbean. They were only to proceed to their designated stations - the *HMS Milford* to Barbados, and the others to the Leeward Islands - when they were certain that the pirate presence was subdued.³⁷⁶ The fact that none of these ships were ordered to remain at the Bahamas is an indication of how far this endeavour would rely on private enterprise. The state was primarily concerned with removing the pirate threat to Caribbean trade rather than establishing the Bahamas against future occupation. Still, if they could be utilised to secure the Bahamas and suppress pirates who continued to operate in those seas, then the joint forces of the co-partners and state would be a formidable force against piracy in the Caribbean theatre.

Although the Bahamas became a crown colony with a garrison and royal governor in 1718, the restoration of the settlement was dependent on the private investment of a collective of London merchants and gentlemen who intended to profit from land tax leased from the proprietors. Rather than a state-driven initiative, this entire project was driven by the commercial partnership of this collective. It was Rogers who solicited the proprietors to revoke their rights to the Bahamas government and it was Rogers, alongside the BOT and the metropolitan mercantile community, who encouraged the resumption of the Bahamas government into the crown remit. The actual expedition to secure the Bahamas was reliant on the private finance invested by the seven partners. Therefore, it cannot be said that this project was part of an active state response to Atlantic piracy, which was restricted to additional naval forces and a pardon for pirates.³⁷⁷ Rather than solicited or driven by state actors, the central

³⁷⁶ TNA, ADM 2/49, 384-385. Instructions to Chamberlain, 5 March 1718; TNA, ADM 2/49, 386. Instructions to Whitney, 7 March 1718.

³⁷⁷ See Chapter Two, 80-92.

recommendation for encouraging the decline of Atlantic piracy was undertaken by private enterprise seeking to gain from colonial development. Dislodging the pirates from the Bahamas and securing the islands from future enemy occupation was one aspect of the project and ensured that it gained support from metropolitan mercantile and state actors, but it was by no means the motivating factor behind the project.

Securing New Providence

Rogers' tenure as governor of the Bahamas lasted only three years. He arrived in Nassau on 26 July 1718, where he met with very little opposition. Only Charles Vane, one of the chief pirate captains in Nassau, resisted his arrival by setting fire to a captured French ship, firing his guns, and fleeing the island with around 90 men. Besides this event, Rogers was able to peaceably land and take possession of the fort. The inhabitants, detailed as 300 men, readily surrendered to their new governor and submitted to the king's pardon.³⁷⁸ Despite this encouraging start, Rogers faced frequent difficulties in securing the Bahamas over the next three years, during which time, he received little support from either the state or his London-based co-partners. Nevertheless, by the end of his three-year tenure, he had successfully dislodged the pirates and secured the Bahamas from a Spanish assault. He achieved these two feats through individual endeavour and the support of the Bahamas inhabitants.

Rogers' first major problem was the lack of a naval ship stationed in the Bahamas. He only managed to prevail with Captain Chamberlen of the *HMS Milford* to remain until 16 August 1718 and Captain Whitney of the *HMS Rose* to stay for three weeks longer. The *HMS Milford* arrived in New York on 28 August where it careened

³⁷⁸ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1727.

and refit until 5 December. Chamberlen claimed he was driven to New York by necessity due to the sickness of his men at New Providence and his orders to refit at a suitable colony; he stated New York was the most convenient place for his men to recover their health as well as being able to refit for a reasonable price. The *HMS Rose* departed on 14 September to carry a letter to Havana from Rogers. Although it was intended that he would return to Nassau, Whitney reported he was driven from Havana to New York by bad weather. Rogers questioned this due to the fact that the Bahamas lay directly in the way of such a voyage.³⁷⁹ The *HMS Rose* and *HMS Shark* were careened at New York before proceeding with the *HMS Milford* to Jamaica in December.³⁸⁰ Alongside the apparent disregard of the naval captains towards securing the Bahamas from the offset, was the fact that a group of prominent London merchants compelled the redistribution of these ships to focus on protecting Jamaican trade in the latter half of 1718.

On 30 July 1718, shortly after Rogers and the naval convoy had arrived at New Providence, a group of prominent London merchants concerned in Jamaican trade represented to the Board of Admiralty that the ships stationed at Jamaica were not cruising against pirates but were trading with the Spanish coast. They requested that the ships stationed at Jamaica be ordered to cease these practices and be employed to cruise against pirates and convoy merchant shipping bound from Jamaica. The Admiralty ensured the merchants that this would be addressed.³⁸¹ In order to appease the merchants further, orders were also dispatched to Chamberlen to proceed to Jamaica

³⁷⁹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718; TNA, CO 23/13, 20-24. Rogers to Craggs, 24 December 1718; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 51/606. Captain's Log, Milford (16 January 1718 to 31 December 1719), Entries 16 August 1718, 28 August 1718, 29 August 1718, 27 October 1718, 28 October 1718, 5 December 1718; TNA, ADM 1/1597. Chamberlen to Admiralty, 29 April 1719.

³⁸⁰ TNA, ADM 51/606. Captain's Log, Milford (16 January 1718 to 31 December 1719), Entries 11 November 1718, 21 November 1718, 7 December 1718.

³⁸¹ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 30 July 1718.

with the *HMS Milford*, *HMS Rose* and *HMS Shark* once Rogers had been established at the Bahamas in order to act “in such manner as that they may be most capable of Protecting the Trade coming and going from the Island”.³⁸² The fact that these ships were ordered to continue at New Providence before attending on Jamaica reflects that this particular group of merchants, who appear to have been led by Humphrey Morice, had also been involved in lobbying for securing the Bahamas.³⁸³ Yet, the task force was being explicitly redirected from their instructions to cruise against the remaining active pirates after New Providence was secured to instead ensure the protection of Jamaican trade. Although these merchants had not explicitly requested that the three ships dispatched to the Bahamas be reassigned to Jamaica, their lobbying ensured that the limited available naval vessels were concentrated on protecting Jamaican trade rather than suppressing piracy throughout the Caribbean.³⁸⁴ These three ships had been intended for station service at Barbados and the Leeward Islands after New Providence was secured which would have allowed for a wider distribution of naval forces which could patrol a larger expanse of the Caribbean. Consequently, lobbying by London mercantile interests, who were concerned first and foremost with the protection of specific regional trading interests in Jamaica rather than the Caribbean expanse as a whole, obstructed the naval attempt to suppress piracy in the Caribbean.

In February 1719, Chamberlen was reprimanded for not following his instructions.³⁸⁵ He had proceeded to Jamaica from New York before actually receiving the orders to do so.³⁸⁶ Despite this reproach, he was not instructed to remain at

³⁸² TNA, ADM 2/49, 498-500. Instructions to Chamberlain, 30 July 1718.

³⁸³ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 30 July 1718.

³⁸⁴ TNA, ADM 51/606. Captain’s Log, Milford (16 January 1718 to 31 December 1719), Entries 14 January 1719, 22 January 1719, 25 January 1719; TNA, ADM 1/1597. Captain Chamberlen to the Lords of the Admiralty, 29 April 1719.

³⁸⁵ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 2 February 1719.

³⁸⁶ TNA, ADM 1/1597. An Account of the Dates of Several Orders and Letters from the Admiralty and Burchett, [29 April 1719].

Jamaican to execute these instructions rather than return to the Bahamas. The reason for this was the necessity to protect Jamaican trade from Spanish attacks during the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720) which had been officially declared in December 1718. In February, Jamaican merchants had applied to the Admiralty for a greater naval strength to protect the islands against Spanish attacks from Cuba.³⁸⁷ Due to a lack of resources, the Admiralty could not comply with these demands:

...unless greater Number of Men by Employed in his Majestys service at sea, than is Voted by Parliament, especially if his Majesty shall find it for his service to have a squadron of ships sent this year into the Baltick sea.³⁸⁸

Naval resources, which had already been overstretched between 1716 and 1718, were further strained by the outbreak of war in Europe. From 1718 to 1720, a significant squadron of Royal Navy vessels were employed in the Mediterranean in order to contain the Spanish Mediterranean advance, particularly after the Spanish invasion of Sicily in July 1718. A contingent of naval vessels also continued to be periodically employed in the Baltic to maintain British and Hanoverian interests in the region, particularly against the rising power of Russia under Tsar Peter the Great after the collapse of the Swedish empire. These two security concerns also necessitated the increase of naval presence in domestic waters in order to prevent a potential foreign-sponsored Jacobite invasion (See Appendix 3: Tables 3.1 & 3.2).³⁸⁹ Due to the need for heightened naval presence in various regions of the European theatre, there was limited resources to defend colonial trade from the impact of the War of the Quadruple

³⁸⁷ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 20 February 1719.

³⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁹ Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 135-155; Christopher E. Dudley, "Establishing a Revolutionary Regime: Whig One-Party Rule in Britain, 1710-1734" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 263-316.

Alliance. These concerns, alongside mercantile lobbying, led to the redistribution of naval vessels employed in the colonial theatre to concentrate on the defence of established and commercially-important colonies, particularly Jamaica. The task force dispatched to combat piracy, which had already deserted Rogers at New Providence, was given new instructions which focused on protecting Jamaican trade. There was no station ship dispatched to the Bahamas which meant Rogers could not rely on naval strength to defend the colony. Likewise, the numerous requests of Rogers and the co-partners outlining the necessity for the dispatch of a second company of soldiers were disregarded after a number of the men Rogers had brought with him had perished due to disease shortly after arrival.³⁹⁰ It is unknown how many of these were soldiers but it must have been a substantial number as Rogers wrote “I have had above 100 sick at one time and not a healthfull officer”³⁹¹ and that the disease killed “above half of the best of those people he brought with him”.³⁹² The state’s reluctance to supply further soldiers or naval resources to defend the Bahamas is further evidence of the state’s inability to provide for the colony’s defence as well as its relative indifference towards the Bahamas. Before the outbreak of war, the state had been willing to support the project to a limited extent by providing naval resources to help establish Rogers on New Providence and a garrison for the security and defence of the colony. However, the outbreak of war after Rogers’ arrival at New Providence required the concentration of state resources on areas of significant importance in Europe and the protection of key colonial trades. The Bahamas, although of recognised strategic importance, was essentially a semi-private

³⁹⁰ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 14. Rogers to Popple, 27 May 1719; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 11. Petition of Gohier and Buck, [2 January 1719]; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 27. Buck and Copartners to BOT, 8 September 1720.

³⁹¹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

³⁹² TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1717.

and unprofitable colony and did not factor into these plans.³⁹³ Alongside highlighting the lack of state concern for the Bahamas colony, this also stresses the overall limits of state ability to suppress Atlantic piracy when European concerns required the focus of naval resources, and the limited available resources assigned to the colonial theatre were concentrated on the defence of the immediate localities of priority colonies. As a result of these priorities, the task force dispatched to suppress pirates provided little support to Rogers in the Bahamas and did not cruise against pirates in the Caribbean but, instead, were redirected to Jamaica where they spent their time convoying merchant vessels.³⁹⁴

Further obstructions to Rogers' undertakings in the Bahamas were driven by the states' general disregard for his administration there. Rogers' instructions upon being appointed governor were purposefully vague, with the intent that more ample instructions would be issued by the BOT when the true state and conditions of the colony were understood.³⁹⁵ Yet, Rogers received no further instructions during his duration as governor. In fact, he rarely received any correspondence from the BOT. In December 1720, he wrote that the last letter he had received was in July 1719.³⁹⁶ This letter had only added to Rogers' administrative problems. In October 1718, he had recommended twelve men to form the colonial council as commanded in his instructions; six who had been brought with him and six who were inhabitants of the islands and had "not been pirates... [and] were the least encouragers of trading with them."³⁹⁷ The BOT replied:

³⁹³ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream*, 117.

³⁹⁴ TNA, ADM 51/606. Captain's Log, Milford (16 January 1718 to 31 December 1719), Entries 5 February 1719, 7 February 1719, 7 April 1719; TNA, ADM 1/1597. Chamberlen to Admiralty, 29 April 1719; TNA, CO 138/16, 184-209. Lawes to BOT, 31 January 1719.

³⁹⁵ TNA, CO 24/1, 10-12. Instructions to Rogers, 21 November 1717.

³⁹⁶ TNA, CO 5/287, No. 16. Rogers to Craggs, 21 December 1720.

³⁹⁷ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

You desire that the King would approve and confirm the several persons you have appointed to be of the Council, but I believe you have not consider[e]d what the expense will be, it will come at least to £9 15s a head, which will be in the whole about £117, and as there is no person here that I know of authoriz[e]d and enabled to disburse that money it will be to no purpose to recommend them to H. M.³⁹⁸

The letter sent in July 1719 confirmed this consideration and stated that the councillors would only be approved when the islands were better settled.³⁹⁹ The state would not pay the salaries of the councillors despite ordering Rogers to appoint a council. In other crown colonies, assemblies paid councillors out of public revenue and therein lay Rogers' second administrative issue: he was not authorised to call an assembly. Without an assembly, Rogers was unable to raise money for the subsistence of the garrison and the maintenance of the colony. He wrote that the lack of assembly discouraged the local inhabitants who felt uneasy at being unable to create laws for the immediate service of the island. Rogers assessed that the lack of assembly was one of the reasons that no inhabitants from other colonies had ventured to settle in the Bahamas.⁴⁰⁰ Furthermore, one account stated that a major discouragement to the reputation of the colony, alongside the lack of an assembly, was the ill opinion of proprietary government in America. The attempts to resettle the Bahamas occurred at the same time that the council and assembly of South Carolina were lobbying against proprietary rule. These were the same proprietors who continued to hold a charter over the quit rents and

³⁹⁸ TNA, CO 24/1, 22-23. Popple to Rogers, 15 January 1719.

³⁹⁹ TNA, CO 24/1, 27-28. BOT to Rogers, 29 July 1719.

⁴⁰⁰ TNA, CO 23/13, 25-27. Rogers to [Craggs], 24 January 1719; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 22. Governor and Council of the Bahama Islands to BOT, 15 January 1720.

royalties of the Bahamas. Although theoretically a crown colony, the Bahamas continued to be perceived as proprietary due to the co-partners lease over the lands and royalties. Without an official council or assembly, the colony could not be perceived as a crown colony free from proprietary rule and this may have discouraged prospective settlers from the Carolinas.⁴⁰¹ This lack of an official colonial council and inability to call a colonial assembly meant that there were no effective methods for raising public revenue. Throughout the rest of the royal colonies, colonial defence was funded through public revenue. Despite the fact that Rogers did not have the same powers or access to the same resources as other royal governors, the state was unwilling to fund the colonial defence of the Bahamas differently to the rest of the royal colonies. Although the Bahamas had been absorbed into the royal remit, the colony remained a semi-private project and received limited focus from the state whose priorities in the colonial theatre focused on protecting the established crown colonies during the war. The Bahamas had only been resumed into crown possession after Rogers and the co-partners had outlined their proposals to restore the colony through their private investment and, as such, there was little state concern for the administration of Rogers' semi-private government.

Likewise, Rogers received little support from his co-partners in the metropole. In 1719, the co-partners unsuccessfully requested reimbursement from the government for colonial maintenance: £11,394 for supplies used to repair the fort, £3,990 for their ship *Delitia* that Rogers had been forced to detain as a guard ship for the harbour after he was deserted by the dispatched naval vessels, and additional funds for the money that Rogers had spent on maintaining the inhabitants and fitting out vessels against the

⁴⁰¹ TNA, CO 23/1, Nos. 20, 21i-v. Craggs to BOT, 21 January 1720.

remaining pirates.⁴⁰² They later claimed that they had spent approximately £90,000 on the settlement.⁴⁰³ That these claims were entirely false is evidenced by the numerous complaints Rogers sent regarding the colony's financial situation. Rogers wrote as early as January 1719 that he been forced to draw several bills on the co-partners for the maintenance and security of the island. The supplies that Rogers had brought to the islands had been expended within five months. These had been consumed by fort repairs, stolen when trading vessels that Rogers outfitted turned pirate, and appropriated by pirates operating in nearby waters. By 1720, Rogers' bills were protested and he could no longer purchase provisions or other necessities to sustain the king's soldiers.⁴⁰⁴ As the co-partners had not established a fund for further expenses in the metropole, the bills were not paid.⁴⁰⁵ Indeed, one of the primary sources of conflict between Rogers and the co-partners was that Rogers had expended their goods without providing a detailed account of how the goods had been used.⁴⁰⁶ Two factors had been sent with Rogers to manage the co-partners goods, but both died shortly after arrival. There were frequent protests that Rogers had taken these goods under his own management and expended them at his will, without making any profit for the co-partners.⁴⁰⁷ This conflict highlights the primary question that would continue to cause disagreement between Rogers and the co-partners throughout the duration of his tenure: when and how would the partners profit from their investment. It is evident that the co-partners had intended to make their merchandise available for purchase by the inhabitants of the Bahamas rather than expended without gain to secure the colony. It is highly likely that this

⁴⁰² TNA, CO 23/1, No. 17. Buck to BOT; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 17i. Account of expenses of the *Delicia*.

⁴⁰³ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 31. Co-partners to BOT, [19 May 1721].

⁴⁰⁴ TNA, CO 23/12, 25-27. Rogers to [Craggs], 24 January 1719; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 22. Governor and Council of the Bahama Islands to BOT, 15 January 1720; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1727.

⁴⁰⁵ TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1727.

⁴⁰⁶ TNA, C 108/418/24. Londonderry to Rogers, 15 August 1719; TNA, C 108/417/9. Gohier to Docminique and Buck, 18 June 1720.

⁴⁰⁷ TNA, C 108/417/8. Gohier to Rogers, 17 September 1720.

envisioned storehouse was encouraged by the prospect of making a profit trading with ex-pirates on New Providence who would need goods to establish their own plantations or homesteads. The fact that the *Samuel* and *Buck* were instructed to trade on Hispaniola and Curacao before returning to London with any goods not sold at New Providence is further evidence of this motivation for profit.⁴⁰⁸ In this way, the co-partners would benefit from the trade in piratical goods, encourage the development of plantations, and then procure the royalties and quit-rents over the land. The co-partners did not believe it was their obligation to provide for the maintenance of the garrison without royal compensation. Although securing the Bahamas had been a major part of the co-partners' scheme, the partners in the metropole were more concerned about their immediate assets than future profits. Rather than pay Rogers' bills with their own wealth, the co-partners attempted to secure the crown's reimbursement. Rogers was forced to use his remaining fortune and enter into debt to support himself and the garrison while requesting the state to intercede and pay the bills.⁴⁰⁹ From this episode, it is clear that the metropolitan partners' priorities were primarily monetary whereas Rogers' primary concern, as the only partner in the frontier, was securing the colony against enemy attacks. The other partners did not have these apprehensions and stated Rogers had exhausted their goods to their great detriment.⁴¹⁰ In turn, Rogers suffered under the realisation of having to maintain the security of the colony with his own credit.

The co-partners only funded two additional voyages to the Bahamas during Rogers' tenure, one in January 1719 and another in July 1720. These carried provisions

⁴⁰⁸ TNA, C 108/417/9. Instructions to Hampton of the *Samuel* and *Brask* of the *Buck* Sloop.

⁴⁰⁹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 22. Governor and Council of the Bahama Islands to BOT, 15 January 1720; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 23. Rogers to BOT, 20 April 1720; TNA, CO 23/13, 55-80. Governor and Council of the Bahama Islands to Craggs, 26 November 1720.

⁴¹⁰ TNA, C 108/417/8. Gohier to Rogers, 17 September 1720.

and manufactured goods to trade on New Providence.⁴¹¹ The co-partners had little motivation to provide more capital for the venture. The state of the Bahamas economy after Rogers' arrival was related in an account submitted to the Secretary of State, James Cragg:

The settlement now consists of those who have lately been a pyrating mixt with strolers and old inhabitants who are but few of them better and all in a poor condition making little use of industry to cultivate the land... This discourages all manner of trade, their money which was chiefly got by pyrating or dealing with them is spent and the place become so very poor, that tho' they want almost everything, vessels begin to carry back their cargoes, so that all manner of trade must shortly come to nothing.⁴¹²

The removal of illicit trade had halted promise of turning the Bahamas into a hub of colonial commerce. There was little money available to fund trading voyages and no cultivated domestic products to encourage trade. Likewise, the project to convert the Bahamas into a profitable plantation economy was hindered by a lack of inhabitants willing or able to cultivate the land, a shortage of settlers migrating from other colonies, and the fact that the land was not as cultivable as promised.⁴¹³ In 1754, Mark Catesby recounted the condition of Bahamian soil, "The Bahama Islands may not only be said to be rocky, but are in reality entire Rocks... the productive Soyl on these rocky Islands is

⁴¹¹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 31. Co-partners to BOT, [19 May 1721].

⁴¹² TNA, CO 23/1, No. 21i. Account of the present state of Providence, 1719.

⁴¹³ *Ibid.*

small”.⁴¹⁴ The unprofitability of the Bahamas had been advanced as early as 1718 in William Wood’s influential *Survey of Trade* (1718):

...they are of little or no Consideration for their Produce, or otherwise useful to us, or necessary to be maintained by us, than as they may become dangerous to our Trade and Navigation in an Enemy’s Hand...⁴¹⁵

This was the primary issue with the entire enterprise. The Bahamas was located in a strategic location but it did not promise to become a substantial commercial asset for the state or private interests. The co-partners had provided the initial investment that would help to secure the colony against pirates and Spanish forces, but it became increasingly unlikely that they would be able to sustain the colony for the length of time required to realise a profit. The co-partners had been motivated by the erroneous material of inhabitants, particularly John Graves, who obscured the true conditions of the islands in an attempt to secure stability through crown absorption.⁴¹⁶ As a result, Rogers was provided little additional support from his co-partners during his three-year tenure.

Due to a lack of state resources and the neglect of the rest of the partnership, Rogers was forced to rely on the agency of the inhabitants to secure the colony. He employed ex-pirates who had accepted the king’s pardon on his arrival, including Benjamin Hornigold and John Cockram, two of the original pirate captains on New Providence, as privateers to defend the nearby waters from those pirates who would not

⁴¹⁴ Mark Catesby, *The natural history of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands* (London, 1754), xxxix.

⁴¹⁵ William Wood, *A Survey of Trade* (London, 1718), 193-194.

⁴¹⁶ Graves, *A Memorial*, 3-8.

surrender. He also organised the male inhabitants into three companies of militia.⁴¹⁷ Rogers had little choice but to depend on the inhabitants, even if he estimated that that they would turn against him if pirates attacked:

I don't fear but they'l[l] all stand by me in case of any attempt except pirates, but should their old friends have strength enough to designe to attack me, I much doubt whether I should find one half to joyn me.⁴¹⁸

Relying on ex-pirates, particularly Hornigold and Cockram who had been fundamental in the rise of the Bahamas as a pirate haven, to help secure the surrounding waters was a gamble that Rogers had little choice but to make, and is confirmation of the desperate situation that he found himself in. Nevertheless, these inhabitants were vital to the defence of the colony during Rogers' worst predicament when a Spanish expedition was launched against New Providence. Rogers had feared a Spanish attack since receiving advice in August 1718 that a new governor had arrived in Havana with orders to destroy the English settlements on the Bahamas.⁴¹⁹ This advice proved accurate as, in January 1719, the Spanish Consejo de Indias wrote that it was necessary to evict the British from New Providence in order to secure Spanish trade passing through the Florida gulf; they believed that Rogers' avowal to dislodge the pirates from New Providence was a ploy and that he really intended to utilise the pirates to undermine Spanish interests.⁴²⁰ Further information of this attack came in February 1719, which prompted Rogers to send a circular letter requesting assistance from the governors of Jamaica, Barbados,

⁴¹⁷ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 17. Petition of Buck to BOT.

⁴¹⁸ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

⁴¹⁹ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10vii. Deposition of Tayler and three others, 4 August 1718.

⁴²⁰ AGI, Santo Domingo 338. Consejo de Indias, 18 de enero de 1719.

New York, Virginia and all other colonies nearby.⁴²¹ No help was forthcoming; those colonies with station ships were unlikely to request these ships to aid the Bahamas as, in the process, their coasts would be left unprotected in a time of war. Each colony focused on the defence of their own trade and coastline from prospective attacks and, consequently, required the limited available naval resources to remain close to their shores. None of the colonies had a surplus of naval resources that could be redirected to support Rogers. Thus, although Rogers' endeavours to secure the Bahamas was beneficial for colonial trade in general, he could not rely on either state or colonial support to defend the colony during the war.

The Spanish attack on the Bahamas occurred in February 1720. The expedition, under the command of Don Francisco Cornejo, consisted of two men of war, four smaller warships and eight armed sloops carrying 1300 men. The attack was successfully repulsed from New Providence, although the Spanish force continued to roam in the Bahamas vicinity until news of peace reached the Caribbean.⁴²² Three factors allowed Rogers and the inhabitants of the Bahamas to oppose this attack. The first factor was the restoration of the fort at New Providence and the support of the inhabitants in this endeavour. Rogers had commenced the repair of the fort almost immediately after he had arrived. He had hired the inhabitants to carry out these repairs as the majority of workmen he had brought with him had died.⁴²³ Initially the inhabitants had proved unwilling to support the restoration of the fort, and Rogers complained of extravagantly high wages and the "excessive laziness of the people".⁴²⁴ Nonetheless, by December 1718, the fort had been repaired to a reasonable standard. Rogers' stated that primary

⁴²¹ TNA, CO 23/13, 84i. Rogers to the Governors of Jamaica, Barbados, New York, Virginia and all the Governors around us, 10 February 1719.

⁴²² Craton and Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream*, 117; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 150. Farrill and Nicholson to [Rogers], [27 January 1720/7 February 1720]; TNA, CO 137/13, No. 42. Lawes to BOT, 31 March 1720.

⁴²³ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

⁴²⁴ *Ibid.*

stimulus for the inhabitants' increased zeal in repairing the fort was their thirst for revenge against the Spanish.⁴²⁵ It is apparent that these repairs would not have been accomplished without the looming Spanish threat as Rogers declared that "it was as bad as treason is in England to declare our designe of fortifying was to keep out the pirates."⁴²⁶ The remaining inhabitants on the Bahamas appear to have been, for the most part, either supportive of pirates or pirates themselves. After all, the colony had relied on wrecking, smuggling, and piracy as the means through which to support the local economy and overall sustenance of the settlement for much of its existence.⁴²⁷ Piracy had provided for these settlers, and it appears that they would have remained unwilling to strengthen the colony's defences had there not been a common enemy which could unite the inhabitants and Rogers. The Spanish provided this common enemy. Numerous Spanish assaults on the Bahamas settlements had led to a natural animosity of the Bahamas settlers towards the Spanish. This may have been one reason why it was Spanish shipping that received the initial focus of piratical attacks launched from the Bahamas. Rogers recognised the importance of this animosity to securing the colony:

I could never have got the fort in any posture of defence, neither would they willingly kept themselves or me from the pirates if the expectation of a war with Spain had not been perpetually kept up and improved before I was certain of it, to make them do some work...⁴²⁸

⁴²⁵ TNA, CO 23/13, 20-24. Rogers to Craggs, 24 December 1718.

⁴²⁶ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 15. Rogers to BOT, 29 May 1719.

⁴²⁷ Craton, *Bahamas*, 73-91.

⁴²⁸ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 15. Rogers to BOT, 29 May 1719

He also stated that this drive to ensure success against another Spanish attack meant that the inhabitants “forgott they were at the same time strength[e]ning a curb for themselves”.⁴²⁹ Rogers would have been unable to defend the colony without the agency of the inhabitants, driven by a passion to oppose another Spanish assault, who supported the restoration of the fort and provided the necessary manpower in the ensuing attack. It was the past experiences of these settlers, living in a largely neglected region of the Atlantic Commons, that shaped their responses to Rogers’ endeavours to secure the colony and repulse the Spanish attack. The second factor was the availability of the resources required to repulse this attack: the materials and provisions provided by the co-partners alongside the state armaments. Without these materials, the fort could never have been repaired and, without this firepower, the fort and Bahamas militia would have remained feeble. Instead, the Bahamas militia, made up primarily of local inhabitants determined to oppose the Spanish, utilised the state-supplied firepower with the defences of the repaired fort to resist the attack. The third factor was the fortuitous presence of the *HMS Flamborough*, on route to serve in the Carolinas, at New Providence when the assault occurred.⁴³⁰ The presence of a naval vessel at New Providence during this time was sheer chance and may have provided a deciding factor in repulsing the Spanish attack.⁴³¹ Therefore, the colony was successfully secured through the individual endeavours of Rogers and the Bahamas inhabitants who were bolstered by the chance naval presence alongside the supplies provided by the state and

⁴²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁴³⁰ Craton and Saunders, *Islanders in the Stream*, 117; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 23. Governor Rogers to the BOT, 20 April 1720.

⁴³¹ Although this was the only naval vessel that aided the colony during Rogers’ tenure, there were intense disagreements between Rogers and the captain, Hildesley. When Rogers left the Bahamas to return to England, there is a report that he fought a duel with Hildesley in South Carolina. Rogers does not discuss the dispute but Hildesley reported that the conflict arose from questions over authority during the defence against the Spanish. Naturally, Hildesley blamed Rogers for this in his account stating that he had exceeded his authority by attempting to command an autonomous naval captain. See TNA, CO 5/387, No. 20. Lloyd to Craggs, 2 February 1721; Cordingly, *Spanish Gold*, 198.

partnership. Most importantly, the Spanish threat presented a uniting influence between Rogers and the settlers which enabled Rogers to restore colonial defences which would provide the necessary security against any future retaliation of unyielding pirates operating within the area.

Despite the many disadvantages that Rogers faced, he had managed to dislodge the pirates from New Providence by early 1719. In October 1718, Rogers wrote that those pirates who had accepted the pardon on arrival but had grown weary of living under restraint had departed to several parts of North America.⁴³² In 1720, the co-partners declared “the great end at first proposed which was clearing those Islands and seas of pirates is now answer[e]d, and those pirates forced to fly to Africa for shelter.”⁴³³ Rogers’ arrival on the island had divided the Bahamian pirates: those willing to give up piracy at that juncture took the pardon, kept their plundered goods, and were employed by Rogers as privateers or traders whereas those who were unwilling to give up their illicit practices voyaged to North America and Africa to prey on shipping there.⁴³⁴ Furthermore, some of those who had originally submitted to the pardon when Rogers arrived changed their mind when it was apparent that their previous employment was more rewarding.⁴³⁵ The relative success of the pardon under Rogers’ government, compared with the disappointment that other colonial governors had reported, was driven by two factors: the implicit permission to keep plundered goods and the opportunity for alternative employment. On arrival, Rogers pardoned approximately 300 pirates and made no issue of their piratical goods. Up until this point, this had proved a contentious point for pirates willing to accept pardon and colonial

⁴³² TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

⁴³³ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 21. Buck and Co-partners to BOT.

⁴³⁴ A number of pirates had already left the Bahamas for the North American coast before Rogers arrived. Arne Bialuschewski, ‘Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725’, *The Mariner’s Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 175-176.

⁴³⁵ TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718.

governments which received little direction on how to manage piratical plunder.⁴³⁶ Rogers, however, appears to have simply overlooked the ambiguity of plundered goods altogether. Alongside this, Rogers needed to employ ex-pirates as mariners for the trading voyages he organised in order to begin establishing a licit economy in the Bahamas, as well as requiring mariners for privateering vessels which could defend the vicinity from pirates and, with the outbreak of war, Spaniards. It is unclear how many trading voyages Rogers organised during his tenure. It is evident that he intended to encourage a trade to Hispaniola as he dispatched at least two sloops there with trading goods in September 1718.⁴³⁷ There is also indication that a number of privateers were fitted out from New Providence during the war and the authorisation to prey on Spanish shipping, which had been the original target of piratical attacks from the Bahamas, may have encouraged those ex-pirates who would have been otherwise motivated to return to piracy.⁴³⁸ Rogers also successfully utilised ex-pirates in voyages against their former brethren, and ensured that his opinion of piracy was known by a trial held in December 1718. Hornigold had successfully apprehended thirteen pirates who had absconded with vessels fitted out from Nassau; three of the men had died from their wounds and the other ten were confined on the *Delitia* to be tried. Rogers appointed judges and commissioners under his authority as governor, an authority that the island had not been able to enact for much of the early eighteenth century due to the lack of governor established there. Nine of the men were found guilty and sentenced to death, although one was later reprieved. They were hanged on 12

⁴³⁶ See Chapter Two, 87-89.

⁴³⁷ A set of pardoned pirates on board these two sloops mutinied and carried the *Buck* sloop to the African coast. NRAS 1209/116. Confession of Hughs, 18 April 1720; NRS AC16/1. Statement of Murray.

⁴³⁸ TNA, CO 23/12, ff. 28-29v. Rogers to [Craggs], 30 January 1719; TNA, 23/1, No. 14. Rogers to Popple, 27 May 1719; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 13. Bennet to BOT, 8 June 1719; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 34. Rogers to BOT, 28 July 1720.

December 1718, marking a definitive end of Nassau as a shelter for pirates and a haven for illicit trade.⁴³⁹ Pirates continued to operate in and around the Bahamas but New Providence was never utilised as a pirate base again.

In December 1720, Rogers received a report that a new partnership for improving the Bahamas had been established. He had not been concerned in this development and, indeed, had not been consulted. When the reality of the condition of the Bahamas was understood, the co-partners were primarily concerned with making a return on their investment. As a solution, the partners in London exploited Rogers' accomplishments in the Bahamas to sell their lease for £40,000 to the newly founded Bahama Company which was comprised of twenty-two new partners including four of the original co-partners.⁴⁴⁰ This syndicate was able to generate investment through fallacies that the Bahamas, now free from threats, would quickly flourish into a lucrative colony. The Bahama Company rapidly developed into a bubble company and was divided into 2,500 shares to which at least 1,401 subscriptions were placed for £1,000.⁴⁴¹ Rogers, whose health had been greatly impaired by his time in the Bahamas and who received no advice on how to proceed, returned to England in 1721 to settle the affairs of the colony. Once there, he found that another governor had been appointed at the insistence of the new company. Rogers, who had invested more than £3,000 of his own fortune and indebted himself to above double that sum in order to secure New Providence, spent time in a debtors' prison and declared bankrupt before receiving a

⁴³⁹ Cordingly, *Spanish Gold*, 162-166; TNA, CO 23/13, 20-24. Rogers to Craggs, 24 December 1718; TNA, CO 23/1, Nos. 22, 22i. Copy of the trial of 10 pirates condemned at Nassau, [4 December 1719].

⁴⁴⁰ Rogers and Gohier were in the Bahamas and Adam de Cardonnel had died in 1719. TNA, C 108/417/8. Copy of Contract signed by the Lessees, 1 June 1720.

⁴⁴¹ This number is based on the surviving subscriptions lists of Samuel Buck, William Chetwynd and Lord Londonderry in TNA, C 108/417/8; Neal, *Master of Events*, 100-1. Many of the subscribers to the Bahama Company also participated in the Mississippi and South Sea bubbles. After the collapse of the South Sea stock, the Bahamas Company fell into disrepute and was later dissolved. Neal, *Master of Events*, 100-1; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 80. Petition of Lessees of the Bahama Islands to Lords Justices, [? 1721]; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 33. Copartners to BOT, [26 May] 1721.

mere £1,500 as his share from the co-partners.⁴⁴² He later returned to the Bahamas in 1729 after the Bahama Company had been dissolved and the Bahamian council requested his reinstatement as governor. He remained there until his death in 1732. The manoeuvrings of the co-partners highlights the metropolitan stakeholders' influence over colonial developments. It was not those in the frontier, such as Rogers, his unofficially appointed council, or the inhabitants, who dictated the colony's prospects but those in metropole who influenced state decisions through their claimed investment. The Bahamas colony was at the mercy of metropolitan commercial interests who acted more as proprietors than patrons of a new crown colony. Although they utilised Rogers' activities to sell their stake in an unprofitable venture, they did not provide him with any consolation on his return despite the fact that he had undertaken much of the investment himself and had been the only co-partner to actively pursue the project's objectives.⁴⁴³

Although initially assisted by the investment of his co-partners and state armaments, it was Rogers who undertook the necessary expenditure to dislodge the pirates and secure New Providence from further enemy occupation after the state, his co-partners, and his fellow colonial governors forsook him. He was primarily supported by those ex-pirates who were willing to accept the king's pardon and the inhabitants, including ex-pirates and accessories to piracy, whose animosity for the Spanish encouraged collaboration with their new governor to secure the colony. These groups were made up of a combination of those pirates and treasure hunters who had been initially motivated by the prospects of gaining from the Spanish wrecks but who were

⁴⁴² Saunders, 'Rogers, Woodes (c. 1679-1732)'; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 90ii. Rogers to Newcastle, 26 August 1727.

⁴⁴³ For further discussion of the role of the Bahama Company in the transition of the Bahamas from proprietary to crown colony see David Wilson, 'Neglected by Reason: Colonial Development and Conflicting Realities in the Early-Eighteenth-Century Bahamas' (forthcoming article).

not motivated to seek vast riches farther afield, as well as those pirates, such as Hornigold, whose initial depredations had targeted Spanish shipping and for whom sanctioned privateering provided legitimisation.⁴⁴⁴ Nassau would have remained a hub of piratical activity without the endeavours of Rogers and the ex-pirates and inhabitants of New Providence. It was the individual agency and cooperation of these colonial actors, rather than the actions of the state, established colonial centres, or metropolitan co-partners, that secured the Bahamas from piratical occupation.

Conclusion

The first major metropolitan expedition against Atlantic piracy in the early eighteenth century was not carried out under state direction but was solicited, financed, and undertaken by a conglomerate of London merchants and gentlemen seeking to profit from colonial development. Although the Bahamas was recognised as a strategic threat to colonial trade, the state remained unwilling to direct significant resources to dislodge the pirates and establish a royal colony. This would require significant resources in order to fund the repairs and restoration of a ruined colony. State expenses were already stretched thin after two decades of European war, and the available resources were focused on containing European threats in the Mediterranean and Baltic whilst also protecting key colonial regions and trades. Although the BOT and influential mercantile groups outlined the necessity of restoring the Bahamas in order to reduce the threat of piracy on colonial trade, the state did not have the resources or motivation to carry out this project. This highlights the limits of state capacity to suppress Atlantic piracy as it

⁴⁴⁴ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 17i. List of men that sailed from Ileatheria and committed piracies on the coast of Cuba, 14 March 1715; TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 10. Rogers to BOT, 31 October 1718; TNA, CO 23/12, ff. 28-29v. Rogers to [Craggs], 30 January 1719; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 34. Rogers to BOT, 27 July 1720.

remained both unable and unwilling to undertake expeditions to the regions of the Atlantic Commons that lay beyond the oversight of the state and where piracy and illicit trade could thrive, particularly when the available resources were needed to protect regions of more tangible economic importance in the European and colonial theatres. As a result, the eventual dislodging of pirates from New Providence was facilitated by metropolitan commercial interests who were driven primarily by speculative economic gain rather than a desire to suppress piracy. When the reality of funding the formation of the Bahamas colony was recognised, these interests swiftly manoeuvred to ensure that they would make a return by selling their stake to a larger syndicate who encouraged investment in a pirate-free Bahamas. Nevertheless, it was these private commercial interests that had solicited the royal resumption of the Bahamas and provided the foundations through which Rogers was able to successfully dislodge the pirates from New Providence.

In the end, it was the individual endeavours of Rogers in Nassau, aided by the ex-pirates and inhabitants of New Providence, who secured New Providence from pirate occupation and the Spanish threat during the war. Rogers utilised his private wealth and credit to sustain a colony burdened by military, administrative, and financial difficulties. He provided alternative employment for pirates who had accepted the king's pardon on his arrival, and utilised local hostility towards the Spanish as a means to unite this frontier community into a somewhat cohesive workforce that successfully defended the island. Without Rogers' endeavours and the cooperation of local settlers, New Providence would have remained a haven for piracy and illicit commerce or would have been devastated by the Spanish attack. Thus, it was the individual effort and agency of these colonial actors - Rogers as colonial governor, ex-pirates as mariners for privateers and trading vessels, and inhabitants as workers and militia – that collectively dislodged

the pirate presence from New Providence with very little support from other state, colonial, or metropolitan actors. Despite having ramifications for the entire Atlantic world, this was first and foremost a local endeavour to secure the vicinities of New Providence from immediate dangers. It is important to recognise that an earlier expedition against New Providence, either in the previous decade or when the initial complaints of piracy were received, might have been more successful in eradicating the pirate threat altogether. Instead, a significant percentage of pirates who did not accept the king's pardon were dispersed from the Bahamas; some continued to raid in the Caribbean and North America while others spread to the West African coast and Indian Ocean.

II

WIDER ATLANTIC WORLD

Chapter Four: Responses to Piracy in North America, 1717-1718

“By the care our Government takes of its Plantation one would Imagine that they are of no further concern to the Government than they are an opportunity of advancing and Gratyfying a Courtier or a Considerable Party Man.”⁴⁴⁵

Anonymous letter to the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas, 1718

In October 1717, the Governor of the Leeward Islands wrote to the BOT to inform them that the pirates had “all gon[e] to north america, or to some other parts”.⁴⁴⁶ Accounts of frequent piratical attacks in North America first appear in the summer of 1717 when pirates spread from New Providence and the Caribbean to the North American coastline. The historiography has tended to discuss the rise of piracy in North America and the Caribbean in conjunction and has generally focused on providing a narrative of the successful expeditions against pirates from Virginia and South Carolina in 1718. Yet, in these discussions, there is little consideration of the motivations behind these voyages or how these were funded, organised and facilitated. Indeed, these voyages are often absorbed into a general discussion of a state war on piracy rather than recognising them as local and reactive colonial endeavours against specific crews impeding local trade.⁴⁴⁷ Only Hanna has made this distinction, stating that colonial vessels were outfitted with men who “could find reasons to fight men who threatened their shipping and their livelihood.”⁴⁴⁸ However, Hanna sees these voyages as part of a

⁴⁴⁵ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 107. Extract of letters from Carolina, [19 August 1718].

⁴⁴⁶ TNA, CO 152/12, No. 62. Hamilton to BOT, 7 October 1717.

⁴⁴⁷ See Arne Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority: economic aspects of maritime depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716-1726', *Global Crime*, 9:1 (2008), 59; Arne Bialuschewski, 'Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 173-176; Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 192-194.

⁴⁴⁸ Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 372.

unified imperial project, and does not consider what the necessity for these voyages suggests about state and colonial capacity to regulate maritime activity in North America.⁴⁴⁹ On the one hand, Virginia was a royal colony that received the focus of state-provided naval defence in North America but which required collaboration between colonial and naval actors in order to mount an expedition to attack pirates operating on the coast of North Carolina. On the other hand, South Carolina was a proprietary colony that received no naval defence and which had little choice but to outfit private vessels to counter pirates obstructing local trade. This was distinctive from the Caribbean, where the majority of colonies fell under the direct authority of the British state and, as such, received some form of maritime defence. Without considering the idiosyncrasies of each region, the historiography has not analysed the differences between state and colonial responses in North America and the Caribbean in the early eighteenth century. These were two distinctive regions with their own unique circumstances that influenced the overall suppression of piracy. In particular, the continued existence of established proprietary and charter colonies in North America created a vacuum of unprotected coastline as the state did not provide for the maritime defence of private colonies. Therefore, it is necessary to compare and contrast both state and colonial responses in North America and the Caribbean in order to understand both the similarities and disparities occurring across geographical divides which impacted state and colonial capacity to suppress pirates and regulate Atlantic maritime activity in general.

First, this chapter outlines the rise of piracy in North America and provides an assessment of the effects of piracy on the various North American colonies. Second, the metropolitan responses to piracy in North America is compared with their reactions to

⁴⁴⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 371-372.

depredations in the Caribbean. This offers further insight into state priorities for maritime defence and outlines the lack of state capacity to regulate maritime activity throughout the entire North American coastline. Third, colonial responses are discussed, primarily focusing on the reasons why private colonies outfitted local sloops to go in quest of pirates in order to provide clear evidence of the differing capacity for maritime defence across royal and proprietary colonies. The limitations of these reactive voyages are also assessed before discussing the two successful expeditions organised by the governor and council of South Carolina in 1718. Fourth, the chapter utilises the expedition against Blackbeard in North Carolina, which was launched from Virginia in 1718, as a case study to examine the necessity of understanding the immediate conditions that dictated how anti-piracy voyages were organised and undertaken in the colonial theatre. These were detached operations, necessitated by local concerns, and initiated by individuals in the colonial frontier rather than by any form of overt metropolitan instruction or command. By examining the reactions to piracy in North America, this chapter will assess the various influences and priorities that shaped metropolitan and colonial responses, and evaluate the limits of regulating maritime activity throughout the North American coastline.

Piracy in North America

The peak of pirate activity in North America occurred in the summer and autumn months of 1717 and 1718.⁴⁵⁰ One of the earliest accounts of pirates spreading from the Caribbean to North America was reported in April 1717 when Samuel Bellamy and his crew, who had previously operated in the Leeward Islands, cruised off Cape Charles in

⁴⁵⁰ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Blackbeard off Philadelphia: Documents Pertaining to the Campaign against the Pirates in 1717 and 1718', *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 134:2 (April 2010), 178.

order to intercept vessels traveling to and from Virginia.⁴⁵¹ Two of Bellamy's captives stated:

...the s[ai]d Pyrates declared they intended to Cruise for ten days off Delaware Bay and ten days more off Long Island, in order to intercept some Vessells from Philadelphia and New York bound with provisions to the West Indies...⁴⁵²

This account highlights the general activities of the pirates in North America during this period. They would operate around colonial capes for a short period, intercepting trading vessels, before moving northward to the next colony.⁴⁵³ They returned to the Caribbean at the end of autumn in order to avoid the winter storms, and then sailed back in spring.⁴⁵⁴ Throughout 1717 and 1718, there were frequent complaints of pirates operating in the capes and inlets off South Carolina, North Carolina, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and as far as Cape Sables, Newfoundland.⁴⁵⁵ According to Alexander Spotswood, the Lieutenant Governor of Virginia, the primary aim of the pirates on the North American coast was to outfit

⁴⁵¹ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16iii. Information of Lucas, 13 April 1717; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16iv. Information of Jacob, 13 April 1717; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16ii. Information of Tarbett and Gilmour, 17 April 1717. There is also an account that a pirate had lain off the capes near Philadelphia in November 1716 and taken at least one outbound sloop. HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Gale, 9 November 1716.

⁴⁵² TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16ii. Information of Tarbett and Gilmour, 17 April 1717.

⁴⁵³ *Ibid*; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 106. Johnson to BOT, 18 June 1718.

⁴⁵⁴ HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 40-41. Logan to Askew, 8 August 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 33. Logan to Goldney, 9 October 1718; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 38. Logan to Aubrey, 30 October 1718; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Gomersall, 5 March 1719; Bialuschewski, 'Blackbeard off Philadelphia', 173; 'Alexander Spotswood to Mr. Secretary Addison, 27 August 1717' in R. A Brock (ed.), *Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Vol. II* (Virginia, 1885), 255-256.

⁴⁵⁵ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16ii. Information of Tarbett and Gilmour, 17 April 1717; TNA, ADM 1/2451. Smart to Admiralty, 28 July 1717; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Lurting, 17 October 1717; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to [Gale], 21 October 1717; *The Boston News-Letter*, 4 November 1717; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 4 December 1717; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 106. Johnson to BOT, 18 June 1718; TNA, ADM 1/2282. Pearse to Admiralty, 5 September 1718; *The Boston News-Letter*, 11 August 1718.

themselves with larger vessels.⁴⁵⁶ This was also indicated by Robert Johnson, the Governor of South Carolina, who stated that the pirates would return plundered vessels to their captains if they were not “fitt for their Purpose”.⁴⁵⁷ The pirates sought the large vessels employed in North American trade, particularly those engaged in trade between Britain and North America, whilst also obtaining stores of provisions from colonial vessels engaged in the provisions trade from North America to the Caribbean.⁴⁵⁸ Larger ships meant the opportunity to take larger prizes in the Caribbean, but they could also be employed to undertake expeditions to distant theatres such as Brazil, West Africa, and the Indian Ocean which a number of these crews appear to have been preparing for. The availability of vulnerable coastal traders carrying provisions provided further incentive for cruising the North American coastline as this enabled pirates to sustain their voyages in North America and the Greater Caribbean, or to prepare the necessary stores for longer voyages further afield.⁴⁵⁹ In comparison to the Caribbean, there was a higher concentration of undefended shipping on the North American coast due to the large expanses of coastline which received no active naval protection as well as those undefended capes of colonies that did not receive station ships. Discussing the impact of piracy on shipping near the Philadelphia capes, James Logan, a prominent merchant and council member in Philadelphia, suggested that pirates were lured to the Philadelphia as they were “well acquainted with it & some bred in it (for they are generally all English) & therefore know our Gover[nmen]t can make no defence.”⁴⁶⁰

⁴⁵⁶ ‘Alexander Spotswood to Mr Secretary Methuen, 30 May 1717’ in Brock (ed.), *Official Letters*, 249.

⁴⁵⁷ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718. See also HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 26-27. Logan to Falconer, 27 June 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 21. Logan to Hunter, 24 October 1717.

⁴⁵⁸ Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Devon, 1972), 280-286.

⁴⁵⁹ HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Gale, 9 November 1716; HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 70-71. Logan to Askew, 14 November 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 35. Logan to [Hunter], 7 August 1718; Bialuschewski, ‘Pirates, markets and imperial authority’, 60.

⁴⁶⁰ HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 76-78. Logan to Goldney, 27 November 1717.

Pirates intentionally targeted these undefended capes as they provided the perfect cruising ground to seize shipping entering and exiting colonial ports. Whilst similar sized vessels were available in the Caribbean, the major Caribbean colonial ports were better defended which meant that pirates could not concentrate their depredations near to the ports but instead cruised off common shipping lanes.

It is impossible to know the exact number of pirates that operated in North America during 1717 and 1718. There are accounts of such notorious captains as Charles Vane, Stede Bonnet, Samuel Bellamy, and Edward Thatch alias 'Blackbeard', alongside lesser-documented figures such as Olivier La Buse, Richard Worley and William Moudie, in North America during this period.⁴⁶¹ It is certain that there were other pirate crews that preyed on North American shipping, but there is little surviving evidence of their movements or activities.⁴⁶² Nevertheless, the number of vessels lost to pirates in these years of activity in North America was relatively small.⁴⁶³ Although the precise number of ships taken or plundered cannot be accurately determined, the number of reported attacks in each region indicates that piracy was not a major threat to most colonies. Over the two-year period, there were forty-eight reported depredations occurring in New York (2), North Carolina (5), New England (6), Virginia (7), South Carolina (10), and Pennsylvania (18).⁴⁶⁴ Although piracy seemingly posed a greater threat

⁴⁶¹ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16ii. Information of Tarbett and Gilmour, 17 April 1717; NYHS, Mss Collection, AHMC – Frost, John. Affidavit of John Frost, 15 July 1717; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Crosby, 23 October 1717; *The Boston News-Letter*. 4 November 1717; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 4 December 1717; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718; *The Boston News-Letter*. 17 November 1718.

⁴⁶² Bialuschewski, 'Blackbeard off Philadelphia', 175.

⁴⁶³ *Ibid*, 178.

⁴⁶⁴ These numbers are estimated by the depositions of captives alongside shipping reports printed in *The Boston News-Letter*. It is probable that the actual number of depredations is higher. TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16iii. Information of Lucas, 13 April 1717; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 4. Extract of a letter from Virginia, 15 April 1717; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16ii. Information of Tarbett and Gilmour, 17 April 1717; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 5. Bennett to BOT, 30 July 1717; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 107. Extract of letters from Carolina, [19 August 1718]; TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718; *The Boston News-Letter*. 1 July 1717, 22 July 1717, 29 July 1717, 4 November 1717,

for South Carolina and Pennsylvania than the other colonies, this was an episodic rather than continuous problem. Ellis Brand, the Captain of the Virginia station ship *Lyme*, partly explained the disparity between the number of vessels taken and the complaints received:

I find it very common with Most ships and Vessells that comes into these Capes that if they see any Vessell Ende[a]vouring to speak with them, and they gitt clear of him; it goes for granted they were chas[e]d by pyrates, I see daily Instances of it...⁴⁶⁵

It is also evident that a large number of depredations went unreported in official colonial and naval correspondence. For example, Thomas Smart, the captain of the New England station ship, reported that a pirate had been operating near Boston and had “plundered severall ships and Vessells coming from ye W[est] Indies hither.”⁴⁶⁶ Smart provides no further information of these ships and vessels. This was not unusual as depredations described in colonial correspondence tend to be related to specific European ships rather than colonial trading vessels, which were not reported as frequently in official correspondence. Even when they were reported, they usually appeared in addition to reports of European ships being taken. It was the impact of piracy on metropolitan trade with the colonies, rather than local intercolonial trade, that motivated state responses and, as such, the reports focused on these incidents. For example, in a letter from Virginia reporting on piracies committed on the Virginian coast, specific information is given of Whitehaven and London ships taken before

11 November 1717, 16 June 1718, 11 August 1718, 18 August 1718, 20 October 1718, 17 November 1718, 29 December 1718.

⁴⁶⁵ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 22 May 1718.

⁴⁶⁶ TNA, ADM 1/2451. Smart to Admiralty, 28 July 1717.

reporting that the same pirates had taken a Rhode Island sloop and had also “boasted that was the Fiftieth ship they had taken.”⁴⁶⁷ While the seizure of fifty ships was, in all probability, an exaggeration, it is likely that the Rhode Island sloop would not have appeared in the official correspondence without this report on the two European ships taken.⁴⁶⁸ Minor depredations on local shipping were not of the same immediate significance as attacks on large European shipping and, consequently, they did not receive similar focus in reports written to the metropole. Attacks on colonial shipping appeared much more frequently in colonial newspapers, usually alongside accounts of the treatment that the captured crews faced, although these were by no means comprehensive for the entire North American coastline.⁴⁶⁹ Thus, unreported attacks may have been much larger than those reported. Regardless of the exact volume of depredations, it is evident that both colonists and metropolitan mercantile bodies were concerned at the presence of these pirates and feared their further increase on the North American coast.⁴⁷⁰ This fear motivated both metropolitan and colonial responses to piracy in North America.

Metropolitan Responses to Piracy in North America

⁴⁶⁷ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 4. Extract of a letter from Virginia, 15 April 1717.

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁹ For accounts of piracy in colonial newspapers see *The Boston News-Letter*. 1 July 1717, 22 July 1717, 29 July 1717, 4 November 1717, 11 November 1717, 16 June 1718, 11 August 1718, 18 August 1718, 20 October 1718, 17 November 1718, 29 December 1718. For a discussion of the motivations behind newspaper reports on piracy see Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 373-387.

⁴⁷⁰ There were also complaints in merchant letters that the increase in piracy led a greater necessity to insure vessels and that insurance rates were higher than usual. One merchant commented “I am sure the [i]nsurance lately has far out run our Proffitts.” HSP, #0485 Volume 8, 191. Norris to Askew, 3 June 1719. See also HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 12-13. Logan to Falconer, 1 May 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 40-41. Logan to Askew, 8 August 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 70-71. Logan to Askew, 14 November 1717; HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Champion, 20 May 1718; HSP, #0485 Volume 8, 153-154. Norris to Askew, 28 August 1718; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 33. Logan to Falconer, 9 October 1718.

The state reacted to reports of piracy in North America at the same time it responded to piracy in the Caribbean. Alongside the proclamation of pardon, which had little success in the North American colonies⁴⁷¹, the state's response centred on the dispatch of naval vessels to key colonial stations: New York, New England and Virginia. Like those dispatched to the Caribbean at the same time, these were not additional ships but were replacements for station ships which had been ordered to return to Britain in early 1717.⁴⁷² The New York station ship, the *HMS Solebay*, had proceeded directly from Jamaica to England without returning to await a replacement, which left the coast unguarded at a time when two pirates were preying on the coast.⁴⁷³ In April, Spotswood reported that the Virginian station ship, *HMS Shoreham*, lay disabled in South Carolina. He complained "certainly this Trade deserves more care from the Crown than to be left in this Naked Condition".⁴⁷⁴ When the *HMS Shoreham* returned to Virginia, Spotswood was able to prevail with the captain to remain until a new station ship arrived to relieve him. Although the *Shoreham* was in no condition to pursue pirates, it could be used to convoy trade through the capes, Cape Charles and Cape Henry, and out of danger.⁴⁷⁵

New station ships were fitted out to attend the North American stations in April 1717, these were three sixth-rates: the *HMS Lyme*, *HMS Squirrel* and *HMS Phenix* for Virginia, New England and New York respectively (See Appendix 4: Table 4.1).⁴⁷⁶ In June, these were given instructions to act in concert against the pirates in North America. Like those dispatched to the Caribbean stations at the same time, these three

⁴⁷¹ It was even suggested that the pardon had provided pirates with the opportunity to build a wider network by placing abettors into established colonial ports. There is no explicit evidence of this although it is clear that opportunistic links remained between landed communities and pirates throughout this period. HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 46-47. Logan to [Hunter], 7 October 1718; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 55. Logan to Askew, 13 December 1718. See also Chapter Two, 85-87, and Chapter Seven, 289-290, 294-296.

⁴⁷² See Chapter Two, 82-85; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁴⁷³ TNA, CO 5/971, No. 13. Hunter to Popple, 3 May 1717.

⁴⁷⁴ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 4. Extract of a letter from Virginia, 15 April 1717.

⁴⁷⁵ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16. Spotswood to BOT, 31 May 1717.

⁴⁷⁶ TNA, ADM 2/49, 208-210. Instructions for Brand, Smart, and Pearse, 11 April 1717; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

ships were to maintain constant correspondence and to coordinate if they received accounts of pirates near their appointed stations. Hence, in 1717, the admiralty had dispatched two groups of replacement station ships that were instructed to coordinate against pirates if necessary: three to coordinate in North America, six to coordinate in the Greater Caribbean.⁴⁷⁷ In June, a second ship was dispatched to Virginia: the fifth-rate *Pearl*. This was not to liaise with the other naval vessels but was to be exclusively employed in cruising the Virginian capes to protect trade; specific instructions were given not to chase pirates too far as this would leave the capes unprotected.⁴⁷⁸ In comparison to the naval force dispatched to the Greater Caribbean at the same time, this was a relatively weaker naval force (See Appendix 4: Table 4.2).⁴⁷⁹ The force consisted of only four small naval ships to defend the North American coastline from South Carolina to Massachusetts, a greater expanse of ocean than the Caribbean Sea.⁴⁸⁰ The dispatch of these few vessels had required significant pressure from metropolitan mercantile interests involved in North American trade.

The primary pressure came from merchants involved in the Chesapeake tobacco trade who petitioned the Admiralty to protect Virginia from pirates.⁴⁸¹ Of the various interest groups involved in colonial trade, the tobacco lobby was one of the most active in petitioning state bodies throughout the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. By the early eighteenth century, the Virginian tobacco trade was dominated by large merchant houses in London who concentrated on importing tobacco from the Chesapeake regions. There was generally collaboration and harmony between Virginian

⁴⁷⁷ For an account of the Caribbean station ships see Chapter Two, 82-85. TNA, ADM 2/49, 262-263. Instructions to Brand, 19 June 1717; TNA, ADM 2/49, 263-265. Instructions to Pearse, 19 June 1717; TNA, ADM 2/49, 265-266. Instructions to Smart, 19 June 1717.

⁴⁷⁸ TNA, ADM 2/49, 259-261. Instructions to Gordon, 19 June 1717.

⁴⁷⁹ See Chapter Two, 82-85. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁴⁸⁰ The Newfoundland fishing fleet also received a fourth-rate and sixth-rate convoy against pirates. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁴⁸¹ The petition from the merchants has not survived. See TNA, ADM 2/49, 259-261. Instructions to Gordon, 19 June 1717.

planters and London tobacco merchants in this period, facilitated through agents employed by Virginian planters to advance their interests in London. The tobacco lobby actively utilised their influence to advance planting interests that either aligned, or at least did not conflict, with their own concerns. For example, during the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), leading London tobacco merchants, particularly John Jeffries, Peter Paggen, and Micajah Perry, were vital in compelling the Admiralty and BOT to provide suitable convoy for the tobacco trade. The frequency with which tobacco merchants coordinated to petition the state, alongside the concentration of the tobacco trade into fewer hands and the existence of a strong relationship between Virginian planters and London merchants, meant that the lobby became more coherent and organised than the groups of colonial merchants involved in other North American trades in the first quarter of the eighteenth century.⁴⁸² The additional ship dispatched to Virginia in 1717, the *HMS Pearl*, was ordered as a direct result of the pressure from these London tobacco merchants.⁴⁸³ Moreover, the three sixth-rate station ships were specifically instructed to ensure that they acted in concert against pirates on the Virginian coast over all others:

...when ther shall be any accounts received of Pirates infesting the Coasts near the Limits of their appointed stations, but more especially within or near the aforesaid Coasts of Virginia, join & proceed against the said Pirates...⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸² Douglas Bradburn, 'The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade in War and the Purpose of Empire, 1690-1717', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 68:3 (July 2011), 362-370; Alison G. Olson, 'The Virginia Merchants of London: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Interest-Group Politics', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 40:3 (July, 1983), 371-3; Jacob M. Price and P. G. E. Clemens, 'A revolution of scale in overseas trade: British firms in the Chesapeake trade, 1675-1775', *The Journal of Economic History*, 47:1 (1987), 20-21.

⁴⁸³ TNA, ADM 2/49, 259-261. Instructions to Gordon, 19 June 1717.

⁴⁸⁴ TNA, ADM 2/49, 263-265. Instructions to Pearse, 19 June 1717.

Pressure by London tobacco merchants influenced the concentration of North American station ships on protecting Virginian trade, rather than on coast-wide efforts to eradicate pirates. This was similar to the Caribbean response that centred on safeguarding the Jamaican sugar trade from pirates.⁴⁸⁵ While it was the tobacco lobby which first motivated and advised of the necessity of this response, the reason that the state were moved by these petitions is simple: the size of the tobacco trade meant that the state was far more concerned with the revenue generated by the tobacco trade than with other American products.⁴⁸⁶ The perceived importance of this trade can be seen in William Wood's enlisting Virginia and Maryland, the two primary tobacco-producing regions, under the same bracket as the West Indian sugar colonies.⁴⁸⁷ As there was limited naval resources available that could be dispatched to protect North American trade, it was not possible to employ a task force that could seek out and suppress pirates whilst also actively protecting colonial localities. Instead, those few naval ships which could be sent to North America, although given instructions to coordinate against pirates where feasible, were specifically to prioritise the protection of Virginia and the lucrative tobacco trade. Tobacco was one of the primary colonial cash crops and the colony that produced it demanded protection over all other assets.

On the other hand, New York and New England produced no lucrative commodity like sugar or tobacco but still received naval protection. These were both royal colonies, falling under the direct authority of the crown, and received station ships in order to provide for the defence of trade in the surrounding area. Furthermore, both were recognised as vital suppliers to the Caribbean plantations. The provisions trade operating from North America to the Caribbean facilitated sugar production and was

⁴⁸⁵ See Chapter Two, 80-92.

⁴⁸⁶ Olson, 'Virginia Merchants' 369.

⁴⁸⁷ William Wood, *A Survey of Trade* (London, 1718), 142.

necessary to ensure the continued sustenance of the Caribbean plantation economy.⁴⁸⁸ This provisions trade, alongside the existence of other important markets in the Middle Colonies and New England, such as the developing market of naval stores in New England, meant that the state recognised the necessity to provide at least some naval resource to defend the trade of these regions.⁴⁸⁹ These colonies also found active encouragement amongst groups of Whigs who recognised that New York and New England provided guaranteed markets for manufactures and could themselves become manufacturing centres.⁴⁹⁰ The supremacy of pro-manufacturing ideology within the Whig faction may have encouraged the stationing of naval ships in the Middle Colonies and New England. It is important to note that Wood, whose imperial vision was embraced by Walpolean Whigs, warned that the development of manufacturing centres in North America would be detrimental to the British manufacturing industry.⁴⁹¹ Nevertheless, he recognised the importance of the provisions trade and stated:

...however the Countries, under the Second Head [Middle Colonies and New England], may interfere with the Product of this Kingdom, or may produce Commodities of little Value annually (as it must be own[e]d) different from what Great Britain produceth; I shall think, until I hear better Reasons, than I have hitherto met with, that it is highly incumbent upon... and greatly the Interest of

⁴⁸⁸ C. Knick Harley, 'Trade: discovery, mercantilism and technology' in Roderick Floud and Paul Johnson (eds.), *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Vol I: Industrialisation, 1700-1860* (Cambridge, 2004), 185; Michael Kammen, *Empire and Interest: The American Colonies and the Politics of Mercantilism* (Philadelphia, 1970), 45.

⁴⁸⁹ N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2006), 302.

⁴⁹⁰ Steve Pincus, 'Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 69:1 (January 2012), 27.

⁴⁹¹ Jonathan Barth, 'Reconstructing Mercantilism: Consensus and Conflict in British Imperial Economy in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 73:2 (April 2016), 274-280; Christopher Dudley, 'Party politics, political economy, and economic development in early eighteenth-century Britain', *Economic History Review*, 66:4 (2013), 1096-1098; Steve Pincus, 'Addison's Empire: Whig Conceptions of Empire in the Early 18th Century', *Parliamentary History*, 31:1 (February 2012), 114-115.

Great Britain, to preserve, and encrease, maintain and encourage its Colonies on the Continent of America.⁴⁹²

It is clear then that amongst the Whig faction, the North American colonies were seen as beneficial, although there were disputes about where this benefit derived from. Despite this perceived importance, these stations received no additional vessels in wake of the pirate presence. They had received one sixth-rate each, the same as they had received in previous years, whereas Virginia received an additional fifth-rate vessel and the focus of all of the station ships in North America (See Appendix 4: Table 4.1).⁴⁹³ Thus, regardless of ideology and the perceived importance of the provisions trade, the naval resources that could be employed in the wider Atlantic were concentrated on the protection of key colonial trades that provided significant revenue to the state and were supported by strong mercantile lobbies.

In Virginia, the naval forces dispatched proved effective for protecting the immediate vicinity by providing a deterrent to pirates who had previously operated in the Virginian capes. Unlike their counterparts in Jamaica, Ellis Brand and George Gordon, the captains of the *HMS Lyme* and *HMS Pearl*, appear to have been diligent in their duty patrolling the Virginian coast as their arrival coincided with a stark decrease in complaints of piratical attacks committed in the Virginian capes.⁴⁹⁴ In August 1718, Spotswood highlighted the effectiveness of the naval vessels stationed in Virginia:

⁴⁹² Wood, *Survey of Trade*, 143.

⁴⁹³ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁴⁹⁴ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 4 December 1717; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 10 March 1718.

There are yet divers Pyrates on this Coast, but the Men of War Cruising about Our Capes has prevented their taking any of our Inw[ar]d or Outward bound ships...⁴⁹⁵

By focusing on guarding the Virginian capes, the Virginian station ships proved successful in decreasing piratical depredations on shipping coming to and leaving from Virginia. In comparison, the station ships of the Middle Colonies and New England were less effective as they needed to protect shipping throughout a much larger coastal expanse. Still, the presence of these ships may have discouraged pirates operating within the immediate confines of New York and Boston, where the two naval ships were primarily stationed. Logan advanced such an interpretation when emphasising the necessity for naval protection in Philadelphia:

...[th]e name of a man of War carries some terour with it to these fellows in Slender built vessels and the apprehensions of their way being block[e]d up behind them by such ships will make them cautious of coming up our Bay & River.⁴⁹⁶

Such a presence, though, did not generate any significant change as pirates were more actively operating throughout the unprotected shipping routes that lay beyond these harbours.

Although this small naval force could not hope to protect all shipping throughout the entire coastline of the Middle Colonies and New England, it is possible

⁴⁹⁵ 'Alexander Spotswood to the Board of Trade, 14 August 1718' in Brock (ed.), *Official Letters*, 294.

⁴⁹⁶ In this letter, Logan complained that there was little defence at Philadelphia due to the lack of naval vessels stationed there. HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 46-47. Logan to [Hunter], 7 October 1718.

that they might have provided a deterrent to pirates operating in these regions if they had actively coordinated and cruised on the unprotected expanses. However, similar to the situation in the Caribbean, the four North American station ships did not coordinate against pirates. Although the Admiralty had instructed the captains to do so, it appears that this was not to take priority over protecting specific trades in their stationed region. For example, Thomas Smart, captain of the *HMS Squirrel* stationed at New England, complained that the Admiralty had not permitted him to join Captain Pearse of the *HMS Phoenix* at New York in 1718 to voyage against pirates. Rather than authorise this action, the Admiralty ordered Smart to remain in New England as pirates were expected on the New England coast, and he was also to be employed to protect the fishery at Canso, Nova Scotia.⁴⁹⁷ Consequently, there were no proactive or coordinated measures by the station ships to suppress pirates throughout the majority of the North American coast. As a result, with the exception of the Virginian capes, the arrival of these ships did not coincide with any decrease in piratical activity on the North American coastline throughout 1717 and 1718.

While Virginia, New York and New England received station ships, North Carolina, South Carolina, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania received none.⁴⁹⁸ These were all proprietary or charter colonies and did not fall under direct royal authority; these did not merit receipt of the naval resources available. In the colonial theatre, naval ships were provided solely for royal colonies, and concentrated in those areas of chief commercial value with close ties to metropolitan mercantile elites, such as Jamaica and Virginia.⁴⁹⁹ In North America, the priority was first to protect the lucrative tobacco trade and, second, to provide some maritime defence for royal colonies of recognised

⁴⁹⁷ TNA, ADM 1/2452. Smart to Admiralty, 16 June 1719.

⁴⁹⁸ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁴⁹⁹ Daniel A. Baugh, 'Maritime Strength and Atlantic Commerce: The uses of 'a grand marine empire'' in Lawrence Stone (ed.), *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689-1815* (London, 1994), 185-223.

importance. Proprietary and charter colonies were not a priority. The inefficiency of metropolitan measures in curtailing piracy throughout the North American coast, particularly within the vicinities of proprietary and charter colonies, necessitated colonial actors to organise separate measures against pirates operating in nearby localities. It was these local endeavours that had started to generate momentum against Atlantic piracy by the end of 1718.

Colonial Responses to Piracy in North American Localities

The North American colonists were more proactive than their Caribbean counterparts in their local endeavours to combat piracy. Only one expedition against pirates was organised in the Greater Caribbean in 1717 and 1718⁵⁰⁰ whereas at least six were undertaken by the North American colonies. The Rhode Island government fitted out two sloops in May 1717 and four sloops were fitted out from Philadelphia in October 1718. All of these expeditions had been motivated by the presence of pirates in the immediate vicinity who were impeding local trade. Although none of these sloops apprehended any pirates, they may have proved a deterrent to pirates operating in the area and forced them to move further along the coastline.⁵⁰¹ It is possible that these vessels would have offered a proactive deterrent if they had continued to cruise the local proximities, but this required funding from colonial governments that did not have the available finances to provide for the cost of maintaining constant guard ships. This

⁵⁰⁰ See Chapter Two, 74-78.

⁵⁰¹ Newspapers reported that three vessels were fitted out from Philadelphia in October 1718, whereas James Logan detailed that four went in pursuit of pirates. HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 48. Logan to [Hunter], 16 October 1718; *The Boston News-Letter*. 20 May 1717, 27 May 1717, 3 June 1717, 27 October 1718.

meant that these could only be fitted out as short-term reactive measures. The motivations for these voyages are described in a letter written by James Logan:

I have been Surprized to hear some sort of people alledge that as we are a Proprietary Gov[ern]m[en]t & not so immediately as some others under [the] Crown, we are not to expect [the] same Protection from the Kings Ships or that an equal regard will be had to us. But as those Ships are Sent abroad in a great measure for ye Protection of Trade from w[hi]ch Britain receives Such great Advantages, And... our Consumption of British Commodities w[hi]ch is very considerable and ye honest pay we make for them yields just ye same Benefit to Britain that they would if we were under any other administration, And as those ships are at p[re]sent designed for ye suppression of Pyrates not only in New York Bay or Sandyhook but in his Majesties Plantations in America... I say it will be difficult I believe to Assign a reason why they should not visit us in a Cruize, unless we should be expected in their Instructions w[hi]ch we are certainly not.⁵⁰²

Philadelphia and Rhode Island were neglected by the naval vessels stationed at New York and Boston. They did not receive naval support as they were not royal colonies, and they could not expect much assistance from the other station ships that were instructed to concentrate on protecting the shipping of their posts, alongside that of Virginia.⁵⁰³ These vulnerable colonies had little choice but to fit out their own voyages

⁵⁰² HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 46-47. Logan to [Hunter], 7 October 1718.

⁵⁰³ Philadelphia was a proprietary colony; Rhode Island was a charter colony. Richard R. Johnson, *Adjustment to Empire: The New England Colonies, 1675-1715* (Leicester, 1981), 354; TNA, ADM 2/49, 208-210. Instructions for Brand, Smart, and Pearse, 11 April 1717; TNA, ADM 2/49, 262-263. Instructions to Brand, 19 June 1717; TNA, ADM 2/49, 263-265. Instructions to Pearse, 19 June 1717; TNA, ADM 2/49,

against pirates operating in their localities. These were small scale, fragmented and reactionary expeditions intended to discourage pirates on their coasts rather than coordinated, proactive attempts to remove the entire pirate presence.

Despite Logan's complaints concerning the lack of naval support for proprietary colonies, the station ships in New York and Boston had little success against pirates. The only victory against piracy in the Middle Colonies and New England in 1717 and 1718 was not attained through the agency of either metropolitan or colonial forces. On 5 November 1717, Samuel Shute, the governor of Massachusetts, issued a proclamation for a public thanksgiving, included in this was an appreciation for God's intervention in protecting the coast:

And that God hath in the course of this Year extended His Mercy to this Land in Manifold Instances... In Manifestly Guarding our Sea-Coast, by taking into His Own Hands a great Number of Wicked Pirates, that came with Designs to Rob and Spoil us...⁵⁰⁴

Samuel Bellamy's ship, *Whydah*, was shipwrecked on the shoals off Cape Codd in April 1717. One account states that Bellamy had seized a ship bound to New England from Madeira. His crew then consumed the captured Madeira wine which caused them to run the ship into the shoals.⁵⁰⁵ Once news of the shipwreck reached Shute, he sent Captain Cyprian Southack to retrieve the pirates' goods.⁵⁰⁶ While Bellamy had lost his vessel, he and a number of his crew were able to escape with only eight pirates in total

265-266. Instructions to Smart, 19 June 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 70-71. Logan to Askew, 14 November 1717.

⁵⁰⁴ *The Boston News-Letter*. 25 November 1717.

⁵⁰⁵ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 5. Bennett to BOT, 30 July 1717.

⁵⁰⁶ TNA, CO 5/792. Entry 19 September 1717.

apprehended and imprisoned in Boston. Although a minor success it led to the first trial of pirates in the colonies during this period and motivated state action to answer questions concerning the legality of pirate trials in the colonial theatre.⁵⁰⁷

In 1700, an act had been passed enabling colonial vice-admiralty courts to try pirates.⁵⁰⁸ There were concerns, however, that the commissions empowering governors with this power had not been renewed since George I's succession.⁵⁰⁹ Although there had been appeals by colonial governors in 1717 requesting advice on how to proceed against captured pirates.⁵¹⁰ Although this had not been resolved, Bellamy's crew were tried in November 1717; six were found guilty of piracy and executed.⁵¹¹ The BOT wrote to Shute enquiring under what authority these trials were carried out.⁵¹² According to Shute, he had the opinion of the Judge of the Court of Admiralty that the commissions for trying pirates were still in force, although there is no surviving evidence of this.⁵¹³ Nevertheless, metropolitan discussion of these commissions had commenced as early as September 1717 when the governors of New York and Bermuda requested advice concerning surrendered pirates. The BOT were of the opinion that the commissions were revived by an act passed in the first year of George's reign, but that it was necessary to send renewed commissions to the colonies.⁵¹⁴ It was only in December 1718 that these commissions were dispatched, and not until March 1719 that the

⁵⁰⁷ Anon., *The Trials of Eight Persons Indited for Piracy* (Boston, 1718), 1.

⁵⁰⁸ 'William III, 1698-9: An Act for the more effectually Suppressions of Piracy' in John Raithby (ed.), *Statutes of the Realm: Volume 7, 1695-1702* (London, 1820), 590-594.

⁵⁰⁹ TNA, CO 5/1051, No. 69. Hunter to BOT, 3 May 1718; TNA, CO 5/915, 180-181. Popple to Penrice, 14 August 1718.

⁵¹⁰ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 24 June 1717; TNA, CO 5/1051, No. 36. Hunter to BOT, [July, 1717]; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 6. Bennett to Popple, 30 July 1717.

⁵¹¹ TNA, CO 5/866, No. 137. Shute to BOT, 9 November 1717.

⁵¹² TNA, CO 5/915, 99-102. BOT to Shute, 6 March 1718.

⁵¹³ TNA, CO 5/915, 177-179. Shute to BOT, 26 June 1718.

⁵¹⁴ TNA, CO 324/10, 136-137. BOT to the King, 18 September 1717; TNA, CO 29/13, 436-438. BOT to Addison, 19 November 1717; TNA, CO 323/7, No. 119. Order of Council, 30 January 1718.

Solicitor General confirmed that Shute had had the authority to hold a trial in 1717.⁵¹⁵ By not resolving questions concerning the legality of trying pirates for over a year after requests were received, the state delayed and obstructed colonial ability to deal with captured pirates. The fact that this issue was not rectified quickly highlights that state concerns were focused elsewhere at this time and that confirmation of colonial authority over trying pirates, which was vital to the effective suppression of piracy, was not a priority issue. Instead, it was Shute's trial and subsequent execution of these pirates that set the precedent for other colonial governors to try pirates under this authority, whilst also encouraging further metropolitan deliberations of these commissions. Although this episode initiated an important discussion concerning the trying of pirates, the sole victory in the Middle Colonies and New England had been achieved through the pirates' own recklessness as opposed to the agency of either colonial or metropolitan forces. The only successful voyages against pirates in North America in 1717 and 1718 were undertaken in the Southern colonies.

The three successful voyages against pirates in this period were organised by the South Carolina and Virginia colonies. The two South Carolina expeditions provide an insightful case study into the motivations and organisation of local responses to piracy in North America. South Carolina was one of the primary victims of piratical depredations throughout 1717 and 1718. This is due to the fact that the South Carolina coast was close to the Caribbean, and the capes were undefended by naval forces which meant that the cargos of British rice traders could be easily seized.⁵¹⁶ In the latter half of 1717, it was even claimed that pirates intended to make a settlement at the nearby Cape

⁵¹⁵ TNA, CO 324/10, 207-208. BOT to Craggs, 2 October 1718; TNA, CO 5/867, No. 35. Solicitor General to BOT, 5 March 1719; TNA, CO 29/14, 21-22. Popple to Lowther, 8 October 1719.

⁵¹⁶ M. Eugene Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History, 1663-1763* (Virginia, 1966), 124.

Fear River.⁵¹⁷ In May 1718, Blackbeard captured at least four vessels in the South Carolina capes and then blockaded the entrance to Charleston, demanding a chest of medicines. He threatened to kill his captives and “to come over the Barr for to Burn the ships that Lay before the Towne and to Beat it about our Ears” if the governor did not comply.⁵¹⁸ Robert Johnson, the governor of South Carolina, outlined to the BOT that he had little choice:

...as the Town is at present in a very Indifferent Condition of making much Resistance of them or any other Enemy should attempt it and that we were very desirous to gett them off our Coast By fair means which we Could not doe otherwise for want of such Helps as other Governments are suply'd with from the Crown, The Chest of Medicines according to their Directions was Imediately sent to them.⁵¹⁹

Again, the lack of capacity to defend a proprietary colony against pirates was blamed on the fact that it was not given the same protection as royal colonies received. Further pirate attacks occurred in September 1718 when Charles Vane lingered in the Carolina capes and apprehended seven ships while Johnson received intelligence in October that another pirate was refitting in Cape Fear River with the plan to cruise against Carolina shipping.⁵²⁰ An anonymous source reported the results of piracy to the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas:

⁵¹⁷ HSP, #0379 Volume 5, 21. Logan to Hunter, 24 October 1717; HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 70-71. Logan to Askew, 14 November 1717.

⁵¹⁸ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 107. Extract of letters from Carolina, [19 August 1718]; Bialuschewski, 'Blackbeard off Philadelphia', 173.

⁵¹⁹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 107. Extract of letters from Carolina, [19 August 1718].

⁵²⁰ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718.

They are now come to such a head that there is no Trading in these Parts It being almost Impossible to avoid them and Nothing but a Considerable force can Reduce them which at first might have been done at an Easy Charge...⁵²¹

Although there are at least three existing accounts of pirates cruising the entrance to Charleston harbour for a short period of between eight and ten days, detaining shipping inward and outward bound, before moving on in 1717 and 1718, this practice would not have ruined trade entirely as the source claimed.⁵²² Still, this would have had a significant impact on local shipping and a continuance of this practice without any response might have discouraged merchants from stopping at South Carolina for trade in the future.

This exaggerated account was an attempt to induce the lords proprietors to respond to the threat of piracy. The colony received no state support for maritime defence as it was a proprietary colony; it was the lords proprietors who were ultimately responsible for sustaining the security of the colony.⁵²³ The anonymous letter continued:

By the care our Government takes of its Plantation one would Imagine that they are of no further concern to the Government than they are an opportunity of advancing and Gratyfying a Courtier or a Considerable Party Man... it cannot be Expected that it can ever become a place Well Settled under a Proprietary Government and able to Defend it self...⁵²⁴

The arrival of pirates coincided with a turbulent period in Carolinian politics. The Yamasee War, which had broken out in 1715, had left the colony in a desperate

⁵²¹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 107. Extract of letters from Carolina, [19 August 1718].

⁵²² TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718.

⁵²³ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 107. Extract of letters from Carolina, [19 August 1718].

⁵²⁴ *Ibid.*

economic situation. The colonists had appealed to the proprietors for assistance during the war but they offered little support. The proprietors petitioned the king to supply soldiers to suppress the attack, and ordered that the revenue owed to them by the colonists be directed to support the war effort.⁵²⁵ Aside from these measures, they were largely inactive in assisting from the metropole sending less than £1,000 during the war. The colonists sent an appeal directly to the state for support; this appeal was refused on the opinion that the queen should not be at the expense of protecting or relieving a proprietary province. In the end, the colony survived but only by undertaking large bills of credit to pay for the war.⁵²⁶ It is estimated that the cost of defence amounted to £116,000, although this does not include the indirect costs of war such as lost production and increasing prices for commodities.⁵²⁷ Although the colonists requested naval support from the lords proprietors in order to deter pirates, the experiences of the Yamasee War meant that they understood such assistance would not be forthcoming.⁵²⁸ Without metropolitan support, the governor and council of South Carolina had to organise two separate expeditions against pirates operating in the nearby capes. Both the governor and council later related that the undertakings “had been a Considerable Expence to us”.⁵²⁹ Although the colony was impoverished by the late war, there was a clear necessity to use their limited resources to combat pirates who were causing further obstructions to the prospects of the colony. It appears that Johnson provided a large portion of the sums for these expeditions as he later wrote:

⁵²⁵ Roper suggests that this may have been a method of putting the collection of rents in order rather than an altruistic endeavour. L. H. Roper, *Conceiving Carolina: Proprietors, Planters, and Plots, 1662-1729* (New York, 2004), 146; L. H. Roper, ‘Conceiving an Anglo-American Proprietorship: Early South Carolina History In Perspective’ in L. H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke (eds.), *Constructing Early Modern Empires: Proprietary Ventures in the Atlantic World, 1500-1750* (Leiden, 2007), 404-408.

⁵²⁶ Roper, ‘Conceiving an Anglo-American Proprietorship’, 404-408; Eugene M. Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina, A Political History, 1663-1763* (Chapel Hill, 1966), 111-116; [F. Yonge], *A Narrative of the Proceedings of the People of South-Carolina in the Year 1719* (London, 1726), 6-8.

⁵²⁷ Robert M. Weir, *Colonial South Carolina: A History* (New York, 1983), 85.

⁵²⁸ *Ibid.*, 124-125.

⁵²⁹ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718.

The poor proffits of the Governm[en]t at the best, the extraordinary expence I was at, in suppressing severall pyrats, and the short time of my being here (the extraordinary expence of my comming over included) I am £1000 sterling worse by having ever had it.⁵³⁰

The threat of piracy to South Carolina, alongside the lack of significant public revenue, necessitated that any local response to piracy required private funding. It is uncertain why Johnson provided these funds beyond the necessity of curtailing this immediate threat, but it is likely that his actions were motivated by two interrelated reasons. First, this was Johnson's first political post. He had been appointed in 1717 by the proprietors, only arriving in South Carolina in October 1717, and was tasked with regaining control of the colonial government and economy from local leaders.⁵³¹ Securing the economy from pirates was a necessary part in ensuring his success in this task and would further his reputation whilst securing further patronage and support from the proprietors who he was reliant upon for his position. Second, such action would gain him backing from local colonial leaders who had grown disillusioned with the proprietary government. Johnson needed the support of these leaders to achieve stability in his government and securing the colony against pirates might have been a means to gain their support.⁵³² Whatever the case, his private capital was necessary to facilitate these expeditions due to the poor financial condition of the colony and the lack of funding provided by the proprietors.

⁵³⁰ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 143. Johnson to BOT, 27 December 1719.

⁵³¹ Alexander Moore, 'Johnson, Robert (1676?-1735)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁵³² Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 103.

The first expedition was organised in reaction to Charles Vane's depredations in September 1718 and the news that another pirate was refitting in Cape Fear River. Two sloops were prepared: the *Henry*, with eighty guns and seventy men, under Captain John Masters and the *Sea Nymph*, with eight guns and sixty men, under Captain Hall. William Rhett, the receiver-general of the Lords Proprietors of the Carolinas, commanded the expedition. The vessels first searched for Charles Vane but did not learn his whereabouts. Next, they sailed for Cape Fear River where they encountered Major Stede Bonnet, who had committed various depredations in North America in consort with Blackbeard. The Carolina force successfully engaged and apprehended Bonnet and his crew. They were then detained in South Carolina to face trial.⁵³³ The second expedition, commanded by Governor Johnson, occurred in December 1718 against two pirate ships under the command of William Moudie, that had taken at least three ships near the Carolina coast. Four ships were fitted out against these pirates. They did not meet with Moudie but were able to capture another pirate ship commanded by Captain Worley, who died in the conflict. The rest of Worley's crew were carried into South Carolina to be tried.⁵³⁴ These were two of the most successful expeditions against piracy throughout the entire colonial theatre since the rise of the pirates of New Providence. The capture and subsequent execution of Stede Bonnet, who had committed numerous depredations along the North American coast, was a particular triumph.⁵³⁵

These two expeditions, financed and commanded by colonial officials, were driven by the lack of maritime defence provided for this region by the state and proprietors. If trade was to be secured in this region, there was little choice but to

⁵³³ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 121. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 21 October 1718; *The Boston News-Letter*. 29 December 1718; Anon., *The Tryals of Major Stede Bonnet, and other Pirates* (London, 1719), iii-vi.

⁵³⁴ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 119. Governor and Council of South Carolina to BOT, 12 December 1718; *The Boston News-Letter*. 29 December 1718.

⁵³⁵ Anon., *The Tryals of Major Stede Bonnet*, 43.

undertake these local endeavours. While Johnson may have facilitated these operations partly to advance his own position, neither the state nor the proprietors responded to the impact of piracy on South Carolina and, as such, these expeditions were also essential to securing the immediate vicinity of his government from a significant threat. It was only in February 1719, when London merchants petitioned the Board of Admiralty, that a sixth-rate was appointed to cruise on the Carolina coast (See Appendix 4: Table 4.1).⁵³⁶ This was the first and only station ship to be specifically appointed to a proprietary colony during this time and had only occurred due to the lobbying by London merchants involved in the rice trade, the third most valuable export crop after sugar and tobacco.⁵³⁷ Again, the metropolitan response was stimulated by pressure from London mercantile interests rather than the colonists themselves. This occurred after the immediate pirate threat to South Carolina had been eradicated using the resources and finances of the colony. Despite Johnson's successes, the colonists of South Carolina rebelled against the proprietors in 1719, renouncing their authority, and electing a governor on behalf of the crown. This initiated a transitional period that ended with full crown control of the Carolina colonies in 1729. Anxieties concerning the defence of the colony were cited as one of the primary reasons for the rebellion.⁵³⁸ Although it was not the catalyst, the failure of the proprietors to aid the colony against pirates helped to fuel further anti-proprietary sentiment in South Carolina.⁵³⁹

⁵³⁶ TNA, CO 5/292. Entry 19 December 1718; TNA, CO 5/292. Entry 19 December 1718; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 6 February 1719; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 12 February 1719.

⁵³⁷ From the 1690s, rice cultivated in South Carolina had developed into the third most valuable export crop after sugar and tobacco. Although not as lucrative as the two primary cash crops, metropolitan links were established through the burgeoning rice trade. Nuala Zahedieh, 'Economy' in David Armitage and Michael J. Braddick (eds.), *The British Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Basingstoke, 2009), 60.

⁵³⁸ TNA, CO 5/1265, No. 142. The "new pretended" Council and Assembly of South Carolina to BOT, 24 December 1719.

⁵³⁹ Sirmans, *Colonial South Carolina*, 125.

The lack of British state resources to curtail piracy throughout the coastline of their Atlantic possessions necessitated these kinds of local reactionary and fragmented voyages. The few naval vessels stationed on the North American coast could not, and were not intended to, protect all shipping travelling to all of the North American colonies. As a result, private colonies, whether charter or proprietary, had little choice but to organise their own pragmatic measures to stop piracy obstructing local trade. Although these were small-scale endeavours, they were vital to providing protection to and discouraging pirates from otherwise unprotected regions. Another example of the importance of local endeavours in combatting piracy is observed in the successful campaign against Blackbeard and his crew in North Carolina in 1718.

Supporting and Combatting Piracy in North Carolina

In August 1718, Spotswood reported on the shipwreck of Blackbeard's ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, in North Carolina earlier that year.⁵⁴⁰ After the loss of their ship, Blackbeard and twenty of his crew surrendered to the governor of North Carolina, Charles Eden, who granted them certificates of pardon under the authority of the king's proclamation of the previous year.⁵⁴¹ According to Ellis Brand, one of the naval captains stationed at Virginia who employed men to inform on Blackbeard's activities in North Carolina, Blackbeard married and "gave out he design[e]d to be an Inhabitant & leave off[f] his Piraticall Life".⁵⁴² Despite this declaration, Brand was informed that Blackbeard abused the merchants by "taking from them what goods or Liquors he pleased and that he might not be called a Pyrate, paid such Prices to them for their Effects as he

⁵⁴⁰ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 50. Spotswood to BOT, 14 August 1718; Bialuschewski, 'Blackbeard off Philadelphia', 173.

⁵⁴¹ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 50iii(c). Proclamation by Spotswood, 10 July 1718; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 61. Spotswood to BOT, 22 December 1718; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 6 February 1719.

⁵⁴² TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 6 February 1719.

pleased".⁵⁴³ He also learned that Blackbeard had been on a voyage since his surrender, and had returned with a ship loaded with sugar and other goods that he declared had been found as a wreck.⁵⁴⁴ This ship later proved to be a French ship, which had been seized by Blackbeard and his crew in August 1718. Rather than condemn this ship as a legal prize, Blackbeard transported it to Ocracoke Inlet where he had established a small base of operations.⁵⁴⁵ A number of the inhabitants of North Carolina wrote to Spotswood concerning the activities of Blackbeard and his crew and requested his assistance.⁵⁴⁶

Although this request pre-empted the operation from Virginia against pirates in North Carolina, it was not concern for North Carolina's trade or inhabitants that motivated the voyage. Spotswood wrote to James Craggs, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, outlining the reason for the expedition:

...the just grounds they had given to Suspect of their intending more open Hostilitys as soon as they could gain a greater number to joyn w[i]th them, occasioned my forming a Design in concert w[i]th the Capt's of his Maj[es]ty's Ships on this Station to prevent a danger w[hi]ch so nearly threat[e]ned the Trade of this Colony.⁵⁴⁷

⁵⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴⁵ 'Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, including a deposition, a remonstrance, and correspondence concerning Tobias Knight's business with Edward Teach, 27 May 1719' in William Saunders (ed.), *The Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2 (Raleigh, 1886), 341-349; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Ellis Brand to the Lords of the Admiralty, 6 February 1719.

⁵⁴⁶ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 6 February 1719; 'Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325.

⁵⁴⁷ 'Alexander Spotswood to Mr Secretary Craggs, 22 October 1718' in Brock (ed.), *Official Letters*, 305.

Spotswood was disturbed by reports that a pirate presence was being established so close to Virginia; he had been one of the most proactive colonial governors in gathering information about the pirates throughout this period. In 1716, Harry Beverly, a Virginian merchant who was preparing a voyage to the West Indies, was permitted to equip his vessel with men and arms in order to defend against the New Providence pirates on the condition that he would provide accurate information on their strength and proceedings.⁵⁴⁸ Spotswood had perceived the significant threat that the Bahamas base posed before pirates had operated on the North American coast and had sent numerous accounts of the pirates' proceedings to the BOT throughout 1716, 1717 and 1718.⁵⁴⁹ He was clearly distressed by the notion that Blackbeard was attempting to establish a similar base on Ocracoke Island. Spotswood received reports that "the Pyrats at Okcrecock have been join[e]d by some other Pyrat crews"⁵⁵⁰ and discussed the "necessity of preventing the Growth of so dangerous a Nest of Pyrates in the very road of the Trade of Virginia and Maryland".⁵⁵¹ Spotswood had recommended as early as 1716 that the pirates at New Providence needed to be speedily suppressed in order to avoid further danger to colonial commerce. Indeed, he had experienced first-hand what could occur if a pirate presence was allowed to flourish and expand in North Carolina.⁵⁵²

Shortly after Blackbeard's surrender in 1718, a number of Blackbeard's pardoned crew travelled to Virginia.⁵⁵³ One of the men, known only as Howard, had been Blackbeard's quartermaster. Howard entered the colony with two slaves that he openly admitted had been piratically-taken. Upon this admission, Spotswood ordered

⁵⁴⁸ This information was never provided as Beverly was taken by a *guardacosta* near Bermuda. TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16i. Representation of Lieutenant Governor and Council of Virginia to BOT, 31 May 1717.

⁵⁴⁹ See TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 16. Spotswood to BOT, 31 May 1717; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 50. Spotswood to BOT, 14 August 1718.

⁵⁵⁰ TNA, ADM 1/1826. Spotswood to Gordon, 24 November 1718.

⁵⁵¹ 'Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325.

⁵⁵² TNA, CO 5/1317, No. 45. Spotswood to BOT, 3 July 1716.

⁵⁵³ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 50iii(c). Proclamation by Spotswood, 10 July 1718.

that the slaves be seized from Howard. In response, Howard commenced a lawsuit against the officer who made the seizure. After this exploit, Howard was arrested and detained on board the *Pearl*, the Virginian station ship captained by George Gordon. Howard, with the assistance of one of the judges of the vice-admiralty court of Virginia, John Holloway, ensured that the justice of the peace who had signed the warrant against Howard, alongside the captain and lieutenant of the stationed naval ship, were arrested on the grounds of false imprisonment. In the end, Howard was tried and convicted of committing piracies after the period that the king's pardon allowed.⁵⁵⁴ Spotswood also thought it necessary to issue a proclamation that prohibited ex-pirates from carrying arms or traveling together in a company greater than three. He was highly suspicious that these men designed to seize a vessel and return to their old occupation.⁵⁵⁵ This episode demonstrated the danger that even a small pirate presence could instigate in the colonies. Howard had managed to induce the support of one of the chief judges in Virginia by supposedly paying him a fee of three ounces of gold dust.⁵⁵⁶ Alongside the concerns raised by Howard's conduct, Spotswood received advice that Blackbeard's crew threatened to enact revenge on Virginian shipping after learning of Howard's imprisonment.⁵⁵⁷ It was the trepidation of a prolonged pirate presence so close to Virginia, bolstered by the Howard incident and the fear of retaliation by Blackbeard, that motivated this voyage rather than the requests of North Carolinian colonists or any actual depredations committed against Virginia by Blackbeard and his crew. This was both a proactive measure to ensure the future safety of Virginian trade and a reaction to

⁵⁵⁴ Brand had been required to go to Williamsburg to pay Gordon's bail. Howard was saved by the arrival of the extended king's pardon the day before his execution. TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 61. Spotswood to BOT, 22 December 1718; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 14 July 1719; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 8 April 1721.

⁵⁵⁵ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 50iii(c). Proclamation by Spotswood, 10 July 1718.

⁵⁵⁶ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 8 April 1721.

⁵⁵⁷ TNA, CO 5/1416. Governor and Council to House of Burgesses, 13 November 1718.

the encounters that the colony had experienced after pirates had established a presence in North Carolina.

Unlike the voyages organised from South Carolina, this was not exclusively a colonial endeavour but required the collaboration of Spotswood and the naval captains at Virginia: Ellis Brand and George Gordon. As soon as Brand had been informed of the pirates at North Carolina, he wrote to the Lords of the Admiralty:

I shall use my utmost endeavours to inform my self of them and what part of the coast, they most cruze upon and if it is possible for me to distroy them notwithstanding they are soe much superior to me, in number One hundred and thirtie men I shall not fail of doing my endeavour.⁵⁵⁸

Brand was part of the naval dispatch instructed to seek out and destroy pirates in North America, particularly those that presented a threat to Virginia. Rather than organise this expedition with the station ships at New York and New England as he was instructed, it was deemed necessary to organise the project in partnership with Spotswood. Spotswood explained the need for this collaboration:

It was found impracticable for the men of war to go into the shallow and difficult channells of that country, and the Captains were unwilling to be at the charge of hyring sloops w[hi]ch they had no orders to do, and must therefore have paid out of their own pocketts...⁵⁵⁹

⁵⁵⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 12 July 1718.

⁵⁵⁹ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 61. Spotswood to BOT, 22 December 1718; TNA, ADM 51/672. Captain's Logs - *Pearl* (26 July 1715 to 8 December 1719), Entry 17 November 1718.

The naval vessels dispatched to the North American stations were not suitable for this kind of expedition; the fifth- and sixth-rate vessels could not navigate the small passages of North Carolina where Blackbeard resided.⁵⁶⁰ Consequently, despite being assigned two naval vessels and receiving the focus of the two station ships at New York and New England, it was necessary to hire two sloops, the *Jane* and *Ranger*, in order to undertake this voyage.⁵⁶¹ Naval captains stationed in the colonial theatre did not have access to the kind of resources necessary to hire these sloops and, as such, required local collaboration to outfit the voyage. Although access to naval vessels which could actively cruise the local capes proved an effective deterrent to pirates who otherwise would have continued to obstruct shipping, these same resources were unsuitable for undertaking specific voyages against pirates operating beyond immediate colonial confines and threatening shipping travelling along unprotected stretches of coastline. Instead, these proactive measures required colonial finance and collaboration.

Spotswood did not use public revenue for this expedition; he hired the two sloops, the *Jane* and *Ranger*, and pilots for the expedition at his own expense. Spotswood outlined that the reason he did not use public revenue was the need to maintain secrecy to ensure that none of the pirates were informed of the expedition. He seems to have feared that members of the Virginian Council and House of Burgesses, Virginia's colonial assembly, would inform the pirates of his plans.⁵⁶² Although he stated that "there being in this country and more especially among the present faction, an

⁵⁶⁰ It is important to note that Blackbeard's previous ship, *Queen Anne's Revenge*, was as strong as the fifth-rate, *HMS Pearl*, at Virginia. Both ships would likewise have struggled to confront Blackbeard when he had his 40-gun flagship. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; David Moore, 'Blackbeard the Pirate: Historical Background and the Beaufort Inlet Shipwrecks', *Tributaries*, vol. 7 (1997), 33.

⁵⁶¹ Moore, 'Blackbeard', 33; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 6 February 1719; *The Weekly Journal, Or, British Gazetteer*. 25 April 1719.

⁵⁶² The leading Virginian families dominated both political bodies and frequently worked together to protect their interests. Emory G. Evans, *A "Topping People": The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680-1790* (Virginia, 2009), 46; Jack P. Greene, 'The Opposition to Lieutenant Governor Alexander Spotswood 1718', *The Virginian magazine of history and biography*, 70:1 (Jan. 1962), 35-42.

unaccountable inclination to favour pyrates”, there is no surviving evidence to support this claim.⁵⁶³ Spotswood’s comments are explained by the fact that there was a continual feud between the governor and the Virginian Council over several issues, primarily concerning the Native American trade, between 1715 and 1718. As this expedition occurred at the height of these debates in 1718, Spotswood did not inform the council or assembly as they may have opposed, and potentially exposed, the venture as part of their political strategy.⁵⁶⁴

Spotswood prevailed with the House of Burgesses to pass an act promising rewards for apprehending pirates: £40 for commanders of pirate vessels; £20 for lieutenants, quartermasters, gunners or boatswains; £15 for other officers; and £10 for every private man. A specific bounty of £100 was placed on capturing Captain Thatch.⁵⁶⁵ Rather than notify the assembly that he had already started to organise an expedition against Blackbeard and that these rewards would provide further inducement for the men involved in the expedition, he stated that the purpose of these rewards were to encourage sloops to fit out against pirates and to persuade the inhabitants of Carolina to seize them on land.⁵⁶⁶ That the House of Burgesses accepted Spotswood’s request for these rewards during this time of political turbulence demonstrates the shared apprehension that the representatives felt towards the nearby pirate presence. Even after this approval, Spotswood did not inform the assembly of his expedition; it seems that, alongside the apparent need for secrecy, he thought there would be opposition to the bill if it was thought that he would benefit politically from this undertaking. The opposing faction might have perceived that Spotswood’s expedition against Blackbeard

⁵⁶³ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 61. Spotswood to BOT, 22 December 1718.

⁵⁶⁴ Greene, ‘Alexander Spotswood’, 35-42.

⁵⁶⁵ TNA, CO 5/1416. Governor and Council to House of Burgesses, 13 November 1718; TNA, CO 5/1416. Minutes of Virginia Council, 19 November 1718.

⁵⁶⁶ TNA, CO 5/1416. Governor and Council to House of Burgesses, 13 November 1718.

would impede their efforts to undermine his governorship if the voyage was a success. Likewise, Spotswood did not inform the governor of North Carolina of his plans to lead an expedition into his jurisdiction. Again, the reason given for this was to ensure that the sloops could surprise Blackbeard.⁵⁶⁷ It is also probable that Spotswood, like Johnson in South Carolina, was motivated by the desire to achieve demonstrable success in his current position. Like Johnson, the lieutenant governorship of Virginia was Spotswood's first appointed political post which he had obtained through the patronage of George Hamilton, the first earl of Orkney and titular governor of Virginia, who had supported Spotswood during his preceding military career. It is likely that Spotswood was motivated in this action as a means to encourage future promotion and to secure his position against the opposing faction by eradicating a potential threat to the colony during his tenure.⁵⁶⁸ Regardless, the funding of this proactive suppression campaign, that crossed colonial borders to eradicate an impending threat, was provided by the private finance of one colonial governor, and organised with support of naval captains and the inadvertent encouragement of a hostile colonial assembly.

On 17 November 1718, the sloops, manned with 55 sailors from the station ships and captained by the first lieutenant of the *Pearl*, Robert Maynard, and an officer of the *HMS Lyme*, referred to only as Mr. Hyde, sailed for Ocracoke Island in quest of Blackbeard and his crew. Brand departed the same night, travelling over land to Bath in case Blackbeard could be found there.⁵⁶⁹ On 22 November, the expedition engaged Blackbeard and his sloop at Ocracoke Island. Blackbeard and twelve of the pirates were

⁵⁶⁷ 'Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325.

⁵⁶⁸ Gwenda Morgan, 'Spotswood, Alexander (1676-1740)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁵⁶⁹ 'Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 6 February 1719; *The Weekly Journal, Or, British Gazetteer*. 25 April 1719.

killed during the conflict, alongside Hyde and eight men from the Virginian sloops. The nine remaining men of Blackbeard's crew were detained.⁵⁷⁰ Maynard later recounted that:

I should never have taken him, if I had not got him in such a Hole, whence he could not get out, for we had no Guns on Board, so that the Engagement on our Side was the more Bloody and Desperate.⁵⁷¹

Although this occurred at a time when Blackbeard was in a diminished condition having only nineteen men in his crew, it was still a key victory that put an end to the pirate presence in North Carolina.⁵⁷² The rest of Blackbeard's crew were seized, alongside 140 bags of cocoa and ten casks of sugar that were found onshore.⁵⁷³ In Bath, Brand announced to Governor Eden that he had come in quest of Blackbeard. Whilst there, he received information that some of Blackbeard's plunder had been lodged with Tobias Knight, the chief justice of the colony. This proved to be true as Brand seized twenty barrels of sugar and two bags of cotton from Knight's barn.⁵⁷⁴ Brand and the sloops returned to Virginia with their prisoners and seized plunder in January 1719; Blackbeard's head was suspended from the bowsprit.⁵⁷⁵ The two companies received approximately £300 for taking these pirates, as decreed by the act passed before their

⁵⁷⁰ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 61. Spotswood to BOT, 22 December 1718; *The Weekly Journal, Or, British Gazetteer*. 25 April 1719.

⁵⁷¹ *The Weekly Journal, Or, British Gazetteer*. 25 April 1719.

⁵⁷² *Ibid.*

⁵⁷³ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 6 February 1719.

⁵⁷⁴ *Ibid.*; 'Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, including a deposition, a remonstrance, and correspondence concerning Tobias Knight's business with Edward Teach, 27 May 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 341-349; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 14 July 1719.

⁵⁷⁵ TNA, ADM 51/672. Captain's Logs – *Pearl* (26 July 1715 to 8 December 1719), Entry 3 January 1719.

departure.⁵⁷⁶ Spotswood received letters of gratitude from Maryland and North Carolina thanking him for this undertaking.⁵⁷⁷ The masters and vessels of North Carolina wrote:

When all other hopes failed Us, you was pleased to Commiserate our Condition, and upon the same application made to you, which had without any Effect been made to some principal authority here, you generously undertook to Relieve us by sending Force sufficient to call those Monsters of Mankind to Account.⁵⁷⁸

Yet, this gratitude did not extend throughout North Carolina. Although this voyage was undertaken at the cost of the Virginian government to the supposed benefit of North Carolina, the subsequent conflict between Virginian and North Carolinian officials provides insight into the differing perceptions of piracy that persisted in the colonial theatre.

The first complaint by the North Carolinian government was that they had not been consulted about the voyage. Thomas Pollock, one of the members of North Carolina's colonial council, questioned the legitimacy of the voyage from Virginia: "I know not by what authority he could send in warlike forces into this Government without the consent of the Government".⁵⁷⁹ Spotswood answered these complaints by stating that he did not inform Eden of his plans in order to protect him from the pirates should the project fail, and because "he was there without force to defend himself, and

⁵⁷⁶ Maynard complained that his ship's company should receive the whole share as they had captured Blackbeard and his crew. This was refuted by Brand who stated that everyone who went on the voyage should receive their share. TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 26 January 1720; TNA, ADM 1/1826. Gordon to Admiralty, 8 September 1721.

⁵⁷⁷ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 72vii. Hart to Spotswood, 9 March 1719; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 72vii. Address of several Masters of Vessells & others trading to & inhabiting North Carolina to Spotswood, 1719.

⁵⁷⁸ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 72vii. Address of several Masters of Vessells & others trading to & inhabiting North Carolina to Spotswood, 1719.

⁵⁷⁹ 'Letter from Thomas Pollock to Charles Eden [Extract], 8 December 1718' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 318-320.

consequently could contribute nothing to the Success of the Design”.⁵⁸⁰ Rather than risk exposure of the plan, particularly when Eden did not have resources to assist the voyage, Spotswood restricted knowledge of the expedition to those who were explicitly involved. This had proved to be an effective tactic as Blackbeard had been unprepared for the attack. If Spotswood had disclosed the plan to others, then this information may have reached Blackbeard through complicit individuals.⁵⁸¹ Although it could be disputed that such an expedition could take place without the consent of North Carolinian officials, this was organised with the support of naval captains and commanded by members of their crew; these naval captains had full authority to voyage against pirates throughout the colonial theatre.⁵⁸² The primary source of complaint, however, was not directed at Spotswood’s authority for organising an expedition into North Carolina, but towards his right to seize goods from their territory.

Blackbeard’s goods, both those seized at Ocracock Inlet and from Knight’s barn in Bath, were condemned by the vice-admiralty court of Virginia and sold at public auction, being perishable commodities, for £2247 19s 4d. The charges for the expedition were deducted from this amount. The rest of the sale was held in case the owner of the French vessel, who the goods were seized from, applied to have the same returned. If this did not occur, Spotswood expected that the king would grant this as a reward to the naval officers and sailors who had undertaken the voyage.⁵⁸³ The argument advanced by North Carolinian officials was that this seizure was an “Invasion of the Rights of the Proprietors”.⁵⁸⁴ They sent a lawyer to the Virginian vice-admiralty

⁵⁸⁰ ‘Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719’ in Saunders (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325.

⁵⁸¹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸² TNA, ADM 2/49, 262-263. Instructions to Brand, 19 June 1717

⁵⁸³ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 72. Spotswood to BOT, 26 May 1719; ‘Alexander Spotswood to Secretary Craggs, 26 May 1719’ in Brock (ed.), *Official Letters*, 316-319.

⁵⁸⁴ ‘Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719’ in Saunders (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325.

court to question their jurisdiction over the goods, although this objection was overruled as the commodities had been piratically-seized by Blackbeard which meant that the North Carolinian government had no rights over them, regardless of where they had been seized.⁵⁸⁵ Next, the officials attempted to impeach Brand by sending depositions to the lords proprietors claiming that he had trespassed on their lands and seized goods that should have fallen under their jurisdiction. Due to these proceedings, Spotswood remitted the value of the pirate goods to London, in case Brand was forced to compensate the lords proprietors. The actions of North Carolinian officials led Spotswood to question the relationship of North Carolinian officials with Blackbeard and his crew. He alleged that all of these manoeuvres were ploys by North Carolinian officials to regain some of the losses that they had incurred by the successful suppression of Blackbeard and his crew.⁵⁸⁶ On 11 August 1719, he wrote to the BOT:

...this Conduct of theirs will be easily unriddled, when it appear that some in Chief stations there have had too much correspondence with these Pyrates, particularly one who held the Offices of Secretary, Chief Justice, one of the Council and Collector of the Customs...⁵⁸⁷

In particular, Spotswood highlighted the fact that Blackbeard had been allowed to continue with piratical goods whilst residing in North Carolina. He wrote that, even if Blackbeard's piratical goods had come from a wreck as had been claimed, they should have been secured and condemned according to the law. Yet, Blackbeard had been permitted to keep his plunder, and the North Carolinian government only made a claim

⁵⁸⁵ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 12 March 1719.

⁵⁸⁶ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 73. Spotswood to BOT, 11 August 1719.

⁵⁸⁷ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 73. Spotswood to BOT, 26 May 1719.

for them after he had been destroyed by an external force.⁵⁸⁸ The BOT supported Spotswood's endeavours both in carrying out the expedition and seizing the piratical goods; they wrote, "It would seem to us that you have done your duty in suppressing the pirates on the coast of North Carolina".⁵⁸⁹ The complaints of North Carolinian officials were simply disregarded.

By these activities, it is highly plausible that Blackbeard was supported by at least some colonists in North Carolina. In particular, the expedition uncovered evidence that suggest Blackbeard had gained the backing of the chief justice of the colony, Tobias Knight, and possibly the governor as well. The primary verification for this is the presence of Blackbeard's plunder on Knight's property alongside a letter written by Knight to Blackbeard stating:

If this finds you yet in harbour I would have you make the best of your way up as soon as possible your affairs will let you I have something more to say to you than at present I can write... I expect the Governor this night or tomorrow who I believe would be likewise glad to see you before you goe.⁵⁹⁰

Knight justified these actions by claiming that Blackbeard was a free man under the king's pardon, and that he knew nothing of Blackbeard's return to piracy.⁵⁹¹ Aside from this, there is little further unequivocal evidence to back up the assertions that North Carolinian colonists or officials supported Blackbeard. The existing evidence certainly

⁵⁸⁸ TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 72. Spotswood to BOT, 26 May 1719; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 73. Spotswood to BOT, 11 August 1719.

⁵⁸⁹ TNA, CO 5/1365, 216-221. BOT to Spotswood, 13 July 1720.

⁵⁹⁰ 'Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, including a deposition, a remonstrance, and correspondence concerning Tobias Knight's business with Edward Teach, 27 May 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 341-349.

⁵⁹¹ *Ibid.*

indicates that Knight knew of and supported Blackbeard's renewed depredations and the subsequent actions of the colony are indicative that others may also have been involved. While open sponsorship of pirates by British colonial officials and merchants in the established colonial ports had largely ended by the turn of the century, this had only taken place when colonial merchants gained access to new markets and became more closely integrated with the Atlantic economy through the development of licit trade.⁵⁹² North Carolina remained one of the poorest colonies in North America as it lacked a staple crop and had yet to develop a significant alternative source of revenue like the Middle Colonies and New England. Like those opportunistic traders who continued to transact with pirates throughout the Atlantic Commons, it is probable that Blackbeard's presence would have been embraced by those who welcomed the economic stimulation that pirate plunder could bring.⁵⁹³

The role of Governor Eden in these affairs is less certain. That Blackbeard was permitted to go on a trading voyage to St. Thomas in a sloop with little tradable cargo and then allowed to keep the plunder he returned with, without any lawful condemnation, alongside the fact that Eden and his Council acquitted Knight of being an accessory to piracy after the events, alludes to the fact that there may have been some form of collusion in these affairs.⁵⁹⁴ That no action was taken against Blackbeard by the government, particularly after he returned to North Carolina with a captured ship, could also be explained as a result of the lack of resources or revenue that Eden could utilise to contest Blackbeard. After all, Spotswood specifically stated that he had not included

⁵⁹² See Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 330-364.

⁵⁹³ Bialuschewski, 'Blackbeard off Philadelphia', 173.

⁵⁹⁴ 'Minutes of the North Carolina Governor's Council, including a deposition, a remonstrance, and correspondence concerning Tobias Knight's business with Edward Teach, 27 May 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 341-349; TNA, CO 5/1318, No. 73. Spotswood to BOT, 11 August 1719.

Eden in his plan as the colony had no effective defences to assist in the expedition.⁵⁹⁵ Furthermore, unlike in South Carolina, North Carolina had no effective ties to London merchants interested in their trade who could petition the state for naval support. Likewise, North Carolina received no resources for maritime defence from the proprietors. For these reasons, it is possible that Eden was forced to accommodate the pirates as he had no other choice. Nevertheless, it seems most plausible that it was a mixture of the two: Eden recognised the commercial opportunities that pirates could bring, and had little alternative but to overlook their endeavours due to a lack of capacity for maritime defence. Regardless of Eden's role, it is apparent by these proceedings that there were those in North Carolina who supported Blackbeard and his crew and this is further evidence that there continued to be those throughout the colonial theatre who accepted the chance to transact with pirates as a means for opportunistic economic gain.

Although this operation proved successful, it also highlights the limits of both state and colonial responses to piracy. The expedition had required coordination between colonial and naval actors due to the fact that the naval ships stationed at Virginia, despite being an effective deterrent against pirates operating in the Virginian capes, were unsuitable for subduing pirates operating in the shallower inlets of the North American coast. Out of necessity, Spotswood had to finance two sloops which could be used by the naval captains for the voyage. Likewise, this voyage relied on the agency of these naval captains, who had been instructed to ensure that Virginian trade was protected from pirates, to transfer men into these colonial vessels and order them to undertake what was essentially a pre-emptive strike to safeguard against future depredations. Even still, the success of the voyage also relied on both secrecy, to ensure

⁵⁹⁵ 'Letter from Alexander Spotswood to John Carteret, Earl Granville, 14 February 1719' in Saunders (ed.), *Colonial Records of North Carolina*, vol. 2, 324-325.

that Blackbeard remained ignorant of the plan, and luck, to encounter him in favourable conditions. Overall, this expedition can only be understood by examining it within the immediate conditions in Virginia and North Carolina which dictated how the voyage was organised and undertaken. Although naval resources were also utilised, this was predominantly a local operation funded by a colonial governor, inadvertently sponsored by a colonial assembly, and organised through the initiative of colonial and naval actors who were driven to subdue a threat to the security of their appointed colony. There was no overt metropolitan command or measure for dealing with Blackbeard in North Carolina but, instead, this relied solely on the agency of individual actors in the locality.

Conclusion

In North America, the metropolitan responses to piracy were comparable to those in the Caribbean whereas local responses varied across colonial divides. The state response to piratical attacks in North America, which centred on dispatching replacement naval resources, was restricted by the low number of naval vessels that could be spared for colonial duty. The state prioritised the maritime defence of royal colonies which fell under direct state authority rather than attempting to proactively defend the entire coastline. Indeed, there was only one additional navy ship sent to North America in the wake of the pirate presence, and this was dispatched in response to London merchants who requested state protection over the lucrative Virginian tobacco trade. Comparable to the situation in the Caribbean where Jamaica received the focus of naval vessels due to its strong metropolitan ties and importance to state revenue, Virginia received an additional vessel and the focus of all of the station ships in North America. Evidently,

the early state responses to piracy in 1717 and 1718 were heavily influenced by metropolitan mercantile groups concerned with the impact of piracy on particular colonial regions. The state appeased these groups not only due to the influence of the leading members of these lobbies but also due to the fact that the regions they represented were of specific commercial value to the state. Thus, vast stretches of the North American coastline and whole colonial vicinities were left undefended.

Regardless of priorities, the state simply did not have the available resources to defend the entirety of the North American coastline. The reality that entire coastal communities were left without protection against pirates necessitated detached local measures to deal with piracy obstructing local trade. These colonial responses were different from the Caribbean due to the existence of established proprietary and charter colonies which needed to utilise local shipping and resources to outfit reactive voyages against pirates operating in the local vicinity. Without these endeavours, the immediate coastlines of private colonies would have remained entirely unprotected with little discouragement for pirates operating nearby to move on to other hunting grounds. It was the endeavours of these colonial actors, particularly Spotswood and Johnson, who provided the funds to outfit small sloops in order to clear the nearby proximity of pirates. These proved more effective in dealing with pirates than the limited state response. It was predominantly these detached locally-funded operations that initiated the momentum against piracy that would continue from 1718 onwards. Between September and December 1718, the voyages from South Carolina and Virginia had three significant successes against pirates and, alongside Woodes Rogers' individual

undertakings in the Bahamas in the same months, brought about a turning point in the suppression of piracy.⁵⁹⁶

It is important not to place too much emphasis on the effect of these successes on Atlantic piracy in general. In North America, these were small-scale and reactive means against specific pirate targets. Although the successes were important, they only provided short-term protection for the proximities of undefended colonial shores. The vast stretches of the North American coastline, and the Atlantic Ocean as a whole, remained unprotected. More than anything, the responses in North America show the severe limits of both state and colonial ability to effectively police maritime activity beyond their immediate shores in the early eighteenth century. Even the close proximities of certain North American colonial ports were significantly encumbered by pirates operating off colonial capes and reactive small-scale voyages could only produce change after pirates had already obstructed their trade. However, these operations may have provided one stimulus behind the decline of pirate activity in the colonial theatre between 1719 and 1721 when pirates spread to the even less protected regions of the West African coast and Indian Ocean.

⁵⁹⁶ For a discussion of Woodes Rogers' undertakings in the Bahamas see Chapter Three, 112-132.

Chapter Five: Piracy and the Slave Trade, 1718-1722

“The Trade to Africa involves in it no less than the Consideration of our whole West-India-Trade in general; a Trade of such essential and allowed Concernment to the Wealth and Naval Power of Great Britain, that it would be as impertinent to take up your Time in expatiating on that Subject as in declaiming on the common Benefits of Air and Sun-shine in general.”⁵⁹⁷

Malachy Postlethwayt (1745)

In March 1722 at Cape Coast Castle, a RAC fort on the Gold Coast of Africa, 168 men were tried for piracy: seventy-seven were acquitted as there was enough evidence to suggest that they had been forced on board, fifty-two were hanged, twenty were condemned to seven years' servitude in the RAC's African mines, seventeen were transferred to Marshalsea prison in London, and two were respited for additional consideration. A further seventy-five black men were sold into slavery.⁵⁹⁸ This was Bartholomew Roberts' crew, who had committed numerous depredations in the Caribbean, Newfoundland, Brazil, and Africa.⁵⁹⁹ The defeat and death of Roberts, alongside the capture of his crew, is often related as one of the most significant events in the suppression of piracy in the early eighteenth century. It was certainly the most substantial naval victory over pirates during these years, which was emphasised by the knighthood granted to the captain of the operation, Chaloner Ogle; the first captain to

⁵⁹⁷ Malachy Postlethwayt, *The African Trade, the Great Pillar and Support of the British Plantation Trade in America* (London, 1745), 2.

⁵⁹⁸ TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 26 July 1722; HCA 1/99/3. Proceedings of the Court held on the Coast of Africa at Cabo Corso Castle, 1722.

⁵⁹⁹ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority: economic aspects of maritime depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716-1726', *Global Crime*, 9:1 (2008), 61-62.

receive a title for triumph over pirates.⁶⁰⁰ Both Bialuschewski and Rediker have acknowledged the role of slave traders in shaping a state response to piracy on the African coast. However, although Rediker states that it was the pirates' impact on slave-trading capital that led to their extermination in the early eighteenth century, he does not provide much analysis of the lobbying of slave-trading interest groups and the subsequent state response. Instead, it simply appears that influential merchants lobbied and the state responded.⁶⁰¹ Yet, an examination of the nuances behind this process suggests that this was a much more complex situation in which two conflicting groups, the separate traders and the RAC, lobbied for naval protection over the specific regions of the African coast where their efforts were focused.⁶⁰² Scrutinising the motivations and influence of these two groups provides a greater understanding behind the process of mercantile lobbying in the early eighteenth century. Likewise, the gradual manner by which the African coast became better protected needs to be understood within the immediate contexts of 1719 and 1720 when the Royal Navy was already overstretched during two European wars as this provides greater clarity of the importance of the slave trade to the eighteenth-century state. Before this point, and despite its economic importance, the slave trade received no state-provided naval protection in peacetime. It was this lack of maritime defence that provided encouragement to pirates operating on the coast. By not analysing these developments, the historiography provides little consideration of what drove the state response and, consequently, cannot provide the specific factors that led to Ogle's success.

This chapter focuses primarily on the first two naval dispatches to the African coast which were organised between 1719 and 1721 to outline the progression through

⁶⁰⁰ Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), 143.

⁶⁰¹ See Arne Bialuschewski, 'Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 178; Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 136-145.

⁶⁰² See pages 189-191 for a description of these two groups.

which these ships were organised, dispatched, and operated. Although it was the second dispatch that achieved success against pirates, it is necessary to examine the problems that confronted the first dispatch to understand the success of the second. In order to do so, this chapter is separated into five sections. First, the motivations for pirates' movement from the colonial theatre to the Western African coast and the impact of piracy in African localities is outlined. Second, the role of the separate traders in shaping the first naval dispatch to the African coast is examined to demonstrate the influence and motivations of this group. Third, the reasons why the RAC did not initially lobby for naval support due to the benefits that Company trade received by the pirates' presence is discussed, before moving on to consider their motivations and influence in shaping the second naval dispatch in 1720. Fourth, state considerations of the slave trade and their ability to offer protection over this trade is analysed within the context of the ongoing European wars in 1719 and 1720. Fifth, the influence of each of these considerations, alongside the realities of African service, on naval operations is assessed to review how several factors shaped Ogle's success in 1722. Overall, by considering the events that occurred in both metropolitan and peripheral locales, this chapter will demonstrate how each of these elements shaped the subsequent ability of the British state to better protect and oversee African maritime traffic in the early eighteenth century.

Piracy on the African Coast

In 1718, Robert Plunkett, the RAC's chief merchant at Sierra Leone stated, "That place [Sierra Leone] is like to become a Nest for such People."⁶⁰³ Plunkett made this declaration in response to the first reported piracy on the west coast of Africa in this period – an attack on the RAC's ship *Experiment* at the mouth of Sierra Leone River in June 1718.⁶⁰⁴ Although there were further depredations in 1718, a surge in reports of piratical activity on the African coast did not occur until 1719 when Howell Davies, Thomas Cocklyn and Oliver La Buse left their previous cruising grounds in the Caribbean and North America to prey on slaving vessels operating on Africa's west coast.⁶⁰⁵

The cause of pirates departing the American theatre for the African coast seem to have been partly due to Woodes Rogers' successful dislodging of the pirate base in the Bahamas⁶⁰⁶ and the increased attempts to suppress piracy in North America.⁶⁰⁷ Primarily, though, the pirates were driven by the prospect of reaching more profitable cruising grounds. Aside from the existence of European forts along the Gold Coast and in a few other locales, the majority of the African coastline and, therefore, European shipping travelling along that coastline lay undefended and unprotected.⁶⁰⁸ Naval vessels were not assigned to the African coast.⁶⁰⁹ Consequently, whilst the increased naval and

⁶⁰³ TNA, T 70/6, 78-79. Plunkett to RAC, 16 June 1718; TNA, ADM, 1/3815. List of the Officers belonging to the RAC who constitute into the Council for their Affairs at each of their settlements on the Coast of Africa.

⁶⁰⁴ TNA, T 70/6, 78-79. Plunkett to RAC, 16 June 1718; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 4 February 1719.

⁶⁰⁵ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 176-177.

⁶⁰⁶ See Chapter Three, 112-132.

⁶⁰⁷ See Chapter Four, 143-177. There was also a Spanish assault on Palmar de Ays in the latter half of 1718 which captured five vessels, 98 slaves, and 86 British mariners. The British mariners were imprisoned, taken to Havana, and used as forced labourers. The Spanish secured Palmar de Ays with 140 men and four guardships in order to defend against future wreckers and halt any possibility of a permanent British settlement in the region. The strengthened Spanish presence at the wreck sites may have provided further encouragement for marauders to seek wealth elsewhere. AGI, Santo Domingo 338. Consejo de Indias, 18 de enero de 1719; Levi Marrero, *Cuba, Economía y Sociedad. Volume 6: Del Monopolio Hacia la Libertad Comercial (1701-1763) parte I* (Madrid, 1978), 79.

⁶⁰⁸ Kenneth Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire: From Africa to America* (Oxford, 2008), 62

⁶⁰⁹ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

colonial operations against piracy may have encouraged pirates' decision to voyage across the Atlantic, as important was the fact that the vast unprotected African coast offered access to vulnerable prizes. Despite Plunkett's apprehension of the potential of Sierra Leone becoming a pirate nest, the primary motivation for the pirates' undertaking to the African coast was not to establish a base there but to seize poorly-defended slaving vessels that could be outfitted for an expedition to Brazil or the Indian Ocean.⁶¹⁰

This was outlined in a memorial to the Admiralty in 1720:

It hath been found by fatal Experience That the pirates when they are pursued or forsake the West Indies, do not faile to come to the Coast of Africa, in order to supply themselves with good sailing ships well furnished with Ammunition, provisions, & stores of all kinds, fitt for long Voyages.⁶¹¹

Those pirates who voyaged to Africa cruised down the African coast seeking large, well-provisioned ships that they could utilise to prey on vessels carrying rich cargoes from Brazil and the Indian Ocean. Likewise, Africa proved a successful recruiting ground for pirates; when ships were captured, a number of the ships' crew would often sign on with the pirates in order to escape the harsh conditions of slaving vessels.⁶¹² Francis Willis, captain of the *Royal Anne Galley*, described slaving crews as "being ripe for piracy" although he could not distinguish whether this was occasioned "by the Masters ill usage or their natural inclinations".⁶¹³ Thus, it is clear that pirates were not motivated by a desire to capture slave cargoes but sought ships, recruits and provisions for

⁶¹⁰ Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 176-177; Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 138.

⁶¹¹ TNA, ADM 1/2282. Pearse to Admiralty, 3 June 1718; TNA, ADM 1/3810. The Memoriall of the Merchants of London Trading to Africa humbly offered to the Rt Honble the Lords Commissioners For Executing the Office of Lord High Admirall of Great Brittain &c, 29 July 1720.

⁶¹² Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 176-177; Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 138.

⁶¹³ TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, 21 October 1720.

expeditions to richer cruising grounds.⁶¹⁴ In this way, Africa was a necessary sojourn rather than a primary destination for pirates.

Nevertheless, Plunkett was correct in his estimation that Sierra Leone could have become a piratical base. When pirates first arrived in force in 1719, they found active encouragement among the independent traders who had established themselves along the river. Plunkett reported that there were 40 private traders settled between Sierra Leone River and Rio Nuñez.⁶¹⁵ John Atkins, surgeon on board the *Swallow*, described these traders:

The private Traders are about 30 in number, settled on the Starboard side of the River: loose privateering Blades, that if they cannot trade fairly with the Natives, will rob; but then don't do it so much in pursuance of that trading Advice, (Amass Riches, my Son) as to put themselves in a Capacity of living well, and treating their Friends, being always well pleased if they can keep their Stock at Par, and with their Profits purchase from time to time, Strong-beer, Wine, Cyder, and such Necessaries, of Bristol ships, that more frequently than others put in there.⁶¹⁶

There are accounts that these independent traders transacted with pirates after they arrived in Sierra Leone in 1719. It was reported that, shortly after Davies, Cocklyn and La Buse had taken at least eleven ships in Sierra Leone River, private traders sent their canoes and boats over to the pirates' ships and returned "loaden with goods & Liquors

⁶¹⁴ Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 176-177; Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 138.

⁶¹⁵ TNA, T 70/6, 99-100. Plunkett and Callow to RAC, 8 June 1719.

⁶¹⁶ John Atkins, *A Voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West Indies; In His Majesty's Ship, the Swallow and Weymouth* (1735), 40.

&c’’.⁶¹⁷ Plunkett again wrote of his apprehensions that this would encourage pirates to establish a base there:

That ye pirates have meet w[i]th such reception there that it is become a place of Rende[z]vous for them there being so many Rascalls on shore that assist them w[i]th Boats & Cannoes to bring their goods on shore and likewise Encourage them in all Manner of Villainy.⁶¹⁸

This account was corroborated by William Snelgrave, captain of a slaving vessel taken by the pirates at Sierra Leone, in 1719. He stated that a great amount of his goods were given to “ye white people & blacks onshore”.⁶¹⁹ It was only with the help of one of the private traders, Henry Glynn, that he was able to recover some of his goods from those traders.⁶²⁰ The encouragement that pirates received from private traders in Sierra Leone would have further motivated their presence on the African coast. Pirates needed access to markets to trade their illicit goods for necessary provisions in order to continue their voyage against African shipping and to reach their desired locations. Although there is no surviving evidence, it is likely that pirates found equal encouragement from other independent European and African traders throughout the African coast.⁶²¹ This was similar to the encouragement of those colonial traders who transacted with pirates in the neglected settlements and remote regions of the colonial theatre. For these traders,

⁶¹⁷ TNA, T 70/6, 98. Plunkett to RAC, 16 April 1719.

⁶¹⁸ TNA, T 70/6, 97-98. [Plunkett] to RAC, 16 April 1719.

⁶¹⁹ BOE, 10A61/1. Snelgrave to Morice, 30 April 1719.

⁶²⁰ Plunkett wrote that Glynn and his nephew were the only private traders who did not support the pirates there. Glynn was later made chief merchant of the RAC at Gambia. T 70/6, 98. Plunkett to RAC, 16 April 1719; BOE, 10A61/1. Snelgrave to Morice, 1 August 1719.

⁶²¹ Davies appears to have transacted with the Portuguese at the island of Príncipe and this trade was supported by the Portuguese governor. NRS, AC16/1, 384-391. Examination of Murray, [1720]; NRS, AC16/1, 381-384. Information of Cheap [1720]; NRAS, 1209/116. Confession of Hughs, 18 April 1720; William Snelgrave, *A New Account of Some Parts of Guinea and the Slave-Trade* (London, 1734), 280-284.

piracy was not a great hindrance to commerce, but provided opportunity for better rates as pirates offloaded seized goods that they did not deem valuable in exchange for provisions and other supplies.⁶²² There was no oversight along the African coast by the British state administration and, for the most part, this was an invisible coastline of the Atlantic Commons where the general activities of traders went unrecorded. Therefore, a piratical base on the African coast was not unfeasible; private traders had already established themselves in the rivers of Africa and encouraged the piratical presence there. Instead of establishing their own base, the pirates utilised local traders to advance their campaigns to reach Brazil and the Indian Ocean in larger, better equipped vessels.

Although a base was not established in Africa, the pirates' impact on the slave trade was significant. In October 1719, Hugh Hall, a Barbados merchant, wrote "Negroes happen to be Dear now, from [th]e Vast number the Pirates have taken upon [th]e Coast of Guinea that were Intended for Our Island."⁶²³ There are existing accounts to signify that at least 81 vessels were either taken or plundered by pirates in Africa between 1718 and 1722 (See Appendix 5: Table 5.1). These were British, French, Dutch and Portuguese ships. Of those reported, 54 were of British origin although it is probable that the number of actual piracies across all nations was much larger than this but the records have not survived (See Appendix 5: Table 5.2). When looking at the accounts, at least 48 of these attacks occurred in 1719 while 23 occurred in 1721 and early 1722. These surges are explained by the presence of Davies, Cocklyn, La Buse and Edward England on the African coast in 1719 before they departed to other locations, and Bartholomew Roberts' presence in 1721 and early 1722 before his capture. There were only six piracies reported in 1720 and these were presumably committed by the

⁶²² Due to the nature of these trades, it is unlikely that evidence of the volume of illicit trading with local African or private European traders will ever be uncovered. See Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority', 52-65; Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness* (Boston, 2014), 53.

⁶²³ NYPL, MssCol 1292, 196-197. Hall to Blair, 15 October 1719.

remnants of Davies, Cocklyn, La Buse, and England's crews. Again, these surges signify that there was no continued pirate presence in Africa in this period but, when pirates did cruise off the African coast, they provided a serious threat to the slave trade. The dispatching and success of Ogle's expedition in 1722 is only explained by understanding the burden of piracy on the slave trade and the subsequent reaction of the separate traders, RAC and the state.

The Role of the Separate Traders to Africa

In February 1719, the Board of Admiralty reported that "Mr Morris and Mr Harris came to the office and desired that Two ships of Warr might be appointed to Cruize on the Coast of Africa, to protect their Trade from Pyrates."⁶²⁴ The persons referred to were Humphrey Morice and Richard Harris, two of the foremost slave traders of the period who had been leading figures in the campaign to remove the RAC's monopoly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. In 1660, Charles II had granted a one-thousand-year monopoly of English trade to Africa to the Company of Royal Adventurers Trading Into Africa which was then transferred to the RAC in 1672. From the mid-1670s onwards, there were complaints from American colonists and English merchants about the RAC's monopoly over African trade. The politicisation of the slave trade, which climaxed in 1698 with Parliament's termination of the RAC's monopoly, resulted in African trade being opened to all merchants in the British Empire on the payment of a 10 percent duty on exports to the RAC. The RAC suffered a further loss in 1712 when the Ten Per Cent Act expired, allowing all merchants of the British Empire to trade on the African coast without any form of compensation for the RAC.

⁶²⁴ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 4 February 1719.

The campaign that deregulated the slave trade was mounted by a group known as the “separate traders to Africa”, a collective of merchants who had actively interloped in the trade in the 1680s and 1690s.⁶²⁵ The separate traders lobbied Parliament, the BOT and utilised printed pamphlets to develop both a public and political case for their opposition to the RAC’s monopoly. With the active participation of separate traders, the number of enslaved Africans transported to the Caribbean and North America increased dramatically from the 1690s onwards (See Appendix 5: Table 5.5). This interest group, whose political influence was confirmed in 1698 and again in 1712, dominated the slave trade from 1712 onwards; the RAC would never recover its supremacy.⁶²⁶ After 1712, Morice and Harris continued to utilise their standing to uphold their economic interests and those of their commercial allies.

The primary cohort of the separate traders were concentrated in London which remained the hub of slave trade activity until the 1730s. This predominance in London allowed separate traders to remain in close proximity to and assimilate with the political bodies that influenced their trade. Indeed, Morice became a member of Parliament in 1713 and director of the Bank of England in 1716. Furthermore, the separate traders had utilised the various Atlantic interests in London, particularly the tobacco lobby, for auxiliary support during their campaigns against the RAC. Whilst each mercantile lobby were generally organised on a regional or trade-by-trade basis, they would take collective action when their interests aligned. These intercolonial alliances created a collective of Atlantic merchants, concentrated in London although often uniting with mercantile groups from other cities, who could be encouraged to join the political lobbying of

⁶²⁵ David Richardson, ‘The British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1660-1807’ in P. J. Marshall, Alaine Low, and Wm. Roger Louis (eds.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1998), 444-445; William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom’s Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill, 2013), 11-44.

⁶²⁶ Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire*, 61-62; Pettigrew, *Freedom’s Debt*, 154-157.

other Atlantic factions when an issue was of mutual concern.⁶²⁷ Moreover, a number of separate traders were triangular traders who held joint interest in protecting the multiple Atlantic trades that they were concerned in.⁶²⁸ As prominent leaders within this transatlantic trading community, Morice and Harris, who both held significant interests in African and Caribbean trade, were frequently requested by various Atlantic mercantile groups to be their representatives before the BOT and Admiralty.⁶²⁹ Both Harris and Morice were involved in earlier efforts to encourage state responses to the growing piratical presence in the Caribbean. Both represented the threat of Bahamas occupation to the King⁶³⁰, and Morice seems to have been at the head of the Jamaican merchants who petitioned the Admiralty to ensure further naval protection for Jamaican trade in 1718.⁶³¹ When news of the pirates' presence on the African coast reached London, it was Morice and Harris who initially spearheaded the campaign to protect the slave trade from piratical depredations.

Morice and Harris represented their apprehensions of the impact of piracy on the slave trade to the Admiralty in February and September 1719.⁶³² Between those months, the pirates' presence in Africa proved to be a considerable threat to the separate traders' commerce. In April, Morice's ships the *Bird Gally* and *Queen Elizabeth* were both plundered in Sierra Leone; the *Queen Elizabeth* was little impaired but the *Bird Gally* was taken and fitted out as a pirate. From April to September, Morice compiled an

⁶²⁷ Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001), 130-134; Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*, 81; James A. Rawley, *London, Metropolis of the Slave Trade* (Columbia, 2003), 42.

⁶²⁸ Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*, 81

⁶²⁹ Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 154-5; Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*, 81, 157-158; Rawley, *Metropolis of the Slave Trade*, 56, 76-81; Richardson, 'British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade', 446.

⁶³⁰ See Chapter Three, 107-109.

⁶³¹ This petition actually obstructed the efforts to suppress piracy in the West Indies. See Chapter Three, 113-117; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 30 July 1718; Rawley, *Metropolis of the Slave Trade*, 77.

⁶³² TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 4 February 1719; TNA, ADM 3/32, Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 18 September 1719.

account of all ships that Cocklin, Davies, La Buse and England captured, plundered or destroyed.⁶³³ In that time, another of Morice's ships, the *Heroine*, was captured alongside two of Harris' ships, the *Princess Gally* and *Leopard*.⁶³⁴ In September, Morice and Harris delivered a list of thirty-three ships taken between April and September 1719 to the Admiralty and the Lords Justices, who exercised royal authority whilst George I was absent from Britain, requesting that ships of war be sent to the Coast of Africa to secure the trade there.⁶³⁵ After receiving this petition, the Lord Justices wrote to the Admiralty to request a proposal for preventing any further depredations on the separate traders' ships. The Admiralty recommended the dispatch of two fifth-rate men-of-war with 40 guns, the *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn*, to Africa to free the coast from pirates which was approved by the Lords Justices.⁶³⁶ The role of separate traders in coordinating this dispatch is further evidenced by the fact that Morice and Harris were asked to propose what instructions should be transmitted to the two ships that would best secure their trade from pirates.⁶³⁷ Consequently, alongside their central role in lobbying for naval support, these representatives were also the experts in their respective spheres of overseas commerce. It was they who had collected the most knowledge about where pirates were primarily operating and, as such, they were relied upon to convey the specific instructions for naval vessels that would best suit the defence of their trade.⁶³⁸ Importantly, the subsequent instructions did not include any consideration of RAC factories or agents at Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast,

⁶³³ This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16); BOE, 10A61/1. Snelgrave to Morice, 30 April 1719; BOE, 10A61/3. An acct of shippes taken by Pirates at Sierraleone on the Coast of Africa, in April 1719;

⁶³⁴ This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16); BOE, 10A61/3. An acct of shippes taken by Pirates at Sierraleone on the Coast of Africa, in April 1719.

⁶³⁵ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 18 September 1719, 24 September 1719.

⁶³⁶ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 24 September 1719, 30 September 1719, 2 October 1719.

⁶³⁷ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 6 October 1719.

⁶³⁸ Gauci, *Politics of Trade*, 134.

Whydah or Cabenda. The naval ships were ordered to touch at Sierra Leone and then to cruise individually between Cape Mount and Cape Palmas, or Cape Palmas and Cape Three Points, with the latter ship to take particular care of trading vessels at Whydah.⁶³⁹ It was specifically between those points where there was no RAC presence that the naval forces were to focus their efforts, only touching at Sierra Leone to inform themselves of the pirates' activities and to protect the trading ships that voyaged for Whydah.⁶⁴⁰ Therefore, it was entirely the separate traders who drove the mobilisation of naval vessels to the African coast in 1719. After their first representation, Morice made certain to have a detailed account of the costs of uninterrupted piracy on the African coast. As both an influential political figure and a representative of the separate traders, he successfully lobbied the Lords Justices to obtain and dictate the naval presence on the African coast.⁶⁴¹

It is not surprising that the separate traders were the first to prompt a naval response to piracy on the African coast in 1719. It was they who suffered most by the presence of pirates in Africa. Of the reported 38 British ships taken or plundered by pirates in 1719, only 4 were registered as RAC or SSC ships. The other 34 were a mix of independent traders from London, Bristol, Barbados and other outports.⁶⁴² Again, this is not surprising given that out of 129 ships that sailed from British and British-colonial ports for Africa in 1718 and 1719, only 15 were registered as RAC or SSC ships.⁶⁴³ Moreover, the primary locations that the pirates preyed on were those areas where there was no RAC or other European forts. These were either the stretches of coast between Gambia and the Gold Coast or the African-controlled trading zones where separate

⁶³⁹ TNA, ADM 2/50, 154-157. Instructions to Willis, 20 November 1719.

⁶⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴¹ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 24 September 1719.

⁶⁴² The number of reported captured or plundered vessels from each location was as follows: London (15), Unknown (7), Bristol (6), Barbados (4), Cork (1), Glasgow (1). See Appendix 5: Table 5.4.

⁶⁴³ This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16).

traders frequented, namely the Bight of Benin and the Bight of Biafra.⁶⁴⁴ The volume of independent trading voyages, alongside the locations that they would voyage to trade, meant that separate traders were more susceptible to pirate encounters than the few RAC ships that voyaged in the late 1710s. The separate traders utilised their influence, as the foremost suppliers of slave labour to the Americas, and experience they gained by successfully politicising and deregulating the slave trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, to direct the state's naval policy in Africa.

In 1720, with the end of the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720), the separate traders presented another petition to the Admiralty outlining reservations that vessels commissioned in Jamaica to target Spanish shipping during the war would soon turn to piracy and voyage to Africa:

fresh Bodys of pirates will from hence arrive [in Africa], & again infest the said Coast, and do as much Mischiefe, as the Others did the last year, unless prevented by the Continuance of the shippes of Warr upon the Coast...⁶⁴⁵

They requested that ships be dispatched to Africa to replace the soon-returning *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn*. This petition was only part of, and not exclusively, the motivation for deploying Chaloner Ogle with the *HMS Swallow* and *HMS Weymouth* to Africa.⁶⁴⁶ In response to metropolitan developments that provided revitalisation of the RAC's prosperity, and in reaction to the continued threat of piracy and the predisposition of the first naval dispatch to favour the separate traders' ships, the RAC

⁶⁴⁴ Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire*, 62. See also Appendix 5: Table 5.6.

⁶⁴⁵ ADM 1/3810. The Memoriall of the Merchants of London Trading to Africa humbly offered to the Rt Honble the Lords Commissioners for Executing the Office of Lord High Admirall of Great Brittain &c, 29 July 1720.

⁶⁴⁶ ADM 2/50, 290-293. Instructions to Ogle, 24 November 1720.

was motivated to lobby the state into providing a naval force that would support their reinvigorated trade.

The Role of the Royal African Company

After the complete deregulation of the slave trade in 1712, the RAC continued to operate by dispatching trading voyages and maintaining forts and settlements in Africa. In 1713 and 1714, an agreement between the RAC and SSC in which the RAC would supply slaves to the SSC, which would then be sold to the Spanish colonial markets, provided fresh motivation for the RAC to carry on trading. However, from 1715 onwards, the SSC organised its own slave trading operations which meant that the RAC gained little from this association.⁶⁴⁷ In the years 1715-1719, the RAC's trade continued to decline with only three ships registered to the RAC departing London: 2 in 1718 and 1 in 1719.⁶⁴⁸ The diminishing state of the RAC after 1715 only partly explains why they did not immediately lobby for naval protection against piracy in 1719.

The RAC's apparent idleness concerning the first surge of piracy is not explained by a lack of depredations. The RAC's ships, forts, and factories were all obstructed by the presence of pirates on the African coast. In 1719, three company vessels, the *Sarah Gally*, *Dispatch* and long boat *Useful*, were plundered by pirates. Moreover, when Cocklin, Davies and La Buse arrived in Sierra Leone in April 1719, they burned the RAC's factory on Bense Island. Before this, they had already burned the RAC's factory and destroyed their fort at Gambia.⁶⁴⁹ Still, the loss of the forts and factories at Gambia and Sierra Leone, although impeding RAC agents there, was not a

⁶⁴⁷ K. G. Davies, *The Royal African Company* (London, 1960), 151-152, 344; Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*, 154.

⁶⁴⁸ This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16).

⁶⁴⁹ TNA, T 70/6, 98. Plunkett to RAC, 16 April 1719; TNA, T 70/6, 97-98. [Plunkett] to RAC, 16 April 1719; TNA, T 70/19, f. 165. Plunkett to RAC, 30 April 1719.

huge loss for the RAC in general as trade at Gambia and Sierra Leone had never been substantial (See Appendix 5: Table 5.6).⁶⁵⁰ The fort at Gambia had already fallen into disarray from a lack of maintenance and would have needed restoration regardless of the actions of the pirates.⁶⁵¹ Likewise, these attacks did not end the RAC presence in these locations as their agents continued to reside and operate in Gambia and Sierra Leone.⁶⁵² Yet, these attacks did provide motivation for the RAC to lobby for protection over their already dwindling trade. The fact that they did not initially pursue this is explained by the considerable advantage that the RAC gained in Cape Coast Castle, the main locale of RAC presence in Africa, from the pirates' activities in 1719.

Situated on the Gold Coast, the principal centre of European residence in Africa, Cape Coast Castle was the headquarters and hub of RAC trade in Africa.⁶⁵³ There were a number of European forts on this coastal stretch and it appears that the pirates intentionally avoided close proximity with this coast on their way to Whydah and West-Central Africa.⁶⁵⁴ As the centre of RAC trade, Cape Coast Castle remained a formidable fort in this period.⁶⁵⁵ It was in Cape Coast Castle, and the Gold Coast in general, that the RAC gained advantage from the presence of pirates. James Phipps, the Captain-General of the RAC stationed at Cape Coast Castle, outlined this advantage in December 1719:

⁶⁵⁰ Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire*, 60.

⁶⁵¹ *Journal of the House of Commons, Volume 16* (London, 1803), 318.

⁶⁵² ADM 1/3815. List of the Officers belonging to the RAC who constitute into the Council for their Affairs at each of their settlements on the Coast of Africa.

⁶⁵³ Davies, *Royal African Company*, 224.

⁶⁵⁴ BOE, 10A61/2. Dagge to Morice, 6 February 1720; TNA, T 70/7, 31-32. Phipps, Dodson and Boye to RAC; BOE, 10A61/2. Snelgrave to Morice, 6 April 1722; TNA, HCA 1/55. Examination of Matthews, 12 October 1722.

⁶⁵⁵ In 1710 Cape Coast Castle was described as consisting of out-works, platforms, and bastions, with brick walls fourteen feet thick, and 74 great guns alongside a number of small arms. Davies, *Royal African Company*, 241; *Journal of the House of Commons, Volume 16*, 317.

But as there has been very few shipping for this part of the Coast & those gladly complying to deal with us for their better security against their dreaded Enemys (the Pyrates) We have had the opportunity of late to trade without Rivals which has been of no small advantage to your honours.⁶⁵⁶

Trading vessels were driven to trade for slaves on the Gold Coast due to the threat of pirates in the other locations of the West African coast. Captains of private trading vessels utilised the defences of Cape Coast Castle to protect their vessels from pirates. For example, Captain Lawrence Prince of the *Whidah*, a trading vessel registered to Humphry Morice, arrived in Cape Coast after fleeing from Edward England's ship; England had been awaiting the *Whidah* after learning of its impending arrival in letters seized on board the *Peterborough*, a separate traders' ship from Bristol.⁶⁵⁷ Upon arrival in Cape Coast, Phipps informed Prince of the hazards of his design to trade at Whydah and stated that he could not insure a ship headed for that coast. Instead, Phipps convinced Prince to trade for slaves procured by the RAC and detained at Cape Coast.⁶⁵⁸ Prince was assured of his decision when England and his crew attempted to attack Cape Coast Castle shortly after his arrival. England sent a fire ship into the harbour, intending to capture those ships that attempted to escape. This proved unsuccessful as the fire ship veered away from the anchored ships and England was forced to flee after coming under fire from the Company fort.⁶⁵⁹ This was the first and only attempted attack on Cape Coast by pirates. Prince was protected and obtained a cargo of slaves. Phipps wrote to Morice stating:

⁶⁵⁶ TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 130-134. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 5 December 1719.

⁶⁵⁷ BOE, 10A61/2. Prince to Morice, 1719.

⁶⁵⁸ BOE, 10A61/2. Phipps to Morice, 19 October 1720.

⁶⁵⁹ BOE, 10A61/2. Phipps to Morice, 5 December 1719.

Capt Prince, who not without good reason, hugged himself in the agreement made with me, and I hope the success you will meet thereby, will encourage you whilst I stay on the Coast, to consign your Vessells to me.⁶⁶⁰

Phipps also prevailed with the other ships protected from this attack to trade at Cape Coast; those who would not trade their full cargo were charged a protection fee of ten percent of their cargo. Phipps proposed that these terms would be insisted upon for all ships that arrived under apprehension of pirates and that were protected at Cape Coast.⁶⁶¹ In fact, the RAC's trade on the Gold Coast benefitted significantly from the pirate presence. In 1719 and 1720, the estimated number of slaves embarked on the Gold Coast by British ships witnessed a substantial increase while the figures at Sierra Leone, the Bight of Benin and West Central Africa dropped considerably (See Appendix 5: Table 5.6).⁶⁶² These variations suggest that there was a stark rise in trade on the Gold Coast in 1719 and 1720; piracy was undoubtedly an important factor in this. For a brief period, then, the pirates' presence on the West African coast encouraged separate traders to trade on the Gold Coast rather than voyage to regions where there was no protection from pirates.

The necessity of maintaining forts in Africa had been one of the primary arguments that the RAC had utilised to try and retain their monopoly in the late seventeenth century. While the separate traders argued that forts were unnecessary, the RAC argued that it was necessary to manage the slave trade from forts as this enabled

⁶⁶⁰ BOE, 10A61/2. Phipps to Morice, 19 October 1720.

⁶⁶¹ There were no further attempts on Cape Coast by pirates so this appears to be the only occurrence where protection money was extorted from independent traders for their protection. TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 101-113. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 17 October 1719; TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 117-129. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 30 November 1719; TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 135-140. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 12 January 1720.

⁶⁶² It is important to note that the presence of pirates would not be the only reason for these variations. These would also be shaped on a regional basis by the number of slaves available, which was dictated by local conditions. A further explanation is the increase in RAC ships trading on the coast that year.

bartering with African slave merchants all year round, rather than being dictated by the specific conditions encountered during a short voyage on the coast, whilst also offering defence against British enemies and pirates. Even when the RAC's monopoly ended, Parliament continued to maintain that the African forts needed to be preserved and were necessary for maintaining the slave trade. The Ten Per Cent Act (1698) was introduced to ensure that the separate traders, now legally permitted to trade on the African coast, contributed to the RAC's preservation of forts in Africa. One of the primary reasons for the RAC's failure to defend their monopoly against separate traders was the considerable financial burden of these forts. The interlopers, unburdened by this cost, were able to carry on a ship-based trade that proved more effective as they were able to actively sail between locations to find trade and procure slaves more effectively; the success of fort-trade was dictated by the localities in which they were settled. After the expiration of the Ten Per Cent Act in 1712, the RAC was faced with the reality of maintaining costly forts on the African coast without a monopoly on African trade nor a contribution from the separate traders who dominated the trade.⁶⁶³ The fact that pirates were able to easily destroy the fort at Gambia shows how far some of the RAC's forts had declined by this time. Before pirates destroyed the forts at Gambia and Sierra Leone, the RAC continued to maintain forts in Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Whydah, alongside at least two forts on the Gold Coast at Accra and Cape Coast.⁶⁶⁴ Success protecting shipping from pirates on the Gold Coast provided the RAC with further justification of the importance of their forts on the African coast.⁶⁶⁵ In this way, the RAC was able to use their "public enemies" - the pirates - to gain advantage

⁶⁶³ Davies, *Royal African Company*, 245-262; Morgan, *Slavery and the British Empire*, 57-61; Richardson, 'British Empire and the Atlantic Slave Trade', 445.

⁶⁶⁴ ADM 1/3815. List of the Officers belonging to the RAC who constitute into the Council for their Affairs at each of their settlements on the Coast of Africa; Davies, *Royal African Company*, 245-246.

⁶⁶⁵ TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 117-129. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 30 November 1719.

over their “private enemies” - the separate traders.⁶⁶⁶ This is evidenced by the fact that Plunkett’s complaints at Sierra Leone did not focus on the pirates themselves but on the local British traders who transacted with pirates.⁶⁶⁷ Their prime concern was that the traders would “spoyl ye whole Trade having so many goods given them by the pyrates”.⁶⁶⁸ Again, Company agents in Africa attempted to use the pirates’ presence to gain advantage over their primary threat: independent traders.⁶⁶⁹ Aside from the attacks in Gambia and Sierra Leone, the RAC’s trade appeared to benefit as much from the pirates’ presence as it suffered. This was a temporary consequence to the initial incursions of pirates in 1719 and there are no accounts that the RAC considered encouraging pirates. That they did not move so rapidly to lobby for naval defence is explained by both the declining state of RAC trade as well as the commercial opportunities that arose on the Gold Coast. For a brief period, it appeared that the RAC could monopolise the British slave trade at Cape Coast Castle and reinstate the 10 percent charge for their forts under the guise of a protection levy. For this reason, the RAC’s Captain General and agents on the Gold Coast had no motivation to request that their metropolitan superiors lobby for naval defence as their specific locale was benefitting from this presence. This changed in 1720 when the RAC complained and implored for a naval dispatch that defended their own interests.

Shortly after the *Royal Ann Galley* and *Lynn* arrived in Africa in 1720, Robert Plunkett complained that Sierra Leone had been left unprotected by them. The ships

⁶⁶⁶ TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 90-99. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 20 June 1719.

⁶⁶⁷ TNA, T 70/6, 78-79. Plunkett to RAC, 16 June 1718; TNA, T 70/6, 97-98. [Plunkett] to RAC, 16 April 1719; TNA, T 70/6, 98. Plunkett to RAC, 16 April 1719.

⁶⁶⁸ TNA, T 70/6, 97-98. [Plunkett] to RAC, 16 April 1719.

⁶⁶⁹ The RAC attempted to utilise this information to remove the local traders from Sierra Leone but found that it was impossible as long as the slave trade remained unrestricted. TNA, T 70/53, 128-133. Court of Assistants of the RAC to Plunkett, 31 October 1721; TNA, T 70/46, 105. Lynn to Peters, 29 November 1721; TNA, T 70/46, 11. Lynn to Temple, 28 December 1721. It is possible that these considerations encouraged later legislation, see Chapter Seven, 273-274.

spent only 10 days in Sierra Leone before continuing to their designated locations.⁶⁷⁰ The vessels were acting as they were instructed by the separate traders. Plunkett indicated the role of the separate traders in these proceedings when he informed the RAC that the crew of the men-of-war told him that their stations were appointed at the request of Morice.⁶⁷¹ The RAC replied:

We are sorry to find the Men of Warr had so little regard to your Requests... that they should so much Neglect the security of the River, where so many ships touch in their way down the Coast, We hope that those which now come to releive them; will have stricter Orders to protect the Compa[ny's] Trade, and Assist their Officers as Occasion may require.⁶⁷²

The RAC began petitioning the Lords Justices and Lords of the Admiralty to dispatch additional men-of-war to cruise on the African coast in June 1720.⁶⁷³ They claimed that the pirates had grown strong in those parts, that they were “dayly increasing” and as the coast was “extensive”, they recognised that an additional number of ships were required “to protect this valuable Branch of the British Trade”.⁶⁷⁴ These petitions coincided with a regeneration of the RAC’s capital under the investment of James Brydges, the first duke of Chandos. In 1720, Chandos became a director of the RAC. New subscriptions were offered which proved a popular investment at the height of the South Sea Bubble when investors were prepared to support projects that were much more speculative. This investment revitalised the RAC’s standing and reinvigorated its trading efforts; it

⁶⁷⁰ TNA, T 70/7, f. 5. Plunkett to RAC, 20 May 1720; TNA, ADM 51/4315. Captain's Logs - Royal Ann Gally (25 August 1719-19 May 1721), Entries 11 March 1720, 21 March 1720.

⁶⁷¹ TNA, T 70/7, f. 5. Plunkett to RAC, 20 May 1720.

⁶⁷² TNA, T 70/53, 15-17. Court of Assistants of the RAC to Plunkett, 30 September 1720.

⁶⁷³ TNA, T 70/90. RAC Court of Assistant Minutes, Entry 28 June 1720.

⁶⁷⁴ TNA, T 70/170, f. 101. RAC to Lords Justices, 28 June 1720.

was once again a wealthy corporation backed by influential investors.⁶⁷⁵ The RAC dispatched at least 34 ships between 1720 and 1722, a dramatic increase from the three ships dispatched in 1718 and 1719.⁶⁷⁶ Although this effort had proved futile by 1725 as the RAC was unable to separate itself from the improprieties of the South Sea Bubble, the RAC's temporarily-restored state motivated its intercession in naval policy and the suppression of piracy in Africa.⁶⁷⁷

The primary stimulus behind the RAC's petitions in 1720 was their intentions to build a new fort in Gambia. The RAC requested that one of the naval ships destined for Africa, either the *HMS Swallow* or *HMS Weymouth*, be instructed to remain in Gambia whilst Company agents and servants erected the fort. They suggested that an additional ship should be dispatched for this service if it was judged that the two assigned men-of-war should not be separated. The RAC signified that this measure was to protect Company agents from all opposition whatsoever; not just concerning pirates but also local opposition to the RAC in Gambia. The RAC also requested the naval ships that cruised the coast for pirates should be directed to give its agents at all other factories any assistance they may have had occasion for.⁶⁷⁸ In this way, the RAC sought to use the additional men-of-war to their own advantage. This was not a new practice as, in 1715, the RAC requested naval assistance in Africa stating that its trade was in danger from European rivals. Harris, Morice and Richard Heysham, another influential separate trader, were asked to consider this request by the BOT. They stated that there was no

⁶⁷⁵ Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*, 165-172; Davies, *Royal African Company*, 344. The Bahama Company provides an example of one such speculative project, see Chapter Three, 130-131.

⁶⁷⁶ The number of reported RAC ships sent out each year are as follows: 1720 (8), 1721 (12), 1722 (14). This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16).

⁶⁷⁷ Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt*, 165-172; Davies, *Royal African Company*, 344.

⁶⁷⁸ TNA, T 70/171, 2. RAC to Admiralty, 30 Septembers 1720; ADM 1/3810. The Humble Memorial of the Court of Assistants of the RAC of England to the Rt Honble the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, 30 September 1720.

need for a naval presence on the African coast; it seems that they suspected the RAC desired to use a naval vessel to carry stores and provisions to Africa.⁶⁷⁹

Thus, the RAC sought to use the second dispatch to benefit their new undertakings in Africa. In addition, they also wanted to protect their shipping and existing settlements from pirates. In 1721, the RAC submitted another request for an additional ship to join the *Swallow* and *Weymouth* in Africa to protect the RAC's trade at Sierra Leone from pirates.⁶⁸⁰ The RAC even contemplated fitting out their own vessels to cruise against pirates in Sierra Leone. They told Plunkett this would be a "considerable expence" and that they "shall not do anything in it at present till such time as we are better advised from you what advantage this Trade will be of to us, & can be able to judge whither we can afford to put our selves to the charge thereof."⁶⁸¹ This consideration did not come to anything although the RAC did introduce rewards to all officers and sailors who defended Company ships. This was an inducement for crews to protect their ships in the event of a piratical attack⁶⁸²; not just for those who were wounded or killed but also those who showed "gallant behaviour & good discipline."⁶⁸³ In previous years, the lack of shipping dispatched to the coast and the dwindled condition of RAC trade led to a general level of apathy towards the pirate presence. With the increased volume of Company shipping sent to the African coast alongside the renewed efforts to re-establish forts and settlements there, the RAC became more actively concerned with the threat of piracy and the potential consequence that their

⁶⁷⁹ Rawley, *Metropolis of the Slave Trade*, 76.

⁶⁸⁰ TNA, T 70/91. RAC Court of Assistants Minutes, Entry 3 August 1721.

⁶⁸¹ TNA, T 70/53, 128-133. Court of Assistants of the RAC to Plunket, 31 October 1721.

⁶⁸² TNA, T 70/135. RAC Committee of Shipping Minutes, Entry 5 October 1721; TNA, T 70/91. RAC Court of Assistants Minutes, Entries 10 October 1721, 24 October 1721; TNA, T 70/123. RAC Committee of Trade Minutes, Entry 19 October 1721.

⁶⁸³ TNA, T 70/123. RAC Committee of Trade Minutes, Entry 19 October 1721.

continued sojourns on the coast could have on the Company's renewed efforts and investment in African trade.

In October 1721, Ogle wrote that he had received instructions for "cruizing on the coast of africa, to protect the trade, and Companys settlements from the Pyrats".⁶⁸⁴ After receiving petitions from the RAC, the Admiralty requested that both the separate traders and RAC consider the instructions for the two naval vessels they intended to send to Africa, the *HMS Swallow* and *HMS Weymouth*, so that "the ships may be of most service to the one and the other".⁶⁸⁵ Whereas the instructions of the previous dispatched ships had been dictated by the separate traders, this dispatch required the separate traders and RAC to discourse and decide upon the instructions.⁶⁸⁶ The resulting agreement was that the vessels were first to proceed to the River Gambia, where one of the ships was to cruise for three weeks to defend RAC agents whilst they built their intended fort, and the other was to continue to Sierra Leone where they were to stay for three weeks to protect the trade there. Next the two ships were to rendezvous at Cape Palmas and sail to Cape Three Points, Cape Coast Castle, and Whydah before careening at Cape Lopez. After careening, they were to sail with the south-east trade wind back to Gambia where they were to begin their second cruise down the coast.⁶⁸⁷ This was a much more detailed proposal than the previous dispatch and covered the primary trading zones, both those used by the RAC and separate traders, on the African coast. The RAC influence is apparent in the orders to aid their endeavours in Gambia and to cruise in Sierra Leone. The naval vessels were also ordered to convoy five RAC ships to Africa. The other orders were similar to those stipulated by the separate traders for the *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn* except from the fact that both ships were to

⁶⁸⁴ TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 6 October 1720.

⁶⁸⁵ TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 15 November 1720.

⁶⁸⁶ TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 24 November 1720.

⁶⁸⁷ TNA, ADM 2/50, 290-293. Instructions to Ogle, 24 November 1720.

proceed together and that they were to call at Cape Coast Castle. The separate traders' influence can be seen in the fact that the ships' stay at Cape Coast was not to exceed more than fifteen days.⁶⁸⁸ This was to ensure that the ships did not make Cape Coast their primary station which would only benefit the RAC and render the cruise ineffectual as the area was little obstructed by pirates. Through their separate but overlapping lobbying, both the separate traders and the RAC were able to direct the orders of the navy in Africa to promote their own interests.

When considering Ogle's dispatch to the African Coast, it is important to recognise that the state had to appease two influential and politically-opposed metropolitan parties involved in African trade. Both the RAC and separate traders sought to use naval vessels to secure their trade in the distinctive African locales where they operated, rather than attempting to gain naval protection for the entirety of the West African coastline. Although the RAC had not been involved in mobilising the first two navy ships to Africa, their renewed endeavours in Africa from 1720 encouraged their intercession in the second naval dispatch. As a result, while the first dispatch had been instructed to concentrate on the areas where independent slave traders transacted, the second dispatch was instructed to protect both independent and Company trade. As shall be discussed, these nuances are crucial to understanding Ogle's success in 1722. First, however, it is necessary to consider state considerations of the slave trade and their motivations to respond to the petitions of slave traders. Prominent slave traders did have influential voices which encouraged state responses but the state's capacity to respond was also dictated by the availability of naval resources and the position of the slave trade in existing priorities.

⁶⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

State Considerations of and Responses to Piracy on the African Coast

As discussed, the state first dispatched naval vessels to Africa upon the request of the separate traders. Although the separate traders provided the instigation of this dispatch, their influence was not the sole reason that ships were dispatched. Morice and Harris first petitioned the Admiralty concerning piracy in Africa in February 1719 but it was not until September 1719, when the separate traders provided a second memorial, that ships began to be fitted out for the African coast.⁶⁸⁹ The reason for this initial inaction was outlined by the Board of Admiralty:

We had acquainted their Excellencys [the Lords Justices] there were not any ships which could be so applied, untill some of those on Forreign Service returned home, unless it was their Excellencys pleasure more ships should be fitted out, concerning which We had not received any directions.⁶⁹⁰

The navy simply did not have the resources to outfit ships to Africa in early 1719. In September, the Admiralty wrote that they would have advised sending ships to Africa earlier had “not other s[e]rvices required most of the ships in Sea Pay”.⁶⁹¹ In December 1718, war had been declared between Britain and Spain, formally initiating the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720). This required an increased British naval presence in the Western Mediterranean throughout 1719 where a substantial portion of navy ships were employed in blockading Sicilian ports under Spanish occupation (See

⁶⁸⁹ TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 4 February 1719; TNA, ADM 3/32, Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 18 September 1719, 24 September 1719.

⁶⁹⁰ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 18 September 1719.

⁶⁹¹ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 24 September 1719.

Appendix 5: Table 5.8).⁶⁹² It was only at the end of September 1719 that two ships of sufficient force were available to dispatch to Africa, the *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn*, both fifth-rates with 40 guns. These were ordered to be manned with their highest complements of 190 men.⁶⁹³ These two vessels were ordered to Africa at the height of naval activity in Europe when more ships were employed in active service than earlier in 1719 (See Appendix 5: Tables 5.7, 5.8, and 5.9). In October and November, at the same time that these ships were refitting for Africa, additional naval vessels were employed off the Galician coast in order to offer a diversion whilst the French invaded northern Spain. Moreover, between June and December 1719, a squadron was maintained in the Baltic in order to protect British trade and to deter Russian expansion into Sweden during the Great Northern War (1700-1721).⁶⁹⁴ The two ships assigned to Africa were only available for service in latter 1719 due to the general increase in naval activity necessitated by these wars, which in turn led to an increase in the number of ships fitted out for active service (See Appendix 5: Table 5.9).⁶⁹⁵ Likewise, the number of ships assigned in the Caribbean decreased in September 1719 after three station ships were ordered home without replacements and this, in turn, provided additional allowance for ships to be stationed outside of Europe.⁶⁹⁶ There was still a finite availability of naval resources and these were overextended throughout Europe, so the fact that these two vessels were then employed in Africa rather than in Europe suggests that the protection of the slave trade received significant state priority. This is not explained solely by the

⁶⁹² Brendan Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat: The Rise and Fall of the First British Empire* (London, 2008), 139-141; N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2006), 228.

⁶⁹³ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 24 September 1719, 30 September 1719; TNA, ADM 2/50, 139. Instructions to Willis and Yeo, 30 September 1719.

⁶⁹⁴ Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 142-143; Rodger, *Command of the Ocean*, 230-231.

⁶⁹⁵ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁶⁹⁶ The returning ships were replaced by the three vessels that were originally assigned to support Rogers in the Bahamas. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721. See also Chapter Three, 112-117.

influence of the independent slave trading lobby but was a clear response by a state concerned about the potential obstructions caused by piratical attacks on the slave trade.

The methodical readjustment of naval squadrons during peace and war, and how this then enabled service on the African coast, is further observed with the state's second dispatch in 1720. The *HMS Swallow*, a fourth-rate of 50 guns, and *HMS Enterprize*, a fifth-rate of 40 guns, were ordered to refit for a voyage to Africa in July. Again, these were instructed to have their highest complements of 280 and 190 men respectively.⁶⁹⁷ Mungo Herdman, the captain of the *HMS Enterprize*, was later ordered to transfer to the *HMS Weymouth*, a fourth-rate with 50 guns.⁶⁹⁸ That two fourth-rate vessels were dispatched to the African coast – at a time when only two fourth-rates were operating in the entirety of the Americas – is further indication of the importance that the state placed on the slave trade. It is apparent that the state would have dispatched fourth-rates previously if there had been a greater availability of naval vessels, but this was only possible after peace was established between Spain and the Quadruple Alliance of Austria, Britain, France, and the United Provinces in early 1720 and the Mediterranean squadron was gradually reduced (See Appendix 5: Table 5.8).⁶⁹⁹ In July 1720, when the *HMS Swallow* and *HMS Enterprize* were first ordered to fit out for Africa, the Mediterranean squadron had reduced from twenty ships to twelve. Herdsman was only instructed to transfer from the fifth-rate *HMS Enterprize* to the fourth-rate *HMS Weymouth* after the Mediterranean squadron was reduced from twelve to four ships in September 1720 which reduced the overall naval expenditure and enabled the employment of the larger fourth-rate for this service (See Appendix 5:

⁶⁹⁷ TNA, ADM 2/50, 250. Instructions to Ogle and Herdman, 21 July 1720; TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 21 July 1720; TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 11 October 1720; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁶⁹⁸ TNA, ADM 2/50, 267. Instructions to Herdman, 29 September 1720.

⁶⁹⁹ Simms, *Three Victories and a Defeat*, 139-141; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

Tables 5.7. and 5.8).⁷⁰⁰ However, Herdsman was instructed to man the *HMS Weymouth* to its middle complement of 240 men as opposed to the 280 men allowed for the *HMS Swallow*.⁷⁰¹ Despite the allowance for two fourth-rate ships for this voyage, the overheads were kept down by only manning one ship to its full capacity. Nevertheless, these vessels were among the first to be dispatched to protect trade at the end of the war at the same time that efforts were being made to reduce naval expenditure.⁷⁰² Again, that they were so quickly ordered to replace the returning *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn* indicates that this was more than just a reaction to the pressure of the RAC and separate traders.

In order to understand the underlying motivations behind state willingness to offer maritime protection to slave traders on the African coast, it is necessary to consider the importance that the state placed on the African slave trade in general. The politicisation of the slave trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had not raised questions about whether the trade was beneficial or not, but was concerned with how to best manage and operate the trade. In the process of these debates, the importance of the slave trade to the entire British Atlantic economy was continually reiterated. In 1718, William Wood outlined this importance:

...our Trade to Africa; which is a Trade of the greatest Value to this Kingdom, if we consider the Number of Ships annually employed in it, the great Export of our Manufactures, and other Goods to that Coast, and the Value of the Product of our Plantations, annually sent to Great Britain.⁷⁰³

⁷⁰⁰ TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁷⁰¹ TNA, ADM 2/50, 267. Instructions to Herdman, 29 September 1720.

⁷⁰² TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721.

⁷⁰³ William Wood, *A Survey of Trade* (London, 1718), 179.

Wood also described the trade as “the Spring and Parent whence the others flow, and are dependent”.⁷⁰⁴ It was consistently argued that the sustenance of the plantation trade and, consequently, the revenue that derived from transatlantic commerce was wholly dependent on the availability of enslaved labourers. Whilst the Whigs sided predominantly with the separate traders and the Tories with the RAC during the debates, recognition of the significance of the slave trade was shared by Whig and Tory alike.⁷⁰⁵ This was further emphasised by the creation of the SSC in 1711 which was intended to manage the *asiento* - the supply of slaves to Spanish America – and be the means through which to restore Britain’s credit in the post-war period.⁷⁰⁶ In this project, the public’s confidence in the slave trade and the envisioned profits deriving from the trade to Spanish America provided the central pull to attract creditors and investors.⁷⁰⁷ Whilst this was originally a Tory creation, there were Whig members on the Court of Directors and the Company seems to have predominantly shared Whig pro-manufacturing considerations.⁷⁰⁸ The significance of the slave trade, then, was not disputed across partisan or ideological lines. The perceived importance of this trade, both in Britain and wider Europe, is evidenced by a proposal from the Court of France that propositioned joint action against piracy on the African coast. This was the first proposal of joint European action against pirates in this period. The *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn*, as well as the *HMS Swallow* and *HMS Weymouth*, were instructed to join with two ships-of-war fitted out from France if there was occasion to voyage

⁷⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 180.

⁷⁰⁵ Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009), 372-386.

⁷⁰⁶ See Chapter Two, 82-83.

⁷⁰⁷ Abigail L. Swingen, *Competing Visions of Empire: Labor, Slavery, and the Origins of the British Atlantic Empire* (New Haven, 2015), 187-191.

⁷⁰⁸ Christopher E. Dudley, “Establishing a Revolutionary Regime: Whig One-Party Rule in Britain, 1710–1734” (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 226-231.

together against pirates.⁷⁰⁹ Although these ships never cruised together, the fact that the first deliberation of joint state-action against pirates was provoked by concern over African trade is indicative of the prominence of that trade in the considerations of the eighteenth-century state.

It was the importance of both the separate traders and the RAC to sustaining African trade that led to their influence in the metropole. Although Whigs had supported the separate traders in their campaigns for the deregulation of African markets, the fact that naval resources were assigned to protect their trade in 1719 was not the result of preferential treatment by the Whig government. It was the importance of upholding the slave trade in general that led to these naval dispatches. After 1712, separate traders dominated the slave trade which made them the critical suppliers of the plantation system; their trade needed to be safeguarded from piratical attacks in order to uphold the transatlantic economy and the substantial revenue this generated.⁷¹⁰ Alternatively, the RAC, although reinvigorated in 1720 and seemingly on the verge of regaining its former trading significance, gained naval encouragement not due to its increased trade but rather because of its role as the administrator of forts in West Africa. Though Whigs had opposed the management of African trade through an exclusive joint stock company, they continued to promote the importance of the forts in Africa. This is evidenced by the fact that an annual subsidy of £10,000 was established during Walpole's ministry to aid the preservation of African forts from 1730 to 1743 when the RAC proved incapable of doing so independently.⁷¹¹ The Company were able

⁷⁰⁹ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 24 September 1719, 30 September 1719; TNA, ADM 2/50, 154-157. Instructions to Willis, 20 November 1719.

⁷¹⁰ Pincus, *1688*, 372-386; William A. Pettigrew, 'Parliament and the Escalation of the Slave Trade, 1690-1714', *Parliamentary History*, 26 (2007), 12.

⁷¹¹ Davies, *Royal African Company*, 344.

to encourage naval support by lobbying in parallel to the separate traders, particularly as their undertakings to establish new forts in Africa aligned with the state interest.

Overall, it was the recognised importance of the slave trade and the necessity to uphold that trade that motivated the state into providing naval support for slave traders. The state's ability to offer maritime defence, even for this critical trade, depended wholly on the reserves of the Royal Navy. While mercantile lobbies could encourage state action over prioritised trades, the hasty deployment of men-of-war relied predominantly on the availability of naval resources to undertake these voyages. That two ships were dispatched to Africa during 1719 and 1720 is verification of the relative priority of African trade to the British state. Nevertheless, as has been observed in previous chapters, the dispatching of naval ships to a region did not inevitably result in the successful suppression of piracy. There were several factors that could influence the effectiveness of naval campaigns against pirates and this trend continues when considering naval operations in Africa.

Naval Operations in Africa

One of the primary obstacles to the effectiveness of naval operations against piracy in Africa was that the pirates did not establish a base nor maintain a constant presence there. In 1720, after arriving in Africa with the *HMS Royal Ann Galley*, Francis Willis wrote to the Admiralty to inform them that "I can gett no Intelligence as yet of any Pyrates being in these Parts; nor of any that has been seen here for a Considerable Time".⁷¹² Willis repeated this sentiment throughout his time on the coast, stating that

⁷¹² TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, 27 February 1720.

during three cruises down the coast, he could learn of no pirates operating in Africa.⁷¹³ When Ogle arrived at Cape Coast in June 1721, he wrote: “I finde the coast so farr has been free from pyratts ever since the factory of Gambia was destroy[e]d.”⁷¹⁴ There were two episodic surges of piracy in Africa. The four naval ships were dispatched during the interim period when the majority of the pirates had left the coast; Ogle arrived shortly before reports of Roberts’ piracies in Africa emerged. Furthermore, even when naval captains received information that pirates were allegedly operating on the coast, it took them several weeks to arrive at the specific reported location. For example, in June 1720, Willis arrived in Cape Lopez after learning that a French ship was chased by a pirate there, and was informed that there had been a supposed pirate ship there five weeks before but he could learn nothing more about them.⁷¹⁵ Similar to the situation in the Caribbean and North America, the vast expanse of the West African coast meant that it was essentially impossible for two naval ships to effectively defend its entirety from pirates and, as pirates did not maintain a particular rendezvous, there was no locale that could be specifically targeted.⁷¹⁶ Instead, the two naval vessels could only protect trade in the immediate regions that they cruised for a short period whilst also reacting to any information they received of pirates’ whereabouts. Even still, the sheer distance of the coast greatly hindered the prospect of effectively suppressing pirates.

The navy ships dispatched to Africa were also hindered by similar obstructions to the effectiveness of the navy in the Americas: namely sickness and the rapid deterioration of ship hulls due to the boring of shipworms.⁷¹⁷ Both dispatches were compelled to stop their cruises in order to refresh their men. The *HMS Swallow* and

⁷¹³ TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, 2 September 1720.

⁷¹⁴ TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 22 June 1721.

⁷¹⁵ TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, 27 July 1720.

⁷¹⁶ TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, 21 October 1720.

⁷¹⁷ See Chapter Two, 70-72.

HMS Weymouth were particularly impacted, burying at least fifty men out of each ship after their first cruise down the coast. Due to the sickness of their men, they were forced to return to Cape Coast in order to press men from merchant ships to make up their crews, rather than sail to Gambia to start their second voyage down the coast.⁷¹⁸

Phipps related the condition of the two naval ships to William Baillie at Comenda:

they are in no Condition at present to goe in pursuit of the Pirates nor if had been attacked by them when first Came out of Princes [Island] were they Capable of making any great Resistance.⁷¹⁹

Sickness debilitated the naval ships to such an extent that they could not follow their instructions and were of “no defence to annoy those Vile Rascals or to Interupt their Villanious designs”.⁷²⁰ The ships fared little better, deteriorating quickly due to the effects of shipworm. The navy attempted to rectify these issues by instructing Ogle and Herdman to careen their ships at least twice during their time on the coast.⁷²¹ This was a reaction to the “meloncholly circumstances” that the *HMS Royal Ann Galley* and *HMS Lynn* had been in after cruising in Africa without instructions to careen.⁷²² The *HMS Lynn* had departed the coast by August, five months after arriving, and the *HMS Royal Ann Galley* by November, eight months after arriving.⁷²³ In the five to eight months that these vessels had cruised the coast, they had not encountered any pirates. Still, the

⁷¹⁸ TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 20 September 1721;

⁷¹⁹ TNA, C 113/262, ff. 94-99. Phipps to Baillie, 24 October 1721.

⁷²⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷²¹ TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 24 November 1720.

⁷²² TNA, T 70/46, 123. Lynn to Burchett, 14 February 1721.

⁷²³ TNA, ADM 51/4251. Captain's Logs, Lynn (20 July 1719 to 21 March 1720), Entry 11 March 1720; TNA, ADM 51/4315. Captain's Logs, Royal Ann Gally (25 August 1719-19 May 1721), Entries 10 March 1720, 4 November 1720, 4 December 1720; TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, August 1720.

voyage of these ships not only highlighted the necessity to careen at least bi-annually, but also the quick deterioration of, and lack of access to, provisions in Africa.

In August 1720, Willis reported to the Lords of the Admiralty that Captain Yeo of the *Lynn* had left Africa to return to England due to the “badness of his Provisions”.⁷²⁴ The ships-of-war had been instructed to remain in Africa until there were no more provisions on board than what was necessary to facilitate their return to Britain.⁷²⁵ Willis was faced with the task of protecting both of their designated cruising grounds, an undertaking entirely impossible for one man-of-war.⁷²⁶ Willis soon found that his own provisions had been depleted due to the “Heat of the Climate & the Vermin destroying it”.⁷²⁷ He attempted to gain provisions at Cape Coast, but was unsuccessful due to a lack of supplies there, and was forced to return to Britain via Barbados where he gained fresh provisions for his return voyage.⁷²⁸ In order to rectify this obstruction to naval operations in Africa, the Admiralty turned to the separate traders and RAC to provide a solution. The Admiralty requested that the two groups consider how provisions supplied by the Naval Victualling Office could be sent on board their ships to Africa for the *HMS Swallow* and *HMS Weymouth*.⁷²⁹ It was suggested that these provisions could be carried to Cape Coast Castle and lodged there for the naval vessels. Although this benefitted both parties, as the naval vessels were instructed to remain on the African coast until they had expended all of their provisions, it was the RAC that was charged with this responsibility.⁷³⁰ This was due to the fact that the provisions were to be stored in the RAC’s African storehouses where their own ships

⁷²⁴ TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, August 1720.

⁷²⁵ TNA, ADM 2/50, 154-157. Instructions to Willis, 20 November 1719.

⁷²⁶ TNA, ADM 1/2649. Willis to Admiralty, 21 October 1720.

⁷²⁷ TNA, ADM 1/2650. Willis to Admiralty, 23 April 1721.

⁷²⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷²⁹ TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 15 November 1720.

⁷³⁰ TNA, ADM 2/50, 290-293. Instructions to Ogle, 24 November 1720.

were sent whereas the separate traders were a loose collective who operated outside of the RAC's infrastructure and whose ships sailed to various different locations in Africa which meant that it was not as straightforward to organise the transportation and storage of these provisions for the naval vessels. In 1721, the RAC dispatched at least three ships - *Lady Rachel*, *Carlton*, and *King Solomon* - carrying 80 tons of provisions provided by the Navy Victualling Office and 25 tons of wine obtained at Madeira. This amounted to an extra four months provisions for the two men-of-war.⁷³¹ The RAC were motivated to this action after they received news that pirates had sailed for the African Coast.⁷³² These provisions enabled Ogle to stay on the coast until June 1722, although he was forced to purchase two months supply of provisions to victual for his journey, with Robert's ships as prizes, back to Britain via Jamaica.⁷³³

The success of Ogle's expedition against Roberts in Africa was occasioned by a number of factors that were determined by the realities of naval service in Africa, the nuances of his instructions, and the diligence of Ogle himself. First, Ogle was only able to gain information of Roberts' presence in Africa because he had returned to Cape Coast in September 1721, after careening at Princes Island, where he spent the rest of the year, only ranging as far as Cape Palmas to press men from merchant ships after a number of his crew had died from sickness.⁷³⁴ If Ogle had proceeded directly to Gambia from Princes Island as instructed, it is uncertain that he would have returned to Cape Coast before information of Roberts' presence at Whydah was outdated. Thus, it was the realities of serving in Africa that compelled Ogle's continued presence on Cape Coast even though his instructions required him to do otherwise. Second, his presence

⁷³¹ TNA, T 70/53, 84-91. Court of Assistants of the RAC to Phipps, 25 July 1721; TNA, ADM 1/3810. Lynn to Burchett, 17 August 1721; TNA, T 70/45, 86. Lynn to Burchett, 17 August 1721; TNA, T 70/55, 14-17. Court of Assistants of the RAC to Glynn, Ramsey and Cox, 13 September 1721.

⁷³² TNA, T 70/90. RAC Court of Assistants Minutes, Entry 15 June 1721.

⁷³³ TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 26 July 1722.

⁷³⁴ TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 6 October 1721.

in this vicinity in the first place had been prompted by the RAC's lobbying for naval support after the first two naval ships sent to Africa had not been instructed to cruise on Cape Coast. Likewise, it was the experience of the rapidly deteriorating condition of the previous two men-of-war which prompted Ogle's instructions to careen at Princes Island. Moreover, his return to Cape Coast Castle in January 1722 was occasioned by the necessity to load the provisions that the Admiralty had sent to the RAC fort. It was on his return to load these provisions that he was informed of Roberts' cruising to Whydah. Without the supply of provisions at Cape Coast Castle, Ogle would not have been able to remain on the coast for the necessary time to encounter Roberts; he had reported as early as April 1721 that his provisions would be near expended by the time he careened at Cape Lopez and so required the victualling office to send additional supplies. It is doubtful that Ogle would have been within this region at the necessary time without the intercession of the RAC and the attempts to rectify the operational issues of the first dispatch by instructing Ogle to careen at Princes Island and receive provisions at Cape Coast Castle. Third, Ogle was diligent enough in his duty to continue searching for the reported pirates despite arriving at Whydah two days after Roberts had departed. Ogle was informed that Roberts had captured a French merchant ship and was determined enough to search the nearby islands at Cape Lopez that had depth of water sufficient enough to careen, as he knew that Roberts would need somewhere to prepare the French ship for a piratical voyage.⁷³⁵ As has been observed in earlier chapters, naval captains were not always as proactive in their duty as Ogle appears here. Such willingness to pursue pirates was determined on an individual and case-by-case basis. Overall, Ogle's triumph is another example that even when naval ships were outfitted against pirates, the outcomes were often dependent on very specific factors

⁷³⁵ *Ibid.*; TNA, ADM 51/954. Captain's Logs - Swallow (13 March 1719 to 10 May 1723), Entries September 1721 to January 1722; TNA, ADM 1/2242. Ogle to Admiralty, 1722.

that were determined in the localities where these events took place and that often lay out with the state's control. Though it is important to recognise that the efforts made by the Admiralty to offset the issues that had faced the first dispatch, namely the necessity to careen ships and provide fresh provisions, played a significant role in Ogle's eventual success against Roberts. Therefore, the successful capture of Roberts' crew, one of the most significant victories of the suppression of piracy, was the result of a combination of various factors which were determined by both metropolitan instructions and local realities.

After Ogle's success against Roberts in 1722, there were no further accounts of pirates operating on the African coast. A new convoy system developed due to the experiences of the naval dispatches in 1719 and 1720 with two ships sent each year, at different intervals, to range the African coast before convoying trading vessels to Barbados and Jamaica. After doing so, the ships were instructed to return to Britain.⁷³⁶ From 1725, station ships that were sent to replace those in the Caribbean were first ordered to range along the African coast.⁷³⁷ This method of staggering each ship's departure meant that there was an increased naval presence on the African coast throughout the year whilst also providing additional strength in the Caribbean. This naval presence provided an active deterrent to pirates as there were no further complaints of piratical attacks on the African coast; in September 1723, it was reported that "there had been no Pirates on the [African] Coast since Com[and]er Ogle went off."⁷³⁸ By the activities of pirates during these years and their stark decline from Africa after 1722, it is clear that pirates favoured defenceless regions, moving on before naval

⁷³⁶ In 1722, the ships were instructed to touch at Barbados and Jamaica, and then cruise along the North American coast from North Carolina to Newfoundland before returning to Britain. It appears that this method ended in 1723 as the ships were ordered to only call at the West Indies before returning. TNA, ADM 2/50, 539-542. Instructions to Percy, 11 July 1722.

⁷³⁷ TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725.

⁷³⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Hamilton to Admiralty, 19 September 1723.

ships could respond, so the regular dispatch of an active marine force in Africa may have stimulated pirates' decline from the region.⁷³⁹ After all, whereas Africa had previously been an unprotected region where pirates cruised to gain bigger ships, it was now a proactively patrolled expanse. Although the majority of the coastline remained unprotected for long intervals, the state had successfully employed the necessary resources to provide more effective convoying and oversight of maritime activity on the West African coast.

Conclusion

Pirates operated on the African coast, not as a means to benefit from the slave trade, but to gain the necessary ships and provisions required to undertake voyages to richer cruising grounds. In the process, however, pirates obstructed a trade which influential metropolitan merchants were reliant on for their prosperity and on which the state placed particularly high importance. The subsequent events highlight three important points in understanding state responses to piracy and the regulation of Atlantic maritime activity in general. First, lobbying by two politically-opposed mercantile groups, the separate traders and RAC, illustrates the importance of understanding the immediate motivations behind mercantile lobbying and how this could change year on year. In 1719, the pirates primarily threatened the trade of separate traders whilst the RAC, in its diminished condition, gained some benefit from an increased trade on the fortified Gold Coast. In 1720, with the attempted regeneration of RAC activity, the Company interceded alongside the separate traders to influence the second naval dispatch to Africa. In turn, these nuances shaped the state response to Atlantic piracy on the West

⁷³⁹ For an analysis of the motives behind pirates' dispersal see Chapter Seven, 292-296.

African coast and necessitated the creation of more complex instructions which appeased both parties. Second, the spread and subsequent impact of piracy on the African coast highlighted the lack of naval protection over the slave trade in the early eighteenth century. In Africa, as in the Caribbean and North America, piracy found active encouragement amongst opportunistic traders who operated beyond the oversight of metropolitan or peripheral authority. That the state responded so quickly to the concerns and complaints of slave traders, despite an ongoing focus on European concerns, emphasises the considerable importance of the slave trade to state considerations of transatlantic commerce. The slave trade was a significant priority and the necessity to uphold that trade was not disputed across partisan or ideological lines. Third, this provides further insight into the fact that the capacity for state response was always determined by the availability of naval resources. The careful balancing of these resources during peace and war, and the focus on maintaining the bulk of the fleet in European waters, meant that only a restricted percentage of Royal Navy ships could be employed in extra-European spaces. The process through which ships were assigned to Africa and became an effective convoy for slave traders was shaped within this context. Although there were limited naval vessels available for station duty in the wider Atlantic, the regular convoy dispatched to cruise the West African coast meant that British interests in Africa became better protected and, in the process, the state gained greater oversight over African maritime traffic. At the same time that the RAC began lobbying the state in 1720, the East India Company began to exert its own pressure to gain naval protection against piracy in the Indian Ocean. This was the first occasion in state responses to Atlantic piracy that the state provided a proactive response to the potential threat of pirates rather than a reactionary response after piratical depredations had already been committed.

Chapter Six: Piracy and the East India Company, 1719-1722

“The remembrance of the Mischief they have formerly done at or near the Red Sea & on your side of India makes Us very uneasy lest they should turn their heads that way & again infest those Parts.”⁷⁴⁰

East India Company (1717)

In November 1719, the Court of Directors of the EIC received an account from Captain Richard Blincko, whose ship *Heroine* had been taken by pirates at Whydah on the African coast. Blincko stated that three pirates had sailed from Whydah and planned to proceed to Brazil and then to the island of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean in order to settle there.⁷⁴¹ After receiving Blincko’s letter, the EIC lobbied the state until a naval squadron was ordered to India in October 1720.⁷⁴² Although the historiography has recognised that the spread of Atlantic pirates to the Indian Ocean, and the subsequent responses to this, significantly shaped the decline of piracy in the late seventeenth century, there is little consideration of Atlantic pirates’ impact in the Indian Ocean in studies of early-eighteenth-century Atlantic piracy.⁷⁴³ The reason for this is that only a few pirate crews sailed beyond the Cape of Good Hope in this period and, in comparison to the exploits of seventeenth-century pirates, made no significant impact

⁷⁴⁰ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 123-125v. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 28 June 1717.

⁷⁴¹ BL, IOR/E/1/10, no. 274. Blincko’s account of Pyrates on ye coast of Guiney gon to Mauritius, 26 November 1719

⁷⁴² TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 11 October 1720.

⁷⁴³ One exception to this is Virginia Bever Platt’s article on the Madagascan slave trade. Virginia Bever Platt, ‘The East India Company and the Madagascar Slave Trade’, *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 26:4 (Oct., 1969), 548-577.

on the EIC's trade.⁷⁴⁴ Instead, the primary insights concerning maritime predation in the early-eighteenth-century Indian Ocean has been provided by the examinations of Elliot, Layton, and Risso who demonstrate the limits of EIC sovereignty over maritime spaces in the face of antagonistic coastal communities and local competitors. In particular, these studies have established that depredations mounted by the Marathan admiral Kanhoji Angria heavily impeded the EIC's capacity to establish maritime supremacy in the waters surrounding Bombay.⁷⁴⁵ Yet, there has been no recognition of how the two issues of Atlantic piracy and local depredations on the western Indian coast became connected between 1719 and 1722 as the EIC attempted to exploit the threat of Atlantic piracy to further its interests and advance its authority in the western Indian Ocean. By linking the records and historiographies of maritime activity occurring in and between the early-eighteenth-century Atlantic and Indian Oceans, it becomes clear that a variety of commercial concerns shaped EIC and state responses to Atlantic piracy in the Indian Ocean. Without identifying or analysing how several considerations influenced these responses, the historiography has overlooked a key case study in understanding the motivations for metropolitan lobbying and subsequent state reactions in the early eighteenth century. Primarily, the EIC sought to use Parliamentary legislation and Royal Navy resources to suppress Atlantic pirates, discourage slave traders transacting at Madagascar, and curtail Angria's power on the western Indian coast.

⁷⁴⁴ For a discussion of the impact of Atlantic pirates on Indian trade in the seventeenth-century see Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 183-221; Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, 1986), 127-159.

⁷⁴⁵ See Derek L. Elliot, 'Pirates, Politics and Companies: Global Politics on the Konkan Littoral, c. 1690-1756', *Working Papers*, 136:10 (March, 2010), 1-43; Derek L. Elliot, 'The Politics of Capture in the Eastern Arabian Sea, c. 1700-1750', *International Journal of Maritime History*, 25:2 (December, 2013), 187-198; Simon Layton, 'The "Moghul's Admiral": Angrian "Piracy" and the Rise of Bombay', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 17 (2013), 75-93; Patricia Risso, 'Cross-Cultural Perceptions of Piracy: Maritime Violence in the West Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf Region during a Long Eighteenth Century', *Journal of World History*, 12:2 (Fall, 2001), 293-319.

First, this chapter considers the impact of Atlantic piracy on Indian Ocean trade to outline that it was the EIC's past experiences of piracy, alongside considerations of the Madagascan slave trade, rather than the actual depredations committed that influenced its petitions. Importantly, piracy threatened to disrupt new trading opportunities that the EIC were attempting to establish in Madagascar by utilising the island as a base whilst also transacting with interloping slave traders who operated despite the Company's monopoly. The EIC's lobbying thus necessitated the dual suppression of Atlantic piracy and interloping slave traders. Second, it argues that EIC requests for naval support against Indian Ocean piracy were also influenced by the need for additional resources to curtail local threats to their maritime supremacy. Third, the state's responses to the EIC's petitions are examined amidst debates concerning the use of Indian cloth in Britain that occurred at the same time. It is put forward that legislation and the allocation of Royal Navy resources to secure and support EIC activities in 1720 and 1721 were only implemented as the Whigs attempted to appease Company interests whilst advancing their pro-manufacturing ideology by banning the use of calicoes in Britain. Lastly, the subsequent naval operations, and their aftermath, in India provide additional evidence that the autonomy of naval commanders in extra-European spaces significantly influenced the effectiveness of the navy to combat piracy. Nevertheless, the dispersal of pirates from the Indian Ocean indicates that the naval presence may have acted as a deterrent, especially for pirates that had already taken rich prizes. Overall, although the presence of a small number of Atlantic pirates beyond the Cape of Good Hope did not produce a major threat to the EIC's commerce, the commotion that ensued in the metropole following news of the pirates' arrival provides further insight into the several factors that shaped mercantile lobbying concerning, and state responses to, Atlantic piracy.

Piracy and the Madagascan Slave Trade

At least four pirate crews made their way from the African coast around the Cape of Good Hope to the Indian Ocean in 1720. These were the crews of Christopher Condent, Oliver La Buse, Thomas Cocklyn, and Edward England.⁷⁴⁶ Between 1720 and 1722, they committed a handful of depredations. The most significant of these were the captures of the *Faça Romance*, a rich Arab trader travelling from Jeddah, by Condent and the *Nossa Senhora do Cabo*, a large Portuguese vessel carrying the Viceroy of Goa and a large quantity of treasure back to Portugal, by Richard Taylor and La Buse.⁷⁴⁷ The EIC suffered only one significant depredation by pirates in this period when England and Taylor captured the *Cassandra*, a Company vessel, off the island of Joanna in August 1720. The EIC reported that this loss had cost them approximately £40,000.⁷⁴⁸ This occurred nine months after the EIC first began lobbying King George I to send naval ships to suppress pirates in the Indian Ocean.⁷⁴⁹

After receiving Blincko's letter in November 1719, the EIC delivered their first petition to the king in December 1719 stating that three pirates intended to sail to the

⁷⁴⁶ Thomas Cocklyn died upon reaching Madagascar and was replaced by Richard Taylor. Edward England was turned out of command in August 1720 and was replaced by Jasper Seager. TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Voisy, 13 November 1721; BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 99. Deposition of Lasinby, 1722; TNA, HCA 1/55, 94-97. Examination of Moore, 31 October 1724.

⁷⁴⁷ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 177; BL, IOR/E/1/12, No. 244. Hastings to Court of Directors, 19 February 1721, BL IOR/G/17/1 part 1, ff. 52-63. Mocha General Letter to Court of Directors, 10 July 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Hollet, 13 November 1721; BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 99. Deposition of Lasinby, 1722.

⁷⁴⁸ The pirates kept the *Cassandra* and fitted it out for their use. BL, IOR/L/MAR/B/488A. Greenwich: Journal, John Barnes, Chief Mate (6 October 1719 – 13 July 1722), Entries 7 August 1720, 8 August 1720; BL, IOR/D/96. Draft of a Petition to His Majesty about the pyrates being supply'd with stores &c at Madagascar [1721]; BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 99. Deposition of Lasinby, 1722.

⁷⁴⁹ TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 11 October 1720.

Indian Ocean with the design to establish a settlement on Mauritius.⁷⁵⁰ The petition developed further:

That from the Experience of former times (when Avery Kid[d] and other Pyrates infested the Indian Seas) They have very great reason to fear the damage they may suffer by a repetition of the like pyracys on the subjects of India, their settlements there may be once more Insulted, The English Trade there stopt Great summes extorted from them by the Natives towards repairing their Damages and the Compa[nie]s ships outward & homeward bound be in continual danger.⁷⁵¹

It was concern of a possible repetition of the difficulties that the EIC had faced in the last decade of the seventeenth century, when a number of pirates utilised St Mary's Island, Madagascar, as a base to prey on shipping in the Indian Ocean, that motivated the EIC's first petition. The pirates' primary target had been the rich Gujarati ships that sailed each year from Surat in India to Mocha and Jeddah on the Arabian Peninsula. The EIC suffered the repercussions of these raids when the Mughals blamed Company employees for the piracies, embargoed their trade and besieged their factories. Embargoes occurred in 1691, 1695, 1698, and 1701, and only concluded when the EIC agreed to convoy and protect Indian shipping.⁷⁵² The pirate threat to the East India trade ended when St Mary's Island ceased to be a significant pirate base after 1700.⁷⁵³

⁷⁵⁰ BL, IOR/E/1/201, 197. Petition of the Court of Directors to the King, [December 1719]; BL, IOR/B/55. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 2 December 1719.

⁷⁵¹ BL, IOR/E/1/201, 197. Petition of the Court of Directors to the King, [December 1719].

⁷⁵² Lauren Benton, 'Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Regionalism', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 47, No. 4 (October 2005), 714; Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 130-134; David Wilson, 'Piracy, patronage & political economy: Captain Kidd and the East India Trade', *The International Journal of Maritime History*, 27:1 (2015), 26-40.

⁷⁵³ For more on piracy in the Indian Ocean in the 1690s and the East India Companies role in their decline, see Arne Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, Slavers and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c.1690-

Suggestions the pirate threat could once again obstruct the East India trade troubled the EIC. Indeed, as early as June 1717, the EIC had reported on news of the rise of piracy in the West Indies, stating:

The remembrance of the Mischief they have formerly done at or near the Red Sea & on your side of India makes Us very uneasy lest they should turn their heads that way & again infest those Parts.⁷⁵⁴

It is clear that it was the EIC's previous experience of the consequences of piracy that prompted them to petition in December 1719 and to remain proactive in soliciting for a naval force throughout 1720. However, there were also ongoing discussions concerning the Madagascan slave trade that ran parallel to these considerations.

In the 1690s, the pirates were able to prolong their presence in the Indian Ocean by trading their plundered goods to colonial merchants operating through a trading post on St Mary's Island. The trading post had been established by Frederick Philipse, a prominent New York merchant, to facilitate the import of Malagasy captives to the colonies as slaves. This soon became an entrepôt of illicit trade between colonial merchants and pirates. It was only through the availability of supplies brought by colonial merchants to St Mary's Island that pirates were able to continue their presence in the Indian Ocean but the Madagascan slave trade and auxiliary pirate trade was halted through the complaints and lobbying of the EIC. The East India Act of 1698 legislated that all East India goods had to be first landed in England and prohibited all vessels from travelling beyond the Cape of Good Hope unless they had the authority of the

1715', *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 38:3 (2005), 401-425; Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 168-173; Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*; Wilson, 'Piracy, patronage & political economy', 26-40.

⁷⁵⁴ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 123-125v. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 28 June 1717.

EIC. The outpost at St. Mary's Island could no longer function effectively as merchant ships from New York were increasingly detained by East India ships, taken by pirates, or seized on their return.⁷⁵⁵ The once-profitable trade became excessively high risk at the turn of the century; maritime traffic between the colonies and Madagascar was all but halted after this. Merchants had exploited a high-risk frontier trade but that trade, much like the outpost, was never designed to be permanent. It was the loss of this trade that led to the end of the pirate threat after 1700.

In December 1715, considerations of the Madagascan slave trade were restarted after the EIC requested the Attorney General, Sir Edward Northey, and their own counsel, John Hungerford, to consider whether the EIC could grant licences for vessels to trade for slaves at Madagascar. These deliberations were initiated by proposals from two merchants to the EIC who requested such a licence, with the intention to sell slaves from Madagascar to Caribbean plantations. Northey declared that the EIC could licence vessels to trade to Madagascar and, with regards to the East India Act 1698, stated that it was immaterial to the EIC where the slaves were to be landed as that was solely an issue for the licensee.⁷⁵⁶ On this information, the two merchants received licences to trade to Madagascar in March 1716.⁷⁵⁷ Through this event, the Madagascan slave trade was revived for the next six years (See Appendix 6: Table 6.1). Between October 1717 and February 1718, at least seven ships were granted licence to trade at Madagascar.⁷⁵⁸

⁷⁵⁵ In 1699, of the three merchant vessels sent out from New York, two were taken by pirates at Madagascar, and one by an East India ship. TNA, CO 5/1045, No. 18. Bellomont to BOT, Nov 28, 1700; Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 170-171; Platt, 'Madagascar Slave Trade', 550-553.

⁷⁵⁶ BL, IOR/H/23, f. 127v. John Hungerford's opinion on the East India Company granting licenses to trade at Madagascar, 2 December 1715; BL, IOR/H/23, f. 127. Northey's opinion on the East India Company granting licenses to trade at Madagascar, 3 December 1715; Platt, 'Madagascar Slave Trade', 554-555.

⁷⁵⁷ Platt, 'Madagascar Slave Trade', 556.

⁷⁵⁸ Two of these resigned their licenses to go on a different voyage and others were licensed in their stead. BL, IOR/B/54. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entries 30 October 1717, 6 November 1717, 20 November 1717; BL, IOR/E/1/18, no. 258. Hambly and Collet to the Court of Directors, 24 December

In June 1719, Hugh Hall, a Barbados merchant involved in the African slave trade, reported on the impact of these licences:

...we have Dispo[e]d of the Eighty three Cargo slaves Imported in [th]e Sloop Samuel & have Word out Utmost Industry in Winding our Chap's to the highest Price, tho[ugh] we must say from the late vast Importation of Madagascar Negroes they are fallen to a much Lower Rate than they were last year at this time.⁷⁵⁹

Although the EIC received more requests after February 1718, they resolved not to licence any more ships for that season as the licensees complained that too many traders would encumber the market.⁷⁶⁰ Throughout 1718 and 1719, while receiving numerous requests for licences to trade to Madagascar, the Court of Directors continually stated that these would be taken into consideration when it was thought convenient to licence more ships.⁷⁶¹ In December 1719, it was determined that no licences would be granted for trading to Madagascar that season.⁷⁶² This declaration occurred at the same that the EIC received information that pirates were planning to voyage into the Indian Ocean, and it is apparent that the EIC were unwilling to risk the potential revival of the pirate trade at Madagascar by allowing slave traders to legally travel there. Regardless, and

1717, 22 January 1718; BL, IOR/E/1/9, no. 19. Harris to Lyell, 18 January 1718; BL, IOR/E/1/9, no. 51. Johnson to the Court of Directors, 17 February 1718.

⁷⁵⁹ NYPL, MssCol 1292, 158. Hall to Betteress, 22 June 1719.

⁷⁶⁰ BL, IOR/B/55. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 30 April 1718.

⁷⁶¹ BL, IOR/E/1/9, no. 120. White to Woolley, 10 July 1718; BL, IOR/E/1/9, no. 266. The Mayor and Citizens of Plymouth to the Court requesting permission to send a ship to Madagascar, 16 December 1718; BL, IOR/B/55. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entries 23 December 1718, 18 November 1719, 25 November 1719; BL, IOR/E/1/10, No. 139. Petition of Marsden to the Court of Directors, [July] 1719; BL, IOR/E/1/10, No. 192. Lord Mayor and Alderman of Bristol to the Court of Directors, 12 September 1719.

⁷⁶² BL, IOR/B/55. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 2 December 1719.

although no more licences were granted from this point on, this was not the end of the EIC's considerations of the Madagascan slave trade.

In May and June 1720, William Gordon and John Huggins delivered two proposals to the EIC offering to pay £300,000 for a lease to carry on an exclusive trade to the South East coast of Africa. It appears that the proposal contained information that an abundance of gold was to be found on that coast and that it could be procured for the same price as silver. The EIC rejected this proposal, stating it would be prejudicial to consent to such an exclusive trade. Nevertheless, the EIC appreciated that the proposed trade could be very beneficial to their commerce and subsequently established the 'Committee about opening a trade to the South East coast of Africa'.⁷⁶³ In August 1720, after considering the proposal, the committee represented to the Court of Directors of the EIC that three or four ships should be sent to trade for slaves at Madagascar, and one or more ships dispatched to assess what trade could be obtained on the South East coast.⁷⁶⁴ The EIC attempted to gain approval for this trade through legislation after being asked by Parliament to propose methods to improve the East India trade as a means to counteract the Calico Act, as shall be discussed later.⁷⁶⁵ As part of their proposal, the EIC recommended that the legislation should contain a provision to:

...encourage the Company to make Settlements at Madagascar, by giving them
Leave to import such Slaves, as they shall purchase there, directly to the West

⁷⁶³ BL, IOR/B/56. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 17 June 1720; BL, IOR/B/56. Minutes taken after the Rising of the General Court, 17 June 1720; BL, IOR/H/23, 134-139. Concerning the proposal for the East India Company opening a trade to the South East Coast of Africa, 3 October 1721.

⁷⁶⁴ Presumably to gain evidence of the claims contained in the proposal. BL, IOR/D/97. Minutes of the Committee about opening a trade to the South East Coast of Africa, Entry 2 August 1720; BL, IOR/B/56. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 5 August 1720.

⁷⁶⁵ BL, IOR/E/1/11, No. 143. Address of the House of Lords forwarded by Popple to Woolley, 30 June 1720; *Journal of the House of Commons, Vol. 19* (London, 1804), 465-466.

Indies, provided that Allowance can be so guarded, that no Opportunity may be thereby given to import any other Commodities, purchased in the East Indies, directly to the British Plantations.⁷⁶⁶

In the end, the state did not consent to this trade and the clause was removed from the final Act halting the EIC's plans to operate a slave trade from Madagascar to the West Indies.⁷⁶⁷ Still, these considerations are important because they coincided with the period during which the EIC was lobbying the state to send men of war to suppress the pirates. In a petition to the Lords Justices in June 1720, the EIC wrote:

...[we] are now in hopes to extend [the trade to India] by entering upon an attempt to open a Trade to the South East Coast of Africa but dare not set about it till they are assured those seas are clear[e]d of Pyrates because these Pyrates offer They intend to settle at Madagascar.⁷⁶⁸

Here the EIC stated that the pirates intended to settle at Madagascar, rather than Mauritius as they had been informed, showing that the directors expected the pirates to take up their previous resort. Clearly, the EIC was anxious of the potential damage pirates could inflict on their trade in India, but this coincided with a period when the EIC were resolved to enter a new branch of trade operated from Madagascar. News of the pirates provided a significant threat to this projected trade. The fact that the Court

⁷⁶⁶ *Journal of the House of Commons, Vol. 19*, 465-466.

⁷⁶⁷ The Act was intended to prohibit the transport of East India goods directly to the West Indies and it was thought that this projected trade would prevent the success of that prohibition. 7 Georgii. Cap. XXI. An Act for the further preventing his Majesty's Subjects from trading to the East Indies, 1721; BL, IOR/H/23, 134-139. Concerning the proposal for the East India Company opening a trade to the South East Coast of Africa, 3 October 1721.

⁷⁶⁸ BL, IOR/D/97. Petition of the Court of Directors of the United East India Company to Lords Justices, 22 June 1720.

had ordered the Committee about securing a trade to the South East coast to prepare this petition highlights the extent to which considerations of pirates and the Madagascan slave trade had become intimately connected in the first half of 1720.⁷⁶⁹

In January 1721, the EIC sent another petition to the king by which time the EIC had successfully lobbied for a naval force to be sent to India. This petition requested that the captains of the men of war be instructed to seize all ships belonging to or navigated by British subjects that they found beyond the Cape of Good Hope without legal authority granted by the Company.⁷⁷⁰ The EIC necessitated this as it had been “inform[e]d several ships are gon[e] out to Madagascar from the West Indies and Great Britain in direct breach of the Laws” and indicated that these ships were going to supply pirates with provisions and ammunition.⁷⁷¹ Again, this petition was prepared without actual evidence that ships were trading with pirates and was based on their past experiences.⁷⁷² It was not until 6 June that the EIC received this evidence. An anonymous letter – signed only ‘Brittanicus’ - informed the EIC that the *Henrietta*, *Cocoa*, *Gascoigne*, and *Prince* had fitted out from London and Bristol in February 1720 on a slaving voyage to Madagascar with the intention to carry slaves to Brazil or the British American plantations. Brittanicus reported that, on arrival at Madagascar, these ships met Condent after he had taken the *Faza Ramance*. He wrote that all four ships had a “good understanding” with Condent, and that they contrived to bring the pirates intelligence of Company ships that could be plundered.⁷⁷³ It is evident that at least four ships illicitly traded for slaves at Madagascar in 1720, and carried their cargo to Virginia

⁷⁶⁹ BL, IOR/H/23, 134-139. Concerning the proposal for the East India Company opening a trade to the South East Coast of Africa, 3 October 1721.

⁷⁷⁰ BL, IOR/E/1/201, 302. Petition of the United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies to the King, 11 January 1721.

⁷⁷¹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁷² BL, IOR/D/18. Minutes of the Committee of Correspondence, Entry 10 January 1721.

⁷⁷³ BL, IOR/D/97. Brittanicus to Heathcote, 6 June 1721.

in 1721. These were the *Henrietta*, *Gascoigne*, and *Prince Eugene* - all mentioned in the Brittanicus letter - alongside the *Rebecca*, a snow which acted as a tender for the *Prince Eugene*.⁷⁷⁴ At least two other vessels were sent from Britain on illicit slaving voyages to Madagascar in 1720 and 1721: the *Coker* – likely the *Cocoa* referred to in the Brittanicus letter – and the *Postillion*.⁷⁷⁵ Whilst at Madagascar, there is existing evidence that the *Henrietta*, *Prince Eugene* and *Rebecca* had encountered Condent. Furthermore, several depositions inform that these ships traded with pirates.⁷⁷⁶ The accounts state that the *Henrietta* traded arms, wine and other necessities in return for various East India goods while the *Prince Eugene* traded arms, ammunition, wine and brandy in exchange for a great quantity of Spanish dollars which were reported to amount to approximately eight or nine thousand pounds.⁷⁷⁷ It is uncertain whether any other vessels were fitted out to Madagascar from Britain or whether the other vessels mentioned had encountered or traded with pirates.⁷⁷⁸ Although the EIC stated ships had been fitted out from the West Indies as well as Britain, these were either assumptions based on previous experience or the evidence for this has not survived.

There is some indication that at least one of the ships, the *Prince Eugene*, had planned to trade with pirates at Madagascar before arriving in 1720. The *Prince Eugene* had been one of the ships licensed by the EIC in 1718. According to an account from Virginia in 1721, after the *Prince Eugene* had been seized for illicitly trading at

⁷⁷⁴ BL, IOR/E/1/12, No. 256. Chiswill to the Court of Directors, 26 November 1721. For a description of a snow see Appendix 1: Table 1.1.

⁷⁷⁵ BL, IOR/H/23, f. 143. Whitaker advising the seizure of the Postillion, 3 October 1721; BL, IOR/E/1/14, No. 172. Affidavit of Smallwood, 28 August 1723.

⁷⁷⁶ BL, IOR/D/97. Minutes of the Committee of Shipping, Entry 9 November 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Miles, 13 November 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Dunwich, 13 November 1721. TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Voisy, 13 November 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Deale, 13 November 1721.

⁷⁷⁷ TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Miles, 13 November 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Dunwich, 13 November 1721. TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Voisy, 13 November 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Deale, 13 November 1721.

⁷⁷⁸ French and Portuguese vessels also visited Madagascar and traded for slaves in these years. This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16).

Madagascar, it appeared that Stretton, the captain of the *Prince Eugene* on both voyages, had made a contract on his first voyage to Madagascar with a retired pirate named Collins who had remained on the island since the 1690s. According to this contract, Collins would act as an intermediary in the trade with the natives in return for £100 value in guns, powder, shot, French brandy, and other supplies.⁷⁷⁹ This is the only evidence of such a contract, but it is probable considering that a number of pirates chose to remain on Madagascar at the turn of the century, integrating with the indigenous population rather than returning to European society.⁷⁸⁰

This is not evidence, however, that interlopers had travelled to Madagascar solely to trade with pirates. Even if the account of Stretton and Collins is true, this was a contract to help Stretton procure a slave cargo rather than pirate plunder and was made before news of the pirates' arrival in the Indian Ocean circulated. Stretton's primary motivations at Madagascar was to trade for slaves. Likewise, those who later traded with Condent's crew did so as the opportunity arose rather than voyaging to Madagascar for that purpose. Similar to the transactions evidenced in locales such as New Providence, North Carolina, and Sierra Leone, traders trafficked with pirates out of the prospect of receiving goods at low cost. Crucially, this was an auxiliary opportunity rather than their main purpose on Madagascar, which was to complete an illicit slaving voyage to the American plantations. Madagascar was far beyond the realms of state or peripheral oversight, and these traders did not envision that the EIC would learn of their dealings with either pirates or Malagasy slave traders. Whilst the EIC focused on interlopers trading with pirates in their petition to the king in 1721, it also wrote that interlopers had the opportunity to purchase slaves at Madagascar which then provided substantial profit by selling them in the Caribbean despite the fact that the legislator had not

⁷⁷⁹ BL, IOR/E/1/12, No. 256. Chiswell to the Court of Directors, 26 November 1721.

⁷⁸⁰ Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, Slavers and the Indigenous Population', 418-424.

thought it fit to allow the EIC the same privilege for fear of “filling the plantations with Indian Goods.”⁷⁸¹ By doing so, the EIC portrayed these interlopers as not only encouraging pirates but also benefitting from an illicit trade that the EIC had not been permitted to commence. With this petition, the EIC aimed to utilise the squadron to ensure that both pirates and interlopers were dislodged from Madagascar. It portrayed these two groups as closely intertwined and, as such, both needed to be discouraged and removed in order to safeguard Company trade. By doing so, the squadron was to be employed not only in eradicating pirates but also in safeguarding the Company’s monopoly over Indian trade.

The EIC’s petitions in 1719 and 1720, therefore, were motivated by more than just past experience. While this encouraged their first petition, and remained at the forefront of their lobbying throughout 1720, there were also wider concerns centring on considerations of the Madagascan slave trade. In 1720, the EIC endeavoured to develop a trade to Madagascar and the South East coast of Africa. At the same time, they had revived the Madagascan slave trade through issuing licenses and shown the potential profitability of this trade to independent merchants. These merchants became interlopers who illicitly traded within the perimeters of the EIC’s charter. As a result of the increase of interloping in Madagascar, the EIC were anxious that traders would restart the illicit pirate trade that had flourished at the close of the previous century whilst also being determined to secure their monopoly. All of these factors encouraged the EIC’s petitions and subsequent requests regarding the naval fleet which they intended to use to rout both pirates and interlopers from Madagascar. Thus, while pirates provided the primary provocation, it was trade considerations surrounding Madagascar that influenced how the EIC planned to utilise the naval fleet beyond just

⁷⁸¹ BL, IOR/E/1/201, 359. Petition of the United Company of Merchants of England Trading to the East Indies to the King, [1721].

suppressing pirates. There were similar deliberations as to how the squadron could help stabilise the turbulent waters around Bombay.

Bombay and Piracy in the Arabian Sea and Konkan Coast

Bombay, a collection of seven islands situated on the west coast of the Indian sub-continent, had been granted to King Charles II by the Portuguese in 1662 as part of the marriage agreement between Charles and Catherine of Braganza. In 1668 the islands were leased to the EIC. The primary importance of Bombay was its close proximity to Surat, one of the chief Indian ports and where the EIC had been permitted to post its factors since 1615. By the early eighteenth century, Bombay had developed into one of the three primary EIC bases in India – alongside Madras (now Chennai) and Calcutta (now Kolkata) – and the chief settlement of the EIC on India’s west coast.⁷⁸² During this period, the Arabian Sea – particularly the region stretching from the Persian Gulf to the Malabar Coast - was a particularly turbulent expanse with multiple maritime powers competing for supremacy over the waters.⁷⁸³ In July 1721, Company agents in Mocha described the taking of a small Bombay ketch⁷⁸⁴ in the Gulf of Aden, writing: “There is no hopes of obtaining any satisfaction, all the People along [tha]t Coast [Hadhramaut] quite up to Muscatt, live upon Plunder, and seize all they can overpower, be they of

⁷⁸² Layton, ‘Moghul’s Admiral’, 47-70.

⁷⁸³ Ashin Das Gupta, ‘India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century’ in Ashin Das Gupta and M. N. Pearson (eds.), *India and Indian Ocean, 1500-1800* (Oxford, 1999), 137.

⁷⁸⁴ For a description of a ketch see Appendix 1: Table 1.1.

what Nation soever.”⁷⁸⁵ There are similar reports of other coastal communities operating in the Arabian Sea, often committing seemingly piratical attacks.⁷⁸⁶ Although these smaller groups did not appear to trouble the EIC to a great extent, there were two local powers that were of particular concern and were frequently discussed by the EIC in both London and Bombay. These were the Omanis – named the Muscats in British sources – who dominated the southern Arabian coast, the Gulf of Oman, and the Persian Gulf, and the Angrias who controlled the Konkan coast.⁷⁸⁷ The Omanis were perceived as a potential threat to the EIC’s commerce in the Western Indian Ocean but, during this period, did not hinder its shipping. In February 1718, the EIC wrote to its Bombay agents:

While the Muscatters [Omanis] keep quiet & offer no insult to the Compa[nie]s ships or those under their Protection We think it best not to quarrel with them for there is nothing to be got from them but a great deal from Us, they are strong at sea [and] have a great many defensible ships... and those full of Men very bold & daring.⁷⁸⁸

The Omanis were a significant maritime power and the EIC were resolute in their unwillingness to enter into a conflict with them, especially while there was no provocation.⁷⁸⁹ The Angrias, on the other hand, were seen as a different case as the EIC outlined, “his [Kanhoji Angria] power is not like the Muscatters nor too great for you to

⁷⁸⁵ BL, IOR/G/17/1 part 1, ff. 52-63. Mocha General Letter to the Court of Directors, 20 July 1721.

⁷⁸⁶ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 333v-347. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 27 February 1719.

⁷⁸⁷ Risso, ‘Perceptions of Piracy’, 306.

⁷⁸⁸ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 197v-215v. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 21 February 1718.

⁷⁸⁹ BL, IOR/E/3/100, ff. 1-20. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 4 November 1719; BL, IOR/E/3/100, ff. 169v-170. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 18 March 1720.

grapple with.”⁷⁹⁰ Although Angria controlled a number of coastal fortifications and a sizeable fleet consisting of smaller vessels, predominantly grabs and gallivats, he was judged to be the lesser power of the two.⁷⁹¹ More importantly, it was the Angrias that posed both an active threat and the most potent competition to the EIC’s commerce in the western Indian Ocean in the early eighteenth century.

Angrian power was established in 1688 when Kanhoji Angria was granted command of Survaranadurg fortress on the Konkan coast by Sambhaji, one of the competing emperors of the Maratha confederacy. By 1710, Angria had received the title of *sarkhil* – admiral of the Marathan navy - and controlled ports and coastal fortifications from Kolaba to Gherieh making him the dominant power on the Konkan coast.⁷⁹² The primary source of contention between Bombay and Angria was the pass system that they both utilised to control shipping in the region. Under this system, all merchant vessels required a permit - called a *dastak* by Angria –to enter the ports of that particular faction. The maritime powers used this system as a justification to stop vessels at sea and seize their goods and crew if the captain failed to produce the relevant pass.⁷⁹³ The EIC had entered into an agreement with the Marathas at the turn of the century that exempted its ships from requiring the *dastak* but there was contention over the terms of this agreement. Under the agreement, those vessels that were not owned by the EIC or British Bombay merchants and that failed to carry a *dastak* were considered legitimate prizes by Angria’s forces. This was unacceptable to the Bombay merchants whose trade and sustenance relied on Mughal and other trading vessels that brought the majority of goods to Bombay. By 1704, the EIC sought to ensure that all ships carrying

⁷⁹⁰ BL, IOR/E/3/100, ff.1-20. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 4 November 1719.

⁷⁹¹ Elliot, ‘Pirates, Politics and Companies’, 14. For a description of a grab and gallivat see Appendix 1: Table 1.1.

⁷⁹² Risso, ‘Perceptions of Piracy’, 302-306; Elliot, ‘Pirates, Politics and Companies’, 2.

⁷⁹³ Elliot, ‘Politics of Capture’, 190.

a British pass, regardless of nationality, were protected from Angria's fleet. Angria rejected this, stating that the Marathas and Mughals were at war and he would seize any vessels belonging to the Mughals who did not carry a *dastak*.⁷⁹⁴ From then on, relations between Angria and Bombay deteriorated due to complaints over Angrian authority to commit depredations on shipping bound to Bombay that did not carry his pass.

Although in March 1717, the EIC wrote to Bombay Council stating that "Trade not War is our business", they also noted that Angria would "prove a severe Thorn in your side" if his vessels could not be destroyed.⁷⁹⁵ The campaign against Angria was initiated by Charles Boone who had arrived in Bombay as governor in December 1715. Before his arrival, it was reported that Bombay was "unwalled, and [had] no Grabs or Frigates to protect any thing but the Fishery; except a small Munchew."⁷⁹⁶ The EIC granted Boone the authority to construct fortifications around Bombay and to procure a number of vessels in order to retaliate against Angria's depredations if necessary.⁷⁹⁷ This naval force, known as the Bombay Marine, totalled approximately nineteen ships by 1717. These varied in size with the largest being a frigate of twenty-four guns and 200 men while the smallest were gunboats mounting six to eight guns and fifty to sixty men.⁷⁹⁸ It was consideration of the potential threat of Angria's maritime strength on the EIC's trade at Bombay that directly motivated the expansion of EIC naval power.

Despite assertions it was reluctant to mount a war against Angria, the EIC saw him as a considerable commercial competitor. The Bombay Governor and Council were given authority to destroy Angria's vessels if they seized shipping that sailed under the

⁷⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 194-195; Elliot, 'Pirates, Politics and Companies', 10-11, 23-24.

⁷⁹⁵ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 105v-117. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 29 March 1717.

⁷⁹⁶ Clement Downing, *A Compendious History of the Indian Wars* (London, 1737), 10. It is uncertain what kind of vessel Downing refers to as a 'munchew', but it is clear that it was a small craft.

⁷⁹⁷ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 123-125v. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 28 June 1717; Elliot, 'Politics of Capture', 189.

⁷⁹⁸ Downing, *Indian Wars*, 25-26; Elliot, 'Pirates, Politics and Companies', 23.

EIC's authority. With regards to Angria's fortifications, the EIC stated "They will do Us no harm It is his Grabs & Vessels [that] can only hurt Us, were they destroy[e]d We should have nothing to fear."⁷⁹⁹ Nevertheless they added, "We should be glad to hear he was remov[e]d from Cunary [Kenerey] and if ever there be a rupture endeavour to root him out from thence."⁸⁰⁰ The EIC were referring to a fortress on the island of Kenerey (now Khanderi), located at the mouth of Bombay harbour, which Angria had gained in 1713.⁸⁰¹ In 1717, Bombay and Angria entered a full-scale conflict, allegedly after Angria's ships took a ship that sailed under British colours.⁸⁰² Between 1717 and 1720, Boone launched a series of unsuccessful attacks on Angria's forts at Kenerey and Geriah in an attempt to suppress his power and end the threat to Bombay commerce. In all of these attacks, the Bombay Marine proved no match for Angria's coastal fortifications and each was repulsed.⁸⁰³ In London, the EIC manoeuvred to utilise the newly-appointed naval squadron to aid Bombay in the conflict with Angria.

When informing Boone that four men of war had been ordered to India to suppress the pirates, the EIC wrote, "This may prove a happy Juncture to force him [Angria] to better man[n]ers by beating him out of Cunry [Kenerey] and Callaby [Kolaba] too."⁸⁰⁴ Kolaba referred to another fort that Angria controlled, Fort Alibag, that was only thirty-five kilometres south of Bombay and one of Angria's primary bases of operation.⁸⁰⁵ One month later, in January 1721, the EIC related:

⁷⁹⁹ BL, IOR/E/3/99, ff. 197v-215v. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 21 February 1718.

⁸⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰¹ Elliot, 'Pirates, Politics and Companies', 26.

⁸⁰² Samuel Charles Hill, *Notes on Piracy in Eastern Waters* (Bombay, 1923), 142.

⁸⁰³ *Ibid.*, 26-29; Downing, *Indian Wars*, 26-28, 34-39.

⁸⁰⁴ BL, IOR/E/3/100, ff. 202v-203. Letter to Boone, 9 December 1720.

⁸⁰⁵ Philip MacDougall, *Naval Resistance to Britain's Growing Power in India, 1660-1800: The Saffron Banner and the Tiger of Mysore* (Woodbridge, 2014), 63.

...on proper applications to the Commodore [of the fleet] We are assured he will enable you to root him [Angria] out of Cunry & Callaby at least. If any other Piccaroons molest you here will be strength eno[ugh] to suppress them.⁸⁰⁶

After lobbying for the naval dispatch, the EIC designed to utilise the squadron to further their own interests on the western coast of India. It was hoped that the navy would be a useful resource in tackling commercial rivals that hindered the trade and authority of Bombay. Moreover, if Angria was suppressed, there was discussion that it would be possible to increase the cost of a British pass.⁸⁰⁷ There is no evidence to suggest that subduing Angria had been the primary goal of the EIC's lobbying as the naval squadron was principally intended to suppress pirates spreading from the coast of Africa to the Indian Ocean. Although Angria acted in a piratical manner at times, his actions were justifiable through his authority from the Marathas who granted him the right to police the Konkan coast using the *dastak* system. Although he was representative of Marathan authority on Konkan, the EIC portrayed Angria as little more than a pirate who preyed on British commerce.⁸⁰⁸ Regardless of Angria's status, the EIC intended to utilise the squadron to not only solve the issues arising from the extension of Atlantic pirates beyond the Cape of Good Hope but also to check the supremacy of existing competitors in the Indian Ocean and re-assert EIC authority over the Bombay region.

⁸⁰⁶ BL, IOR/E/3/100, ff. 233v-236. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 13 January 1721.

⁸⁰⁷ K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company 1660-1760* (Cambridge, 1978), 123.

⁸⁰⁸ For further discussion of British portrayal of Angria as a pirate see Elliot, 'Pirates, Politics and Companies', 37; Lakshmi Subramanian, 'Whose pirate? Reflections on state power and predation on India's western littoral' in Simon Davies, Daniel Sanjiv Roberts and Gabriel Sanchez Espinosa (eds.), *India and Europe in the Global Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2014), 241-243.

The EIC's persistent solicitation for a naval dispatch to India was driven by commercial considerations in Madagascar and Bombay and was underwritten by recollection of the difficulties that piracy had instigated in the 1690s. The EIC's authority in the western Indian Ocean was both severely limited and regularly contested in the early eighteenth century and all of these concerns were driven by the complete inability of the EIC to effectively regulate maritime activity in its vast monopoly region. The Company, although underestimating Angria's own powerbase, openly acknowledged that it lacked the resources necessary to compete against some of the other established maritime powers in the region. That it struggled to establish uncontested supremacy or authority within the surrounding waters of their primary power centre in the western Indian Ocean is further confirmation of the insufficiency of Company marine strength against its local competitors. As a result, while the naval squadron was at first chiefly intended to suppress Atlantic pirates who had voyaged around the Cape of Good Hope, the EIC sought to employ it as a resource to further its interests against pirates, interlopers, and external competitors in the western Indian Ocean. The British state not only ensured that a squadron was dispatched to the Indian Ocean but also that it was instructed to advance the EIC's interests against these maritime competitors.

State Considerations of the East India Trade

Since the surge of piracy in 1716, naval ships had only been sent to assist in manoeuvres against pirates after extensive lobbying by influential merchant groups who produced reports and evidence of piratical activity. In 1720, the EIC was able to secure the strongest naval squadron sent against pirates without any accounts of actual

depredations on EIC shipping or, in fact, any real evidence that pirates had spread to the Indian Ocean. To understand this, it is necessary to examine both the available resources of the state at this time and the wider considerations and debates surrounding the EIC's trade that influenced the state to order a naval fleet to India.

Upon receiving the EIC's first petition in December 1719, the king referred it to the Admiralty for consideration.⁸⁰⁹ In January 1720, the Admiralty requested that the EIC provide further information of the pirates and specify what kind of ships were desired.⁸¹⁰ The EIC could not deliver intelligence of pirates beyond what was contained in Blincko's letter. Instead, they again outlined the threat that piracy could pose to their trade and requested two or three ships of war of a suitable force be sent to India alongside a sloop that could be used to enter the creeks and rivers of Madagascar and other islands that the pirates might resort to.⁸¹¹ On 21 January, the Admiralty delivered a report to the king considering the EIC's request. They reported that, when naval ships had been sent to India against pirates in 1699 and 1703, they had stayed in India for two years in which time the crews suffered high mortality and the ships returned in extremely poor conditions. They also related that all naval vessels were, at that time, employed in other services and that there was above 21,000 men currently employed in naval service but, if it was the king's desire, then they would fit out additional ships that were currently laid up or would remove ships from another service to go to the East Indies.⁸¹² It was not until August that the Admiralty again considered fitting out a squadron to be sent to the East Indies after the EIC's petition to the Lord Justices in

⁸⁰⁹ BL, IOR/B/55. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 1 January 1720.

⁸¹⁰ TNA, ADM 3/32. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 13 January 1720.

⁸¹¹ BL, IOR/D/97. Court of Directors to Admiralty, 20 January 1720.

⁸¹² BL, IOR/D/97. Report upon the Petition of the East India Company for some Men of War to protect their Trade against the Pirates, 21 January 1720.

June.⁸¹³ These deliberations occurred at the same time that the second dispatch to Africa was organised after the war with Spain had ended in 1720 and the Mediterranean squadron had been gradually reduced. It was not until this point that the Admiralty had the resources available to organise a squadron to go to the Indian Ocean.⁸¹⁴ Even though the June petition had included information of the seizure of an Ostend ship, the *House of Austria*, off the Cape of Good Hope by Condent, which the EIC used as evidence to suggest that the pirates had spread from there to the Indian Ocean, the Admiralty again requested further intelligence of pirates in India.⁸¹⁵ Thus, even when resources became available, the Admiralty questioned the necessity of such a costly voyage, especially when there was not sufficient evidence stating that pirates had arrived in the Indian Ocean. Yet, without any additional information, the Admiralty began fitting out ships at the end of September. To understand why these ships were organised without any further information of pirates, it is necessary to consider how the underlying influence of the EIC and debates surrounding the Company's trade between 1719 and 1721 encouraged this outcome.

Between 1689 and 1709, the EIC had faced a significant crisis due to competing economic and political forces that sought to restructure the East India trade in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. On the one hand, the existing EIC had become identified with the Tory party under Josiah Child's leadership, whilst the Whigs supported a conglomerate of interlopers who sought entry into the lucrative Eastern trade. In 1698, in return for a £2 million loan to the crown – to be used to fund the

⁸¹³ BL, IOR/D/97. Petition of the Court of Directors of the United East India Company to the Lords Justices, 22 June 1720; BL, IOR/B/56. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 6 July 1720; BL, E/1/11, No. 173. Burchett to Woolley, 30 August 1720; TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty, Entry 30 August 1720.

⁸¹⁴ See Chapter Five, 206-209.

⁸¹⁵ BL, IOR/D/97. Petition of the Court of Directors of the United East India Company to the Lords Justices, 22 June 1720; BL, IOR/B/56. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 6 July 1720; BL, E/1/11, No. 173. Burchett to Woolley, 30 August 1720; TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty, Entry 30 August 1720.

Nine Years' War – the interlopers were granted the monopoly over East Indian trade. To secure its existence, the Old Company subscribed £380,000 of the £2 million stocks, making them the New Company's biggest shareholder. In this way, the Old Company continued to operate from within the New Company and retained a strong hold over the East India trade due to their existing factories and relationships in the East. Between 1701 and 1709, the Old and New Companies negotiated an amalgamation and in 1709, after a £3.2 million loan to the government, the two Whig and Tory companies officially merged to become the United Company of Merchants Trading to the East Indies.⁸¹⁶ From 1709 onwards the EIC entered a forty year period of relative stability, facing no further significant internal challenge to their monopoly.⁸¹⁷ Furthermore, through the large, long-term and low-interest loans granted to the state to secure its monopoly, the United EIC had become fully intertwined with the fiscal underpinnings of the early-eighteenth-century British state.⁸¹⁸ While the EIC was dependent upon the Crown and Parliament for its overseas authority and monopoly, the Crown and Parliament were reliant upon the EIC for short- and long-term loans to expand or secure the public credit. As such, the EIC was not only an influential merchant group that generated significant revenue for the state through taxation but had also become intrinsically linked to the political and fiscal apparatus of the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth-century government.⁸¹⁹ It is not enough to argue, though, that the influence stemming from the EIC's unique position guaranteed the Company ready access to the state's

⁸¹⁶ Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996), 151; Philip Lawson, *The East India Company: A History* (London, 1993), 51-56; Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, 2009), 366-399.

⁸¹⁷ G. J. Bryant, *The Emergence of British Power in India, 1600-1784: A Grand Strategic Interpretation* (Woodbridge, 2013), 22; Om Prakash, 'The English East India Company and India' in H. V. Bowen, Margarette Lincoln and Nigel Rigby (eds.), *The Worlds of the East India Company* (Woodbridge, 2002), 2.

⁸¹⁸ H. V. Bowen, "'No Longer Mere Traders': Continuities and Change in the Metropolitan Development of the East India Company, 1600-1834', in Bowen et al. (eds.), *East India Company*, 26; Emily Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade: The English East India Company, 1600-1757* (Princeton, 2014), 41-42.

⁸¹⁹ Bowen, 'No Longer Mere Traders', 20-26; Erikson, *Between Monopoly and Free Trade*, 41-43; Lawson, *East India Company*, 75-77.

naval resources as the Admiralty continually questioned the necessity of sending a naval squadron to the Indian Ocean without specific evidence of piracy. When a squadron was eventually organised, it was ordered at the same time that Parliament was considering other measures for securing the Company's trade in the wake of a ban on the use of Indian cloth in Britain.

The Whigs had targeted the existing Company in the post-Revolution period with the argument that the Company drained the economy by importing goods that hindered the domestic manufacturing sector. The New EIC was intended to establish a more beneficial trade to India that supported and encouraged British manufactures. It was within the context of one of these issues, the Company's importation of Indian calicoes, that the squadron was assigned to support the EIC's activities in the Western Indian Ocean.⁸²⁰ In October 1719, the Lord Justices received a petition from the Company of Weavers complaining that the import of calicoes from India was detrimental to the British textile trade as calico was being increasingly purchased by the domestic market as a more preferable alternative to wool.⁸²¹ Leading up to this petition, there had been increasing popular unrest surrounding the perceived impact of imported Indian cloths on British weavers and others involved in the wool trade. Their grievances found support amongst the dominant Whig party as this directly contested the Whig's pro-manufacturing ideology. Hence, an Act was passed in 1721 that prevented the wearing and usage of calicoes in Britain.⁸²² The importance of this is that, during the debates concerning Indian textiles in 1720, the EIC was requested to outline the primary difficulties facing their trade and how these could be secured. Parliament would then

⁸²⁰ Christopher E. Dudley, "Establishing a Revolutionary Regime: Whig One-Party Rule in Britain, 1710–1734" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 2010), 231–234.

⁸²¹ BL, IOR/E/1/10, No. 221. Popple to Woolley, 23 October 1719; Wood, *Survey of Trade*, 264–265.

⁸²² These could still be re-exported to Europe and the colonies. Dudley, "Establishing a Revolutionary Regime", 231–236.

pass an act to provide whatever support they could to ensure the welfare of the EIC's commerce.⁸²³ This was essentially an exchange by the government in return for prohibiting the use of one of the EIC's trade goods in Britain; the Whigs had to protect domestic manufacturers but also had a clear stake in maintaining the EIC's interest. The EIC submitted a list with multiple requests but the three most significant with regards to the ongoing concerns in the Western Indian Ocean were: that the EIC be encouraged to make settlements on Madagascar (as has been discussed); that an effectual stop be put on British subjects interloping in the East India trade with or without foreign commissions⁸²⁴; and that a prohibition be placed on the import of East India goods to the American colonies except that which was carried directly from Britain.⁸²⁵ The resultant act, passed in 1721, posed heftier fines for interlopers and created further powers that the EIC could utilise against them. These included the ability of the EIC to not only seize vessels and traders interloping in the Indian Ocean but also to commence lawsuits in the Court of Exchequer to gain reparations from the agents, factors and co-partners of illicit voyages. The act also effectively extended the provisions of the Navigation Act of 1663 to East India goods, explicitly outlying that these had to be landed in England first before being exported to the colonies.⁸²⁶ Whilst appeasing weavers and advancing the pro-manufacturing agenda of the Whigs, these debates also safeguarded the Company's monopoly over East India goods and broadened its authority to police British subjects in the Indian Ocean. Crucially, these discussions

⁸²³ BL, IOR/E/1/11, No. 143. Address of the House of Lords forwarded by Popple to Woolley, 30 June 1720; *Journal of the House of Commons, Vol. 19*, 465-466.

⁸²⁴ Between 1716 and 1719, the Company had lobbied the state to provide assurances that British subjects be prohibited from trading to the East Indies under foreign commissions after it was found that British ships and ships containing British subjects had been fitting out from Ostend with commissions granted by the Hapsburg empire. Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis, 1976), 218; John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (London, 1993), 237-238

⁸²⁵ *Journal of the House of Commons, Vol. 19*, 465-466.

⁸²⁶ 7 Georgii. Cap XXI. An Act for the further preventing his Majesty's Subjects from trading to the East Indies.

occurred after the EIC's petition to the Lord Justices on 22 June 1720 for ships to suppress piracy; it was on 6 July 1720 that the EIC was requested to propose methods to secure their trade. That the Admiralty only began to organise a naval dispatch to the Indian Ocean in the latter half of 1720, at the same time that Parliament was offering legislation to promote the EIC's trade, provides an indication that this squadron was part of these considerations and a further measure offered by the state to appease the EIC in the wake of the calico debates.

Between September 1720 and January 1721, the Admiralty organised a squadron of four ships for the Indian Ocean. These were three fourth-rates – the *HMS Lyon*, *HMS Salisbury*, and *HMS Exeter* - and one sixth-rate – the *HMS Shoreham* - coordinated under the command of Commodore Thomas Mathews.⁸²⁷ This was the strongest naval fleet sent specifically to suppress piracy during this period. The only other force that equalled the same number of ships, if not the strength, sent against pirates had been that which accompanied Woodes Rogers to the Bahamas. However, that had been a task force with instructions to proceed to other stations once the pirates had been suppressed in the Caribbean⁸²⁸ whereas the India force was coordinated under the command of a commodore and had the sole objective to suppress piracy and support the EIC's trade in India.

The EIC was asked to provide the necessary instructions for the fleet. The squadron was to call at Madeira and the Cape Verde islands before making their way to the Cape of Good Hope and then to Madagascar. Once at Madagascar, they were to investigate whether there were any pirates at Port Dauphin and St Mary's Island, the

⁸²⁷ TNA, ADM 2/50, 266-267. Instructions to Haddock, [27 September 1720]; TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 11 October 1720, 8 November 1720, 23 January 1721; TNA, ADM 2/50, 277-278. Instructions to Mathews, 8 November 1720; TNA, ADM 2/50, 320. Instructions to Reddish, Johnson, Cockburn and Mayne, 13 January 1721.

⁸²⁸ See Chapter Three, 110-111.

primary rendezvous of pirates in the 1690s. Whilst they were inspecting the various ports at Madagascar, one of the fleet was to detach and sail to the Mascarene islands to check for pirates there. Next, the ships were to head to the mouth of the Red Sea at the end of July to meet pirates praying on the Mocha and Jeddah pilgrim fleets in August, after which they were to proceed to Bombay and then down the Malabar Coast. Moreover, if there was intelligence of pirates operating in any other location, then the navy was to act on that intelligence. These instructions were evidently produced from information collected of the cruising voyages of pirates in the 1690s.⁸²⁹ Included was a command stating:

...during the time which you shall be with the ships under your Com[m]and in the India[n] Seas, you are to use your best endeavours to give all possible countenance & Protection to the Companies settlements, & their Trade in those Parts.⁸³⁰

Alongside instructions to offer protection to the EIC's operations, the captains were also given instructions to seize any ships transacting within the parameters of the EIC's charter without authority. This was in response to the EIC's petitions regarding the interlopers at Madagascar and the alleged resurgence of the pirate trade.⁸³¹ Therefore, although the bulk of the instructions related to suppressing the pirates and the locations where they may be found, it is evident that the ships were being sent for the purpose of

⁸²⁹ TNA, ADM 2/50, 323-327. Instructions to Mathews, 23 January 1721.

⁸³⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸³¹ BL, IOR/E/1/201, 320-322. Letter under the Common Seal of the United East India Company granting the four ships of war sent to the East Indies to seize unlawful traders, 9 February 1721; BL, IOR/E/1/12, no. 63. Burchett to Woolley, 13 February 1721; BL, IOR/E/1/12, no. 69. Burchett to Woolley, 18 February 1721.

suppressing pirates, discouraging interlopers, and securing the Company's settlements and trade in India.

It was within the immediate contexts of the calico debates that took place between 1719 and 1721 that the EIC were able to gain naval resources to suppress piracy in India. Not only was it able to do so without existing evidence that Atlantic pirates had reached India but it also ensured that the assigned captains were specifically instructed to aid the EIC in any way possible. The Company also utilised these debates to gain further measures to secure its monopoly from interlopers and remove any uncertainties about the legality of the Madagascan slave trade. This was not simply the result of the EIC dictating naval policy to gain the strongest squadron sent against pirates in order to maintain its interest, but was intertwined with larger debates surrounding Indian trade in general; Royal Navy resources were simply one means of appeasing Company interests whilst advancing a Whig pro-manufacturing agenda. Without recognition that multiple considerations triggered the request and dispatch of naval squadrons to extra-European spaces, the use of state resources to support commercial bodies becomes easily misinterpreted. These events did not come about because the EIC could dictate naval policy but were shaped by the immediate contexts of the calico debates which occurred at the same time that the Company sought to employ the Royal Navy in its ongoing conflict with Angria on the Konkan coast as well as to suppress the pirates and discourage interlopers from trading at Madagascar.

Naval Operations in India and the Dispersal of Pirates

The squadron commenced its voyage in February 1721. The *HMS Lyon*, *HMS Exeter*, and *Hms Shoreham* arrived at Madagascar in July. They had been separated from the

HMS Salisbury which had been ordered to Lisbon to procure a new main mast. The three ships sailed up the western side of Madagascar before stopping at Joanna (now Anjouan). They then sailed to the Gulf of Aden before proceeding to Bombay where they remained between August 1721 and January 1722. The *HMS Salisbury* reunited with the fleet at Bombay in October. In January, the fleet ventured down the Konkan and Malabar coasts and then proceeded to Mauritius in March and Ile Bourbon (now Reunion) in April. From Ile Bourbon, they sailed to St. Mary's Island where they stayed for two weeks before heading to Manigaro harbour on the western side of Madagascar and then to Joanna. From Joanna they sailed to the Maldives and reached Fort St George on the eastern coast of India in July 1722.⁸³² Up to this point, the fleet seems to have followed their instructions and searched for pirates in the locations that the EIC had outlined. Although they had not encountered any pirate vessels on their voyage, which is not surprising considering that the fleet were searching for a small number of pirates in a vast expanse of ocean, the squadron had respected its commands and had even mounted an attack on Angria's fort at Kolaba. This occurred in November and December 1721 whilst the fleet had been at Bombay and was organised as a joint EIC and Portuguese attack with the aim of dislodging Angria from Bombay and the nearby Portuguese territories.⁸³³ Ultimately, this resulted in no change to the situation as the joint forces of the navy, EIC and Portuguese were repulsed by Angria who was given substantial assistance from the forces of the Maratha emperor. The British and Portuguese forces had failed to coordinate their attack so that the Maratha forces were able to easily rout their attempt on Kolaba. The assault ended after the Portuguese negotiated a peace with Angria and the Maratha army, and withdrew their forces; the

⁸³² TNA, ADM 1/1597. Cockburn to Admiralty, 17 March 1721; TNA, ADM 1/2096. Mayne to Admiralty, 30 September 1721; TNA, ADM 51/538. Captain's Logs - *Lion* (1 October 1720 – 20 July 1724), Entries February 1721 to July 1722; Downing, *Indian Wars*, 53.

⁸³³ BL, IOR/E/3/101, ff. 113-131. Letter to the President and Council at Bombay, 24 March 1722.

EIC forces were forced to retreat.⁸³⁴ Although this attack ended in failure, the EIC had managed to utilise the naval fleet in an attempt to dislodge an external competitor from the Konkan coast. This is further confirmation that removing the Angrian presence had been an implicit, although not the principal, reason that the EIC had requested a naval squadron be sent to the Indian coast.

Although the EIC had spent over a year lobbying for a naval force to suppress pirates and advance their interests in the western Indian Ocean, they reaped little benefit from the fleet. The primary reason for this was the fact that, after July 1722, Commodore Mathews halted all operations against pirates and instead utilised the naval squadron to proceed on a trading voyage. In May 1724, the EIC reported that Mathews:

...carr[ie]d on a great Trade in India for himself and other particular persons, and was concern[e]d in some Countrey shipping from Port to Port, besides he Loaded the Shoreham so deep from Bengal to Surat, that it was the general opinion she was unfit to make a good Defence against an Enemy, much less to Chase any pyrate she might meet with in the Voyage.⁸³⁵

By several accounts, it is apparent that Mathews spent the rest of his two-year period in India loading the fleet with trade goods, convoying private merchant vessels that he was invested in, and carrying off individuals who had grievances against the EIC in exchange for money.⁸³⁶ He even employed a provision in his instructions, that stated he should

⁸³⁴ Elliot, 'Pirates, Politics and Companies', 29-31; BL, IOR/G/17/1 part 1, ff. 109-112. Bombay General Letter to the Court of Directors, 8 March 1722; BL, IOR/L/MAR/B/313A. London: Journal (4 April 1720 – 15 July 1722), Entries 26 November 1721, 10 December 1721, 24 December 1721; TNA, ADM 51/538. Captain's Logs - *Lion* (1 October 1720 – 20 July 1724), Entries 29 November 1721, 30 November 1721, 12 December 1721, 29 December 1721, 31 December 1721.

⁸³⁵ BL, IOR/E/1/202, 171-175. Court of Directors to Admiralty, 9 May 1724.

⁸³⁶ *Ibid*; BL, IOR Neg 11606-36. Cowan to Gould, 15 April 1723; BL, IOR Neg 11606-36. Cowan to Boones, 6 November 1723; BL, IOR/E/1/15, No. 62. Mayne to the Court of Directors, [1724]; BL,

visit the eastern coast of India if he learned of any pirates operating there, to direct the naval fleet to Calcutta; this was carried out even though there was no information of pirates on the eastern coast. Throughout his command, Mathews utilised the naval fleet to participate in a trade that covered the vast stretches of ocean between Mocha and Calcutta.⁸³⁷ It even appears that Mathews had traded with pirates when the fleet visited St. Mary's Island in April 1722. Various depositions taken afterwards recounted that Mathews traded with William Plantin, a pirate who had belonged to Condent's crew but had since retired to remain on Madagascar. According to the depositions, Mathews sold beer, wine and liquor for a considerable sum of money that Plantin had gained from his share of plunder from the *Faza Ramance*. There is enough corroborating evidence given by various crew members of the naval ships to substantiate these claims.⁸³⁸ Again, the actual effectiveness of naval vessels against pirates were obstructed by the autonomy of a naval commander who sought to advance his own fortune rather than complete his assigned objective.

Before he was appointed to India, Mathews had captained naval ships in both the War of the Spanish Succession and the War of Quadruple Alliance, during which time he had participated in significant victories, particularly during the British engagement with the Spanish fleet off Cape Passaro in 1718. That he was then appointed commodore of the East Indies squadron was likely the result of his accomplishments during the war. However, Mathews' conduct in India, particularly from the latter half of 1722 until his return to Britain in 1724, seems to confirm that he had always intended to utilise his command in the Indian Ocean to further his own

IOR/D/97. Memorandums of paragraphs in the Company's letters from Bombay wherein mention is made of Commodore Mathew's proceedings, dated from 28 December 1721 to 3 January 1724.

⁸³⁷ BL, IOR/E/1/202, 171-175. Court of Directors to Admiralty, 9 May 1724.

⁸³⁸ TNA, HCA 1/55, 78-101. Various depositions relating to Thomas Mathews trading with pirates at Madagascar, 1724.

personal fortune before relinquishing active naval service. This is verified by the fact that he did not seek further naval appointments on his return to Britain but instead attempted to enter parliament.⁸³⁹ While Mathews had distinguished himself in previous positions of command, he sought to benefit from the complete lack of oversight he could expect in the Indian Ocean. For two years, Mathews was able to operate on his own terms without any interference from higher authority using naval resources to benefit his own estate. He neglected his intended service, perhaps even going so far as to trade with pirates at Madagascar when it was to his advantage. The state and admiralty simply had no control over their naval commanders when they operated with autonomy in extra-European theatres. Still, it is doubtful that Mathews anticipated that neither the admiralty or the state would learn of his actions, especially as he had constant clashes with EIC agents throughout his time in India which he must have known would be reported. His undertakings, then, make it clear that he did not fear the potential repercussions, and this highlights the overall ineffectiveness of the state and admiralty to deter such independent action by naval captains in the early eighteenth century. Yet, Mathews returned to Britain in 1724 to a different legislative landscape than he had left.

Shortly after he had departed, Parliament passed legislation titled ‘An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Piracy’ in 1722. Included in this act was a provision forbidding naval captains from taking on board any merchant goods whatsoever. The punishment for doing so was a court martial with the possibility of the forfeit of command and office, and removal from any further naval service.⁸⁴⁰ With this provision, the state was attempting to put an end to the self-serving enterprise of naval captains

⁸³⁹ Daniel A. Baugh, ‘Mathews, Thomas (1676-1751)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, 2004).

⁸⁴⁰ 8 Geo I, c.24.

stationed in extra-European spaces; a practice that had continually thwarted the suppression of piracy. On his return from India in 1724, and as a result of these changes, Mathews was court martialled for his trading ventures; his punishment remained relatively slight as he was only fined four months' pay. It was deemed that there was not enough evidence to prosecute him for trading with pirates and the EIC were reluctant to pursue any form of criminal prosecution out of a fear of aggravating the Admiralty. Although the Company attempted to sue Mathews in civil court for the estimated £13,677 that he had accumulated from his activities, this case was later dropped after the intercession of the Admiralty. That Mathews had supposedly made a significant fortune during his two-year period in India undoubtedly offset any real impact of losing four months' pay. In fact, Mathews does not appear to have suffered greatly after he was court martialled. He was not employed by the navy again until 1736, but this was through his choice rather than a result of his actions in India. In 1736, he became dockyard commissioner at Chatham and later returned to active sea service after becoming vice-admiral and commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean in 1742.⁸⁴¹ Thus, although the state enacted these provisions, it remained reluctant to enforce them too heavily. Still, the Piracy Act of 1722 marked a turning point in grievances against the autonomy of naval captains in the frontiers as the state attempted to deter commanders with the possibility of a court martial if they were caught disregarding their instructions in favour of trading.⁸⁴²

⁸⁴¹ BL IOR/E/1/202, 192-193. Woolley to Burchett, 30 September 1724; BL, IOR/D/98. Draft of a reply to Burchett's letter of 19 November, [November 1724]; BL, IOR/E/1/202, 197. Woolley to Burchett, 27 November 1724; TNA, ADM 1/3911. Minutes from the Court Martial of Thomas Mathews, 26 December 1724; *The Daily Post*, 30 December 1724; *Newcastle Courant*, 27 February 1725; BL IOR/E/3/102, ff. 261-278v. Letter to the President and Council of Bombay, 2 April 1725; Baugh, 'Mathews, Thomas (1676-1751)'.

⁸⁴² See Chapter Seven, 273-274.

Despite this direct failure of the naval fleet, its presence may have had an indirect effect on the suppression of pirates in the Indian Ocean. Only four crews of Atlantic pirates are evidenced to have operated in the Indian Ocean between 1720 and 1722. These were Condent's crew and the remnants of Cocklyn, England, and La Buse's crews who coordinated under the changing leadership of La Buse, Seager and Taylor. In November 1721, it was reported that Condent planned to end his piratical career after taking the *Faza Romance*. Joseph Hollet, a crewmember of the *Prince Eugene* that had traded with Condent at Madagascar, stated:

...the s[ai]d pirate Vessel then lay at the s[ai]d Port [St. Mary's Island] with another Vessel which they said was a Moca Man & their Prize wherein they had got enough & don[e] their Business & that they need not go to sea again as long as they lived or to that effect.⁸⁴³

There was no further news of Condent until March 1722 when Richard Lasinby, who had been a captive on the *Cassandra*, informed that he had met Condent at Ile Bourbon. He stated that Condent and forty of his crew had accepted a pardon from the French representatives there. Some of the crew remained at Ile Bourbon while others had taken passage to Europe.⁸⁴⁴ A similar account was sent to Humphrey Morice from Jamaica in May 1723. The letter reported that a pirate ship named the *Cassandra* captained by a man called Taylor was attempting to solicit a pardon from the *Mermaid*, one of Jamaica's station ships, near Portobello, Panama.⁸⁴⁵ Taylor and La Buse appear to have remained on Madagascar and in the surrounding locales – such as Mozambique

⁸⁴³ TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Hollet, 13 November 1721.

⁸⁴⁴ BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 98. Account of Lasinby, [March] 1722.

⁸⁴⁵ BL, IOR/E/1/14, No. 162. Copy of a letter from Jamaica to Morice, 12 May 1723.

and Delagoa - from April 1721 after taking the *Nossa Senhora do Cabo* until June or July 1722. At this point, the pirates separated with a number going on board the *Cassandra* to travel to the West Indies and the rest remaining on Madagascar.⁸⁴⁶ After 1722, there was little news of Atlantic pirates committing depredations in the Indian Ocean, and there were three analogous reasons behind this dispersal.

First, the Bombay Council reported that the lack of fresh accounts of European pirates was due to the naval squadron cruising in Madagascar in July 1721. Although Mathews' instructions specifically stated that the fleet should search Port Dauphin and St. Mary's Island on the eastern side of Madagascar, the fleet had sailed up the western side of the coast looking for pirates. It is uncertain why Mathews ordered the ships to proceed up the western side. It was suggested that the ships could not separate and cruise both sides of the island because the *Salisbury* had yet to arrive although this does not explain why the ships chose to proceed up the western rather than eastern side.⁸⁴⁷ It was reported that the squadron touching the western side of Madagascar had alerted the pirates to the British naval presence in the Indian Ocean.⁸⁴⁸ There was another account given by a captive on board Taylor's vessel stating that when Taylor and La Buse returned to Madagascar in 1721 after capturing the *Nossa Senhora do Cabo*, a Malagasy brought a letter that had been left by Mathews for the *Salisbury* and which provided the pirates with information concerning the presence and size of the fleets.⁸⁴⁹ This is the only evidence that such a letter existed but, whatever the case, it is certain that the pirates knew of the presence of a naval fleet by late 1721 and this provided part of the

⁸⁴⁶ BL, IOR/E/1/14, No. 205. Account of Freeman, March 1723; TNA, ADM 1/2097. Mathews to Admiralty, 26 September 1723.

⁸⁴⁷ TNA, ADM 2/50, 277-278. Instructions to Mathews, 8 November 1720; BL, IOR/G/17/1 part 1, ff. 109-112. Bombay General Letter to the Court of Directors, 8 March 1722.

⁸⁴⁸ BL, IOR/G/17/1 part 1, ff. 109-112. Bombay General Letter to the Court of Directors, 8 March 1722; TNA, ADM 1/2096. Mayne to Admiralty, 10 March 1722.

⁸⁴⁹ TNA, HCA 1/55, 94-97. Examination of Moore, 31 October 1724.

motivation for their dispersal from the Indian Ocean in 1722.⁸⁵⁰ Moreover, it was stated that those pirates who chose to remain on Madagascar when the *Cassandra* sailed to the West Indies designed to remain there until they received news that the men of war had departed. Presumably they then intended to resume their depredations.⁸⁵¹ Consequently, although the men of war did not encounter the pirates, news of the naval presence may have acted as a deterrent as the pirates do not appear to have travelled far beyond Madagascar after this point. Importantly, it was not simply apprehension of the naval vessels that motivated the pirates' dispersal.

Second, and arguably the most significant, was the fact that the pirate crews had already taken significant prizes in the Indian Ocean before the naval force had arrived. Both sets of pirates - Condent on the one hand and the remnants of England, La Buse, and Cocklyn's crew on the other – had not committed many depredations in the Indian Ocean but both had captured rich cargos. When the crew of the *Cassandra* were soliciting for a pardon in the West Indies, it was reported that they could divide £1,200 per crewmember and also had a large quantity of diamonds and goods on board that they had plundered from the *Nossa Senhora do Cabo*.⁸⁵² This is clear evidence that a number of the pirates were willing to retire after they had made their fortune. It is important to note that those pirates who left the colonial theatre to undertake lengthy voyages to Africa, India, and Brazil had been primarily driven by the prospects of gaining a rich prize in less defended waters. After doing so, their intentions were to re-enter colonial or European society with the share they had gained from their

⁸⁵⁰ BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 97. Account of Lasinby, 19 March 1722.

⁸⁵¹ BL, IOR/E/1/14, No. 205. Account of Freeman, March 1723; TNA, ADM 1/2097. Mathews to Admiralty, 26 September 1723.

⁸⁵² BL, IOR/E/1/14, No. 162. Copy of a letter from Jamaica to Morice, 12 May 1723.

endeavours.⁸⁵³ Those crews who had voyaged to the Indian Ocean and found success made particular use of pardons offered by colonial powers. Although the British pardon had expired, there were active pardons employed by the other colonial powers as a means to stem the piratical threat. For example, the French East India Company's representatives on Ile Bourbon had been granted approval to pardon the pirates on Madagascar as a means to stop their attacks on the French Company's trade.⁸⁵⁴ There was also the added incentive that the pirates brought their plundered goods with them to the colony.⁸⁵⁵ The French granted Condent's crew a pardon and allowed them to keep their plunder. Likewise, Taylor's crew were eventually granted a full pardon by the Spanish at Portobello in return for twenty percent of their plunder as taxation.⁸⁵⁶ The navy presence made the Indian Ocean a much riskier cruising ground and there was less incentive to tempt fate after the crews had already taken rich prizes.⁸⁵⁷

Third, the EIC had successfully opposed the potential threat of Madagascar resuming its status as an entrepôt of illicit trade. After the 'Act for the further preventing his Majesty's Subjects from trading to the East Indies' was passed in 1721, the EIC commenced lawsuits against the captains and owners of the ships that they had learned had traded at Madagascar in 1720.⁸⁵⁸ They accepted £600 from the owners of the *Postillion*, £700 from the owners of the *Prince Eugene* and *Rebecca*, and £1,200 from the

⁸⁵³ This is distinctive to those sets of pirates who remained in the colonial theatre throughout this period, preying on local coastal shipping in undefended regions, and accruing profit through sustained piratical activities. See Chapter Seven, 264-267.

⁸⁵⁴ Marina Carter, 'Pirates and Settlers: Economic Interactions on the Margins of Empire' in Sameetah Agha and Elizabeth Kolsky (eds.), *Fringes of Empire: People, Places, and Spaces in Colonial India* (Oxford, 2009), 60.

⁸⁵⁵ Lasinby stated a pirates' effects were forfeited to the French governor if he died without leaving a widow. BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 98. Account of Lasinby, [March] 1722.

⁸⁵⁶ BL IOR/E/1/14, No. 163. Extracts of two letters from Pearce to Morice, July 1723; BL, IOR/E/1/202, 73. Court of Directors to Lords Justices, 9 August 1723.

⁸⁵⁷ For further discussion of pirates' dispersal into colonial or European societies see Chapter Seven, 294-296.

⁸⁵⁸ 7 Georgii. Cap XXI. An Act for the further preventing his Majesty's Subjects from trading to the East Indies.

owners of the *Coker* and *Henrietta* and agreed to halt further prosecution against them.⁸⁵⁹ The chief aim of the EIC in these proceedings was to prevent the further development of the Madagascar slave and auxiliary pirate trade.⁸⁶⁰ It appears that they succeeded as there were no further reports of British ships fitting out to Madagascar to trade for slaves or to supply pirates after 1721 (See Appendix 6: Table 6.1). It is hard to evaluate how far this was a considerable factor in the pirates' dispersal. Slave traders from other European states continued to call at Madagascar, and there is evidence that pirates could find markets for their plunder in other locales in the Indian Ocean.⁸⁶¹ For example, the *Cassandra* and *Victory* traded for supplies with merchants from the Dutch fort at Cochin.⁸⁶² However, access to these markets and the availability of necessary supplies was never guaranteed. If pirates had ready access to supplies from their base on Madagascar, then there may have been more incentive to remain in the Indian Ocean. Therefore, it is possible that Madagascar could have developed into a significant base of operations if the EIC had not reacted quickly to news of interlopers voyaging there to trade for slaves and illicit plunder.

By shifting focus to examine naval operations in the Indian Ocean, despite a lack of quantifiable success against pirates, it is possible to further emphasise two themes that were prevalent in the Atlantic. First, the lack of oversight of naval captains in extra-European expanses created the conditions which enabled captains to disregard the intended service of naval vessels in these stations in favour of self-interested enterprise. In these maritime spaces, the state was entirely reliant on autonomous

⁸⁵⁹ BL, IOR/B/57. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entries 11 February 1723, 20 March 1723, 7 June 1723; BL IOR/E/1/14, No. 96. Duckinfield and Hooke to the Court of Directors; IOR/D/98. Minutes of the Committee for Preventing the Growth of Private Trade, Entry 7 June 1723.

⁸⁶⁰ BL, IOR/E/1/202, 51-52. Woolley to Townshend, 6 February 1723.

⁸⁶¹ This information taken from *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16).

⁸⁶² BL, IOR/P/341/5. Bombay Proceedings, Entry 30 January 1721; BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 97. Account of Lasinby, 19 March 1722; BL, IOR/B/56. Minutes of the Court of Directors, Entry 22 March 1722.

individuals to advance their authority and this heavily obstructed their capacity to effectively police the sea. Second, the activities of the few pirate crews who operated in the Indian Ocean provide indication of the motivations that encouraged the dispersal of pirates, which primarily centred on the fact that they had taken rich prizes and each gained a significant share of plunder. This was perhaps mixed with apprehension of the naval presence in India alongside the decline of the Madagascan slave trade and the problems of market access. In this way, it is equally important to analyse the pirates' motivations for dispersing as it is to analyse the operations and undertakings of naval captains in the periphery. While there was a correlation between the pirates' dispersal and increased naval presence in the Indian Ocean, it is important to fully assess and analyse how far these were directly intertwined so as not to overstate the efficacy of naval regulation and, by extension, state authority over maritime activity in the early eighteenth century.

Conclusion

In many ways, although piracy appeared to be the central theme in these considerations, it was in fact peripheral to the underlying motivations for the subsequent responses. The EIC emphasised the potential commercial impact of piracy in order to secure legislation and a naval squadron against the Company's dual concerns of the Madagascan slave trade and the campaign against Angria on the Konkan coast. It was the ongoing commercial considerations of Bombay and Madagascar, alongside past experiences of the consequences of Atlantic piracy, that drove the EIC's petitions. Nevertheless, although there was a lack of evidence concerning actual piratical attacks in the Indian Ocean, the EIC received the strongest naval force sent against pirates, whose

captains were given an explicit mandate to suppress piracy and protect Company trade. This was distinctive from the situation occurring in Africa, the Caribbean, and North America where dominant mercantile lobbies provided evidence of actual depredations on their trade and the state manoeuvred to secure these trades by providing what naval support that it could spare to secure prioritised regions. In this case, the state's responses to piracy in the Indian Ocean were intertwined with broader discussions concerning the EIC's trade. The naval squadron that was allocated was part of the Whig's larger appeasement of EIC interests whilst they restricted the use of Indian cloth in Britain and advanced their pro-manufacturing agenda. It was these political-economic considerations, rather than concern of the threat of piracy on EIC trade, that influenced the subsequent state responses to news of Atlantic pirates operating in the Indian Ocean. That this squadron was sent to the Indian Ocean provides another perspective on the actual capacity and priority of the state to regulate maritime activity in extra-European spaces as the limited resources of the Royal Navy were employed as a means to advance the political agenda of the leading metropolitan party, rather than utilised to bolster efforts against piracy in colonial regions that were more seriously impacted. Overall, these events highlight the multifaceted considerations that motivated mercantile lobbying and state responses in the early eighteenth century. Likewise, despite the prolonged negotiations between these two groups, the subsequent outcomes did not guarantee any actual change in extra-European spaces whilst these undertakings relied on the actions of autonomous individuals. New legislation required active policing and enforcement whilst the effectiveness of naval operations was subject to the diligence of captains. In India, the pirates' dispersal was not shaped primarily by the measures implemented in the metropole but was instead encouraged by the successes that pirates found against rich shipping in the Indian Ocean. As such, when considering the decline

of Atlantic piracy in the third decade of the eighteenth century, it is important to evaluate how far this was driven by pirates' own motivations as it was by the measures that state and colonial centres enacted to discourage piracy.

III

THE SUPPRESSION OF PIRACY

Chapter Seven: The Decline of Piracy Considered, 1722-1726

“We have had little or no damage done for some time in these parts by Pirates, only by some Spaniards that call themselves Guarda Coasts...”⁸⁶³

Barrow Harris (1723)

Between 1722 and 1726, Atlantic piracy declined by such an extent that the historiography has generally agreed that 1726 marked the end of the “golden age” of piracy. Despite these assertions, the historiography has not provided a conclusive analysis of why piracy declined in this period. Instead, scholars such as Earle and Rediker emphasise that the military-legal campaign against piracy, driven by the successes of the Royal Navy and embodied by widely-publicised trials, brought about the decline in piracy.⁸⁶⁴ Alternatively, Bialuschewski and Hanna identify the changing perceptions of colonists towards pirates as the primary factor motivating this decline, as this antipathy meant that pirates were no longer welcomed in colonial ports and the markets for their plundered goods waned. This also restricted the options of mariners who were unable to re-enter colonial societies at the end of piratical voyages.⁸⁶⁵ Additionally, Hanna highlights the importance of the expansion of print media on both sides of the Atlantic in shaping negative perceptions of piracy, while Chet stresses that the increased availability of marine insurance in the 1720s offset the losses sustained by piracy and this meant merchants were less troubled by reports of piratical activity.⁸⁶⁶

⁸⁶³ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 16 June 1723.

⁸⁶⁴ Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 183-208; Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), 136-147.

⁸⁶⁵ Arne Bialuschewski, 'Pirates, markets and imperial authority: economic aspects of maritime depredations in the Atlantic World, 1716-1726', *Global Crime*, 9:1 (2008), 52-65; Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 365-415.

⁸⁶⁶ Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness* (Boston, 2014), 8-26, 51-65; Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 372-394.

Although none of these evaluations offer the definitive explanation as to why piracy declined, each of these provide some indication of the reasons why piracy made less impact on Atlantic trade after 1722. As this chapter will argue, rather than being the result of one decisive factor, the suppression of piracy was in fact a gradual and multifaceted process, shaped and influenced by multiple participants throughout the Atlantic, that gradually reduced the number of pirates operating from 1722 onwards.

This chapter first considers the activities of pirates in the colonial theatre between 1719 and 1726, outlining the areas that were primarily impacted by piracy during these years. Next, metropolitan responses to the continuing threat of piracy on key colonial trades is analysed to examine the sustained role of mercantile bodies in effecting state anti-piracy measures and outlining whether state measures significantly changed or remained conventional throughout the period. Naval operations throughout the colonial theatre are then assessed to evaluate the reasons why there were more numerous successes against pirates during this period. Despite naval success, the chapter then outlines the continued necessity for, and success of, local colonial measures against pirates. Lastly, the importance of all of these factors are considered in creating the conditions that encouraged a number of pirates to disperse and disappear, whilst also stressing the fact that piracy continued after 1726 but was no longer the chief commercial threat to Atlantic commerce. By 1726, the majority of the New Providence pirates and their offshoots had been captured, killed, or dispersed, and both metropolitan and colonial interests were focused on the more significant issue of maritime predation by Spanish guardacostas.

Piracy in the Colonial Theatre, 1719-1726

Between 1719 and 1721, there were few reports of pirates operating in the Caribbean or North America. This resulted from a combination of a number of pirates resorting to other theatres - particularly Africa, Brazil and the East Indies - alongside renewed Anglo-Spanish conflict during the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720).⁸⁶⁷ News of the war had reached the colonies by March 1719 alongside a proclamation from King George I which extended the pardon for pirates to July 1719. There was an expectation that pirates would accept the extended pardon and join colonial privateering crews fitting out against the Spanish.⁸⁶⁸ Although several privateers were commissioned from Jamaica, the Leeward Islands, New Providence, New York, and Rhode Island, there is no explicit evidence of pirates accepting the pardon and being absorbed into privateering crews.⁸⁶⁹ The drop of piratical activity in the colonial theatre during these years provides some indication that a portion of former pirates may have done so. It is more likely, however, that war with Spain produced slight change on the remaining pirate population, but rather employed those pirates who had already accepted the pardon at New Providence and other locales.⁸⁷⁰ Most pirates who had not accepted the pardon in 1718 continued to operate throughout the war. Some of these maintained a continued presence in the colonial theatre whilst others returned intermittently from

⁸⁶⁷ David J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter, 1990), 111-112.

⁸⁶⁸ *The Boston News-Letter*, 9 December 1717; TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 18 December 1718; TNA, CO 137/13, No. 30. Lawes to BOT, 24 March 1719.

⁸⁶⁹ TNA, CO 137/46, No. 37i(c). Aldcroft to Bignell, 30 March 1719; HSP, #0379 Volume 8, 191. Norris to Askew, 3 June 1719; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 13. Bennett to BOT, 8 June 1719; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 15ii. Journal of Martindale, 3 December 1719; TNA, CO 37/10, No. 15. Bennett to BOT, 24 December 1719. See also Chapter Two, 88-89.

⁸⁷⁰ See Chapter Two, 85-87, and Chapter Three, 112, 128-130. There were concerns that British privateers commissioned during the war would prove problematic when peace was declared, although there is no evidence that these concerns proved correct. HSP, #LCP.in.HSP85. Dickinson to Unspecified, 24 June 1719; TNA, ADM 1/3810. The Memorial of the Merchants of London Trading to Africa to Admiralty, 29 July 1720.

Africa and Brazil.⁸⁷¹ Hence, although accounts of piratical attacks declined, piracy did not diminish entirely in the Caribbean and North America during these years.

Nevertheless, the suppression of piracy in the colonial theatre remained largely unchanged from 1719 to 1721. There were no successes by stationed naval ships against pirates in either the Caribbean or North America, and colonial ships continued to be more effective in reducing the piratical threat. In fact, the two successes against pirates in this period marked the emergence of a new dimension in local colonial efforts against piracy as both successes were carried out by vessels with no backing or support from colonial governmental bodies. In October 1720, a Jamaican trading sloop apprehended a pirate vessel, commanded by Jack Rackham, after encountering the vessel near Jamaica.⁸⁷² Next, in early 1721, another Jamaican trading vessel captured Charles Vane on the Central American coast whilst Vane attempted to recruit a new crew.⁸⁷³ The capture and subsequent executions of Rackham and Vane, whilst occurring when both were in a weakened condition, ensured that neither could continue to recruit, increase their strength, and bolster the collective pirate threat. These were fortuitous encounters by individual captains whose exact motivations are uncertain but who seized the opportunity to suppress a piratical threat and perhaps receive a reward or share of

⁸⁷¹ For example, Bartholomew Roberts cruised in Africa and Brazil in 1719 before undertaking a voyage to the Caribbean and North America in 1720, stretching as far as Newfoundland, before returning to Africa in 1721. Arne Bialuschewski, 'Between Newfoundland and the Malacca Strait: A Survey of the Golden Age of Piracy, 1695-1725', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 90:2 (May 2004), 176-178; *The American Weekly Mercury*, 17 March 1720; *The Boston Gazette*, 20 June 1720; TNA, CO 152/13, ff. 20-35v. Hamilton to BOT, 3 October 1720; TNA, CO 137/13, No. 45. Lawes to BOT, 13 November 1720; TNA, ADM 1/2624. Vernon to Admiralty, 18 April 1721.

⁸⁷² TNA, CO 137/13, No. 45. Lawes to BOT, 13 November 1720.

⁸⁷³ Vernon only states that Vane was captured at "the Bay". He was most likely referring to the bay where Jamaican sloops traded with logwood cutters in Belize, although he may also have been referring to somewhere on the Honduran coast or Mosquito shore. TNA, ADM 1/2624. Vernon to Admiralty, 18 April 1721; Frank Griffith Dawson, 'William Pitt's Settlement at Black River on the Mosquito Shore: A Challenge to Spain in Central America, 1732-87', *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 63, No. 4 (Nov., 1983), 681-682.

plunder in the process.⁸⁷⁴ This again highlights that the suppression of piracy was fragmented and driven by local or, in these cases, individual motivations rather than coordinated metropolitan or colonial endeavour. Aside from these individual successes, no anti-piracy expeditions occurred during these years by either station ships or private colonial vessels. This is perhaps unsurprising as these vessels were instead employed against the Spanish in 1719 and 1720 but, even with the cessation of arms in 1720, there were no significant undertakings until 1722, when pirates again concentrated their depredations in the colonial theatre.

As early as January 1722, Barrow Harris, the commander-in-chief of the navy ships stationed at Jamaica, reported:

There are ... 3 or 4 Pyrate sloops in these parts that frequently do Damage to the Trade both to Windw[ar]d & Leeward of this Island and indeed in all parts they [are] Cruising at Large.⁸⁷⁵

Although there were significantly more attacks reported than between 1719 and 1721, these were committed by a few remaining pirate crews and their offshoots. Overall, the number of Atlantic pirates continuing to operate in this period was much smaller than in previous years.⁸⁷⁶ Regardless of their diminishing strength, these pirate crews were responsible for a number of depredations throughout the colonial theatre, utilising five primary locales to careen, recruit, and launch attacks. From 1722 to 1724, the principal locations utilised in the Caribbean were the Virgin Islands, particularly the island of

⁸⁷⁴ Jonathan Barnet, who seized Rackham and his crew, had been one of the privateers commissioned against pirates in 1715. TNA, CO 137/11, No. 16ii. A List of Vessels commissioned by Hamilton.

⁸⁷⁵ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 17 January 1722.

⁸⁷⁶ Bialuschewski suggests that the total number of pirates did not exceed 200 in any year after 1722. Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 180.

Saint Croix, as well as Samana Bay on the north-east end of Hispaniola. From here, pirates would cruise against shipping near Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands.⁸⁷⁷ They also appear to have used Tobago as another site where captured ships would be carried and furnished for their use.⁸⁷⁸ In North America, pirates voyaged to Newfoundland before returning to the Caribbean.⁸⁷⁹ After 1724, pirates appear to have converged on the Honduran coast, particularly amongst the Bay islands: Roatan, Utila, and Guanaja, where they continued their depredations.⁸⁸⁰ With the exception of Newfoundland, each of these regions were free from colonial oversight or presence. Newfoundland, on the other hand, was unique in that it was occupied by British settlers but was treated as a seasonal fishing station by the British state despite having a population of approximately 3,000 settlers by 1720. Consequently, Newfoundland only received naval support when squadrons were dispatched to convoy the fishing fleet. This meant that Newfoundland only received naval protection for a few months of the year, during the peak fishing season.⁸⁸¹ Pirates appear to have resorted to Newfoundland in early spring where they assaulted local fishing vessels, cleaned their own vessels in the harbours, and restocked their provisions. They also recruited stragglers who were keen to escape the harsh conditions of Newfoundland and who had been indebted due to unproductive fishing seasons and unpaid wages. The pirates then left the coast before

⁸⁷⁷ TNA, CO 314/1, No. 5. Hart to Carteret, 24 May 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 27 May 1722; TNA, ADM 3/34. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 5 June 1722; TNA, ADM 2/50, 527. Instructions to Harris, 6 June 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 1 July 1723.

⁸⁷⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1880. The Relation of Ezekell David, [1723]; TNA, CO 28/18, 754iii. Deposition of George Barrow, 8 November 1723.

⁸⁷⁹ Jerry Bannister, *The Rule of the Admirals: Law, Custom, and Naval Government in Newfoundland, 1699-1832* (Toronto, 2003), 43; Olaf Uwe Janzen, 'The Problem of Piracy in the Newfoundland Fishery in the Aftermath of the War of the Spanish Succession' in Poul Holm and Olaf Uwe Janzen (eds.), *Northern Seas: Yearbook 1997, Association for the History of the Northern Seas* (Esbjerg, 1998), 57-75.

⁸⁸⁰ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 3 April 1725; TNA, CO 23/1, No. 57ii. Deposition of John Ekines, 6 May 1725; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 4 November 1725; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 23 December 1725; Brand to Admiralty, 7 April 1726.

⁸⁸¹ Bannister, *The Rule of the Admirals*, 8, 41-43; Janzen, 'Problem of Piracy', 57-75.

naval ships arrived.⁸⁸² Therefore, even though there was a lower number of pirates operating in this period, they committed a countless number of depredations on colonial trading and fishing vessels from multiple bases and these attacks motivated metropolitan and colonial responses.⁸⁸³

Metropolitan Responses to Piracy, 1722-1726

Metropolitan mercantile groups lobbied the state to provide further measures to suppress pirates and protect trade between 1722 and 1724 after it was apparent that previous measures had largely failed. In February 1722, it was reported in the House of Commons that:

A Petition of divers Merchants, and others, trading to several Parts of the *West Indies*, and our Northern Colonies, was presented to the House, and read; setting forth, That, for several Years past, many of his Majesty's Subjects, turning Pirates, have committed continual Robberies on the *British* Trade in the *West* and *East-Indies*; so as the said *British* Trade hath already sustained greater Losses by the said Pirates than were suffered during the late *French* Wars.⁸⁸⁴

The petition stated that the previous measures taken had not been sufficient and that unless “some more effectual Remedies be taken, or more sufficient Force be employed, in reducing the said Pirates, than hath hitherto been, the Western Navigation must be

⁸⁸² TNA, ADM 1/2453. Memorial of Planters & Masters at Canteaux, [1724]; Bannister, *Rule of the Admirals*, 11-12; Janzen, ‘Problem of Piracy’, 57-75.

⁸⁸³ At least one pirate crew was reported to have been at Cape Verde in 1724, although it does not appear that they cruised on the African coast. TNA, ADM 1/1880. Hamilton to Admiralty, 19 September 1723; TNA, CO 28/44, No. 65. Worsley to Carteret, 11 January 1724; Bialuschewski, ‘Malacca Strait’, 180.

⁸⁸⁴ *Journal of the House of Commons, Vol. 19* (London, 1804), 741.

unavoidably ruined.’⁸⁸⁵ Petitions during these years were primarily driven by sugar and slave trade merchants from London and Bristol who coordinated their efforts to secure colonial trade.⁸⁸⁶ The fact that it was predominantly merchants concerned in Caribbean trade who lobbied throughout this period highlights two points. First, that piracy continued to have a significant impact in the Caribbean which is supported by the fact that many of their primary bases were in close proximity to the key sugar producing colonies. Second, that piracy no longer provided a significant threat to the Virginian tobacco trade. It is important to stress that the lack of lobbying from tobacco merchants does not mean that piracy did not obstruct shipping on the North American coast during this period. Instead, this reinforces the notion that pirates chiefly operated in regions where there was little or no naval presence. For example, they did not operate near the Virginian capes where naval vessels actively cruised from 1718 onwards.⁸⁸⁷ Although there is a clear decrease in the number of reports concerning attacks on shipping in North America as the majority of the remaining pirates concentrated their depredations in the Caribbean Sea, pirates continued to cruise on the undefended North American coastline and near colonies whose immediate vicinities lay unguarded.⁸⁸⁸ In fact, the hindrance of piracy on the Newfoundland fisheries after 1720 introduced a new dimension to metropolitan lobbying, with fishing interests in Newfoundland and England requesting protection from pirate attacks.⁸⁸⁹ It was petitioning by sugar, slave,

⁸⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸⁶ *Ibid.*; TNA, ADM 3/34. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 14 March 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 6 August 1723; TNA, CO 388/24, No. 145. Merchants trading to Jamaica to BOT, 31 May 1724.

⁸⁸⁷ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 4 December 1717; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 10 March 1718.

⁸⁸⁸ TNA, CO 5/868, ff. 296-297v. Cumings to Popple, 20 June 1722; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 320. Logan to Askew, 12 June 1723; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 322. Logan to Crosby, 2 July 1723; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 324-326. Logan to Askew, 27 July 1723; TNA, CO 5/10, ff. 376-379. Partridge to Wager, 6 January 1724; HSP, #Amb.54. Lawrence to Bluett, 13 July 1724.

⁸⁸⁹ TNA, ADM 1/2453. Memorial of Planters & Fisherman at Canteaux, [1724]; Janzen, ‘Problem of Piracy’, 57-75.

and fishing lobbies that prompted state considerations of further naval dispatches and new anti-piracy legislation in 1722.

After receiving the petition outlined above, Lord Carteret, the Secretary of State for the Southern Department, wrote to the admiralty that King George I was “determined to encourage and protect his Trading Subjects, and would have a sufficient force of shipping got ready in order to reduce the said Pirates.”⁸⁹⁰ Despite the king’s intent, there was little change to the number of ships stationed in the majority of the colonies throughout this period: Jamaica (4 to 5); Barbados (1); Leeward Islands (1); Virginia (1); New England (1); New York (1); Carolina (1). While new ships were dispatched, these were to replace those returning and were of similar size and strength. By 1722, the numbers of ships stationed in the colonies had decreased back to pre-1717 standards with Virginia and the Leeward Islands assigned only one vessel after receiving two ships in response to the piratical surge in 1717 and 1718.⁸⁹¹ The chief differences from before 1717 was that Jamaica maintained a substantial squadron, Carolina continued to receive a station ship after lobbying by London rice merchants in 1719, and one or two ships were dispatched to Africa each year whereas previously there had been none (See Appendix 7: Tables 7.1 & 7.3).⁸⁹² These were not new developments after 1722 but simply sustained the advancements of earlier years. The only exception to this was Newfoundland. Before 1722, two warships, usually a fourth- and sixth-rate, were sent to convoy the fishing fleet to Newfoundland and defend the fisheries each year. From 1723 to 1725, an extra ship was assigned to Newfoundland in response to

⁸⁹⁰ TNA, ADM 3/34. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 14 March 1722.

⁸⁹¹ An additional sloop was dispatched in 1725 that was to attend on both Virginia and Carolina. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725; TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

⁸⁹² TNA, ADM 3/31. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entries 6 February 1719, 12 February 1719.

reports and lobbying concerning the piratical depredations occurring there.⁸⁹³ Aside from this, though, naval strength in the colonies remained the same between 1722 and 1726.

The admiralty's response to Carteret in March 1722 indicates the reason why there were no additional ships dispatched to the colonies even though it was a royal request. It was noted in the Board of Admiralty minutes that Carteret was to "be acquainted that the necessary services do already Employ the Number of Men allowed by Parliament."⁸⁹⁴ Between 1721 and 1722, the average number of men employed in naval service decreased from 16,890 to 9,686 while the average number of naval ships in service reduced from 89 to 66. This trend continued throughout the period with 6,327 men employed across 61 ships in 1725 (See Appendix 7: Table 7.2).⁸⁹⁵ This was an intentional adjustment of naval resources by the state with the aim to reduce naval spending in the post-war period. As has been discussed in previous chapters, the state had maintained large Mediterranean and Baltic squadrons during the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720) and the Great Northern War (1700-1721). After November 1721, both squadrons had been recalled. Yet, rather than redistribute the bulk of these to other squadrons, the majority were paid off. While naval presence in Africa and India had benefitted from the return of these squadrons, the colonies did not receive any additional ships in their wake (See Appendix 7: Tables 7.3 and 7.4).⁸⁹⁶ There were only so many naval resources that could be allocated to extra-European waters and the state's priority at this time was to reduce naval expenditure; it was unwilling to

⁸⁹³ In 1723, this was an additional fourth-rate while afterwards one fourth-, fifth-, and sixth-rate were appointed each year instead. TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725; TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

⁸⁹⁴ TNA, ADM 3/34. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 14 March 1722.

⁸⁹⁵ The number of men and ships employed increased dramatically in 1726 as renewed conflict necessitated the revival of the Baltic and Mediterranean squadrons. An additional fleet was dispatched to the Caribbean to blockade Porto Bello. TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

⁸⁹⁶ TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725. See Chapter Five, 206-209, and Chapter Six, 241-243.

provide any further resources to the colonies beyond the extra convoy ship to Newfoundland. That the state continued to sustain a strong naval presence in Jamaica and dispatched two ships each year to Africa, despite the general reduction of ships in active service, shows that securing key colonial trades from pirates remained an important, if auxiliary, priority. One further, and less-costly, measure that was implemented in the metropole was new anti-piracy legislation.

In early 1722, Parliament passed ‘An Act for the more effectual suppressing of Piracy’.⁸⁹⁷ The key intent of this new law appears to have been to rectify two major complaints that were continually raised by colonial officials: the inability to try accessories to piracy in the colonies, and the tendencies of naval captains to disregard their stations in order to trade. In 1719, the Jamaican Governor, Nicholas Lawes, stressed the need to sanction the trying of accessories to piracy in the colonies:

I could have wish’t there had been a clause incerted in the Commission [for trying pirates] to have empower[e]d the Commissioners therein ... to have tried the accessarys of pyracy, for I am persuaded, were the pirates not supplied with necessarys, and received intelligence from shoar greater numbers wou[ld] have come in and embraced H[is] M[ajesty’s] pardon.⁸⁹⁸

Before 1722, accessories to piracy could only be tried in England, which meant offenders had to be apprehended and sent home.⁸⁹⁹ As such, there was little action taken against those who traded with and supplied pirates. The 1722 Act legislated that any persons found to be dealing with pirates were to be deemed not as accessories to piracy,

⁸⁹⁷ 8 Geo I, c.24.

⁸⁹⁸ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 30. Lawes to BOT, 24 March 1719.

⁸⁹⁹ TNA, CO 138/16, 227-236. BOT to Lawes, 9 July 1719.

but as pirates themselves. This meant that they could then be prosecuted under the same commissions granted to colonial officials to try pirates. The second key provision of the act was an attempt to curb the issue of navy ships leaving their stations undefended and undertaking trading voyages. This was a particularly prevalent issue in Jamaica, where there were numerous reports that naval ships were trading on the Central American coast rather than defending Jamaican trade, but those stationed in Jamaica were not the sole offenders.⁹⁰⁰ For example, it was reported in early 1722 that John Waldron, the captain of the New York station ship, was killed by Spaniards whilst trading at Puerto de Marien on the Northern Cuban coast.⁹⁰¹ Likewise, Thomas Mathews' undertakings in India demonstrate that this was a prevailing issue in extra-European waters.⁹⁰² This legislation sought to deal with the issue by stipulating that naval captains would be court-martialled if they received any merchandize on board their ships with intent to trade.⁹⁰³ The 1722 act was the state's attempt at suppressing piracy by hindering illicit markets and restricting the self-interested pursuits of naval captains. Both provisions were passed with the intent that this would create a much more hostile environment for pirates to operate in, with more proactive naval vessels and less willing traders.

Therefore, throughout this latter period, metropolitan responses to piracy remained conventional. The state attempted to influence the situation in the colonies through the two methods it had always employed: sustained naval support for key regions and decrees aimed at subduing the threat. In 1718, this had been a royal proclamation of pardon while in 1722, this was new anti-piracy legislation. Nevertheless,

⁹⁰⁰ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 13. Lawes to BOT, 21 June 1718; TNA, CO 137/12, No. 16iii. Address of the Council and Assembly of Jamaica to the King, 9 August 1718.

⁹⁰¹ TNA, ADM 1/2096. Smith to Martin, 3 May 1722; AGI, Santo Domingo, 338. El Rey al Gobernador de la Habana, 13 de noviembre de 1722.

⁹⁰² See Chapter Six, 251-253.

⁹⁰³ 8 Geo I, c.24.

this legislation was a new attempt to negate the effects of naval autonomy in the colonial theatre. By examining naval operations in the colonial theatre between 1722 and 1726, it is possible to analyse the effects of this legislation.

Naval Operations in the Colonial Theatre, 1722-1726

First, it is necessary to outline the recurring issues that inhibited naval operations throughout the period that the state did not counteract, or that the new legislation did not successfully thwart. Alongside the prevailing issues such as mortality, morbidity, and the effects of shipworms, the two main obstructions to the effectiveness of station ships against pirates were the types of ships dispatched to the colonies and the autonomy of naval captains. Despite continued requests for smaller vessels which could chase pirates through the shoals and inlets where they often escaped, the admiralty continued to predominantly assign fourth-, fifth- and sixth-rate vessels as station ships. In January 1723, Barrow Harris, the commander-in-chief of the ships stationed at Jamaica, requested that two or three sixth-rates or sloops that were well fitted for rowing be added to the squadron as, at that time, there were two fourth-rates, two fifth-rates, and only one sloop attending on Jamaica.⁹⁰⁴ Harris went as far as to suggest that, if necessary, he would send one of the fifth-rates back to England as the requested ships would be “of more service than one of those [fifth-rate] ships can be.”⁹⁰⁵ A similar

⁹⁰⁴ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 20 January 1723; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725.

⁹⁰⁵ It is interesting that Harris requested sixth-rates which were still incapable of following pirates amongst the shoals, but these would have still been more effective against pirates than the larger ships that lacked the necessary manoeuvrability and speed. TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 20 January 1723

opinion appeared in an anonymous paper outlining significant concerns of the sugar lobby in 1724:

...if lesser ships were appointed for the stations I mean of 30 Guns or under, the trade would be better secured and the Expence very much more lessened, then if we sent out large ships against the said Pirates, and who can never follow them into shallow water, which hath been found true by frequent experience.⁹⁰⁶

In response to Harris, the admiralty sent the *Spence* sloop to Jamaica in May 1723 to replace the fifth-rate *Mermaid* which was due to return to England. Aside from this, the only other sloop dispatched in this period was the *Shark* sloop which was assigned to attend on both Virginia and Carolina in 1725.⁹⁰⁷ Although it dispatched these sloops, the admiralty continued to have a skewed perception of what ships were best equipped to deal with pirates, placing the focus on stronger ships over smaller, faster vessels despite knowledge and reports of the successes of small colonial vessels against pirates in the preceding years.⁹⁰⁸ This is evidenced by the fact that, when the king requested additional ships in 1722, the admiralty was of the opinion that “those of the Fourth Rate will be fittest for this service.”⁹⁰⁹ By failing to recognise the realities of suppressing pirates in the colonial theatre, the admiralty continued to send station ships which were fundamentally ineffective in chasing smaller pirate vessels.⁹¹⁰ This is particularly significant as, at this time, the remaining pirates predominantly operated in small vessels. However, it is important to also recognise that if smaller vessels were sent to defend the

⁹⁰⁶ TNA, CO 388/24, No. 155. Anonymous paper on the Sugar trade, [22 July] 1724.

⁹⁰⁷ TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725.

⁹⁰⁸ See Chapter Four, 156-177.

⁹⁰⁹ TNA, ADM 3/34. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 14 March 1722.

⁹¹⁰ For an example of this see TNA, ADM 1/1880. The Relation of Ezekell David, [1723].

colonies against pirates rather than the traditional fifth- and sixth-rate warships, then the colonies would be exposed to European warships if war broke out. Although stations ships were instructed to voyage against pirates, this was not their sole purpose. Instead, the limited number of navy vessels that could be allocated to the colonial theatre were employed to convoy and protect merchant vessels in times of peace, whilst also providing for the defence of royal colonies and British shipping in times of war. This required that the majority of those assigned needed to be of a certain strength. Hence, whilst sloops were required for the suppression of piracy, warships were essential for the other functions of colonial service and, at a time when the state was actively reducing naval expenditure, there was simply not the available resources to assign additional sloops to each station. For the most part, each station continued to be assigned the same size and number of ships as previously.

The second issue, the autonomy of naval captains, had been one of the key hindrances to naval success against pirates throughout the entire period. While restricting naval captains from taking goods on board, the new legislation made no attempt to curb naval autonomy in the colonial theatre. Naval captains continued to dictate the service of the ship and could choose whether or not to accept input from colonial officials. As a result, questions of authority often led to conflicts between the two groups. For example, the Jamaican Governor, the Duke of Portland, wrote in 1723:

I should be glad to say, that their conduct was such, as his Majesties service, and the good of this Island requires from them, but that will more fully appear upon enquiry they carry matters so high as to think, that they are equals [to] his Maj[est]ys Capt[ain] Generall ... particularly the Comm[odore] [who sees himself as] superior

to everybody here, no one except, no Grand Visir in Turkey can support the dignity of his post in a more extraordinary manner.⁹¹¹

Portland later stated in 1724 that if “one seems to take the least notice of what they do, tho[ugh] it be the most irregular thing in the world, their answer is, that they are independent, equal to the King’s Governours, and above the Council.”⁹¹² These disagreements led to a lack of coordination or dialogue between naval ships and colonial officials which, in turn, obstructed endeavours to suppress pirates impacting local vicinities. For example, in 1726, a sloop was fitted out by the governor and council of Massachusetts to proceed against a small pirate vessel on the coast. Due to a previous dispute, the captain of the station ship was not involved with the operation. Moreover, the captain had requested help from the governor to recruit additional seamen in order to go in quest of the pirate, but was refused. When the armed sloop proceeded out of Boston, it was fired upon by the station ship which thwarted the intended voyage. The captain later claimed that he had not been informed of the operation and that he thought the sloop had been run away with by pirates, whereas the governor claimed that the captain had been informed of the voyage and it was offered as one of the reasons that additional seamen could not be provided to the naval ship.⁹¹³ Whatever the case, this example illustrates how tensions between naval captains and colonial officials over questions of authority obstructed the effectiveness of naval vessels to suppress pirates. While in this case conflict hindered the naval captain’s ability to voyage against pirates, it

⁹¹¹ TNA, CO 137/14, ff. 219-220. Portland to Berkeley, 23 July 1723.

⁹¹² TNA, CO 137/52, ff. 35-39. Portland to [Carteret], 4 March 1724.

⁹¹³ TNA, CO 5/10, No. 183. Memorial of the Lt. Governor and Council of Massachusetts to the King, 8 July 1726; TNA, ADM 1/1598. Willard to Cornwall, 30 June 1726; TNA, ADM 1/1598. Cornwall to Admiralty, 4 July 1726.

was often the case that captains simply refused such operations despite requests by or intelligence from colonial officials.

Likewise, the success of the 1722 act in preventing naval ships from leaving their stations to go trading was thwarted by the continued autonomy of naval captains in the colonial theatre. There are existing accounts that state Jamaican naval captains actively circumvented the provisions of the legislation. One account outlined that this was done by hiring or buying sloops, loading them with goods, and furnishing them with crew and victuals from the navy ship. The warship would then convoy the sloops from port to port, carrying on a trade through the sloop rather than on board the naval ship, thereby circumventing the decree prohibiting naval ships taking merchant goods on board. Another account reported that Jamaican station ships charged a fee to convoy vessels to the Central American coast, thus continuing to make a profit whilst carrying out their orders.⁹¹⁴ Both accounts need to be treated with some scepticism though, as the first was written by Portland during his conflict with naval captains stationed on Jamaica and the other is an anonymous account. These could have been written with the intention to slander captains stationed on Jamaica as there are no further reports of this occurring in either Jamaica or elsewhere. In spite of this potential bias, it is feasible that there was truth to these accounts given the previous reports of naval ships being employed to advance the fortunes of self-interested captains. Such reports also give a possible, and plausible, explanation of the reasons why Jamaican naval ships proactively convoyed ships, particularly to Central America, from 1723 onwards.

The admiralty dispatched new instructions to Caribbean station ships in June 1722 after Richard Harris, one of the primary sugar and slave trade lobbyists, informed

⁹¹⁴ TNA, CO 137/14, ff. 223-224. Portland to Carteret, 25 July 1723; TNA, CO 388/24, No. 155. Anonymous paper of the Sugar trade, [22 July] 1724.

that the chief rendezvous of pirates was Saint Croix in the Virgin Islands.⁹¹⁵ The station ships at Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands were instructed to investigate Saint Croix as well as Samana Bay, which they had learned was another pirate haunt, whenever the ships could be spared from the services of their stations.⁹¹⁶ This order was carried out by the various Caribbean station ships throughout 1723, with Commander-in-Chief Barrow Harris frequently ordering one of the Jamaican ships to cruise to the eastward as far as Saint Croix, looking into Samana Bay en route, and the Leeward Islands station ship undertaking multiple visits to the Virgin Islands, but no pirates were encountered during these voyages.⁹¹⁷ Ellis Brand, the captain of the Leeward Islands station ship, reported that he could “noe ways get Information from the Inhabitants, in those parts or any ways find that there had been any Pirates thereab[ou]ts at the time it had been represented to me.”⁹¹⁸ This is further evidence that, even when naval ships followed instructions, the successful suppression of piracy required a certain degree of luck to encounter pirates. This was particularly problematic during this latter period as there were fewer pirates active. Still, the fact that the navy neither encountered pirate vessels nor gained intelligence of their whereabouts, even with active cruising throughout the year to locales where pirates actively operated, suggests that pirates may have learned of the increased naval presence at the Virgin Islands and, in response, utilised different regions. Indeed, it is plausible that the inhabitants of the Virgin Islands warned pirates of the naval ships patrolling amongst the islands as there are frequent

⁹¹⁵ TNA, ADM 3/34. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 5 June 1722.

⁹¹⁶ TNA, ADM 2/50, 527. Instructions to Brown and Brand, 6 June 1722; TNA, ADM 2/50, 527. Instructions to Harris, 6 June 1722; TNA, ADM 2/50, 563-565. Instructions to Elford, 25 September 1722.

⁹¹⁷ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Dent, 23 March 1723; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 1 July 1723; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 16 July 1723; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 10 August 1723. TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 16 November 1723; TNA, ADM 1/1598. Cooper to Admiralty, 4 March 1724.

⁹¹⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 16 July 1723.

reports that the inhabitants corresponded with and supplied pirates.⁹¹⁹ Therefore, although the stationed captains appear to have followed their instructions by cruising to the Virgin Islands, these efforts proved fruitless. Instead, it was on the Central American coast, where Jamaican station ships proactively cruised in 1725 and 1726, that naval successes against pirates in the Caribbean occurred.

In 1725, Harris wrote to the admiralty, “We have not sustained any Damage by the Pirates, many months past, only in the Bay of Honduras where they give us some Trouble.”⁹²⁰ From 1725, the majority of the remaining pirates congregated on the Honduran coast. In response, the fifth-rate *Diamond* and *Spence* sloop, both Jamaican station ships, actively cruised on the coast, particularly around the Bay islands - Roatan, Utila, and Guanaja - where the pirates were reported to primarily resort. These patrols produced a few minor victories for the navy when the *Diamond* and *Spence* chased a small number of pirates, often causing the pirates to burn their vessels and disperse.⁹²¹ Nevertheless, there were very few pirates actually captured until 1726 when the chief naval success against pirates in the Caribbean was undertaken by a naval lieutenant, named Bridge, in a small Spanish sloop, recaptured from pirates and manned with fifty sailors from the *Diamond*. This small crew proceeded to the Bay islands and Moskito coast where they engaged and captured a number of pirates, causing the rest to flee.⁹²² After this voyage, there were few reports of pirates operating in the Caribbean, but it is important not to overstress the effectiveness of Bridge’s expedition. This occurred at a time when the pirates were in largely desperate situations; they were a small population scattered throughout the Honduran coast. That several pirates were captured during this

⁹¹⁹ TNA, CO 152/14, ff. 302-308v. Hart to BOT, 12 July 1724.

⁹²⁰ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 3 April 1725.

⁹²¹ *Ibid*; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 4 November 1725; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 23 December 1725.

⁹²² TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 7 April 1726.

voyage provides another example of naval success being enabled through access to suitable vessels for chasing pirates. The fifth-rate *Diamond* could not navigate the same shallow waters as the small Spanish sloop, and this proved vital in capturing and dispersing these small crews of pirates who were operating in similar sized vessels or canoes.⁹²³ This was an issue that was raised persistently throughout the period, but never effectually rectified by the admiralty.

A further point that Bridge's expedition highlights, is that naval success was also dependent on the diligence of captains who actively pursued pirates. The *Diamond* was regularly employed in searching for pirates on the Honduran coast throughout 1725 and 1726. This was primarily motivated by the need to protect illicit Jamaican trade to the Honduran coast. The Bay islands were in close proximity to the key centres of this trade; Trujillo, in particular, which developed throughout the 1720s as one of the chief entrepôts of Anglo-Spanish contraband trade.⁹²⁴ The *Diamond* was sent to the Honduran coast not to suppress pirates but to convoy Jamaican trading vessels to locations near the Bay islands.⁹²⁵ While suppressing pirates was part of protecting this trade, it is probable that the active pursuit of pirates on the Honduran coast was not solely driven by the desire to diligently follow orders. This may also have been an unintentional consequence of the Piracy Act of 1722. It was on the Central American coast that naval ships had been reported to trade throughout the period, and it was also where they were allegedly charging fees to convoy vessels after 1722. Increased naval activity against pirates on the Honduran coast, then, may have been occasioned by the need to protect trading vessels that naval officials had outfitted themselves, or to safeguard those vessels that were paying for protection. Again, it is important to stress that there is little

⁹²³ *Ibid*; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 3 April 1725.

⁹²⁴ Taylor E. Mack, 'Contraband Trade Through Trujillo, Honduras, 1720s-1782', *Yearbook. Conference of Latin Americanist Geographers*, Vol. 24 (1998), 45-48.

⁹²⁵ TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 23 December 1725.

surviving evidence of these practices occurring but it does appear plausible given accounts of naval activity prior to 1723. Regardless, the 1722 legislation appears to have motivated increased naval endeavour throughout the Caribbean. Although this did not result in a number of substantial victories over pirates, it did create a much more hostile environment for pirates to operate in.

Increased naval activity throughout the Atlantic, particularly in Africa and the Caribbean, provided an active deterrent which discouraged pirates. It is clear that pirates would operate in defenceless regions and move on before naval ships could respond. For example, as discussed, pirates moved from the Virgin Islands after naval ships began actively cruising there. This was similar to the situation in Africa where there were no further accounts of pirates operating on the African coast after Ogle's success against Bartholomew Roberts in 1722 and the development of a yearly convoy system in which two ships were sent each year, at different intervals, to range the African coast before convoying trading vessels to Barbados and Jamaica.⁹²⁶ Likewise, pirates operating in India were motivated to suspend their activities, or return to the Atlantic, when news was received of the naval squadron that had been dispatched to the Indian Ocean.⁹²⁷ Thus, proactive cruising by naval vessels in Africa and the Caribbean seem to have provided a significant deterrent for pirates in the 1720s.

For the North American colonies and Newfoundland, there is little equivalent evidence that naval vessels acted as an active deterrent. There was only one success by a North American station ship against pirates in this latter period when Peter Solgard, the captain of the New York station ship, engaged two pirate sloops under the command of

⁹²⁶ See Chapter Five, 218-219.

⁹²⁷ See Chapter Six, 254-256.

Edward Low near Block Island in 1723 and captured one of the sloops and crew.⁹²⁸ Aside from this success, which was the first and only victory of a station ship over pirates in North America, the navy appear to have been unsuccessful in deterring pirates from operating on the North American coast. These ships were not as proactive in ranging the coast or seas like those in the Caribbean and Africa. Unlike the Caribbean and African warships, those stationed in North America were not instructed to proactively cruise for pirates but were confined to their stations in order to protect the nearby vicinities and to convoy trading vessels beyond the local capes. North American station ships were only to respond after pirates were reported on the coast. For example, Solgard had only left his station after receiving advice that pirates had been operating nearby.⁹²⁹ As a result, this reactive approach only discouraged pirates from operating in specific localities and did not deter pirates from operating on the still-undefended expanses of North American coastline.⁹³⁰ For example, there was a stark decline of depredations near the Virginian capes after additional station ships were dispatched in 1717.⁹³¹ In Newfoundland, although there were few accounts of pirates after 1725, it is hard to evaluate how significant the extra naval ship was in this development as they continued to be assigned to Newfoundland for the fishing season only. Whilst present, naval ships did cruise more actively amongst the banks, and the defence of Newfoundland was also bolstered by two warships sent from France. In 1724, these French warships appear to have had the two sole successes against pirates

⁹²⁸ Low escaped with their principal vessel which carried the majority of their accumulated plunder. HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 320. Logan to Askew, 12 June 1723; TNA, ADM 1/2452. Solgard to Admiralty, 12 June 1723; TNA, CO 5/1085, No. 35. Burnet to Carteret, 25 June 1723; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 322. Logan to Crosby, 2 July 1723; HSP, #0379 Volume 10, 324-326. Logan to Askew, 27 July 1723.

⁹²⁹ TNA, ADM 1/2452. Solgard to Admiralty, 12 June 1723.

⁹³⁰ TNA, ADM 1/2453. Solgard to Admiralty, 25 May 1724.

⁹³¹ See Chapter Four, 149-150. TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 4 December 1717; TNA, ADM 1/1472. Brand to Admiralty, 10 March 1718; TNA, ADM 1/2453. Solgard to Admiralty, 25 May 1724.

operating in Newfoundland.⁹³² These successes may have discouraged further piratical attacks in Newfoundland, although this was more likely due to the fact that they further reduced the already small number of pirates still operating on the North American coast, rather than the short-term naval presence providing an active deterrent. It was only in the immediate localities of key colonial stations that naval vessels provided substantial discouragement to pirates operating along the North American coastline. There was no attempt to safeguard the entirety of the North American coast due to the lack of available state resources and the compulsion to defend royal colonies, or colonies with specific lobbying interests such as South Carolina, over others. As such, the suppression or dispersal of pirates in regions that received little or no naval support continued to require active colonial participation.

Metropolitan responses remained concentrated on defending key colonial regions whilst attempting to alter the situation through legislation. State resources remained necessarily finite and state authority only extended so far across the Atlantic. Consequently, beyond an identification that smaller ships would be better equipped to chase pirates and placing some further restrictions on naval autonomy, there was little more the state had the capacity to do. Even so, each of these points had their own disadvantages. If colonial officials had full authority over naval captains, then they could easily abuse that power for their own gain and undermine the directives of the admiralty. If smaller vessels were sent to defend the colonies against pirates rather than the traditional warships, then the colonies would be exposed to European warships if war broke out. Even though the 1722 legislation made some impression on the overall effectiveness of naval ships, particularly in the Caribbean, the state's ability to regulate Atlantic maritime activity remained firmly dictated by the limitation of naval resources

⁹³² TNA, ADM 1/1473. Bouler to Admiralty, 13 August 1724; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Bouler to Admiralty, 4 October 1725.

that could be allocated to extra-European spaces. The second key provision of the 1722 act, permitting prosecution of accessories to piracy in the colonial theatre, relied on the resources and abilities of colonial bodies to actively seek out and prosecute accessories to piracy. As shall be discussed, this was a difficult and, in many ways, impossible task.

Colonial Responses to Piracy, 1722-1726

Colonial vessels, fitted out at the expense of colonial governmental bodies, continued to play a necessary role in the suppression of piracy in this latter period. In 1724, the metropolitan agent for Rhode Island reported:

The Governm[en]t of Rhoad Island have all along in time of warr done more execution ag[ain]st the privateers than any of the King's Governm[en]ts on that Continent and been more ready and expeditious in sending out vessells of warr in quest of pirates (when that coast has been infested with them) than any of their neighbouring Provinces without any charge to the Crown.⁹³³

Two sloops had been dispatched from Rhode Island in response to pirates operating in the nearby vicinity in 1717, and two sloops were again furnished by the government in 1722 against two small pirate vessels committing depredations on the coast. The Boston government also funded a sloop to pursue the same pirates, as the New England station

⁹³³ TNA, CO 5/10, ff. 376-379. Partridge to Wager, 6 January 1724.

ship had left to protect the fishery at Canso, Nova Scotia.⁹³⁴ This absence had been occasioned by merchants from Exeter and Barnstaple petitioning the admiralty for naval support for the Canso fishery in 1721. In response, the New England ship was given additional instructions to cruise to Nova Scotia and protect the Canso fishery during the fishing season which occasioned the New England coast to be left exposed.⁹³⁵ Consequently, both colonies were necessitated to supply their own maritime defence as Rhode Island did not receive metropolitan naval support and the New England station ship was required to defend an additional region, leaving the station vulnerable to piratical attacks for a significant part of the year. Like previous colonial endeavours, these were reactive measures against pirates impeding trade in the immediate localities of each colonial government. There was little more that these colonies could do with their limited available resources. It was only in Jamaica, which had access to greater revenues than the majority of the colonies, that a sloop was fitted out as a preventative measure to defend the island's coasts. In 1722, the Jamaican assembly, with the full support of the governor and council, passed an Act which provided the funds to maintain a sloop to guard the Jamaican coast from pirates for twelve months as "his Majesties ships station[e]d here have not been altogether sufficient for that purpose."⁹³⁶ Although the Jamaican station ships were more proactive after 1722, at least one sloop continued to be employed by the assembly throughout the period as it was reported in a petition by merchants trading to Jamaica in 1724 that "the Planters of Jamaica are at an annuall Expence of £5000 a year & sometimes Double to fitt Out ships of Warr to protect the said Island."⁹³⁷ Although this sum may have been exaggerated, it highlights the large costs associated with maintaining a sloop to guard colonial coasts. The

⁹³⁴ TNA, CO 5/868, ff. 296-297v. Cumings to Popple, 20 June 1722.

⁹³⁵ TNA, ADM 2/50, 389. Instructions to Durrell, 3 May 1721.

⁹³⁶ TNA, CO 137/14, ff. 184-187. Lawes to BOT, 10 December 1722.

⁹³⁷ TNA, CO 388/24, No. 145. Merchants trading to Jamaica to BOT, 31 May 1724.

majority of the colonies, particularly those in North America, did not have access to the kind of revenue that was necessary to maintain a marine presence; they could only react as circumstances allowed. Despite the cost of furnishing these sloops, none of these encountered pirates operating in their localities between 1722 and 1726. Nonetheless, similar to the earlier discussion, these sloops may have motivated pirates to disperse from the local coasts and operate elsewhere. Although this did not result in the direct reduction of the pirate population, the sloops had the intended benefit of ridding vicinities of immediate threats.

One of the most substantial victories against pirates during this period occurred due to the agency of a colonial actor. This transpired in 1724 without the support or backing of colonial governments when Walter Moor, the captain of a South Sea Company trading sloop, encountered George Lowther at Blanquilla, an island off the Venezuelan coast. Moor successfully surprised, engaged and captured Lowther's sloop and twenty-four pirates, although Lowther and a handful of the crew managed to escape on shore.⁹³⁸ Moor outlined his motivations for engaging Lowther in his deposition:

... [I] supposed the sloop to be a Pirate, And did find the sloop just Careened with her sails unbent and her Great Gunns on shore, so took that advantage to attack her before she could gett in a Readiness to attack the said [South Sea Company] sloop Eagle...⁹³⁹

This was a pre-emptive assault on a pirate vessel by a trading sloop to prevent the pirates from getting into an attacking position. It resulted in the successful capture of a pirate sloop and the majority of its crew. The rest of the crew were later captured on

⁹³⁸ TNA, CO 152/14, ff. 289-289v. Deposition of Walter Moor, March 1724.

⁹³⁹ *Ibid.*

Blanquilla by a Spanish sloop sent from Cumana, Venezuela, after Moor informed them of the pirate's presence there; four of the crew were captured while Lowther was found dead with a pistol by his side, having seemingly shot himself. Lowther was one of the foremost pirates in this latter period, and his demise marked a significant victory in the suppression of piracy.⁹⁴⁰ It was after this point that accounts of piracy throughout the colonial theatre declined as the remaining pirates resorted to the Honduran coast. Again, this victory highlights the three prevalent factors that were often critical to the successful defeat of pirates: the agency of captains, the use of suitable vessels, and the luck to encounter pirates. Without these three factors, this victory would not have transpired. Although this occurred without the support of colonial government, it demonstrates that the independent activities of colonial actors, whether officials, merchants, or ship captains, were as important as naval vessels in creating a hostile environment for pirates to operate within. It was only through the undertakings of all of these actors that it was possible to deter or dislodge pirates from local colonial coasts. Even though these activities remained detached, any effective suppression of piracy required this collective effort as neither colonial or state centres had the available resources to adequately discourage piracy throughout the Atlantic world.

This idea of a lack of resources of both state and colony is demonstrated when considering the endurance of markets that sustained piracy throughout the 1720s. Undeterred by the 1722 legislation, the illicit trade between pirates and colonial traders continued. Given the nature of this trade, the accounts for this are fragmented but there is enough evidence to suggest that this practice continued throughout the colonial theatre. For example, there are reports that traders from Bermuda, Jamaica, and the

⁹⁴⁰ *Ibid*; Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 180-181.

Virgin Islands were actively supplying pirates after 1722.⁹⁴¹ The surviving reports make it clear that whilst there was colonial opposition towards pirates operating off local colonial coasts and attacking local colonial trade, this opposition did not then extend throughout the Atlantic and obstruct markets for illicit plunder. A portion of the colonial community continued to transact with pirates in a high-risk, opportunistic trade. This point was confirmed as late as 1724 by the governor of Bermuda when he wrote “I am very sorry to say it; but these people do not look upon those monsters [pirates] with that abhorrence which they ought to do.”⁹⁴² Although this trade continued, there was little effort to seek out accessories to piracy. This was an incredibly difficult task as the displacing of pirates from New Providence had removed the centre of illicit dealings between traders and pirates. As a result, after 1718, these transactions were carried out in a sporadic ship-based trade that took place without any centre, occurring between individual trading and pirate vessels in the obscure inlets and islands of the Atlantic Commons.⁹⁴³ Gaining evidence of such a small-scale illicit trade was highly implausible. For example, when the governor of the Leeward Islands complained about the inhabitants of the Virgin Isles supporting pirates, he stated that he could get no “positive proof” of this practice but that there was “a strong presumption” that it occurred.⁹⁴⁴ Neither colonial governments nor naval vessels could effectively police a trade that was carried out in an impromptu manner in the uncontrolled or contested spaces of the Atlantic and, consequently, this legislation made little quantifiable impact.⁹⁴⁵ While in general there was a decline of open colonial sponsorship of piracy

⁹⁴¹ TNA, CO 37/10, No. 38. Hope to BOT, 21 February 1723; TNA, CO 37/11, ff. 113-118v. Hope to BOT, 20 March 1724; TNA, CO 152/14, ff. 302-308v. Hart to BOT, 12 July 1724; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Brand to Admiralty, 23 December 1725.

⁹⁴² TNA, CO 37/11, ff. 36-44. Hope to BOT, 14 January 1724.

⁹⁴³ Bialuschewski, ‘Pirates, markets and imperial authority’, 52-65; Chet, *Ocean is a Wilderness*, 53.

⁹⁴⁴ TNA, CO 152/14, ff. 302-308v. Hart to BOT, 12 July 1724.

⁹⁴⁵ Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1793* (Chapel Hill, 2010), 212-256.

due to changing perceptions of commerce raiding in the early eighteenth century, it is important not to overstate this point as illicit trade continued to occur between pirates and traders throughout the Atlantic Commons.⁹⁴⁶

That is not to say, however, that this legislation did not act as further discouragement to some colonial traders. The prospects of being tried and executed as a pirate, alongside the more proactive cruising by naval vessels amongst the Virgin and Bay Islands, might have unsettled traders who were otherwise interested in the illicit plunder trade. Compounding these considerations was the fact that the trade in plundered goods was under the greater control of colonial traders rather than the pirates themselves. Whereas seventeenth-century pirates travelled to colonial ports to trade, it was colonial traders who made the choice to transact with pirates in the eighteenth century. Without a centre for this trade, markets would have gradually faded as colonial traders did not have a specific region to call at for guaranteed plunder and, alternatively, this took place on a small-scale ship-by-ship basis determined by individual opportunistic encounters in the Atlantic Commons. The descriptions of violent piratical attacks on British vessels printed in colonial newspapers and pamphlets would have further discouraged colonial traders from seeking out this trade as the risks began to outweigh the benefits. Without safe and guaranteed markets, the opportunities for both pirates and colonial traders to profit from plundered goods declined and this led to a decrease in both activities. Yet, they did not disappear.⁹⁴⁷ While the legislation was practically impossible to enforce with the limited resources of the state and colonies, the

⁹⁴⁶ See Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 365-415.

⁹⁴⁷ This discussion is based on Koot's argument concerning British interimperial trade in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in which he evidences that Anglo-Dutch colonial trade became less important after British colonial traders took control of the trade by using their own shipping and gradually chose to focus on the opportunities offered by trading predominantly with other British colonies. Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York, 2011), 215-228. See Hanna for a discussion of how colonial newspapers and printed pamphlets may have shaped colonial perceptions of pirates. Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 365-415.

potential consequences of the trade were heightened which may have discouraged colonial traders and, in turn, provided further motivation for pirates to disperse as the environment became more hostile and markets more uncertain.

Colonial measures continued to be as important as naval activity in sustaining the momentum against piracy in the third decade of the eighteenth century. Colonial actors, determined to secure their local boundaries and trade, actively proceeded against pirates operating in their vicinities. Thus, there was not a more coordinated state war against piracy after 1722 and, instead, anti-piracy operations continued as a series of disjointed campaigns which aimed to safeguard immediate localities. The colonial governments could not have achieved more, since they did not have the resources to mount anything more than short-term reactive campaigns against pirates in nearby waters. Neither metropolitan nor colonial measures proved entirely effective in suppressing pirates in the early eighteenth century. While there were a small number of victories by both naval and private colonial vessels that reduced the pirate population, these measures remained conventional and pragmatic. More important was the fact that these actions increasingly appear to have motivated a number of pirates to end their activities and disperse amongst the colonial population.

The Dispersal of Pirates Considered

While metropolitan, naval, and colonial endeavours slowly reduced the Atlantic pirate presence, they did not pursue and eliminate all pirates from the colonial theatre. In order to evaluate the reasons why piratical attacks dwindled and were no longer as assiduously reported after 1722, it is important to understand both the dispersal of pirates and the increased activity of the Spanish guardacosta in the 1720s. As early as

October 1722, there was an account given by a victim of piracy that his captors had “all Express a very great desire to leave off that way of Living if might be pardon[e]d”.⁹⁴⁸ There are multiple reports from 1722 onwards of pirates requesting pardons or simply scattering amongst colonial communities. There were two analogous reasons for this.

Firstly, the campaigns against specific pirate crews and bases by colonial and naval actors between 1717 and 1726 gradually eliminated a large number of Atlantic pirates. Of equal importance were the indirect measures, particularly increased convoying and active cruising throughout the Atlantic, that gradually created a more hostile environment that made piracy much less desirable and motivated pirates to disperse. Increased naval and colonial marine presence on Atlantic coasts meant that piracy was a much riskier and less lucrative undertaking. While the entirety of the coastline could not be secured, the once undefended capes, islands, and coastal expanses where colonial shipping frequented were increasingly better protected through detached naval and colonial endeavour. This situation was bolstered by ships outfitted from the colonies of other nations, particularly the French, to protect their trade from pirates.⁹⁴⁹ This meant that the pirates of the latter period could not remain in one locale for any significant length of time before vessels were sent in pursuit of them and, as such, had to focus on taking small undefended coastal traders rather than preying on the more lucrative ships entering or exiting colonial ports.⁹⁵⁰ Furthermore, proactive cruising by Caribbean station ships, particularly to the Virgin and Bay Islands, meant that pirates were unable to establish an effective base of operations in the isolated regions of the

⁹⁴⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 13 October 1722.

⁹⁴⁹ Discussions took place between the British and French colonial governments in the Leeward Islands to coordinate against pirates but these did not result in any joint ventures. TNA, CO 28/17, ff. 69-70v. Cox to BOT, 4 February 1721; TNA, CO 152/14, ff. 43-45v. Agreement between the French and English Leeward Islands, 19 February 1721; TNA, CO 152/14, ff. 23-87v. Hamilton to BOT, 19 May 1721; TNA, ADM 1/1473. Bouler to Admiralty, 13 August 1724.

⁹⁵⁰ Bialuschewski, ‘Malacca Strait’, 180.

colonial theatre. While a ship-based trade with pirates continued, naval presence in these two regions obstructed the development of a centre for illicit trade that could replace New Providence. Likewise, in addition to the public spectacles of pirate executions and the displaying of bodies to serve as a warning of the consequences of committing piracy, accounts of the few direct successes against pirates were widely publicised and disseminated. These accounts provided example of the real stakes of committing piracy with the aim to discourage mariners from turning pirate in the future.⁹⁵¹ The increasingly precarious environment that these direct and indirect measures collectively produced would have contributed to motivating pirates to disband and provided a deterrent to future mariners who may have otherwise been attracted to the potential prospects of piracy. The increasing percentage of forced men amongst pirate crews in the 1720s provides indication that anti-piracy measures had dissuaded the wider seafaring population from the pull of piracy.⁹⁵²

Secondly, and of equal importance, was the fact that piracy was an opportunistic and economically-motivated exploit and, when they could, a number of pirates seized the chance to re-enter colonial society.⁹⁵³ This was shaped by the fact that the majority of pirates had always planned to return to civilised society after they had made their fortune. In 1716, the majority of pirates had been initially motivated by the potential gains to be made from the shipwreck of the Spanish treasure fleet. In the first place, these were opportunistic treasure hunters who sought to benefit from the wrecks.⁹⁵⁴ Several of these treasure hunters, likely those who had succeeded in gaining from the

⁹⁵¹ See Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 372-394.

⁹⁵² Bialuschewski, 'Malacca Strait', 178-180; TNA, CO 28/18, ff. 1-27v. Worsley to BOT, 24 November 1723; TNA, CO 5/898, No. 33. Dummer to [Newcastle], 20 August 1724.

⁹⁵³ Mark G. Hanna, 'Well-Behaved Pirates Seldom Make History: A Reevaluation of the Golden Age of English Piracy' in Peter C. Mancall and Carole Shammas (eds.), *Governing the Sea in the Early Modern Era: Essays in Honor of Robert C. Ritchie* (California, 2015), 134.

⁹⁵⁴ See Chapter One, 34-40, 53-58, and Chapter Two, 64-67.

wrecks, had accepted the British pardon and returned to colonial society between 1717 and 1719.⁹⁵⁵ A portion of those who did not instead undertook long voyages to Brazil and the Indian Ocean in search of a rich prize and seem to have always intended to return to colonial or European society after doing so. A small number of pirates achieved this, particularly those that returned from the Indian Ocean with substantial plunder and accepted amnesty from opportunistic colonial governments, while others were unable to do so due to increasing obstructions throughout the Atlantic world. The availability of European pardons provided further encouragement for these pirates to disperse in the 1720s as they were able to return to colonies whilst maintaining their plunder. From 1722, a number of pirates accepted pardons from French and Spanish colonial governments. At least two pirate crews accepted Spanish pardons at Cartagena and Portobello, while two more accepted amnesty from the French on Hispaniola. Similarly, pirates who had remained on Madagascar in the Indian Ocean accepted a pardon that the French East India Company had offered in an attempt to curb the threat to its trade. In all these cases, the pirates were reassured they could keep plundered goods.⁹⁵⁶ It seems that these pardons were offered out of the joint motivation to remove piratical threats and receive influxes of plundered wealth; for example, the pirates who took the pardon at Portobello were required to pay twenty percent of their plunder as taxation.⁹⁵⁷ Thus there was a portion of the pirate population who were willing to take pardons as long as they did not face prosecution over their plundered goods; this was one of the primary reasons that the British pardon, which lasted from

⁹⁵⁵ See Chapter Two, 85-87, and Chapter Three, 112, 128-130.

⁹⁵⁶ BL, IOR/E/1/13, No. 98. Account of Lasinby, [March] 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 17 May 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 13 October 1722; BL, IOR/E/1/202, 73. Directors to Lords Justices, 9 August 1723; Carter, 'Pirates and Settlers', 60.

⁹⁵⁷ BL IOR/E/1/14, No. 163. Extracts of two letters from Pearce to Morice, July 1723; TNA, CO 137/52, ff. 51. President of Panama to the Duke of Portland, 5 October 1723; Marina Carter, 'Pirates and Settlers', 60.

September 1717 to July 1719, had been impeded.⁹⁵⁸ Other pirates simply left their vessels to conceal themselves amongst colonial populations, either by taking passage on trading vessels encountered at sea or by joining marginal communities on the fringes of colonial society, or left the colonial theatre altogether and returned to Europe in the hope that they would avoid detection there.⁹⁵⁹ There is not enough evidence to provide an accurate indication of how many pirates accepted European pardons, or simply dispersed amongst colonial and European populations. Still, it seems that this was a significant portion of the pirate population as the number of pirates operating declined rapidly after 1722, and this is not explained by naval and colonial victories. Instead, it was the lower prospects of capturing a rich prize due to the increasing hostility throughout the seas that encouraged this dispersal. Those remaining, particularly those who resorted to the Bay Islands from 1724, favoured small-scale piracies on smaller shipping in order to profit from piratical operations over a much longer term, rather than attempting to gain rapidly through targeting richer but higher-risk prizes. Even still, increased naval activity around the Bay Islands meant that those pirates who were not apprehended were encouraged to disperse and, subsequently, disappear from record after 1726. Hence, it was considerations of the increasingly hostile seas, the availability of suitable pardons, and the resolution to re-enter colonial society that shaped the dispersal of the majority of pirates throughout this period.

⁹⁵⁸ The possibility of a new British pardon was considered after two pirate crews petitioned British colonial officials for amnesty in 1722. However, despite deliberations in the metropole and the full backing of the sugar lobby, a new pardon was not granted. TNA, CO 323/8, No. 35. Harris to Popple, 7 December 1722; TNA, CO 324/11, 3-6. BOT to Privy Council, 10 January 1723.

⁹⁵⁹ NRS, AC16/1, 377-381. Information of Daw, [1720]; NRS, AC16/1, 384-391. Examination of Murray, [1720]; TNA, CO 152/13, ff. 62-66v. Hamilton to Popple, 16 February 1720; NRAS 1209/63. Campbell to Undisclosed, 22 February 1720; NRAS, 1209/116. Confession of Haswell, 16 March 1720; NRS, SC 54/17/2/44/1a. Confession of Savage, 17 March 1720; *The American Weekly Mercury*, 17 March 1720; NRS, SC54/17/2/44/1c. Confession of Topen, 18 March 1720; NRS, SC54/17/2/44/1e. Confession of Dowdoun, 18 March 1720; NRS, SC54/17/2/44/1k. Confession of Kernie, 22 March 1720; NRAS, 1209/116; NRAS 1209/116. Confession of Hughs, 18 April 1720; 'Spotswood to Craggs, 20 May 1720' in R. A Brock (ed.), *Official Letters of Alexander Spotswood, Vol. II* (Virginia, 1885), 340-3; TNA, HCA 1/55, 50v-52v. Examination of Jones, 13 February 1723; TNA, ADM 1/2242. Orme to Admiralty, 17 May 1723; Joseph Redington (ed.). *Calendar of Treasury Papers, Vol. 6: 1720-1728* (London: 1889), 134.

Nevertheless, Atlantic piracy did not end after 1726. The historiography generally dates the end of the “golden age” of piracy to 1726 due to the fact that the majority of the New Providence pirates and their offshoots had been captured, killed, or were inactive by that time. Accounts of piracy continued to intermittently appear in official reports, although these were individual occurrences that did not create any significant impact on Atlantic trade. For example, as early as 1727, the lieutenant governor of Virginia reported the trial of three pirates that had recently been convicted there; in 1729, a pirate captured at least two vessels near Bermuda; and in 1731, five sailors were tried for piracy at Philadelphia for seizing a Portuguese ship.⁹⁶⁰ What is important to recognise is that with each of these reported cases, it was information of the trials or the capture of European ships that were discussed. These were noteworthy occurrences that needed to be related back to the metropole. It is probable that a number of minor piracies on local shipping went unreported in colonial reports or newspapers after 1726. This is similar to the situation from 1722 onwards, when pirates were primarily assaulting small coastal and fishing vessels, of which there is little specific information given in colonial reports.⁹⁶¹ This declining significance is highlighted by the fact that there was no further lobbying by metropolitan mercantile interests for measures against piracy after 1724. Although accounts of piracy continued past 1724, they received less and less focus in official reports, colonial correspondence, newspapers, and mercantile petitions. One possible reason behind this may have been the increased availability of marine insurance in the 1720s, which offset the losses

⁹⁶⁰ TNA, CO 5/1337, No. 37. Gooch to Newcastle, 21 September 1727; TNA, CO 5/1321, ff. 115-115v. Deposition of Batting, 1 February 1729; TNA, CO 5/1321, ff. 110-117v. Gooch to BOT, 29 March 1729; TNA, CO 5/1234, No. 12. Gordon to Newcastle, 10 November 1731.

⁹⁶¹ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Hamilton to Admiralty, 19 September 1723; TNA, CO 28/44, No. 65. Worsley to Carteret, 11 January 1724; Bialuschewski, ‘Malacca Strait’, 180.

sustained by occasional piratical attacks.⁹⁶² While this is an important point, metropolitan mercantile lobbies continued to petition when there were significant numbers of depredations committed by other antagonists against British shipping. Of much more importance to the decreasing focus on piracy, was that piracy was no longer the chief commercial threat to British colonial trade. After 1724, piracy became a local issue which primarily hindered small colonial vessels. For example, the handful of remaining pirates who operated on the Central American coast from 1724 primarily obstructed the smuggling trade operating from Trujillo. Whilst this encouraged a response from the Jamaican station ships, it did not significantly impede the trade of metropolitan mercantile groups so it did not receive mercantile focus or complaints. Instead, in the 1720s, there was a clear transition from British merchants predominantly lobbying for measures against piracy to merchants seeking protection against the Spanish guardacosta. As the overall significance of piratical attacks on Atlantic commerce dwindled, guardacosta depredations increased so that there was a distinct shift in both colonial correspondence and commercial lobbying from piracy to the guardacosta.

Depredations by guardacostas had been a constant source of complaint for British colonial merchants and officials, particularly in Jamaica, since peace was declared between Britain and Spain in 1713.⁹⁶³ These depredations considerably increased after the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720) as Spanish privateers were granted new commissions as guardacostas. In August 1720, the Jamaican governor reported on this activity:

⁹⁶² See Chet, *Ocean is a Wilderness*, 8-26, 51-65.

⁹⁶³ See Chapter One, 29-34.

...tho' I have allready given most of them notice of the suspension of arms and that a Peace was speedily to ensue; yet the Spaniards continue dayly to molest our coast and commit depredations by robbing severall of our remote settlements, and this is chiefly done by vessells fitted out from Trinidado on Cuba.⁹⁶⁴

After the war, the practice of commissioning guardacostas continued from ports such as Santiago de Cuba and Trinidad, Cuba, which had been the chief benefactors of guardacosta between 1714 and 1718.⁹⁶⁵ After 1720, guardacosta were also commissioned from St. Augustine in Florida and Puerto Rico.⁹⁶⁶ Puerto Rico subsequently developed into the primary port of guardacosta activity after 1722, with one governor commenting:

...that island is at present a nest of pirates (the Dunquerque of America) who under pretence of being guarda de la costa's, greatly infest the American seas; and make frequent depredations on H. M. subjects, as is too notorious.⁹⁶⁷

The guardacosta continued their previous practices of seizing any European ships on the grounds that they had been illicitly trading on Spanish colonial coasts. This was done regardless of where vessels were taken and without any real evidence that such a trade had occurred. Captured vessels were then carried to and condemned at various Spanish ports in the Caribbean and Central America.⁹⁶⁸ When British colonial merchants

⁹⁶⁴ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 44. Lawes to BOT, 24 August 1720.

⁹⁶⁵ *Ibid*; TNA, ADM 1/2624. Vernon to Admiralty, [June 1720].

⁹⁶⁶ TNA, CO 5/358, ff. 59-60v. Undisclosed to Craggs, 29 September 1720; TNA, CO 5/1319, No. 15. Spotswood to BOT, 31 May 1721; TNA, CO 137/14, ff. 152-153. Lawes to BOT, 10 May 1722.

⁹⁶⁷ TNA, CO 152/40, No. 25. Hart to Townshend, 8 May 1729.

⁹⁶⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 3 August 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Governor of Havana, 8 September 1722.

or naval captains travelled to these ports to demand restitution, they were given little regard by Spanish colonial officials, or informed that they would have to proceed to Madrid to protest with the courts there. This was often too much of an undertaking for merchants who returned without any form of reparation.⁹⁶⁹ As the guardacosta operated with commissions granted by Spanish colonial officials, they received the legitimacy and backing of the Spanish colonies. Unlike pirates, guardacosta could rely on the support of colonial governors and had access to lawful colonial markets where they could stock up on provisions, repair their vessels, and sell their plunder. Guardacosta attacks increased throughout the 1720s, and continued into the 1730s until war was declared between Spain and Britain in 1739; depredations of the guardacosta were a primary provocation for this war.⁹⁷⁰

The guardacosta made a much greater impact than piracy on British colonial trade in the 1720s. In 1722, the senior naval commander at Jamaica reported:

The Spaniards are now much more troublesome to the Trade than the open Pirates; for if we happen to meet them they are Spaniards, and they take all the Trade Vessels they can and directly carry them into port, whence I have not heard of anys returning again.⁹⁷¹

The guardacostas committed numerous depredations in the Caribbean Sea, and often operated along the coastlines of the Southern colonies, significantly obstructing the

⁹⁶⁹ TNA, CO 5/4, No. 27. Petition of Merchants of London and others, 20 May 1726.

⁹⁷⁰ Casey S. Schmitt, 'Virtue in Corruption: Privateers, Smugglers, and the Shape of Empire in the Eighteenth-Century Caribbean', *Early American Studies* (Winter, 2015), 80-110.

⁹⁷¹ TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 3 August 1722.

sugar, tobacco, and slave trades.⁹⁷² At first, these attacks prompted requests by metropolitan lobbies for measures against both guardacostas and pirates. For example, a petition of merchants trading to Jamaica stated that “the Greatest Mischeifs which hath of late years attended Our Colonys have been Caused by the Spanish Guard de Coast Vessels & Pyrates.”⁹⁷³ The petition then outlined the specific consequences that guardacostas had on the sugar trade:

...In Respect to the said Spanish Guard de Coast Vessells the Spaniards in America have been for Divers years past at Warr with us, while we continue in a state of Peace with them by Reason whereof most of our sugar ships from the said Island are obliged to stay to come In Fleets as in Warr Time, and Consequently arrive so late after the crop that Most of the Foreign Sugar Markets are usually first sup[p]lyed by the French, or other our Rivalls In those Commoditys before ours Cann gett Home And by the Discourage Occasioned here by Freight Comes Dearer then otherwise It would be & Is a further Charge on the sugar Trade at Jamaica.⁹⁷⁴

Similar thoughts were conveyed in an anonymous paper on the sugar trade which went as far as to advise that, unless some measures were taken, the guardacosta “will become the greatest Incumberance to the British Trade and which if not prevented must like a milstone sink it to the lowest Ebb in the West Indies.”⁹⁷⁵ By 1726, piracy was no longer considered a primary commercial threat and was absent from mercantile petitions.

⁹⁷² TNA, CO 5/1319, No. 15. Spotswood to BOT, 31 May 1721; TNA, CO 23/12, No. 84. Memorial of White to Townshend, [1723]; TNA, CO 388/24, No. 145. Merchants trading to Jamaica to BOT, 31 May 1724.

⁹⁷³ TNA, CO 388/24, No. 145. Merchants trading to Jamaica to BOT, 31 May 1724.

⁹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷⁵ TNA, CO 388/24, No. 155. Anonymous paper on the Sugar trade, [22 July] 1724.

Subsequently, it was the guardacosta that received the principal focus of metropolitan mercantile lobbying. A petition, containing ninety-four signatures of British merchants trading to America, including the foremost representatives of Atlantic trading interests, such as Humphry Morice and Richard Harris, stated:

It is notorious those guarda de la costa's ... never met with an English vessel, and could overcome, which they did not take, destroy or plunder... Many of your Majestie's subjects have been killed and wounded in defence of their vessels and goods, and several in cool blood: and that the damages sustained in this unlawful manner since the Peace of Utrecht have amounted to above £300,000.⁹⁷⁶

The merchants requested state measures to counter guardacosta attacks alongside intervention at the Spanish court in Madrid to gain reparations.⁹⁷⁷ This petition marked the final shift of metropolitan commercial focus from piracy to the guardacosta. A similar change occurred in the colonial theatre as colonial officials and merchants increasingly requested that station ships, particularly those at Jamaica, protect colonial shipping from guardacosta attacks.⁹⁷⁸ In the 1720s, one of the Jamaica station ships was frequently employed to cruise in the vicinities of Jamaica, Hispaniola and Cuba in order to protect trade, search for guardacostas committing piratical attacks, and even to seek redress on the behalf of merchants.⁹⁷⁹ This produced little change as there was little that

⁹⁷⁶ TNA, CO 5/4, No. 27. Petition of the Merchants of London and others trading to and interested in the British Colonies in America, 20 May 1726.

⁹⁷⁷ *Ibid*; TNA, CO 388/24, No. 155. Anonymous paper on the Sugar trade, [22 July] 1724.

⁹⁷⁸ TNA, ADM 1/1598. Candler to Burchett, 16 August 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 20 July 1723.

⁹⁷⁹ TNA, CO 137/14, ff. 152-153v. Lawes to BOT, 18 May 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1598. Candler to Burchett, 16 August 1722; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 31 December; TNA, ADM 1/1880. Harris to Admiralty, 20 July 1723.

the navy could do against vessels commissioned by European powers in times of peace, unless it could be unequivocally proved that they had committed piratical attacks.⁹⁸⁰ Similarly, the sloop that was paid for and maintained by the Jamaican colonial government was fitted out for the dual purpose of guarding the Jamaican coast from guardacosta as well as pirates.⁹⁸¹ Therefore, throughout the 1720s, both metropolitan and colonial focus shifted from the depredations of pirates to that of the guardacosta who provided a more prevalent and active threat to colonial trade.

It is important to stress that there was no definitive reason behind the pirates' dispersal. This was shaped by numerous factors that all provided motivation for pirates to end their activities. Yet, it is not precise to say that pirate activity ended in 1726. It is clear that piracy made much less of an impression in the 1720s, particularly after 1724. Piracy did not, however, disappear entirely; it simply became less of an issue than the guardacosta. Sporadic reports of piracy continued to appear in colonial accounts, and it is uncertain how often minor piratical attacks occurred that were simply overlooked in official reports and newspapers due to their inconsequential impact. What is evident is that commercial considerations were the primary factors that linked colonial and metropolitan interests in their endeavours to suppress piracy, and these considerations moved to the guardacosta as it became the greatest threat to Atlantic commerce in the 1720s.

Conclusion

The period between 1722 and 1726 witnessed the decline of piracy in the colonial theatre. While intermittent accounts of piracy continued after 1726, these were small-

⁹⁸⁰ TNA, ADM 2/50, 612. Instructions to Captain Harris, 13 April 1723.

⁹⁸¹ TNA, CO 137/13, No. 45. Lawes to BOT, 13 November 1720.

scale individual occurrences which had little consequences for Atlantic trade. The decline of Atlantic piracy is not explained by the minor victories of state or colonial campaigns in this period, nor is it explained by changes brought about by new anti-piracy legislation in 1722. Indeed, despite the decrease in piracy, the overall measures throughout the period remained conventional and pragmatic, outlining the continued limits of both state and colonial capacity to regulate maritime activity. Instead, it was a combination of detached metropolitan and colonial measures which created an increasingly hostile environment for pirates to operate in. These measures continued throughout the period, further encouraging remaining pirates to relinquish a vocation which had become increasingly precarious for less gain. While neither state nor colonial resources were enough to fully suppress piracy, the collective efforts of these participants did provide an effective deterrent which discouraged pirates. The majority of the New Providence pirates and their offshoots, who had not been captured or killed, had dispersed by 1726, seemingly re-entering colonial or European populations. By this time, piracy was no longer the chief commercial threat to colonial trade as their significance was greatly diminished by the decline in the number of pirates operating alongside the increasing impression of guardacosta attacks on Atlantic trade. Both metropolitan and colonial concerns shifted from pirates to the guardacosta as their attacks became more consequential. Maritime predation continued in the Atlantic after 1726 but small-scale piracy became a local issue as the most substantial piratical attacks occurred under the legitimacy of Spanish colonial sponsorship.

Conclusion

There was no coordinated war on piracy in the early eighteenth century. Instead, a series of fragmented and distinctive campaigns, shaped and influenced in metropolitan and colonial contexts, slowly reduced and isolated Atlantic pirates. Far from the concerted and premeditated enterprise embraced by the existing historiography, this was in fact a sequential process that occurred only as state, merchant, and colonial actors reacted to the impact and threat of piracy in different localities of the Atlantic and Indian Oceans. By examining eighteenth-century anti-piracy campaigns from the various vantage points in which they were constructed, this thesis has sought to address the reactive nature of empire at a local, regional, and transnational level.

In his recent examination of early modern piracy, Hanna stressed that the “severing of the land/sea connection [at the turn of the eighteenth century] transformed the nature of piracy and the fate of its practitioners.”⁹⁸² While the findings of this thesis concur with Hanna’s argument, it has stressed the importance of examining the specific impact that this separation had on anti-piracy measures. Although it is clear that there was greater cohesion between state and colonial responses to piracy in the early eighteenth century, as pirates were no longer welcomed in colonial ports and local efforts were undertaken to combat pirates operating on nearby shores, this did not then lead to the unified imperial project currently embraced by the historiography.⁹⁸³ When these campaigns are viewed as a whole, it is clear that there was unity in the overall aim

⁹⁸² Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740* (Chapel Hill, 2015), 421.

⁹⁸³ Although Hanna recognises that these campaigns were constructed in different theatres and stresses the crucial role that colonial maritime communities played in deterring pirates both on land and at sea, his overall analysis advocates coordination between state and colony without consideration of the unsystematic nature of these campaigns. Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 365-415; See also Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2004), 181-208; Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London, 2012), 127-147.

to stem the impact of piracy on British trade, but referring to this as an imperial project overstates the actual circumstances and means through which anti-piracy campaigns were constructed. This was not an organised empire-wide project. The apparatus for such a campaign simply did not exist in an empire comprised of distant semi-autonomous communities and settlements that were separated by vast ungovernable maritime and coastal expanses. When viewed individually, the uniform characteristics of these anti-piracy campaigns were that they were haphazard and pragmatic. It has been the thesis' contention, therefore, that the nature and impact of British anti-piracy measures can only be understood through the comparative analysis of British state measures against piracy, the dissemination of these measures in the periphery, and the analogous but disconnected endeavours occurring in the localities.

During this ten-year period, anti-piracy operations occurred only after pirates were stimulated by changing circumstances to voyage to other regions in pursuit of new opportunities and, in the process, encountered, obstructed, and antagonised diverse participants of empire. By following the sequential movements and impact of pirates between 1716 and 1726, this thesis not only provides a new understanding of the rise and decline of piracy in the early eighteenth century, but has also offered an appraisal of the web of connections that shaped the development of empire within and across these spaces. In particular, it has explored the ways in which colonists, companies, governors, mariners, merchants, and Royal Navy captains advanced, hindered, and contested British imperial authority throughout extra-European spaces.

For each theatre that pirates impacted, it was merchants and companies involved in profitable long-distance trades that prompted British state responses. These groups played a central role in shaping and dictating state reactions and, in consequence, directly contributed to the development of British imperial power in extra-European

spaces. Drawing from existing scholarship on commercial politicisation, this study has stressed that mercantile success in procuring maritime protection for specific regions was decided by the significance placed on, and contemporary debates surrounding, the trades managed by these groups.⁹⁸⁴ This explains why the Royal Navy protection that was afforded to specific regions fluctuated throughout the ten-year period as pirates spread from place to place and different groups lobbied for protection. This directly contradicts the view advanced by Earle that the decline of piracy was effected by Royal Navy ships that were dispatched to proactively hunt and exterminate pirates.⁹⁸⁵ Instead, the Royal Navy was predominantly called upon to safeguard trade; naval captains were only instructed to pursue pirates on occasion, and most were only to do so when pirates were reported in the immediate vicinities surrounding their station. Piratical attacks, then, highlighted the vulnerable nature of long-distance trade in peacetime and, in response, British merchant groups mobilised to gain protection over the maritime spaces where their trade was conducted. Thus, the extension of British imperial authority to these spaces, as represented by Royal Navy vessels, was contingent on the commercial connections and concerns that linked the British state with merchant groups managing beneficial trades to extra-European spaces.

Yet, despite continuous lobbying for maritime protection against pirates, a number of challenges obstructed the overall ability of the Royal Navy to regulate

⁹⁸⁴ Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996); Christopher Dudley, 'Party politics, political economy, and economic development in early eighteenth-century Britain', *Economic History Review*, 66:4 (2013), 1084-1100; Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society, 1660-1720* (Oxford, 2001); Perry Gauci, "'Learning the Ropes of Sand": The West India Lobby, 1714-16' in Perry Gauci (ed.), *Regulating the British Economy, 1660-1850* (Farnham, 2011), 107-122; Alison G. Olson, 'The Virginia Merchants of London: A Study in Eighteenth-Century Interest-Group Politics', *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 40:3 (July, 1983), 363-388; William A. Pettigrew, *Freedom's Debt: The Royal African Company and the Politics of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1672-1752* (Chapel Hill, 2013); James A. Rawley, *London, Metropolis of the Slave Trade* (Columbia, 2003); James A. Rawley, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (London, 1981); Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit: The English Financial Revolution, 1620-1720* (Cambridge, 2011); Nuala Zahedieh, *The Capital and the Colonies* (Cambridge, 2010).

⁹⁸⁵ Earle, *The Pirate Wars*, 181-208.

Atlantic maritime activity. Previous considerations of the Royal Navy's operations in extra-European waters have stressed the operational difficulties unavoidable in distant overseas service. For example, Buchet concentrates on the impact of disease, shipworms, and supply shortages, while Brunsman emphasises the difficulties of drafting mariners for naval service in the colonial theatre.⁹⁸⁶ However, there has been little reflection within these studies on the ways that the Royal Navy's capacity as protector and overseer of British trade was impacted by the autonomy of naval captains.⁹⁸⁷ In each region discussed throughout this dissertation's chapters, there are examples of Royal Navy captains who utilised long-distance service for their own gain, turning to self-interested enterprises rather than protecting shipping in and around their stations. Thus, even when the British state provided for the defence of trade, there was no guarantee that such protection would materialise with the arrival of Royal Navy vessels. Instead, local maritime forces were organised to defend the surrounding waters of peripheral ports. Although these forces proved a vital component of British anti-piracy campaigns, they have been underplayed and misrepresented in the existing historiography. For example, Rodger states that "The pirates ... could not long resist co-ordinated efforts by warships on the coast and colonial authorities denying them shelter and supply in port."⁹⁸⁸ Assertions such as these overstate the efficacy of Royal Navy coordination and operations while also doing a disservice to colonial responses by

⁹⁸⁶ Christian Buchet, 'The Royal Navy and the Caribbean, 1689-1763', *The Mariner's Mirror*, 80:1 (February, 1994), 30-44; Denver Brunsman, *The Evil Necessity: British Naval Impressment in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (Virginia, 2013).

⁹⁸⁷ This is often acknowledged within studies of early-eighteenth-century piracy, which quote contemporary complaints concerning the self-interested activities of Royal Navy captains in order to advance reasons for their failures in suppressing pirates. However, the ways in which these complaints then influenced alternative local measures against pirates are not considered. See Guy Chet, *The Ocean is a Wilderness: Atlantic Piracy and the Limits of State Authority, 1688-1856* (Massachusetts, 2014), 19-22; Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 188-189.

⁹⁸⁸ N. A. M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London, 2006), 232. See also Earle, *Pirate Wars*, 181-208; Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 127-147. Hanna recognises the successes of local maritime forces, although he does not consider them in any great detail. Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 371-372.

restricting their role to land-based measures. This is true for eighteenth-century studies of colonial maritime conflict in general, which focus on the role of privateers outfitted in times of European war without recognising the significance of maritime defence organised by local bodies to protect regional trade from peacetime antagonists.⁹⁸⁹ While crucial to understanding the decline of piracy, the ways in which colonists responded to maritime challenges also illustrates how British imperial authority was extended to maritime spaces through local initiatives undertaken by necessity rather than by design. The Royal Navy, as the principal force of British imperial power in maritime spaces, was unable to defend the waters that connected the British Atlantic world and, as a result, local measures were essential in attempts to secure these boundaries.

When viewed from the perspective of regional actors, the connections that shaped their responses to piracy were as distinctive and unique as the regions in which they operated. In all of these places, however, it was local conflicts that determined the ways in which anti-piracy measures were organised and effected. In particular, rivalries between imperial competitors, whether intra-imperial - between colonial governors, elected colonial representatives, Royal Navy captains, or competing trading groups - or inter-imperial - between subjects of different empires, played a central role in responses to maritime challenges. These localised and disparate conflicts had far-reaching consequences on the formation of British imperial power throughout the Atlantic and Indian Oceans as the participants involved, whether formally vested with authority or otherwise, influenced the methods and circumstances in which empire existed within these spaces. Such rivalries were evident in requests for maritime protection, whether

⁹⁸⁹ For example see Bruce Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783* (Harrow and New York, 2001); Richard Pares, *War & Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763* (London, 1963); Shinsuke Satsuma, *Britain and Colonial Maritime War in the Early Eighteenth Century: Silver, Seapower and the Atlantic* (Woodbridge, 2013); David J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter, 1990); David J. Starkey, E. S. Van Eyck Van Heslinga, and J. A. De Moor (eds.), *Pirates and Privateers: New Perspectives on the War on Trade in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Exeter, 1997).

these originated in extra-European spaces or were promoted by British-based mercantile lobbies, and subsequently shaped the means through which local defence of trade took shape. At one extreme, a combination of intra-imperial conflict in Jamaica and inter-imperial conflict in the Caribbean Sea inadvertently produced a surge in piracy after 1716 and, consequently, created the circumstances that provoked new initiatives to protect Atlantic trade.⁹⁹⁰ At the other extreme, the competing interests of rival trading groups laid the foundations for the Royal Navy's greatest success against pirates and, more importantly, encouraged the development of a convoy system which better protected British shipping engaged in the African slave trade.⁹⁹¹ These conflicts were both a cause and consequence of Britain's dynamic imperial framework as imperial participants competed within and against the existing structures of empire, and empire transformed as a result of the direct and indirect challenges that these contests produced.

Overall, the manifold ways in which anti-piracy campaigns were organised, funded, and executed points to both the strengths and weaknesses of British imperial authority over the vast maritime spaces which connected imperial centres. The failures and general ineptitude of state anti-piracy measures demonstrates the limitations of British state power over distant colonies and settlements, which was contingent on the actions and activities of governors, local policymakers, Royal Navy captains, and company agents established in peripheral centres. The very nature of British imperial power, however, means that these campaigns cannot be evaluated as a centralised state-coordinated endeavour, as this oversimplifies and misrepresents the actual means through which imperial authority was extended to maritime and marginal spaces. When these campaigns are viewed as a series of analogous but disconnected campaigns,

⁹⁹⁰ See Chapter One, 27-59.

⁹⁹¹ See Chapter Five, 181-220.

however, it is evident that imperial authority was not only advanced and adapted by strategic and reactive measures extending from London, but was also the result of the compliance and impromptu actions of British subjects operating in peripheral centres and margins. Such conclusions resituate eighteenth-century anti-piracy campaigns within considerations of negotiated empires, in which Atlantic imperial frameworks were shaped and adapted through the negotiations between state and colony, as well as within wider studies of empire-building that emphasise the opportunistic, spasmodic, and extemporaneous development of empire.⁹⁹² Responses to piracy throughout regions of British control and interest provide evidence of the versatility, which Darwin refers to as the “hallmark characteristic of British imperialism”, that provided the strength of British imperial authority throughout the empire.⁹⁹³ Although driven by different motivations and circumstances, the anti-piracy initiatives and operations of disparate participants extended the power and authority of British imperialism to maritime and marginal spaces. Thus, while neither state nor colonial centres had the resources necessary to suppress pirates throughout the Atlantic, their collective efforts created a hostile environment for pirates to operate in, established better protection for Atlantic shipping and, in the process, strengthened imperial authority over British Atlantic trade.

It is equally important to recognise the collective limits of all these measures. Taken as a whole, the multilateral responses considered throughout this thesis did not result in the permanent establishment of authority over Atlantic maritime traffic sailing between British ports. The extension of imperial authority to these spaces was entirely

⁹⁹² On negotiations see Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (eds.), *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820* (New York, 2002); Alison Gilbert Olson, *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690-1770* (Cambridge, 1992); Craig Yirush, *Settlers, Liberty, and Empire: The Roots of Early American Political Theory, 1675-1775* (Cambridge, 2011). On empire-building see John Darwin, *Unfinished Empire: The Global Expansion of Britain* (London, 2013); J. H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven, 2006); Alison Games, ‘Beyond the Atlantic: English Globetrotters and Transoceanic Connections’, *William and Mary Quarterly*, 63:4 (2006), 675-692; Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (Oxford, 2009).

⁹⁹³ Darwin, *Unfinished Empire*, 388.

contingent on the intermittent measures of diverse imperial participants whose activities led to an increased presence of patrolling vessels in particular regions for a limited time. Such measures could not, and did not intend to, permanently extend authority to these places. These were reactions to specific circumstances rather than part of a solidified and persistent extension of British authority to maritime and marginal spaces. The vast oceanic areas that connected imperial centres remained a frontier of contested and neglected spaces where there was little oversight or control. It was throughout this space that there had been a prevalence of individuals willing to trade with pirates when the opportunity arose, whether this was independent traders in Sierra Leone or island settlements in the neglected corners of the Caribbean. Claims that piracy had ended by 1726 relate to the drop in reports of piratical attacks which significantly impeded the established Atlantic world, but this does not mean pirates disappeared entirely throughout the Atlantic Commons. Despite the evident advancements and successes of this ten-year period, these maritime spaces and the activities that occurred there remained far beyond the practical reach of imperial power.

Appendices

Appendix 1. Vessel Types and Rates

Table 1.1. Vessel Types

<i>Vessel Type</i>	<i>Description</i>
Brig	A small two-masted sailing vessel.
Brigantine	A small two-masted vessel, square-rigged on the foremast and foremast-and-aft rigged on the mainmast.
Canoe	A small open boat in which paddles provide the primary method of propulsion.
Frigate	Three-masted ships, fully rigged on each mast, and normally armed with between twenty-four to thirty-eight guns carried on a single gun deck. Normally rated in navies as fifth- and sixth-rate vessels and used as look-outs, cruisers, and convoys. See Table 1.2.
Gallivat	A coastal vessel used in the western Indian Ocean. Most likely a similar kind of craft to a grab.
Grab	A kind of galley used along the coasts of the Indian Ocean. Varies in size from 150-500 tons burden. Two, and sometimes three, masts, square-rigged, and commonly without a bowsprit.
Ketch	A sailing vessel with two masts, square-rigged on both a main and mizen mast as well as having fore-and-aft-rigged sails. Often described as ‘a ship without a foremast’.
Ship of the line	A warship carrying gun armaments sufficient enough to lie in the line of battle. Warships were rated according to the number of guns they carried. In Britain, six rates were introduced, the first three of which were considered powerful enough to lie in the line of battle. Fourth-rate ships, which carried between fifty and seventy guns, were sometimes included in the line of battle. See Table 1.2.
Sloop	A sailing vessel with a single mast, fore-and-aft rigged. The term was often used to describe any unrated naval vessel carrying less than 20 guns.
Snow	A two-masted merchant vessel. Rigged as a brig, with square sails on both masts, but with a small trysail-mast immediately aft of the main mast.

Sources: K. N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilisation in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge, 1989), 141; Peter Kemp (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Ships & the Sea* (Oxford, 1976); Robert L. Hardgrave Jr., *Boats of Bengal: Eighteenth Century Portraits by Balthazar Solhyns* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2001), 80-82; Rif Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1714-1792* (Barnsley, 2014).

Table 1.2. British Royal Navy Rating System in the Early Eighteenth Century

<i>Rate</i>	<i>Description</i>
First Rate	Three-decked vessels carrying 100 guns.
Second Rate	Three-decked vessels carrying 90 to 96 guns.
Third Rate	Two- or three-decked vessels carrying more than 60 but less than 80 guns.
Fourth Rate	Two-decked vessels carrying more than 40 and less than 60 guns.
Fifth Rate	One or two-decked vessels carrying between 30 and 42 guns.
Sixth Rate	One or two-decked vessels carrying between 20 and 24 guns.

Source: Rif Winfield, *British Warships in the Age of Sail, 1714-1792* (Barnsley, 2014).

Appendix 2. Tables for Chapter Two

Table 2.1. Average number of naval ships assigned per Caribbean station, 1714-1718

<i>Station</i>	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718
Barbados	1	1	1	1	2
Jamaica	2	2	1	2	3
Leeward Islands	1	1	1	2	3
On Survey in West Indies	0	0	1	2	1
South Sea Company Service	4*	4	3	0	0

* Although assigned for this service, these four ships remained in England throughout 1714 before departing in 1715.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/13. List Book, 1714; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Table 2.2. Average number of naval ships assigned per squadron, 1714-1718

<i>Squadron</i>	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718
Home Service	41	32	31	19	16
Plantations*	15	15	9	10	13
Baltic Squadron	0	10	16	16	7
Mediterranean Squadron	19	12	6	0	18
South Sea Company	0	3	2	0	0
Coast of Scotland	0	4	7	4	0
Coast of Ireland	0	1	0	1	5
Baltic Convoys	0	1	1	4	3
Sallee Squadron	0	0	0	5	7

* Note that the 'Plantations' squadron was sometimes designated 'Abroad' or 'Foreign Service' and often included 2-3 ships sent to Gibraltar and Minorca which are included in the averages. In any given year, the Caribbean and North American station ships make up the majority of this squadron.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/13. List Book, 1714; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Table 2.3. Average number of naval ships assigned per theatre, 1714-1718

<i>Theatre</i>	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718
European theatre	60	60	61	49	56
Stationed outside of Europe	15	18*	11	10	13

* Four ships were assigned to support the South Sea Company in establishing the *asiento* trade granted to Britain by Spain in the Treaty of Utrecht.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/13. List Book, 1714; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Table 2.4. Percentage of naval ships assigned per theatre, 1714-1718

<i>Theatre</i>	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718
European theatre	80%	77%	85%	83%	81%
Stationed outside of Europe	20%	23%	15%	17%	19%

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/13. List Book, 1714; TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Appendix 3. Tables for Chapter Three

Table 3.1. Average number of naval ships assigned per squadron per quarter, 1718-1719

<i>Squadron</i>	1718				1719			
	Jan-Mar	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec
Home Service	19	14	13	18	26	39	23	20
Plantations	10	14	16	14	13	12	13	13
Baltic Squadron	0	12	12	4	0	4	16	14
Mediterranean Squadron	0	26	27	22	24	23	25	21
Coast of Ireland	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5
Baltic Convoys	0	0	4	4	7	4	3	2
Sallee Squadron	7	8	8	6	5	5	7	8
Other Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Table 3.2. Percentage of naval ships assigned per theatre per quarter, 1718-1719

<i>Theatre</i>	1718				1719			
	Jan-Mar	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	April-June	July-Sept	Oct-Dec
European theatre	76%	82%	81%	81%	84%	87%	86%	85%
Stationed outside of Europe	24%	18%	19%	19%	16%	13%	14%	15%

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Appendix 4. Tables for Chapter Four

Table 4.1. Average number of naval ships assigned per station, 1714-1719

<i>Station</i>	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719
Carolina	0	0	0	0	0	1
Maryland	2	1	0	0	0	0
New England	1	1	1	1	1	1
New York	1	1	1	1	1	1
Newfoundland	2	2	2	1	2	1
Virginia	1	1	1	1	2	1

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Table 4.2. Average number of naval ships assigned per region, 1714-1719

<i>Region</i>	1714	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719
Caribbean	8	8	6	6	9	8
North America	5	3	3	3	4	3
Newfoundland Convoy	2	2	2	1	2	1

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721

Appendix 5. Tables for Chapter Five

Table 5.1. Number of Vessels Reported Plundered or Taken, 1718-1722

<i>Year</i>	<i>No.</i>
1718	1
1719	48
1720	6
1721	9
1722	14
Exact year unknown	3

Table 5.2. Nationality of Vessels Reported Plundered or Taken, 1718-1722

<i>Nationality</i>	<i>No.</i>
British	54
Dutch	2
French	13
Portuguese	12

Table 5.3. Number of Vessels Reported Plundered or Taken in Each Region, 1718-1722

<i>Region</i>	<i>No.</i>
Anomabu (Gold Coast)	9
Gambia	10
Sestos	3
Sierra Leone	13
Whydah	18
Other	8
Unknown	20

Table 5.4. Owners of Vessels Reported Plundered or Taken, 1718-1722

<i>Owner</i>	<i>No.</i>
Independent Trader	44
Royal African Company	7
South Sea Company	3

Sources for Tables 5.1-5.4: *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16); TNA, T 70/6, 17-18. John Callow to RAC, 9 June 1718; BOE, 10A61/3. An acct of shipp's taken by Pirates at Sierraleone on the Coast of Africa, in April 1719; TNA, T 70/6, 97-98. [Plunkett] to RAC, 16 April 1719; TNA, T 70/6, 98. Mr Plunkett to RAC, 16 April 1719; TNA, T 70/19, f. 165. Plunkett to RAC, 30 April 1719; TNA, T 70/8, f. 100. Gohier to RAC, 15 June 1719; TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 90-99. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 20 June 1719; TNA, T 70/6, 100-102. Phipps and Stevenson to RAC, 15 July 1719; TNA, T 70/6, 17-18; TNA, ADM 3/33. Board of Admiralty Minutes, Entry 27 September 1720; BOE, 10A61/3. Account of Biglow, 1 October 1719; TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 101-113. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 17 October 1719; BOE, 10A61/7. Morice to Snelgrave, 24 November 1719; TNA, C 113/273/1, ff. 117-129. Letter from Cape Coast Castle to RAC, 30 November 1719; TNA, T 70/7, f. 3. Phipps and Stevenson to RAC, 8 February 1720; TNA, T 70/4, f. 20. Glynn and Ramsey to RAC, 30 June 1721; TNA, T 70/91. RAC Court of Assistants Minutes, Entry 29 August 1721; TNA, T 70/4, f. 21-25. Phipps, Dodson and Boye to RAC, 30 September 1721; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Stephenson, 9 November 1721; TNA, T 70/7, f. 26. Phipps, Dodson and Boye to RAC, 17 January 1722; TNA, T 70/7, f. 30. Baldwyn and Peck to RAC, 25 January 1722; TNA, HCA 1/55. Information of Thompson, 2 March 1722; BOE, 10A61/2. Snelgrave to Morice, 6 April 1722

Table 5.5. Estimate Number of Slaves Embarked on British Ships, 1671-1730

<i>Dates</i>	<i>Estimate No. of Slaves Embarked</i>
1671-1680	10616
1681-1690	112193
1691-1700	116495
1701-1710	151877
1711-1720	167409
1721-1730	226192

Source: *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16)

Table 5.6. Estimates of British Embarkation of Slaves per Region, 1715-1725

<i>Region of Embarkation</i>	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725
Bight of Benin	4524	3344	3560	8308	6099	1075	1215	3444	4294	7736	4345
Bight of Biafra	1745	0	2309	2579	2470	2177	1910	402	1311	734	1905
Gold Coast	5591	8994	8945	6195	7932	11395	7446	8335	4125	5545	7853
Senegambia and off-shore Atlantic	2612	1213	1921	1335	174	320	1074	1534	1325	2044	4652
Sierra Leone	0	0	0	1051	1009	0	731	0	131	0	747
South-east Africa and Indian Ocean islands	0	0	1572	2686	3348	855	1320	0	0	0	0
West Central Africa and St. Helena	1638	1089	1219	760	1171	733	1134	690	4471	6318	3817
Windward Coast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	723	0

Source: *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16)

Table 5.7. Average number of naval ships assigned per region, 1718-1722

<i>Region</i>	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722
Caribbean	9	8	7	8	9
North America	4	3	4	4	4
Africa	0	1	3	2	2
East Indies	0	0	1	4	4
Newfoundland	2	1	2	2	2

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725

Table 5.8. Average number of ships assigned per squadron per quarter, 1718-1722

<i>Squadron</i>	1718				1719				1720				1721				1722			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
Home Service	19	14	13	18	26	39	23	20	21	13	15	25	19	23	31	33	26	29	31	29
Plantations	10	14	16	14	13	12	13	13	13	14	16	13	13	19	22	24	22	22	24	26
Baltic Squadron	0	12	12	4	0	4	16	14	16	28	28	19	18	28	28	9	0	0	0	0
Mediterranean Squadron	0	26	27	22	24	23	25	21	20	20	9	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coast of Ireland	5	5	5	5	5	3	5	5	5	4	4	5	3	5	6	6	6	6	6	6
Baltic Convoys	0	0	4	4	7	4	3	2	3	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Sallee Squadron	7	8	8	6	5	5	7	8	8	6	5	5	5	4	1	0	0	0	0	0
Other Service	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725

Table 5.9. Average number of ships assigned per theatre per quarter, 1718-1722

<i>Theatre</i>	1718				1719				1720				1721				1722			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
European theatre	31	65	69	59	67	78	79	76	73	75	61	58	45	60	66	48	32	35	37	35
Stationed outside of Europe	10	14	16	14	13	12	13	13	13	14	16	13	13	19	22	24	22	22	24	26
Total	41	79	85	73	80	90	92	89	86	89	77	71	58	79	88	72	54	57	61	61

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725

Table 5.10. Percentage of ships assigned per theatre per quarter, 1718-1722

<i>Theatre</i>	1718				1719				1720				1721				1722			
	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Sep	Oct-Dec
European theatre	76%	82%	81%	81%	84%	87%	86%	85%	85%	84%	79%	82%	78%	76%	75%	67%	59%	61%	61%	57%
Stationed outside of Europe	24%	18%	19%	19%	16%	13%	14%	15%	15%	16%	21%	18%	22%	24%	25%	33%	41%	39%	39%	43%

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725

Appendix 6. Tables for Chapter Six

Table 6.1 Estimates of British Embarkation of Slaves in the Indian Ocean, 1715-1725

<i>Region</i>	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725
South-east Africa and Indian Ocean islands	0	0	1572	2686	3348	855	1320	0	0	0	0

Source: *Voyages: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database* (consulted 12/02/16).

Appendix 7. Tables for Chapter Seven

Table 7.1. Average Number of Naval Ships Assigned per Station, 1715-1726

<i>Region</i>	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725	1726
Barbados	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Carolina	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Jamaica	2	2	2	3	5	4	4	5	5	4	5	9*
Leeward Islands	1	1	2	3	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
New England	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
New York	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Newfoundland	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
Virginia	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2**

* This increase is explained by an expedition led by Vice Admiral Hosier to blockade Porto Bello as part of renewed Anglo-Spanish conflict. The expedition was coordinated from Jamaica and included the Jamaican station ships.

** The additional ship was a sloop assigned for the service of both Virginia and Carolina.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725; TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

Table 7.2. Average Yearly Totals of Men and Ships Employed in Naval Service, 1715-1726

<i>Year</i>	<i>No. of Men</i>	<i>No. of ships</i>
1715	13852	87
1716	14357	85
1717	13514	77
1718	14199	78
1719	19772	93
1720	21370	94
1721	16890	89
1722	9686	66
1723	8212	68
1724	7022	66
1725	6327	61
1726*	17520	78

* Increases in 1726 are explained by renewed conflict which necessitated the revival of the Baltic and Mediterranean squadrons. An additional fleet was also dispatched to the Caribbean to blockade Porto Bello.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725; TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

Table 7.3. Average Number of Naval Ships Assigned Per Region, 1715-1726

<i>Region</i>	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725	1726
Africa	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	2	2	1	1	1
Caribbean	8	6	6	9	8	7	8	9	8	7	7	11*
East Indies	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	4	2	0	0	0
Newfoundland	2	2	1	2	1	2	2	2	3	2	2	2
North America	3	3	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	5

* This increase is explained by an expedition led by Vice Admiral Hosier to blockade Porto Bello as part of renewed Anglo-Spanish conflict. The expedition was initiated in May 1726.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725; TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

Table 7.4. Average Number of Ships per Squadron, 1715-1726

<i>Squadron</i>	1715	1716	1717	1718	1719	1720	1721	1722	1723	1724	1725	1726
Baltic	10	16	16	7	9	23	21	0	0	0	0	12
Coast of Ireland	1	0	1	5	5	5	6	6	6	5	4	3
Coast of Scotland	4	7	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Convoys	1	1	4	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
Home Service	32	31	19	16	27	19	26	28	33	36	36	33
Mediterranean	12	6	0	18	23	13	0	0	0	0	0	4
Plantations*	15	9	10	13	13	14	20	24	21	16	15	21**
Salé	0	0	5	7	6	6	3	0	0	0	0	0
South Sea Company	3	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

* The 'Plantations' squadron included ships dispatched against pirates in Africa and India which explains the increase from 1721 to 1723. Note that this squadron was sometimes designated 'Abroad' or 'Foreign Service' and often included 2-3 ships sent to Gibraltar and Minorca which are included in the averages. In any given year, the station ships make up the majority of this squadron. See Table 7.3 for the average number of naval ships sent to each region of interest.

** This increase is explained by an expedition led by Vice Admiral Hosier to blockade Porto Bello as part of renewed Anglo-Spanish conflict. The expedition was initiated in May 1726.

Sources: TNA, ADM 8/14. List Book, 1715-1721; TNA, ADM 8/15. List Book, 1721-1725; TNA, ADM 8/16. List Book, 1726-1728.

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