

The last journey of the San Cayetano (1745): privateering and male migration during the war of Jenkins' Ear

**El último viaje del San Cayetano (1745): corsarismo y
migración masculina durante la guerra del Asiento**

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Abstract: The San Cayetano was one among hundreds of privateering vessels sailing European coasts in 1745. Its last journey was a succession of problems and desertions until it was captured by a British ship near Portugal. Neither the sailors nor the captain of the San Cayetano influenced the politics of the time or were at the centre of any remarkable military action. However, their journey serves as an interesting window into mid-Eighteenth Century Spain. The last journey of the San Cayetano offers a story of war, diplomacy and imprisonment, but also many interesting insights about migration and working conditions in the naval industry.

The San Cayetano shows how, facing a context of economic uncertainty caused by war, two Spanish merchants from Cadiz decided to invest in the profitable privateering business, i.e., attacking and capturing ships to sell them, along with their cargo, with royal sanction. At the same time, the sailors of the San Cayetano provide some clues as to the life conditions in times of war (since they worked without a fixed wage, only with the promise of loot) and exemplarize some of the migratory patterns in Early Modern Spain. The diverse origins of the crew remind us that before Industrialization, internal migrations in the Iberian Peninsula were already a constant.

The article is divided into five parts. In the first part, sources, Prize Papers, the methodology and microhistory will be presented. Then, the ship and its crew will be situated within its historic context: the war of Jenkins' Ear between Britain

and Spain. After that, the owners of the San Cayetano will be portrayed and a possible explanation for the ship suggested. Next, the last journey of the ship will be reconstructed thanks to the documents seized by the British when it was captured. Finally, in order to go beyond the anecdotal, the crew of the San Cayetano will be linked to demographic models of migration in Eighteenth-century Spain. The ultimate aim of this article is thus to advocate microhistory as a useful methodology and illustrate the potential of the Prize Papers as a historical source.

Keywords: Privateering, migration, labour, sailors, Jenkins' Ear war.

Resumen: El San Cayetano era uno más de los centenares de barcos corsarios que surcaban las costas europeas en 1745. Su último viaje vino marcado por una serie de contratiempos y desertiones hasta que se rindió a un buque corsario inglés sin presentar batalla en la costa portuguesa. Ni los marineros ni el capitán del San Cayetano influyeron en la política de la época ni protagonizaron ninguna gesta militar. Sin embargo, sus peripecias nos ofrecen una interesante ventana por la que asomarnos a la España de mediados del siglo XVIII. La historia del último viaje del San Cayetano trata de guerra, diplomacia y encarcelamiento, pero a través de ella también aprendemos sobre migraciones y las condiciones laborales en el sector naval.

El caso del San Cayetano nos muestra cómo, ante las pérdidas y la incertidumbre causadas por la guerra, unos comerciantes gaditanos decidieron pasarse al lucrativo negocio corsario, es decir, a asaltar y robar barcos extranjeros con autorización real. Al mismo tiempo, los marineros del San Cayetano nos dan pistas sobre las condiciones de vida en tiempos de guerra (pues trabajaban sin cobrar, solo por la promesa de botín) y nos muestran algunos de los patrones migratorios en la España dieciochesca. La diversa procedencia de los marineros del San Cayetano nos recuerda que ya antes de la revolución industrial la migración interna en la península Ibérica era una constante.

Este artículo está dividido en cinco partes. En la primera presento las fuentes, los Prize Papers, y la metodología, microhistoria. A continuación, sitúo al San Cayetano y sus tripulantes en su contexto histórico. Posteriormente, intento reconstruir la historia del barco e identifico a sus dueños. Después narro el último viaje del San Cayetano a través de la documentación incautada por los ingleses cuando capturaron el barco. Finalmente, para trascender lo anecdótico conecto el San Cayetano con los modelos demográficos a gran escala sobre migraciones peninsulares en el periodo. Con todo esto pretendo reivindicar la microhistoria

como método de trabajo y vehículo para la divulgación, así como mostrar el potencial de los Prize Papers como fuente historiográfica.

Palabras clave: corso, migración, trabajo, marinería, guerra del Asiento

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Introduction

Wars are full of unremarkable events. The war of Jenkins' Ear, fought in 1739-1745 between Spain and Britain, is no exception. The conflict is mostly known in Spain for the successful defence of Cartagena de Indias organized by Blas de Lezo. However, battles between armies and navies were only a small fraction of the actions of the conflict. Most actors were actually private entrepreneurs who sought profits in the business of attacking and capturing enemy vessels with the sanction of the State and following established juridical procedures, a practice also known as *privateering*. This article focuses on the last journey of a Spanish privateering ship acting during the conflict, the San Cayetano.

The last journey of the San Cayetano was a succession of unfortunate events. The ship left Cádiz in March 1745 with the goal of attacking British vessels. The expedition did not start well: the former captain of the San Cayetano fell ill and the owners had to look for a quick replacement. Before leaving port, some men left the ship, perhaps stealing some of its supplies, and new sailors had to be found. A few days after its departure, the ship had an accident and was forced to stop in Ayamonte for reparations. More men took advantage of the situation and deserted. A couple of weeks later, after the San Cayetano was repaired, it was chased in the coast of Portugal by a British privateer. The main mast broke the following day, and when the British man of war appeared again, the San Cayetano surrendered without offering resistance. Its cargo was seized, the ship's papers were confiscated, and the crew was taken to Lisbon. They were imprisoned and interrogated at the house of some British merchants, with the assistance of the Spanish vice-Consul in the city, who acted as a translator.

The San Cayetano tells a story of war, imprisonment, and diplomacy, but also other hidden stories about migration, trade, working conditions at sea, and social relations. This article analyses its last journey, focusing on aspects of labour and migration. First, I explain very briefly the sources and methodology I have used. After that, I provide some historical context about the war and privateering practices during the period. Then, I reconstruct the history of the San Cayetano, and its last journey be-

fore being captured by the British. Finally, I connect the crew of the ship with the demographic models that apply to the migratory movements of Spain in the Eighteenth century.

A brief warning: In most literature, ships are gendered and given the she/her pronouns. I will use the neutral pronouns because, after all, a ship is an inanimate object moved and repaired by people, the real protagonists.

Sources and methodology

Most of the primary sources used in this article come from the Prize Papers collection. The Prize Papers are a section of the archive of the British High Court of Admiralty, the result of the Early Modern practice of prize-taking: in times of war, the Navy and private ships authorized by the State (also known as *privateers*) would capture and seize as many enemy and neutral vessels as possible, including merchant boats. When a ship was captured, its crew was taken prisoner, and the cargo and all papers found on board were confiscated. Once the captured ship arrived at an allied port, a court case would begin in order to decide the destiny of the ship and its cargo. If the vessel, crew, and cargo belonged to an enemy nation the judicial decision was simple and the captors would enjoy the price, but many times this was not the case. In those situations, the confiscated papers were essential to establish if ship and cargo were legitimate prizes.

After the judicial process was finished, the British would usually keep the confiscated papers (known as *ship's papers*) and the documents related to the legal case (*court papers*) and stored it in the archive of the High Court of Admiralty (originally in the London Tower, later moved to the National Archives in Kew), where they remained largely unnoticed until some historians re-discovered their potential in the last decade.¹ The basic unit of categorization in the archive is the ship. Usually, all documents related to a capture were bundled together and stored in one or more boxes. These boxes have the name of the captured ship, and all vessels which were captured in the same war (for instance, the War of Austrian Succession) are ordered alphabetically. The catalogue descriptions for many entries are very rudimentary, even though they are being slowly updated and expanded. The Oldenburg-based Prize Papers Project is digitizing and re-indexing this vast historical archive with the goal of creating an open access research database that will allow historians around the world to work with the documents at a distance. The online database will allow to search files and trace connections between individuals and places, making available documents in at

¹ Margaret R. HUNT: "All At Sea: The Prize Papers as a Source for a Global Microhistory: Conference Report", *German Historical Institute London Bulletin*, 37:1 (2015), pp. 124-135.

least 19 languages (including Ladino, Mandarin and Persian). Most of the documents have barely been consulted —there are even unopened letters—, so once the project is complete there could be a small revolution in the historiography of the Early Modern period, at least regarding the availability and diversity of sources for historians

There are millions of documents from the late Sixteenth century to the early Nineteenth in the archive, including up to 160,000 unopened letters.² The archive has a global nature, since in the Early Modern Period (and especially from the Eighteenth century onwards) British keels were present in most seas and oceans and the British Empire was eventually at war with almost every country or Empire on Earth. For now, documents in 20 different languages have been identified (including Persian and Mandarin). The material is very diverse, unlike other archives where almost all files have the same nature. There are many kinds of documents in the Prize Papers, and even though some pieces might be unique, most of them fit into definite categories. For instance, in the court papers we can find examinations (interrogations to the prisoners), affidavits, allegations, attestations, claims, commissions and even abstracts and translations of the ship's papers. The ship's papers are more diverse: there are passports, letters of marque, bills of lading, cargo manifests, muster rolls, bills of health, logbooks, ransom bills... and of course letters and correspondence, since many times ships were also floating post offices used to send documents from one place of the world to another. Not every ship and legal case produced all the different document types. Sometimes the judicial cases were quick and clear, some other times there were long legal battles for the prize with dozens of claims and allegations. As for the ship's papers, the archive only contains the documents that were seized on board when ships were captured. Frequently, the captains or crew of the captured vessels would manage to throw some of the documents overboard. In the box of the San Cayetano, for example, we find seventeen ship's papers and fourteen court papers, making up a total of 104 pages.

The Prize Papers have been used by historians of migration, mostly on a quantitative basis. Jelle van Lotum and his collaborators created a dataset using the court papers, mostly examinations. This dataset has been used to trace and map migratory routes in Europe,³ to find out the determinants of migration in Early Modern Europe,⁴ and to compare Dutch and British crews.⁵ Van Lotum's approach, nevertheless, is

² "The Prize Papers Project", www.prizepapers.de [last time accessed 02-12-2019].

³ Jelle VAN LOTTUM: "Some thoughts about migration of maritime workers in the eighteenth-century North Sea region", *International Journal of Maritime History*, 27:4 (2015), pp. 647-661.

⁴ ALEXANDER KLEIN & JELLE VAN LOTTUM: *The Determinants of International Migration in Early Modern Europe: Evidence from the Maritime Sector, c. 1700–1800*, Kent, University of Kent, 2017.

⁵ Jelle VAN LOTTUM, Jan LUCASSEN & Lex VAN HEERMA VOSS: "Sailors, National and International Labour Markets and National Identity, 1600-1850", en Richard W. UNGER (ed.), *Shipping and economic growth, 1350-1850*, Leiden, Brill, 2011, pp. 309–352.

mostly quantitative and heavily influenced by the neoclassical theory of migration. Another historian, Xabier Lamikiz, has used the Prize Papers to document the lives, journeys and strategies of Spanish merchants in America, a group of temporary elite migrants.⁶

In this article, I work with the Prize Papers to write a microhistory of the last journey of a Spanish privateering ship in the year 1745. Microhistory is a methodology that reduces the scale of historical analysis to the minimal (individuals, small groups or concrete events), borrowing some of the tools of ethnography and anthropology, a qualitative way of carrying out historical research. It allows historians to «isolate and test the many abstractions of social thought», to escape the traditional categories of legal and diplomatic history, and to contest the «preoccupation with numbers rather than persons and the sociological preference for abstractions as analytic units.»⁷ This way of researching and writing history was born in 1970s,⁸ but it is still popular and relevant nowadays.⁹ It has four main advantages: «it is appealing to the general public, it is realistic, it conveys personal experience and whatever it has in its focus, the lines branching out from this reach very far», this is, it points towards the general.¹⁰ Many historians of migration have followed a quantitative approach, as it allows to draw migratory routes and measure population flows.¹¹ However, a quantitative focus may lack some perspective of the lives, experiences and motivations of the people living in the past. Microhistory is an effective *antidote* against this, as it focuses in individuals rather than in numbers.

⁶ Xabier LAMIKIZ: “Flotistas en la Nueva España: diseminación espacial y negocios de los intermediarios del comercio transatlántico, 1670–1702”, *Colonial Latin American Review*, 20:1 (2011), pp. 9-33; Xabier LAMIKIZ: “Basques in the Atlantic World, 1450–1824”, en *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017 [online resource].

⁷ Edward MUIR & Guido RUGGIERO: *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe*, Baltimore, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, p. viii.

⁸ The seminal works of microhistory are Carlo Ginzburg’s *The Cheese and the Worms* and Natalie Zemon Davies’ *The Return of Martin Guerre*, both available in multiple languages and editions.

⁹ Lara PUTNAM: “To Study the Fragments/Whole: Microhistory and the Atlantic World”, *Journal of Social History*, 39:3 (2006), pp. 615-630.

¹⁰ István SZIJÁRTÓ: “Four Arguments for Microhistory”, *Rethinking History*, 6:2 (2002), pp. 209-215.

¹¹ See, for example, Torsten FEYS, Lewis FISCHER et al., *Maritime Transport and Migration*, Liverpool University Press, 2007; Antonio EIRAS ROEL: “Estructura demográfica, diversidad regional y tendencias migratorias de la población española a finales del Antiguo Régimen”, en Simonetta CAVACIOCCHI (ed.), *Le migrazioni in Europa, secc. XIII-XVIII*, Florence, Le Monnier, 1994, pp. 199–231; Ida ALTMAN: “Emigrants and Society: An Approach to the Background of Colonial Spanish America”, *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 30:1 (1988), pp. 170-190; Leslie Page MOCH: *Moving Europeans. Migration in Western Europe since 1650*, Bloomington Indiana University Press, 2003; Cátia ANTUNES: “Trade networks and migration, early modern Europe”, en Immanuel NESS & Peter S. BELLWOOD (eds.), *The encyclopedia of global human migration*, Hoboken, Wiley-Blackwell, 2013.

Privateering in times of war

The last journey of the San Cayetano took place in the context of a war between two of the greatest colonial powers of the mid-Eighteenth century, the Spanish and the British. This war is known in most English language sources as *War of Jenkins' Ear* and in many Spanish sources as *La Guerra del Asiento*. The name “War of Jenkins' Ear” obscures the fact that trade, and specifically the expansion of slave trade, were one of the main reasons for the war: As one of the clauses of the Peace of Utrecht, which ended the War of Spanish Succession (1701-13), the new king of Spain, Philip V, granted the British the monopoly of slave trade of Africans to the Spanish territories in America for thirty years, what was known as *derecho de asiento de negros*. To make sure the agreement was respected and to avoid smuggling in the Caribbean, the Spanish would ask privateers to register British ships sailing to the Spanish possessions. The legend says that during one of these registries in 1731, a Spanish captain cut the ear of a Welsh master named Jenkins, an incident that seven years later would be used by a significant sector of British Parliament as a justification to war. The diplomatic tensions between Spain and Great Britain increased, and in 1739 Phillip V would suspend the *asiento*, which prompted a declaration of war by the British, who calculated that it was the right moment to dispute the Spanish the control of the Caribbean and even conquer the Spanish colonies in America, although they would be unsuccessful. The Spanish and the British fought mostly in America, but they also attacked each other's ships in the Mediterranean with the objective of halting trade and interrupting communications.¹²

When the San Cayetano left Cádiz in March 1745, the war was already in its sixth year and had become part of a larger, European conflict, the War of Austrian Succession. In European shores, privateers like our ship became the main protagonists too. Privateers were captains with royal authorization to attack, seize and sell as many enemy vessels as they could capture, normally funded by merchants or shipbuilders. This legalized robbery, justified since the Antiquity as the right to take “war spoils”, was subject to a series of rules. Privateer captains needed to hold a *letter of marque*, a more-or-less standardized document that was recognised by most European states. In case of capture, holders of these letters were treated like prisoners of war, as

¹² For more information on the war, see Antonio de BETHENCOURT: “La Guerra de la Oreja: El corso marítimo”, en Immanuel NESS & Peter S. BELLWOOD (eds.), *España y el mar en el siglo de Carlos III*, Lugar, Marinvest, 1989, pp. 337–345.; Enrique OTERO LANA, *La Guerra de la Oreja de Jenkins y el Corso Español (1739-1748)*, Lugar, Instituto de Historia y Cultura Naval, 2004. Also, Antonio LABORDA & Santiago RODRÍGUEZ AEDO: *Historias de la Real Armada y asociados. Prensa y corsarios españoles en la Guerra del Asiento, 1739-1748*, Lugar, La Hoja del Monte, 2018; and Allan J. KUETHE & Kenneth J. ANDRIEN: *El mundo atlántico español durante el siglo XVIII*, Lugar, Editorial Universidad del Rosario, 2018, pp. 131-172.

long as they had flown their actual flag after the first cannon shot (usually ships were flying false flags in order to avoid being captured). As a comparison, Muslim captives would be enslaved and sold by many European privateers, and pirates (including individuals sailing or trading without the authorization of any state) of any nationality would be executed.

In Spain, privateering activities were regulated by the *Ordenanza del Corso* of 1718 and the *Instrucción para corso y presas* of 1740, which established a series of rules about combat, what prizes were considered legitimate, how loot was to be shared (two thirds for the shipowners and the remaining for the officials and crew), how the crew was to be recruited and other questions.¹³ The letter of marque could be obtained after paying a fee, and the shipowners bore all the costs of the expeditions, with some state-sanctioned benefits when acquiring supplies. Privateering was a risky activity for the shipowners-*entrepreneurs*, as they could lose the keel and the investment, but it also gave great returns if the expeditions were successful. It was even riskier for crews and officers, who could be killed, disabled or captured, and whose wages depended on the loot. States could increase pressure on their enemies with no cost for the royal treasury, as well as purchase the captured keels and goods and demand the assistance of privateering ships if it was deemed necessary.¹⁴

The ship

In the mid-Eighteenth century, Cádiz was a global city bursting with people, goods and ships. It held the monopoly of trade with the Spanish America since the *Casa de Contratación* and the Consulate had been moved from Seville in the previous decades. Every vessel sailing or returning from America needed to make a stop in the city, which made it a magnet for migrants from all places and social origins, from rich foreign traders looking for good business deals to poor people in search of employment or a journey to the *Indies*.¹⁵ This was the case of many of the sailors of the San Cayetano, and perhaps one of its owners, as we shall see.

The city was nonetheless affected by war. There were no significant attacks to the cities nor scarcity of supplies, but British privateers would eventually intercept

¹³ FELIPE V REY DE ESPAÑA: “Ordenanza de 17 de noviembre de 1718 prescribiendo las reglas con que se ha de hacer el Corso, contra turcos, moros, y otros enemigos de la corona: IV-6457(40)”, *Biblioteca Virtual del Ministerio de Defensa*, 1718, <https://archivos.juridicas.unam.mx/www/bjv/libros/1/154/12.pdf> [last time accessed 3-12-2019].

¹⁴ Enrique OTERO LANA: *La Guerra de la Oreja de Jenkins...*, pp. 43-45 For a general overview, see Agustín CORRALES ELIZONDO: “Regulación legal del corso y la piratería marítimas”, *Piratería y Corso en la Edad Moderna: XXIX Jornadas de Historia Marítima*, Madrid, Instituto de Historia y Cultura Naval, 2004, pp. 73-103.

¹⁵ Manuel BUSTOS RODRÍGUEZ: *Cádiz en el sistema atlántico. La ciudad, sus comerciantes y la actividad mercantil (1650-1830)*, Cádiz, Universidad de Cádiz, 2005

one of the ships leaving or travelling to the port, imprisoning sailors, causing losses to merchants, and preventing migrants and passengers from arriving at their destinations. The conflict also caused a shortage of sailors in most ports of peninsular Spain, either because they had been conscripted, because they had been captured by the enemy, or because they had joined a foreign ship in order to avoid serving in the navy.¹⁶ This might be an important factor to explain the relative youth of the San Cayetano's crew. Nevertheless, war was also an opportunity for some of the investors and traders living in Cadiz who decided to purchase a letter of marque and fund privateering enterprises in order to diversify their income. Privateer shipowners were, in a way, pre-Industrial venture capitalists making the best out of a prolonged war.

The owners of the San Cayetano in 1745 were Francisco Fernández del Haedo and Pablo Juan Bautista Gazo, neighbours of Cádiz. Francisco del Haedo was a merchant acting in Cádiz and El Puerto de Santa María (a coastal town nearby) with assets and investments in American trade.¹⁷ Probably, the loss of the San Cayetano did not affect him much, since some years later we find him amongst the most prominent traders in El Puerto de Santa María.¹⁸ We know less about Juan Bautista Gazo. He seems to have been born in Cádiz,¹⁹ although perhaps he was part of the influential Genoese community that lived in the city.²⁰ His surname, originating in Genoa, seems strongly connected to the story of the San Cayetano, though this might be just a coincidence.

In 1740, a ship with the same name and similar characteristics belonging to a certain Tomás Gazo, a Genoese living in Cádiz, was captured by an English privateer

¹⁶ Antonio LABORDA & Santiago RODRÍGUEZ AEDO: op. cit., p. 111 Spain had a tradition of not pressing its sailors into serving in the navy, unlike the British. Nevertheless, the matriculation system still made sailors work in military ships against their will.

¹⁷ We find him in a document from the following year in which he complains about the little money collected by a captain for the sale of some cargo he sent to Buenos Aires. *Francisco Fernández con Joaquín Olivares: venta de géneros, Pleitos de la Casa de la Contratación y Consulados*, 1747, Archivo Histórico Nacional, Consejos, 20221, Exp. 2.

¹⁸ Fernández del Haedo was part of the patrician elite of El Puerto de Santa María, there are records of his participation in local institutions. He also contributed significantly to the maintenance of the infrastructure at Cádiz's port, as we can read in Juan José IGLESIAS RODRÍGUEZ: "El complejo portuario gaditano en el siglo XVIII", *e-Spania*, 25 (2016), <https://journals.openedition.org/e-spania/25989> [last time accessed 2-12-2019].

¹⁹ He is described as a Spaniard in the documents of the San Cayetano and in two references in the testamentary dispositions database of the local archive (Archivo Histórico Provincial de Cádiz) for the years 1753 and 1754.

²⁰ "Becoming Spanish" was important for Genoese merchants. We know the case of Bartolomé Gazo, who migrated to Cádiz in 1723 and obtained Spanish nationality in 1754. Perhaps Juan Bautista Gazo was his son or close relative. See Catia BRILLI: "La importancia de hacerse español: La élite mercantil genovesa de Cádiz en el siglo XVIII", en Isabel LOBATO FRANCO y José María OLIVA MELGAR (eds.), *El sistema comercial español en la economía mundial: siglos XVII-XVIII*, Huelva, Universidad de Huelva, 2013, pp. 227–255. A very solid study of the Genoese community in imperial Spain is Céline DAUVERD: *Imperial ambition in the early modern Mediterranean. Genoese merchants and the Spanish Crown*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2015.

named Whitchurch and brought to Gibraltar, where it was condemned as a legitimate prize.²¹ This San Cayetano had only a cannon and some other guns, and was manned by nine sailors from France, Malta and Genoa. Apart from them there were thirty passengers on board, but we only know the names of three of them. They were traders from Tenerife who owned some of the confiscated cargo that was on board. According to the interrogations conducted in Gibraltar to the passengers, the 1740 San Cayetano operated as a merchant vessel sailing under Genoese colours and covering the route between Cádiz and Tenerife. It carried oil, sugar and dye, and its Captain was a Genoese named Giacomo Donte, who said that he had been living in Cádiz for at least four years working as the master of the ship. According to Donte, Tomás Gazo had been living in Cádiz for at least ten years.²²

Is this San Cayetano the same ship we find in 1745? We cannot be completely sure, but the fact that both crafts have the same name and a similar tonnage, apart from the coincidence in the owners' surname, seem to point out there is some relation. In the interrogations conducted in 1745, the sailors of the San Cayetano state that the ship had been built in France and had been repaired in Cora del Río (near Sevilla) five years before, this is, in 1740.²³ The 1740 San Cayetano was sold in Gibraltar; it is more than possible that it was repurchased by its original owner or someone close to him. If this is true (we cannot be certain unless all archival sources and connections are explored), then the reconversion of a trading ship into a privateering vessel has somehow a connotation of personal revenge against the British who had caused the initial loss. However, this is pure speculation. I have not been able to find evidences of a relationship between Tomás and Juan Bautista Gazo, and even though the surname is not particularly common, it could be a coincidence. We find another Gazo in the last journey of the San Cayetano, a sixteen year-old boy named Jazinto, son of Felipe. He was born in Savona and had a «wound mark in the left side of the face».²⁴

We know of the privateering actions of the San Cayetano since 1743, when a letter of marque was granted to its captain, Pedro Mascalet. Under his command, the San Cayetano made three captures between December 1743 and January 1744: two British ships sailing to Italy, and a vessel called the “Sea Siren” whose master was *Andrés Stivens*.²⁵ At the beginning of 1745 Pedro Mascalet fell ill, and the owners of the San Cayetano hired a substitute: José de la Torre, who, according to the documents, was not registered as a sailor and may have been inexperienced. It seems that

²¹ *Allegation of James Whitchurch for the ship St. Caetano*, 1741, The National Archives, HCA 32/100/3/CP6.

²² *Deposition of Giacomo Donte, master of the tartan St. Caetano*, 1740, The National Archives, HCA 32/100/3/CP1, <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C14512562> [last time accessed 2-12-2019].

²³ *Examinations for the ship San Cayetano*, 1745, The National Archives, HCA32/101/8/CP1.

²⁴ *Muster Roll for the ship San Cayetano, 6 March 1745*, The National Archives, HCA32/100/3/SP12.

²⁵ Probably the name has been “Hispanicised”. This information was kindly offered by Antonio Laborda via email, who researched privateering ships in Spanish archives.

the unsuccessful last Journey of the San Cayetano was the first one as captain for José de la Torre. Eventually, Pedro Mascalet recovered from his illness and came back to privateering: he captured two more ships in December 1745 and January 1746, this time as master of the sloop *Nuestra Señora de los Dolores*.²⁶

From Cádiz to Lisbon

Like most privateers, the San Cayetano sailed without a fixed destination, as its goal was to find, chase and capture ships. The letters intercepted in the San Cayetano give us a hint of the projected area of operations: Lisbon, Oporto, Baiona (Galicia), Coruña and San Sebastian. In these letters, all with the same text, Juan Bautista Gazo asks some of his contacts to assist the San Cayetano in the case it needed help; he would assume all costs. There were also two letters from José de la Torre to friends in Lisbon. This area matches the theatre of operations of other Spanish privateers.²⁷

Crews were usually recruited by captains, but we do not have information to state this was the case of the San Cayetano. The substitute captain joined the ship rather late and given the difficulty to find sailors that we mentioned before, assembling a crew of experienced sailors and fighters in less than a week would have been a complicated task. José de la Torre was hired by Gazo and del Haedo in early March 1745; the letter of marque of the ill captain was amended the 4th of that month to include his name.²⁸ José, born in Valencia 36 years before, was married and declared having lived in Cádiz for more than a decade. His brother Félix, ten years older than him and also married, was his second in command. The rest of the officers came from different places in the Iberian Peninsula: Aveiro (Portugal), Granada, Seville, Tarragona or Palma de Mallorca. De la Torre started writing the muster roll (a list of the crew and passengers) on the 6th. It is possible that some of the sailors were part of the successful previous crews of the San Cayetano. Besides the officers, there were 55 sailors on board when the ship left Cádiz. Eight of them deserted before the journey even started, but they were replaced before leaving port.

As in most periods of war, desertion was relatively common in the 1740s. There were many reasons why a sailor would flee: tensions with the captain or other sailors, lack of payment, doubts about the security of the journey, traveling and eating free of charge, escape justice or recruitment to the Navy. In order to avoid desertions, sea

²⁶ Antonio LABORDA & Santiago RODRÍGUEZ AEDO: op. cit., pp. 162-163.

²⁷ José Manuel VÁZQUEZ LIJÓ: “El corso gallego en la Guerra del Asiento (1739-1748): Escenarios, actores y presas”, *Ohm: Obradoiro de Historia Moderna*, 26 (2017), pp. 119-148; Enrique OTERO LANA: “La piratería y el corso en Flandes y el Cantábrico”, *Piratería y Corso en la Edad Moderna: XXIX Jornadas de Historia Marítima*, Madrid, Instituto de Historia y Cultura Naval, 2004.

²⁸ *Letter of marque issued to Pedro Mascalet for the ship San Cayetano, 9 July 1743, 1743 (Amended 1745)*, The National Archives, HCA32/101/8/SP1.

labourers in Spain needed to be officially registered or “matriculated”, and muster rolls included physical descriptions of the crew members to identify them. The *Matriculation Rule* of 1737 was an attempt to identify and control all Spanish sailors, who were theoretically granted some fiscal privileges and rights like pensions for the elderly and disabled in exchange for their availability to serve in the Navy if they were chosen in a draw. In practice, payments of pensions were irregular and the advantages of matriculation for sea workers practically inexistent, so desertions remained widespread and attempts of fraud by forging identities were common.²⁹ Perhaps some of the crew members of the San Cayetano lied about their names, age or place of origin, especially those who had joined the ship with the intention of deserting. Some of the seamen of the San Cayetano were not matriculated.³⁰ Significantly, the new captain was not matriculated either, although his brother was due registered.

The ship left Cádiz on 10 March 1745. It carried four cannons, six swivel guns (smaller and more mobile pieces), supplies for sailing and provisions for the crew. These included, among other things, raisins, snuff tobacco, lemons, oranges, bread, eggs, vegetables, chocolate, fish, olives and «silk and needles for wounds», in this order.³¹ Three nights later, when the San Cayetano was sailing towards Cape St. Vincent, a piece of the prow broke «due to bad weather». On the 15th the San Cayetano arrived to Ayamonte (in the southern border between Spain and Portugal) for reparations. The following day, five more sailors deserted and one left with the permission of the captain.³² After finishing the reparations and buying some supplies, the San Cayetano sailed again on the 19th.³³

A week later, when it was sailing near the Berlengas islands (~85km north of Lisbon), the San Cayetano came across a larger keel which started attacking them. The crew of the San Cayetano defended themselves as best as they could and were chased until night. The following morning, the main mast broke. When it was almost

²⁹ The *matricula* existed since the seventeenth century; it was a system to recruit sailors for the navy. The 1737 Ordinance is similar to that of 1607, with some slight modifications: in the 1740s, people who registered as sailors were exempt from conscription to the regular Army. A short introduction can be found in Alberto HOCES GARCÍA: “La Matrícula de Mar: Tripulaciones para la Real Armada”, <<https://blogcatedranaval.com/2017/06/22/la-matricula-de-mar-tripulaciones-para-la-real-armada/>> [last time accessed 2-12-2019]. A more detailed analysis is Jose Manuel VÁZQUEZ LIJÓ: “La Matrícula de Mar y sus repercusiones en la Galicia del siglo XVIII”, Ohm: *Obradoiro de Historia Moderna*, 15 (2006), and especially, Francisco Javier de SALAS, *Historia de la matrícula de mar y exámen de varios sistemas de reclutamiento marítimo*, T. Fortanet, 1870, pp. 161-182. The original text of the law can be found in “Ordenanzas de matrícula del mar de 1737 (las llamadas del Infante Almirante)”, <https://www.todoababor.es/datos_docum/matri_1737.htm> [last time accessed 2-12-2019].

³⁰ This is interesting, yet I have not been able to find out more information about these sailors. Perhaps they were not matriculated because they were governed by the ordinance of 1718, which gave captains and shipowners the freedom to recruit matriculated sailors.

³¹ *Memory of expenses of the ship San Cayetano, 1745*, The National Archives, HCA32/100/3/SP10.

³² *Muster Roll for the ship San Cayetano, 6 March 1745.*, The National Archive.

³³ THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, *Logbook of the ship San Cayetano, 1745*, HCA32/100/3/SP13.

repaired, the ship from the previous night, a British privateer named Garland, appeared suddenly and shot a warning. Faced with a superior enemy, the San Cayetano surrendered. We will never know if this was a decision of the captain or if the crew forced him to capitulate, as he was an inexperienced captain and the ship had already suffered two accidents. Either way, the captain of the British privateer, Robert Taverner, seized the San Cayetano and took its crew captive. Ship and crew were taken to Bellem, near Lisbon, where the British vice-consul and some English merchants lived, arriving there on March 28. The captured sailors were held prisoner in the Garland.³⁴ The San Cayetano had sailed for the last time, at least as a Spanish privateer.

A few days later, some of the prisoners were taken to the house of a British merchant named Anthony Andrews and were submitted to customary interrogations. This was a standard practice, consisting of a series of standardized questions in order to find out the nationality of the ship, its cargo and the captain, as well as to examine inconsistencies in the testimonies. José de la Torre, his brother Félix (who was his second in command) and two other crew members were questioned by the British commissioner, a merchant called Edward Burn, in the presence of two witnesses and with the assistance of Jaques Francisco Sabois de la Tuelliere, the Spanish vice-consul in Lisbon, who acted as interpreter, as well as Walrave Lodwik, the English vice-consul in Lisbon, who acted as notary.³⁵

The four prisoners told the same story: that the San Cayetano was a privateering craft commanded by de la Torre and owned by Gazo and del Haedo, that after stopping in Ayamonte for reparations some sailors had deserted, that at the moment of the capture there were 53 sailors on board, and that no papers were thrown overboard. The case was clear, but the formal legal procedure still needed to be followed. The confiscated papers were sent to Britain and translated by Sebastian Puchot, a public notary. On July 9th the ship and its cargo were formally condemned as a lawful prize, and they became property of Robert Taverner and his capitalist partners, if he had any.³⁶

For some reason, the muster roll of a French merchant vessel bound for Martinique in 1744 was found among the papers of the San Cayetano.³⁷ This is not an archival error, since the document is also mentioned in the abstracts and translations of the San Cayetano written by Sebastian Puchot. There are no references to this list in any other document. It might have been a previous prize of the San Cayetano. How-

³⁴ *Examinations for the ship San Cayetano, 1745.*, The National Archives.

³⁵ *Ibidem.*

³⁶ *Allegation of Robert Taverner for the ship San Cayetano, 1745, 1745*, The National Archives, HCA32/101/8/CP2.

³⁷ It was the St Marguerite, also known as La Galère du Languedoc (master Balthazard Bonnefoux; second captain Antoine Buisson). See HCA/32/101/8/SP11.

ever, this French ship is not mentioned in the official registries of Spanish captures, nor appears in the catalogue of the Prize Papers. A hypothetical explanation is that it could have been intercepted and pillaged by our ship, a practice that was rather common at the time.³⁸

We do not know either what happened to the crew of the San Cayetano after they were brought to Lisbon. The documents do not mention anything, but considering that they were in Portugal, that feeding prisoners was costly, and that there were regular exchanges of prisoners between the Spanish and the British, we can assume they were eventually released. If they were not taken to England and remained in Lisbon, their journey was not completely unfortunate: there were no casualties and at least the crew was near Spanish territory, so they could return safely to their homes.

Stories of Labour migration

The story of the San Cayetano can be read as one of the hundreds of minor battles in a long and largely privatized conflict, the war of the *Asiento*. Military stories normally focus on the strategies, tactics and technologies used in combat, and sometimes on remarkable individual stories, but the truth is that war mostly consists of unremarkable events, especially in a conflict like the war of Jenkin's ear where privateers had such protagonism. Privateers would use the force if necessary, but their strategy was rather based on surprising enemy ships and capturing them without much fight. Neither privateer shipowners nor officers or crew were moved by deep patriotic feelings or hatred of the enemy. They sought quick and easy profits, and they were not willing to die or to kill if there was not a good reason.³⁹ Privateering was a business, and for the owners of the San Cayetano the ship was another investment. Del Haedo and Gazo belonged to a new entrepreneurial class that was not part of the traditional aristocracy and that regarded privateering as one of the best ways to acquire wealth in times of war.⁴⁰

We can also look at San Cayetano through the lens of migration and labour history. Ships resemble a factory, as they require the coordination, cooperation and discipline of many workers.⁴¹ Seamen (there are almost no cases of female sailors) were away from home most of the time and their movements were bound to the confines of the ship, a rather unhealthy environment. Even though we do not have information

³⁸ A contemporary example can be found in Enrique OTERO LANA: "La piratería y el corso en Flandes y el Cantábrico", op. cit.

³⁹ Enrique OTERO LANA: *La Guerra de la Oreja de Jenkins...*, p. 61.

⁴⁰ Antonio LABORDA & Santiago RODRÍGUEZ AEDO: op. cit., pp. 23-24.

⁴¹ Peter LINEBAUGH & Marcus REDIKER: *The many headed hydra. Sailors, slaves, commoners and the hidden history of the revolutionary Atlantic*, Boston, Beacon, 2001, p. 150.

about the dreams, thoughts, aspirations or fears of the sailors of the San Cayetano, we can speculate what led them to join the crew and try to reconstruct their workspace.

There was a shortage of sea workers during most of the Eighteenth century, especially in times of war,⁴² and the war of Jenkins' Ear was no exception.⁴³ Privateering ships were more attractive for sailors than merchant vessels or the navy.⁴⁴ Despite the uncertainty regarding payment and the possibility of death, sailors in privateers enjoyed better working conditions than their counterparts in trade or military service. Journeys were relatively short (especially compared to the ships crossing the Atlantic) and usually the coast was always on sight. Food on privateering ships was generally better and more varied than in military or commercial fleets, as we can see in the list of products of the San Cayetano.⁴⁵ Sailors on privateers performed the usual duties of manning the vessel, cleaning and watching, and they always needed to be ready for combat, but they did not have to take care of the cargo, the most exhausting and time-consuming activity.⁴⁶ Privateer crews were larger than commercial ships in order to man the captures, which also eased the work on board.⁴⁷

There are 63 names in the muster roll of the San Cayetano. It is impossible to know if the crew members were telling the truth about their names or places of origin, but for the purposes of the analysis I will assume that the sailors that remained on board did not lie. Fifteen of them left the ship without authorization, making a desertion rate of almost 24%. There are many possible reasons for desertion, as explained above; perhaps some of the sailors did not find their new and inexperienced captain reliable enough.⁴⁸ Their average age was 23,6 and their median age was 22; in other words, a young crew, although that was normal during the period, especially in times of war. The youngest sailor was only thirteen, and the oldest members of the crew, the

⁴² Many examples can be found in Maria FUSARO, Bernard ALLAIRE, Richard BLAKEMORE & Tijn VANNESTE (eds), *Law, labour, and empire: Comparative perspectives on seafarers, c. 1500-1800*, Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

⁴³ Antonio LABORDA & Santiago RODRÍGUEZ AEDO: op. cit., p. 27; Enrique OTERO LANA: "La piratería y el corso en Flandes y el Cantábrico" en *Piratería y Corso en la Edad Moderna: XXIX Jornadas de Historia Marítima*, Instituto de Historia y Cultura Naval, 2004.

⁴⁴ Peter LINEBAUGH & Marcus REDIKER: op. cit., p. 161.

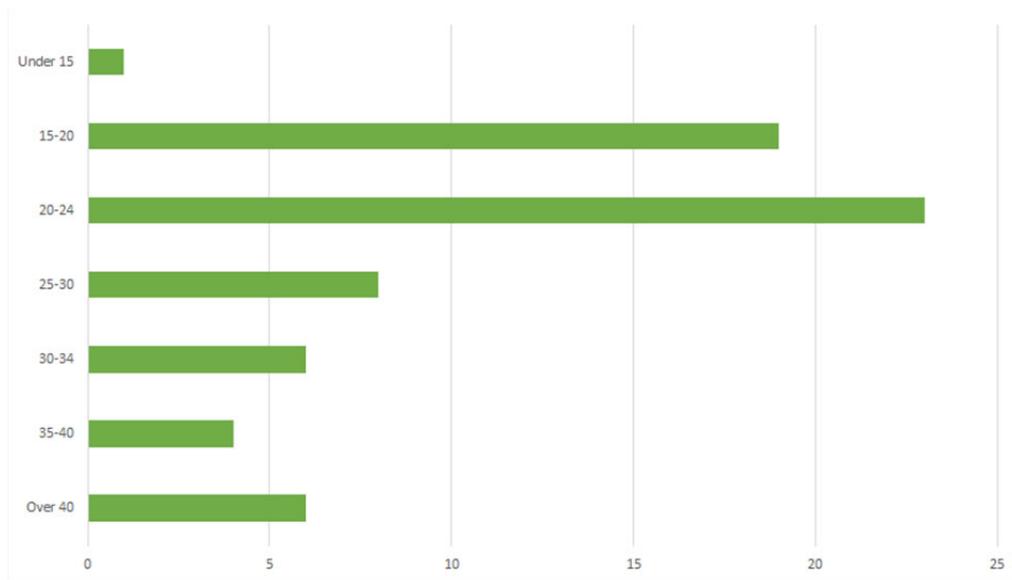
⁴⁵ The National Archives, *Memory of expenses of the ship San Cayetano, 1745*, The National Archives. See also Otero Lana, *La Guerra de la Oreja de Jenkins y el Corso Español (1739-1748)*, p. 92 and Daniel CALIXTO GARRIDO, *Las ordenanzas del corso y el marco de actuación corsario*, 2016, pp. 212-215.

⁴⁶ Aingeru ZABALA: "La vida cotidiana en los navíos de comercio", en Vicente PALACIO ATARD (ed.), *España y el mar en el siglo de Carlos III*, Madrid, Marinvest, 1989, pp. 183-198.

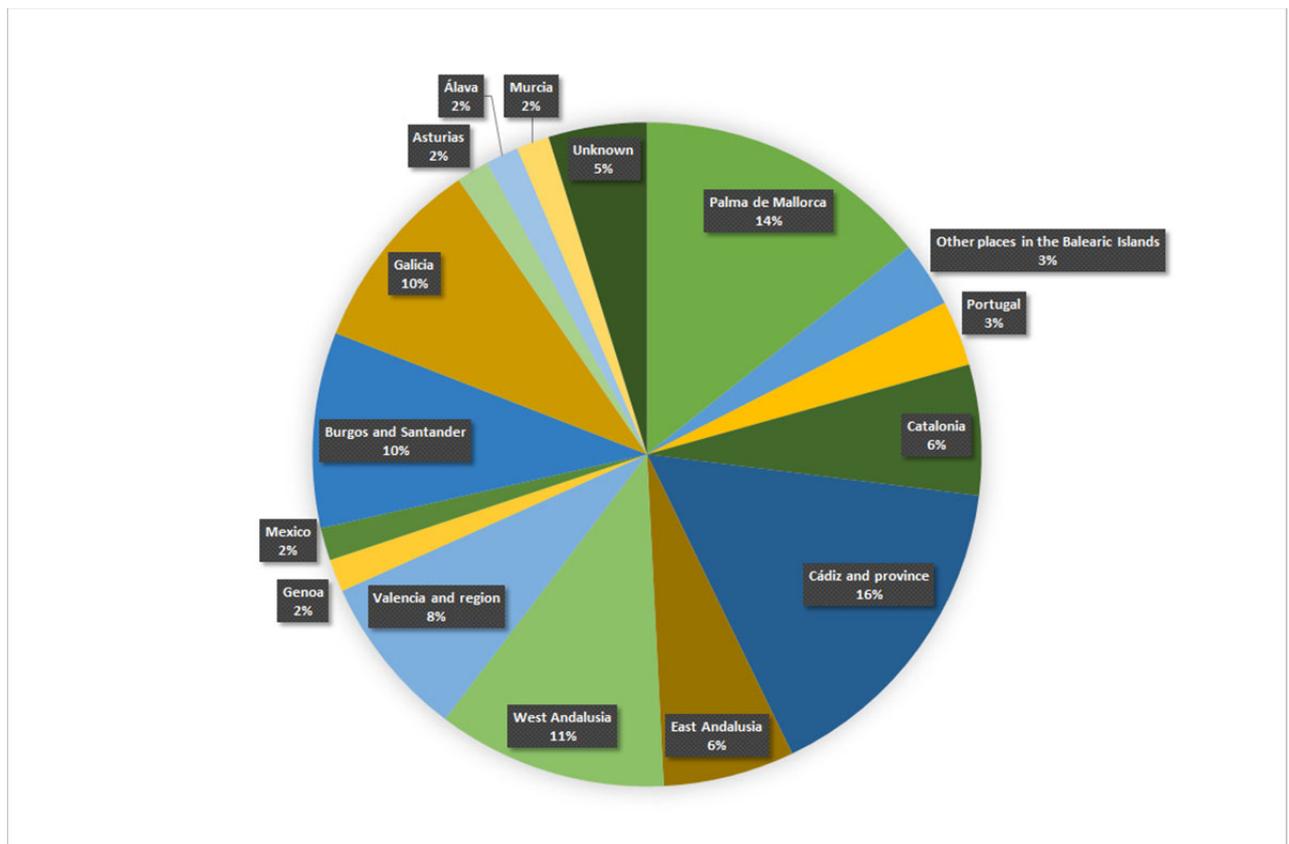
⁴⁷ Antonio LABORDA & Santiago RODRÍGUEZ AEDO: op. cit., p. 29.

⁴⁸ That was the reason for desertion in other privateering ships. Otero Lana mentions the case of the Spanish privateer La Gata: some of its crew members deserted because they thought the captain, a certain Monsieur Cadet, was coward. See Enrique OTERO LANA, "Una vida de "pillaje, haraganería y libertad": La indisciplina de los corsarios vascos" en *Itsas memoria: revista de estudios marítimos del País Vasco*, 7 (2012), p. 483. See also Enrique OTERO LANA, "Un ejemplo de la indisciplina de los corsarios españoles: el motín del buque corsario" en *Homenaje a Joaquín González Vecín*, Universidad de León, 2005, pp. 515-517.

surgeon and a seaman, both of them from Palma de Mallorca were. The following graphs have been drawn with information extracted from the muster roll of the San Cayetano and help visualizing the data.



Graph 1: Crew members by group of age



Graph 2: Crew members by place of origin

Most of the crew came from different parts of Spain, except for the Genoese teenager that was mentioned before, an officer and a sailor from Portugal, and a seaman from Campeche, Mexico. 84% of the crew members were born more than 100 km from Cádiz, even though they might have changed their place of residence to the city. 17% of them had been born in Andalusia, the region surrounding Cádiz. Another 17% were from the Balearic Islands, the most represented region outside Andalusia. Most of them were naturals from Palma de Mallorca and given their ages and the fact that their names were the first in the muster roll, they might have travelled together. Perhaps they already were experienced sailors or fighters, as the Balearic Islands had a long tradition in privateering.⁴⁹ There is also a significant presence of migrants from northern regions of the peninsula such as Galicia or the mountains of Santander (administratively part of Burgos at the time).

It is possible to contrast the geographical origins of the crew members with the models of internal migration that historians have proposed for Spain. I will only make reference to male migration as there were no women on the San Cayetano. Unfortunately, most studies on pre-industrial Spanish migration have focused on movements of people to the Americas⁵⁰ or foreign communities in the Spanish empire.⁵¹ Research on internal migration in the Early Modern period is complicated, as most local archives only register births and deaths, not displacements of people.⁵² Antonio Eiras Roel is one of the few scholars that has addressed the topic at a national level. According to him, population in Eighteenth-century Spain was not particularly mobile, with high percentages of endogamy (people marrying someone from their same hometown). In rural areas, most people remained close to their hometown, and those who migrated did it mainly to nearby cities.

However, Spain was not a homogeneous reality, and there were significant variations between regions. Eiras Roel distinguishes between regions of emigration, regions of immigration and areas where there are no significant movements of population; he also separates circular and seasonal migration from permanent displacement. There seemed to be an “outer belt” of emigration zones in the north: Galicia, Asturias, San-

⁴⁹ Gonçal Artur LÓPEZ NADAL: “El corsarismo en el Mediterráneo (1516-1830)”, *Piratería y Corso en la Edad Moderna: XXIX Jornadas de Historia Marítima*, Madrid, Instituto de Historia y Cultura Naval, 2004, pp. 17–36.

⁵⁰ For example, Ida ALTMAN: “Emigrants and Society...”, and “Moving Around and Moving On: Spanish Emigration in the Sixteenth Century”, en Jan LUCASSEN y Leo LUCASSEN (eds.), *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, Bern, Peter Lang, 1997, pp. 253–269.

⁵¹ For example, Céline DAUVERD: *Imperial ambition... or Oscar RECIO MORALES (ed): Redes de nación y espacios de poder. La comunidad irlandesa en España y la América española, 1600-1825*, Valencia, Albatros Ediciones, 2012.

⁵² The first methodologically reliable census of the Spanish population was published in 1787, four decades after the last journey of the San Cayetano.

tander, the Basque country and, to a lesser extent, Catalonia. There were also many young male migrants from rural areas in the inner parts of Andalusia. The regions of immigration were Aragon, the plateau of Castille, and Andalusia, the latter especially for migrants from coastal regions in the north of Spain.⁵³

The crew of the San Cayetano represents these trends to a limited extent. We find sailors from the emigration regions mentioned by Eiras Roel, but they only represent a quarter of the total. Many of the northerners on board the San Cayetano joined shortly before departure and were relatively young, which might indicate they were not experienced sailors or that they had only arrived recently to Cádiz. Although Mallorca is described as region of immigration, a significant number of workers on the San Cayetano originated from the region. The high percentage of seamen from Andalusia confirms that most migrations took place at a regional level. Cádiz, nevertheless, was a global city and a magnet for migrants from all around Europe, so it is not surprising to find such a diverse crew.

The muster roll of the San Cayetano does not specify if the crew members were single and married, or where they had lived in the previous seven years (a question that was very important for the British because it allowed them to determine to what king the prisoner was loyal). We can only speculate about the families and migration trajectories of the rest of the sailors. Most of them were matriculated, meaning that they had, at least theoretically, some experience as sailors. We know a little bit more of two of the sailors thanks to the interrogations carried out by the British in Bellem. Joseph Carrasco, 34, was from Almería (East Andalusia) but had been living in Moguer (West Andalusia) for the last 10 years. He was married and worked as the steersman or pilot of the San Cayetano. Francisco Canales, 20, was a bachelor. He was born in Uceda, a town located in the northern emigration belt. He said he had been living in Cádiz for at least eight years, so he probably left home when he was eleven or twelve. He seems to have been deeply religious, as he demanded «the place of his Nativity» to swear before the interrogation. Both Carrasco and Canales were probably illiterate, since they signed the examination (a document with a transcription of the interrogation) with a cross. The document was in English anyway, so it would have been difficult for him to understand what was written.

Conclusions

The San Cayetano was a medium-sized privateering vessel, owned by two merchants from Cádiz and manned by a crew of mostly young, male migrants from different

⁵³ Antonio EIRAS ROEL: “Estructura demográfica, diversidad regional y tendencias migratorias...”, pp. 199–231.

parts of the Iberian Peninsula and the Hispanic world. The average age of the crew members was 23, a fact that illustrates how scarce were sea laborers in the sixth year after the War of Jenkins' Ear broke out. The San Cayetano had a successful trajectory as a privateer: under the command of its former captain, who fell sick and had to be substituted, the San Cayetano managed to capture three enemy ships. Its last journey in 1745 was marked by accidents and desertions (a quarter of the crew left the ship without permission), perhaps as a consequence of its relatively unexperienced new captain. The ship was captured by a British privateer in the coast of Portugal and the crew members were taken prisoner and were interrogated by the British near Lisbon. The papers on board of the ship were confiscated and brought to England, and later they became part of the Prize Papers section of the archive of the High Court of Admiralty.

Thanks to the Prize Papers we can know more about the ship than in usual archives, since the letters, lists and all documents that belonged to the San Cayetano are preserved almost intact. The archive offers many possibilities for researchers of naval warfare, who can see “snapshots” of the moments when ships were captured. The Prize Papers have a huge potential for all historians interested not only in privateering, but also in sea labour, trade and migration. Apart from quantitative studies, there are great opportunities for historians who decide to take ships as units of analysis. Ships are floating worlds, and the Prize Papers preserve evidences of a wide range of social interactions, networks and linkages.

All in all, the San Cayetano is just one of the hundreds of ships that sailed to and from Cádiz in the year 1745. To my knowledge, there are no systematic, quantitative studies of migration and sea-workers in Spain, so it is difficult to know if the ship was representative of the sailing and privateering sectors. The diverse origins of the crew of the San Cayetano illustrate that migration has been a constant reality in our continent for the last five centuries, and that in pre-industrial contexts internal migration is as persistent as international migration (perhaps both phenomena should not be treated separately). In that respect, understanding privateering as an industry and seamen as workers has the advantage of highlighting the connectivity between regions and allows us to assess the labour conditions at sea. Sailors in privateering vessels were exposed to greater risks than those in merchant ships, but the work was arguably less exhausting and if the expedition was successful, the gains were more substantial.