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Fighting Back British Privateers and the Loss of the *Leocadia*, Santa Elena, 1800¹

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Abstract

At the end of the eighteenth century and during the first decades of the nineteenth century, Europe was involved in continuing conflicts among the nations fighting for consolidating their own hegemony in the Western World. The Spanish alignment with the French against Great Britain meant the transfer of this conflict to the Hispanic colonies. Therefore, the Pacific coast became the scene of incursions of British privateers, whalers and smugglers. This threat was felt in the Galapagos as well as in Guayaquil and in the Santa Elena peninsula. Between 1797 and 1808 this enemy presence disturbed the maritime commerce in the South Sea. In this context, the shipwreck of the frigate *Leocadia*, in Santa Elena, the night of November, 16, 1800, with an important cargo for Panama demonstrates the necessity of putting together a new defensive fleet to defeat the enemy threat. This event also reflects the difficulties that the local authorities and merchants went through to face the new peril and its repercussion for the maritime trade in the South Sea.

1. Agreements and discords among the power nations

In the year of 1789, while France was in the heat of revolution, Spain and Great Britain were on the verge of initiating a war, due to an incident between these two nations in the Straits of Nootka in Canada. Nevertheless, after negotiations on the 28 of October of 1790, both nations subscribed the Treaty of San Lorenzo. By means of this agreement, Spain granted to England, the right to sail, disembark, and colonize the regions of the

coast of the North American Pacific, whereas Great Britain once again committed not to violate the Spanish possessions in South America. Among other points in the agreement, most significant for the history of the South Sea was that British whalers could operate the American coasts, including entering Hispano-American ports in case of emergency (Ortiz S & Toledo, 2001). On the other hand, the United States was recognized as a country and received freedom of navigation and commerce.

Since the signing of the treaty of Utrecht (1713) by the European nations that had been involved in the war of Spanish succession, the South Sea became a scene of dispute of the power nations. The San Lorenzo Treaty (1790) was another historical milestone that demonstrated the negotiations between the power nations and their consequences for the Americas. This treaty affected the Spanish commercial monopoly in its American colonies.

With the Peace of Amiens, signed in 1802, it was hoped that almost one decade of permanent fighting between the diverse powers would come to an end. Nevertheless this peace was short lived, since at the end of 1804 Spain once again was at war against England, and the Pacific again became the scene of persecution of smugglers, privateers and whalers.

This series of agreements and discords commonly has been interpreted from a Euro centrist perspective, focusing on the consequences for the European nations. Nevertheless, it is essential to go beyond analyzing negotiations among the colonizing powers and also replace the perspective centered in the routes of the Atlantic, in order to understand the complexity of the commercial routes of the Pacific and the drive of the colonies to solve their own defensive and commercial problems.

In the present paper we seek through the history of *Santa Leocadia* to examine how these agreements and discords among the powers had serious implications for marine commerce in the South Sea. Far from the epicenter of the disputes, the colonial officers and merchants had to solve the defensive and commercial problems facing the abandonment of their Crown. Other colonizing nations capitalized on this, using it to their benefit.

2. Dynamics in the South Sea

Since the sixteenth century, colonial regions had developed a maritime circuit in the Pacific, then known as the *Mar del Sur*, that connected the different regions by means of official ports and others not so official, but allowed by the local authorities. Thus, from Chile to Acapulco, and Acapulco to Manila, a legal, but also illegal maritime traffic was created in the form of contraband of all type of goods and products to satisfy the demands of the colonial markets.

The nineteenth century maritime history of the Pacific must consider the rupture of the old Spanish monopoly and the incursion of England as an industrial power as well as the presence of the United States as a new commercial power that appeared as producer and trader from the ports of Philadelphia, Boston, New Cork and Savannah. And also it is important to acknowledge the trade among the different Hispano-American ports (Leon, 2001, p.301). This situation continues from the end of the eighteenth century through the first decades of the nineteenth century, charting a new course in the history of commercial relations. As a result, trade between America and Europe increases significantly “10 times” (Leon, 2001, p.301).

In this sense, the history of inter-colonial commercial relations in the Pacific must take into account the new commercial routes, and the product circulation, that go beyond just the silver route, which meant a reorientation in the legal and illegal traffic of products. As a result, during the beginning of the nineteenth century, one must consider influences such as Buenos Aires with its new roll as the port for the Potosi silver, as well

as Chile, which had been released of the trusteeship of Lima. And off course, Guayaquil and its blossom in the cacao commerce once surpassed the restrictions of the Crown.

Thus, all this commercial development also was challenged by the presence of ships coming from other European nations, some of them protected under political agreements operating in the South Sea like whalers, smugglers and privateers in legal but also illegal missions. This enemy presence implied a challenge for the colonial authorities and the merchants who had been almost abandoned by Spain, which was absorbed in its own European conflicts. In this sense, the history of *Santa Leocadia* symbolizes the challenge and drive of the American colonies in the Pacific to maintain their commercial dynamics in spite of the presence of enemy powers, and the neglect of its own Crown.

3. Foreign threat in the South Sea

To the end of the eighteenth century, with the signing of the treaty of San Lorenzo, England obtained certain benefits of circulation and commercialization in the South Sea. Indeed the English took advantage of this new opportunity to approach the ports with merchandise, therefore promoting to the maximum extent, contraband, which also affected the commerce not only of Spain and its colonies, but also the Inter-colonial commerce that had settled in the Americas. The Viceroy of Lima expressed on the matter: "*The English project expeditions to this sea...*"² And therefore he solicited the formation of a defensive Navy, due to the danger that the stop in the commerce implied (AAB, legajo 29, 20/09/1801, fol1). In the same way in which the president of the Audiencia of Lima aimed that:

There are no other forces whereupon to count in the post station of the Callao, but with a small corvette armed provisionally... that cannot protect this marine commerce according to the terror that are going through the merchants by the

repeated experienced of hits, is to fear increases in such way that arrives the case of lacking food in this capital... (AGI, Estado 73, N103, fol 1).

During the last years of the eighteenth century and the first decades of nineteenth century, the presence of English contraband ships affecting the Hispano-American commerce, was a reminiscent of the principles of the eighteenth century.

In an attempt to protect the coasts of the South Sea from the new threat of the traditional European powers, plus the new presence of the recently freed North America, the general lieutenant of the Real Navy of Peru, Francisco Gil de Tabuada, asked the Spanish crown for the construction of four brigs to patrol the coasts of the Peruvian Viceroyalty. Thus, the defensive history begins with the arrive at Callao in 1795 of both brigs the *Peruano* (alias San Francisco) and the *Limeño* (alias San Gil). Indeed, its very first mission was to persecute an enemy fleet made up of four British whaling frigates that had been seen in Arica. During the following years, the *Peruano* and the *Limeño* operated like defense ships persecuting the English privateers, and also the North American whalers throughout the coast of the South Sea.

In September of 1798 the *Peruano* and the *Limeño* along with two gunboats persecuted two British frigates that had been seen in Cabo Blanco. Days later the governor of Guayaquil noticed the presence of an English frigate and some North American whaling ships that were behaving more like pirates than fishermen. In January of 1799 this fleet also persecuted another British merchant frigate off the coast of Guayaquil. The actions of the *Peruano* and the *Limeño* in the last years of the eighteenth century are described in detail by Jorge Ortiz Sotelo and Lorena Toledo (2001).

In 1800, due to the bad shape of the *Limeño*, a new defensive fleet was formed by **frigate *Santa Leocadia***, the corvette *Castor* and the privateer *Orué*.

Appointed by the Viceroy of Peru at the beginning of this year when crossing Guayaquil and the Galapagos islands, the division under command of captain Don Antonio Barreda, sail from Callao the 21 of January the frigate of the King Santa Leocadia and corvettes Castor and Orue armed in war the first on behalf of Its Majesty, and the second a expenses of this consulate and reinforcing its trimmings 100 men of the Infantry regiment of Lima... (AGN/B, Historia Civil, SC29, 8, D16, 8 de julio de 1800, Fol.. 33).

This fleet was financed by a combination of sources, the *Santa Leocadia* by the State, the corvettes *Castor* and *Orué* by the consulate of merchants. Its first mission weighed anchor on January 25th of 1800 toward the Galapagos. Interestingly, during the first decade of the nineteenth century, privateering was a determining factor in the conflicts and wars between states. Therefore, the existence of this mixed fleet reflected the defensive necessity at that time. *“The privateering was an effective substitute and foundation of the naval supremacy of the states”* (Thompson, 1994, p.26).

The first decade of the nineteenth century registered the most violent period of maritime history, partly because neither France nor England was able to control the innumerable hordes of desperate privateers who went around the seas without state control. With a fundamental difference for England the privateer forces, were mercenary aids to their naval forces that had permission to attack anyone including the neutral commerce, whereas for France the privateers were navy and were not authorized to attack the neutral commerce. During the first half of the nineteenth century the privateers were an important force for the interstate wars as fundamental elements, substitutes, or the foundation for the naval supremacy of the states (Thomson, 1994, p.24).

Privateers or traders and the presence of foreigners in the South Sea generated a common feeling of instability, as much for government officials for whom these intruders threatened the Spanish sovereignty, as for the colonial merchants who were affected by the interference of the contraband of other nations in their own markets, while their hands

were tied due to the multiple restrictions imposed by their Crown. The words of the Viceroy of Peru when he asked for the conformation of a defensive square in the year of 1791 reflected this reality:

I will maintain it in station on the North and the South coast of this Kingdom, covering in this way ,while the circumstances allow it, these seas free of the temptations of the contraband, that bring the fishermen... at the moment are common the hostilities and robberies and other extortions that in sea and land the English privateers practiced... (AAB, legajo 13, 5/6/1792, fol 1).

Indeed for the case of the Hispano-American colonies, in the coasts of the Pacific, its distance from the nucleus of the interstate conflict meant on the one hand that its metropolis neglected its defense, and on the other hand its enemies also took advantage of this distance to break the agreements and behave like pirates. Under these circumstances, the colonies had to create mixed defensive fleets as in the case of the square commanded by *Santa Leocadia*, which emulated the square, *Nuestra Señora de la Guía*, formed at the end of the seventeenth century, with similar characteristics and under similar circumstances.

The medieval tradition dictated that the defense was the responsibility of the subjects who were favored by it. Meanwhile, the State really was in charge of collecting and redistributing the taxes. During the colonial time the *Armada del Mar del Sur* and the *Armada de Barlovento* were the official Navies of the Americas, financed by the *avería* tax. This tax, which was to equip the Real Navies, was collected by the civil employees, as a fixed percentage of the value of all the products, silver and gold that sailed by the South Sea.

This tax was easily accepted by the local merchants whose interest was the protection of shipped merchandise. In fact sometimes they offered donations and voluntary contributions for the defense of the maritime commerce. On repeated occasions the Crown requested particular donations and voluntary loans to remedy the defensive situation in the South Sea.

In some cases, defensive squares were financed entirely by individuals as in the case of the *Nuestra Señora de la Guía*, a privateering company financed by Limenian merchants, who at the end of the seventeenth century faced the cruelest pirate siege, requiring them to fight their enemies before they could approach the coasts.

A. *Nuestra Señora de la Guía*

In the year of 1687, due to the new outbreak of the piracy threat, the Viceroy Duque de la Palata obtained by a private finance effort the conformation of a defensive square destined to fight the enemy. A group of wealthy neighbors, contributed economically to create this square in change they obtained the right to keep the captured pirate ships, meanwhile, the State ran with the expenses of artillery and maintenance of the ships. Two ships integrated this fleet the *San José*, the *San Nicolas* and one patache. The *San Nicolas* was commanded by Don Nicolas de Igarza, the *San José* by Don Dionisio de Artunduaga. In May of 1687 they left the Callao. Thus the Viceroy informed:

*A company of all those who want to contribute has been formed, and important enterprise to arm a military square, It had to be compose by two ships and a patache, the name **Nuestra Señora de la Guía**, it soon leaves to sail in search of the enemy... (AHBC/Q, JJ218, fol 156R).*

This square fought during five days on the coasts of Guayaquil against the enemy fleet led by Groniet and Le Picard. Indeed in a confrontation in the coasts of Atacames, it lost one of its ships, The *San Nicolas*, that sank in a sand bank. The crew and the artillery were rescued, but the ship did not. The other ship the *San José* persecuted the pirates toward the coasts of Central America, forcing them to abandon its ships and flee by land. Thus the Viceroy informed:

The governor Dionisio de Artunduaga returned to the port of Callao, after twenty one months, their success were the seven boats that were taken from the enemy and with the glory for him to have thrown them of the sea (Ibid, fol 158r).

Toward 1689 this square stopped being a factor of defense against the piracy, to become once more a commerce company. In 1689 the replacement of the *San Nicolas*, the *San Francisco de Padua* was shipwrecked while leaving the port of Puná. They managed to save the crew, but when this last shipwreck occurred, this square lost the character for which it was created³ The success of *Nuestra Señora de la Guía*, in expelling the pirates in just a short time was an early example of the effectiveness of the private companies providing the defense in the South Sea.

Emulating this defensive square, in the year of 1800, a new defensive convoy was formed with the same characteristics, a mixed company of defense with the purpose of expelling the English and North American whaling privateers, who taking advantage of the commercial disagreements and the distraction of the European powers were again threatening the coasts of the South Sea.

B. *Santa Leocadia* and its defensive square

In an effort to face the new English threat in the coasts of the South Sea, the colony officials joined with the consulate of merchants formed a defensive square again. The history of this fleet resembled the earlier of *Nuestra Señora de la Guía*. Again a convoy of frigates was formed, one financed by the state and the other two by the colonial traders, with the purpose of persecuting the English and North American whaling privateers, who taking advantage of the political agreements of their nations, were threatening the South Sea and jeopardizing the maritime commerce. This square obtained the right to confiscate the ships taken from the enemies to increase their own fleet.

In the year of 1800 the Viceroy of Peru reported the formation of the defensive square and the success achieved in its first mission, therefore he expressed:

Having had the honor to inform Your Excellence in letter of 22 of January the last destiny of the Division that had formed to persecute the English whalers, who from the beginning of this year caused insufferable damages to our commerce and

promised greater ones, it seemed my duty to inform you the happy success of this expedition... repeating equal blows by our part against these enemies... not having here under my control another naval force that a frigate and two brigs... according to these, the armed whalers surplus today on 22 without counting the other so many Americans who make the same commerce... to prevent it, and anticipating some new force whereupon to increase the small one that I have today under my control... some individuals seem to try to arm at their expense a division whereupon to clean the Sea of them. Although nothing has been said to me until the present, I try to foment the idea, and if it verifies I just can not doubt that they obtain it. The enemies who escape to this risk will instruct from it to their government (AGI, Estado 73, N 108, fol 1, 1r).

The words of the Viceroy acknowledge on one hand the presence of English and North American enemies who supposedly were protected under the agreements of their governments with Spain were jeopardizing the coasts and islands of the South Sea, behaving mostly like armed privateers. On the other hand, the Viceroy expressed the defensive weakness of the South Sea, thus, again confirming the necessity of private investment to take charge of the defense in this Sea. He also explained how until the moment it had been taken thirteen whaling ships, “*and a double number scared off*” (Ibid, fol 1r).

Another report registered the actions of this square, formed by the frigate *Santa Leocadia*, and the corvettes *Castor* and *Orué*, when they persecuted the British whalers in the Galapagos islands:

They arrived to Galapagos the 10 of February... to that our old ones called Enchanted... in the great bay of Santa Isabel... without finding the enemy privateering vessels, that according to the news arrive there frequently for fishing whales, and where it was believed they deposited effects of our prey merchant... Santa Leocadia separates from the corvettes... lost the hope to sight enemies returned to the Callao the 31 of May with Peruvian bark and tobacco of the King... (AGI, Estado 73, N 108, fol).

Thus the Viceroy reported how in this mission the three boats were fortuitously separated. The reason why they separated was not clearly registered. The *Santa Leocadia* returned to the Guayaquil coast, while its companions *Castor* and *Orué* stayed in Galapagos, where:

Three days after separated the corvettes, the Orue was on the southern end of this Santa Isabel, and discovering to noon in the 4° quadrant a frigate and another one in 3°, noticed that the first put in a English flag; it corresponded with the same, and pursuing it, it noticed two hours later that second sailed towards North... at night confirmed that there was one third enemy boat that called to its companions... next morning all three formed aligned the three sail close to the wind... at five in the morning the Orué opened fire that the two frigates answered... after fighting three hours with alive fire... the enemies were forced its sail to avoid the battle... (Ibid, f.75).

As a result of this confrontation two British whalers were captured and a load was seized of:

In the one of 305 English tons were 70 barrels of sperm, because it just had arrived at Galapagos coming from London, leaving his load and fighting with a Spanish privateer of Montevideo on Cabo Frío. The other of 280 tons had a cargo of 230 barrels of sperm and 28 seadog skins. (AAB, legajo 28, 6/1/1801, fol 1).

Days later after its return to the coast, the Orué sighted “*The third enemy frigate named the Amable Catalinita of 10 canons, ship that had sacked the merchant boat El Rosario... This ship did not offer resistance and easily was captured*” (Suplemento de la Gazeta de Lima, Julio, 12 de1800, fol 74-76).

A revealing, detailed account of the privateering behavior of this defensive square can be found in the report of Domingo de Orué, the proprietor of *Orué*, who when explaining the confrontation with the English enemies in Galapagos expressed:

At five in the morning the Orué opened fire that was answered by the two frigates... after fighting three hours with alive fire... the enemies forced his sail to avoid combat... the time almost precise for the Orué to use... red flag to its top, an old privateering indication of not giving quarter, had satisfactory not rendering to English whalers New Castor and Britain... with 22 and 27 men manned by captains Joseph Christie and Juan Ines gave their letters of marque signed by Jorge III (AGI, Estado 73, N103, fol, 46).

During the year 1800, while the *Peruano* was being repaired and in replacement of *Limeño*, the defensive square composed by the frigate *Santa Leocadia*, the corvettes *Castor* and *Orué*, was quite successful in its work to persecute and catch British whaling privateers. A sample of it was “*the one hundred and as much English prisoners of the crews of 11 whaling ships taken...*” (AAB, legajo 28, 13-03-1801, fol 1). In the month of August of 1800 the *Santa Leocadia* also faced in “*Coquimbo the persecution of two apparently enemy frigates that blocked some ships of this commerce and were Anglo-American whalers*” (AAB, legajo 28, 13/03/1800). In September of 1800 the *Santa Leocadia* also managed to catch “*an Anglo-American Brig named Boston Pacific Trader*” (AAB, legajo 28, 2/9/1800, fol 1). These are only a few examples of the actions of the frigate *Santa Leocadia* in its mission to defend the coasts of the Viceroyalty of Peru. However, due to a sudden shipwreck, the *Santa Leocadia* was out of operation, and again the coasts of the Viceroyalty were unprotected and the government officers and merchants urged the construction of a substitute frigate.

C. The tragic end of *Santa Leocadia*

The military frigate Santa Leocadia left the past 7 sailing from Paita to Santa Elena was shipwrecked at eight thirty the night of November the 16th in the South beach of the western end of that anchorage, with the misfortune to be lost in pieces... at six hours perishing more than 25 men of its crew with the surgeon and two pilots and great number of wounded and bruised (AAB, legajo 30, 200/12/1800, fol 1).

The *Santa Leocadia*, commanded by Antonio Barreda was one of the most beautiful Spanish frigates of the Pacific. On the 7th of November of 1800, it sailed accompanied by the *Peruano* and two other merchants in commission from the Callao transporting 130.000 of the *Situado* for Panama, plus another considerable sum corresponding to the Limean merchants. Altogether with a register of one million eight thousand six hundred and fifty pesos, plus the crew and a group of English prisoners who were taken to Panama (AAB, legajo 30, Fol. 3, 4, 5, 23).

Unlike its previous commissions, persecuting British whalers, the trip of November 1800 had a tragic end for this frigate, and without a doubt this catastrophe affected the defense and maritime circulation in the South Sea. Not only the loss of the ship, 140 people, 48 wounded, plus “*it is left under the water the sum of one hundred ninety and eight thousand and fifty three pesos*” (Ibid, fol 23). But, in addition the loss of this frigate implied that again the coasts of the South Sea remained defenseless, without the main ship of their fleet.

The loss of this ship again put in jeopardy the defense and the marine commerce of the South Sea, according to the Viceroy's communication with the navy ministry:

From this unfortunate event today turns out to be here in greater lack of vessels of the king to attend this post station, I hope that Your excellence informs of our greater necessity, in case You all have the good destine to send marine forces for these objects and for the defense of its dominions in this South Sea and protection of the marine commerce (AAB, legajo 30, 200/12/1800, fol 1.2).

In the following months the rescue operations were executed⁴ In January of 1801, while the *Limeño*, the old companion of *Santa Leocadia*, accompanied by the merchant *Jesus Maria*, were loading material for the rescue as well as for the construction of the new frigate that would replace the *Santa Leocadia*, they received news about two English privateering frigates that had been seen. On that occasion the *Fortune* and the *Chance* had crossed from *Paita* to *Manta*. After a lack of support on the part of the governor of Guayaquil the *Limeño* undertook the persecution. Captain Felipe Martinez commanding the *Limeño* had a devastating confrontation between Tumbez and the island of Santa Clara with the frigate *Chance*, commanded by the English captain William White, who had under his control “*a crew of more than 70 and an armed frigate between 19 and 22 pieces of artillery*” (AAB, legajo, 29, 16/10/1801, fol 1). After three hours of combat, the results were ominous for the *Limeño* that lost its captain and also several members of its crew, receiving severe material damages, which resulted in lieutenant Pedro Cortazar surrendering to the enemies. Part of the crew was released in Tumbez and the rest in Guayaquil (Ibid).

After this disastrous loss, the authorities and the merchants insisted on the construction of the replacement for *Santa Leocadia*, but apparently luck was not on their side, since after the beginning of the construction of the frigate *Ciudad de Lima* in the shipyard of Guayaquil, months later a fire destroyed not only the wood for this boat but all hopes to reinstitute a defensive square that emulated the actions of the *Nuestra Señora de la Guía* in its moment and by the *Santa Leocadia* and its escorts (AAB, legajo 29, 08/11/1801, fol 40).

In spite of the joint effort of the merchants and colonial officials, it was not sufficient to fight the attack of the representatives of the power nations that struggled for the commercial dominion in the South Sea. The effort of *Nuestra Señora de la Guía* in its time as well as the effort of the *Santa Leocadia* demonstrated the defensive fragility of the Pacific and overall the narrow connection between the maritime dynamics with the rivalry of the powers of the world. Perhaps the present history of the illegal fishing of sharks in Ecuador is precisely a reflection of this reality?

4. Impact of the relations between empires in the dynamics in the South Sea

The Spanish monopoly in the South Sea was replaced gradually during the eighteenth century by other commercial powers, beginning with the treaty of Utrecht (1713). At that time the king of Spain accepted this: “*all the ships and boats of the three crowns will be able to sail freely...*” (ANH/Q, Cedularios, caja 6, 7/11/1712, fol 2). Soon this situation evolved toward the policy of free commerce, adopted in the middle of the century. This reality contributed to the aim of the Spanish hegemony in the Pacific.

The Spanish commercial domination was decreased by the pressure of other powerful nations, primary England, which had the industrial, financial and maritime power to do so. The United States also had a preponderant roll in the marine commerce of the Pacific. During the Napoleonic wars, its position as a neutral nation served to support its commercial connections and supply the Hispano-American markets. As a result from this process, Spain which had monopolized the American commerce during

three centuries disappeared gradually from the commercial scene in the New World (Leon, 2001). This new commercial perspective significantly affected the connections between the commercial empires as well as the interregional interchange of the American colonies of the Pacific.

As mentioned previously, the treaty of San Lorenzo (1790) had implications for the powers. Perhaps what has been explored less, but that greatly affected the regions of the South Sea was the whaling agreement, that contemplated the English operation of front to the American coasts. This implied a new challenge for the inhabitants of these regions, which were affected again by agreements between the commercial forces and faced the presence of the enemy in a form of privateering or just piracy.

Again the presence of enemies of other nations meant to the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies of the Pacific a new challenge that had to be faced independently because its Crown was facing the French pressure. Although this new foreign presence could be assumed to be a new commercial option, it was not, since it was interpreted as the traditional privateer or pirate presence, moreover, and a new element was added because the whaling ships were protected by the agreements between the commercial powers. Indeed a Spanish navy officer expressed this reality in the following way:

Frequent navigation and enter at the ports of the South Sea of foreign ships by pretext of the whale fishing, and to aid their necessities being their main object to do illicit commerce that damage the national one, have forced to send narrower orders to prevent it, without until now have produced the wished effect (AAB, legajo 30, 25/2/1805, fol 66).

With the treaty of San Lorenzo the British had acquired the right to fish whales and to disembark in case of emergency. Nevertheless this threat of armed fishermen as privateers and loads of contraband had to be faced by the remainder of the official representatives and regional traders, who once again found themselves needing to form a defensive Navy, an effort that resulted in serious failures, as the history of *Santa Leocadia* demonstrated.

After the shipwreck of *Santa Leocadia*, constant requests were made to fortify the coastal protection in the South Sea and to construct new defensive frigates. Nevertheless the position of the central government, absorbed with its own fight against the French pressure was resigned to losing control of the Pacific, as reflected in the words of Miguel Solery, when talking about the presence and contraband of the English and North American ships in the South Sea:

It seems very difficult to me to prevent the contraband in that coast because being included from Guayaquil to Chiloe a space of more than thousands leagues cannot have defense able to cover this extension... Nevertheless of this I do not believe that the contraband that until now is made in the Kingdom of Peru is of great consideration, but it will be if is not watched over with effectiveness... (AAB, legajo 37.25/2/1805, fol 69).

Apparently this official diminished the impact of the contraband, saying it would be necessary to see what the merchants of the region had to say, since they were being affected directly. In addition, about the presence of the North American ships the official expressed:

The greater part of the ships that are there are American and as these have not obtained permission of Their Majesty to fish in those coasts... but in the occasion of the war with the England is natural that nation sends one or two military frigates to maintain that fishing....(Ibid, fol 70).

These words again reflect certain resignation on the part of the central government. Despite this, at the beginning of the nineteenth century the colonial regions did not intend to accept abandonment by the Crown. As the history of this century demonstrates these colonies were ready to take the reins of their own destiny.

From a Eurocentric perspective and with a certain “Atlantinism” history has fundamentally focused the maritime commercial issues and the impact of the enemy presence in the Atlantic and consequently almost exclusively on the commerce between Spain and its colonies. The present paper pursued to focus on the impact in the agreements and discords of the colonial power nations in the history of the South Sea; and fundamentally in the dynamic response of agents like the officials and merchants, who already moved away from the entrapment and clumsy commercial restrictions of Spanish Crow, had to act as opposed to these new incursions of other economically powerful nations, that not only were putting in danger the possible sovereignty of these regions but, were jeopardizing the legal and illegal maritime circuits that had been developed in the Pacific.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that the loss of *Santa Leocadia*, and the difficulty in forming another square of coastguard vessels reveals the defensive weakness in the South Sea. Moreover, these realities are indicators of the negligence in which the Spanish Crown maintained the Pacific during its colonial dominion. This negligent abandonment extended until the beginnings of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, already in the prologue of the independence process, this situation was intolerable for the colonial regions that highly depended on the maritime traffic of the Pacific; therefore they had to safeguard the system of interregional commerce that had been constructed upon the myopia of the Spanish Crown.

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Archivo General de la Nación /Bogotá (AGN/B)

Historia Civil, SC29,8, D16, 8 de julio de 1800, noticias sobre la persecución a dos fragatas corsarias inglesas *Castor* y *Bretaña* Fol. 332-335V.

Archivo Nacional de Historia /Quito (ANH/Q)

ANH/Q, Cedularios, caja 6, año 1700-1720

Archivo Álvaro de Bazán (AAB)⁶

Legajo 1 (1781 a 1784)

16/2/1784, Lima, Vacaro a Valdés, remitiendo copia de cuatro oficios cursados con el Virrey respecto al retiro de los buques de guerra del Mar del Sur. Tiene lista de oficiales, 21 folios.

Legajo 3 (1785)

20/2 a 20/10/1785, Lima, Vacaro a Valdez, sobre el paquebote *Africa*, del erario de Guatemala, y su uso en transporte de madera de Guayaquil al Callao, 4 folios hojas.

Legajo 12 (1791)

18/10/1791, Paíta, Fragata *Liebre*, Geraldino a Valdés, da cuenta de haber encontrado a la corbeta inglesa ballenera *Libertad* en Paíta.

Legajo 13 (1792)

5/6/1792, Lima, Gil de Taboada a Valdés sobre destino dado a los buques de guerra. Han sido enviados para proteger las costas del contrabando, 3 folios.

Legajo 22 (1797)

23/12/1797, Callao, *Peruano* Vivero a Pedro Varela, ministro de Marina, sobre su travesía llevando tropa a Juan Fernández y el apresamiento de una ballenera inglesa, 2 folios

Legajo 24 (1798)

14/9/1798, Tumbes, Estado de los bergantines *Peruano* y *Limeño*, existentes en el Callao de Lima, Martínez a Langará, sobre búsqueda de dos corsarios ingleses, 6 folios.

29/7/1798, Lima, nota al virrey de Lima, sobre el empleo de fragatas balleneras inglesas apresadas, 1 folio.

Legajo 26 (1799)

2/9/1799, Callao, Ugarte a Langará, salida de buques para Panamá, 121 folios.

7/10/1799, Lima, captura de dos bajeles por dos fragatas balleneras inglesas, 1 folio.

23/10/1799, Lima, captura del bajel nacional *Humildad* por parte de corsarios ingleses, 3 folios.

Legajo 28 (1801)

6/1/1801, Lima, Ugarte a Cornel, sobre arribo a Guayaquil de la *Castor* el 2/6. Iba en convoy con la *Santa Leocadia* y la *Orué*, la primera se separó el 6/3 al norte de las Galápagos. Con la *Orué* trató de arribar a costa pero se separaron el 31/3 y el 3 de abril se dio cuenta que aún seguía sobre las Galápagos. Finalmente, el 3 de mayo recaló en la Gorgona, y luego de hacer agua y leña llegó a Guayaquil. Aún no sabe nada de la *Orué*, 2 folios.

13/3/1801, Bellavista, fuga de 24 prisioneros ingleses en el bote del mercante *Piedad*. Por orden del 23/3/1800 se pusieron en libertad a más de 100 prisioneros ingleses de 11 buques balleneros tomados al declararse la guerra, varios se han ido en embarcaciones mercantes, otros permanecen en Lima y otros se emplean como jornales en la marina mercante. 16 de ellos que trabajaban en los buques *Piedad* y *Begoña* se escaparon la noche del 10 en un bote del primero, con 5 más de la capital y 3 pilotos de las presas del *Orué*, “escapados de este castillo”, 7 folios.

2/9/1800, Bellavista, Ugarte a Cornel sobre arribo de la *Santa Leocadia* de su comisión a Arica en persecución de una corsaria inglesa. Conduce al bergantín norteamericano *Negociante Pacífico* que va a la costa noroeste con licencia del cónsul español en Boston. Estado de fuerza.

Legajo 29 (1801)

3/1/1801, Bellavista, salida del *Limeño* convoyando a un mercante, para el apoyo al buceo en la Punta de Santa Elena, 5 folios.

22/2/1801, Bellavista, regreso de Guayaquil de la *Castor* y salida del *Peruano* para Panamá, 1 folio.

17/3/1801, Bellavista, arribo de la *Castor* con dos presas y convoy, procedente de Guayaquil, 1 folio.

4/6/1801, Lima, sobre prisioneros ingleses tomados en 1797, 5 folios.

3/8/1801, Callao, remite los acuerdos de la Junta del apostadero sobre las dos fragatas inglesas capturadas por la corbeta *Atlántica* en las Galápagos en abril de 1800. Se trata de las balleneras *Bretaña* y *Pólux*, 1 folio.

8/9/1801, Callao, dictamen sobre recursos para impedir que los enemigos británicos continúen perjudicando el comercio marítimo del Perú, 4 folios.

1/10/1801, Callao, sobre envío de fuerzas navales al Pacífico, 2 folios.

22/10/1801, Lima, sobre el reglamento de marina mercante para la Mar del Sur, 7 folios.

16/10/1801, Lima, parte del apresamiento del bergantín *Limeño* por la corbeta británica *Chance*, en la boca del Guayas, 7 folios.

2/11/1801, Callao, nombramiento como alférez de navío a favor de Domingo de Orué, otorgado por el Rey el 14/1 junto con su reconocimiento tanto a él como a los demás individuos de la *Atlántica* por la acción en Galápagos. Está en Acapulco y Chile con su corbeta, 1 folio.

22/1/1801, Lima, operaciones de buceo en Santa Elena, 1 folio.

26/2/1801, Lima, operaciones de rescate de la *Santa Leocadia*, 1 folio.

21/3/1801, Lima, operaciones de rescate de la *Santa Leocadia*, 1 folio.

22/4/1801, Lima, operaciones de rescate de la *Santa Leocadia*, 1 folio.

22/5/1801, Lima, operaciones de rescate de la *Santa Leocadia*, lista de lo sacado, 7 folios.

21/6/1801, Lima, suspensión de operaciones de rescate de la *Leocadia* durante el invierno, 7 folios.

7/7/1801, Callao, suspensión de las operaciones de rescate de la *Leocadia* durante el invierno, 3 folios.

4/11/1801, Lima, construcción de la fragata *Nueva ciudad de Lima* en reemplazo de la *Leocadia*, 8 folios.

Legajo 30 (1801)

20/12/1800, Lima, Fragata *Santa Leocadia*, su naufragio, buceo y reemplazo de otra que ha de construirse en Guayaquil a expensas de la capital de Lima, 45 folios.

Legajo 33 (1803)

21/11/1803, Lima, sobre el naufragio de la *Santa Leocadia*, 2 folios.

Legajo 37 (1805)

25/2/1805, Aranjuez, sobre buques extranjeros en la Mar del Sur, 8 folios.

Legajo 40 (1806),

15/7/1806, Madrid, noticia de los buques menores empleados en los mares de América, 1 folio.

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AGI, Estado 73, N103, 26, octubre, 1801, Sobre atropellos de corsario ingleses

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de 1800, Fol. 74-76



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¹ Paper presented in the Symposium of Maritime History, Annapolis, Maryland, September,21 2007.

² All quotes have been translated from Spanish by the author.

³ Lohman Villena, quoted by Moreyra Céspedes,I, pags 139-140, 147-186, 233-233.

⁴ Camilo Destruge in his article “The frigate Santa Leocadia” expressed that several attempts to rescue the Santa Leocadia had been made by different enterprises during the XIX and XX centuries, although it is still believe that had been partially rescued.

⁵ All the sources had been kept in Spanish so the references wont be altered.

⁶ Documents of this Archive had been quoted thanks to the generosity of Jorge Ortiz Sotelo.