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Thrown to the Sea: Capitalism and Belonging aboard Ship on French Transoceanic Voyages, 1680-1793

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Thrown to the Sea: Capitalism and Belonging aboard Ship on French Transoceanic Voyages, 1680-1793

By

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Committee in charge:

Professor Carla Hesse. Co-Chair
Professor Elena Schneider, Co-Chair
Professor Timothy Hampton

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Abstract

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The rapid development of commercial capitalism in the eighteenth century transformed political, social and cultural structures of life in early modern France and its colonies. It wove together an increasingly global world by speeding goods and people across oceans. This dissertation examines the social consequences of capitalist deterritorialization in the first French Empire. The ship stands as a key technology that propelled the emergence of France as a commercial power in the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the ocean is most often represented as the gap between points on sweeping maps that trace the travel of sugar, indigo, calicos and captive people. For historians of the slave trade, the Middle Passage has often held a paradoxical status, an origin point for diasporic communities amid an abyss of human loss. In contrast, maritime historians have illuminated the ship as a site of traditional workshop relations, or as a nursery anti-capitalist and anti-state radicalism. This dissertation brings new archival material to historiographic debates about commerce, labor, and slavery to reassess these visions of oceanic social worlds. It exposes the ship as a central site of capitalist spatial and social formation in the eighteenth century, while challenging conceptualizations of capitalist space as an untextured web of connection. By placing Africans at the forefront of the study, it reveals deep continuities in the commodification of all social bonds at sea. African captives, forced into the Middle Passage, composed the majority of people on these long-distance voyages, and their encounter with capitalism exposes in the barest terms the aspirations of early modern capitalists and the gravitational pull of the market, as it subsumed and redefined social bonds. This close look at capitalist social formation at sea reveals a world formed through the fusion of human and economic bonds and propelled by the threat of social and physical annihilation.

The first chapters illuminate the processes by which women, men and children ordered their social worlds at sea. Addressing the captives held aboard ship in chapter one, and crewmen and officers in chapter two, this section discusses rites, labor and trade as practices of social ordering aboard ship. These chapters reveal the social meanings that adhered to claims of economic possession and the processes by which people at sea forged bonds of belonging. Childbirth and the accompanying rites, as well as breastfeeding and childcare, surface as

significant social engines among women aboard slaving ships, whereas the unusual isolation of men, captive and free, forced alternative strategies to secure care and life-giving necessities. The final two chapters turn to points of contact between social groups. In chapter three, I trace the rise of the market as a force of social ordering and the falling away of religion and other institutions and practices as avenues of solidarity at sea. My final chapter takes as its starting point the predominance of death at sea and the problem of ordering the dead in oceanic graves. It demonstrates that death grounded this seaborne social world, even as it ravaged communities aboard ship.

To Weston, Henry and Jimmy.

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Abbreviations

AN	Archives Nationales, Paris
ANOM	Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer, Aix-en-Provence
ADSM	Archives Départementales de la Seine-Maritime, Rouen
ADLA	Archives Départementales de la Loire Atlantique, Nantes
AD33	Archives Départementales de la Gironde, Bordeaux
AD35	Archives Départementales d'Ille-et-Vilaine, Rennes
AD56	Archives Départementales du Morbihan, Vannes
SHDL	Service Historique de la Défense à Lorient
AM Nantes	Archives Municipales de Nantes

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Introduction

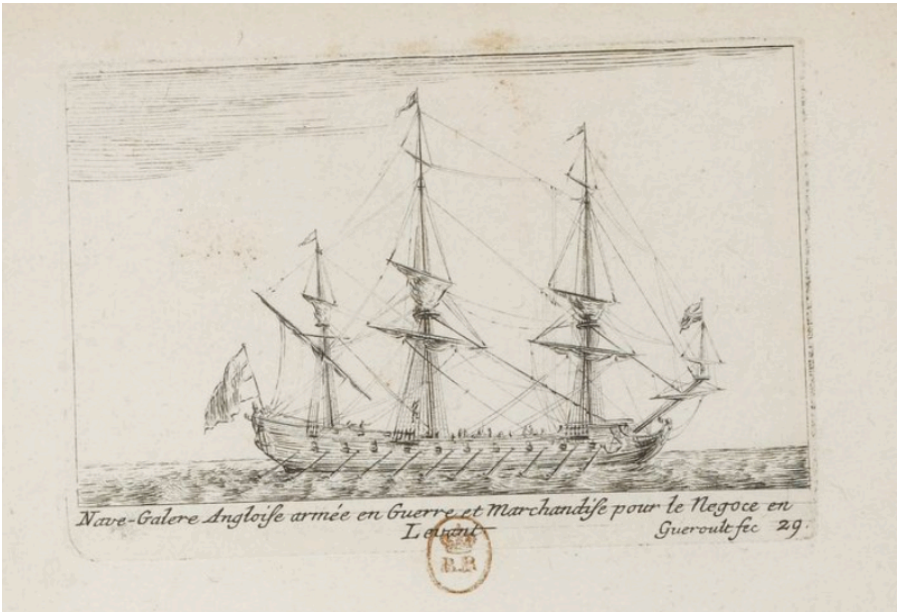

Figure 1. Nave-Galère Angloise armée en Guerre et Marchandise, Gueroult du Pas, Recuëil de veües . . ., *1710. This image, from P. J. Gueroult du Pas's 1710 guide to ships, is a rare illustration of the galley-frigate similar to La Sirenne. The 20-gun ship depicted here was slightly larger than the 14-gun La Sirenne, but it shows the alternating piercings for oars and cannons in the lower deck, and the three masts, yards and rigging for a fully-rigged ship.*[1]

The three-masted *Sirenne* was one of the last of its design, a 130-ton galley-frigate built along the swift lines of a warship, fully rigged with broad square sails to speed it across the open ocean, and with oars to propel it in calmer seas.[2] Deployed for trade and warfare in the final months of the War of the Spanish Succession, the *Sirenne* cast off from the port of Bordeaux on March 9, 1713 with a passport that guaranteed free passage from Bordeaux to Martinique and Saint-Domingue and back. 13 skilled topmen manned the rigging, unfurling the mainsail and topgallants, topsails and studding sails, as a boatswain directed the maneuvers and the pilot steered the ship from the port into the widening Gironde estuary. Deep within the ship, the hold carried 91 tons of wine, 70 anchors of lard, 8000 tiles, 124 plates, 10 cases of soap, 18 cases of grapes, 80 anchors of eau de vie, 25 barrels of butter, 27 oak boards, 20 anchors of artichokes, 42 barrels of flour and other miscellaneous merchandise destined for the French Caribbean.[3] The crew and four *éngagés*, indentured servants sailing for posts in Saint-Domingue, had hung their hammocks from the close beams of the lower deck, and the officers and four passengers stored their sea-chests in their small berths, built in crowded rows at the rear of the ship, underneath the

[1] P.J. Gueroult du Pas, *Recuëil de veües de tous les differens bastimens de la mer Méditerranée et de l'ocean avec leurs noms et usages* (Paris: Pierre Giffart, 1710), 30.
[2] Brian Lavery, Introduction to *Deane's Doctrine of Naval Architecture, 1670*. (London: Naval Institute Press, 1981), 19; V. Labraque-Bordenave, *Étude sur les constructions navales à Bordeaux: commerce maritime* (Bordeaux: Imp. De E. Bissei, 1866), 61-2.
[3] Passport, *La Sirenne*, March 11, 1713, Passports pour les îles de l'Amérique, Amirauté de la Guyenne, AD33 6B 87, 93v-94v.

poop deck and adjacent to the captain's cabin.[4] As they sailed on, the thirty-nine men and one woman onboard divided their allegiances and formed factions onboard. Captain Daniel Bertrand, a 38-year-old New Catholic from Saujon, clashed with his major officers and his crewmen, challenging their loyalty to Catholicism, France, and their shipmates.

By the spring of 1715, the second captain, the surgeon, the pilot, the boatswain, the longboat's coxswain, a passenger, and a sailor of the *Sirenne*, had come before the admiralty court of La Guyenne in Bordeaux to relate their accounts of the 1713 voyage. Captain Bertrand stood accused of fathering a child with a young stowaway in his cabin, of impeding Catholic worship and evangelism, of smuggling enslaved people between Jamaica and Saint-Domingue, of selling his cabin boy's indenture to a hotelier in Saint-Pierre, and of abusing his cooper, cabin-boy, and second captain.[5] The longboat's coxswain told how he and a skeleton crew rowed to a mysterious meeting between the first boatswain and Captain Bertrand's brother, a Protestant refugee aboard an English slaving vessel, just outside the port of Petit-Goâve. The second boatswain, François du Four, claimed captain Bertrand charged down into the lower deck to keep Catholic officers and priests from the soiled cots of dying Protestants, shouting, "We are of two religions. Won't you leave this man to die in peace?" The second pilot related that the particular "familiarity" between Captain Bertrand and the young girl, Grozille, led the second captain to abandon the captain's cabin and instead to sleep in the berth of his brother-in-law.[6] In the light of the court, these testimonies described a spectacle of disorder that violated a series of prohibitions and resonated with growing anxieties about global commerce and changing forms of communal formation, social order, and identification. Who belonged in a French seaborne community, and on what terms? The case arose at a crucial moment in the fracturing of belonging at sea. It is one of the last cases in the admiralty court archives to address religious or moral comportment, outside of smuggling and physical violence, and the series of accusations evoke the criss-crossing facets of belonging that eighteenth-century oceanic trade churned through, including race, gender, religion and labor.

The following chapters analyze the consequences of emergent global capitalism for eighteenth-century social worlds. They trace how captive Africans, crewmen and officers forged social bonds at sea and articulated new forms of belonging along the sinews of nascent global trade. The constant dislocation that defined transoceanic trade ripped through landed social bonds; it pulled people from complex sources of care and of identity. For African captives, these processes of deterritorialization exacted a devastating cost in the forms of acute physical and emotional suffering and in catastrophic loss of human life. In the wake of this destruction, market bonds of credit, debt and possession subsumed and adhered to other forms of human relation. A granular view into the mechanisms of social and cultural production at sea reveals their transformation along the capitalist imperatives of speed and profit. It shows that the sea was an important site of capitalist spatial and social formation in the eighteenth century.

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[4] Jean Boudriot, *L'Equipage, La conduite du vaisseau*, vol. IV of *Le Vaisseau de 74 Canons: traite pratique d'art naval* (Paris: J. Boudriot, 1977), 47-51.

[5] Saujon was a major Protestant center in the Saintonge region prior to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Louis Spiro, "Saujon: Une Église protestante saintongeaise à travers quatre siècles d'histoire 1559-1959" *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire du Protestantisme Français (1903-)*, vol. 121 (April-May-June, 1975): 187.

[6] Cahier d'Informations, Procédure contre Daniel Bertrand, (February 20, 1715- July 9, 1715), Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 1152.

Figure 2. Vaisseaux Moüillez en Rade, Gueroult du Pas, Recuëil de veües . . . , *1710.*
The entry to the Gironde may have looked something like this in 1713. Here Gueroult du Pas depicts a large three-masted warship with three gun-decks moored at harbor, its topsail unfurled, ready to set sail.[1]

Global Trade in the Eighteenth Century

La Sirenne was one of thousands of ships that embarked from French ports over the course of the eighteenth century. Bordeaux alone armed 49 ships for the Caribbean from 1713 to 1714, and Nantes sent an average of 51 ships per year with an additional average of 12.5 slaving ships per year from 1712 to 1732.[7] Le Havre, Lorient, La Rochelle and Saint-Malo sent dozens more each year. By 1730 Martinique and Saint-Domingue could expect 441 ships in trade with metropolitan ports, including 24 ships carrying slaves.[8] Lorient and Saint-Malo also sent their ships farther out to the shores of Peru, China, and East Africa, and the bustling ports of the Red Sea and the Indian Subcontinent. This dissertation follows 525 of these mercantile oceanic voyages originating in or destined for Nantes, Lorient, Bordeaux, or Le Havre, spanning the years from 1680 to 1793. These moving social worlds were at the heart of emergent global capitalism; they fueled and wove together accelerating global trade.[9] The oceanic voyage pulled

[7] Christian Huetz de Lemps, *Géographie du commerce de Bordeaux à la fin du règne de Louis XIV* (Paris: Mouton, 1975), 552-5. Jean Meyer, *L'Armement nantais dans la deuxième moitié du XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1999), 60-65. For the numbers on the slaving voyages, I searched the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database for all slaving voyages departing from Nantes for the years 1712 to 1732. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/XTUufFoz (Accessed 11/15/2017).
[8] James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: the French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 214-215. The number of slave trade voyages indicates those counted in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database as sailing under the French flag that arrived in Martinique or Saint-Domingue in the year 1730. Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/DSKxdE9g (Accessed 11/15/2017).
[9] John Shovlin demonstrates the intertwined histories of capitalism and the state in early modern France, in particular the state's concerted interest in promoting circulation. Elizabeth Cross describes a novel iteration of this relationship after the Seven Years' War in her study of the *Nouvelle Compagnie des Indes* (1785-1793). Oceangoing

sailors and officers away from their landed communities and severed the social ties of captives transported from West Africa and Madagascar to French colonies in the Caribbean, Louisiana and the Mascarenes. In the confines of the ship and the moving space of the water, people onboard were forced to rearticulate the forms and meaning of belonging at sea.

The social and cultural worlds aboard ship follow the contours of expanding global trade during the eighteenth century. The stories in this dissertation unfolded between two dramatic turning points in French global trade, beginning with the accelerating opening of global markets in the late seventeenth century, and ending with the decimation of overseas trade during the French Revolutionary Wars (1792-1802). Between these dates, trade grew in spurts from 1680 to the Seven Years War and stagnated from 1763 to 1772. In the two final decades of the Ancien Regime, trends for trade diverged, as Atlantic slaving activity boomed and France's trade to the East Indies dwindled. Within this rough outline, each port in France, each destination and each form of trade witnessed its own booms and busts, and within these broad and particular trends, men, women and children wove their lives and knotted together the fragmentary fables that surface in the archives.

The first French settlers arrived in the Caribbean and Canada in the early seventeenth century, and the populations and economies of their settlements grew slowly until the 1680s.[10] By mid-century, cultivation of tobacco, sugar and indigo had begun on Saint-Christophe, Martinique and Guadeloupe. Rising interest in overseas trade was finally realized in a marked rise in the numbers of ships sailing to Senegal and the Caribbean in the 1680s, as merchants in major ports began to shift interests away from traditional markets in grain, salt and wine and towards colonial products.[11] By the early eighteenth century, booming indigo and sugar markets in Europe and demand for slaves in the Caribbean fueled the rapid growth of French Atlantic trade and of French port cities along the Atlantic coast.[12]

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vessels were, of course, the necessary technologies for contact with the Americas and the establishment of sea routes for trade with Sub-Saharan Africa and the Indian and Pacific Oceans. For a detailed study of the early technology of these vessels, see Roger C. Smith, *Vanguard of Empire: Ships of Exploration in the Age of Columbus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); John Shovlin, *Trading with the Enemy: Britain, France, and the 18th-Century Quest for a Peaceful World Order* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021); Elizabeth Cross, *Company Politics: Commerce, Scandal, and the French Visions of the Indian Empire in the Revolutionary Era* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023).

[10] Codfishing in Newfoundland had, since the sixteenth century, supplied the first colonial products for enterprising merchants, ship owners and investors in Atlantic and Channel ports, including Nantes, Le Havre and Bordeaux and these fishing voyages remained a substantial portion of long-distance maritime activity for France well into the eighteenth century. On cod fisheries, see James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 17, 139-149; Jean-François Brière, *La Pêche français en Amérique du Nord au XVIIIe siècle* (Montreal: Fides, 1990).

[11] Jean Meyer, *L'Armement nantais*, 60.

[12] French slave traders struggled to meet the rising demand for slaves in the Caribbean, and French settlers there depended largely on foreign shipping to fill that demand. Pritchard, 14. Meyer, *L'Armement nantais,* 60, 66-7.

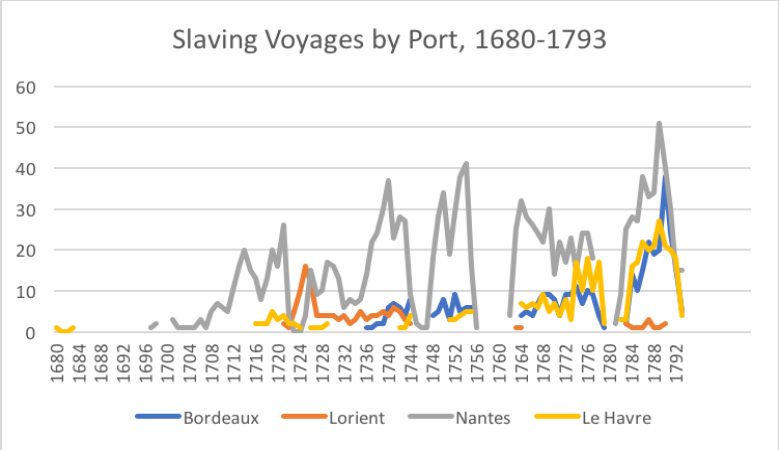

Table 1. Slaving Voyages by Port, 1680-1793
Slaving voyages rose dramatically over the century, with Nantes outpacing Lorient, Bordeaux and Le Havre several times over through most of the century. However, Bordeaux and Le Havre began to send out comparable numbers of ships after the American Revolutionary War.[13]

While Atlantic trade in the late seventeenth century developed across several chartered companies, French trade in the Indian Ocean grew under the relatively centralized control of the king and his ministers.[14] In 1664, Colbert established the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*, modeled after and in competition with the Dutch VOC and British Company of the Indies.[15] Its aim was to establish French trading posts in South Asia for direct access to textiles and spices. Like many of the Atlantic trading companies, the *Compagnie des Indes* would undergo several iterations, disintegrations and re-formations over the following century and a half.[16] Paris retained centralized authority over the company through its several reorganizations, the first in 1684-5 giving greater control to the king, and the second in 1719 when John Law incorporated

[13] These figures are taken from the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/wf1X6VuA, Accessed 2/1/2018.
[14] In some ways, the seventeenth century challenges foreshadowed those of the early eighteenth century. Like John Law, Colbert attempted to give the Compagnie des Indes Occidentales a monopoly over all trade to the French colonies of the Americas, including the slave trade, in 1664. However, he soon found the company was unable to embark a sufficient number of ships to supply the growing demand for slaves in the Antilles. By 1669 Colbert switched strategies to encourage independent traders, but these too failed to fully supply the colonies with slaves. This led to the dismantlement of the Compagnie des Indes Occidentales and the establishment of smaller companies including the Compagnie du Sénégal (1672) and the Compagnie de Guinée (1684), which became the Compagnie de l'Asiente from 1701 to 1713. These companies operated alongside subcontracted ventures and unwelcome clandestine traders in the slave trade. Kenneth Banks, "Financiers, Factors, and French Proprietary Companies," in *Constructing Early Modern Empires*, ed. L.H. Roper and B. Van Ruymbeke (Boston: Brill, 2007), 90-92; Robert Louis Stein, *The French Slave Trade: An Old Regime Business* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1979), 11; Clarence Munford, *The Black Ordeal of Slavery and Slave Trading in the French West Indies, 1625*-1715, 3 vols. (Lewiston, NY: E Mellen Press, 1991); Erin Greenwald, *Marc-Antoine Caillor and the Company of the Indies in Louisina: Trade in the French Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2016), 13; Philip Boucher, *France and the American Tropics to 1700: Tropics of Discontent?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008), 17; Holden Furber, *Rival Empires of Trade in the Orient, 1600-1800* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976), 103-105.
[15] However, in its administration the French company was, Furber argues, more like a syndicate than a company, administered closely by the king's minister and his appointed syndics with no powerful body of directors and very little input by shareholders. See Furber, 202.
[16] Michael Pearson, *The Indian Ocean* (London: Routledge, 2003), 152.

Colbert's *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* with the *Compagnie de l'Occident* and the *Compagnie Royale de Chine* into the *Compagnie Perpetuelle des Indes*.[17] Enthusiasm for the company was lukewarm from the start, but intendants were able to secure significant investments from merchant communities in Lyon, Rouen, Bordeaux, Nantes, Tours, and Saint-Malo.[18] Outside of the company's eventual primary port at Lorient, Le Havre (very briefly), Nantes, and Saint-Malo would also embark ships for the company.[19] Despite its centralized organization, the policies and conditions that directed company trade were remarkably changeable. Over the decades following its establishment, royal priorities for the company shifted from establishing a colony in Madagascar to seizing prize ships, in addition to the company's original ambitions of supplying spices, textiles and, later, tea to the European market. The challenge of financing the fitting out of merchant ships, compounded by the added requirement for naval vessels to protect against Dutch and British attacks, alongside unexpected delays and fractious agents, only contributed to the volatility of the enterprise. It cut deeply into the company's rare, often marginal profits. Failed voyages, botched military offensives and bad investments marked these first decades of the company.[20]

Over the course of the eighteenth century, overseas trade dramatically expanded in tonnage and as a percentage of French maritime trade.[21] Already in the first decade of the eighteenth century, merchants in Nantes and Bordeaux, among other cities, were building their fortunes off the flourishing demand for sugar, coffee, indigo and other colonial products, as well as an accelerating demand for slaves in the Caribbean.[22] Saint-Malo merchants embraced the Indian Ocean trade with enthusiasm in the early decades of the century, and Saint-Maloians continued to dominate the trade to South Asia and China, as merchants, officers and seamen, even after the foundation of the *Compagnie des Indes,* based in Lorient in 1719.[23] The *Compagnie* also took part in the French slave trade, alongside merchants from the major trading centers of Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseille, alongside several smaller ports. Demand for slaves in the Caribbean rapidly outstripped the *Compagnie*'s ability to fit out enough ships. By the 1730s, the slave trade and Atlantic direct trades had been taken over by independent merchants and ship owners.[24]

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[17] Philippe Haudrère, *La Compagnie Française Des Indes Au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Les Indes Savantes, 2005), II: 157-160. Furber, 203.
[18] Furber, 203.
[19] Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, II, 131, 337.
[20] However, tenuous successes in establishing diplomatic trading relations in Surat and Pondichéry established a lasting basis for the trade that would finally begin to flourish after 1719. Furber, 108-124.
[21] Dale Miquelon, *Dugard of Rouen: French Trade to Canada and the West Indies, 1729-1770* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 17.
[22] While the French acquisition of the *asiento* in 1702 had opened new markets to the *Compagnie de Guinée*, the War of Spanish Succession (1702-1715) interrupted trade and impeded profits in the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. By 1707 for the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* and by 1713 for the Atlantic slave trade, severe losses had pushed royal policy to abolish monopolies and grant independent traders the privileges to trade. This marks the true end of the seventeenth century slave trade in Stein's analysis. See Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, 11; Stein, "Measuring the French Slave Trade, 1713-1792/3", *The Journal of African History*, 19 (1978), 518; Meyer, *L'Armement Nantais*, 60-65; T. J. A. Le Goff and Jean Meyer, "Les constructions navales en France pendant la seconde moitié du XVIIIe siècle", *Annales*, 26, 1 (Jan-Feb 1971), 179; Patrick Villiers, "Peut-on parler d'un navire colonial Français au XVIIIème siècle? Quelques réflexions sur des dépouillements statistiques de grands ports de l'Atlantique et de la Manche" *Proceedings of the Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society* 22 (1998): 244.
[23] Furber, 120-121; Villiers, 245 ; Perry Viles, "Slaving Interest in the Atlantic Ports" *French Historical Studies* 7, no. 4 (Autumn, 1972), 532.
[24] Furber, 207; Harms, 51-2.

For both Atlantic and Indian Ocean trade, the period between 1730 and 1755 was one of stability and steady growth.[25] During this period, the *Compagnie des Indes* maintained 25 vessels, 15 frigates, 8 flutes, and 10 brigantines, and embarked between 18 and 20 departures per year from Lorient to the East Indies.[26] Now under even greater royal control, this reorganized company managed to establish more solid political control in the Indian Ocean, penetrating further inland in South Asia and solidifying their colonies in the Mascarenes as layover destinations, plantation colonies, and military bases.[27] In the Atlantic, the direct and slave trades grew steadily throughout this period, with minor set-backs during the War of Austrian Succession. Nantes continued to be at the forefront of the slave trade, sending more than half the French departing from France for West Africa during this period.[28] However, Bordeaux, and notably Le Havre showed remarkable rises in their participation in the trade after 1741.[29] The swarms of vessels that crowded Atlantic and Indian Ocean ports during these decades facilitated the construction and maintenance of broader social and economic ties between seamen, as discussed in the third chapter.

The intensification of global trade meant greater integration of trading networks, both in terms of the seamen who moved from ship to ship, route to route, and in terms of the goods they carried across oceans. By the 1760s, probate inventories record hundreds of cases in which men bought calicos, silk handkerchiefs, sugar and tobacco from the sea chests of their deceased shipmates. When disease struck the slaving ship, the *Duchesse de Grammont de Nantes* while it was moored at Loango in the spring of 1772, sixteen-year-old ship's boy, René La Touche purchased calico culottes from the inventory of Jean Baptiste Zamite. The ship's carpenter purchased a pot of sugar.[30] When the sailor, Jean Baptiste Dubois died aboard the *Nereide* at Gorée in August of 1730, his shipmates purchased a *tasse de coco* from his sea chest, and when his shipmate, Jean Popeguin died a week later, sailors purchased two *pagnes* or lengths of cloth specifically for the African market, from his inventory.[31] These inventories reflect the broader interconnectedness of Atlantic and Indian Ocean markets, as well as seamen's increasing engagement in and reliance on global markets for profit and survival.

All transoceanic trade suffered during the Seven Years War, as naval warfare escalated to an unprecedented scale, threatening commercial sea routes, and the French suffered devastating losses.[32] These losses and the threat of capture by the British slowed trade across the Atlantic to a

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[25] Meyer, *L'Armement Nantais*, 68.

[26] The stability of the French company was in part supported by the royal revenue from the sale of tobacco, granted to the reorganized company. Furber, 209-210.

[27] Kenneth McPherson, *The Indian Ocean: A History of People and the Sea* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 198-199, 209-211; Auguste Toussaint, *History of the Indian Ocean*, June Guicharnaud trans. (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1966), 152-155.

[28] Stein, "Measuring the French Slave Trade", 518.

[29] From 5 total slaving voyages from Le Havre departing from 1731 to 1741, merchants sent 32 from 1741-1756, 6 during the War of Austrian Succesion, and 23 from 1749-1755. This reflected an 146% rise in sugar production from 1713 to 1739 on what was becoming the predominant sugar-producing colony in the French West Indies, Saint-Domingue. Edouard Delobette, 'Les Mutations Du Commerce Maritime Du Havre, 1680-1730 (1ère Partie)', *Annales de Normandie*, 51 (2001), 262-263. Pritchard, 180.

[30] Probate Auction, Jean Baptiste Zamite de Malthe, *La Duchesse de Grammont de Nantes*, March 4, 1772, Pièces depose en Greffe, ADLA B 4997.

[31] Probate Auctions for Jean Baptiste Dubois and Jean Popeguin, *La Nereide*, August 6, 1730 and August 13, 1730, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, AD56 9B 106.

[32] The French lost their posts in Senegal to Britain in 1757-1758. Pierre H. Boule, "Eighteenth-Century French Policies toward Senegal: The Ministry of Choiseul" *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 1970): 306.

crawl, leaving direct trade dramatically reduced by the end of the war.[33] While Atlantic direct trade recovered slowly, and the slave trade rapidly, in the Indian Ocean the war had torn through the finances of the *Compagnie des Indes* and left their political position in South Asia extremely tenuous. French military commanders, unfamiliar with the political circumstances in India that the company relied upon, had upset alliances and antagonized potential partners. Losses of key positions, including forts in Senegal, Chandannagar, Mahé and Pondicherry during the war disrupted trade, and shook French interests on the ground, even after the return of attenuated control over some of those locations after the war.[34] In addition, the company had run deeply into debt and lost both men and ships to the British, making any recovery after the war extremely difficult.[35] The French strategy after the war transitioned to production in the Mascarenes and mere maintenance of their factories in India. By 1769, the company had been dissolved, its properties turned over to the French crown, and the last cargo from the company arrived in Lorient in 1771.[36] While the Mascarenes witnessed a brief period of growth under direct royal control, this ended as the British established decisive dominance and seized the remainder of French territories in the Indian Ocean during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.[37]

In contrast to the devastation of the *Compagnie des Indes* and to the lingering damages to the direct trade, the French slave trade expanded dramatically after the Seven Years War until the French Revolutionary Wars. Responding to demands from colonial planters after the war, the French state offered increased incentives to slave traders. This state sponsorship helped to bolster the slave trade, giving it the fastest recovery of all forms of transoceanic trade.[38]

While France had lost Gorée and Senegal during the Seven Years War, traders expanded their reach to the Congo and Angola and even to Madagascar and Mozambique in the Indian Ocean.[39] French involvement in the American Revolutionary War only temporarily dampened the slave trade.[40] Shipping slowed from most ports during the war, but it rebounded with vigor after 1783, reaching the highest numbers of ships and of tonnage embarked for the slave trade, and the highest numbers of captives traded to the French colonies in the Caribbean and the Mascarenes.[41] The brutal escalation of the slave trade hit its apex around 1790 and plummeted

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[33] Nantes alone lost 109 ships, a value of 17,250,000 livres, from 1754 to 1759. Meyer, *L'Armement Nantais*, 73-94.
[34] Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, II, 751-757.
[35] Haudrère marks the company's debt to be sixty million livres by 1762 alone. Furber, 162-169; Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, II, 755.
[36] Furber, 210 ; Toussaint, 157-159.
[37] Toussaint, 160, 165-167.
[38] Jean Meyer has shown that the annual embarkations from Nantes for the slave trade from 1763 to 1776 surpassed annual embarkations prior to the war. The increase in direct trade with the colonies was steady but slower, exceeding 1753 numbers on a yearly basis in the 1770s. Meyer, *L'Armement nantais*, 81-94. Delobette, 267. Villiers, 249.
[39] The slave trade in the Indian Ocean, supplying the plantation colonies of Ile de France and Bourbon, witnessed a similar expansion. Alpers demonstrates that the French even came to dominate the slave trade in East Africa in the decade from 1785 and 1794. Edward A. Alpers, "The French Slave Trade in East Africa (1721-1810)" *Cahiers d'Études Africaines* 10, no. 37 (1970): 98-105, 110-121. See also Richard B. Allen, "The Constant Demand of the French: The Mascarene Slave Trade and the Worlds of the Indian Ocean and Atlantic during the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries" *The Journal of African History*, vol. 49, 1 (2008): 43-72. Allen, *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2014), 84-89.
[40] Meyer, *L'Armement Nantais*, 88-89.
[41] Le Havre in particular benefited from this disruption, as the merchants leading the new Compagnie du Senegal, established in 1786, three years after the return of Senegal to France, invested in the slave trade. From being a port mainly dedicated to European trade before the Seven Years War, it had become the third slave-trading port in France

after 1792, largely attributable to the beginnings of the Haitian Revolution in 1791 and of the French Revolutionary Wars in 1792. As the Haitian Revolution disrupted the plantation economy and dampened slave-trading interests, the Revolutionary Wars, followed by the Napoleonic, disrupted maritime trade for over two decades, dismantling the fortunes of powerful merchant families and discouraging their investment in overseas trade.[42]

French ships on *voyages au long cours* carried hundreds of thousands of men, women and children across the seas over the eighteenth century. Captive Africans composed the majority of these people, forced aboard French ships and into enslavement in the French colonies in the Caribbean and the Mascarenes. Children and healers, outcasts and nobility, mixed in the 'tweendecks of slaving vessels. French sailors and officers, carpenters and cooks flooded into Nantes, Bordeaux and Lorient from surrounding regions, aiming to secure a daily meal, a salary and the opportunity to engage in the global market. Captives and crew embarked under vastly different circumstances, but all onboard faced an urgent need to create social bonds in the moving world at sea.

Archival Sources

The archives of criminal cases reflect the patterns of growth across different transoceanic routes, with slight variation. The preponderance of cases in the inventory for this dissertation comes from the direct Atlantic trade in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, but even by the 1740s, cases from slaving voyages begin to overtake all others. The two cases from voyages to the Pacific come from the first decade of the eighteenth century, when investors in Saint-Malo, Le Havre and Port-Louis sponsored a series of expeditions around Cape Horn to Peru and across the ocean to China.[43] Voyages to the Indian Ocean were less frequent, even during the most successful years of the *Compagnie des Indes*. In the criminal record, voyages to the Indian Ocean that produced criminal cases dropped from four during the period from 1740 to 1759 to one in the period from 1760 to 1779. The total number of voyages in the inventory shows a slower decline, from forty-six in the period from 1740 to 1759 to 39 in the period from 1760 to1779, finally falling to just two in the period from 1780 to1792.

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by 1793. This is based on number of ships. In terms of tonnage, Le Havre ranked second in France. Delobette, 268; Jean Meyer, "Le commerce négrier nantais (1774-1792)" *Annales*, 15, no. 1 (Jan.-Feb. 1960), 128.

[42] Meyer, "Le commerce négrier nantais," 129.

[43] Procédure contre l'equipage de *La Confiance,* 1706, Minutes Criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 240; Proceds extraordinairement encommencé allencontre Dusieur Jean Sangerant chirurgien decedé sur le navire nommé La découverte, 1716, Procédures, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP 305.

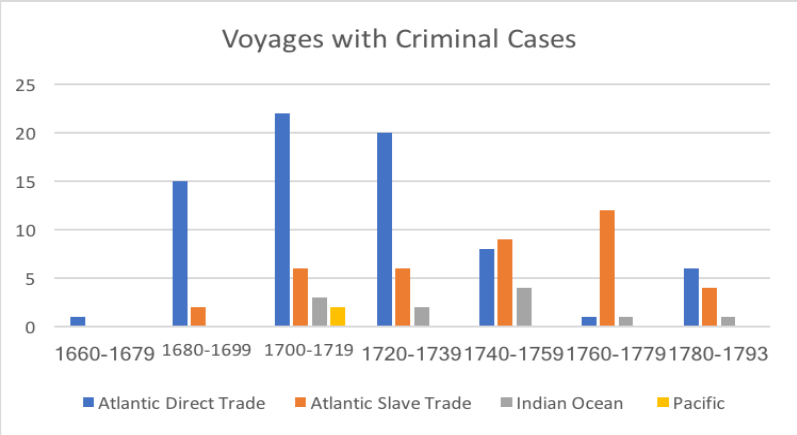

Table 2. Voyages with Criminal Cases, 1660-1793
This table charts the 127 voyages in my database of criminal cases. While some of the variation is due to a relatively small sample size, the general pattern reflects the growth of all trade up to the Seven Years War and the strength of the slave trade through the second half of the century.

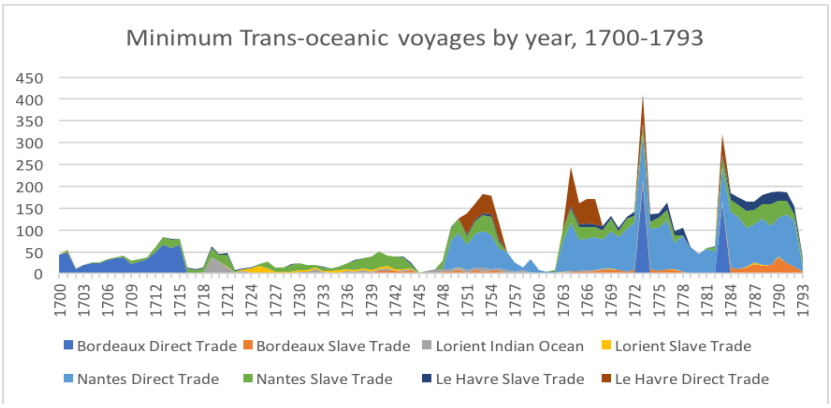

Table 3. Minimum Trans-oceanic voyages by year, 1700-1793
Lacunae in the archives and historians' varying approaches to describing traffic through the ports makes it difficult to present a single figure that represents total voyages in France through this period. This graph represents the minimum number of transoceanic voyages embarking from Bordeaux, Lorient, Nantes and Le Havre during the eighteenth century.[44]

[44] According to the most complete data available, I estimate that my database represents about 5% of trans-Atlantic slaving voyages, about 3% of trans-Atlantic direct trade, and about 67% of voyages to the Indian Ocean. I was able to locate numbers for colonial trade for Le Havre only for the years 1751-1767 and 1773 and 1783. Christian Huetz de Lemps gives the figures of all embarkations from Bordeaux, while other researchers give numbers only for direct colonial trade. The most consistent figures across the four main ports of this study comes from the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database and from Haudrère's study of the Compagnie des Indes. I used the complete dataset available through the Trans-Atlantic slave database, Haudrère's figures, and I extrapolated as best I could from decades for which the data was complete for direct Atlantic colonial trade. I compiled the numbers for this graph from the following sources: The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, http://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/wf1X6VuA, Accessed 2/1/2018; Pierre Dardel, *Navires et marchandises dans les ports de Rouen et du Havre au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: S.E.V.P.E.N., 1963). Huetz de Lemps, 524, 555; Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, II: 845, 853, 857; J. -S. Bromley, Bromley, J.-S., "Le Commerce de La France de l'Ouest et La Guerre Maritime (1702-1712)", *Annales de Midi*, 65, no. 21 (1953), 66; Meyer, *L'Armement Nantais*, 78-80; Patrick Villiers, *Marine royale, corsaires et trafic dans l'Atlantique de Louis XIV à Louis XVI* (Lille: Atelier National de Reproduction des Thèses, 2003) vol. I, 395, and vol. II, Planche LII.

The primary source base of this dissertation includes over 75 ships' logbooks, over 200 probate auctions from 29 voyages, over 100 criminal cases from French Admiralty courts, printed travel narratives, medical treatises, and various associated documents. Several methodologies inform the analysis and integration of these varied sources. In the reading of logbooks and other often laconic sources on the enslaved, I look to Stephanie Smallwood's work reading logbooks against the grain and to Saidiya Hartman's use of "critical fabulation," reliant on speculation and subjunctive storytelling to "tell an impossible story and to amplify the impossibility of its telling."[45] The work of cultural historians like James H. Sweet, Natalie Zemon Davis and Carlo Ginzburg inform the reading of court testimony against the grain, recognizing the coercive framing of these documents as well as the ways testimony reveals presumptions about cultural norms and their violation. Anthropological concepts and research, read alongside archival documents, help bring texture and substance to the implicit stories that surface in the margins of logbooks and captains' reports.[46] This methodological approach underlines the power structures inherent in the documents, while resurfacing possible stories omitted from the archives, and building out the cultural contexts that shaped the events referenced within the documents.

	Atlantic Direct Trade	Atlantic Slave Trade	Atlantic and Indian Ocean	India and China	Indian Ocean	Pacific
1660-1679	2	0	0	1	0	0
1680-1699	13	2	0	0	1	0
1700-1719	31	13	0	0	5	7
1720-1739	70	60	6	13	60	0
1740-1755	26	31	19	6	36	0
1756-1763	0	2	2	2	6	0
1764-1774	25	25	1	14	15	0
1775-1783	0	4	0	1	3	0
1784-1792	6	5	0	1	1	0

Table 4. Voyages by Date and Route
This table represents the total 525 voyages that I drew from in my research, including voyages that produced civil cases, criminal cases, and probate inventories. I have divided the 13 decades into 20-year segments, with the exception of the Seven Years' War and the American Revolutionary War, which drastically damaged French overseas trade. The proportions in this table are not entirely representative of broader French trade, as they relate the idiosyncrasies of the archives as much as the ebbs and flows of commerce. What is visible, however, is the rapid growth of trade in the 1720s and 1730s, and the dramatic declines associated with the two aforementioned wars.

[45] Stephanie E. Smallwood, "The Politics of the Archive and History's Accountability to the Enslaved", *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History*, 6 (2016), 117–32; Saidiya Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts", *Small Axe*, 12 (2008), 1–14.
[46] James H. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares, African Healing and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNC Press, 2011); Natalie Zemon Davis, *Fiction in the Archives: Pardon Tales and their Tellers in Sixteenth-Century France* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1987); Carlo Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976).

Drawn from the court records of the Admiralties at Nantes, Guyenne, Lorient, Vannes, and Le Havre, criminal court cases offer glimpses into daily routines and specialized work, the celebration of rituals and feasts, as well as extraordinary abuses by captains and crewmen alike. The testimony of witnesses describes not only the offending actions but the conditions of life at sea, and the spatial elements of each conflict. It was the longboat's bosun aboard *La Sirenne* who witnessed the alleged smuggling between Captain Bertrand and his refugee brother, and the surgeon who claimed special knowledge of the religious leanings of men in their sickbeds, while topmen claimed to know only of rumors regarding alleged beatings by the coxswain against an indentured servant in the ship's galley.

Alongside criminal court cases and logbooks, this dissertation takes advantage of the large number of probate auctions preserved in the admiralty court archives. These documents itemized and recorded the sales of the possessions of men who died at sea. Auctions were held aboard ship, generally within the few days following a death, and the proceeds were deposited at the *Trésoriers des Invalides*, a general fund for injured men and families of the deceased, and then distributed to his heirs.[47] With a team of research assistants, we surveyed 216 probate inventories from 29 voyages, primarily from the admiralty court archives at Nantes and Vannes. They include auctions of the belongings of chaplains, cooks, sailors (both whites and free blacks), ensigns and ships 'boys; all except captains and first mates are included. Due to the nature of these documents, this collection favors ships with high death rates. I have tried to balance this in my collection method, by including all voyages from a particular year or box, and by maintaining individual voyages as a variable in my database, in addition to individual inventories. These inventories detail thousands of transactions in which shipmates purchased items from a priest's cassock to a "very used" pair of socks.[48] Corresponding crew lists help identify the buyers and sellers, their ages, origins and ranks aboard ship. They illuminate commercial practices and patterns of consumption among sailors and officers. [49] They also

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[47] This was established in 1681 and renewed in 1739. Ordonnance de la Marine du Mois d'Aout 1681, Titre XI, Article XI, in René-Josué Valin, *Nouveau Commentaire sur l'Ordonnance de la Marine, du Mois d'Aout 1681* (La Rochelle: Jerôme Legier; Pierre Mesnier, 1760); Réglement du Roi Pour la recherché des soldes & produits d'inventaires des gens de mer qui meurent sans tester pendant leurs voyages sur les bâtimens marchands . . . 23 August 1739 in Valin, 411-412.

[48] The inventories on land and at sea, at times fail to specify the number of a particular object sold, and include kinds of objects for which the value might vary greatly depending on the quality and condition. This is less relevant for a qualitative assessment of the inventories, and for quantitative assessments, I have decided to use only those that do specify quantity and, as much as possible, the quality of the items. A. J. Shuurman, "Probate Inventory Research: Opportunities and Drawbacks" in *Inventaires après deces et ventes des meubles. Apport à une histoire de la vie économique et quotidienne XIVe-XIXe siècle,* eds. A.J. Shuurman, M. Bauland, P. Servais (Louvain-la-Neuve: Academia, 1988), 19-28.

[49] Scholarship on the probate inventories from eighteenth-century France has demonstrated that the people of eighteenth-century France owned global and comfort goods at increasing rates over the century. While probate inventories on land reveal the material lives of only a portion of the population, generally well to do, married and of an older subset than the population at large, all free men and boys serving aboard ship, as well as some passengers, would have their possessions catalogued and sold in this way. In the very few cases where the dead had nothing at all to sell, this fact was recorded alongside others' inventories. Much of the work on probate inventories in France has been on consumption in Paris. See Daniel Roche, *Peuple de Paris: essai sur la culture populaire au XVIII siècle* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1981); Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun, *La Naissance de l'Intime* (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1988); Cissie Fairchilds, "The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris" in *Consumption and the World of Goods* John Brewer and Roy Porter eds. (London 1993), 228-248; Steven Kaplan, *The Bakers of Paris and the Bread Question, 1770-1775* (Durham, NC, 1996).

underscore the violence that permeated those markets in the eighteenth century. Michael Kwass has demonstrated how the high demand for calicos, tobacco and other exotic goods in France, combined with the strict state control of these products, fomented both widespread smuggling and violent, repressive efforts of the state and its agents.[50] Death opened markets aboard ship, which allowed seamen to consume global goods, to participate in trade, and to have access to liquidity in foreign ports, in the form of clothing and other commodity currencies.

Historiography

In looking to court documents to illuminate life at sea, my study builds upon a stout body of scholarship on eighteenth century sailors, primarily in the British Atlantic. This historiography describes sailors as politically conscious, often revolutionary historical actors. Jesse Lemisch's 1968 article, "Jack Tar in the Streets" broke new ground in this respect. He argues that a sailor's resistance to impressment through riots and mutiny in late eighteenth century British North American colonies was not simply a reaction to unfavorable circumstances but rather expressed an "awareness that certain values larger than himself exist" and that he was a victim not of personal circumstances but of broader injustice.[51] These sailors and their resistance, he shows, played key parts in political opposition to British policies in the lead-up to the American Revolution. Two works from 1986 expanded this analysis of sailors. The first, a dissertation by Julius Scott, published in 2018, traces the interconnections between Caribbean and Atlantic ports shaped by sailors in the late eighteenth century. Revealing the density and intricacy of maritime networks in this region, Scott traces the movement of people and information throughout the Atlantic world. He argues that seafaring provided opportunities for skill-building and escape to enslaved and free people of color but also demonstrates that seafarers themselves were instrumental in transferring news and knowledge from one port to the next between subordinated groups in the Atlantic world.[52] Marcus Rediker's 1986 monograph, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, focused more closely on the lives, politics and labor conditions of sailors in the early eighteenth century Atlantic. He argued that sailors were a nascent working class and the ship, a workspace in transition between workshop and factory.[53] For Rediker, riots, mutinies and desertion, read alongside sailors' involvement in political activity at port, demonstrate not only their political awareness but their political radicalism. This argument persists through his later work, and is perhaps most assertively expressed in his study with Peter Linebaugh, *The Many-Headed Hydra* (2000). Linebaugh and Rediker trace centuries of oppression against "hewers of wood and drawers of water," the unskilled laborers of the early modern Atlantic world, as well as

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[50] Michael Kwass, *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).

[51] Jesse Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets: Merchant Seamen in the Politics of Revolutionary America" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 25, no. 3 (Jul. 1968): 407.

[52] Scott's work is also one of the few to focus on sailors in the French Atlantic. Julius Scott, "The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution" PhD Diss., (Duke University, 1986); idem, *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2018); idem, "'Negroes in Foreign Bottoms': Sailors, Slaves, and Communication" in *Origins of the Black Atlantic* ed. Laurent Dubois and Julius Scott (New York: Routledge, 2010), 69-98; idem, "Afro-American Sailors and the International Communication Network: The Case of Newport Bowers", in *Jack Tar in History: Essays in the History of Maritime Life and Labour*, ed. Colin Howell and Richard Twomey (Fredericton, NB: Acadiensis Press, 1991), 37-52.

[53] Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 6, 111-112, 200.

numerous episodes of resistance.[54] Emma Christopher examines sailors and captives on British slaving ships. She argues that while sailors did develop revolutionary ideology, they did so, not through solidarity with their captives, but rather through their efforts to distinguish their particular rights and identities from the men, women and children held below deck.[55] While my dissertation recognizes the forms of resistance, from revolt to shirking to suicide, at play among sailors and enslaved people, I turn my focus to the place of economic and political relationships as components of the social and cultural world of the ship. I have found among French seamen a great reliance on the cultivation of credit, of political and economic power, through privileged relationships with officers and other politically powerful figures on board. This reliance emerged over time, from one articulated through a moral economy to one articulated through financial credits and debts.

To navigate these more subtle, contested power relations between officers of different classes and crewmen of different racial and cultural backgrounds, I build upon the work of Michael Jarvis and Daniel Vickers, who place the work of early modern seamen in the context of working households of the period, and within the master-servant relationships that pertained.[56] Michael Jarvis, focusing on Bermudian mariners, argues that these smaller intercolonial trading vessels promoted paternalistic, reciprocal relationships among the men, free and enslaved,

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[54] The attempts to link these together sometimes seem to rely on the fears expressed by political authorities rather than on clear evidence of collaboration between subordinated groups. In addition, it is not always clear that the sailors who stoned the windows of slaving merchants in 1775, for example, were "attack[ing] slavery" rather than their reduction in wages. Nevertheless, some examples, particularly from the late eighteenth century are compelling. Overall, this study underlines, if not the radical politics of all "sailors, slaves, [and] commoners," then at least their keen awareness of their political and economic positions and their deliberate efforts to shape those positions. This study has received some pushback. Linebaugh, Peter, and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2000); Robin Blackburn, review of *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners and the History of the Revolutionary* Atlantic, by Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *Boston Review*, Feb. 1, 2001, Books & Ideas, http://bostonreview.net/books-ideas/robin-blackburn-review-many-headed-hydra.

[55] This literature is too vast to survey comprehensively in a footnote. However, foundational works include Philip Curtin's 1969 survey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*, Joseph Miller's magisterial study of the Angolan slave trade in the eighteenth century, and David Eltis's work, in collaboration with other scholars on collecting and interpreting the data for the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Recent contributions from Rediker, Saidiya Hartman and Stephanie Smallwood have explored material, psychological, social and emotional elements of experience of life aboard ship during the Middle Passage, as well as questions of identity. Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). Joseph Miller, *Way of Death: Merchant Capitalism and the Angolan Slave Trade, 1730-1830* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988). David Eltis and David Richardson, eds. *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade* (Portland OR: Frank Cass, 1997); Robert Harms, *The Diligent: A Voyage through the Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2002); Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and Their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Viking Penguin, 2007). Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007). Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). Alexander X. Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants Across the Eighteenth-Century British Atlantic World* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2008); David Eltis and David Richardson, eds, *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

[56] Vickers argues that employment aboard ship was a strategy embraced by maritime families as a life stage, dangerous but also carrying the promise of providing labor and income for young men. Daniel Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea: Yankee Seafarers in the Age of Sail* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005); idem and Vince Walsh, 'Young Men and the Sea: The Sociology of Seafaring in Eighteenth-Century Salem, Massachusetts', *Social History*, 24 (1999), 17–38.

onboard. He argues that the conditions of these voyages are better described as "oceangoing workshops," than early factories.[57]

Bringing the historiography of the slave trade into conversation with maritime history, my research underlines the continuity between East Indies and West Indies voyages, as sailors and officers moved between routes in the course of their career, and as common market imperatives shaped the social worlds onboard.[58] In addition, within the rich historiographies of the transatlantic slave trade and the maritime world, there are few works that address both slaving and non-slaving voyages.[59] Cultural histories of captives and those of sailors most often examine them in isolation, highlighting their distinctive experience rather than their shared social world.[60] Viewing the ship as holding a single social body, despite the deep fractures that ran through it, allows for a multifaceted analysis of the processes of social production. When a priest baptized twins born to a captive woman, when another woman named her newborn son in the *vodun* tradition, these moments serve as prisms of social meaning, the facets of which are only visible by considering the varied worlds of the participants. My study underlines crewmen's and captives' divergent relationships with a market that valued the labor of one class, the bodies of another. I aim to bring into focus the varied consequences of a common force of capitalist dislocation.

My dissertation brings to the surface the intersection of race, religion, age and gender in the construction of social bonds at sea. The ship was overwhelmingly dominated by men. Nevertheless, women and children together often composed the majority of captive people aboard ship, and on most ships, they outnumbered crewmen and officers.[61] While historians have examined the construction of race and gender through their analyses of sexual violence aboard slave ships, there remains little literature on other forms of gender construction aboard ship, including those exercised by captive men, women and children.[62] In my discussion of gendered

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[57] Scholars of nineteenth-century seafarers have revealed similar complexities. See Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1997); Michael Jarvis, "Maritime Masters and Seafaring Slaves in Bermuda, 1680-1783" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 59, no. 3 (Jul. 2002): 585-622; idem, "The Binds of the Anxious Mariner: Patriarchy, Paternalism, and the Maritime Culture of Eighteenth-Century Bermuda" *Journal of Early Modern History* 14 (2010): 82; Paul Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront: American Maritime Culture in the Age of Revolution* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

[58] Kirti N. Chaudhuri, *Trade and Civilization in the Indian Ocean: An Economic History from the Rise of Islam to 1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); Marika Sherwood, "Race, Nationality and Employment among Lascar Seamen, 1660 to 1945" *New Community: A Journal of Research and Policy on Ethnic Relations*, 17 (1991): 229-44; Pearson, (2003); David A. Chappell, "Ahab's Boat: Non-European Seamen in Western Ships of Exploration and Commerce", in *Sea Changes: Historicizing the Ocean*, Bernhard Klein and Gesa Mackenthun eds. (New York: Routledge, 2004), 75-89; André Wink, *Al-Hind, The Making of the Indo-Islamic World*, 3 vols. (Leiden: Brill, 2004); Peter A. Coclanis, "Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?" *The William and Mary* Quarterly, vol. 63, no. 4 (Oct. 2006): 725-742; Amitav Ghosh, "Of Fanas and Forecastles: The Indian Ocean and Some Lost Languages of the Age of Sail" *Economic and Political Weekly* vol. 43, 25 (Jun. 21-27, 2008): 56-57.

[59] Linebaugh and Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra* (2000); Haudrère, *La compagnie française des Indes* (2005); Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and their Captive Cargoes*; Rediker, *The Slave Ship* (2007).

[60] Alain Cabantous, *Le ciel dans la mer: Christianisme et civilization maritime XVIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1990); Gilje, *Liberty on the Waterfront* (2004); Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea* (2005); Jarvis, "The Binds of the Anxious Mariner" (2010); Scott, *The Common Wind* (2018).

[61] J. Mettas, *Répertoire des expéditions négrière françaises au xviiie siècle*, ed. Serge Daget, 2 vols. (Paris, 1978, 1984); David Geggus, "Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity in the Atlantic Slave Trade: Data from French Shipping and Plantation Records", *Journal of African History*, 30 (1989), 23–24.

[62] Jennifer Morgan and Sowande Mustakeem pay particular attention to gendered violence and experience aboard slaving ships. Jeffrey Bolster has illuminated the role of race and gender in the construction of black sailors' identity

divisions of labor among captives aboard ship, of a slave revolt in which captive men killed several women and children below deck, of crewmen's and officers' use of paternalistic models of authority to describe their relationships onboard, I aim to recompose the broader mechanisms of the construction and operation of race and gender onboard. The conclusions bear not only upon the history of the slave trade; seamen who sailed the Middle Passage carried what they learned on their future voyages, whatever the destinations and home with them to France.

Historians of the early modern Atlantic have often depicted the sea as a space between, a socially empty zone, traversed by ships, goods and people, but absent of significant social activity, provoking calls by some Atlanticists to resurface the histories of the ocean itself.[63] My work incorporates theoretical underpinnings from the fields of geography and oceanic studies to plot a course for the cultural historiography of the ocean. Looking to the work of Doreen Massey and Philip Steinberg, I examine the ocean as a socially constructive field of movement, which stretched social relations out over vast distances, even as it produced proliferating places, anchors of the social world on the trajectories across the seas.[64] Rather than a smooth surface of travel, I argue, the eighteenth-century oceans were filled with contested and differentiated sites of ritual and trade, mourning and violence, revealing the bumpiness of capitalist spatiality when considered in the realm of the social. In my final chapter, I turn to death at sea. Looking at the seaborne rites for the dead and at the extraordinarily high rates of death at sea, especially for captive Africans, I argue that the routes of exchange were tied up with death.[65] Using ArcGIS to

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in the eighteenth century. Beverly Lemire reveals 18th century British sailors' roles in the production of an imperial masculinity. Bolster, *Black Jacks* (1997); Sowande Mustakeem, "'I Never Have Such a Sickly Ship Before': Diet, Disease, and Mortality in 18th-Century Atlantic Slaving Voyages", *The Journal of African American History*, 93 (2008), 474-496; Beverly Lemire, "Men of the World: British Mariners, Consumer Practice, and Material Culture in an Era of Global Trade, c. 1660-1800", *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 288–319; Jennifer L. Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment': Gender, Slavery, and Trans-Atlantic Passages", *History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History*, 6 (2016), 185–207.

[63] Linda Colley argues for the significance of the oceangoing vessel as a technology of warfare and communication, which created ripe conditions for the proliferation of constitutions. Alison Games has argued that historians in the field should turn their attention back to the ocean and the voyages that crossed it. Historian of cod fisheries, Jeffrey Bolster, makes a similar assessment of the field in his 2008 article. A notable exception to this neglect of the ocean in Atlantic history is Robert Harms, cited above. See Alison Games, "Atlantic History: Definition, Challenges, and Opportunities" *The American Historical Review*, 111, no. 3 (June 2006): 741-757; Bolster, "Putting the Ocean in Atlantic History: Maritime Communities and Marine Ecology in the Northwest Atlantic, 1500-1800" *The American Historical Review,* 113, no. 1 (Feb., 2008): 19-47; Linda Colley, *The Gun, the Ship, and the Pen: Warfare, Constitions, and the Making of the Modern World* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 2021).

[64] Massey argues that the spatiality of global capitalism is a kind of "stretching out over space" of power and social relations. Similarly, Philip's Steinberg's recent proposal for a Lagrangian model of oceanic space takes movement, rather than boundaries, as its starting point. In this model, the ocean emerges as "a dynamic field that --- through its movement, through our encounters with its movement and through our efforts to interpret its movement --- produces difference even as it unifies", a field constituted by moving particles, physical characteristics in motion which change because of that motion. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 158; Philip Steinberg, "Of Other Seas: Metaphors and Materialities in Maritime Regions" *Atlantic Studies* 10, no. 2 (2013), 156-169.

[65] These estimates are drawn from my current sample of 25 logbooks, and correlated with data from the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database at slavevoyages.com and the database on voyages of the *Compagnie des Indes* administered by the *Service historique de la Défense*, *Mémoire des Hommes* at https://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/. I accessed eight of the logbooks (and eighteen others that I have not yet analyzed) at the *Archives Nationales*, where I attempted to sample logbooks for the East India trade from around 1700, 1720, 1740 and 1760 (logbooks from the 1780s and 1790s are more difficult to come by in large part because of the dissolution of the *Compagnie des Indes*). Many of the logbooks from the Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades have been digitized by the national archives, and 169 are available online through the *Archives*

map over 2000 deaths of men, women and children at sea, including those of over 1000 enslaved people, I make visible these thousands of sites of loss, mourning and social production. I argue that they illustrate the stickiness of capitalist webs of exchange and force our attention to how these exchanges stretched out over time and space.

Chapter Summary

My first two chapters focus on the processes by which women, men and children ordered their social worlds at sea. Treating the captives held aboard ship in my first chapter, I use close reading of ships' logbooks, supplemented by eighteenth-century travel literature and twentieth-century anthropological studies to build out the richness of social and cultural worlds that women, children and men who were sold to the ship carried with them into Atlantic slavery. I bring to light rites and practices that required social engagement and production among captive Africans held aboard ship, including childbirth, parenthood and childcare, labor and meals.

My second chapter addresses crewmen and officers. I discuss rites, labor, foodways and mutual care as practices of social ordering aboard ship. Reading criminal court testimony against the grain, alongside testaments, correspondence and literary accounts, I aim to elucidate the mechanisms of social cohesion and breakage among people at the sea in the early decades of global capitalist expansion.

My third chapter looks at relational modes between groups aboard ship, specifically religious practice, discipline, and conversion, credit and small-scale commercial activity among seamen and officers, and mutiny and revolt. Looking at both captives and crewmen, I illustrate the rising power of the market as the conduit of social bonds. I argue that the relation to the means of exchange became the determinant of social status, and the claim to possessions and to credit became the social safety net, as other forms of communal support fell away over the century. If crewmen increasingly sketched bonds of interdependence through credit and debt, captive Africans relied upon mutual care, though global commodities surfaced below deck as well, as the conduits of solidarity, which lubricated and solidified social, spiritual and political bonds of belonging.

My final chapter argues that death grounded this seaborne social world, even as it ravaged communities aboard ship. It examines how the extraordinarily high death rates for crewmen and catastrophic rates for captives on eighteenth century *voyages au long cours* effected lived experience and social order onboard ship. Beginning with a discussion of the problematic nature of burial at sea, this chapter describes eighteenth-century methods of differentiating and placing the dead at sea, both through the rites of burial and through the meticulously differentiated notations and iconography of death at sea, as marked in ships' logbooks. Finally, using coordinates of sea burials gleaned from the logbooks, it maps the locations of over 2000 sea burials.

This dissertation examines the consequences of capitalist deterritorialization for eighteenth-century social worlds, focusing on the central players in the global movement of people and things. It traces the divergent effects of dislocation on captives, crewmen and officers, as they struggled for survival, for the comfort and security of social bonds, and for what wealth they could grasp as they sailed from port to port. In this dynamic social world, my study

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Nationales. From this set, I have chosen to prioritize logbooks for which I have probate inventories or other corroborating documents. Joseph C. Miller, "Mortality in the Atlantic Slave Trade: Statistical Evidence on Causality" *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 11 , No . 3 (Winter , 1981), 400, Table 4.

reveals the grim but fertile common ground of seaborne social life to be the extraordinary proximity to death.

Chapter 1. Processes of Social Ordering among The Enslaved

As the longboat approached *La Favorite*, moored at the mouth of the Senegal River in October of 1743, the bare rigging, an intricate web of rope that wove through masts and yardarms, spars and sails, stretched up from the ponderous hull. The 400-ton frigate was a maneuverable warship adapted for trade, with the full square sails of a vessel but a lighter, more streamlined hull with only a main deck and 'tweendecks. It reached around 100 feet from prow to stern and higher from keel to the top of the mizzen mast. Large and more heavily armed than most slaving ships at more than twice the average tonnage and carrying 20 guns, it was not unusual among the vessels of the *Compagnie des Indes*.

Upon his arrival in Senegal for the gum trade, captain Jean de Sanguinet received the unexpected news that he was to carry "a cargo of blacks for the account of Monsieur Michel of Nantes" to Monsieurs Fihel and Michel at Leogane. His crew of more than 70 men had to crowd their own belongings and mattresses between the 20 guns lining the ship's deck in order to make room for the 507 captive children, men and women who would come to occupy the tweendecks. By the time the first captives for trade arrived onboard *La Favorite* in late October, the ship's carpenters, Jean Abgral, Jacques Andouard, and Jacques Le Crosme had completed modifications to the vessel to accommodate its human cargo.[66] They might have been assisted by 12 Africans, brought aboard in September to assist the quartermaster and an ill and depleted crew.[67] They constructed a 10-foot high *barricado*, dividing the fore and aft of the main deck, and a bulwark below to divide the men's and women's quarters. Netting likely stretched along the rails to deter attempts to jump overboard.

The first captive to die aboard the *Favorite* on October 29, 1743, was a young man, about 22 years of age. He had likely jumped from the longboat in an effort to swim to shore or to drown himself. He was pulled back aboard by crewmen as the longboats drew him and 50 other captives towards the *Favorite*, moored near the sandy *barre* dividing the Senegal River from the Atlantic Ocean. He had swallowed—perhaps even aspirated—seawater on the final day of his passage to the ocean. He died within 24 hours.[68]

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[66] All three men were from Lorient, but their pay and rank evince the sharp hierarchy between them. Jean Abgral, the first carpenter of the ship was 36 years of age. He is listed as an officier marinier, and was paid 30 Livres tournois per month. In contrast, Jacques Andouard (28 years old) and Jacques Le Crosme (20 years old), were both listed as "matelot charpentier", and were paid 22 and 9 Livres tournois per month. This helps demonstrate the overlapping systems of rank, occupation and pay aboard ship. Rôle de la *Favorite* February 6, 1744), Rôles au désarmement, Bureau des classes de Port-Louis, SHDL 2P 30-II.4, ed. A.S.H.D.L.

[67] It is unclear whether these twelve men were enslaved or free. In either case, they were likely laptot sailors, Africans employed by Europeans at Saint-Louis and Gorée. The *Compagnie* maintained a workforce of enslaved laptots, while they also employed free African workers. Free laptots earned a salary worth that of four working adults. Free Africans who worked for the *Compagnie* worked primarily in the maintenance of the fleet, as carpenters, sawyers, caulkers, blacksmiths, gunsmiths and in the production of food. Jean de Sanguinet, Journal de Bord, *La Favorite*, captain Jean de Sanguinet, November 19, 1743, Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/30, pièce 72; James F. Searing, *West African Slavery and Atlantic Commerce: The Senegal River Valley, 1700-1860* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 77, 102.

[68] The captain attributed his death to ingesting seawater. Ingesting a large amount of seawater can cause swift decline and death within 24 hours. Seawater contains about 35 grams of salt per liter. Beyond breathing water into the lungs, large gulps of seawater could have introduced at least 20 grams of salt into the man's system within a period of minutes. This amount of salt ingestion has resulted in at least one documented fatal poisoning of a healthy adult in recent decades. If we consider the likelihood that this man also suffered from severe dehydration and possibly diarrhea (both contributors to high sodium concentration in the blood, or hypernatremia) during his forced

What significance might his death have carried for the 49 other captives aboard the longboat, those who witnessed his dive overboard and his struggle against the grasping hands of crewmen? What did his death forebode, occurring as it did at that boundary between land and sea, precipitated by the sickly water that surrounded the ship? The enslaved people aboard the *Favorite* would go on to vigorously resist their own transportation. According to the logbook, two men drowned themselves the day after the ship set sail by jumping overboard, and the captain received reports that others were planning similar actions. Over the following week, five men died of self-starvation; thereafter, the captain commanded forced feeding of others who continued to refuse food throughout the voyage. Famine conditions across the region in 1743 had perhaps prepared the people onboard for the physical and psychological toll of starvation. Over the two-month course of the oceanic passage, 21 of the 54 deaths of captives were attributed to scurvy.[69]

There is a temptation to focus so closely on the slave ship as to isolate it, to imagine the suffering of Atlantic slavery as metaphorically contained in the Middle Passage, a nadir of suffering or primordial chaos from which the Atlantic diaspora emerged.[70] The noxious hull of the ship could not contain the fullness of the human catastrophe that spanned transoceanic trade. Rather, the events onboard, revealed through the clouded glasses of the traders 'logbooks, reflect a grimly visible inflection point within longer trajectories of weary and deadly migration. Aboard the *Favorite* in 1743, most captives, predominantly male, had already traveled for months before their arrival at the coast. If they followed the most common route described by James Searing, they likely were marched for over a month in a grueling caravan hundreds of miles from the middle Niger valley to the *captiverie* at French Fort Saint Joseph in the kingdom of Gajaaga near where the Falémé River meets the Senegal. They would have languished for weeks in a warehouse, a den of disease where survival depended on inconstant access to starvation rations. In time, a boat would have carried them 300 more miles down the Senegal river to the coast. Others, particularly women and children, were more likely to come from regions closer to the Atlantic ports, as their sale price had to sufficiently exceed the costs of capture and transportation to the coast.[71] Captain de Sanguinet did not record how many of the 507 captive people on the *Favorite* were women, men or children. However, he recorded the deaths of four women; one 16-year-old boy, strangled on November 22, 1743; and the preterm birth and death of twins mid-ocean to a captive woman, on December 15, 1743. The presence of more women and children is confirmed by de Sanguinet's comments on the account and sale of his cargo at Leogane, in which he lists the amounts exchanged for men, women, boys and girls, and expresses his regret that he was unable to trade more children.[72]

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migration to the coast, this ingestion of salt water is likely to have been the direct cause of his death. G.A. Gresham GA and M. Mashru, "Fatal poisoning with sodium chloride." *Forensic Science International*, 1982; 20: 87-8; Y. Ofran, D. Lavi, D. Opher, T.A. Weiss and E. Elinav, "Fatal voluntary salt intake resulting in the highest ever documented sodium plasma level in adults (255 mmol L-1): a disorder linked to female gender and psychiatric disorders" *Journal of Internal Medicine* 256, no. 6 (2004), 535-538.

[69] Journal de Bord de *La Favorite*, AN MAR/4JJ/30, pièce 72, 10/27/1743-1/2/1744; Searing, 83.

[70] Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 193-195.

[71] Patrick Manning, *Slavery and African Life: Occidental, Oriental, and African Slave Trades* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 98; Searing, 34-5; Boubacar Barry, *Senegambia and the Atlantic Slave Trade* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 116-117; Michael A. Gomez,, *Exchanging Our Country Marks: The Transformation of African Identities in the Colonial and Antebellum South* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 43; Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 61.

[72] De Sanguinet writes "Les Messieurs ont aujourd'huy commancé la vente de noirs a bord, et Jusqu'a midy, Ils en ont vendeu 250 a 1200L les hommes et 1100L les femmes, Les negrillons et negrittes 8L900 piece, de ces derniers il

The stark desperation of the first death aboard the *Favorite* evokes the crisis moment of embarkation in the Middle Passage, the seemingly toxic nature of the sea, and the false bifurcation of landed and sea passages. Interwoven with the stories of the pernicious sea itself are the mundane perils that preceded and reverberated in the voyage; the murderous landed passage and captivity of enslaved people; and the malnutrition, disease, violence and cultural and psychological distress of dislocation. Memories of the landed passage, of the dead who fell in the long marches and of the families forever lost, haunted those who survived to embark on the ship. Passage to the sea did not mark a full severance from the landed world. Those who embarked did not shed their memories of social and cultural practice in the shallows of the coastal waters. Yet the conditions of life in bondage aboard ship made the construction of new social bonds and a social order a fraught project. This chapter follows these efforts to bring order to the disordered social world of shipboard life, from birth to death.

La Parc des Femmes

In the *Favorite*, as in other slaving ships, women and children were forced into the aft section of the 'tweendecks, below the officers 'quarters, and separated from captive men by a strong bulkhead. The stench of human suffering permeated these close decks and walls and persisted long after the enslaved cargo was disembarked in the Americas.[73] Vinegar, vigorous scrubbing and incense could only do so much to cleanse the filth, urine, and blood that soaked into the wood. The sickly fetor from the *Favorite*'s maiden voyage from Lorient to Ouidah and Saint-Domingue in 1740 likely still clung to the ship in late 1743, when women and children descended into their stifling quarters. They were among countless other women and children who embarked on slaving ships over the eighteenth century, countless because their gender was often left out of extant records, and countless because these records are far from complete.[74]

There is a kind of trap embedded in imagining this space. Like at the moment of burial, the attributes of personhood flicker in and out of view in the 'tweendecks, visible only in excruciating glimpses. Pregnant women surface only at the birth and death of their newborns. Nursing women come into view in the archives only at the death of "nursing infants." Does it help us understand the fullness of their experience to view these women through the lens of parenthood, or does it deny their personhood, the wholeness of their selves without a child? The archive is silent on both sides of the question, leaving only the fine edge in between, the glint on the edge of a knife. Aboard the *Comtesse* in 1740, a nursing infant survived for a time. A woman nursed a child. Yet, this edge tempts us to gesture toward a broader history of care. In order to nurse him, she surely held him. They likely lay side by side, pressed between the other women and children on the sodden boards, while her fever burned and his body slackened, after he lost the strength to nurse, as she herself lost the strength or the will to hold on. Or she did some of this or none of it. However deep her strength or love, the arms of a mother cannot be expected to hold all this suffering, or to somehow hold an image of love or hope in a world defined by

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ny en avoit asses et trop de grand noirs. Il ne m'a été possible de faire a Gorée un bon assortiment, gardant toute la Jeunesse pour eux." Journal de bord de *La Favorite*, January 4, 1744, AN MAR/4JJ/30, pièce 72.

[73] Cleaning with vinegar and water, and perfuming with incense was common aboard all ships, but slave ships were identifiable by their distinctive and strong odor. On the suffocating conditions of the slave deck, cleaning regimes and the smell of slave ships, see Harms, *The Diligent*, 310-311; Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 148; Mustakeem, 59-60.

[74] Even Sanguinet's total count of the captives at 507 likely excludes any infants who boarded with their mothers, as infants were not often counted in final counts of captives for trade, reflecting their low sale value, as well, perhaps, as the extreme precariousness of their prospects of survival.

violence. Neither can her presence, or that of her child, be ignored. Turning our gaze first to mothers and infants aboard slaving ships signifies the sinews of social worlds, the structures of power that shaped the experiences and the histories of those who crossed the seas.

Childbirth

The textual fragments that document the deaths of newborns and children with such actuarial precision, when read against the grain, invoke the many stories of these women's lives before their enslavement.[75] The documentation of women who were pregnant or who carried young children onto the ship force our gaze to the social and cultural as well as bodily histories that shaped their routes to Atlantic slavery. In other places and other times, they had carried forward traditions, bloodlines, cultural practices and social bonds along with the men, children, elders and kin in their communities. Across the ocean in the Caribbean and in Louisiana, many would find ways to reconstruct communities, culture and families, even as their bodies were manipulated, mutilated and raped in service of their enslavers.[76] Aboard ship, however, the pervasiveness of sexual violence and the dehumanizing conditions makes it almost impossible to accurately imagine the experience of pregnancy or of parenthood below deck.[77] Labor and birth took place alienated from ritually significant people, materials, and spaces in the midst of filth, decay, illness, and violence. Though the experience of pregnancy and labor was surely common in the women's quarters of slaving ships, I have encountered only three documents of birth, all of which included references to baptism. The fact that the only documentation of pregnancy and birth that I have been able to locate coincides with live birth and baptism suggests that a broader spectrum of miscarriage, stillbirth and perhaps abortifacient practices coexisted in the women's quarters. The following section discusses these births in the context of the memories the mother may have carried and the absence and alienation from communal rites.

On December 15, 1743, twin girls were born to an enslaved woman in the women's quarters of the *Favorite*. They died within the hour. When the mother was forced onboard the

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[75] Ian Baucom uses the term "actuarial historicism" to describe the genre of the logbook, which reduces human lives to their measurable values in the Transatlantic trade. "Actuarial historicism" draws upon actuarial sciences such as statistics to build models of history. It relies on abstract, aggregate forms of information to create types (context), and exceptions or illustrations of that type. He argues that this kind of historicism developed out of the same actuarial logic that measured the lives of enslaved people against the typical measures of price or death rates. Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery and the Philosophy of History* (Durham, NC, 2005), 45.

[76] Marisa Fuentes discusses the broader social worlds and networks of power that enslaved women navigated in Barbados. Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016). On the manipulation and medical mutilation of women's bodies under slavery, see Deirdre Benia Cooper Owens, *Medical Bondage: Race, Gender and the Origins of American Gynecology* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2017), particularly chapters 1-3. On familial relations and motherhood in bondage, see Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650-1838* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1990); Jennifer Morgan,, *Laboring Women: Gender and Reproduction in New World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Sue Peabody, "Madeleine's Children: Slaves from Isle Bourbon (Present-Day Réunion), Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries", *Clio. Women, Gender, History*, (2017), 166–78; Randy M. Browne, 'Husbands and Fathers: The Family Experience of Enslaved Men in Berbice, 1819-1834', *NWIG New West Indian Guide*, 91 (2017), 193–222. On the cultural power wielded by women, see especially Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana: The Development of Afro-Creole Culture in the Eighteenth-Century* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1995) On women's contribution to Atlantic knowledge and agricultural practices in the Americas, see Judith Carney, *Black Rice: The African Origins of Rice Cultivation in the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[77] Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 114.

Favorite in late October or late November, she had likely been pregnant for almost half a year.[78] For much if not all of this time, she was captive. Women sold into Atlantic slavery faced the threat of sexual violence during capture, along the passage to the coast and in the dreaded warehouses at Gorée or Saint-Louis before they met the greedy stares and grasping hands of officers and sailors aboard the slaving ships. If they were pregnant prior to their capture or became pregnant in captivity, they faced the added burden of pregnancy-related ailments and immunodeficiency as well as the terrifying prospect of labor and parenthood under the conditions of slavery. As she entered the tweendecks, the details of this prospect would have come into grim focus. In the place of friends and family was a crowd of sickly strangers, forced together in the suffocating confines below deck. The 507 captives held in the 'tweendecks occupied a space of around 30 by 90 feet.[79] It is unclear how many of them were women and children, but considered all together, this leaves only 5 square feet of floor space per person in the tweendecks, not enough space to lie flat. The crew may have added wooden bunks to ameliorate the crowding, but while this would have created more space for bodies to lie, it cut the already oppressive 5 feet of headspace in half. Small children and infants, often uncounted in final tallies of purchases, lay close to their caregivers, further crowding the quarters. Amidst this crowd of bodies was the noise. Marcus Rediker evokes the sounds of the slave ship, "crying and wailing from one quarter and low, plaintive singing from another; the anarchic noise of children given an underbeat by hands drumming on wood" and conversations whispered or shouted over the sounds of lapping waves and the creaking hull.[80] As she took in these surroundings, what memories did she call up from the births of siblings, nieces, and perhaps her own children torn from her through her enslavement? Where did her thoughts wander as she anticipated the searing pain of childbirth far from her family and community?

It is likely she attempted to find social and medical support among other women onboard. She, like many others aboard the *Favorite*, likely carried with her the Wolof language and memories of Wolof cultural practices. Ethnic labels used in the slave trade generally had more to do with traders' interests and price-setting than any sense of self-identification that the enslaved people might have recognized. Nevertheless, most captive women who entered the trans-Atlantic slave trade through Saint-Louis and Gorée were Wolof. Aboard the *Favorite*, Captain Sanguinet marked three of the four women who died, "Guÿolof," one of several French variants of "Wolof". Other ethnic groups likely included Fulbe, Sereer, Bambara and Mandinka.[81] Wolof men and

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[78] It is extremely unlikely that an infant born earlier than seven months (28 weeks) gestational age would have survived birth to be baptized, particularly under these conditions. Louise Bourgeois, midwife to Marie de Medici in the early seventeenth century, also cited seven months as the earliest a child could be born and survive. Wendy Perkins, *Midwifery and Medicine in Early Modern France* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1996), 32-33. "Extremely Preterm Birth", The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, August 2019, https://www.acog.org/patient-resources/faqs/pregnancy/extremely-preterm-birth."Preterm birth," World Health Organization, February 19, 2018, https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/preterm-birth.

[79] This estimation is based upon the tonnage of the ship compared against the known proportions of other slaving ships and historical archaeological measures of seventeenth and eighteenth-century warships. Bertrand Guillet, *La Marie-Séraphique navire négrier* (Nantes: Musée d'histoire de Nantes, Éditions MeMo, 2009), 90. Rif Winfield and Stephen S. Roberts, *French Warships in the Age of Sail, 1626-1786* (Havertown: Pen & Sword Books Ltd., 2017), 1672-1717.

[80] Traders too complained about the noise of the enslaved cargo. Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 2, 182.

[81] Sanguinet gives no ethnic attribution for the first woman to die onboard, on November 21, 1743, three days after their departure from the coast. According to the logbook, this woman was around 33 years of age, and died of epilepsy. Other captives whose deaths are marked in the logbook are described as "Guÿolof" (seventeen men), "Bambara" (seventeen men), "Poulard" (Fulbe, one boy and one man), "Serrere" (Sereer, three men), and

women, and those who had encountered Wolof society through trade or warfare, would have recognized the hierarchical nature of slave societies in Gorée and Saint Louis, and aboard ship. Their novel status as captives aboard ship bore echoes of the social category of *jaam sayoor,* which in Wolof society denoted war captives, people "without rights, with no social identity until they were purchased."[82] This recognition of their status offered no comfort beyond a sinking certainty of the trials to come. Despite their shared condition, women aboard the *Favorite* likely continued to recognize many differences between them. Any Bambara women onboard may have immediately recognized others of their country through their patterns of scarification, four lines across the face.[83] Wolof and Mandinka girls and women may have known each other by tattoos that marked their lips, as they did the lips of twentieth-century girls and women.[84] This possibility for immediate recognition may have eased the formation of certain relationships along ethnic lines upon arrival at the coastal warehouses or upon first embarkation on the ship. Such visible markers also signaled the divides between the assemblage of people below deck. Shared language similarly offered the relief of recognition, of grouping along linguistic lines, while heightening the sense of difference between linguistic groups. While the Wolof language dominated the women's quarters, others may have spoken Fula, Mandinka or Sereer languages. Even if many of the women aboard the *Favorite* shared the same language, that was no guarantee that they shared religion, status or caste prior to their enslavement. These differences did not preclude the formation of social bonds, but it reveals the web of difference these women had to navigate, even as they endured and bore witness to pain, loss, death and birth. Even among those who spoke her language or shared her country marks, the shuddering pains of the mother's first

"Mandinq"(Mandinka, one man). The remaining eight men and one woman who died during the voyage from Senegal to Saint-Domingue with no ethnic attribution. The relationships between these labels and their bearers is far from clear, and it is just as unclear to what degree these labels and numbers describe the broader enslaved population onboard. However, it is very likely that many spoke one of several distinct but related Senegambian languages. The use of the label of "Bambara" in the Atlantic trade was particularly instructive, if also particularly dubious, because of its changing meanings dependent on context. Most often, Peter Caron writes, an ethnic term was "a generic term to describe people of an, at best, vaguely defined group or geographic region." Nevertheless, as Gwendolyn Hall has demonstrated in her study of legal documents in colonial Louisiana, people of African descent in New World contexts also used African ethnic terms, predominantly "Bambara" in early eighteenth-century Louisiana, to identify themselves. For a discussion of ethnicity in the slave trade see Midlo Hall, *Africans in Colonial Louisiana*; Peter Caron, "Of a Nation Which the Others Do Not Understand: Bambara Slaves and African Ethnicity in Colonial Louisiana, 1718-60", in *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity, and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade,* 99-102; Paul E. Lovejoy, 'The African Diaspora: Revisionist Interpretations of Ethnicity, Culture and Religion under Slavery', *Studies in the World History of Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation*, 11 (1997); Robin Law, "Ethnicity and the Slave Trade: 'Lucumi' and 'Nago' as Ethnonyms in West Africa", *History in Africa*, 24 (1997), 205–19.

[82] This was in contrast to *jaam juddu*, enslaved people born into their condition, who still could only free themselves from their enslavers' control until well into adulthood. Searing, 48-9.

[83] Midlo Hall, 49.

[84] Michael Gomez notes that runaway notices in eighteenth and nineteenth-century North America listed the "country marks" of men from Gambia, one with a cross on his forhead and "three perpendicular strokes on each cheek" and another with "country marks down the sides of his face." It is unclear whether Senegambian women bore similar markings. Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*, 39. David Gamble and A.K. Rahman, "Mandinka Ceremonies", Gambian Studies, no. 34, David P. Gamble Papers (Collection 1997). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, p. 41; David Gamble, Linda K. Salmon and Alhaji Hassan Njie, "The Wolof", Gambian Studies, no. 17, David P. Gamble Papers (Collection 1997). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, p. 29.

contractions must have brought into fresh relief the piercing loneliness of alienation from country and family.

By the time she went into labor, the woman aboard the *Favorite* had been captive in the ship for a month or longer, and perhaps knew some of the women onboard from the *captiveries*.[85] Those who met her on the ship would have noticed her pregnant belly at first sight. Perhaps while taking exercise or meals above deck or while lying side by side in the darkness, they spoke words of advice or comfort. While older women, including midwives, were less likely to be aboard the ship, many and perhaps most of the women were mothers who had endured childbirth themselves. It is possible that some of their conversations turned around the option of abortion. West African women were familiar with abortifacient plants and methods, and an unknown number of pregnant women chose to resist their enslavement through the termination of pregnancy. While better documented in plantation societies in the Americas, Sowande Mustakeem has located records of two women whose deaths were attributed to abortion on late eighteenth-century British slaving ships, demonstrating that this form of "gynecological resistance" was in use at sea as well. Enslavers often exploited the love between mothers and their children to enforce greater control through threats and acts of violence against those children.[86] Many of the mothers onboard the *Favorite* were captured alongside their children and were fully aware of the horrifying cruelty inflicted upon the very young in bondage. Late eighteenth-century testimony to the British House of Commons described infants whipped, scalded, burned and simply thrown overboard on the pretense that they cried too much or ate too little. In at least one devastating case, the captain forced the infant's mother to receive the burned and broken body of her nine-month old baby in her arms and then drop him over the side of the ship.[87] By choosing to end a pregnancy, women guarded themselves and their unborn children against the torturous conditions they witnessed aboard ship and the horrors they anticipated across the ocean.[88]

Rumors that circulated below deck painted fearful visions of the world to come at the end of the journey. On December 7, three weeks into the voyage and just one week before the birth, the enslaved women reported to the captain that the "grand noirs," likely enslaved men charged with guarding the other enslaved people onboard, had warned them "that [the ship] will soon

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[85] It is unclear whether she was one of the 151 captives who were forced onboard in late October from Saint-Louis or the 356 captives, sent to the ship from the *captiveries* in Gorée in mid-November.

[86] Darlene Clark Hine, *Hine Sight: Black Women and the Reconstruction of American History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 33.

[87] This particularly abhorrent case against Captain Marshall on the ship the *Black Joke* illustrates the extent of violence against children in bondage. If other captains were less inventive in their cruelty, the separation of infants from mothers and the abuse of young children leading to their deaths was a very common occurrence. Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 90-94; Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 286.

[88] Sasha Turner describes the toll of maternal grief that followed such dire decisions. Sasha Turner, "The Nameless and the Forgotten: Maternal Grief, Sacred Protection, and the Archive of Slavery", in *Motherhood, Childlessness and the Care of Children in Atlantic Slave Societies* (New York: Routledge, 2020). Sowande Mustakeem importantly links this practice to broader discussions of the "'political lives of dead bodies,' which on slave ships similarly included black boys and girls within the womb whose lives were terminated by mothers unwilling to bring them into a life of bondage." Mustakeem, 103. Mustakeem cites Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 33. For a discussion of "gynecological resistance", see Darlene Clark Hine and Kate Wittenstein, "Female Resistance: The Economics of Sex," in *The Black Woman Cross-Culturally*, ed. Filomina Chioma Steady (Cambridge, MA: Schenkman, 1981), 289-300. Mustakeem, 101-3.On abortifacients, particularly the "peacock flower", as tools of political resistance, and the scientific knowledge of indigenous and African women, see Schiebinger, Londa, "Feminist History of Colonial Science" *Hypatia* 19 (2004), 233–54.

have arrived, and that [the captives] will be delivered to people who will cut their throats."[89] Sanguinet attempted to convince them otherwise. It is unclear whether the women found his words of reassurance credible, but the fear itself speaks to the palpable nearness of death among the enslaved aboard ship. Whether below deck or at their arrival, women understood that their lives and those of their children were in danger. Twenty-nine men had died in the four weeks since their departure from the African coast, twenty-eight of them enslaved.[90] Though the women had fared better, with only one death in that same period, the early signs of scurvy and bloody flux were creeping in among them and would steal away three more women before their arrival in Saint-Domingue. Given the threat of cannibalism waiting across the water and the horrifying conditions aboard ship, the dangers to the mother and child of birth without the ceremonial attributes that secured their physical and spiritual safety likely appeared insurmountable. Miscarriage under these circumstances could hardly have been rare. Whether she chose to end her pregnancy or whether her body could not sustain it, she entered into labor, likely kneeling, but perhaps confined on her back, crowded among strangers and acquaintances in the heat, stench and contamination of the 'tweendecks.

As her labor began, she and the women around her likely thought of times they had assisted at the births of family members in their compounds and villages. While I have located no accounts of eighteenth-century Wolof birthing rituals, a composite picture, built through twentieth-century ethnographies, and eighteenth-century accounts of Senegambian customs, conveys the rich ritual environment of birth and the integral role of female kin to the physical and spiritual protection of mother and child. A mid-twentieth-century ethnographic account of a birth in a Wolof community in Njau, The Gambia, taken by anthropologists David Gamble and Barbara and David Ames, relates an experience dominated by a close intergenerational network of women. Upon the first signs of labor, female members of the compound assembled in the home of the woman giving birth. Led by a midwife, generally an older woman from the village, they guided the mother through her birth. Gamble mentions that the father is often not notified when labor begins, and the child would remain in the mother's home on the compound until its naming ceremony, on the seventh day after its birth. On the morning of the naming ceremony, the mother would bathe herself and her baby in waters imbued with protective substances.[91] An ethnographic description of a Mandinka naming ceremony, taken the previous year by Gamble and A. K. Rahman, describes a seven day period between birth and the naming ceremony, during which the child did not leave the mother's home.[92] Women's privileged access to birth and the early days of an infant's life likely distinguished eighteenth-century birthing rituals as well. The visibility of naming rituals in men's accounts from the eighteenth century, coupled with the invisibility of birth in those accounts lends suggestive support to the probability that rites surrounding birth were the prerogative of women. Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, the son of a Fulbe

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[89] "Les negresses mavertirent que les grands noirs leur avoit dit que nous seriont bientost arrivez et qel'on les livreroint a de gens qui leur couperoint le col". Sanguinet, 12/7/1743. On African "guardians", see Rediker, *The Slave Ship,* 214-215; Stephanie Smallwood, "African Guardians, European Slave Ships, and the Changing Dynamics of Power in the Early Modern Atlantic", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 64 (2007), 676–716.

[90] The twenty-ninth was a seventeen year old stowaway, Joseph Bruneau, who died of scurvy and fever on December 12, 1743.

[91] David P. Gamble, David Ames, Barbara Ames, and Alhaji Hassan Njie "A Wolof Naming Ceremony: Human Interaction and its Aesthetic Significance" in Verbal and Visual Expressions of Wolof Culture, Gambian Studies, no. 22, David P. Gamble Papers (Collection 1997). UCLA Library Special Collections, Charles E. Young Research Library, University of California, Los Angeles, pp. 143-145.

[92] David Gamble and A.K. Rahman, "Mandinka Ceremonies", p. 5.

ruler in the Muslim state of Bundu in the Upper Senegal, who was kidnapped and sold into slavery in the early eighteenth century, related a description of Fulbe celebrations in his narrative of his own enslavement. His narrative, composed by a white British acquaintance Thomas Bluett, included "some observations . . . concerning the Manners and Opinions of his Countrymen." This account does not mention birth itself but describes "a kind of Baptism [or naming ceremony] for all Children of both Sexes" occurring "When the Child is seven Days old," in which the community gathers at the father's house to witness and celebrate the child's naming ceremony.[93] Similarly in his early eighteenth century account of the Bight of Benin, Dutch company agent, Willem Bosman described a feast given by the parents of the newborn seven days after birth among families in the Kingdom of Benin.[94] On the Gold Coast as well, parents prepared a feast for their community a week after the birth.[95] While these narratives are far from complete ethnographies, the omission of birth and inclusion of naming ceremonies in the documents suggests the relative privacy of birth, within the mother's home, the intimate group involved, and the exclusion of men, even fathers from the birthing process. While birth was marked by these intimate gender-exclusive groups, it surely figured in all women's lives. The women trapped below deck on the *Favorite* very likely held memories of birth among women.

The insularity of Senegambian birthing rituals finds tacit confirmation in the writings of early modern Europeans as well. Early modern European literature on Africa was plagued with inaccuracies, plagiarism and dehumanizing depictions of African people. European writers and enslavers created and relied on the pernicious myth that African women did not suffer during labor and that they could and did return to their daily routines shortly after giving birth. This assertion found its greatest support in enslavers 'willful ignorance and self-interest in the multiplication of their property. In the Atlantic world, this insidious belief would abet the physical exploitation and sexual abuse of enslaved women for the purpose of reproducing the enslaved population.[96] Rather than recognizing the intimacy of childbirth, European writers deliberately denied African mothers 'pain, community and culture. Early eighteenth century French slave owner, Dominican priest and writer, Jean-Baptiste Labat argues that though African women suffer equally under the curse of Eve, "they control themselves so well that no one knows a woman has given birth until she is seen carrying her child to the river or sea to bathe him and herself."[97] This is certainly an exaggeration, though it may reflect African cultural

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[93] The Muslim state of Bundu incorporated multiple ethnicities, primarily Fulbe, but Diallo spoke Wolof, and there would have been some degree of cultural familiarity, given the movement of people. Thomas Bluett penned and published the account of Ayuba Suleiman Diallo, known to his American and European acquaintances as Job Ben Soloman, before Diallo managed to secure his freedom and return to his homeland. Thomas Bluett, *Some Memoirs of the Life of Job, the son of Solomon the High Priest of Boonda in Africa; Who was a Slave about two Years in Maryland; and afterwards being brought to England, was set free, and sent to his native Land in the Year 1734* (London: Richard Ford, 1734), 43. Boubacar Barry, "Senegambia from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century: evolution of the Wolof, Sereer and 'Tukuloor'", in *General History of Africa,* volume 5, *Africa from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century*, ed. B. A. Ogot (Berkeley, CA: UNESCO, 1992, repr. 2000), 287-288.

[94] . Willem Bosman was an agent for the Dutch Company of the Indies on the Guinea coast in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century. Willem Bosman, *A New and Accurate Description of the Coast of Guinea, divided into the GOLD, the SLAVE, and the IVORY COASTS,* . . . (London, 1705). 444.

[95] Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 64-66.

[96] This myth also built upon classical traditions that constructed images of otherness through references to tropes of deviant sexuality and indifference to motherhood. Barbara Bush-Slimani, "Hard Labour: Women, Childbirth and Resistance in British Caribbean Slave Societies" *History Workshop*, Autumn, 1993, no. 36 (1993), 86-87; Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 64-66.

[97] "Elles se contraignent donc si bien qu'on ne sçait qu'une femme est accouchée, que quand on la voit porter son enfant à la Riviere ou à la Mer où elle va le laver & elle aussi." Labat himself, never traveled to Africa, and instead

practices that socialized women to bear pain stoically, including cicatrization, tattooing and clitoridectomy.[98] Nevertheless, his depiction of African birth as quiet, even silent, invisible until the mother and child leaves her home to bathe, recalls the protective intimacy of birth and the limitations of the male gaze. It is possible that the constructed invisibility of African birth in this particular source unveils the near-sacred privacy of birth in the mother's home.[99]

Rendered invisible by male writers of the eighteenth century, birth marked a dangerous and transformative passage for mother and child in West African communities. This passage required the support and medicinal and spiritual care of female members of the compound and community. Among women in West Africa, conception often formed a final part of the marriage rite, cementing the woman's status in her community as a wife.[100] Birth solidified her position as a mother among the women of her compound. To get a better sense of the texture of birthing rituals, I turn again to the 1950 Njau ethnographic account. Though distant by over two centuries, it suggests the richness of cultural practices surrounding birth and may gesture towards the kinds of practices that could have come before. In Njau in 1950, the midwife prepared for the birth by laying down sacking on the floor of the mother's home. She ritually secured the cloth with shards of a broken pot placed under each corner. A fire burned continually in the mother's hearth throughout her labor and over the week following the birth. The mother knelt on this cloth, aided by the other women in the compound as she labored to birth her child. Once the baby was born, the midwife cut the cord and rubbed the baby with oil before washing it and giving it a "liquid charm (*safara*) to drink." She then rubbed salt in its mouth to help it learn to speak. Before the mother could take the baby in her arms, she was given hot water to wash herself. Then, with the assistance of the other women if necessary, she jumped over the fire in her hearth in four directions.[101] Finally, the mother lay in her bed, where the midwife offered her the newborn three times, before she released it to the mother on the fourth time. The newborn, lying beside her mother, was sprinkled with water using a bouquet of early millet. Mother and baby then lay in her bed for the entire week from the infant's birth until its naming ceremony, sheltered by the protective space of the mother's home, with the fire burning continuously in the hearth. An iron rod beside the fire and spiritually powerful plants at the entryway guarded against dysentery, stomach pain, and ill wishes. This first week centered around the protection of the vulnerable infant, referred to as *liir* or *liir bu tooy*, meaning "fragile newborn, delicate".[102]

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relied on other sources, particularly the writings of officials of French slave trading companies. Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Nouvelle relation de l'Afrique Occidentale,* vol. 5 (Paris: 1728), 330. Curran, Andrew S., *The Anatomy of Blackness* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 58-67, especially 62-63.

[98] Bearing the pain without audible complaint could bring status to the girl enduring the practice, and could protect the woman giving birth from supernatural forces. Gamble et al., "Mandinka Ceremonies" , 41; Gamble et al., "The Wolof", 29; Maria Rosa Cutrafelli, *Women of Africa: Roots of Oppresssion*, trans. Nicolas Romano (London: Zed Press, 1983), 136-7; Bush-Slimani, "Hard Labour", 87; Melville J. Herskovits, *Dahomey: An Ancient West African Kingdom* (New York: J. J. Augustin, 1938), vol. 1, 278, 282-3, 291-5.

[99] In the 1950 Wolof naming ritual in described by Gamble et al., the naming ceremony began with ritual bathing of mother and child in water imbued with red bark and other substances protective against witchcraft, evil spirits, diarrhea and other ills. Gamble et al., "The Wolof", 149.

[100] Jennifer Morgan writes of conception rites among women in the Gold Coast, in which friends ritually prepared the new wife for conception, after which she would make a ceremonial procession to the seashore to wash herself after being "ritually dirtied" by children on the way. Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 65, note 63.

[101] Gamble and Rahman account for a similar practice of the mother jumping over a fire in each direction, though in this case it was an exclusively female ritual performed outside the mother's home following the naming ceremony. David Gamble and A.K. Rahman, "Mandinka Ceremonies", Gambian Studies, no. 34, 12.

[102] Jacqueline Rabain-Jamin, "Enfance, âge et developpement chez les Wolof du Sénégal" *L'Homme: Revue française d'anthropologie*,167-168 (2003), 54.

Mother and child were believed to be easily harmed through exposure to malicious forces, including others in pain, who were expected to avoid approaching the house. The afterbirth and umbilical cord, considered to be a part of the newly-born person, were buried with particular care in a secret place in the home or garden, to prevent them falling into the hands of malevolent people or forces. The proper execution of these rites protected not only the infant and mother during this vulnerable period, but also guarded against irregularities in future pregnancies.[103]

The absence of similar protections was glaringly obvious on slaving ships. If they could find one, her fellow bondswomen may have placed a loincloth or rag below her to distance her body from the filth that lined the floors.[104] Perhaps older women and mothers may have held her hands and spoke to her. Jean Barbot, a French sailor in the late seventeenth century, described a birth onboard, and noted that several women below deck assisted the woman in labor.[105] Perhaps younger women and girls stared. Some surely turned their backs, consumed by their own afflictions or frightened by the visibility of her pain. How did this sight affect women who carried their own young children with them, or others who were just beginning to recognize the early signs of their own pregnancies? At some point during her labor, someone alerted the ship's surgeon, who, as a powerful man among their captors, brought an alien presence, along with his own rudimentary training, to the birth. When the twins were born, around ten at night, it was immediately clear that they were premature. The surgeon called for the ship's chaplain to come perform the baptism while the infants were alive, but he could not be bothered to rise from his bed. The surgeon then baptized the two girls before their death minutes later. He did not record their baptismal names. There was no fire to leap over, no midwife to rub the babies with oil, no clean water to wash the mother. There was likely no time for ritual, and no space that could offer protection to any of them. Was there time for their mother, exhausted from the birth to recognize them, hold them, or name them in her own language? Upon their deaths, the bodies of the two infants were thrown, perhaps with the afterbirth, over the side of the ship.

Any birth aboard a slaving ship must have evoked a range of emotions and reactions among the women who witnessed it, but the birth and early death of twins under these conditions likely amplified its significance for Africans onboard. There are contradictory accounts of the color of the infants 'skin. Captain Sanguinet wrote in his logbook the day after the birth, "this night a negresse gave birth to two little whites who were baptised and died an hour later."[106] The same day, Pierre René Behourd, a captain in his own right but a passenger who kept his own logbook aboard the *Favorite* from Senegal to Lorient, wrote "at 10 this evening, there was a

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[103] David P. Gamble, David Ames, Barbara Ames, and Alhaji Hassan Njie "A Wolof Naming Ceremony: Human Interaction and its Aesthetic Significance" in Verbal and Visual Expressions of Wolof Culture, 143-145.

[104] Captives were generally stripped of their clothing by the time they reached the ship, or upon their arrival onboard. They would make the voyage "in a state of nudity or, at most, in ragged or tattered loincloths, breechclouts, or some form of genital covering." Jerome Handler, "The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans", *Slavery and Abolition*, 30 (2009), 2-4.

[105] Barbara Bush describes this birth and Barbot's insistence on the African mother's resilience and her ability to return to work cooking within an hour of the birth. She notes the ritual deficit of shipboard birth. Anne Caroline Bailey also comments on the traumatic effect of being unable to perform rites of passage on the Atlantic voyage, the ways in which this absence endangered the relationships between the living and the dead, the person, their kinship networks and the spiritual world. Anne Caroline Bailey, *African Voices of the Atlantic Slave Trade: Beyond the Silence and the Shame* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005), chapter 7; Barbara Bush, 'African Caribbean Slave Mothers and Children: Traumas of Dislocation and Enslavement Across the Atlantic World', *Caribbean Quarterly*, 56 (2010), 78-79.

[106] "Cette nuit une negresse a accouché de deux petits blancs qui ont eut le Bapteme, et sont mort un hr apres." de Sanguinet, Journal de bord de la *Favorite*, December 16, 1743.

negresse who gave birth to two girls before their term, of which the infants were black, after having been christened by the surgeon, as the chaplain did not want to get out of bed to baptise them."[107] However Behourd and Sanguinet characterized blackness or whiteness, their contradictory accounts demonstrate their disinterest in the devastating human cost of their trade. For the women who witnessed the birth, each attribute likely carried deep emotional and cultural import. For some, the familiar shape of the infants 'impossibly small hands perhaps evoked memories of their own children's delicate fingers. Most of the women likely believed in a numinous quality of twinship, requiring ritual intervention to honor or contain the spiritual forces they carried. Across many West African and West Central African societies, twins were regarded with particular suspicion or honor, as signs of ancestral grudges against the mother, or as holders of sacred power.[108] Among Bamana peoples of the far interior, twins carried special blessings from Faro, an androgynous albino creator God who himself gave birth to the first twin girls after bringing order to the world.[109] Therefore parents and families of surviving twins were entitled to more resources, and the parents took special measures to spiritually care for the twin children, including maintaining a small altar for them.[110] Albinos, though considered a form of twin in *Bamanaya*, were suspect, as they were believed to be the result of conception under the midday sun, "the sky of Faro's anger," and perhaps a sign of the mother's infidelity.[111] Twins also held ambivalent places in Wolof communities, where they were considered innately contentious and endowed with special knowledge and power, particularly the power to cause illness. Culturally associated with lower survival rates and infertility, twins possessed similar powers as other otherworldly children. In twentieth-century ethnographic studies of Wolof peoples, otherworldly children, *nit ku bon* in the Wolof language, were described as vengeful ancestor spirits, who chose to enter and leave the world at will to torment their mother.[112] Did a similar interpretation of twinship haunt the Wolof women in the ship? Did it compound or bring conceptual order to the torment felt by their mother, trapped in the belly of the ship? Others aboard ship may not have shared this sinister interpretation of twinship itself, but they would have understood the need to address the spiritual otherness of twins. Twentieth-century accounts of Sereer peoples discuss the celebration of the birth of twins with ritual gifts, and the consecration of a dedicated

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[107] "Sur les 10h du soir il y a eu une negresse qui a acouchée de deux filles avant le terme dont les enfant sont noir, apres aurié eté christienné par le sirugin d'autant que lomonié napas voulu se lever pour les batiser." Behourd records the birth on the entry for December 15, and given his more detailed account and the tendency to record the night's events in the entry for the following day, I am following Behourd's dating rather than de Sanguinet's. Pierre Behourd, Journal de bord de *La Favorite*, December 15, 1743, AN MAR/4JJ/66, pièce 86-87.

[108] Victor Turner describes the structural problem caused by "twinship in a kinship society", as two individuals are born into a single social role. He describes the use of a model of oppositional or complementary pair in Ndembu twin rituals in Zambia as illustrative of a broader cultural mode of dyads. For a broader survey of anthropological literature on twinship, see Renne and Bastian. Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 44-93; Elisha P. Renne and Misty L. Bastian, "Reviewing Twinship in Africa" *Ethnology*, vol. 40, no. 1 (Winter 2001), pp. 1-11.

[109] Pascal James Imperato, and Gavin H. Imperato, "Twins and Double Beings among the Bamana and Maninka of Mali", in *Twins in African and Diaspora Cultures: Double Trouble, Twice Blessed*, ed. by Philip M. Peek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 52-54.

[110] Pascal James Imperato and Gavin H. Imperato, "Twins, Hermaphrodites, and an Androgunous Albino Deity: Twins and Sculpted Twin Figures among the Bamana and Maninka of Mali" *African Arts*, 41, 1 (2008): 43-44.

[111] Albinos were thought to be conceived as a pair of twins, unified in the womb by Faro, who also removed their color. Imperato, Pascal James, and Gavin H. Imperato, "Twins and Double Beings", pp. 54-55.

[112] A. Zempleni and J. Rabain, "L'Enfant nit ku bon: un tableau psychopathologique traditionnel chez les Wolof et Lebou du Sénégal" *Psychopathologie africaine*, vol. I, 3, (1965): 329-441.

altar.[113] In the Americas, Richard Price and Sidney Mintz contend, the birth of twins was likely to have been one of many occasions that required cultural borrowing and collaboration among enslaved people, torn from their communities of origin and spiritual authorities.[114] It seems likely that here, aboard the *Favorite*, the brief appearance of twin girls, White or Black, called for similar attention. The inability to fully attend to this need for ritual care could only deepen the sense of spiritual and physical crisis among enslaved people aboard ship.

The emergency baptism of the twin girls could not satisfy this ritual need. At the birth, the surgeon crouched by the mother and took her children in his hands. If holy water was available, he poured it three times over each infant in the form of the cross, as he pronounced in French, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit." If he was unable to obtain holy water, he would have used the same stagnant water that served as drinking water onboard.[115] Despite the use of the term *baptême* in the logbook, the rite was an *ondoiement* or emergency baptism, such as those performed across the French empire in the home by surgeons, midwives, or neighbors when a newborn seemed unlikely to survive to be baptized in the parish.[116] *Ondoiements* were marked by their partiality, saving the soul of the baptized child from eternity in Limbo, but without fully securing their position in the religious and civic community. Those infants who survived were expected to complete their baptism through supplementary rituals in the parish church at a later time. Those who did not survive to complete the rituals could nonetheless be buried in consecrated ground by rite of their *ondoiement*.[117]

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[113] Jacqueline Rabain, *L'enfant du lignage: Du sevrage à la classe d'âge chez les Wolof du Sénégal* (Paris: Payot, 1979), 194-197.

[114] . Richard Price and Sidney Mintz point to twinship to help explain sociocultural change and the development of African-American culture. They argue that, though twinship carried different meanings across African cultural groups, nevertheless, across cultures there was a consensus that "*something* must be done." Under enslavement in the Americas, they argue, there were fewer spiritual authorities from enslaved people's communities of origin, and knowing that something must be done, it is likely people were open to incorporating a wider range of ritual practices to treat shared spiritual needs. Sidney W. Mintz and Richard Price, *The Birth of African-American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1992), 10, 46-47.

[115] Considering the priest's general delinquency on this voyage, refusing even to attend to the ritual needs of the crew, it seems unlikely he even offered to open his sea chest for the occasion. There was likely sufficient drinking water on hand for the ceremony, particularly if the surgeon had brought any to assist with the birth. Eighteenth-century jurisprudence was very clear that fresh water was the only material to be used for the ceremony. Jean Verdier, *Essai Sur La Jurisprudence de La Medecine En France, Ou Abregé Historique et Juridique Des Etablissemens, Reglemens, Police, Devoirs, Fonctions, Récompenses, Honneurs, Droits, & Privilèges Des Trois Corps de Médecine; Avec Les Devoirs, Fonctions et Autor* (Paris: Prault Père, 1763), 292.

[116] *Ondoiements* were particularly common in New France and rural places with a shortage of priests. Interestingly, French Christians also subscribed to a belief in the dangers that could face infants who left the home before baptism (another kind of naming ceremony), and did not take newborns out of the home until the day of their baptism. A fire, kept burning, and iron or metal also served as protective materials against malevolent forces. Hélène Laforce, *Histoire de la sage-femme dans la région de Québec,* (Quebec: Institut québécois de recherche sur la culture, 1989). Gelis, Jacques, and Rosemary Morris (Trans.), *History of Childbirth: Fertility, Pregnancy and Birth in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Polity Press) 195-196.

[117] The urgency of this need for emergency baptism is underlined by the prevalence of *sanctuaires à répit* in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century France. These were niches or altars in the church where families placed stillborn infants and infants who died before their baptism in hopes that a miraculous, temporary restoration of life, even weeks after death, could allow a priest to perform an ondoiement. Parents and parishioners watched carefully for a fluttering eyelid or shifting limb so that a priest might rush to the infant and perform the minimal rites. Although theologians distrusted these popular practices, their increasing pressure to ensure postmortem ceasaraen sections in order to baptize the fetus evinces the parallel concerns of the official Church for the salvation of unborn and infant souls. The unbaptized could also be buried in the north side of churchyards, which was, like the south side, consecrated ground, but which many laymen and clergy alike thought of as unconsecrated. While cesarean

It is hard to imagine what reactions this brief ceremony could have incited among the women who witnessed it. Though it is unlikely that any of the women were Christian, the recognizable power of spoken words and sprinkling of water may have given some answer, strikingly inadequate, to the demand for ritual resolution for the unusual birth. The water may have evoked the washing of Wolof newborns directly after their birth, or perhaps the "liquid charm" placed between an infant's lips. However, it is more likely that most watched the surgeon and the baptism with deep distrust. Enslaved people onboard, with exception of the two newborns, had first encountered the surgeon at the time of their purchase at the coast, where the surgeon conducted an invasive inspection of their bodies, stripped of clothing. With indifference or interest, surgeons examined the eyes, skin, mouths, muscles and genitals of the men, women and children presented for purchase. The women aboard the *Favorite* knew this man's face, his voice, and his touch. They had felt his examining gaze and endured the assault of his hands.[118] Aboard ship, they had likely known him to conduct similar investigations into their own and others' bodies. He may have been the man who improvised, on the captain's orders, "a kind of funnel" from sailcloth to force-feed the captive men who refused to eat.[119] In addition to these direct assaults on the captives, the women were aware of the invisible but potent threat posed by his contamination through proximity to illness and death. They likely witnessed him tending to the epileptic woman who succumbed to a seizure three weeks before, and may have heard or seen his treatment of the thirty-one other people who had died over the previous weeks from flux, scurvy, self-starvation, and abscesses, as well as his probing attentions to the ill who still clung to life. As Wolof women saw him descend that night into their quarters and approach the mother in childbirth, did they think of the sinister activities of *doma*, or witches? Mid-twentieth-century Wolof ethnographical accounts describe a visit to an ailing person at night as the act of a *doma*, who hovered greedily beside the sick and dying to consume them.[120] *Doma* were particularly drawn to the blood of childbirth and were known to approach unprotected mothers and newborns to dine upon their organs. The women onboard likely witnessed the approach of this man, who lurked ominously around the dying, with apprehension. If their thoughts did not turn to supernatural malevolence, or to his pollution through proximity to death, the women recognized the surgeon as one of their captors, an agent whose intervention led more often to suffering than to relief. It seems unlikely that his assertion of ritual authority over the birth, his attentions to the bodies of the mother and infants, quelled the fear of ritual deficiency or

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sections were practiced with more frequency over the later half of the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, they remained uncommon, particularly as many families opposed the mutilation of the mother's corpse. José G., Rigau-Pérez, "Surgery at the Service of Theology : Postmortem Cesarean Sections in Puerto Rico and the Royal Cedula of 1804", *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, 75 (1995), 377–404. Harms, *The Diligent*, 248; Vincent Gourdon and Catherine Rollet, "Stillbirths in Nineteenth-Century Paris: Social Legal and Medical Implications of a Statistical Category", *Population*, 64 (2009), 602-606. Jacques Gélis, "Un Cadavre Qui Donne des 'signes de Vie': Le Cas de l'enfant Mort-Né Au Sanctuaire à Répit", *Techniques & Culture*, 60 (2013), 44, 56; Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 130-131.

[118] On the examinations of captives by captains and surgeons, see Richard B. Sheridan, 'The Guinea Surgeons on the Middle Passage: The Provision of Medical Services in the British Slave Trade', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 14 (1981), 616; Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea: Terror, Sex and Sickness in the Middle Passage* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2016), 44-46.

[119] "J'ai fait faire un espece d'antonoir d'une voille pour done du fraix aux noirs, en entrepont, et malgré touttes mes precautions il m'en meurt" Sanguinet, Journal de bord de *La Favorite*, November 23, 1743.

[120] David Ames, "Belief in "Witches" among the Rural Wolof of the Gambia", *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 29 (1959), 265-268.

countered the women's understanding of the growing danger that surrounded them.[121] Other women on other ships may have found some consolation in the ritual recognition of the power and import of these brief newborn lives, like apparitions in the dark. They may have found comfort in the seeming protection and place that the baptism created for the souls of the soon-to-die. However, the baptisms of the twins aboard the *Favorite* seems more likely to have highlighted contested claims of possession and power. Whatever his intent, the surgeon asserted his power over the bodies and the souls of an enslaved women's children. He incorporated them, however cursorily, into his communion of enslavers, which excluded and oppressed the infants ' mother and all the enslaved people who lived and died on the ship.

In the 36 logbooks I have surveyed, I have encountered four emergency baptisms of infant captives, those of the twins aboard the *Favorite,* one of an infant aboard the *Duc d'Anjou*, carrying captives from Madagascar to the Mascarenes in 1738 and one of a newborn aboard the *Roy Dahomey*, sailing from the Bight of Benin to Saint-Domingue in 1773.[122] Only aboard the *Favorite* is there any indication that the *aumônier* did not perform the baptism. In the two other cases I have located, the person performing the baptism is not identified. The *Duc d'Anjou* had a priest onboard, and although I have not been able to locate the roll book for the *Roy Dahomey*, it carried over forty crewmen and was therefore at least legally required to embark a chaplain as well, though this requirement was often ignored.[123] The priest aboard the *Favorite* was particularly delinquent, even among the notoriously degenerate clergy who served aboard ship. Father Fournier earned the captain's disparagement early in the voyage while the ship was moored in Saint-Louis, Senegal. When half the crew lay sick in their beds in late September and into October of 1743, he refused to celebrate Mass and refused to return to the ship to hear confessions or administer the last rites.[124] Even given this delinquency, it is striking that the surgeon, rather than the priest who was resting in his cabin just above the women's quarters, baptized the newborn girls, and it further underlines the ritual deficit at work even among the

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[121] Portuguese traders in Angola reported that many enslaved people understood mass baptism prior to embarkation as a ritual of control, strong magic used to curtail rebellious or sexual behavior aboard ship or to identify and prepare the bodies to be consumed through cannibalism or the material extraction of blood, oil or powder. Miller, *Way of Death*, 402-404; Linda A. Newson, and Susie Michin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2007), 102.

[122] de Sanguinet, Journal de bord de la *Favorite*, December 16, 1743); Guillaume Liout (2e pilote), Journal de bord du *Duc d'Anjou*, April 8, 1738, AN MAR/4JJ/76, pièce 22; J. Crassous-Medeuil, Journal de bord du *Roy Dahomey,* August 26,1773, AM La Rochelle EEARCHANC 48.

[123] Surgeons were legally required on transoceanic voyages, and priests were required on ships with crews of more than forty crewmen. However, the requirement for priests was often neglected, particularly on private slaving ships. Aboard the eighteen logbooks of Atlantic slaving voyages I have surveyed, four embarked without priests. Only one of these voyages embarked fewer than forty crewmen. This vastly overrepresents the presence of chaplains aboard slaving ships, as my database includes primarily slaving ships of the *Compagnie des Indes*, which were larger, carried more crewmen, and were more committed to the state regulations, and better able to secure chaplains. Every ship destined for a transoceanic voyage embarked at least one surgeon and more often two or more to insure against the loss of a surgeon to illness or death. Slaving ventures often employed separate surgeons for crewmen and captives. The *Favorite* alone carried three surgeons on its 1743 voyage. In the absence or dereliction of priests aboard ship, surgeons were well positioned to undertake the solemn duty to baptize newborns. The surgeon performed the baptism aboard the *Favorite* only because the priest refused to be disturbed from his rest. He was endowed with spiritual authority through the priest's dereliction of duty and most importantly by the closeness of death.

[124] Sanguinet writes in early October that he went ashore to request the return of their almoner, Father Fournier, who had taken lodging in Saint-Louis, Senegal. Fournier replied that "il a embarqué a jeu et que mon ordre, n'etoit pas precis pour le faire renger a son devoir de bord." It had been two months, however, since he had administered the sacraments to the sickly crew. A Franciscan from the monastery in the Fougères forest in Brittany,

crew and officers. At a time when Catholic theologians and magistrates were forcefully recommending, and in some places mandating, postmortem caesarean operations in order to baptize potentially living fetuses, the imminent death of two newborn girls did not irresistibly demand that a priest descend into the lower quarters of the ship.[125]

Naming

What function could such a partial, precarious ritual serve in the slaving vessel, where the religiosity of officers and crewmen was notoriously suspect, where the priest himself could refuse to attend, and the ritual could offer little comfort to non-christian mothers and no civil status to the enslaved child or its family? The account of the emergency baptism of a newborn boy aboard the *Roy Dahomey* in August of 1773 suggests that in at least one case, a mother or a woman near her laid claim to part of the ritual by giving the newborn his Fon name, "Bossoû". Of the four emergency baptisms of infant captives that I have encountered in the logbooks, only this single record includes the name of the infant. Even an adult emergency baptism aboard the *Duc d'Anjou* gives no name for the baptized man. In no case was the name of a captive infant's mother recorded.

The *Roy Dahomey*, a 260-ton slaver from La Rochelle departed from the Bight of Benin in late May, 1773, carrying 423 people, 166 women, 213 men, 20 boys and 24 girls, captive below deck.[126] At least one pregnant woman and two nursing infants and their mothers embarked over the course of its three-month stay off the coast of Ouidah. Most captives had been enslaved inland, as war captives, then taken by Oyo traders to Dahomey, where they would be traded again to agents at Ouidah or taken directly to the eastern coastal ports where they were sold to European buyers.[127] As Ouidah and Badagri had no *captiveries* on the coast, captives were forced aboard the ship in small groups over a period of several months between early March, when Captain Corby paid the customs at Badagri, and their departure from the coast. The logbook leaves these months blank, so it is unclear when men, women and children were purchased, if they traveled to the ship together or if their groupings were already segregated by sex and age. A study of the Dutch trade, particularly at the Windward Coast, shows that Dutch traders demonstrated a clear preference for the gradual purchase of children and women early in the trade, at a pace of several every few days, followed by large purchases of captive men closer to

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[125] While theologians had long recommended cesarean operations if a mother died in childbirth, in order to baptize the fetus, eighteenth-century theologians began to insist on the operation, much to the consternation of midwives, surgeons, and often the families of the deceased women whose corpses would be the subject of offensive tests for signs of life, and the invasive operation. In Puerto Rico, extant records document cesarean sections "only on white (or at least free) women, with status ranging from poor to affluent." José G . Rigau-Pérez, "Surgery at the Service of Theology", 377–404.

[126] 213 of the captives were men, 166 were women, 20 were boys and 24 were girls. Jean Mettas notes the principal site of purchase as Ouidah. Although he references two sources that I have not been able to access, the detailed logbook only lists customs paid at Badagri to "Prince Sainsou", surely Sensou, a merchant and warrior who was, at that time, contesting the primacy of the Jengen (one of eight chiefs governing Badagri) over the French trade at Badagri. It seems likely that at least some captives were purchased from this smaller market, just 100 kilometers to the East. Jean Mettas, *Répertoire des Expéditions Négrière Françaises au XVIIIe Siècle*; Tome 2 *Ports Autres que Nantes*, ed. Serge and Michelle Daget (Paris, 1984), 256/2278, p. 321; Robin Law, "A Lagoonside Port on the Eighteenth-Century Slave Coast: The Early History of Badagri" *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne Des Études Africaines*, 28 (1994), 32–59; J. Crassous-Medeuil, Journal de bord du *Roy Dahomey,* (1772-1773) AM La Rochelle EEARCHANC 48

[127] Robin Law, "Slave-Raiders and Middlemen, Monopolists and Free-Traders: The Supply of Slaves for the Atlantic Trade in Dahomey c. 1715–1850", *The Journal of African History*, 30 (1989), 45–68.

embarkation.[128] The pregnant woman on the *Roy Dahomey* likely entered the bowels of the ship in the company of another woman or a child. As she descended into the women's quarters, she perhaps scanned the enclosure for familiar faces. She would have noticed immediately that her fellow captives were women and children, and that her captors were male. Jennifer Morgan suggests that this sexual segregation might have hastened women's understanding of the sexual and reproductive labor that would be demanded of them in captivity.[129] Did the woman aboard the *Roy Dahomey* find comfort in the recognition of women who shared her language? If there were few or no others who shared her passage to the coast, she may have at least known the country-marks of the other women below deck, perhaps the two lines between the eyes and three across the cheeks that adorned the faces twentieth-century Dahomean girls and women and of North American runaways from the Bight of Benin[130]. Did she seek solace with the nursing mothers who shared this fetid space? Throughout the following weeks, she would have felt her belly grow as she watched the frenetic increase of the population below deck until bodies, breath, noise and stench overfilled it. It would be three months before her labor began in the women's quarters, and, after the birth and death of her son on August 26 and 27, 1773, one more week before she would step onto solid ground in Saint-Domingue.

Like the mother of twins aboard the *Favorite*, the woman aboard the *Roy Dahomey* gave birth on a clear day, as the ship passed into the Caribbean sea.[131] A long line of skylarks, a sign of land and their nearness to their destination, stretched across the sky. In the water below, a whale calf was seen surfacing and diving alongside the ship.[132] The woman had endured the final three months of her pregnancy imprisoned on a ship far from her family, out of sight of land and without adequate protections.[133] She learned the uncomfortable newness of her pregnant body's form as she lay unclothed, with only a loincloth to shield her skin from the rough, rocking deck. The visible advancement of her pregnancy and the approaching birth may have served as a cohesive force among the women aboard ship.

Other enslaved women likely came to her aid as the birth approached. While most captives sold from Ouidah and the surrounding ports had been captured far inland, beyond the kingdom of Dahomey, they likely shared a *lingua franca* or general tongue that connected the broader geographic region stretching out from Dahomey and Ouidah into dependent and neighboring states by the late eighteenth-century.[134] Beyond the ties of language, Fon and Yoruba peoples 'shared practices and beliefs predated the transatlantic slave trade, and Fon-Ewe peoples had incorporated Yoruba gods by the eighteenth century.[135] Certainly devotees of varied *vodun*

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[128] Simon J. Hogerzeil and David Richardson, "Slave Purchasing Strategies and Shipboard Mortality: Day-to-Day Evidence from the Dutch African Trade, 1751-1797", *Journal of Economic History*, 67 (2007), 168.

[129] As Jennifer Morgan writes, "the slow realization of the women that they were being treated as property would have been inextricable from their experience of the ratio of men to women. Morgan, *Laboring Women*, 52.

[130] Gomez, 175. Herskovits, *Dahomey*, 292-3.

[131] Although these two women gave birth at sea over 800 miles apart in the ocean, the sites of the births were 1000 miles closer together than the likely geographical origins of the women in Senegambia and the Bight of Benin.

[132] Crassous writes, "Vu plusieurs petits oisseaux comme des alouettes et en grande Bande / donnez hier au Negres de la faine et des Cocos le meme nombre ce matin des fevres Vue ce maitin un petit Balainot" Journal de Bord du *Roy Dahomey* August 25-26, 1773.

[133] Twentieth-century Dahomean women used protective charms and special familial rites to guard the physical and spiritual health of the mother and infant. Herskovits, 260.

[134] Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*, 25, 59-60.

[135] "Yoruba" was originally an outsider Hausa term, possibly used to describe people of a certain town. "Yoruba" signifies Yoruba-speakers to describe the constellation of peoples, who generally identified primarily based on their town rather than a broader ethnicity. Robin Law argues that a broader Yoruba identity, often using the terms

pantheons sailed on this voyage across the Atlantic. Sweet's research shines a light on the proficiency of African healers and religious leaders in the Americas, and the possibility that they practiced even while captive aboard slaving ships. European traders commented on captives ' resistance to receiving care from ship's surgeons in favor of care from their fellow captives.[136] Perhaps her shipmates lent her or helped her produce a protective charm, which she could clasp in her hands or conceal it in the folds of her cloth covering. African-made amulets and charms sometimes traveled to the Americas, almost certainly carried by enslaved people in the Middle Passage, and charms likely formed a part of pregnancy protections among Dahomean and neighboring peoples of the eighteenth century.[137] Even without the necessary *materia medica*, women may have used touch and spoken word to care for the ailing woman. Melville Herskovits writes that among the Dahomey in the 1930s the final stage of pregnancy was known as a period when the mother "hears the child" through its movements in her belly. During this time, her family and caregivers took special spiritual care of the mother and child. A child in the womb might be vowed to a deity, who would be invoked for protection during pregnancy, protective charms would be given to the mother, and the mother would call upon her own ancestors or *loa*. Always before a birth, a sacrifice of a chicken or cock with palm oil, salt, peppers, and corn meal was due to *Legbá,* a gatekeeper *loa,* guardian of crossroads, invoked before any ritual and particularly before ritual medicine.[138] Twentieth-century Dahomeans offered beans and corn meal to the spirits of their ancestors to ensure a safe and healthy birth.[139] Perhaps almost two centuries earlier, the women aboard the *Roy Dahomey* reserved portions of their meager rations of manioc, rice, coconut and beans to compose a makeshift offering to their ancestors, to win their favor and to bolster their strength in this time of crisis. When the pregnant woman among them went into labor, it seems likely that at least some of her shipmates may have gathered the caregiving resources they could assemble to aid her through the birth.

The potential cohesion of a social order among the women is suggested by the choice of a Dahomean name for the infant born onboard. Dahomean naming practices layered identities and unveiled the facets of the social person as he grew from infancy to adulthood. Several names were given at birth, including a secret name given by the mother, as well as religious names derived from the devotions of mother and father. When a child survived five months a diviner directed a naming ceremony to ask destiny or *Fa* to reveal the child's ancestral protector and thus his ancestral name. As he grew into adulthood, he would acquire names at initiation into professional or religious groups. Women would also be given a name by their husband at

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"Lucumi" or "Nago", perhaps signifying their different geographical regions in Africa, would emerge in Atlantic slavery through the transatlantic exchange and under European colonization. For an analysis of the transatlantic slave trade's effects on changing ideas of African ethnicity in Africa and the diaspora, particularly with respect to "Yoruba" and associated ethnic terms see Biodun Adediran, "Yoruba Ethnic Groups or a Yoruba Ethnic Group? A Review of the Problem of Ethnic Identification," *Africa: Revista do Centro do Estudos Africanos de USP,* 7 (1984), 57-70; Law, "Ethnicity and the Slave Trade", 205–19; Gomez, *Exchanging our Country Marks*, 56-7. Sweet, *Domingos Alvarès*, 14.

[136] Sweet, *Domingos Alvarès,* 32, 40-43.

[137] African-made protective amulets have been found in African burial sites in the Americas. Handler, "The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans", 4-6.

[138] James Sweet argues that Domingo Alvarès drew upon the powers of *Legbá* to heal and lead his spiritual community in Brazil. Herskovits, 260. Sweet, *Domingos Alvarès*, 59, 125-6.

[139] Beans recur as ritual food for *vodun* and ancestors in times of crisis and alongside goats, chickens and rum in more formal rituals. Herskovits, 37, 204, 209.

marriage.[140] Each name unveiled the person's layered identity, and most importantly placed them in their social and spiritual order. The child born aboard the *Roy Dahomey* did not live long enough to acquire his ancestral name, or any of the names of adulthood, which would have placed him in his family, his professional group or as a devotee of a particular *loa*. Neither his mother's name nor his father's, whoever he may have been, were written in the slave traders ' records. However, his mother ensured that he was given a religious name, that his place in the spiritual order was recognized by those around her and even by her captors.

Variations of the name "Busu" or "Boussou" are recorded in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century records of enslaved and free people of color in Martinique and Saint-Domingue, as well as in early twentieth-century ethnographies of the Dahomey.[141] While the meaning of the name in the eighteenth century is not documented, twentieth-century ethnographies identify the name, spelled "Bosu" or "Bosou", as one given immediately after birth, derived from the conditions of the birth or the religious affiliation of the parents. In these accounts, "Bosou" was associated with abnormal births and with the *vodun tohosu* cult that venerated the abnormally born. Among devotees of the *tohosu* cult, "Bosu" was the name given at birth to the first-born son of a mother who belonged to the cult of *tohosu*.[142] Devotees believed that "children born with missing or deformed limbs or with teeth, hair or other abnormalities" were *tohosu*, powerful deities who chose to appear on earth through stillbirths, miscarriages and anomalous births, portents of social and spiritual disorder that called for redress. According to legend, the first of these "powerful and dangerous beings" was born, a bearded, talking child with six eyes, to the royal line amidst drought, famine and fire.[143] The plagues persisted until the royal lineage agreed to worship the *tohosu*. These deities were connected with bodies of water, *to* meaning "river", "lake" or "marsh", and *hosu* or *ahosu* meaning "ruler" or "king." If a newborn was recognized as a *tohosu,* it would be returned to the waters from which it came.[144] In the midst of the vast and rocking waves of the ocean, in the wet darkness of night on the sickly ship, the signs of social and environmental disorder surrounded this mother. Her choice of the name "Bossou" for her son suggests that her mind may have turned to these deities, to their power as signs of disorder, and to their power to bring social order in times of suffering, as she strove to bring her son into the world, and as she watched his life fade in the hours after his birth.

Tohosu were likely among the many deities who were called upon by enslaved people to correct disorder and redress the pain of enslavement. Their particular intertwining of social and bodily disorder figured in another tradition from the Bight of Benin, as documented by James Sweet in his study of African healer, Domingos Alverès in Brazil and Portugal. Sweet discusses how Sakpata, another *vodun* knowledge tradition, empowered enslaved Africans to heal their communities and correct the social ills of slavery. Sakpata deities, like the *tohosu,* held the power

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[140] Auguste Le Hérissé, *L'ancien Royaume Du Dahomey, Moeurs, Religion, Histoire* (Paris: E. Larose, 1911) 236-7; Herskovits, 167-8.

[141] James Sweet identifies "Bosu", in various spellings, as a certain quality of vodun, found in several lists of Sakpata divinities. Oral history ties one of these to the Kadja, who were said to carry their patron god, Sakpata Agbosu with them on their migration north from Badagry to Savalu in the early eighteenth century. However, it is unclear if the divine quality could be itself a name. Guillaume Durand, "The Survival of Names of African Origin in Martinique After Emancipation", *Dialectical Anthropology*, 26 (2001), 227; Sweet, *Domingos Alvares*, 130-132.

[142] Similarly, Auguste Le Hérissé, writing in 1911 wrote that a child born with the umbilical cord around his neck in could be called "Bôsou" among other names. Le Hérissé, 236-238. Herskovits, 266.

[143] Edna G. Bay, *Wives of the Leopard: Gender, Politics and Culture in the Kingdom of Dahomey*, (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1998), 93-4.

[144] The Dahomey *tohosu* cult would grow over the following century to incorporate an ever-widening hierarchy of ancestor cults with the monarchy at the center. Edna G. Bay, *Wives of the Leopard*, 93-4, 251-254.

to signify and cure social and environmental ills. While *tohosu* gave signs of disorder through abnormal births, Sakpata deities did so through epidemics of smallpox.[145] Both were venerated in Mahi country, which Sweet identifies as a center of political opposition to the Dahomey, though *tohosu* had recently been introduced as a powerful cult of the Dahomean royal family as well.[146] It seems possible that women from the Bight of Benin who witnessed or suffered miscarriage, stillbirth or newborn death in bondage, called upon *tohosu* to restore social and natural order, to bring health and justice to their world at sea. For the women aboard the *Roy Dahomey*, the early birth and early death of Bossoû may have served as a kind of communication, a recognition between human and deity of the cruel disorder of their world, and may have elicited a plea for protection as they hastened toward their unknown fates in the islands.

No account remains of the hours between his birth and death. He must have cried, as crying was so often a sign of life, a precondition of baptism. Did his mother whisper his own secret name when only he could hear? There were forty-four young children aboard the ship. Perhaps some approached Bossoû to examine his smallness, a miniature in their midst. What lessons did his body shape in their minds about birth, pain, and death in bondage? Older children or women may have explained to the young among them the meaning of his name. For some, the loss must have receded among so many losses, which flooded the mind and overflowed the thin powers of narrative to account for this pain. The following afternoon, his body was thrown to the sea. Whatever the spiritual beliefs of his mother, however much her own exhaustion and despair weighed upon her, the grief of this loss must have been searing. For her, as for the countless other women who gave birth aboard ship, his name made a place for his spirit and a place for his memory. Despite the devastation that surrounded his birth, Bossoû's name asserted the existence of a human and spiritual community, even in this nightmarish world.

In the margins of the entry for August 26th and 27th, Crassous drew a small illustration of an infant and wrote "a child born last night at 3h and Baptized and called Bossoû // nothing [néant]".[147] But of course, the child was not nothing. His very physicality was evinced by the illustration, his social and spiritual place evinced by his name. He was not forgotten simply because his number was not counted among the tally of the dead. His mother gave him a name, one that despite the barriers of language and religion, was recorded in the Frenchman's logbook. In giving him his name, she honored his brief appearance in the world. It seems likely that Bossoû's mother was a prominent figure among the women onboard, given the exceptional fact that her son's African name was recorded. If, as I suggested above, she and others had begun to

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[145] Sweet, *Domingos Alvarès*, 16-21, 34-5, 75-77, chapter 6 passim.

[146] Although worship of *tohosu* was not yet dominant in Dahomey, the cult was on the rise in Dahomey during the decades leading up to the *Roy Dahomey*'s departure from the coast. *Tohosu* was one of the most significant religious introductions by Hwanjile in Dahomey in the mid-eighteenth century to solidify the spiritual power of the monarchy. While most aboard the *Roy Dahomey* likely came from far inland, the enslaved people onboard may have included Dahomean debtors and political and religious opponents to the crown. The *Roy Dahomey* embarked at the tail end of the reign of Tegbesu and his *kpojito* or "female reign-mate", Hwanjile (r. 1740-1774). Hwanjile's efforts to consolidate spiritual and political power in the monarchy during her shared reign with Tegbesu, combined with the increased pressure to produce captives for sale to the Atlantic market in the 1770s, created favorable conditions for the judicial enslavement of religious and political opponents. While Dahomean law forbade enslavement of subjects of the king except through judicial enslavement or special permission for the sale of dependents, a shortage of captives available for sale in the 1770s forced Tegbesu, to resort to the enslavement and sale of his own subjects, likely through judicial enslavement. Law, Robin, 'Slave-Raiders and Middlemen, Monopolists and Free-Traders", 52-54; Edna G. Bay, "Belief, Legitimacy and the Kpojito: An Institutional History of the 'Queen Mother' in Precolonial Dahomey", *The Journal of African History*, 36 (1995), 13-15.

[147] Crassous, Journal de Bord du *Roy Dahomey* August 25,1773-August 26, 1773.

forge social and spiritual bonds, whether around *tohosu* or around other *loa*, and around their shared sufferings, the birth, naming and death of her son surely marked a pivotal moment in the consolidation of community aboard ship. For Bossoû's mother and her shipmates, the birth and naming of Bossoû confirmed his spiritual and social existence, and thereby also confirmed the spiritual and social order he was born into. The lack of names of the enslaved dead in the devastating lists that lined the margins of Crassous's and countless other logbooks, the reduction of people to numbers or to "nothing", and the refusal to count infants and young children among the cargo because of their low sale value were all attempts by the slave traders to deny the social worlds of enslaved people and to flatten their social order. To have a name is to have a place, a community and a social order to which you belong. Bossoû's mother and the women surrounding her understood this. The act of naming this child Bossoû affirmed the existence of a place and an order, however disrupted, for the newborn boy.

Childbirth was marked by the urgency of demand for ritual ordering, a demand that could in some cases find an answer, temporary and incomplete, through language, through naming and possibly through practices erased through omission by the archival record. Childbirth and death, the entry and exit of numbers from the ledger, are nearly the only events in the lives of enslaved women that emerge in the archives. These events rise to the surface through their financial significance, but they mark a strange intersection of ritual, social and financial worlds. If birth was a crucible of social production and social ordering through ritual, as I have suggested above, the mundane concerns of everyday life, from food to labor, served more granular and gradual processes of social ordering. Women's and children's lives stretched out over days and months. As they ate, slept, and worked aboard ship, the need to find ways of ordering this social world must have pressed upon them. The rhythms of daily labor and meals marked the day and distilled tenuous and shifting patterns of social order. While there is little to no discussion in the sources of slave traders regarding the processes of social ordering among the enslaved aboard ship, it seems likely that the shared food and eating spaces of mealtimes may have encouraged a flattening of social distinctions, while labor may have become the site of new divisions and coalescing social bonds.

The Rhythms of Daily Life

On days without rain or rough weather, women and children were brought up the main stairwell, past the officers 'quarters and into the open air of the quarterdeck around nine o'clock in the morning. Some perhaps were already familiar with the interiors that lay behind the closed doors of officers and high-ranking seamen. Captive women were frequently subject to sexual assault and forced domestic labor in the officers quarters. As they stepped onto the main deck, they would have seen the high barricade, which, as below, was intended to separate men from women, and particularly to guard against revolt by captive men. The murder holes and spikes that embellished the barricade made plain its violent purpose. Netting along the sides of the ship evinced the captors 'anticipation that some would attempt to escape through suicide. In a large cauldron before the barricade boiled fava beans and rice or millet, emitting a bitter odor that mixed with the pervasive stench of the ship and the salt of the sea air.[148]

Around ten in the morning, captives were forced into groups of ten, and each group given a single trough of food. After the meal, they were ordered to dance and sing, after which many captains insisted that captives be washed and inspected. A 1777 manuscript which advises slavers

[148] Harms, 308; Anonymous (Captain), "Observations touchant le soin des nègres dans le voyage de Guinée" (c. 1777), Bibliothèque Municipale de Nantes, Nantes, France, M878.

on how to preserve the physical health of their captives recommends daily rinsing of the mouth with lemon juice in water. Given the prevalence of scurvy on many ships and the absence of lemons, it seems more likely that captives were given plain water. Twice weekly, the author wrote, women should be encouraged to wash themselves. Under the most punctilious captains, captives may have had their mouths washed with water and vinegar daily, and their bodies washed less frequently.[149]

In the hours that stretched from captives 'morning meal to their final meal in the early evening, their captains sought ways to extract labor, to exercise the bodies they would soon offer for sale, and to busy their subject population with tasks and distractions that they hoped would forestall coordinated attempts at revolt. Domestic work, preparation and consumption of tobacco, likely wove through the languishing days of captive women and children, as did care for the ailing and the very young, whether in response to their captors 'orders or their own volition. The apparitions of animals, flying fish, dolphins, and seabirds around the ship marked the time and space of the voyage as well.[150] After the evening meal, captives were forced back below for the long night. Surely this rhythm of the day, the shared subjection to dehumanizing and violent treatment cultivated captives 'understanding of their collective predicament. However, unequal access to food and varied forms of forced labor may have encouraged divisions and isolation as well. Women and girls targeted for rape and the witnesses of their violations did not share the same nightly experience, and daylight further revealed the fragmentation of personal experience aboard ship.

The ascent above deck, though it brought some relief from the stifling conditions below, also likely made many keenly aware of their nakedness and of the eyes of predatory men. Around them stood officers and crewmen, dressed according to their rank, many of them armed. The captives, in contrast, were provided, at most, with no more than a small loincloth to cover themselves. Rather than expose their bodies, some women chose to squat for the entire day. Bodily differences likely contributed to feelings of isolation. Menstruating women and girls may have been given small amounts of cloth to serve as a tampon, but it seems likely that most had nothing with which to clean themselves or conceal their condition.[151] Pregnant and lactating women found the signs of their reproductive power exposed for their captors' benefit. Many of those who had been victims of abuse could not easily hide the signs of their victimization, whether injuries or the visible symptoms of venereal disease.[152] Women and children who suffered from swellings, sores, abscesses and rashes felt their illnesses exposed. These conspicuous ailments may have contributed to the isolation of the ill, but signs of captives ' collective endangerment and the insistent threat of death hung around the main deck as they did below. Deprived of familiar people, rites and materials with which to forge social bonds, how did women and children find order within their lives aboard ship?

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[149] Anonymous (Captain), "Observations touchant le soin des nègres dans le voyage de Guinée".
[150] Equiano remarks upon his wonder at witnessing flying fish, some of which landed aboard the vessel. Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African. Written by Himself,* vol. I. (London: T. Wilkins, 1789), 54.
[151] Harms, 311-312.
[152] Mustakeem notes, "One can only imagine the shame inflicted through the development of these physical disfigurements on the captives' bodies." Mustakeem, "I Have Never Seen Such a Sickly Ship Before", 484.

Eating together

Twice daily, groups of ten women and children sat on deck around large bowls of beans mixed with rice or flour, sometimes marginally enriched with a small amount of oil or peppers. The quality and quantity of food provided for captives varied significantly between voyages, dependent on the intent and diligence of the captain, as well as factors of spoilage and availability of food, not always under his control. Some captains chose to supplement the provisions with fruit, water and manioc flour purchased at São Tomé or Principe.[153] The captain of the *Roy Dahomey* purchased bananas and yams at Principe, about three bananas and less than one yam per captive, which he would ration out over the following weeks. As the ship sailed into the South equatorial current, where schools of fish surrounded the ship daily, the crew fished tuna and albacore to supplement captives 'diet. When they reached the mid-Atlantic a week later, "the fish beg[an] to leave [them]," and only the occasional meal of flour and coconut or yams diversified an otherwise changeless diet of fava beans over the next six weeks.[154] However provisions ranged widely depending on the captain's diligence and knowledge of the trade. Aboard the *Favorite*, captives suffered from Captain Sanguinet's lack of experience and preparation. Despite his repeated insistence that the high mortality aboard his ship was "not at all [his] fault", he made the unusual choice to rely primarily upon biscuit to feed the captives onboard.[155] The *Compagnie* supplied meat and tobacco, but he found both supplies rotten and deficient.[156] Sanguinet was unable to secure adequate rice or couscous at Senegal or Gorée, and he made no effort to purchase fruit or fresh supplies.[157] Over the course of the voyage, Sanguinet records his attempts to ration out meat and eau-de-vie in twice weekly portions, believing against all evidence that these victuals would fortify the bodies of the weakening men below deck. The contents of the remaining meals are unclear but certainly dismal if not repulsive. Sanguinet established force-feeding of the men onboard within the first week after the ship's departure from Gorée.[158] By one month after their departure from Gorée, signs of severe scurvy had appeared among dozens of the men, and though the women "were not yet sick", two women would die of scurvy in the final two days of the voyage, just after the ship's arrival at *Saint-Domingue*, as the captain awaited buyers for his enslaved cargo.[159] This suggests that Senegambian women and children may have been slightly more insulated against nutritional deficiency upon their embarkation, due to the fact that most had endured shorter periods of captivity and transportation before the Atlantic voyage. It is likely that any shortened time in bondage prior to embarkation helped delay the more visible and debilitating effects of

[153] Journal de bord, *La Jeannette*, 1743-1744, Journaux de Bord, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 5006/1; Journal de bord, *L'Aurore*, 1704-1705, Journaux de Bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR 4JJ/93 pièce 12; Journal de bord, *Le Roy Dahomey*, 1772-1774; Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 64.
[154] Journal de bord, *Le Roy Dahomey*, February 1, 1773.
[155] Sanguinet, Journal de bord de *la Favorite*, November 26, 1743.
[156] Lettre de Sanguinet, capitaine, de Léogane, à M. David January 15, 1744, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/144/C, pièce 64.
[157] It is likely that he had received particular instructions to make no unapproved stops elsewhere on the voyage from the *Compagnie*. Nevertheless, this inability to secure the necessary provisions simply underlines the priority of the traders and the *Compagnie* for a speedy voyage at the lowest possible cost, accepting the likelihood of a certain loss of life.
[158] Sanguinet, Journal de bord de *la Favorite*, November 23, 1743.
[159] While contemporary diagnoses are often suspect, scurvy would have been one of the most familiar and easily identifiable seaborne illnesses. Bleeding gums and pinprick bleeding over the body were among the tell-tale signs. Sanguinet, Journal de bord de *la Favorite*, November 28, 1743, January 1, 1744, January 2, 1744.

malnutrition aboard ship on the body. However, the fact that scurvy was one of the more common illnesses among captives on slaving ships also underlines the fact that the near inedible quality of food aboard some ships significantly abetted illness and nutritional deficiency that began at the time of capture, and rose swiftly in the *captiveries* on the African coast.[160]

Despite the repulsive quality of the food, bland and often bitter, burned from long cooking, or spoiled from being left unheated in the hours between meals, it provided the only safeguard against starvation onboard. Competition over the food was surely not unknown aboard slaving ships, as stronger or more desperate people claimed more, leaving others, especially the ill, with inadequate caloric intake.[161] However, mealtimes aboard slaving ships seem more likely to have highlighted the shared condition of captive women and children onboard. The distinct preparation of food for the captives, generally cooked in a separate cauldron or oven, combined with the deliberate separation of women and children from men for mealtimes, likely elevated gender and age in women and children's understanding of their status aboard ship. Among Wolof and Sereer families in mid-twentieth century Senegambia, age and gender often determined who shared plates. Young children who were no longer breastfeeding were often given their own plate, as were the elderly and the ill, while children over the age of 8 ate from a common plate with adults of the same sex. Pregnant women were granted privileges over food and their cravings indulged. Older women could eat with children, but were expected to avoid eating with young women in fear of damaging their fertility.[162] While the general trauma of dislocation and violence of seaborne slavery must have eclipsed expectations of daily life, the practices of twentieth-century Senegambians suggest that women and children may have been accustomed to sharing plates with fellow women and children. However, aboard the ship the presence of strangers across age classes and the presence of the ill beside them must have underscored their changed status. Children from Dahomey may have felt the absence of elders in particular, if, like young children in twentieth-century Dahomey, they were accustomed to sharing their meals with their siblings and paternal grandmothers at their grandmother's home.[163] The dismal and demeaning quality of the food, the absence of the beloved aromas of favorite dishes, of the treats secretly given in moments of indulgence, must have compounded the painful loss of mothers, children, siblings, cousins and the many others who had surrounded children and women and composed their worlds in former days. The humiliation of being forced to eat strange food from a collective trough likely served to suppress distinctions of ethnicity, age and sex, though it is impossible to know whether enslaved women and children themselves imposed some ranked access to food that went unnoticed by their enslavers. Some captives, perhaps many, shared more than just the provisions as they sat around their designated bowls. Perhaps younger children moved between laps of the women and older girls and boys who would have them, and who would perhaps take part in feeding their younger shipmates. Some women and older children may have helped the ailing to a portion of the mealy stew. Surely some found time to talk of times past, perhaps of savory meals and favorite dishes. If they found time to talk, conversations likely turned to their survival and to what might come at the end of the voyage, though hunger

[160] The partial nature of records on causes of death aboard slaving ships makes conclusive analysis near impossible, but as symptoms only show after 8 to 12 weeks, it seems likely that severe scurvy aboard ship was more common among Africans who had made long treks to the shore, including also those who had been imprisoned in *captiveries* prior to embarkation.
[161] Harms, 308-311.
[162] Igor de Garine, "Usages alimentaires dans la région de Khombole (Sénégal)" *Cahiers d'Études africaines*, vol. 10 (1962): 229-237.
[163] Herskovits, 155.

might have precluded any activity aside from eating, while food was available. As they dipped their spoons or their hands into a single bowl, their shared plate of noxious foodstuffs made plain their shared endangerment aboard the ship.

Labor

The labor demanded of women at sea varied dependent on the needs and fears of their enslavers. The primary concern of the captain and investors in the voyage was the preservation of the sale value of the cargo. To that extent, the primary obligations required of women aboard ship were related to their own survival, namely eating and performing some form of exercise. Other forced activity, including dancing, singing, and grinding tobacco for personal consumption, may fall within the category of labor as well, as the intent was to safeguard against psychological and physical decay and thereby preserve the marketability of the women.[164] Some captains have demanded that women also participate in food preparation, including grinding flour for the captives 'daily meals or to perform other domestic labor in service of the officers, justified as a way to strengthen their minds and bodies against the deleterious effects of the voyage.[165] Many women would also be required to care for captive children and to suffer sexual assault by the officers. It is notable that none of this labor is directly documented in the French logbooks, only surfacing obliquely through prescriptive documents, most notably instructions to captains, and implicitly through the presence of young children and the ill in the women's quarters.[166] As it is unlikely that all women performed all tasks aboard the ship, the varied forms of labor demanded of women likely created opportunities for social cohesion on the basis of skills and labor, layered atop affinities based on language, ethnicity, religion and age.

One captain's account of his trading activity at the Gold Coast and the Bight of Benin in the 1760s and 1770s, preserved in a manuscript at the Bibliothèque Municipale de Nantes, includes a section entitled "Observations touchant le soin des nègres dans le voyage de Guinée." He suggests that captive women should be charged with grinding maize into flour, which would be used to thicken and counter the bitterness of the bean soup. This, he suggests, would strengthen their bodies against decay and fortify their minds against despair. It is unclear to what extent this recommendation represents common habits aboard ship. Jean Barbot writes of one woman, who after giving birth aboard his ship, was forced to return to her cooking duties within the hour, her newborn tied to her back with a rag.[167] *Journaux de traite* from voyages to the Bight of Benin, where maize production had taken hold over the eighteenth century, and one from a ship that stopped at Principe for provisions, reveal purchases of "ears of corn" in large quantities. Given the certainty of swift spoilage of fresh produce, it is very likely that this corn was dried rather than fresh.[168] Judith Carney suggests that slave traders on the African coast often

[164] Dancing was intended not only to exercise the women's bodies, but to entertain the crew, while reinforcing the oversexualization of African women and girls by their captors. See Katrina Dyonne Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About: The Racial Politics of Music and Dance in North American Slavery* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2014), 42-44.

[165] On grinding food, see Colin A. Palmer, *Human Cargoes: The British Slave Trade to Spanish America, 1700-1739* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 51; Miller, *Way of Death,* 415; Johannes Menne Postma, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600-1815* (Cambridge, MA: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 258.

[166] Anonymous (Captain), "Observations touchant le soin des nègres dans le voyage de Guinée".

[167] Barbara Bush, "African Caribbean Slave Mothers and Children", 78.

[168] Captain Jean-Baptiste Gaugy aboard the slave ship Le Roy Guinguin recorded buying 4,400 ears of corn at Principe in 1765, along with flour, 4400 yams, 6624 coconuts, 21500 bananas, as well as much smaller amounts of

purchased unprocessed rice, to be cleaned and ground by enslaved women aboard the ship.[169] The same may have been the case for millet and sorghum. It can be assumed that many captains may have sought to cut costs by purchasing and loading unprocessed or partially processed dry grains, whether corn, sorghum or millet, and depending on the forced labor of captive women to finish processing it. Yams, though they were likely only sold in one form, still might have been pounded by female captives before cooking. Cassava, in contrast, requires significant processing to produce the manioc flour that was common aboard slaving ships, and many captains specify that they purchased manioc flour rather than the raw root.[170] While it is impossible to know what proportion of captains purchased unprocessed grains, due to the lack of specificity in account books and logbooks, five of the six primary foodstuffs purchased for captives 'consumption in the slave trade could have required significant labor aboard ship before they could be cooked and consumed.[171] Eighteenth-century West African women would have been accustomed to the work of hand milling. Milling grain composed a significant portion of women's daily labor across West Africa, and in the maize-producing regions even women from farther inland were familiar with the work of grinding maize.[172] Pounding rice in a mortar and pestle, the method used in Africa, was grueling and skilled work, as was the work of grinding other grains on a grinding mill or millstone.[173] It is notable that I have found no mentions of such tools in ships ' inventories, in captains 'instructions, or in records of revolt, despite the potential for even wooden instruments like pestles to be used against captors.[174] It is likely they were purchased in France prior to embarkation and had little resale value when a ship was sold. I have also seen no entries in inventories or *journaux de traite* for the food bowls, utensils, toilets or other items of daily use aboard the ship, suggesting that these may have occupied a similar category. Without a sense of the number of grinding tools that might have been aboard a slaving ship, we cannot tell what fraction of women might have been forced to mill grain at any one time. Surely, space constraints limited the number of mortars or mills that could be carried onboard, and the difficulty of coordinating a workforce out of the weakened, demoralized, and linguistically

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salt and palm oil. Jean-Baptiste Gaugy, Copie extrait du journal de traite du négrier le Roy Guinguin sous le commandement du capitaine Jean-Baptiste Gaugy, à la Côte d'or en Afrique, December 4, 1764- April 12, 1766, Fonds Berthrand de Coeuvres: Dossiers de Navires, ADLA 16 J 1.

[169] Carney, *Black Rice*, 146-147.

[170] Crassous, Journal de Bord du *Roy Dahomey* July 16, 1773; Giron, Journal de bord de la *Jeannette*, December 6, 1743; Robert Rirdan, Rapport du Capne, Martinique, Amirauté du Fort Saint Pierre de l'Isle Martinique, October 19, 1732, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4983, among others.

[171] James McCann, *Maize and Grace: Africa's Encounter with a New World Crop, 1500-2000* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), 28. Eric Robert Taylor, *If We Must Die: Shipboard Insurrections in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006), 27; David Eltis, "The Slave Trade & Commercial Agriculture in an African Context", in *Commercial Agriculture, the Slave Trade and Slavery in Atlantic Africa*, ed. by Robin Law, Silke Strickrodt, and Suzanne Schwarz, 2013, 41-43.

[172] Judith Carney has demonstrated the sophistication of this final stage of processing rice for consumption or for the market. She argues that enslaved women from rice cultivating areas in West Africa brought this and other knowledge of rice cultivation to South Carolina, where they were instrumental in establishing rice as a plantation crop there. She also relates seventeenth-century accounts and cites twentieth-century anthropological work that indicate the gendered nature of this work prior to the eighteenth century and persisting into the modern era. David W. Ames, "The Economic Base of Wolof Polygyny", *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology*, 11 (1955), 391–403; James D. La Fleur, *Fusion Foodways of Africa's Gold Coast in the Atlantic Era* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 93; Judith Carney, "Rice Milling, Gender and Slave Labour in Colonial South Carolina", *Past & Present*, 153 (2018), 124-129.

[173] On rice milling as skilled and labor intensive work, see Judith Carney, "Rice Milling", 126-129.

[174] Taylor catalogues weapons used in slave revolts, which included logs, ax handles, food bowls and other pieces of wood, as well as tools and weaponry. Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 96.

diverse population of women onboard posed another obstacle. It seems most likely that not all women performed this particular labor aboard the ship. Many would have been too ill to work. Others may have sought out the familiar rhythm of milling, perhaps in hopes of privileges or access to food, perhaps simply out of fear of being found uncooperative or caught by the crew without a necessary occupation. Some may have found comfort in working alongside others who shared their skills. On ships where a captain did force women to grind corn, those who spoke the same language or similar dialects, might talk over their work. At the very least, they must have recognized each others' skill as well as their mutually demeaned status. For some, the regularity and familiarity of the work might have numbed the severe psychological distress of captivity at sea, while it added to the dire physical demands on their bodies. While the circumstances,history and health of each captive population and of each woman surely weighed heavily on the possibilities for social engagement, aboard some ships and among some women, the shared task of grinding grain may have provided particular opportunities for social engagement over skilled work.

If milling grain aboard ship was likely restricted to voyages from certain regions, the presence of substantial numbers of enslaved children suggests that childcare would have formed a large part of many women's work aboard ship. Information on children aboard ship is extremely limited. Understandings of age groups and the limits of childhood varied between European nations and slave traders, who in some cases characterized children as being under the age of ten, but often used height and signs of puberty as indicators of adulthood. Modern scholars often use fourteen or fifteen as a likely upper limit.[175] It is very likely that children composed a large minority aboard many, perhaps even most ships, though an accurate estimate of their presence is evasive. David Geggus estimates that around 26.6% of the captives carried aboard French slaving ships were children.[176] In logbooks that I have consulted, sixteen of twenty-one slaving voyages mention the presence of children. The logbooks of the remaining five make no mention of the age (or in some cases even the sex or number) of their captives, suggesting that there may have been children aboard those ships as well.[177] With children composing a substantial proportion of all captives embarked on French slaving ships from 1680 to 1793, childcare surely would have dominated many women's labor obligations. This was particularly the case for women captive aboard French ships in the period of 1751-1775. Ships trading at Senegambia during that period embarked 38 children out of every 100 captives, 43 children out of every 100 captives at the Bight of Biafra, and 30 out of every 100 people traded along the West Central African coast.[178] Aboard a ship like the *Deux Nottons*, which sailed from Nantes to Ouidah in 1764, where proportions approached the overall average for the century of around 26 percent, 80 children and 100 women crowded the deck and women's quarters. Aboard the *Apollon*, which sailed from Nantes to the Bight of Benin and Saint-Domingue, 72 children

[175] Geggus, "Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity", 23; David Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts , African Authority , and the Atlantic Slave Trade", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 58 (2001), 85; Hogerzeil and Richardson, "Slave Purchasing Strategies", 169.

[176] Geggus, "Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity", 23–24; J. Mettas, *Répertoire des expéditions négrière françaises au xviiie siècle*, ed. Serge Daget, 2 vols. (Paris, 1978, 1984).

[177] Interestingly, the corresponding entries in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database for five of these voyages show no data on the presence or absence children.

[178] Within the 3,369 French slaving voyages listed in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database for the period between 1680 and 1793, only 704 note the presence or absence of children. Among these 704 voyages, the average percentage of children among the captives was over 26%. Only a small number of voyages, less than 17, record having no children onboard. https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/uO6njeY3, Accessed June 15, 2020.

lived aboard the ship with 116 women and 155 men. Other ships with similar percentages of children reveal similarly close proportions of women to children, with each group composing around 24 to 34 percent of the captive population, while men composed around 40 to 50 percent. This suggests that even on voyages with average percentages of children, there was close to a 1:1 relationship of women to children. Considering the range of needs associated with children of different ages, it seems likely that some women were tasked with caring for several children, while many others had no childcare duties.[179] Depending on the capacities and needs of enslaved women and older children aboard ship, and on the dedication of the captain to extracting human value from his cargo, many, perhaps even most children had no caregiver aboard the ship. This deficit was certain to be amplified on ships with higher proportions of the youngest captives. On a small but significant number of voyages, children composed a majority of the captive people aboard ship.[180] It is difficult to imagine the conditions at this extreme, where aboard the *César*, captained by Pierre La Haye from Nantes to Sierra Leone in 1752, 185 children sailed with only 39 women and 49 men, or aboard the *Jeune Flore*, which carried around 265 children, 11 women and 81 men from West Central Africa to Martinique in 1745.[181] If food, shelter, water, sanitation and emotional resources were already stretched beyond their breaking points on most voyages, children must have felt the effects of these deficits most keenly when they outnumbered captive adults. The large numbers of children onboard slaving ships suggests that while the labor of caregiving dominated many women's experiences, the lack of caregiving resources, felt by all below deck, particularly dominated the lives of children at sea.

The most absorbing form of childcare may have been the care and feeding of infants. Aboard the *Roy Dahomey*, as aboard many other slaving ships, a small number of "nursing infants" or *enfants à la mamelle* were embarked with the other captives, but they were not counted in the tally of the enslaved people onboard. Three nursing infants embarked aboard the *Néréide* in 1730, three aboard the *Alexandre* in 1732, and three aboard the *Comtesse* in 1740.[182] Mustakeem writes of the precariousness of infant life and the burden of childcare in the transatlantic slave trade, as captains often saw the very young as costly burdens of negligible sale value.[183] Crassous confirms this in his records of the infant dead aboard the *Roy Dahomey*. As he

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[179] These figures are drawn from the information on the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, retrieved through the search referenced above. For most voyages, it is unclear what proportion of children were under the age of 7, though where that information is available, Geggus has found significant proportions of children under 13 and under 7 years old. Geggus, "Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity," 24.

[180] 6% of the 704 French voyages that note the percentage of captive of children onboard in the Trans-Atlantic slave trade database.

[181] While this may be an extreme case, women aboard ships sailing from West Central Africa may have been particularly overburdened with childcare, as these ships carried the among the highest percentages of children and among the highest ratios of men to women. Geggus calculates that 30% of enslaved cargos from Congo-Angola were children, and captives from the region had sex ratios of 212 men for 100 women. Voyage ID 30605, Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/eRCP4HbU. Geggus, "Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity," 32.

[182] It is likely many other ships embarked nursing infants, as many logbooks do not specify their captives by age or gender. However, it is also possible that the embarkation of nursing infants or their documentation was more prevalent in the period from 1730-1740. The fact that all three ships embarked three nursing infants seems likely to be a coincidence, unless perhaps captains received orders to embark no more than three nursing infants. Jean de Lafargue, 1er pilote, Journal de bord, *La Néréide* October 13, 1730, Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/28, pièce 20; Mathurin Laurant, 1er pilote, Journal de bord, *L'Alexandre*, October 3, 1732, Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, MAR/4JJ/28, pièce 29 (10/3/1732); Joseph Le Houx, Journal de bord, *La Comtesse*, November 5, 1740 Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81.

[183] Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 41.

did for Bossoû, he marked the deaths of two nursing infants in mid-July of 1773 with the word "néant", or "nothing", because they were not counted in the value of the cargo. The pilot aboard the *Saint-Louis* in 1730 similarly remarked on the cargo of the *Diane* on its departure from Gorée, which included "296 captives, not including some little [ones] at the breast, who are not counted."[184] Eight months later, the *Saint-Louis* departed with 279 "men of all ages", 71 "women of all ages", likely including boys and girls and "11 little children at the breast, from the age of one month to one year."[185] At least seven of those children died in the Atlantic voyage. The remaining four might have survived to reach Saint-Domingue or La Balise at the mouth of the Mississippi River, or their deaths may simply be undocumented.

The outsized burden of care (and caloric nourishment) for children of such a young age certainly came from one of the few women onboard who were able to produce milk at the time of embarkation. The struggle to feed a young child "from the age of one month to one year" and to guard them from illness must have required unceasing vigilance. If toddlers over the age of one but under the age of two were among the enslaved, they may have also relied on breastfeeding women, as women in West Africa and enslaved women in the Caribbean generally nursed children well into their second and sometimes into their third or fourth year of life.[186] While some infants and toddlers, suffering from dysentery, parasites, or the virulent fevers that swept through these ships likely refused to eat, others may have suckled constantly, driven by hunger and thirst, seeking to soothe their ailing bellies or simply seeking refuge from the stress and suffering of their surroundings.[187] The sheer physical demands of feeding an infant in these circumstances must have taken a heavy toll on the physical health of nursing women. At mealtimes just as at most other times of the day and night, nursing women and caregivers of very young infants likely would have needed to hold the children while they tried to feed themselves. Seated around a single bowl with nine other women and children, it would have been difficult to secure sufficient food for oneself and for a young child. Considering the general malnutrition

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[184] Jean Mettas documents 6 infants aboard the *Diane*, captained by Tortel, which departed from Gorée on 1/15/1730. See voyage 64/2912 in Mettas, vol. 2, p. 583. Rudolphe Carné, Journal de bord, *Le Saint-Louis*, January 16, 1730, Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/17, pièce 50.

[185] "Deux cent soixante et dix-neuf, hommes de tout ages . . . Soixante et onzes femmes de tout ages . . . plus 11 petits Enfants à la mamelle, depuis l'age d'un mois jusquà un an cy 11 petit." Carné, Journal de bord, *Le Saint-Louis* September 14, 1730). A sign of how processing numerical data can conceal the presence of children, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database cites the same number of enslaved people onboard this voyage (361), but records 0% children. This is somewhat surprising, as Jean Mettas's data on the voyage includes 11 "enfants à la mamelle". See Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, voyage ID 32911 and voyage 63/2911 in Mettas, *Répertoire des Expéditions Négrières Françaises*, vol. II, 582.

[186] In Barbados, Handler and Corruccini have estimated an average age of weaning among enslaved children at about 3.24 years, based on analysis of skeletal remains of enslaved people. In eighteenth-century African cultures, women breastfed for an average of two to three years. Herbert S. Klein and Stanley L. Engerman, "Fertility Differentials between Slaves in the United States and the British West Indies: A Note on Lactation Practices and their Possible Implications" *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 35, no. 2 (Apr. 1978), 369; Jerome S. Handler and Robert S. Corruccini, "Weaning among West Indian Slaves: Historical and Bioanthropological Evidence from Barbados", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 43 (1986), 114-116.

[187] While breastfeeding infants have been found to have higher cortisol levels than formula-fed infants, they exhibit shorter crying times and less increase in heart rate when experiencing brief procedural pain. Researchers propose that the higher levels of cortisol may be related to analgesic effects of breastfeeding. Ricardo Carbajal, Soocramanien Veerapen, Sophie Couderc, Myriam Jugie, and Yves Ville, "Analgesic Effect Of Breast Feeding In Term Neonates: Randomised Controlled Trial", *BMJ: British Medical Journal* 326, no. 7379 (2003): 13–15; Yang Cao, et al. "Are breast-fed infants more resilient? Feeding method and cortisol in infants", *The Journal of Pediatrics* vol. 154, 3 (2009): 452-4.

aboard ship, as well as the form of mealtimes, breastfeeding women must have suffered from increased nutritional deficiencies, even when compared to their captive shipmates. Whether they exclusively nursed their children or supplemented their milk with food, they divided any nutrition they obtained from their meager rations between themselves and the children they nursed.

Coupled with malnutrition was the outsized physical demands of carrying and caring for young children. Stephanie Smallwood writes of one woman aboard a late-seventeenth-century British slaving ship, who refused "to abandon her duties as a mother," carrying her child everywhere about the ship until she died of exhaustion.[188] Unlike in West Africa, women aboard the ship often had no cloth or other materials by which to carry their children or tie them to their backs, meaning that infants would have to be carried in their arms.[189] If small infants had to be held because they could not sit, older infants had to be held because the seaborne world was full of dangers. Amidst the constant threat of disease lay the risk of a child crawling underfoot, falling overboard or into the "filth of the necessary tubs" described by Olaudah Equiano, or simply drawing the violent ire of an officer or crewman.[190] The vigilance such protection required would have placed significant burdens on the shoulders of their caregivers. Nursing-specific ailments may have shortened the lives of some women as well. One woman aboard the *Diligente*, a small slaving ship that departed from Nantes in 1749, died mid-voyage due in part to a breast infection. She was likely nursing or pregnant at the time of her death, and mastitis might be considered as one of the many afflictions that bore upon breastfeeding women, particularly those who had already suffered the loss of an infant.[191]

The stories of parenthood aboard ship underline the ways in which the social disorder of the slave ship coupled with physical danger to imperil caregivers and their children. For some captive women, the cries of infants would have brought into keen focus their own aching bodies. Others may have turned to heartrending memories of their own children, left behind, captured or dead. Some captive women or children may have offered to hold or watch another's baby in order to allow the primary caregiver to rest or attend to her own physical needs. No matter what help fellow shipmates may have found strength to share with nursing women, it could never sufficiently bolster these caregivers or their children against the cruelty of the slave ship. The dire emotional cost of this disempowerment exceeds measure. One woman, aboard the French ship *Le Maurepas*, jumped to the sea while holding her infant daughter as the ship sailed from

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[188] The historiography of slavery is so dominated by the deluge of violence and death that care and the physical and emotional burdens that accompany it are often lost. Smallwood's attention to the story of this mother and her child, imperfectly hidden in the captain's account, unveils the labor of care. Quote from Peter Blake, "A Journall of my Intended Voyage for ye Gold Coast kept by mee Peter Blake Commander of ye Royall Companys ship *James* in ye searvis of ye Royall African Company of England," 28 November 1675, Treasury Papers Collection, British Public Record Office, Kew, England, T70/1211, f.71. Cited in Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 145, 151.

[189] Bush, "African Caribbean Slave Mothers and Children", 74.

[190] Equiano writes of these "necessary tubs, into which the children often fell, and were almost suffocated", and of his own shock when he was tied by his feet and whipped for refusing food. He writes "I had never experienced any thing of this kind before." Countless children must have felt a similar shock and terror upon their first encounter with the violence of the slave ship. Equiano, vol. 1, 74, 79.

[191] This woman was traded at the Sierra Leone estuary. She developed breast inflammation aboard the *Diligente*, a small slaving ship from Nantes, and died soon after. The captain comments in his notes that she was "grosse et grasse" and "très belle." Journal de navigation du navire *la Diligente* commandé par Charles Le Breton Lavallée, July 30, 1750, Journaux de Bord, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 5004/4.

Petit Popo to São Thomé in July of 1733.[192] Depression, desperation, sickness and fear were rank aboard the ship, where two other adults sought refuge in the waves as the ship lost sight of the shore. They had already been onboard for nearly a month. Perhaps it had become impossible for this woman to watch herself and her daughter carried further each day into the sinister world of her captors. Likely she and the two other adults who jumped to the sea in the ship's passage to São Thomé believed, like many other Africans caught in the Atlantic trade, that death could carry their spirits home.[193] Whatever her motives, her action denied her captors any further power over her own or her daughter's body and spirit. As Stephanie Smallwood argues, the mothers who held their children even to the point of exhaustion, as well as those who chose the sea above the violent subjection of the ship, insisted upon the fullness of their humanity so loudly and so painfully that their insistence bleeds through the very archives constructed to deny that humanity.[194] If each such story unveils another abyss of human suffering and human cruelty, it also reveals the social breakdown of the slave ship. The trade tore the individual from their community and the networks of communal care that might have otherwise surrounded caregivers and the very young.

Nevertheless, the work of caregiving, whether forced or voluntary, necessitated bonds of dependence across age groups and among the women involved.[195] Women enslaved in the Americas adopted shared mothering strategies in order to cope with the many demands on their labor and bodies, and to improve their own and their children's chances at survival.[196] This was likely the case aboard the ship as well. This communal caregiving opened opportunities to share not only their time and words, but also songs, childcare practices and perhaps even memories of their own families, insofar as such recollections together could assuage inescapable pain of separation. Very young women might have organized games like those that had only recently filled their days at home. At night, skilled storytellers may have captivated the attention of children and adults alike below deck. And when milestones arrived, such as first teeth, walking, or the loss of baby teeth, women may have negotiated ways to mark these transformations, which, under more normal circumstances, would indicate changes in care needs, responsibilities and modes of socialization for children.[197] The archival record is too thin to discern what

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[192] Déclaration d'arrivée du navire *Le Maurepas* de Nantes Capne Le Sr. Thiercelin, Amirauté de la ville du Fort Royale, Martinique, March 30, 1732, Pièces Déposées en Greffe, Amiruaté de Nantes, ADLA B 4982.

[193] Another woman and a man accompanied them into the waters of the Gulf of Guinea during this passage to São Thomé, though the *déclaration* does not specify if they jumped overboard on the same or separate days. Off the coast of Petit Popo, another man had drowned after attempting escape in one of the ship's canoes. On varied causes of suicide and suicide as resistance among enslaved people, see Pierson, "White Cannibals, Black Martyrs." Sasha Turner writes of the grief of enslaved women who chose to terminate their pregnancies or resorted to infanticide to protect themselves from the pain of motherhood under slavery and their children from lives in bondage. William D. Pierson, "White Cannibals , Black Martyrs : Fear , Depression , and Religious Faith as Causes of Suicide Among New Slaves", *The Journal of Negro History*, 62 (1977), 147–59; Kevin Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power: Aquatic Culture in the African Diaspora* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 33-35; Turner, "The Nameless and the Forgotten", 18.

[194] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 150-151.

[195] Sowande Mustakeem suggests that these forced relationships of caregiving, while designed to reduce costs to the ship, "foreshadow[ed] the importance of fictive kin within plantation communities." Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 41.

[196] Emily West and Erin Shearer, "Fertility Control, Shared Nurturing, and Dual Exploitation: the lives of enslaved mothers in the antebellum United States" in *Motherhood, Childlessness and the Care of Children in Atlantic Slave Societies*, ed. Camillia Cowling, Maria Helena Pereira Toledo Machado, Diana Paton and Emily West (New York: Routledge, 2020), 123-124.

[197] These are among the landmarks noted in ethnographic studies of twentieth-century Dahomey, Bambara, Wolof, and Bakongo communities. Rabain-Jamin, "Enfance, âge et développement chez Les Wolof du Sénégal", 49–66;

practices might have been in use aboard the ship. Many changes would have been delayed or passed unrecognized. While some children may have gained their sea legs before they learned to walk on land, the hazardous conditions of shipboard toilets likely led to postponed potty training. As mentioned above, the irregularities of the voyage may have halted a nursing woman's milk production or her psychological resources for this intimate form of caregiving, leading to early weaning. Alternatively, some women may have extended breastfeeding in order to fortify and comfort a child. This disordered world dislocated not only people but also the milestones of developmental time and the associated caregiving needs and activities. While the lives of infants and toddlers were particularly in peril aboard the slave ship, the fact that some survived suggests that women and older children at times found ways to supply the most essential caregiving needs to the youngest among them. Such achievements must have relied on some social support, networks of interdependence forged in the bowels of the ship.

Captive Children

Almost any ship would have embarked significantly more children than infants.[198] Slavers used language, spatial divisions and special privileges to accord a particular status to these older children, most between the ages of 7 and 15. It is significant that slave traders reserved *enfant* and *fille* for captive newborns and infants and chose to call the older children they held onboard *negrillons* or *negrittes*, *rapasses* or *raparittes,* or sometimes included in *femmes de toutes ages* or *hommes de toutes ages*.[199] I have found no instances of slavers '

Blandine Bril, Martine Zack, and Estelle Nkounkou-Hombessa "Ethnotheories of Development and Education: A View from Different Cultures" *European Journal of Psychology of Education* 4, no. 2 (1989): 307-18; Herskovits, vol. 1, 274-5, 395.

[198] Children's experiences of the Middle Passage have not figured prominently in the scholarship, with several notable exceptions, despite the fact that many of the enslaved people who wrote about their experience on the Middle Passage crossed the Atlantic as children. Exceptions include the work of Audra Diptee, Martin Klein, Jerome Handler, and Benjamin Lawrence. Jerome Handler describes 15 autobiographical accounts of enslaved people who survived the Atlantic passage to British America. Of the authors, 3 were captured between the ages of two and six, 7 between the ages of 10 and 15, and 3 were captured between the ages of 20 and 40. All related or wrote their accounts in adulthood. These are adults' childhood recollections, recorded decades after the events occurred, and related for diverse purposes to public or private readers, often translated from the author's original language. Thus, they must be considered carefully, leaving allowance for the inflections of memory, language and rhetoric as shapers of the stories. Nonetheless, they remain some of the most direct sources that can speak to childhood, and individual captivity at sea in the Middle Passage. See Jerome S. Handler, "Survivors of the Middle Passage: Life Histories of Enslaved Africans in British America", *Slavery and Abolition*, 23 (2002), 25–56; Audra Diptee, "African Children in the British Slave Trade during the Late Eighteenth Century" *Slavery & Abolition* 27, 2 (2006), 183-96; Audra Diptee and Martin Klein "African Childhoods and the Colonial Project" *Journal of Family History* 35, 1 (2010); Benjamin Lawrance, "'Your Poor Boy No Father No Mother': 'Orphans,' Alienation, and the Perils of Atlantic Child Slave Biography", *University of Hawai'i Press on Behalf of the Center for Biographical Research*, 36 (2013), 672–703.

[199] While *rapasse or raparittes* (also termed *rapacilles* or *raparilles*, adaptations of the Portuguese term) could indicate children indicated for household service, the use of these terms in the logbooks suggest that it indicated captives who were children, i.e. "Il nous en reste 105 tant homme que femmes rapasse et raparitte" "Les Bateaux de barre ont mis abord et monsieur de Billy Capitaine est veneu a bord et a porté ses expeditions pour partir pour louisianne et 95 Captifs qui font en tout 200 tant hommes que fames rapasses et negrittes." Following this entry is a table numbering "Hommes: 147 / Femmes: 29 / Rapasse: 10 / Raparittes / Enfants a la mamelle: 3" Jean de Lafargue, 1er pilote, Journal de bord, *La Néréide* October 13, 1730; Similar usage of *rapasse* and *raparilles* appears on Le Houx's logbook for the 1740 voyage of the *Comtesse*. Le Houx, Journal de bord, *La Comtesse*, November 5, 1740.

documentation using *garçon* or *fille*, and only one use of the word *enfants* to describe the death of captive children who were among the twenty captives who drowned when a ship sailing from Madagascar ran aground on the Malabar coast in 1739.[200] This linguistic differentiation between captive infants and children distanced them from their captors 'vocabulary, and perhaps their concepts, of childhood. It indicated the children's value as products among the cargo, but also their differentiation, through their lower but still significant monetary value and through their lower perceived threat to the crew, from their adult shipmates. It suggests that girls and boys were caught between the financially negligible infants and the adult captives, who carried both the promise of high profits and the threat of revolt. This position would accord them an ambiguous status aboard the ship. Their dehumanizing commodification rendered them vulnerable to arbitrary and often extreme violence, even atop the constant threats of disease, malnutrition and severe psychological distress. At the same time, the fact that they were perceived to be less dangerous meant that they were often allowed greater freedom of movement and at times direct access to crew and officers. As they voyaged on the ship, they had to contend with this ambiguity, to locate allies amidst the crowd below deck or their oppressors above.

As a class aboard the ship, African children also had to adapt to a flattened social organization of age groups. Differences in age organized the lives of children on land, shaping their affiliations, their affections, their social activities and their initiation into social and professional roles.[201] For some, these differences were solidified in age-sets or age-classes, which formally organized boys and men into age groups, as many as 11 in some societies and as few as three and others. Among the twentieth-century Afikbo Ibo of the Bight of Biafra, age sets spanned a period of only three years.[202] Among the Segu Bambara of the Upper Niger Valley, often transported through Senegambia, age sets crossed a broader range of years, but performed a similar social function, determining social roles and rewards, and overshadowing, though not completely occluding the effects of kinship or wealth.[203] Children from these societies may have found some parallels between the concept of age-sets as leveling institutions based primarily or exclusively on the age and sex of members and the distinctive position of children aboard the ship. Though members of age sets generally came from local communities, membership was open regardless of clan and often of ethnic origin. Aboard the ship, children too were forced into a collective status based solely on their age, though girls and boys were often grouped together. Unlike shipboard classes however, age-sets often had formal leadership, acted corporately within the society, and expressed distinctive forms of sociability, such as group revelry and drinking millet beer among the Segu Bambara bachelor age set.[204] Children aboard the ship were forced to adapt in the moment to their perceived status and to improvise their strategies of survival. While

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[200] The captain had allegedly mistaken an unknown island on the Malabar coast for the port of Goa when he sought shelter from rough weather along the Malabar coast. Only 4 people survived the wreck, including two surgeons, a caulker, who died of scurvy 3 days after reaching shore, and one female captive, who was later traded for 30 Roupies by the surviving surgeons. Procès-verbal fait abord *La Subtile*, December 15, 1739, La Compagnie des Indes, ANOM C/4/3.

[201] Richard Roberts, "Production and Reproduction of Warrior States: Segu Bambara and Segu Tokolor, c. 1712-1890", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 13 (1980), 403-405; Rabain-Jamin,'Enfance, âge et développement chez les Wolof du Sénégal', *L Homme*, 2003, 53-58; Herskovits, *Dahomey,* 277-279.

[202] The twentieth-century Afikbo Ibo are considered an age-set society, though many others in the region are not. Simon Ottenberg, *Leadership and Authority in an African Society: The Afikpo Village-Group* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1971). Anne Foner and David Kertzer, "Transitions Over the Life Course: Lessons from Age-Set Societies", *American Journal of Sociology*, 83 (1978), 1088.

[203] Foner and Kertzer, "Transitions Over the Life Course", 1082-1088.

[204] Roberts, "Production and Reproduction of Warrior States", 389–419

individual children were at times granted special privileges, the grouping of children on the slave ship gave them no formal roles, no distinctive initiation, and in contrast to most age-set societies for which initiation occurred at or around puberty, the category of *negrillons* and *negrittes* aboard the ship encompassed all children from the ages of 4 to 15. Even those from societies without formal age-sets would have been accustomed to some separation in the manners of play, work and education for children under or over the age of 9. Any space for children entering puberty to play, laugh, tell "amorous tales" in same-sex gatherings with others of their age was all but extinguished by the violence of the ship and the relative strangeness of the crowd.[205] In landed communities, adolescence often brought with it instruction and initiation into sexual awareness and play. Among twentieth-century Dahomean girls, this initiation included ritual scarification and instruction from a married woman. Boys too began to meet together, to tell and dramatize love stories, and to receive instruction from older brothers or cousins. At adolescence, boys also moved out of their mother's homes and into a shared home with other boys their age. Menstruation also required ritual address, namely social separation in a separate house until the bleeding had stopped.[206] This ritual treatment of adolescence, though distant from the eighteenth century and limited in scope, helps relate the formal place likely given to sexual instruction and to adolescence itself, among many of the Africans who embarked on the Middle Passage. It is difficult to imagine any use for similar rites or instruction in the disordered world of the ship. In place of rites and recognition of status, children in the Middle Passage were subjected to rape and sexual exploitation.[207] It is possible, even likely, that women and older children sought to provide some words of advice to the young, now exposed to the assaults of captors, but gone was the insular presence of familiar peers, the formal strata that distinguished children between the ages of 4 and 8, and those above the age of 9. Aboard the ship, young teenagers were grouped with six-year-olds, and they were accorded the same formal status, though the forms of their treatment and abuse changed as they approached adulthood, and girls became more vulnerable to rape, and all children more vulnerable to exemplary punishment.[208] Many children managed to bargain a survival under these circumstances, seeking alliances and protections, affection and aid where they could.

Informally, children may have congregated together with others close in age. Those who spoke the same language likely found each other early. Visible signs also helped children find others of similar ethnic backgrounds and similar ages. Relative size, the loss of baby teeth, and some indications of puberty could be immediately recognized. Some children would have borne country marks that signified their entry into stages of life, their social status and their membership in ethnic, kinship and local groups.[209] On ships sailing from Senegambia, Fulbe children may have borne facial scarification or other markings. Raised, dotted patterns may have adorned the bodies of some girls from West Central Africa, while boys from Benguela, Angola, Quila and Congo likely had no facial markings. On ships that sailed from the Bight of Benin, boys from Dahomey may have recognized each other by their facial cicatrization, or from their teeth, as some twentieth-century boys chose to file or remove the upper front teeth around their

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[205] Herskovits, 278.
[206] On early twentieth-century practices surrounding menses among the Dahomey, see Herskovits, 278-288.
[207] On one British ship, a captain raped a "little girl of eight to ten years" violently for three nights, leading to serious injury. Mustakeem, 86-87.
[208] Olaudah Equiano writes of his shock when he was beaten severely for refusing to eat aboard the slave ship. Equiano, 73-74.
[209] Katrina H. B. Keefer, "Scarification and Identity in the Liberated Africans Department Register , 1814-1815", *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 47 (2013), 541-2.

early adolescence.[210] Dahomean girls who had entered puberty likely bore the cicatrizations given after their first menstruation. The cuts crossed the bridge of the nose, adorned the hairline, the cheek, the upper and lower back, shoulders, thighs, left hand and abdomen.[211] Yoruba-speaking children as young as six or seven likely bore markings particularly specific to their local groups, and Mina, Allada and other ethnicities from the Bight of Benin practiced elaborate cicatrization of the face and torso.[212] Paul Lovejoy describes these markings as a kind of map, readable by anyone from the interior of the Bight of Benin, which allowed others to identify the origins, family, status and citizenship of the bearer.[213] It is unclear to what degree such markings shaped children's friendships and associations below deck, but age, gender, language and ethnic markings were likely some of the first features children looked for when they encountered their young shipmates.

Embarkation was likely the moment when most children met most of those who would accompany them across the ocean, though some may have encountered each other at the *captiveries* along the coast.[214] Like women, children were more likely to have been captured in regions closer to the point of embarkation, and less likely to have spent long periods of time in the barracoons or European forts before they were purchased and forced aboard the ship.[215] Nevertheless, many had already suffered months or years in bondage, sold and resold in the long trek to the Atlantic market. Olaudah Equiano, kidnapped at around this age from his home near the Niger River in modern-day Nigeria, describes his closeness with his mother, whom he slept alongside "always", and who "adorned [him] with emblems, after the manner of our greatest warriors." This appeal to memory evokes a sense of personal pride in his budding martial skill, a visible recognition of place, now lost, in the broader society, and a potent relic of the mother-child bond. Siblings, friends and other relatives, even when captured together, would eventually compose a broader constellation of bereavements. These losses (of recognition, of a place in a social order and in a family, and loving bonds) must have shaken children at the moment of their enslavement and at the many severances that marked their passage to the coast. Ottobah Cugoano, an abolitionist author and Fante from the Gold Coast who was enslaved in his early adolescence around 1770, recounts this experience of compounded loss in his narrative of his enslavement, published nearly twenty years later.

> Let it suffice to say that I was thus lost to my dear indulgent parents and relations, and they to me. All my help was cries and tears, and these could not avail, nor suffered long, till one succeeding woe and dread

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[210] Examples of teeth filing can be found in eighteenth-century records of African slaves in the Americas as well, though these were associated with enslaved men and women identified as "Callabar" or "Eboe". Gomez, 122-123; Herskovits, 286, 289.

[211] In the twentieth century, groups of girls underwent the ceremony together, accompanied by the boys they were betrothed to and their friends in a festive environment. Herskovits 295-296.

[212] Keefer, 545; Paul E. Lovejoy, "Scarification and the Loss of History in the African Diaspora", in *Activating the Past: Historical Memory in the Black Atlantic*, ed. by Andrew Apter and Lauren Derry (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010), 104-115.

[213] Lovejoy, "Scarification and the Loss of History", 116.

[214] Horror greeted those children who were forced into the *captiveries* and castles along the coast. Cugoano writes of the "horrible scene" at the Cape Coast castle, the "rattling of chains, the smacking of whips, and the groans and cries of our fellow men." Vincent Carretta, *Quobna Ottobah Cugoano: Thoughts and Sentiments on the Evil of Slavery and Other Writings* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 15-16.

[215] Proportions of children aboard ships were also higher in regions where the site of capture was generally closer to the coast, and, as in the Bight of Biafra, where pawnship may have composed a larger part of trading practices. Geggus, "Sex Ratio, Age and Ethnicity", 39-40.

> swelled up another . . . the grievous thoughts which I then felt, still pant in my heart; though my fears and tears have long since subsided.[216]

These catastrophic losses built up over the weeks prior to their embarkation aboard the slave ship. Nevertheless, their embarkation aboard the slave ship marked a bewildering and cruel departure from their known world.[217] Belinda, a woman who had lived in bondage for over sixty years, described her encounter with the slave ship after her capture near the Volta River when she was not yet twelve years old in a legal petition to the Massachusetts Legislature in 1782. Aboard ship, she witnessed "scenes which her imagination had never conceived of, a floating world, the sporting monsters of the deep, and the familiar meeting of billows and clouds" and "three hundred Africans in chains, suffering the most excruciating torment."[218] Several children forced aboard these ships would later write of their fear, shared by many adults, that they would be cannibalized by their captors.[219] Equiano wrote of how he and his shipmates exhausted themselves from "crying together." Children came to the ship riven with the scars of separation, the wounds and illness brought on by the passage, and faced with the immediate threats of violence and death at sea. The sight of children "crying together" must have been common, a sign of the devastation of the trade, of the overwhelming losses that followed each captive person across the seas, of the fears of what lay ahead, and a sign perhaps of the captives 'collective recognition of their shared bereavements. To survive, children must have sought some comfort in their shared mourning, in each others' arms and the arms of captive women. They likely strove to forge connections with those who shared their language, country marks, age or sex, but most of all, they had to orient themselves along the sinews of power that ran through the slave ship.

Unlike toddlers and infants, who most likely depended almost entirely on women caregivers, older children, who could feed themselves and meet the most basic hygiene needs, depended upon a diverse range of survival strategies. Many must have relied upon each other. Especially aboard ships where they outnumbered adults, older children, if strong enough to do so, may have tended wounds, or helped with the tasks of cleaning and feeding the younger children. Among twentieth-century Wolof and Dahomean communities, older children played a large role in the care of younger children, guiding their first steps, talking and playing with them. In the evenings, they told each other stories, often animal or trickster tales with moral messages.[220] Perhaps aboard ships traveling from Senegambia, children wove elements from their own capture into tales of *doma* (witches), who hung around circumcision schools, hoping to carry away younger boys.[221] Some may have invented games or stories to occupy themselves and their shipmates. One observer remarked upon a game played by young boys aboard the ship, a

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[216] Carretta, *Quobna Ottobah Cugoano*, 15.

[217] While many children may have entered slavery closer to the coast, most would have been traded several times prior to their sale at the coast, spending anywhere between several weeks and years in the long landed passage, with passages to the Bight of Biafra and trading sites in Senegambia generally shorter than those in West Central Africa. See Miller, *Way of Death*, chapter 7.

[218] Vincent Carretta, *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 142-4.

[219] Equiano's account is the best known of these, but Cugoano and others expressed a similar fear. Handler, "Survivors of the Middle Passage", 35.

[220] Herskovits, 276.

[221] Enslaved people from West Central Africa also linked enslavers with cannibals and witches. Thornton, John, "Cannibals, Witches, and Slave Traders in the Atlantic World", *William and Mary Quarterly*, 60, no. 2 (2003), 273–94.

kind of chasing game that they called "slave taking" or "bush fighting", a sign that even imagined worlds were deeply inflected by the experience of enslavement.[222]

Many must have sought protection and kindness from the adults who shared the ship with them, a survival strategy and effort to reconstitute human connection and some semblance of stability in this unstable world. Benjamin Lawrence writes of the "extreme vulnerability of child slaves and their pressing need for patron/client relationships," often conceived of and expressed in terms of fictive kinship.[223] Adults who shared the same language or country marks would have been the most likely targets of children's dependence and trust, as well as adults who may have shown signs of kindness or care. In regions where captives were traded and forced aboard in smaller groups, children may have clung to an adult who had accompanied them in the passage to the coast or from coast to ship. Those who had been imprisoned in *captiveries* prior to their embarkation may have had more opportunity to forge tenuous and distressed connections with the others who shared their prisons. Once onboard most children likely formed bonds with particular captive adults. Likely some women took on the responsibility of caring for ill children, or for ensuring that certain children had enough to eat or were cleaned. Older boys may have also befriended captive men, particularly those who shared their language. Olaudah Equiano, who was kept in the men's quarters, writes of his conversations with his "countrymen", who told him all they knew about the ship and its sailors.[224] The relative freedom of movement children enjoyed aboard some ships would have allowed them to spread news, rumors, and conspiracies between the fore and aft of the ship, making them not only dependents of older captives, but integral to the social cohesion of captives as a whole. Children often played essential roles in the plotting of slave revolts aboard the ship. They conveyed plans between men and women, whose direct communication was carefully guarded against, and they used their access to officers quarters to gather important information about officers 'daily routines, as well as crucial tools for breaking chains and locks.[225] It is difficult to imagine what memories, what hopes and what despair must have raced through the minds of young captives like Cuguano, who tells of a plot between women and boys to burn the ship, believing that "death was more preferable than life" in the slave ship, but it is clear they shared much with their captive shipmates and were often willing to undertake the same risks to break free of their bondage.[226]

In some cases, however, the privileges of movement and access to the officers served to distance children from their fellow captives. It was not uncommon for officers to employ children for domestic service or amusement, allowing them to sleep in the cabins or on deck and allowing them considerable freedom of movement.[227] Some children befriended sailors or officers, though these relationships did not protect them from violence. Equiano befriended a mariner, who taught him to look through a quadrant.[228] Audra Diptee writes of one girl, kept as a mistress for the entire voyage by the captain in his cabin. Over the weeks at sea, she befriended the captain's young son. However, when she accidentally ripped the boy's shirt while playing,

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[222] Diptee, "African Children," 191, 191 note 70.
[223] Lawrance, "'Your Poor Boy No Father No Mother'", 672–703.
[224] Equiano, 76-77, 83.
[225] Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 88-94. Handler, "Survivors of the Middle Passage", 34.
[226] Cugoano, in his discussion of a planned revolt writes that "it was the women and boys which were to burn the ship." Their plot was exposed by a woman "who slept with some of the head men of the ship" Carretta, *Quobna Ottobah Cugoano*, 15.
[227] Barbot wrote of "several fine little boys whom we mostly kept to attend to us about the ship" for the amusement of the officers. Cited in Bush, "African Caribbean Slave Mothers", 78.
[228] Equiano, 83.

she was severely beaten. Boys soon learned that their mobility set them above the enslaved men, and may have led to distrust between the two groups. Diptee relates one witness's testimony before the British Parliament that he had often seen boys tease the chained men aboard the ship. On one occasion, a captive man was flogged for seizing and pinching one of the mischievous boys.[229] In a more deadly circumstance, that of a revolt aboard the *Diligente* off the coast of Sierra Leone in 1750, two boys who served at the captain's table claimed that the men who initiated the revolt threw them overboard because they refused to provide them with arms.[230] Thirteen children and fourteen women aboard the *Concorde* were allegedly killed by captive men and women during a failed revolt in 1732.[231] The frequent cooperation between children and women in the plotting and execution of slave revolts aboard ship, suggests that they may have found affection or at least shared stakes to unite behind. The cases of the *Concorde* and *Diligente*, among others, suggest that these relationships could also lead to different calculations. These relationships, often obscured in the formal admiralty court documents, were clearly complex, contextual, and came from the unique pressures captive children felt to secure their safety within the violently flattened and fragile social order aboard the slave ship. Even the youngest children were forced to assess the sinews of social and physical power, to forge new relationships, to seek out protection, recognition, respite and status under the greatest duress, where any choice often encompassed subjection to humiliation and physical and sexual abuse, where a misstep could lead to excruciating pain or death. Whatever bonds these children forged, whatever positions they maneuvered, any resulting protections or privileges were severely limited and fragile, vanishing in a moment.

Le Parc des Hommes

The particular isolation of men from women and young children aboard slaving ships underlines the slave trade's flattening of social orderings, its delineation of people by age and sex, rather than by the myriad other ways in which people organize themselves, including language, kinship, professional group, and religion. The slave traders 'flattening of the social existence of their captives perdures in the data of mere survival rates by age or sex. The passage becomes a black box, where people go in and numbers (and anecdotes) come out. If women and children have been underrepresented in the historiography of the slave trade, the family histories of captive men aboard ship have been overlooked in many cases. Enslaved men, like all captives on the oceanic voyage, enter the archives most frequently through their death. A smaller but substantial number of captives surface through their attempts at revolt and resistance. These mark the edges of shipboard experience, the ceaseless deepening of bodily pain and the eruption of violent resistance. This section seeks to unfold the time and space between those two edges,

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[229] Diptee, 192.

[230] Journal de navigation du navire *la Diligente* commandé par Charles Le Breton Lavallée, May 15, 1750.

[231] On the morning after a failed revolt aboard the slave ship *La Concorde* in 1732, crewmen found fourteen women and ten "big girls" ("grandes negrittes") and three "big boys" ("grands negrillons") intoxicated and suffocated "yvres et étouffés" in the women's quarters, ostensibly killed by those who revolted. The women and girls, according to the *Procés verbaux* had been raped during the long night over which revolters held the ship. The accuracy of this description is dubious, considering the racially coded rationale the officers attributed to the enslaved men who revolted. They claim that many of those who participated in the revolt had been stoked to action by the promise of sexual access to the women. Interestingly, three women were named as instrumental to the revolt, perhaps signaling disunity among the women and older children in particular. Déclaration fait abord *La Concorde* July 7, 1732, Minutes Civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 208.

the ways in which men and older boys, imprisoned together in the rank tweendecks, sought to construct social bonds, to make sense of and challenge the cruel denial of their personhood below deck. Like women and children, men were forced to navigate the breakage of familial bonds and the demand to meet ritual needs without required materials or places. Daily routines of food and labor provided some structure to their time at sea and shaped their disrupted social worlds. By focusing on these obscured elements of captive men's lives at sea, I aim to question the implicit binary created by slavery's archives of death and revolt, and the historiographical resort to violence to identify men's agency.

Fatherhood on the Slave Ship

In April of 1738, a pregnant woman and seven of her family members were forced onto a canoe to be carried aboard the *Duc d'Anjou,* a hulking French East Indiaman moored at Ile Marote, now Nosy Mangabe, in the Antongil Bay off the Northeast coast of Madagascar.[232] Among this small group, seized in a skirmish between rival tributaries of the Sakalava king at Massaly, was the woman's husband who, according to the *pilote* of the *Duc d'Anjou*, "preferred to allow himself to be captured rather than to abandon his family, of whom we have 7 to 8 slaves."[233] What can we make of this statement? It first reminds us of the particular proximity of the site of the family's capture to the site of their embarkation. In contrast to West African routes to slavery, on Madagascar in the early to mid-eighteenth-century, raids and warfare leading to enslavement often occurred within the range of hundreds rather than thousands of miles, with captives traveling days or weeks rather than weeks or months to their point of embarkation.[234] This family followed an unusually direct path to European enslavement, from their capture, at the coast of the Antongil Bay, to their embarkation on the *Duc d'Anjou,* moored possibly within sight or earshot of the conflict. It is this proximity that sheds light on the so often obscured moment of enslavement, and on the choice, however circumscribed, of one father to accompany his family into bondage. How many men fought enslavement only to surrender when the struggle appeared insurmountable, with the hope for some way to stay beside their loved ones? Historians have documented many women's desperate dedication to caring for their children in bondage, but the segregation by sex in the European slave market and the distance between enslavement and sale has often hidden the experiences of fathers and fatherhood in the slave trade. Following this man's experience can draw focus to the countless men torn from their families by the trade.

It would be easy to romanticize the man's decision without considering the circumstances that conditioned his and his family's enslavement. It seems exceedingly unlikely that his choice was between slavery and freedom. He was captured in a surprise raid, when a coordinated attack on the Sakalava emissary was foiled and the allies turned upon each other, raiding the village of a local king, Diambay.[235] Likely the man's first choice was to stay beside

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[232] The uninhabited island had been sold to the French for use as a trading post by the Sakalava king Andriana Baba, also known as Adrien Baba, in 1732. This diplomatic arrangement was negotiated by captain Castillon of the company ship the *Diane* on August 22, 1732. Robert Bousquet, *Les Esclaves et Leurs Maîtres à Bourbon (La Réunion) Au Temps de La Compagnie Des Indes, 1665-1767* (Mazères: Lulu, 2011), http://www.reunion-esclavage-traite-noirs-neg-marron.com, 119. J.-M. Filliot, *La traite des ésclaves vers les Mascareignes au XVIIIe siècle*, (Paris: ORSTOM, 1974), 131

[233] "Le père aima mieux se laisser prendre que d'abandonner sa famille dont nous en avons 7 a 8 esclaves" Guillaume Liout, Journal de bord du *Duc d'Anjou*, April 6, 1738.

[234] As the trade intensified in the late eighteenth and into the nineteenth century, increasing numbers of captives were seized further inland, into the Imerina highlands. Filliot,155-8.

[235] Bousquet, 128-9.

his family as the assailants approached, aiding in their flight or their defense. After their capture, he likely faced at most three options. If he were a member of the Diambay household, he may have faced execution. While raids most commonly resulted in capture, it was not unknown for rivals to execute a small number of men from powerful opposing families, aiming to forestall political resistance.[236] Perhaps this man and his family belonged to the family of Diambay, who had fled for his life during the attack, with no time to gather his people or cattle. If execution did not await the man enslaved in this raid, he would have faced either enslavement without his family in Madagascar or sale to the next European ship to arrive at the coast. It is possible, considering his proximity to the coast and the trade, that he was aware of the circumstances of the French trade, and fully aware of the risks that lay ahead. It is unlikely he misunderstood his position as a captive, but some Malagasy it seems held adventurous and romantic hopes of life outside of Madagascar. Des Chesnays notes on several departures from Madagascar the discovery of Malagasy stowaways aboard the *Duc d'Anjou*, who had boarded, "malgré leurs parents et amis disant qu'ils veullent voir la France au moins iront ils à l'Isle de France."[237] Their ultimate fates are unclear.[238] Whatever his alternatives, this father voiced his appeal to embark, enslaved alongside his wife and family.

The man would have found his appeal to remain with his family immediately frustrated when he boarded the *Duc d'Anjou*. Stripped of their clothing, their heads and bodies shorn, he and his family stepped aboard the 600-ton ship. While the men of the family awaited their shackles on the main deck, they could have witnessed the women and children disappear, forced behind the barricado, where they would be kept in the *grand chambre*, "among the crew" of 137 men.[239] Captive families met this and other moments of separation with terror, desperation and despair.[240] It is possible that the family had expected to remain together in slavery. Indeed the man's stated intention to stay with his family suggests as much. If this was the case, one can only begin to imagine the shock of separation aboard the ship, the fear of hearing a child's voice cry out in pain, or worse, of never hearing their voice again. Surely the man sought out the sound of his wife's voice and listened with trepidation to the shouts of the Frenchmen behind the barricado. Husband and wife may have found ways to communicate while onboard through the children who roamed the ship more freely. Perhaps even the man's children were able to visit with him, bringing some comfort in the strange world of the ship.[241] It is possible, of course, that this family, living by the coast, and at least moderately acquainted with the trade fully understood the risks they undertook together. If this was a choice made for their own survival or made out of love, it could do little to dampen the distress of separation, of witnessing their shackled loved ones, forced into different quarters of the stinking ship.

For enslaved Malagasy men and women, enslavement and separation rent not only their living families but also their ancestral ties. In Madagascar, as in the Mascarenes and Atlantic slavery, enslaved people were stripped of their ancestral and familial rights, their formal social existence subsumed by their value to the families of their enslavers. This severance must have carried significant psychological weight in societies like those of the Malagasy, in which

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[236] Bousquet, 64.
[237] Des Chesnays, Journal de Bord*, Le Duc D'Anjou*, June 13, 1737, August 9, 1737, October 14, 1737.
[238] Des Chesnays consistently counts these "nègres de bonne volonté" separately from the "nègres et négresses esclaves", I have not yet found information of what these men encountered when they reached Ile de France, nor the conditions of their transportation as stowaways.
[239] Garneray, Ambroise Louis, *Voyages, Aventures et Combats* (Paris, 1853), 114-115, cited in Filliot, 222.
[240] Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 109-113
[241] Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 112.

ancestors formed such an important component of social and spiritual lives. Anthropologists working on contemporary Madagascar describe the centrality of ancestors to Northern Malagasy beliefs and cultural life. They understand the health, well-being and status of parents and children to depend heavily on the inclusion of children in matrilineal and patrilineal kinship networks and ancestries.[242] In the 1960s, perhaps echoing longstanding beliefs about ancestors and procreation, western Sakalava families referred to pregnancy as the "ancestors continuation," an expression of ancestor's favor on a mother and couple.[243] The organization of villages and houses reflect this primacy of ancestors in the structure of Malagasy communities. Villages and houses are oriented along a north-south axis with the tombs of the ancestors just outside the village at the northernmost pole. Houses, built along this axis, follow southward, with the northernmost house reserved for the village founder, with his son's houses arranged to the south and and west of his own. In contrast, enslaved people in northern Madagascar were buried, not in their own family tombs, but on the southern edge of their enslaver's tomb.[244] The slave ship represented an even more radical alienation. The man who boarded the *Duc d'Anjou* was forced to undergo the transformation of his role as a bearer of ancestral lineage, a key connecting the power of his ancestors to the promise of his children. His ultimate fate uncertain, he entered into a kind of limbo, his connection to spiritual and social power and his access to his family severed by his capture and sale.

The traumatic severance of familial and ancestral ties was perhaps most keenly felt when the pregnant woman went into labor, four months too early and just hours after their embarkation on the ship. She gave birth that evening and the child was baptized shortly afterwards. The child survived just over one day, and on the morning of April 8, 1738, its lifeless body was thrown into Antongil Bay. Did the infant's father hear the cries of his wife over the noise of the ship or glimpse the smallness of his child's body falling into the waves? It is unclear if he ever heard of its baptism, or if news of this ritual would have mollified or exacerbated his sense of alienation from the birth and death of his his child. It would be impossible to fully imagine his experience of this compounded loss, the news of his wife's suffering, of their child's death, and his powerlessness to be with his partner in their shared sorrow, their powerlessness to provide the proper mortuary care for their newborn. Among contemporary northern Malagasy, young infants are known as "*zazo rano"* (water babies), soft, delicate and unformed, "still full of water" (*mbola rano*). Anthropologist Erin Kate Nourse describes the practices of social incorporation that follow the first teething, but also the distinctive mortuary practices surrounding early loss of life in the city of Diégo Suarez, Madagascar. Those who die in these early months, before their first teeth arrive, before they can be ritually incorporated into their lineages, cannot be buried with their ancestors, but are swaddled and placed in baskets on a hill just outside the city, overlooking the beach. While these are twentieth-century practices, the belief in the unformed state of the early infant seems to date back at least to the nineteenth century. These practices suggest that earlier generations likely shared the need for particular mortuary care for those who died before they could be incorporated into the social body, that this care required particular placement, not simple exclusion from the ancestral tombs. The death of a newborn encompassed the tragic loss

[242] Erin Nourse, "Turning 'Water Babies' (Zaza Rano) into 'Real Human Beings' (Vrai Humains): Rituals of Blessing for the Newly Born in Diégo Suarez, Madagascar", *Journal of Religion in Africa* xlvii (2018), 229-230
[243] Nourse, "Turning 'Water Babies' (Zaza Rano) into 'Real Human Beings' (Vrai Humains)", 231.
[244] Gillian Feeley-Harnik, 'The Sakalava House (Madagascar)', *Anthropos*, 75 (1980), 563-4, 573-4; Hilde Nielssen, *Ritual Imagination: A Study of Tromba Possession among the Betsimisaraka in Eastern Madagascar* (Boston: Brill, 2012), 32-36; Bousquet, 61-62.

of a child, but also the evaporation of a promise that life had carried, the promise to bring families together, the promise to connect the living to their ancestors, the promise to bear forward a lineage.[245] The father may have learned of his child's death from other children who wandered the ship. He may have learned of the loss only upon their arrival at Île de France weeks later. Whenever the news found him, the father likely felt continual and cascading bereavements for the pain he could not share with his wife, for the loss of his child and for all that child represented.

The official denial of his fatherhood would continue upon his arrival in Ile de France, where, even if he was sold with his family to the same enslaver, he would enjoy no legal parental rights, where records likely omitted any reference to his familial connections, and where French law and customs forbade his children from using his name.[246] It is likely, but uncertain, that he was sold apart from his family, perhaps to a different bidder. At auction, enslaved people were arranged based on their age and sex rather than their familial ties.[247] This did not necessarily preclude any further connection after their sale. Many enslaved people formed partnerships across plantation boundaries. However, the disorientation and severe curtailment of mobility under slavery could make such relationships dangerous and exceedingly difficult.[248] Despite these obstacles, many enslaved fathers did find ways to maintain familial bonds in slavery, whether by supporting their partners and children, by asserting patriarchal authority over them, or through some combination of these.[249] Whatever his actions after his arrival in Île de France, the choice of the man aboard the *Duc d'Anjou* to follow his family into European captivity underlines the efforts of enslaved fathers to hold onto their families, as well as the violent circumscription of their parental rights.

Rhythms of Daily Life

After his separation from his family, the father and any other captured men descended into the disorienting world of the 'tweendecks. The scars of capture and separation would stay with them throughout the voyage and beyond, but here in the darkness and above, exposed to the elements on the main deck, they learned the signs of their subjugation while they found ways to begin to forge new social bonds and articulate social order. Aboard the *Duc d'Anjou* and many other slaving ships sailing from Madagascar, which often carried hundreds of livestock, the stench and lowing of cattle likely dominated much of the experience below deck and underlined the subjugation of the captives carried alongside them.[250] The day after the embarkation of the

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[245] Nourse, "Turning 'Water Babies' (Zaza Rano) into 'Real Human Beings' (Vrai Humains)", 224–56.
[246] Peabody, 169-170; Matthew Gerber, *Bastards: Politics, Family and Law in Early Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 90-91; Gilles Gérard, *Famiy maron, ou la famille esclave à Bourbon (Île de la Réunion*), (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), 29.
[247] Filliot, 229.
[248] Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807-1834* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 368-370; Marietta Morrisey, *Slave Women in the New World: Gender Stratification in the Caribbean* (Lawrence, KA: University of Kansas Press, 1989), 85.
[249] The topic of enslaved family structures and kinship in the Atlantic world has been the subject of significant study, with early literature inspired by West African anthropological studies focusing on matrilineal kinship patterns, and more recent studies focusing on the nature of enslaved partnerships and kinship networks, contextual factors shaping enslaved families. On the family involvement of enslaved fathers in the Caribbean, see Randy Browne, 193–222.
[250] Smaller groups of enslaved people on the previous circuits from Madagascar to Ile de France likely found themselves in unusual circumstances, often a room in the poop deck, but it is not unlikely that even a relatively small cargo of over one hundred people would have been forced to sleep in the fore space of the 'tweendecks. Bousquet, 364.

captives seized in the raid, the crew of the *Duc d'Anjou* brought onboard "over one hundred cattle" followed by almost one hundred more on the following day. Just three months earlier that year, the ship had landed in Ile de France with 117 captives and 173 heads of cattle, having carried them for over a month from Madagascar. Over the previous year, it had transported cumulatively around twenty or thirty people, and nearly seven hundred heads of cattle on three expeditions between Ile de France and Madagascar. While captive men were quartered separately from the livestock, the accumulated smell of hundreds of cattle and their waste must have filled all corners of the vessel, compounding the infamous odors of the slave ship.[251]

On voyages where the majority of captives came from regions near to the coast, and where the period between capture and embarkation was short, the people below deck may have found closer linguistic, cultural and perhaps even kinship ties with the others onboard. This was likely the case for captives carried on the *Duc d'Anjou* in 1737. The father of the family described in the logbook may have found solace with distant kinsmen or friends from his village, captured alongside him in the raid that led to his enslavement. Together, they may have talked of their losses, shared songs and memories and discussed what might lay before them. After the first embarkations in early April, the captives spent the next month aboard the ship, including two weeks awaiting sail in Antongil Bay while more captives trickled into their quarters. On April 13 Diambay sold a man who he claimed had killed his father when he was chief four years before. On the fifteenth, a man and woman who had been enslaved to the grandmother of a rival king Baldriche were sold to the ship.[252] Surely these were not the only political rivals to be imprisoned in the 'tweendecks. While the conditions of shipboard bondage suggested a uniform subjugation regardless of prior status, the men of the 'tweenedecks surely saw themselves as riven by political animosities, as much as they may have been connected by prior association. It is possible that groups enslaved in raids nearer the coast may have been better able to preserve a sense of social and cultural continuity and more likely to preserve ethnic and political boundaries during the voyage.

In the Atlantic trade, those captured near the coast likely had to choose between isolation aboard the ship or constructing new social bonds with strangers. In contrast, those who had been kept in the *captiveries* at European forts for months before their embarkation, had likely begun to establish bonds and ranks among them. Those with leadership abilities and perhaps religious or political status that they carried with them into bondage may have consolidated groups around them.[253] Such consolidation may have set the foundation for a robust resistance to bondage by the men aboard the *Favorite* in 1743. Many men aboard the ship had been purchased at Gorée after months at the fort. Captain Sanguinet of the *Favorite* claimed they had been overworked, forced to break rocks, and underfed, leading to widespread scurvy aboard his ship. Surely the conditions and provisions at the fort precipitated the men's decline aboard the ship, but it may have also contributed to their collective action. On November 19, 1743, just one day after their departure from Gorée, two men jumped overboard, and the captain received warning of a

[251] I have found no discussion of the how these cattle were fed, cleaned or the conditions of their transportation. I assume, due to the rough seas of the region, that they would not have been kept on the main deck, but it is not clear. Their presence could only increase the noise and smell of the ship.

[252] King Baldriche may have been a descendent of a late-seventeenth century British pirate, Adam Baldridge, who had attempted to establish a colony on Madagascar around 1691. On pirates, kings and eighteenth-century Malagasy power structures, see Jane Hooper, "Pirates and Kings : Power on the Shores of Early Modern Madagascar and the Indian Ocean", *Journal of World History*, 22 (2011), 215–42.

[253] See for example James Sweet's discussion of Domingos Alvares and religious leadership at sea. Sweet, *Domingos Alvares*, 32-41.

planned revolt among the Fulbe men. Sanguinet had the supposed leaders whipped by the other men, but even this did not quell rumors of rebellion, and the men he held captive continued to pursue escape through suicide and self-starvation. The bodies of two Fulbe men who likely took their own lives were found in the *parc des hommes* on November 22, 1743, and by the 23rd, the crew had instituted force-feeding of the captive men.[254] That Sanguinet singles out the Fulbe men as the leaders and main participants of these acts of resistance suggests that ethnic bonds, to whatever extent they were perceptible by the slave trader, continued to be strong shapers of affinity and collective action aboard ship. It seems likely that these bonds, forged primarily but perhaps not exclusively on the foundation of shared language and ethnicity, may have developed and strengthened as captives identified each other at the warehouses in Gorée. There, they likely communicated and constructed collective understandings of the future that Atlantic bondage held for them. Once embarked on the slaving ship, it took little time for respected members of their group to lead their resistance to enslavement.

Whether traveling the Atlantic or the Indian Ocean, captives aboard French slaving ships followed nearly identical daily routines. Their days would be marked by washings, mealtimes and forced labor. Each morning, enslaved men were forced, two-by-two or four-by-four onto the main deck. The surgeon and another officer inspected their chains and bodies and washed the "armpits and the sexual parts with water and vinegar," or with saltwater, a practice that, though ostensibly aimed to protect against illness, underscored the bodily and sexual humiliation faced by men and women aboard the slave ship. Many captains also insisted they rinse their mouths with vinegar to avoid scurvy. After this, they would eat what they could before they were forced to exercise, in what Europeans called "dancing", in which they were forced to sing, jump, and rattle their chains on command, sometimes to a tune played on a violin by the crew. After this exhausting exercise, captives faced further forced labor.[255] Several slavers commented on the need to multiply the tasks of captives "to distract them from thinking of revolt" and to "soften their limbs." Captive men may have been forced to spin rope, or most commonly, empty the toilets and scrub the 'tweendecks with "bricks".[256] Many, it must be assumed, were too ill to do more than sit or lie on the deck, although even this rest was often denied.[257] At the close of the day, men were given an evening meal, sometimes followed by tobacco or *eau-de-vie*, before they descended again into the 'tweendecks until the morning. The activities that marked the day underlines the captors 'interest in controlling the bodies and minds of these men, their interest in maintaining the sale value of their human property and in guarding against revolt. They reveal the Middle Passage to be monotonous but not absent of activity. As Stephanie Smallwood has argued, the slave ship was an important site of production in the slave trade, where crewmen and

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[254] In Sanguinet's logbook, he writes, "A Minuit, en faisant la ronde, trouvé un noir poulard etranglé agé de 16 ans marqué comme en marge a 7hres du matin trouvé un autre negre mort de ptisie and follie poulard agé de 20 ans marqué comme en marge." Béhourd's logbook records the deaths as follows, "du jeudy au vandredy dans la nuit il c'est trouvée un noir qui a été egorgé en lantrepont avec les autre noirs et un autre qui cest tué de luy mesme dans l'infirmery des nègres." While only the latter of the two deaths is ascribed to suicide (*folie* or *il s'est tué*), the first strangulation may well have been suicide too, as strangulation was not an uncommon way that enslaved people on the Ocean chose to end their lives. Sanguinet, Journal de Bord, *La Favorite*, November 22, 1743; Béhouard, Journal de bord, *La Favorite,* November 22, 1743, Journaux de Bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/66, pièce 86-87. Pierson, "White Cannibals", 152-3; Taylor*, If We Must Die*, 38.

[255] Jerome S. Handler, "The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans", 10.

[256] "Voyage à la Côte d'Or", 17??, Bibliothèque Municipale de Nantes, MS 878. Garneray, *Voyages, aventures et combats,* 116, cited in Filliot, 223. Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 26-27.

[257] Enslaved people who refused to eat or perform as ordered were often whipped or otherwise severely punished, at times leading to their deaths.

officers worked to strip their captives of the signs of their social being in hopes that they could transform them into commodities, and where Africans resisted that commodification through care and through death.[258] The forced labor of captives aboard ship, the noxious food, the dehumanizing conditions, shaped captives 'bodies and constrained their actions. The physical exhaustion from labor aboard ship compounded the effects of disease, malnutrition and psychological distress to deplete the bodies and emotional resources of captive men at sea. They also shaped their fragile social worlds at sea.

Eating Together

Whatever their status prior to capture, men ate the same food, with groups of ten men gathered around a single tub, once in the morning and once in the evening. Some slavers, like the captain of the *Roy Dahomey*, alternated supplements given to men or women, giving bananas or fish to the women on one day and to the men on another. Captains also provided tobacco and liquor occasionally and in small portions, intending to quell the signs of emotional distress as well as any revolutionary impulses. Sometimes given spoons, captives were more often expected to eat with their hands. On the voyage from Madagascar, they were likely fed rice, to which cooks might add peas, peppers, salted beef or fish, or sugar in extremely small amounts.[259] Captains generally embarked foodstuffs from the African region of embarkation, both as a matter of convenience and out of concern for loss of human property, as they feared that alien food might abet the spread of gastrointestinal illness aboard the ship. Several accounts documenting efforts by enslaved men to secure better, sufficient provisions suggest a similar recognition of the tight link between food and water quality and their likelihood of survival. While the monotony and nutritional poverty of slave provisions underlined the subjugation of enslaved people aboard the ship, it also encouraged communication and coordination, likely across ethnic and linguistic boundaries, to address their basic needs. Shipboard foodways could consolidate class cohesion and motivate collective action among enslaved men, who soon recognized their captor's shared interest in the survival of their bodies. In their demands to captains for better or different food, captive men engaged in forced negotiation with their captors, with only the financial value of their bodies as bargaining chips.

By the time they reached Gorée in mid-August 1731, the captives aboard the *Dauphin*, a decrepit 90-ton slaving ship, had survived over a month in seaborne bondage and a harrowing storm that spoiled more than half their provisions and had threatened to sink the entire vessel. The *Dauphin* had departed Loango in West Central Africa on June 25, 1731 with 292 captive men, women and children, and 24 crewmen. It sailed for just one month before rough seas and wild winds in the mid-Atlantic fatigued the already sodden frame, opening gaps in the hull. Seven feet of water rose in the hold, immersing the ship's supplies of beans, bread and fresh water, and causing the ship to list strongly to one side. As panicked sailors worked the pumps above, captives and crewmen in the watery chaos below used the same buckets and tubs they had eaten from earlier that day to bail the seawater from the ship. By the time the leak had been patched with lead, more than half the ship's supply of beans and almost the entire supply of bread had been soaked in seawater and bilge. Much of what remained was found to be spoiled by rats. As the captives surveyed the damage around them, as they waded through the water in the hold, as they tested the soft and rotten wood of the barrels and hull, and as they saw their food and

[258] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 122-152.
[259] Filliot, 223.

water mixed with the sea, the night's terror must have been replaced by a deeper dread of spoiled food, slow starvation, or sinking, captive in the middle of the sea. They had worked alongside their captors to preserve the ship and save their lives, to insist upon the chance of survival, though surely they knew that not all could be saved. Four days before the flood, one man had died. A girl had died two days before, and a woman two days before that. What hopes for survival did those 284 captives who were alive to weather this storm hold in their hearts and in their shared words as the ship turned eastward to sail back toward the rising sun? Without adequate food and water to last the 650-league voyage to Martinique, the captain determined to sail the nearly 300 leagues, a voyage of two weeks, to Gorée to refresh their supplies. The detour to Gorée would extend the voyage over a month and a half, and contribute to severe malnutrition, illness and catastrophic loss of life aboard the *Dauphin*. In the face of these dire prospects, captives aboard the *Dauphin* located the root of their collective suffering in their inadequate access to appropriate food.

Over the two-week voyage to Gorée, 6 captive men died, 4 within the final four days at sea. Thirteen more people, three girls, two boys, three women and five men, would lose their lives before the ship departed Gorée for Martinique two weeks later, prompting the captain, Robert Rirdan of Nantes, to ask his captives, "by way of one who speaks English" why so many were dying, to which the man responded that the captives blamed the diet of millet, and reported that they needed beans and manioc flour instead. While captives from West Central Africa were likely accustomed to millet as a part of a more diversified diet, the preparation aboard ship, in an unchanging, watery porridge, was unfamiliar, unappealing and dangerous to the captives ' health.[260] A record of food purchases at Gorée confirms the captive man's account of over-reliance on millet. At Gorée, Captain Rirdan purchased a surplus of wine and meat to feed the officers (nine goats, dozens of chickens and fish, and ten heads of cattle), but he purchased almost exclusively millet, and a paltry supply, for the captives 'remaining two months at sea.[261] A rough calculation based on the purchases at Gorée suggests that over the final two months of the voyage, captives would have been provided around 1200 calories per day, 97% of which would have come from millet, and the remaining 3% from a single calabash of palm oil and one head of cattle, the last of which was to be divided among the 25 crewmen and 262 remaining captives.[262]

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[260] Joseph Miller estimates that "caloric requirements for inactive men, women and children, taken together, could be as low as 1,625 per day", but men and women were often expected to perform labor and exercise aboard the ship. Basic rations for enslaved people in the South Atlantic seem to have ranged around 1 kilogram of beans and about 2 kilograms of manioc flour, far above the rations that could be provided for by Captain Rirdan's purchases at Gorée. On survival and basic labor rations in slavery and the slave trade see Appendix A in Joseph C. Miller, *Way of Death,* 13-18, 695-700.

[261] It is possible Rirdan was able to pull from the provisions he carried from France and Loango, but Rirdan's own accounts suggest these supplies were already rotting due to their exposure to seawater, and likely had been exhausted by the time of their departure from Gorée. After the flood, Rirdan recorded that he was forced to throw out 38 of the 68 days worth of beans, and the remaining 30 day-rations for "mes blancs and tous mes noirs" were "gastées ne euisant qu'avec peine." They were likely consumed over the voyage to and stay at Gorée. The biscuit was similarly spoiled by the flood, leaving only 100 pounds. Rirdan, Déclaration, August 1, 1732, Pièces déposées en Greffe, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4983.

[262] The captain purchased 13700 pounds of millet, and one calabash of palm oil for the captives, as well as one head of cattle for the captives and crew. It is possible that other protein sources were used for captives' food, but the specification that the single cow was "for the crew & blacks" suggests that this was the exception. I have used modern conversions for calories in millet, palm oil and beef, which likely overstate the caloric value of early modern provisions. Divided over the 262 remaining captives, (and for the beef, the 25 remaining crewmen), and by the 67 days from mid-August (the likely date on which provisions were embarked) to the disembarkation of enslaved people in Martinique), this gives about 1159 calories per day. The conversion figures are as follows: 3.712 calories

If captive men overheard the animals slaughtered for the captain's table, or caught the aroma of wine and cooking fat, they knew that their own meals would subsist of only thin porridge. The alimentary division of classes would have been especially visible on voyages such as this, where the signs of nutritional deficits were so easily read on the bodies of the enslaved. Aboard the *Dauphin*, it is likely that signs of scurvy, from extreme fatigue to pinprick-like spots along the skin and painful swollen gums, had begun to creep in by early September, if not sooner. Unfamiliar pathogens borne in the water of Gorée also painfully rent through the bodies of captives, who were forced, meal after meal to eat the same flavorless porridge that had treated them so roughly the day before. These ailments would claim almost half of all captives onboard by the time the ship reached Martinique. In contrast, four of the twenty-seven crewmen who began the voyage died at Loango, none of them officers. While the voyage of the *Dauphin* was particularly disastrous, deaths due to food shortages, malnutrition and food-borne illnesses were not uncommon aboard slaving ships. Four of the sixteen captive deaths aboard the *Alexandre*, which sailed from Lorient to Senegal in 1732, were attributed to scurvy, and scurvy and dysentery accounted for the majority of the 81 captive deaths on the 1740 voyage of the *Comtesse*.[263] On the *Dauphin*, it seems clear that the calories and nutrients provided by millet alone, nearly devoid of protein or fat, were insufficient to sustain the lives of the captives still onboard. This deficiency, well recognized by all aboard the ship, motivated the captives to communicate their needs to the captain, to argue that his assessment of the bare minimum would not guard his captive cargo against starvation and death in the weeks before their landing in Martinique.

Captives 'understanding of their shared stakes may come to light in the words of the enslaved translator, suggesting some of the content of conversations below deck. While he surely could not represent all the captives, it is likely that the translator spoke for many who had bonded over their shared pain and fears in the 'tweendecks. The fact that the enslaved translator spoke English testifies to the linguistic diversity and fluency below deck. Many West Central Africans spoke Portuguese as well, but almost all captives aboard the *Dauphin* would have spoken either Kikongo or Kimbundu, which were part of the same subfamily of Bantu languages, and mutually intelligible with relatively little effort.[264] Surely many hours were spent discussing the present dangers, and on how they might confront them. Aboard the *Dauphin*, as likely aboard so many other ships, the men bemoaned their disgust with the food and voiced their grim understanding that their bodies would need more and different sustenance, if they were to survive the journey. A severely limited representation of the fullness of enslaved communication below deck, it nevertheless reveals one facet of cohesion to be the topic of food and water, matters of survival that linked together the lives of those shackled below deck.

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per gram millet; 1137 calories per pound beef; 67 calories per gallon palm oil. If these calculations are inexact, they at least give a sense of the proportions, and suggest a severe shortage of protein and fats to support the captive population onboard. "Conte des frais et Depences fait dans la Baye de Goré contraint dy relaché par une voye deau cause en mer par les rats le premier aoust mil sept cent trente deux a bord du Navire le Dauphin . . .", August 29, 1732, Pièces déposées en Greffe, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4983.

[263] Sowande Mustakeem details the potential effects of the limited diets of enslaved people aboard ship. Mustakeem, Sowande, '"I Never Have Such a Sickly Ship Before". Mathurin Laurant, premier pilote, Journal de bord, *L'Alexandre*, 1732-1733, Journaux de Bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/28, pièce 29; Joseph Le Houx, capitaine, Journal de bord, *La Comtesse*, 1740-41, Journaux de Bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81.

[264] Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas, 1585-1660*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 56.

To protect his investment, or at least mitigate his employers' claims against him for poor management, Captain Rirdan followed the captive men's advice to seek out manioc flour. After their departure from Gorée, he steered the ship to the Cape Verde islands to attempt to trade for manioc. The endeavor proved fruitless. Rirdan was unable to bargain for anything more than a barrel of water, and he quickly abandoned the effort. The ship continued out into the open ocean without obtaining any significant supplements to the captives' diet. Upon their arrival at Martinique, the reserves of millet and water were completely exhausted. Surely the single cow purchased "for the crew & blacks" and the calabash of palm oil had long since been divvied up into the daily stew. Over the devastating months of September and October, one could count the passage of days by the lives lost. Almost half of all people held captive aboard the *Dauphin,* 137 out of 292 people, died over the course of the voyage.[265] More deaths likely followed in the days after their landing in Martinique. Among the survivors, what remained were the memories of the faces of those lost, of a story told, or perhaps only the image of contorted bodies and the spaces they left behind.

As captives well understood, the lives of captives and the profits of the ship were mutually dependent and even close to inseparable. While Rirdan's detour to Cape Verde was unsuccessful and perhaps half-hearted, it underlines the begrudging pact between enslaver and enslaved on many ships to at least attempt to overcome the grim odds of the slave trade.[266] Men aboard other ships also negotiated for access to preferred food and appealed to officers to defend themselves against deprivation and starvation, even against the assaults of crewmen.[267] In a criminal abuse case against the second captain of the slaving ship the *Marie-Séraphique*, which sailed to Loango and Cap-Français in 1772, multiple witnesses reported that the victim of the abuse, Pierre Davalo, had stolen food from a captive man. The second-captain, André Dujet, claims that the captive brought the complaint to him, and he responded with strong words but no physical violence. However, witnesses for the prosecution argued that this particular offense spurred Dujet to chase Davalo into the 'tweendecks and kicked and beat him so severely that he was bedridden with blackened bruises all over his body, and he died soon afterwards.[268] Among the crew, Dujet had a reputation for violence. Rumors circulated that Dujet was heard to say that "he would not trouble himself about killing a sailor, or about breaking an arm or leg, that this would be of no importance because with money, one could prepare one's affaires . . . or leave the

[265] In the two month voyage from Gorée to Martinique, 5 girls, 26 boys, 54 men, and 23 women died. Rapport du Capne Robert Rirdan, Martinique, Amirauté du Fort Saint Pierre de l'Isle Martinique, October 19, 1732, Pièces déposées en Greffe, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4983; Estat des Negres negresses negrillons et negrittes mort a Bord du Navire le Dauphin de Nantes Commandé par Robert Rirdan depuis le Commencement de la traitte a Louangue de Berry Coste d'Angole . . . , October 21, 1732, Pièces déposées en Greffe, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4983.

[266] Not all captives sought survival, however. Aboard other ships from other regions, such as Captain Sanguinet's *Favorite*, discussed above, conversations below deck regarding food and survival turned away from seeking remedies from the enslavers and towards the more subversive act of self-starvation, following a series of other attempts at suicide and revolt.

[267] Mustakeem, 69-70.

[268] Some witnesses testify only to their knowledge of the beating, not the surrounding circumstances. Others include a dispute between Davalo and the *maître d'équipage* in front of the captives over repairs needed to the hatches. For statements on the dispute with a captive over stolen rice, see 2e Interrogatoire du Sr. Dujet, Procédure contre Sr. Dujet, May 6, 1773, Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4958, 1v-2r; Witness statements from Pierre Launay, May 6, 1773, ADLA B 4958, 3r-4v; Louis Rousseau, May 11, 1773, ADLA B 4958, 13; Julien Augareau, May 13, 1773, ADLA B 4958, 18.

country."[269] Whatever truth lay behind this accusation, the rumor itself suggests a perception among the crew that crewmen's bodies were relatively disposable, and while their health and labor was necessary to keep the ship and its captive cargo in order, the viability of captive bodies held greater weight among the officers.[270] The man who reported Davalo's theft understood this dynamic; he understood his financial value to the ship as part of the captive cargo, and he used this position to defend his access to food against the incursions of crewmen. It is worth noting that known cases of captives stealing food from the reserves were treated with similar brutality, the offenders whipped and the supposed leaders tortured for their offenses.[271] Food theft not only violated the strict order of the slave ship, but it also could lead to disaster if provisions ran out before the conclusion of the voyage. While Dujet's response appears to have been extreme, it underlines a broader willingness among slave traders to hear the appeals of their captives in relation to provisions. Aboard the *Dauphin* or the *Marie-Séraphique*, as surely aboard many other slaving ships, captives 'requests for better access to food could lead officers to steer the ship off course to seek alternative provisions, or to resort to extraordinary violence against offenders of alimentary divisions. The cases signal an important element of captive status aboard the slave ship, an area of negotiation within an environment of unceasing efforts at dehumanization, even if the terms were cruelly weighted against the enslaved, who were forced to stake their lives where the traders staked only profits. If the predominant effect of slave provisioning aboard ship was collective suffering, and the deterioration of captives 'bodies, flattening differences of age, ethnicity, language, and religion, it also held the potential to motivate communication and the organization of collective demands, through the sliver of an opportunity to make claims for their own survival.

Labor

If food could serve as a leveler and cohesive factor between captive Africans, some of the clearest social divisions among enslaved men emerged through their forced labor aboard the ship. Captive men's labor, like that of captive women, surfaces rarely in the archival documents beyond blanket generalizations and prescriptive advice. What is clear is that much of it, from the ubiquitous scrubbing of the decks each morning to the forced "dancing" required after meals, ostensibly to keep captives 'bodies healthy, was extremely physically demanding. As suggested by the use of slave labor to scrub the decks, it is likely that many enslaved men were forced to perform some of the hard labor required for the operation and maintenance of the ship. Stephanie Smallwood notes that in the British trade, captains recruited enslaved men to man the pumps, operate the sails, and even defend the ship against attackers when crewmen's labor was insufficient.[272] Aboard the company ship *Le Dauphin* in 1724, captive men were forced to assist in embarking firewood for the voyage at Ouidah, and in 1732, aboard Nantes ship, also named *le Dauphin*, captives were forced to undertake the grueling task of weighing anchor, hauling the enormous combined weight of the anchor and sodden rope, in preparation to set sail.[273]

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[269] Witness statement of Jean le Foretier, Procédure contre Sr. Dujet, May 6, 1773, ADLA B 4958, 9.
[270] The light judgement against Dujet, simply a reprimand to behave better in the future, coupled with the fact that he would captain his own slaving voyage within a year of the case, could only have confirmed crewmen's beliefs that their lives were worth little to those in charge of the trade.
[271] Mustakeem, *Slavery at Sea*, 70.
[272] Smallwood, Stephanie, "African Guardians, European Slave Ships", 682.
[273] Pierre Chavy, Journal de bord du *Dauphin*, (March 14, 1724), Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR 4JJ/27, pièce 7; Rirdan, "Comte des frais et Depences fait dans la Baye de Goré".

Undernourished, perhaps suffering from the early stages of scurvy, whose first signs include extreme lethargy and difficulty breathing, the men who performed this work aboard the *Dauphin* likely found it exhausting if not debilitating.[274] On most ships, it seems the same forms of forced labor were shared across all male captives, though the conditions of work likely varied significantly between voyages and captains. As among the women grinding grains, the men may have found the work a time to talk and sing together.[275] For many, the shared burden of work may have provided further basis for commiseration and perhaps a broader ground for mutual understanding or aid. Others may have found in the work a further reason to retreat into their own mental worlds. For some, labor differentiation offered privileges to the few, often along ethnic lines, encouraging the splintering of social allegiances below deck.

Many West African societies had professional castes or classes, which granted particular inheritable privileges to their members. This was particularly true of people who entered the slave trade from Senegambia and Sierra Leone. In the Senegambian state of Kajoor, caste groups included blacksmiths, leatherworkers, musicians, bards and courtiers. Their status granted them political power, honor, and economic privilege, while they also faced significant social taboos.[276] Similar castes existed among Mande-speaking groups, from the Mandinka to the Bamana.[277] It is possible that these formal professional classes shaped African's understanding of labor divisions aboard ship.[278] Even where professional groups did not consolidate into formal castes, skills and social, religious and professional identities were often linked to forms of labor. Kevin Dawson has shown how enslaved Africans who had worked on or near water carried their aquatic traditions, beliefs and skills across the Atlantic, for use as occupations, escape or recreation.[279] Michael Gomez writes of how enslavers in the Americas sought out particular ethnicities for particular forms of labor, illustrating that enslaved Africans' skills and in many cases their professional identities survived the passage. For example, the religious education of some Muslims captured in the slave trade, and their inexperience in other trades, made them more likely to be forced into domestic labor.[280] Aboard the ship, there were few opportunities for men in particular, to practice professional skills under the gaze of their captors. Most forced labor was monotonous, low skilled and imposed on bondsmen by nature of its exhaustive and demeaning qualities. Former blacksmiths or court musicians surely felt their demotion keenly, when they emptied the latrines or attempted to scrub away the refuse that polluted the 'tweendeck. For all, the forced labor aboard the ship served to flatten their social roles and political power. Few Africans would have encountered any opportunity to distinguish themselves through their forced labor aboard the ship. However, it is aboard ships that traded first at the Gold Coast that the

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[274] Mustakeem, Sowande, '"I Never Have Such a Sickly Ship Before'", 484.
[275] Marcus Rediker describes how captives used song to communicate between fore and aft sections of the ship, to express sorrow, to mock their captors, in addition to the act of finding simple enjoyment aboard the otherwise miserable ship, among other purposes. Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 282-284.
[276] Searing, 39-41.
[277] Imperato, Pascal James, and Gavin H. Imperato, 'Twins and Double Beings among the Bamana and Maninka of Mali', in *Twins in African and Diaspora Cultures: Double Trouble, Twice Blessed*, ed. by Philip M. Peek (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011), pp. 39; Gomez, 38-39.
[278] Michael Gomez writes of how these class and labor divisions continued to become major socially organizing principals among Africans and people of African descent in North America. Gomez, 15.
[279] Dawson discusses the intertwining of religious and social meanings in the construction of group identities for Africans who worked in or alongside bodies of water, as coastal people who depended at least in part on fishing and water transport for their livelihoods. Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*; idem, "Enslaved Swimmers and Divers in the Atlantic World", *The Journal of American History*, 92 (2006), 1327–55.
[280] Gomez, 85.

clearest evidence of formal and forced shipboard labor divisions among enslaved Africans appears.

Aboard some ships, captive men were used to discipline and oversee other captives. The regular use of what would be called "guardians" in the British trade seems to date from the late seventeenth and likely continued well into the eighteenth century.[281] Armed with cat-o-nine-tails, guardians were granted relative freedom of movement, and sometimes more or different food than the other captives.[282] Perhaps the enslaved Africans who assisted the crew against their shipmates when a revolt erupted aboard the *Jeannette* in October of 1743 were among such a group of "guardians." Like many ships that employed guardians, the ship had traded at the Windward and Gold Coasts for a smaller number of captives before completing the trade at Epe in early October.[283] However, the granting of privileges or power aboard the ship was not always enough to ensure the loyalty of captives. Captain Jean Abraham of the *Concorde*, which sailed to the Bight of Benin in 1732, noted his "quartermasters" whom they had traded for further up the coast, "and to whom we would give liberty from fetters, being free on the deck, . . . who had always seemed very faithful in doing their duty to correct the others, . . . following the custom of this navigation."[284] Like many slaving captains, Jean Abraham traded for the "quartermasters . . . further up the coast," as guardians intended to oversee captives from Whydah and the Bight of Benin were often traded for in the Gold Coast, or at least a significant distance from the primary site of trading.[285] Stephanie Smallwood argues that the longstanding relationships of trade and labor between Africans and Europeans on the Gold Coast, stretching back to the fifteenth century, may have "primed" Africans enslaved there to interpret the position of guardian as one of several privileged positions within a stratified system of European bondage, perhaps with the false expectation that guardianship aboard the ship would necessarily translate to an enduring

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[281] British ships seem to have purchased women as guardians in significant numbers, composing between 30% and 50% of African guardians on most ships. However, she suggests that women guardians were likely used for food preparation, and likely as informants, rather than to discipline other captives. Smallwood, "African Guardians", 695-696.

[282] David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 228.

[283] Adam Joullain, an officer of the *Jeannette* reported that upon hearing gunshots while they were engaged onshore, he and other officers rushed to the ship to find "plusieurs Neigres sur le gallere derière . . . tous armés." A sailor alongside them informed them that these men were "pour soutenir les Blancs," and had already pushed back the attackers, some into the 'tweendeck and others overboard. Hiron, Journal de bord de *la Jeannette* October 5, 1743.

[284] These African "quartermasters" would, according to their shipmates, lead a revolt against the crew in an effort that would leave 14 women, 10 girls and 3 boys dead, along with 8 men, some of whom were likely killed by the gunshots and grenade thrown by the crew and officers. "nos Cartiers maitre que nous avions traitté au haut de la Coste a qui Nous aurions donné La Liberté des fers estant Libres sur le pont au quels nous Naurions rien trouvé Ny ey ce devant le moindre soupçon deux nous ayant toujours parû tres fidelles a faire leur devoire a corriger les autres au quels lon auroit donné pouvoire de faire suivant la coutume de cette navigation il sen seroit trouvé six diceux qui estoient complice et qui auroient fourny des instruments propres pour se deferrer . . . ", Jean Abraham, Procès verbal, July 7, 1732, Minutes Civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 208. Stephanie Smallwood links the term "guardian" used in English and Portuguese slave trades to the term "quartermaster," given authority over the lowest ranking crewmen and over the management of the ship's hold. Smallwood, "African Guardians", 698.

[285] Eltis suggests that the deliberate sourcing of slave guardians from regions different than the majority of the human cargo reveals ethnic antagonism and a greater closeness between people with shared ethnic backgrounds. Smallwood, rightly, argues that ethnic difference and material perquisites were likely insufficient to explain the overwhelming adherence of African guardians to the rules and duties set by their enslavers. David Eltis, *The Rise of African Slavery in the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 228-230; Smallwood, "African Guardians, European Slave Ships", 688.

position of privilege in later bondage.[286] Aboard the *Concorde*, it seems, this social conditioning was insufficient to bolster the guardians 'allegiance. In the wake of a revolt that left thirty-two captive people dead, some killed by the crew and officers and others seemingly in conflict between captives in the 'tweendecks, an interpreter laid the blame with the African quartermasters, who they claimed had promised much to the captives who joined them in revolt.[287] This testimony came under direct threat of violent retribution, and was shaped by the captives 'interest in survival and the slavers 'eagerness to identify a small number of mutinous leaders to punish. When the leaders had been identified, the captain ordered the heads of three of those who died during the revolt to be crushed at the mizzen mast, to serve as an example for the others onboard. By the time reinforcements arrived from neighboring ships also moored at Keta, a passage between the men's and women's quarters had been forced open, and most of the men had undone their fetters. It is notable that the crew's advance notice of the revolt came not from the guardians, but from an ill captive in the infirmary. The guardians had at the very least neglected to inform the crew of the revolt underway in the 'tweendeck, and very likely had participated more actively, perhaps even leading the uprising. The informant in the infirmary and the violence below deck suggests a breakdown of the vigilant order the captain surely hoped to guarantee by the presence of the guardians. Even the office of guardian, the clearest division of power, privilege and labor among enslaved people aboard ship, though it manifested a social stratification, was not determinate of social order.

Family separations and alimentary practices aboard ship flattened the visible social experience of captive men aboard ship, and while labor could shape social groupings and hierarchy among the enslaved, the divisions were crude and any hierarchies visible on deck not always strictly related to the social relationships and orderings below. Below deck, Africans did distinguish themselves through their skills and work. Swimmers and aquatic workers, as Dawson notes, took the opportunity early on to attempt to swim to safety.[288] As James Sweet has illuminated, spiritual leaders may have practiced healing and provided leadership for their fellow captives.[289] Warriors likely led and participated in revolts, as did spiritual leaders.[290] Blacksmiths may have assisted in the breaking of chains and bonds below deck, and musicians may have used songs to cover the sounds of revolt and perhaps to aid in coordinating the revolt.[291] If the structures imposed on enslaved Africans by their captors predominantly reinforced the shared stakes across preexisting divisions of kinship, food, labor and ethnicity, the guardians aboard the *Concorde* and the father aboard the *Duc d'Anjou* underline the degree to which Africans themselves determined the shape of their social bonds below deck. If their conditions at times

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[286] Smallwood also connects these expectations to an older, less autocratic, and less racialized set of labor and market relations, defined by a "first Atlantic system". Smallwood, "African Guardians, European Slave Ships", 676–716; On the First and Second Atlantic Systems, see P.C. Emmer, "The Dutch and the Making of the Second Atlantic System" in *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System*, ed. Barbara L. Solow (Cambridge, 1991), 75-96; Emmer, *The Dutch in the Atlantic Economy, 1580-1880: Trade, Slavery, and Emancipation* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1998).

[287] Among the dead were three boys, ten girls, and fourteen women, allegedly killed by the men and few women who revolted, as well as five men, allegedly among those in revolt, killed by the crew and officers. I will address this gender asymmetry in a later chapter.

[288] Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*, 32.

[289] Sweet, *Domingos Alvares*, 33-41.

[290] Gomez argues that the Bambara "warrior-cultivator personality" led to higher incidences of small-scale revolt in North American slavery, which may have been the case aboard the ship as well, particularly considering the high incidence of revolt aboard ships sailing from Senegambia. Gomez, 52-3. Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts," 77.

[291] Taylor, 67-68.

demanded collective action, their skills, kinship, language and ethnicity likely structured the forms of that action, whether to demand better access to food or to violently resist their bondage. The slave traders' attempts to flatten the social order of their captive men into one, at most two hierarchical groupings, could not fully suppress the social meanings Africans brought with them aboard the ship, and those they would carry into Atlantic slavery.

Conclusion

For the Africans forced into the European slave trade, their passage across the Ocean was marked by disorientation, dehumanizing treatment and loss of status, of family, of recognition, of power over their own bodies and those of their children. These losses were overwhelmingly permanent, as the ships carried captives towards lives in bondage in the French colonies. Nevertheless, captive Africans carried much with them. Country marks and language marked their ethnic and local origins, helping many captives to identify potential allies below deck, while professional and caregiving skills helped some forge positions among their shipmates. The lines of affiliation were not necessarily determined by those that had articulated their daily lives on land. Enslaved Africans aboard slave ships constructed their social worlds through the observation of rites, however circumscribed, that life events like birth and death demanded. They forged alliances around the grain mills, the cabestan, and around the quest for survival. Unlike the worlds they left behind, and those they would build on the other side of the ocean, and unlike the seaborne world of their captors, the social worlds of captives were temporary, built out of urgency, and would face yet another disintegration once the ship reached its destination.

It seems that many captives understood the temporal nature of the voyage. Even fearsome rumors of cannibalism referenced an approaching end to their condition. The women aboard the *Favorite* heard from the *grand nègres* that they would be "delivered to people who will cut their throats" once the ship reached its destination.[292] For those who had already suffered long landed passages to the coast, their experiences of repeated sales and transportation likely shaped substantial suspicions that their transoceanic passage would be no different. Aboard the ship, they may have encountered many others who were less sure of the fate of shipboard relationships. Children and women, more likely to have been sold within shorter distances and shorter periods of time from their point of capture, might have been more willing to imagine that the protections of shipboard political alliances could outlast the voyage. Similarly, enslaved guardians, who, as Stephanie Smallwood argues, may have witnessed African-European labor and trading relationships prior to their embarkation, and anticipated enduring relationships of privilege within European bondage. For children, the temporality of the voyage must have been particularly bewildering. Young children understand time differently, where "yesterday" encompasses the past and "tomorrow" the fullness of the future.[293] They depend upon conversations with parents and family members to understand their place in time and space. Aboard the ship, who might have provided explanation of the passage of time and space at sea? For Equiano, as likely for many others, a countryman informed him that they were being carried to a far away land to work, but there seems to have been little information about how long the voyage would be, or what work and what separations lay ahead.[294] The extreme vulnerability of

[292] Sanguinet, Journal de bord, *La Favorite*, December 7, 1743.
[293] Hudson, Judith A, 'The Development of Future Time Concepts Through Mother-Child Conversation', *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly*, 52 (2006), 70–95.
[294] Equiano, 48-49.

captives to disease, deprivation and violence could only underscore the broader precariousness of their relationships and seaborne social worlds. Under these circumstances, it seems most people must have formed what they understood to be tenuous bonds of necessity, connections formed to withstand the conditions of slavery at sea, with great uncertainty regarding their permanence aside from a general recognition of their fragility. Remarkably, many of these connections, forged out of desperation in the vast unknown of the mid-ocean, did survive the voyage and even the further disruptions of sale and bondage in the colonies. Scholars have shown that some shipmates maintained these ties even across generations.[295]

A lost package of letters evokes the ghostly sinews of human relationships stretched almost to their vanishing point in the slave trade. The letters, now lost to the archive, endure, like so many references to the social worlds of captives, in a brief reference, an aside in an otherwise formulaic document. They serve as evidence for the continuity of memories and of captive people's efforts to build and maintain social bonds, even after the slave ship's departure from the African coast. On June 24, 1705, Captain Houssaye wrote in his logbook for the French East Indiaman the *Aurore* that letters were written on behalf of twenty captive African women to the *gens de la terre* on land, though the nature of their relationship is unclear. The women had already been at sea for nearly a month, having departed from Loando with forty other captives on a Portuguese brigantine in late May. As the ship neared Benguela, they were captured a second time, in a naval assault by the *Aurore,* which had just days before destroyed the fort and pillaged the town of Benguela. Upon their return to the coast, the women "had it written to their friends" that they might be ransomed in exchange for cattle.[296] Once the ship had received 6 cows, 30 poultry and a few herbs, the captain sent all the women to the shore, along with "all the ornaments of the church of Benguela" which they had seized in the raid. The sixty men remained captive aboard the ship. The women's ability to dictate or write their letters suggests they likely spoke Portuguese, and, like the captive men who died later in the voyage, were likely baptized and bore Christian names. Mariana Candido remarks that the Portuguese translation of *gens de la terre*, *filhos da terra*, refers to the "locally born descendents of European men and local women," some of whom served as translators and could read and write, suggesting that these women may have borne even deeper ties to the Atlantic trade and cultural resources. They clearly put whatever skills, knowledge and connections they could assemble towards negotiating their release.[297] The captain's receptivity to their plea, and his willingness to part with his captives, is perhaps best explained by the fact that his was not primarily a slaving voyage. After the destruction of the Portuguese fort at Benguela, he would sail next to A Coruña, Spain, before finally returning to France. It is also likely that he was motivated by the increasingly severe nutritional deficiency that plagued the voyage and eager to obtain more meat, often thought to be

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[295] Borucki, Alex, 'Shipmate Networks and Black Identities in the Marriage Files of Montevideo, 1768-1803', *Hispanic American Historical Review*, 93 (2013), 205–38; Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967), 149-50; Elsa V. Goveia, *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 245; Hawthorne, Walter, '"Being Now, as It Were, One Family": Shipmate Bonding on the Slave Vessel Emilia, in Rio de Janeiro and throughout the Atlantic World', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 45 (2008), 53–77

[296] "The same day, the *gens de la terre* sent two cows to Monsieur the Baron de Palliere, with the promise that they would send more in exchange for the return of the negresses who were on the brigantine. This was promised to them, and the negresses had [this] written to their friends."

[297] Candido, Marina P., *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 11.

a preventative against scurvy. Scurvy had caused the deaths of two crewmen over the previous year, and would claim the lives of at least 27 more along with at least six of the forty captive men aboard the ship in the grim four months between their departure from Benguela in June of 1705 and their final return to Port Louis in October of that year. The twenty women who secured their return to the African coast evoke the wide-cast storylines of Oceanic history, which tied the Indian Ocean voyage of the *Aurore* to the slave trade along West Central Africa. It illustrates the entanglements of trade in humans and trade in goods within this oceanic world. Their letters, even if extant only in the historical imaginary, serve as a reminder that the connections people left behind on the Middle Passage did not vanish when they departed from the coast. While these women found ways to reconnect with "friends" or at least temporary allies on land, the overwhelming number of Africans were forced to carry the bonds with those they had lost out into the open sea. They were forced to build new social worlds amidst the terror of the slave ship. They forged relationships, many of which fell behind them as death rent through the ship, many of which they carried ahead as they sailed into the uncertainty of time and space, the monotony of the ocean interrupted and colored by death, by birth, by rotting food supplies, by fish and whales in the mid-ocean, by the accumulating stench of the ship, and eventually by the aroma of flora and the flocks of birds that marked the approach to land.

Chapter 2. Processes of Social Ordering among Crewmen and Officers

Seamen departed from their homes for months or years at a time; the currents carried them beyond the sight of land, and beyond the reach of landed institutions, from relative health to physical decay, and often, but not always, back again. These boys and men set sail into a moving world, but one whose motions they could read, navigate and at times direct. Their departure from landed space marked the start of a bounded journey with a beginning and end. In between, they lived temporarily disconnected from local ties, landed social norms, and the spaces that organized landed social life. Nevertheless, the spaces of the ship and the rhythms of the voyage structured a new life at sea.

The overlapping temporalities of ritual, labor and the body formed a skeletal frame upon which seamen built seaborne social orders. Even the most unpredictable voyages were divvied up into careful segments, each day divided into seven watches, each week marked by the sabbath, and the years punctuated by feast days and by the arrival at ports of call. Changing environmental and bodily conditions divulged the accumulation of time at sea and their progress towards their destination and return to France. In contrast to the captives aboard these ocean-faring vessels, experienced seamen could track their voyage across familiar seas. They read the constellations they sailed beneath and anticipated the hot stillness of the equatorial Atlantic seas, the forceful Agulhas current that swept against ships sailing around the Cape of Good Hope, the jet-black frigate birds and the blue-footed boobies that crowded the ships and shorelines in the Southwest Indian Ocean. They anticipated too the bitter bodily signs of passing time and space, particularly the onset of flux and scurvy, dual plagues that wrecked crews on *voyages au long cours*. While the duration of some voyages, particularly those to the East Indies, could vary by months, seamen awaited their return to the mainland with some certainty of the season, if not the exact date. Finally, for most seamen, their time as voyagers was delimited by the years of their youth. Roughly three quarters of employed seafarers were under 30 years of age, over half were younger than 25.[298] This was not a lifelong profession for most; for their young adulthood, seafaring became a means to supply their own needs, to supplement their families income and perhaps to build a little capital upon which they might found their own households and fund later enterprises.[299] Their time at sea accumulated, as hours worked, as voyages served, in their pay and in the experience that would promote them from *mousse* to *matelot*, and from *matelot* to pilot, or for the well-connected onboard from *pilotin* to lieutenant or captain.[300] This accountability of time brought order to the passage, and the familiarity of temporal markers in a world of endless horizons formed a skeletal frame upon which seafarers constructed their social worlds. This chapter examines the rhythms of free seafarers voyages, from their embarkation to

[298] This estimate is based on a survey of 660 seafarers whose ages are known and who participated in probate auctions aboard ship in 208 probate auctions held on 20 voyages from 1730 to 1773. Nereide (1729-1731), AD56 9B 106; Duc d'Anjou AD56 9B 107; Duc d'Anjou (1731-1733), AD56 9B 107; Heron (1732-1735), AD56 9B 107; Flore (1734-1736), AD56 9B 108; Saint-Louis (1734-1735), AD56 9B 108; Aurore (1735-1736), AD56 9B 109; Duc d'Anjou (1736-1739), AD56 9B 111; Comtesse (1740-1741), AD56 9B 112; Bruny (1773-1774), AD56 9B 121; Dauphin (1773-1774), AD56 9B 121; Reine (1734-1736), AD56 9B108; Aquilon (1777-1778), AD56 9B121; Trois-Amis (1776-1778), AD56 9B121; Ville d'Archangel (1776-1778), AD56 9B121; Cupidon, ADLA B 4997; Vermudien (1771-1772), ADLA B 4997; Mercure (1732-1733), ADLA C 1307.

[299] Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea.*

[300] Requete d Francois Drouillet de Bordeaux en Reception de pilotte, September 26, 1736, Procedures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 1237.

disembarkation, tracking the ways in which the activities of daily life, the experience of the body, and ritual life structured social life onboard.

Embarkation

The process of engaging one's labor required seamen to register in a labor system that, while it ferried them to the other side of the earth, also placed them under the tight surveillance of the state. The *bureau des classes*, a state institution with the goal of maintaining a list of all seamen eligible for service on the king's naval ships. This system aimed to maintain a third or a quarter of all French seamen on reserve at all times, so that they might be called to serve in times of war. Those sailors registered in Lorient during the middle of the century were called instead to serve on the ships of the *Compagnie des Indes*. In practice, the *bureau des classes* rarely refused a sailor's departure on a mercantile vessel; it served primarily to track and control seamen's movements, not prevent them from leaving port.[301] Whether they contracted their labor with their captain, as in most ports, or directly with the *bureau du contrôle* or *bureau des classes* in Lorient, seamen were required by law to sail the full length of the voyage and return to their port of embarkation.[302] Before departure, captains deposited a copy of the roll books with the *bureau des classes*, and they were required to account for any seamen who did not arrive back with the ship upon its return, whether due to illness, death or desertion.

If engagement for a voyage marked seamen's entry into this regimented system, it also freed several months of wages to be spent as needed to support their families, outfit their sea chests or fuel their spirits as they prepared for the grim months ahead. In Nantes, Bordeaux and Rouen, this often amounted to two-months' advance, and for those departing for longer voyages from Lorient, this was later extended to four-months', then six-months' advances. These advances were intended to help support the seamen as they prepared to embark, paying for the purchase and laundering of clothing that would guard them against the elements during the voyage, as well as room and board as they prepared to depart. They were also essential to support their families while they were at sea. Despite their youth, most sailors were married with at least one child to support.[303] In Lorient, half of the sailors' advance pay was paid directly to their families through the *bureau des classes*.[304] Beyond familial expenses and the purchase of necessities, however, it seems sailors found other ways to invest their funds, despite the efforts by the state to restrict those activities. As of 1745, a royal ordinance prohibited any lending to sailors, even by shipmates sailing together. Inhabitants of maritime towns were also prohibited from extending credit against the salaries of sailors except for rent, subsistence, or clothing, to the extent that the king declared any other loans null and unenforceable, in an effort to protect families' access to

[301] T. J. A. Le Goff, 'Problèmes de Recrutement de La Marine Française Pendant La Guerre de Sept Ans', *Revue Historique* (1990), 283, 205–33.
[302] The power of the *Compagnie* to recruit men from the Quartier of Port-Louis suppressed the wages aboard these ships in comparison with ships departing from other ports, notably Nantes, where sailors' wages were nearly double those of their counterparts at Lorient. Jean-Michel André, *Les Engagés de la Compagnie des Indes: marins et ouvriers (1717-1770)* (Vincennes: Service Historique de la Marine, 2004), 57.
[303] Valerie Timpagnon, "Les familles des gens de mer et la mort: navigants de la seconde Compagnie des Indes" Ph.D. Thesis, (Université de Bretagne Sud, 1998), 143.
[304] Upon their return, sailors or their families needed to go to the *bureau des classes* to receive their pay, which process was intended to preclude any possibility of negotiation. Jean-Michel André, *Les Engagés de La Compagnie Des Indes: Marins et Ouvriers (1717-1770)* (Vincennes: Service Historique de la Marine, 2004), 80-84.

their income.[305] Similarly, captains were prohibited from issuing any pay to sailors in colonial ports or any advances prior to the sailors' return to their home port.[306] These measures were intended to control sailors' movements, withholding pay until the completion of the voyage to facilitate the state's surveillance of its mercantile and naval labor pool. They also aimed to protect sailors' families from impoverishment, as the state suspected that sailors would consume their wages, presumably on frivolous indulgences, during the course of their voyages, and that the availability of wages during the voyage would "excite troubles in the ships, occasion libertinage [and desertion] of sailors, and deprive their families of subsistence."[307] Nevertheless, repeated reiterations of the prohibition over the following decades suggests that sailors and others violated the ordinance frequently.[308]

The men and boys who embarked on these ships met others onboard from places well-known to them, who spoke familiar tongues, and some who attended the same parish church.[309] While it was not rare to find men from Sweden, the Netherlands, Spain, Ireland and England on French ships, most men came from the French littoral, mostly from the region surrounding the port of departure. Aboard the *Aurore*, sailing from Lorient to the Indian Ocean in 1704, 83 of 116 seamen hailed from Brittany, 38 of them from towns and villages surrounding the port of Lorient and Port-Louis, 13 from these two major ports and 14 others came from Groix, a small island opposite the estuary.[310] On ships sailing from Nantes to the Caribbean in the first decades of the eighteenth century, 60% of sailors came from the region immediately surrounding Nantes and an additional 24% from Brittany in general, mostly Port-Louis and Brest. Sailors from Brest and Port-Louis made up as much as half of Nantes' slaving crews from the same period, with the

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[305] *Ordonnance du Roy du premier Novembre mil sept cens quarante-cinq PORTANT défenses à tous Officiers, Mariniers & autres Gens des Equipages des Bâtimens Marchands, de rien prêter pendant le cours des Voyages aux Matelots desdits Equipages; & à tous Habitans des Villes Maritimes, de former aucune action sur la solde des Matelots, si ce n'est pour loyer de maison, subsistance ou hardes fournies du consentement des Officiers des Classes* (Nantes: Imprimerie d'Antoine Marie, 1745), Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 13164.

[306] *Ordonnance du Roy qui deffend aux Capitaines des Navires desarmez aux Isles de l'Amerique, de payer dans les dites Isles La Solde düe a leurs equipages leurs enjoint den faire les decomptes en presence des officiers chargée du detail des Classes et Regle les formalitez à observer à ce sujet, du 19 Juillet 1742* (1742), Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 13164.

[307] *Ordonnance du premier Novembre mil sept cent quarant cinq*, (1745).

[308] Maurepas to Nantes Bureau des Classes, Versailles, France, September 26, 1748. Choiseul duc de Praslin, Arrest du Conseil d'Etat du Roy portant que l'ordonnance du 1er Novembre 1745 qui fait defenses au tous particuliers et habitants des villes maritimes de former aucune action sur la solde des matelots, si'l n'est oour loyer de maison, subsitance ou hardes fournies du consentement des officiers des classes, sera executée . . . (Granville, France: May 10, 1767), Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 13164.

[309] At the time of their embarkation, the five sailors from Lorient either would have attended services at the chapel of the *Compagnie des Indes*, or they would have joined the four sailors who belonged to the overcrowded congregation at Ploemeur, which swelled in the early years of the century, as Lorient sought funds to construct a local church. Of the crew of the *Aurore*, 9 would likely have belonged to the Ploemeur congregation.Those who embarked from Lower Brittany, including the region surrounding Lorient and Port-Louis would likely have been bilingual in French and Breton, though some may have spoken only Breton. On the establishement of a parish at Lorient, see H.-F. Buffet, 'Lorient Sous Louis XIV', *Annales de Bretagne*, 44 (1937), 320-330; On the languages in use in France during the Ancien Régime, see Michel de Certeau, Dominique Julia, Jacques Revel, *Une politique de la langue: La Révolution française et les patois* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975; 2002); Bell, David A, 'Lingua Populi , Lingua Dei : Language , Religion , and the Origins of French Revolutionary Nationalism', *The American Historical Review*, 100 (1995), 1403–37.

[310] Role d'equipage, *L'Aurore*, in Journal de Bord de l'*Aurore*, April, 1704, AN MAR 4JJ/93 pièce 12.

other half overwhelmingly from Nantes and a small number of surrounding villages.[311] Even though only a few members of any one crew may have sailed together before, many at least moved in similar social circles. Rumors that surface in court cases spread from ship to ship and crew lists show many men hailing from the same town or village.[312] While it is difficult to trace friendships and other informal relationships as they wound the maritime community together on land, they emerge obliquely in the admiralty court archives as rumors; rumors of death at sea and rumors of ill treatment traveled back to family members and to sailors at port. The widow of a cook aboard the *Duc d'Harcourt* testified that she had heard rumors from sailors in Bordeaux that her husband died of mistreatment by Captain Le Terrier.[313] Captain Jean Louis Bouyries of the *Renommée de Bordeaux* sued three men of his crew for spreading the rumor "on the ship and in this very town" that he had caused the death of a ship's boy onboard in his last voyage to the Gold Coast.[314] More mundane news of death also traveled from the sea to families onshore, as demonstrated by the many letters by widows to the *Compagnie* and admiralty courts requesting their inheritance after hearing of their husbands' deaths at sea.[315] The widow Blandin wrote to the Bureau de Classes at Lorient in September 1725 to ask if her husband truly had died at sea, as she had heard tell by several sailors.[316] Later in the century, and in particular on East-Indies voyages, the composition of these ships became more international, incorporating sailors from Venice and Spain, the Netherlands and England, as well as the Caribbean. These groups incorporated émigré populations from French ports as well as seamen who first embarked on a French ship at distant ports of call, finding work as replacements for men who had been lost, whether through hospitalization or death, to illness and other hardships of the voyage.[317]

If sailors came from the same towns, the same villages and perhaps the same parishes, officers formed an even more socially concentrated class. Officers embarking on the fleets of Law's *Compagnie des Indes* came overwhelmingly from established maritime families in Saint-Malo, particularly early in the century. Captains and officers from Nantes and Bordeaux

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[311] Murielle Bouyer, "L'attraction Progressive de Nantes Sur Les Petits Ports Des Littoraux Bretons et Poitevins (1694-1715)", in *Des Villes, Des Ports, La Mer et Les Hommes. Actes Du 124e Congrès National Des Sociétés Historiques et Scientifiques, 'Milieu Littoral et Estuaires', Nantes, 1999*. (Paris: Editions du CTHS, 2001), pp. 41–52.

[312] I will discuss these rumors in greater detail in a later section. See for example Informations faites à la requête du Sieur Jean Louis Bouyries Capitaine du Navire nommé La Renommée de Bordeaux, plaignant . . . Des bruits calomnieux repandus à bord . . . Et dans la present ville d'avoir causé la mort du nommé Nazereau cy devant mousse sur ledit navire en son dernier voyage ainsy qu'à la côte d'or, à Saint Domingue et dans la presente ville, May 5, 1768, Informations, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 892.

[313] Procedure contre Le Terrier capitaine du Duc d'Harcourt, 1751, Informations, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 883.

[314] Informations faites à la requête du Sieur Jean Louis Bouyries Capitaine du Navire nommé *La Renommée de Bordeaux*, 1768, Informations, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 892.

[315] Widow to the Bureau de Classes at Lorient, October 31, 1726, Lettres de particuliers, Correspondance de la Compagnie, SHD-L 1P 278 liasse 6, pièce 28.

[316] Widow Blandin to the Bureau de Classes at Lorient, September 20, 1735, Lettres de particuliers, Correspondance de la Compagnie SHD-L 1P 278 liasse 8 piece 7.

[317] I base these impressions upon a small sample of probate auctions for which we have identified the origins of participants. I aim to broaden the survey to assess the robustness of the distinctions highlighted here. One problem in this survey is that the two ships from the 1770s are both slaving vessels, but most of those from the 1730s are direct Caribbean voyages, including just one slaving voyage. It is possible, therefore that the type of voyage, not just the period of embarkation, made a difference for the composition of the crew. Probate auctions from *Le Postilion de la Societé de Nantes*, *Le Saint François Xavier* ADLA B 4983 (1733-1733); *Le Cupidon*, *La Duchesse de Grammont*, *Le Vermudien* ADLA B 4997 (1770-1772); Crewlist for *Le Mercure* ADLA C 1307 (1732-1733).

generally came from the major ports, whereas sailors often came equally from the surrounding regions.[318] While the majority of merchant families were of French origin, many belonged to prominent emigrant communities, most notably Irish, "Portuguese" Jewish, and Dutch communities, particularly in Bordeaux, Nantes and Rouen.[319] Aspiring captains cultivated ties to these merchant families, whether French or émigré. The social composition of the officer class concentrated even further by the end of the century. A survey of captains' names from slaving voyages from Lorient, Nantes and Bordeaux shows that around 31% of captains from ships departing in the first half of the century shared a surname, whereas about 50% of slaving captains in the second half of the century shared a surname.[320] While there is no similarly accessible data for major officers or for non-slaving Atlantic routes, a similar pattern likely pertained.

Most seamen followed their fathers, brothers, uncles and cousins to the sea. Correspondence surrounding the emergent *Compagnie des Indes* in the early 1720s reveals the ways in which families used their connections to secure positions for young men seeking careers at sea. In 1721, René d'Espinose, a well-connected member of the Nantes bourgeoisie, wrote to Gérard Mellier, the mayor of Nantes who happened to be in Lorient. D'Espinose aimed to secure a position on a *Compagnie* ship for his nephew, "presently a porter" who had already served on two voyages but was presently without work. Likely spurred by the prospect of riches to be won in Law's new company, Monsieur Boisquet of Nantes similarly wrote to recommend his brother-in-law, Monsieur Billotte of Quimper, to the service of the company in May of the same year.[321] In 1723, a Madame Villeon wrote from Saint-Malo to her husband in Lorient as he prepared to embark on his next voyage. She related her delight at hearing that her husband would be embarking with her "friends" and suggested that he register their sons at the *Bureau des Classes* in Lorient as sailors, in case of war and a corresponding *levée*. Likely she hoped to initiate her sons to the maritime trade and to seize on Lorient's privilege to recruit sailors for merchant ships, even during wartime, when sailors from other ports would be called to serve on naval ships. Just four months later, in January of 1724, Nicolas and Odot Villeon, both sons of François from Saint-Malo, embarked on the *Mercure* as *mousses*, sailing a slaving voyage for Gorée, Ouidah and Martinique. Nicolas and Odot did not sail with their father.[322] Nevertheless, they retained at least a minimal correspondence with their family. Within weeks of their return in

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[318] Philippe Haudrère, "Les Officiers Des Vaisseaux de La Compagnie Des Indes: Un Corps d'élite Dans La Marine Française Du XVIIIe Siècle", *Histoire, Économie et Société*, 16 (1997), 120.

[319] Peter Sahlins, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004), 148, 172-180

[320] This calculation is based on data from the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database. I have attempted to correct for instances where the same first name was spelled multiple ways or an initial was used by deleting likely duplicate names from the dataset. Slave Trade Database, https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/zKbxXWrd Accessed 5/17/2022.

[321] Correspondence Monsieur Boisquet to Gérard Mellier, (May 6, 1721) Compagnie des Indes Personnel, A.M. Nantes HH209.

[322] I have assumed her name is an alternate spelling of "Villeon" as this letter was bundled with others related to the family "Ville eon", "Delavilleleon" and others, all seeming to discuss the same family. Madame Lavillion, Letter to Monsieur Villeon demeuran chez monsieur Belzjambé Delbois Demeurant dans la grande rue de Loriant, Loriant, August 25, 1723, Lettres de particuliers, Correspondance de la Compagnie, SHD-L 1P 278 liasse 6, pièce 10. Rôle du Mercure (1724-1725), Bureau de classes de Port-Louis, Rôles au désarmement, long cours, SHD-L 2P 21-II.13, ed. l'Association des Amis du Service Historique de la Défense à Lorient (A.S.H.D.L.), "Armement des navires", *Memoire des Hommes*, https://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/fr/article.php?larub=28&titre=armements-des-navires Accessed 8/1/2023.

September of 1725, their sister Magdallenne in Saint-Malo wrote of her relief at the news of their safe return and her urgent concern that they and come straight home to their siblings, who were living on a pension in Saint-Malo since the death of their mother, presumably sometime in the previous two years.[323] These letters illustrate the interconnectedness of eighteenth-century seafaring communities between ports, the integration of maritime families into the institutions and networks of maritime employment. It is likely that the men named in these letters would rise to the officer classes, given the literacy of their advocates and their privileged connections. Nevertheless, crew lists suggest that sailors as well as officers used their family connections to find work at sea.

While the relations between crew are difficult to establish with certainty, shared surnames and places of origin suggest the possibility of familial relations. Michel Marin, a ship's boy, from Lorient boarded the *Aurore* in 1704 at age twelve alongside Cezar Marin, the boatswain from the adjacent town of Ploemeur. At twenty-one years of age in 1742, Jean Farost embarked for India on the *Lys* as a second *quartier-maître*, serving under his father Benoît, who embarked as the second *maître d'équipage*. On the same ship, Pierre Le Nevedé, a *valet*, and his likely son, a *matelot cannonier* sailed together. Alain and Pierre Rabin, both sailors from Pleurtuit, were likely cousins.[324] Aboard the *Neptune*, which sailed for China from 1731 to 1734, Louis and Marc-Antoine De Joannis, both sons of Jean Baptiste from Lorient, sailed together, the first as a pilot, the second as a sailor. *Mousse* René Griot sailed with his father, the *matelot* Antoine, as did *mousse* Robert Morillon and his father, the *matelot* Pierre Morillon. A *mousse* aged 13 and *matelot* aged 20, both named François Rouault and both from Saint-Malo, though of different fathers, embarked together. Brothers Jacques and Alexis Robinot from Erquy sailed together, as did Pierre and Mathurin Raux of Saint-Malo.[325] A scattering of shared surnames among the crew of these and other ships suggests that more distant familial relations may have worked together onboard, though these relationships are difficult to establish with certainty. Similar patterns appear on slaving ships as well. Aboard the *Concorde de Vannes*, a slaving ship that sailed to Ouidah and Martinique in 1731, Jean Abraham captained the ship, while his brother Jacques served as the lieutenant.[326] *Maitre d'équipage*, Golven Stéphan sailed with his son, Nicolas, who embarked on the *Valeur* for Senegal in 1740 as a coxswain. Fourteen-year old Marc Chauvain sailed with his father Claude, a *matelot charpentier* (a carpenter with the rank of a seaman) aboard the *Flore* destined for Ouidah and Saint-Domingue in 1734, as did the brothers Loth and François Grossin, both *cannoniers*.[327] Aboard the *Comtesse*, captained by Joseph Le Houx to Senegal and Saint-Domingue in 1740, two pilots, Guillaume and Hervé Quermeneur, both sons

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[323] It appears that Magdallenne, like many seafarers' dependents, found herself in financial need, especially when sailors departed on voyages for more than a year, a circumstance that compounded the importance of maintaining contact with one's family at sea. Upon their return, sailors or their families needed to go to the *bureau des classes* to receive their pay, which process was intended to preclude any possibility of negotiation. André, 80-84; Magdallenne Villeon, Letter to Monsieur de la Ville eon a la grope de . . . a Lorient, September 24, 1725, Lettres de particuliers, Correspondance de la Compagnie, SHD-L 1P 278-6, pièce 11.

[324] Rôle du Lys (1742-1743), SHD Lorient 2P 30-I. 12, ed. A.S.H.D.L.

[325] All extant rollbooks for the *Compagnie des Indes* have been transcribed into pdfs by the l'Association des Amis du Service Historique de la Défense à Lorient (A.S.H.D.L.). They are accessible online through the French Defense Ministry's historical website, *Mémoire des Hommes*. All rollbooks hereafter marked A.S.H.D.L. are from that collection. Role du *Neptune* (1731-1734) SHD Lorient 2P 26-I.8 ed. Joël Vaillant and Jean-Michel André, (A.S.H.D.L.), https://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/fr/article.php?larub=28&titre=armements-des-navires Accessed 8/1/2023.

[326] Rôle de la *Concorde* (1731-1733) AD56 9b 208.

[327] Rôle de la Flore (1734-1736) SHD-L 2P 27-I.6, ed. A.S.H.D.L.

of Nicolas from Morlaix, were likely brothers. There were also ships with no such relations onboard.[328] Tellingly, few onboard familial relationships stretched across the sailor and officer classes, whatever the route. *Mousses* were likely the sons of sailors and could expect to matriculate into the sailor class on future voyages, with just a few rising to become petty officers in their later careers. Major officers generally came from well-connected maritime families and most often began their careers as pilots and ensigns, rather than mousses. Yet, these familial relationships provided partially overlapping hierarchies of association from *mousses* to *maîtres* and pilots to captains. Nevertheless, it seems it was not uncommon for sons to sail with fathers, nephews with uncles and brothers together.

Sailing with an older relative could offer significant benefits, from skills and training to protection and the simple comforts of companionship. When ten-year-old Robert Morillon embarked on the *Neptune* on what was surely his first voyage, his father, the forty-year-old sailor Pierre likely showed him the ropes quite literally, acquainting him with the rigging, the capstan, and the daily work of the ship. He adjusted to ship time and learned maritime hierarchy and discipline under his father's tutelage. Even though sailors held limited authority aboard the ship, this guidance, as well as the presence of an older advocate, may have helped the young Robert integrate among the crew and guarded him against the gravest necessity and the worst abuses by officers and other crewmen. *Mousses* were frequently the targets of officers' anger and hazing by other members of the crew. Aboard the *Saint-Michel*, which sailed from Bordeaux to the Caribbean in 1731, the two ship's boys suffered from hunger and poor treatment. One died on the voyage, allegedly from poor treatment. The other, out of desperation, stole biscuit from the ship's supply. The captain tied him to the capstan and whipped him, and crewmen testified that this cruel treatment, among other abuses, led the boy to take his own life.[329] Perhaps the presence of a brother or cousin would have given him someone to confide in, someone to tend his wounds or someone to advocate for him. The two boys on the *Saint-Michel* were likely without recourse to family onboard, and they suffered dearly for it. Such extreme cases surface on only a small fraction of the voyages, but the number of *mousses* and ensigns, the two youngest classes onboard, who appear as victims in criminal court cases suggests that they were frequently targeted by officers and crew alike and were particularly in need of the protection and guidance a family member might provide. Unfortunately, these protections could only guard the young Robert Morillon so far. When the *Neptune* reached Île-de-France on its return from China in March of 1734, after over two years at sea, Robert fell seriously ill and was sent to the hospital at port. Just ten days later, his father Pierre was sent to the hospital at St. Paul, Île-Bourbon to recover. Pierre would return to Lorient and go on to sail on two more voyages, but the young Robert died on the return voyage.[330]

It is notable that direct familial relations were rarer within the lower ranks on slaving ships. Most such relations that I have been able to identify come from the officer classes, whether major or petty officers. This may underscore sailors' sober assessment of the risks and benefits that might accrue to crewmen as opposed to officers on these disease-ridden voyages.[331] The

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[328] Rôle de la *Comtesse* (1740-1741), SHD-L 2P 29 - I.19. ed. A.S.H.D.L. Rôle de la Néréide (1729-1731) SHD-L 2P 24-I.10 ed. A.S.H.D.L.

[329] Procedure contre André Gallien, July 2, 1731, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6 B 1207.

[330] Robert embarked as a passenger on the return voyage of the Duc de Chartres, but he died just as the ship returned to Lorient in 1735. Role de Duc de Chartres, SHD-L 2P 26-II.13 ed. A.S.H.D.L..

[331] While slaving voyages embarked proportionately more men for the tonnage of the ship in order to deter slave revolts, the sheer numbers of men on the hulking East Indiamen were often double or more the crews on Atlantic voyages.

protections an older relative might provide against extraordinary abuse on a sailing ship, the guidance he might give, had to be weighed against the extraordinary risks of disease and revolts on slaving voyages. Aboard ships sailing to China or the Indian ocean, crude death rates hovered around 50 per thousand per year (d/y), whereas aboard slaving ships, the rate hovered around 140 d/y early in the century, with a slow decline to around 110 d/y over the by the 1790s. Fathers, uncles and brothers may have been reticent to subject their relations to the very real dangers of revolt or epidemic disease on a single slaving voyage for the low monthly wages of a sailor, whereas officers could expect higher salaries, but also the exponential growth of their financial rewards as they rose through the ranks, accorded *pacotilles* or percentages of the profits from the voyage.[332] It may also reflect the captain's interest in limiting solidarity among crewmen, while he consolidated power within the officer classes. On these voyages, captains were particularly concerned with ensuring the strength of their hierarchical control, fearing that any disorder or whisper of mutiny could open the door to slave revolt.

As much as these familial relations could provide protection for those of the lowest status, they may have promised increased security for the captain as well. Social cohesion aboard the ship afforded order and good function, which, regardless of the risks facing any seamen on a long voyage, could at least help guard against catastrophe. However, solidarity was particularly important for captains to cultivate among the often-opportunistic officers. Major officers held navigational expertise as well as political authority aboard the ship. A captain was most secure when he could assume his immediate subordinates in this empowered class were working toward his (and his family's) success. Having a brother or nephew among the lower officers could provide the captain with an informant and ally.

Thus, familial relations made up a small but important part of the crew and officers on most voyages. They signal the relative stability of free seafarers' social lives. While boys and men, captains and carpenters departed from their female relatives, the old and the very young, their churches and landed institutions, they brought with them familial relations. Their embarkation aboard ship marked their entry into a new temporality, a new spatiality, which shaped the construction of order within this demographically skewed and institutionally stripped social body. However, as this chapter will show this construction was not made of whole cloth, nor did its form originate in the mandates of the market. It was founded upon the ideals and methods of early modern familial ordering, which coupled increasingly with market drivers to create a uniquely seaborne social order. While family relationships, friendships and shared language, culture and religion provided the bases for social cohesion onboard, life at sea forged new bonds of association, structured through sea-time, labor, ritual, and increasingly, the market. As this chapter will show, the accelerating seaborne marketplaces forged new alliances in this moving world, facilitating relationships of debt and obligation that crossed class boundaries. As these men became more integrated into the world of global trade, shipmates built interdependencies across rank, and structured political alliances to gain increasing access to the wealth of overseas trade and to guard against the dangers of life at sea.

The New Temporality of the Ship

When the *mousses* Jean Medor, Joseph Peliton and Henry Crozillac stepped onto the 100-ton *La Dorade*, moored at Bordeaux in June of 1726, they stepped into a moving world, propelled by its own rhythms, both natural and man-made. The odor of burnt tar, juniper and vinegar cloaked

[332] Journal de voyage de *la Nereide*, Journaux de Bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR 4JJ/63.

the stench of the salt-wet wood, and it signaled the boys' entry into the maritime world.[333] Just the day before, the admiralty court's surgeon had arrived to "perfume" the ship, burning tar and juniper or vaporizing vinegar below deck with the intention of purifying the stagnant, damp air.[334] The concept of perfuming the air was borrowed from physicians and surgeons in hospitals and sick rooms, where they generally used juniper and incense cakes to purify the air.[335] The methods of purifying the air of the ship, from burning sulfur to vaporizing vinegar on a red-hot cannonball may have repelled lice, bedbugs and other vermin, at least temporarily from the spaces of the ship.

Perfuming the ship marked the readiness of the ship to set sail, the final step before the crew embarked, but it was more than a utilitarian routine. The dense aroma of burnt juniper and tar likely evoked a sense of ritual as well. The eighteenth-century city was full of distinctive odors and aromas that filled space and marked time.[336] Like the censers that swung through church aisles at the start of the Mass, the pungent herbal and medicinal smoke of the ship inaugurated a distinct time, set apart from the ordinary. While it did not carry explicitly religious meanings for those who embarked, the aroma of juniper, the stench of burning tar, surely connoted the start of a voyage, the departure from land, and perhaps carried a promise, however dubious, of the health and safety of the ship that would carry them to sea. The period at sea far exceeded the time any sailor spent in the church, but every experienced seaman who caught the smell of this distinctive smoke summoned the memories of previous voyages as he cast his thoughts forward to the months ahead. The three *mousses* aboard *La Dorade*, likely teenagers and likely on their first voyage, would learn the rhythms of daily life and of the Atlantic route as they sailed to Saint-Domingue in 1726.

Jean Medor was a young man or boy of African descent, most likely enslaved by his Captain, a Monsieur Fort-Brousse. He sailed as a ship's boy "without pay."[337] While he had likely already

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[333] The connections with the church may have been more concrete as well, as at least one receipt for incense from 1724 suggests that convents and monasteries may have supplied some *armateurs* with the necessary *parfums*. Sister Magdelenne Chaslle, Fille de la Charité, certifies having delivered three "doses" of perfume to Monsieur Laborde, surgeon of the admiralty, to use for the vessel the *Charmante* of Bordeaux in 1724. Je certifie avoir livré à Monsieur Laborde chirurgien trois doses de Parfum pour le Vaisseau la charmante de bordeaux appartenant à Monsieur Silva Capitaine Catelinau fait à Bordeaux ce 13 Janvier 1724—Soeur Magdelenne Chaslle fille de la charité. Receipt, Soeur Magdelenne Chaslle fille de la charité, January 13, 1724, Papiers de bord, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6 B 369. Certification of fumigation June 5, 1726, Role d'équipage June 6, 1726, Papiers de bord, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 373.

[334] Tar and juniper seem to have been of general usage for perfuming the ship, though contemporaries also suggest that some may have fumigated the space with burned sulfur, or vinegar poured on hot iron. Nicolas Aubin, *Dictionnaire de la Marine,* (Amsterdam: Pierre Brunel, Marchand Libraire sur le Dam. 1702), 596. Henry-Louis Duhamel Du Monceau, *Moyens de conserver la santé aux equipages des vaisseaux: avec la maniere de purifier l'air des salles des hôpitaux ; et une courte description de l'hôpital Saint Louis…* (Paris: H. L. Guerin & L.F. Delatour, 1759), 135-8.

[335] "Parfum (Médicine/Pharmacie)," *Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, etc.,* eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert. University of Chicago: ARTFL Encyclopédie Project (Spring 2021 Edition), Robert Morrissey and Glenn Roe (eds), http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/, vol. II: 941.

[336] Odors alone, from food waste, feces and urine, animals and butcheries, saturated the air of early modern cities. Aromas of street food and baking bread also contributed to the olfactory aura of communities. Arlette Farge, *Le Peuple et les Choses: Paris au XVIIIe siècle* (Montrouge, France: Bayard, 2015), 24-27; Thomas W. Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead: A Cultural History of Mortal Remains* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), 220-223.

[337] It is unclear what his status was, but likely that he was held in slavery by the captain. The practice of embarking ship's boys without pay was was not unknown, and several embarked on a single voyage in 1724. I have found one crewlist on which all ships' boys, none of whom are listed as "negre" and all of whose French towns of origins are

labored for weeks along the banks of the Garonne, he was not aboard Fort-Brousse's previous voyage, suggesting that this may have been his first embarkation. He was one of a very small minority of Black seamen sailing on transoceanic voyages departing from France in this period. While people of color regularly composed the crews in the Caribbean, among the roughly 1200 men who embarked from Bordeaux for the Caribbean in the first six months of 1726, Medor is the only seaman whose race is noted in the roll books.[338] The other two ship's boys, Joseph Peliton and Henry Crozillac, came from Bordeaux and the nearby port of Rochefort, while other men onboard the *Dorade* hailed from a wide geographic range along coastal and riverine France, from Saint-Malo and Brest to the upper Garonne, as well as one sailor from Canada, reflecting the broader patterns of regional sourcing for French maritime labor.[339] While Medor's race and status would have immediately set him apart from his shipmates, it would not necessarily have precluded the possibility of friendship with his peers. Olaudah Equiano wrote that he met a boy, Richard Baker, while enslaved aboard a ship sailing from Virginia to England. Baker showed Equiano "a great deal of partiality and attention, and in return [Equiano] grew extremely fond of him." The two boys "became inseparable" and remained dear friends over a series of voyages of British naval vessels.[340] It is possible that similar bonds developed between the three boys aboard the *Dorade*.

The ebb and flow of the tide, along with the strength and direction of the wind, dictated the date and time of departure. When that time arrived, the longboat, which weighed several tons, would be hauled in. All seamen, including Medor, labored to bring in the ponderous anchor and its sodden hemp cable.[341] Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, who embarked for Isle de France aboard the *Marquis de Castries* in 1768, wrote of this moment of embarkation: "I hear the noise of whistles, the turning of the capstan and the sailors who raise the anchor. Here is the last cannon salute; we're under sail."[342] As Barthelemy Gaillardy, the pilot from Bayonne, directed the *Dorade* from Bordeaux down to the mouth of the Gironde estuary and out into the Atlantic, the mousses and 21 other seamen became acquainted and learned the contours of the ship. The hundred-ton ship, built in Le Havre in 1720, stretched seventy-five feet long, with a quarterdeck spanning the stern half of the ship. Seven cannons studded each side of the ship, and three masts spanned above it.[343] In its hold, it carried 25 tons of wine, 50 quintaux of biscuit, 3 tons of fish, and dozens of barrels of "vegetables", salted meats, olive and fish oils, vinegar, flour, butter, and

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marked, embarked "sans gages." See Bordeaux crewlists from 1724. Many enslaved people aboard eighteenth-century sailing ships worked in roles related to cooking or domestic service, and in these cases, their roles are often specified in the crew lists. The lack of specific role named here, paired with the fact that he is listed among (if at the end of) seamen and ship's boys suggests that this may indicate his role as well. On the age range of *mousses,* see Boudriot, vol IV, 31.

[338] I have been unable to locate any further information regarding Medor. His own origins, whether in Africa, South Asia or the colonies, are not recorded. Though he was most likely enslaved, it is possible that he embarked as a freedman, paid only with room and board for the voyage to learn the trade.

[339] Roll book, *La Dorade*, June 6, 1726, Rôles d'équipages, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B373, 35-38.

[340] Equiano, vol. I, 98-118.

[341] N. A. M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 1986), 41.

[342] Henri Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, *Voyage à l'Isle de France, à l'Isle de Bourbon, au Cap de Bonne-Espérance, etc. avec des observations nouvelles sur la nature et sur les hommes,* vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Merlin,1773), 22; Rodger, 41.

[343] Inventaire de la fregatte nommée la dorade Commandé par monseiur Bonté de la Construction agrées et appareux & armement De Present Levant La ville de Bordeaux, October 16, 1725, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 1182.

of course, 60 barrels of eau-de vie.[344] In the 'tweendecks, the space between the hold and main deck, Medor, Peliton, Crozillac and their fellow seamen set up their mattresses or hammocks and stored their belongings.

Once at sea, the very rocking of the ship forced men to move at its rhythm, to adjust their stride, gait and internal balance. Those new to the sea waited out the period of seasickness, suffering for days with uncontrollable vomiting. The crowd of objects, people and things pressed in on all sides aboard the eighteenth-century sailing vessel. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre wrote of the "disorder" of the ship, "one does not know where to walk. There are cases of wine from Champagne, coffers, tons, trunks." Moreover, the constant sounds of the ship fatigued the nerves. Above the slapping of waves against the sides, and the rushing sounds of wind and tides, Bernardin de Saint-Pierre heard "sailors swearing, beasts lowing, geese and poultry cheeping on the quarterdeck." Even aboard smaller vessels, like the *Dorade*, which sailed without livestock, the cords whistled, and the rigging howled in the wind.[345]

The winds and currents, tracked and noted each day at noon in the ship's logbook, set the speed of the voyage, while storms and periods of calm alike threatened to stretch out a voyage by days or weeks. Alongside this natural temporality, man-made markers of time divided seaborne time from time on land. Throughout the day, a petty officer monitored an hourglass and rang the bell each half hour. Every four hours (with two two-hour dog watches between four and eight each evening), he rang the bell eight times, and the starboard and larboard watches alternated between rest and work. "Idlers," or specialist non-seamen (carpenters, pursers, chaplains and others) slept at night and worked during the day.[346] The ship's bell called seamen to meals, to work and to prayer; ordering their movements through the ship as they tracked the passage of time at sea. For officers, particularly the pilots and captains who measured longitude and latitude each noon, this timekeeping was necessary for the calculation of the progress of the ship along its intended route. In the absence of landmarks, in the absence of a church clock, the ship's bell marked the passage of time and space in the rolling sea.

Gens de Mer

The social body of the ship is best understood from the bottom up, not because of the power held by the lowest ranking members of the ship, but because their treatment uncovers the beliefs that underlay processes of social ordering at sea. This section treats the men and boys typically termed *gens de mer* or seamen. The term includes ships' boys, sailors and, in most cases, *officiers mariniers*. Together, they composed the majority of the free men employed in the roll books. They ate together and drank together and, though certain *officiers mariniers* did not keep watch but instead slept at night and worked in the day, they generally hung their hammocks or laid their mattresses in the same spaces in the *entrepont* or forecastle. Nevertheless, differences in pay and privileges ran through the class of the *gens de mer*, placing sailors above mousses and *officiers mariniers* above sailors. At the bottom of these rankings were the ships' boys, or *mousses*.

[344] Estat de la cargaison du Vaisseau la Daurade de Bordeaux, June 4, 1726, Rôles d'équipages, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 373.
[345] Saint-Pierre, 17-18.
[346] Rodger, 26-8, 38-40.

Mousses

Ships' boys were the most expendable members of the social body at sea, so expendable in fact, that they were often hired on only to satisfy regulatory requirements, intended to foster a robust population of sailors to furnish the king's ships in times of war.[347] In 1686, the boys of the hospital were embarked as *mousses* aboard ship for this purpose.[348] Indeed, their French designation, *mousse*, meant not only a "young boy serving in a ship's crew" but also a "certain froth that forms on water" when it is agitated.[349] These boys were the froth, or scum, the sweat of a heaving abyss, that accompanied sailors and officers at sea but did not materially contribute to sailing of the ship or the success of the voyage.[350] Challe remarks that a *mousse* is "the valet of the sailors on the ship," in other words, not an apprentice seaman but a servant.[351] Their social position was marginal, which made them vulnerable to isolation and abuse. Of course, they did perform labor onboard, often the most menial jobs, while they also studied the skills of seafaring. This section will address the position of *mousses* as youths at sea, as laborers aboard ship, and as liminal members of the shipboard community. I will begin with the ways in which ship's boys found rest and recreation onboard.

Once Medor and his shipmates had successfully weighed anchor, they divided into starboard and larboard watches. The day at sea began at noon, when the captain and pilot measured the position of the ship, but the first watch began at eight o'clock in the evening. Let us assume Medor belonged to the second watch of seamen and follow him as he descended into the 'tweendecks. There, he set about making his seaborne home. He and his fellow *mousses* would spend the following year moving between the dark confines of the 'tweendecks and exposure to the elements above, likely sharing a hammock or mattress between them as they alternated watches.

Mousses kept a small amount of clothing, tobacco, and occasionally a few luxuries or trading goods in a sack or trunk against the sides of the creaking hull. While these particular ships' boys left no archival record of their shipboard possessions, probate auctions of others on similar voyages suggest a generally limited inventory. On a two-year slaving voyage from Bordeaux to Gorée, Cabinda, Ile de France and Saint-Domingue in 1749, a ship's boy, Nicolas Servant died on his return to France with only the ragged clothes on his back and a shirt, worth 5 sols, to his name. His particular destitution is underlined by the fact that his brother had succumbed to scurvy early in the voyage, leaving Nicolas all his shipboard possessions. Nicolas promptly auctioned these to the highest bidders aboard the ship, reserving for himself several items of basic clothing, a hat, his brother's coopers' tools and his hammock and blanket, all of which seem to have been gone or soiled beyond repair by the time of his own death a year and a half later. He may have traded the tools along the voyage in exchange for more urgent necessities or

[347] Le Goff, "Problèmes de Recrutement", 283, 206-208.
[348] Embarquement des enfants de l'Hopital, 1686, Minutes de greffe, Amirauté de Saint-Malo, AD35 9B 194.
[349] "Mousse", *Le Dictionnaire de l'Académie Française*, 4e ed., vol. 2 (Paris: Brunet, 1762).
[350] Alain Corbin's poetic evocation of the pre-1750 imaginary of the sea would suggest that *mousse* would have connoted a sense of debris that clung to the "ruins" of ocean coastlines. Corbin, Alain, *The Lure of the Sea: The Discovery of the Seaside in the Western World*, trans. by Jocelyn Phelps (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), 4-5.
[351] Robert Challe, *Journal d'un Voyage Fait Aux Indes Orientales, Par Une Escadre de Six Vaissesaux Commandez Par Mr. Du Quesne, Depuis Le 24 Février 1690, Jusqu'au 20 Août 1691* (Rouen: J.-B. Macheul le jeune, 1721), vol. I, 276-277.

diversions at port.[352] In contrast, an exceptionally materially rich ship's boy, Louis Vincent Hervigo, sailing on a direct voyage from Nantes to the Caribbean in 1733 carried with him 21 items of clothing, tobacco, chocolate and three books of hours. The auction of his goods yielded over 70 livres.[353] More typically, *mousses*' probate auctions yielded around 16 livres and rarely over 35 livres, and their remaining belongings consisted of a small assortment of *chemises*, *culottes*, *bas*, and *souliers.*[354] Whatever belongings Medor, Crozillac and Peliton brought onboard, most items remained packed in their personal satchels for the majority of the voyage, aside from clothing, outerwear and basic commodities, notably bedding and a knife for meals.

The 'tweendecks was, as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre wrote, "a shadowy prison, where one cannot see a thing."[355] It was hot, dark and odorous. The air was so oppressive as to encourage weekly "purification" of this space on well-ordered ships, by scrubbing the deck and "perfuming" it with burning tar. This likely did little to improve its aroma. With each voyage, water accumulated in the depths of the hull and, as it stagnated there, brewed a microbial stew that exhaled sulfurous gasses into the hold and *entrepont*, where men and, on some ships oxen, fowl and other animals, shared the shelter below deck. Duhamel du Monceau wrote in 1759 that a candle brought into the hold below the entrepont would dim in the close air, and he noted a 1745 incident when a man fell over dead, and several around him took ill, after he opened a *futaille* of seawater in the hold.[356] Most ships were equipped with pumps that could remove excess water from the hold, but these were inefficient and required exhausting labor. Captains sought to minimize rather than to eliminate the water in the hold, and instead attempted to ventilate the *entrepont* by opening the portholes and hatches whenever possible.[357] At port, captains would ensure that the interior of the ship, including the emptied hold, was cleaned to the greatest degree possible, as much water as possible pumped out, the boards scrubbed. The smoke from juniper and tar could barely mask the stench of sulfur, of illness, of animal blood and waste.

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[352] Testament fait . . . par Raymont Servant de Sainte Croix de Bordeaux embarqué en qualité de deuxième tonnelier sur le Navire *le Duc d'Harcourt* dudit port de Bordeaux . . . , January 21, 1749; Inventaire et vendûë faite . . . au plus offrant et dernier encherisseur des Hardes nippes et autres meubles tant bons que mauvais appartenant au nommé Raymont Servant de Sainte Croix de Bordeaux embarqué sur le Navire *le Duc d'Harcourt* dudit port de Bordeaux en qualité de Deuxième Tonnelier et décédé par maladie de Scorbut, January 22, 1749; Inventaire et vendue faite en mer . . . aboard du Navire *Le duc d'harcourt* de bordeaux . . . de tout ce qui a esté trouvé appartenir au Nommé Nicolas Servant de Sainte Croix embarqué sur ledit Navire et mort en mer abord dudt. Navire le Septieme jour dudit present mois de juin par maladie, June 19, 1751, Inventaires des effets des gens décédés en mer, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B2044.

[353] Hervigo, 14 years old at the time of his embarkation, was significantly better off than most other ships' boys. The particular acuity of his choices in merchandise for a maritime market, coupled with his relative wealth suggest he was well connected to maritime traders or at the very least well-off seafarers who practiced illicit or small-scale trading. Probate Auction, Louis Vincent Hervigo, July 22, 1733, Pièces déposées en greffe, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4983.

[354] This is based on a survey of 9 probate auctions of the goods held by ships' boys' who died during an Atlantic or Indian Ocean voyage from Lorient or Nantes, spanning from the 1730s to the 1770s. These include both slaving and non-slaving voyages. I have excluded two significant outliers, one yielding over 61 livres and another yielding over 283 livres, both of which exceed double the next highest amount (just under 34 livres).

[355] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 17.

[356] Duhamel Du Monceau, *Moyens de conserver la santé*, 33-40.

[357] On well-ordered ships, sailors and ships' boys alike brought all their bedding and belongings above deck each Sunday to allow for a thorough cleaning and purification with burning tar. New inventions, paper sleeves that could carry bad air out, leather "*soufflers*" and vents of varied designs aimed to force the circulation of air without of course unduly inconveniencing the captain, shipbuilders or *armateurs*, with the result that they were generally too small and too finicky to make much difference. Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 39; Duhamel Du Monceau, 78-125.

Thus, it was the main deck and the forecastle where *mousses* and their shipmates ate and socialized. Sailors could be assured three meals a day, though the food itself was poor; their breakfast, around 8:00 in the morning, was a hard biscuit. Lunch, around noon, consisted of a gruel made of grain and beans, as did the evening meal around 8:00 PM. Two or three times a week, they were allotted salted meat. The water onboard was drawn from rivers and rivulets near the port and mixed with wine prior to consumption in order to at least partially mask the taste of spoilage.[358] Meals were served according to rank, with the captain's table, its finery and its superior provisions, were reserved primarily for major officers, a second table provided for the artisanal classes, and the crew's galley and whatever makeshift seat one might find for the rest. For their meals, each sailor brought his own wooden bowl, spoon and knife, and they ate in small groups, scattered across the deck. On cold nights, sailors gathered in the forecastle by the warmth of the kitchen and others found seats alone where they could. During daytime, those few crewmen who could read and had access to reading material could expand their mental horizons, or at least practice prayer or professional edification. One ship's boy, Pierre Camaret, who embarked on the *Saint-Nicolas* sailing from Brest to Montevideo in 1714 carried twenty-seven volumes with him. Many related directly to the work and spiritual life of seamen, including *Prière et Oraisons des Gens de Mer* and instructional manuals for pilots, and others promised greater potential for philosophical and theological stimulation. François Fénélon's didactic novel *Télémaque* and Gatien de Courtilz de Sandras's *Memoires de Madame de la Marquise de Fresne* abutted volumes of Ptolemy and Pliny, and Jansenist and Jesuit works suggest an interest in matters of ecclesiology.[359] Clearly, he was exceptionally rich (and well-read) for a ship's boy. Nevertheless, he was not the only seaman to bring books with him to sea. Fifteen-year old Marc Vatvient from Saint-Malo, the ship's boy who died aboard the *Reine* en route to India, had a pilot's guidebook in his sea chest, and his shipmate, twelve-year-old Pierre Dumont from Lorient, had four books with him when he died five months later.[360] These books circulated through the crew, not only through reading out loud and borrowing, but also through the probate auctions that followed death at sea. Seventeen-year-old sailor Guillaume "Favre" purchased the pilot's guidebook from Vatvient's inventory, and when he died five months later, an abridged "livre de pilotage" was auctioned to a soldier onboard.[361] Overall, the books carried by crewmen and ships' boys were overwhelmingly of practical or spiritual value. Jean Pierre David, who set sail as a *pilotin* in 1730 from Le Havre to the Caribbean brought with him an instructional

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[358] On the *Ecueil*, sailing for Siam in 1690, the water came from a small brook that ran through the town of Hennebon, near Lorient. Challe, 355.

[359] A list of his books includes: *La theorie des planettes*, *Les travaux de Mars pour la fortification nouvelle*, *l'Imitation de Jesus*, *Télémaque*, *Lettre de Pline* (2 vols), *Traité de la Conscience* (3 vols), *Reponce a Louis Benois*, *Lettres de Vargase* (2 vols), *Imitation pour les dimanche et feste*, *Traité de Fortification, Heure a trois office*, *La Marquise de Fresne*, *Le Veritable arc de naviguer*, four books on l'usage du cartier spherique, *Instruction des pilotes*, *La Construction des vaisseaux de roy*, *La geographie Universelle*, *Le Nouveau Monde*, *L'abrege du pilotage*. Remarkably, Camaret also brought with him a parakeet and a monkey. Invantaire des hardes apartenents a Pierre Camaret mousse dessedé le 20 Octobre 1714 faitte par nous pilote du dit navire le St. Nicolas en presence des officiers, April 6, 1715, Minutes de sentences, Enquêtes et procedures, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4759.

[360] Probate Auction for Marc Vatvient aboard *la Reine*, captained by Henri-Marie Gaillard de Boisriou, December 23, 1734, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B108; Probate Auction for the possessions of Pierre Dumont aboard *la Reine*, captained by Henri-Marie Gaillard de Boisriou, May 16, 1735, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, AD56 9B108.

[361] Probate Auction for Guillaume Faure aboard *la Reine*, captained by Henri-Marie Gaillard de Boisriou, May 25, 1735, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B108.

manual and prayer book.[362] The boatswain, Etienne Pichon, who embarked in 1734 on the slave ship *Saint-Louis,* brought with him a prayer book, as did Jean Malo Le Mesle, a sailor from Saint-Malo who died on the transatlantic voyage of the *Bruny* in 1774, and Pierre Leon, a sailor aboard the slave ship *Nereide* in 1730 carried with him a book on navigation.[363] This type of literature offered fewer opportunities for engrossing narrative, and though books of prayer may have occasioned some reading aloud among friends, it seems likely that when books were part of the material culture of seamen, they were more often used for personal edification than socialization.

While talking was discouraged during work, men and boys joked, disputed and shared rumors when working close by one another, when resting, and especially during the "dog-watches", the two watches in the twilight hours from four to six and six to eight in the evening. Richard Henry Dana, who went to sea in the early nineteenth century, wrote of this as a period of repose, when "the crew are sitting on the windlass or lying on the forecastle, smoking, singing, or telling long yarns," while captain and officers walk the quarter-deck and the steward enjoys a pipe with the cook.[364] As they ate, and in the minutes or hours that followed, depending on their watch, sailors shared tall tales, ribald songs and jokes that carved the contours of their social world.

An episode aboard a *Compagnie* ship returning from India illuminates the crowded and raucous atmosphere of mealtimes among the crew. On April 29, 1721, Albert Castellin, a Dutch sailor who had embarked on the *Solide* as a replacement in Bengal four months earlier, was seated in the forecastle on one of the ship's bollards, a post used for mooring the vessel. He sat alone, knife in hand, eating his bread and lard, but a crowd of men were gathered around him, pressed up against the warmth of the kitchen. Most men had finished eating and were gathered in the forecastle to light their pipes at the galley fire and enjoy a smoke with their shipmates. After more than two months on the open sea, they were approaching the frigid passage around the Cape of Good Hope, and the forecastle promised much needed shelter. Denis Laboureur, the ship's master-of-arms, sat on the neighboring bollard. The cook was sitting alongside the kitchen, having finished his tasks for the moment, and the *commis-de-vivres*, or steward, François Allais, was on deck, in view of the entry to the forecastle. Just outside on the main deck, Balthazar de la Croix, a 25-year-old man from Le Havre and one of the ship's four *contremaitres*, and Jean Baptiste Nicolet, a 30 year old sailor from Dieppe, could be seen roughhousing and laughing. What happened next underlines the tensions between sailors on deck, but it is worth resting a moment with this scene before violence erupted among its players. The testimony in this criminal case reveals a vibrant tableau, with sailors and petty officers brawling in jest, their voices and laughter rising above the crashing noise of the wild sea around them. The bricks of the oven warmed the cook's back, and tobacco smoke filled the forecastle and mixed with the aromas of the day's meals. Officers and crewmen were at ease together, and the mood was lively and jocular.

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[362] Probate Auction for the possessions of Jean Pierre David aboard *le Neptune*, captained by Pimont, 1732, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP230.

[363] These are just some of the books listed in the over 200 probate auctions we have analyzed. Probate auction for the possessions of Etienne Pichon aboard *le Saint-Louis*, captained by André Jacques de Bienvenu, November 30, 1734, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 108; Probate auction for the possessions of Pierre Leon, aboard the *Nereide*, captained by Hugues Cantaul Dentuly October 29, 1730, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 106.

[364] Richard Henry Dana, *Two Years before the Mast: A Personal Narrative* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1911), 15.

Sailors generally included ships' boys in their social world as clear subordinates; the older shipmates could expect *mousses* to accommodate their demands, and in return, they shared their knowledge, skills, and sub-culture. Tobacco and pipes were common aboard ship. Ship's boys may have indulged alongside their older shipmates, with the lights of their pipes tracing their movements across the deck at night and the smoke perfuming the salt air in the day, but they were more likely observers than participants.[365] Michel Le Turque, a sailor of twenty-six years of age, testified on June 10, 1733 that "it [was] the custom that *mousses* must give [a light] to sailors at work, when asked for it."[366] Michel smoked his pipe at five in the morning while raising the flags to celebrate the captain's marriage in the port of Penerf, near Lorient, and he smoked it as he walked the deck in the early dawn. It seems his companions, two ships' boys aged fifteen and eighteen, did not smoke their own pipes. When the admiralty investigated the fire that took the ship less than an hour after their departure for shore, they were interrogated only with regards to the lighted wick, disposed of in an iron candlestick, whereas Turque was questioned with regard to his pipe, which he carried with him across the deck as he watched the rising sun. In Turque's telling, the ship's boys are marginal, the accessories that make possible the work and repose of the sailor. While he smokes, works and walks, the ships' boys watch, but by watching their superiors, they became acquainted with maritime labor, by lighting the pipes of their shipmates, they witnessed the significance of tobacco to maritime culture, while they learned too their place in a hierarchy of work and comfort at sea.

Once retired in his hammock, Medor had only four hours of rest before eight rings of the ship's bell called him on deck for the next watch. The following twenty hours were composed of five alternating watches, between rest, work and recreation, that would carry him and his shipmates to 4pm the next afternoon. At night, they slept in short three-to-four-hour periods, and in the day, they used these in-between periods to rest, eat, socialize, and learn. They were liable to be called onboard at any time in case of emergency. The labor of ship's boys could range widely; most trained as seamen, participating in the hard labor and menial tasks of the ship. Most often under the direct watch of officers on the quarterdeck, as they hauled on the heavy sheets, halliards and braces. Working alongside novices and sailors, they learned the art of knots and watched the top-men, young but skillful and experienced sailors who maneuvered the topgallant and royal yards.[367] On slaving voyages, these young teenagers assisted in overseeing captives.[368] Others, like Marc Chauvain, who sailed with his carpenter father on the *Flore* 1734, learned the skills of carpenters or coopers. Still others, often the sons or nephews of officers, aspired to learn pilotage and rise to the officer class. This was likely the case for Marc Vatvient, mentioned above, who died with maps, a *livre de pilotte*, several *echelles anglaise* and other navigational instruments, as well as a pencil and paper in his sea chest.[369] All were subject to follow the commands of their superiors, whether officers or sailors, to light their pipes and wash their

[365] This is evidenced in at least one criminal case in which two *mousses* and one *matelot* are charged with starting a fire aboard the *Roy des Indes* in 1733. Interrogatoire au sujet du feu pris au navire *le Roy des Indes*, maître Le Normand, June 10, 1733, Minutes Criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 244.
[366] "Il demanda un morceau de feu à Jacques le Normand, l'un des Mousses, comme il est d'usage, que les mousses en doivent donner aux matelots dans le travail lorsqu'ils en demendent" Interrogation de Michel Le Turque, Matelot sur le batiment le Roy des Indes, June 10, 1733, Minutes Criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 244.
[367] Rodger, 26-28
[368] Procédure contre Vallere Martin, 1731, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP229.
[369] Inventaire et vent des effets de Marc Vat Vient, mort sur *la Reine*, December 22, 1734, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 108.

clothes as commanded.[370] It seems that certain *mousses* worked in service of particular men aboard the ship. Modeste Moissau aboard the *Halcyon* in 1737 served as *mousse* to the cook, who ordered him to retrieve butter, to wash dishes and other tasks around the galley.[371] Thus, ships' boys were a complex group defined more by its age and status than by specific forms of labor. Without a clearly defined function, they were ambiguously positioned, inessential to any one task onboard, and easily targeted for the display and exercise of authority.

In many ways, the labor of ships' boys mirrored and perhaps even surpassed opportunities available to them on land. Across eighteenth-century France, boys of fourteen with no familial trade or inheritance to speak of went out to seek their fortunes. Olwen Hufton writes that most hoped for a position as a *valet* or *domestique de ferme*, where they were guaranteed room and board, as well as between fifty and one hundred *livres* per year.[372] Maritime labor offered a small but comparable income, likely around six to eleven *livres* per month, and an avenue towards a skilled, if relatively low-wage profession. Many boys sought out the sea. Parents too, who had rights over their minor sons' pay, sought placements for the boys aboard ship.[373] At sea, they were assured a place to sleep, however damp, and daily meals, however far they might be spoiled. If the relative absence of theft among sailors in the criminal cases at the admiralty courts is any indication, one advantage of the tighter supervision aboard ship contributed to greater security of property than might be found in lodgings that young workers would have found on land.[374] Nevertheless, in practice, life at sea presented additional constrictions. The first, and perhaps most surprising, is the lack of mobility, at least in terms of professional mobility. Laborers in eighteenth-century France were remarkably mobile, moving from town to town and master to master. In Rouen, half of all jobs named in the *bureau d'embauche* were for a period of fifteen days, and twenty percent lasted only a month.[375] The boys and men who embarked on these voyages lived alongside each other often for over a year, not only subject to the same master but temporarily isolated from their broader community. Desertion could result in criminal prosecution and preclude any future employment aboard French vessels. This prolonged isolation from their community also contributed to a greater concentration of violence in the hands of their superiors. While workshops saw their share of violence, both from masters and their journeymen and laborers, violence at sea was overwhelmingly the purview of the captain, lieutenant and bosun. If the most degrading insults against a master and his wife were abundant and easily spoken in the town or village, aboard ship, they registered as "murmurings" tantamount to the incitement of mutiny. Physical altercations were taken even more seriously. In these

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[370] Vallere Martin mentions that he had ordered a mousse to wash his clothes while the ship was at port, wintering in Martinique. Interrogatoire de Vallere Martin, Pilotte sur le Navire La Mare de Grace Capne de Sieur Piednoir, February 3, 1731, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP229.

[371] It is notable that the case brought against the cook accuses him of whipping the boy unjustly, though it is unclear if the legal question turns on the method or the fact of corporal punishment by the cook. Enquete civile à la requete de Guillaume Moisau Marchand frippier a paimboeuf et Modeste Mousau son fils . . . garçon de chambre sur le navire L'*alcyon* . . . contre le nommé Louis deshayes cuisinier sur ledit Navire, July 25, 1777, Enquêtes et procedures, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA 9B4821.

[372] Olwen Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1974), 33.

[373] Geneviève Beauchesne, "Voyageurs Clandestins Dans La Marine Marchande Au XVIIIe Siècle, d'après Les Archives Du Port de Lorient", *Revue Française d'histoire d'outre-Mer*, 49 (1962), 23.

[374] This security may have been of debatable utility dependent on the value of goods boys and men carried with them. Arlette Farge recounts several instances of theft of clothing, linen and other belongings among eighteenth-century workers. Arlette Farge, *La Vie Fragile: Violence, Pouvoirs et Solidarités à Paris Au XVIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Hachette, 2016), 127-128.

[375] Farge, *La vie fragile*, 127-8.

circumstances, sailors, ships' boys and other seafarers of low rank had no immediate recourse to neighbors or the broader community, who bore witness to abuses and allegations of abuse and often came to a laborer's defense in such disputes on land;[376] the spatial and temporal isolation of the ship granted outsized authority to the major officers, although, as criminal cases demonstrate, it did not go wholly uncontested.[377]

In late 1730, Jacques Belloncle, a day laborer from the town of Montivilliers, just northeast of Le Havre, brought a case against Vallere Martin, the second captain aboard the *Marie de Grace*. His son, also named Jacques, had embarked as a ship's boy for the voyage to Whydah, São Tomé and Martinique in 1728 and had deserted in Fort Royal in 1729. Belloncle, along with several sailors, accused Martin of singling out his son for particular and extreme abuse that precipitated his desertion, and demanded the court force Martin to pay him the salary due to the *mousse* for the entire voyage, as required according to law when an officer dismissed a sailor without cause, as well as damages for the abuse.[378] The testimony that follows describes the meeting of two worlds, those of day laborers and seafarers, as well as the place of *mousses* as liminal figures between captives and crew.

The conflict between Belloncle and Martin erupted in late November or early December of 1729, as the ship, carrying over two hundred and twenty captives from the Bight of Benin, left São Tomé. The mood aboard the ship was grim and laced with terror. Prior to their departure from Ouidah, at least one captive woman had been brutally murdered, her jawbone severed and used to threaten any who considered further resistance. At least four crewmen had died of disease, one of them a *mousse* named Jean-Baptiste Mesenguel whom, witnesses alleged, the captain accosted with the jawbone along the African coast, telling him he would treat him similarly should he dare to disobey. Mesenguel died of illness just days later, and most thought the dishonor embedded in the threat itself caused harm enough to precipitate his demise. Belloncle sailed under this threat of violence and specifically, of the kind of dishonorable and mutilating violence tendered towards the enslaved. Like all ships' boys, he occupied this liminal place, in which the bonds he forged with his superiors were particularly important to protect against slipping out of community and into the category of cargo.

In his interrogation, Vallere Martin, a Portuguese seafarer from Lisbon who had lived in Le Havre for ten years, vacillated between describing Belloncle as an impertinent and lazy worker and a boy, whom he protected and guided on the voyage. As Martin tells it, he was in his cabin, writing, when he heard Belloncle on the forecastle arguing with the captain over his treatment onboard, yelling that he feared the captain would "murder him as he did the other ship's boy" who had died several days after the captain allegedly threatened him with the severed jawbone. Martin rushed to confront Belloncle, grabbed him and reprimanded him, and many witnesses saw Martin kick Belloncle from the forecastle to the main deck, breaking his arm, although Martin claims Belloncle simply fell. Belloncle had his arm in a sling for the remainder of the voyage to Martinique. As the king's council and examiner advised in his interrogation, kicking a boy or man to the deck, breaking his arm, "is not a chastisement authorized by any ordinance of

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[376] It is worth noting as well that scholars have argued that many disputes were intentionally public for the purpose of dishonoring one's opponent. See Christopher R. Corley, "On the Threshold: Youth as Arbiters of Urban Space in Early Modern France", *Journal of Social History*, 43 (2009), 144; Garrioch.

[377] Farge, *La vie fragile*, 133-5.

[378] The laborer must have made use of his connections to the maritime world networks to identify the specific legal infraction (dismissal during the voyage without cause) and the relevant legal code, "article dix du titre quatre du livre troisiesme de l'ordonnance de la marine" in his supplication to the court. Procédure contre Vallère Martin, February 5, 1731, ADSM 216BP229.

the King."[379] However, sailors' accusations regarding the abuse allegedly perpetrated while wintering at Martinique reveals that the offense was not simply that of excessive violence against a body but rather a violation of the boy's status within the shipboard community, emphasizing that the form and extent of violence used was generally reserved for captives. In their testimony, they aim to highlight the distinction between the paternalistic treatment due to ship's boys and the unbridled violence allowed for captives.

Sailors' testimony regarding this second notable episode consistently begins with the statement that the captain had disembarked with his enslaved cargo at Fort Saint-Pierre to sell them, while the crew, led by Martin, wintered at Fort Royal. This left the ship without its usual commander and, in the eyes of seamen and their officers, without its crowd of the classless. Sailors accused Martin of pursuing Belloncle constantly, subjecting him to corporal abuse frequently "without cause." Sailor Jacques de Bosne testified that "many different times", Martin tied Belloncle down and whipped him with a rope's knotted end "like a *nègre.*" All witnesses referred to one particular occasion, shortly before Belloncle's desertion. Martin commanded Belloncle to retrieve his clean laundry, and when Belloncle did not respond quickly enough to Martin's orders, Martin commanded the sailors to whip him with a knotted cord. No sailor was willing. Therefore, Martin took up the rope himself, whipping the boy so brutally that his body turned "completely black." The trope of "*tout noir*" to describe the severity of an injury in criminal cases was very common, and surely the primary meaning here is that Belloncle's bruises were deep and covered his body. However, the phrase, stated alongside the claim that Martin treated Belloncle "like a slave," suggests that this treatment left marks on Belloncle's body, but also on his status and his honor. His body itself was turning black, just as Martin's alleged effort to enlist crewmen in the whipping, coupled with the severity of his treatment, threatened to stain his honor, to push him below the rank of the crew and out of the community of classed individuals.[380] By the 1730s, the term, *nègre*, used in this testimony, had come to mean both a Black African and a slave, and the phrase "on l'a traité comme un *nègre*" was in common usage to mean that someone white was treated as though they were a slave, unjustly because they were expressly not a slave, nor were they Black.[381] In an almost identical claim, an eighteen-year-old ship's boy asserts that he was beaten "*tout noir*" by his captain along the African coast using a "whip used on slaves" and denied food.[382] This testimony makes clear the line between sailors and slaves; one group was subject to corporal discipline by honored individuals and within limits; a member of the other category could be beaten without bounds by any person onboard, so long as the abuser had the permission of the captain or his surrogate. Once his bonds were loosed, Belloncle seized his opportunity, ran to the side of the ship and jumped to a jollyboat, which he rowed ashore to find refuge in the streets of Fort Royal.

The position of Belloncle aboard the ship illuminates the broader structure. Testimony in this case juxtaposes the status of "*mousse*" or *"enfant*" with that of slave or "*nègre*" to expose the vision shared by sailors and Martin alike of a paternalistic social order onboard. Jacques Hanguel, a twenty-one-year-old sailor described Belloncle as an *enfant*, though he was around

[379] Interrogation de Vallere Martin, Pilotte sur le Navire *La Marie de Grace*, February 3, 1731, ADSM 216BP229.
[380] Information contre Vallere Martin, January 7, 1731, ADSM 216BP229.
[381] Andrew S. Curran, *The Anatomy of Blackness* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), 9-10.
[382] This case, brought by Honoré Guillou, also illuminates the tensions at tasks typical for ships' boys, as it describes a fist fight between the youth and the armurier along the African coast, an order to heat water to cook a recently slaughtered pig, and lice-ridden clothing so awful that shipmates refused to eat any food prepared by the young man. Interestingly, he calls himself a martyr. Supplie humblement honoré guillou mineur aagé de dix huit ans, April 28, 1742, Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4949.

fifteen at the time of his embarkation. Similarly, Martin repeatedly excuses his behavior by claiming that, though childless himself, he only "chastised him as he would his own son." Indeed, he claimed that "he loved to care for him." If he whipped him, "that whip did not harm him" and that "if he chastised him, it was paternalistically."[383] Whatever the truth of this story, it is clear that both sides understood that the court would expect and approve of paternalistic relationships between officers and ships' boys, and understood ship's boys to be children or at least minors in a community of men. This paternalistic relationship is emphasized in other cases as well. In 1751, witnesses from the Levrette, testified that the ship's boy, Julien Emeriau and second lieutenant onboard shared a bed when they fell seriously ill with dysentery while moored outside Ouidah the previous July. This closeness was short-lived, as the lieutenant kicked the boy in the stomach when Emeriau touched him with his feet. Nevertheless, when Emeriau brought his complaint to captain Giron, he directed him to rest in his own bed, allegedly saying, "go to sleep, my child," and had him carried to his own hammock.[384] This followed landed norms of patriarchal government, which granted fatherly authority over a youth to several parties, including the parent, the priest, and guild masters or employers.[385] The norms of this patriarchal authority were well understood. *Mousses* and their social equals were subject to the rule of their masters, but they could not be treated "as slaves," and significantly, they had a right to desert under such treatment, and their families had a right to bring prosecution against abusers.[386] The court awarded Belloncle the pay due to his son, as well as damages for the ill treatment, and restored the boy's right to embark on future voyages.[387] It is on this fragile grounding, the liminal place of youths aboard ship, that reveal honor and violence as the foundational principle and method, respectively, of articulating social order aboard ship.

As Bernardin de Saint-Pierre wrote, "*mousses* are children, often treated with excessive barbarity" onboard and victims to the turning moods of officers and sailors alike. On some ships, he suggests, these boys were whipped in periods of calm "to make the wind come."[388] An eighteenth-century British captain recounted a similar scene of ships' boys, tied to a hoop, each commanded to flog the boy in front of them "to raise a gail of wind."[389] If these instances evince a kind of cruel humor or hazing enacted against the youngest onboard, the criminal cases at the admiralty courts expose the severity of corporal punishment imposed on *mousses*. The son of a Professor of Hydrography at Bordeaux brought a case against the major officers of the *Leopard* in 1705 for overworking his twelve-year-old son, who was injured while collecting lemons, and

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[383] Interrogatoire de Vallere Martin, Pilotte sur le Navire La Marie de Grace Capne de Sieur Piednoir, February 3, 1731, ADSM 216BP 229.

[384] Emeriau died hours later. Regardless of whether the captain used this gentle tone with the boy, as testified by the ship's surgeon, it demonstrates this perduring ideal of paternalistic care between the officer class and their subordinates. This testimony underlines the physical closeness of officers,men and boys in the ship as well, lying side-by-side, even in extreme illness. Information faitte par Nous Joseph Jullien Bascheur Conseiller du Roy . . . Contre le Sieur Leon Chanda Second Lieutenant sur le Navire *la Levrette* de Nantes, January 4, 1751, Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4951.

[385] John R. Gillis, *Youth and History: Tradition and Change in European Age Relations, 1770-Present* (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 21.

[386] Another twelve-year-old boy was found aboard the *Esperence de Bordeaux* in 1731, having fled abuse on another ship. Declaration abord *l'Esperance de Bordeaux*, March 1731, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B1206 (1731).

[387] Jacques Belloncle Supplication, February 3, 1731, ADSM 216BP229.

[388] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, 35

[389] Jack Cremer, *Ramblin' Jack: The Journal of Captain John Cremer, 1700-1774*, ed. R. Reynell Bellamy (London, 1936), 50, cited in Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 238.

for executing extreme punishment on another *mousse* for a minor infraction, hoisting him into the air, whipping him, and rubbing the cuts with vinegar, salt and hot peppers.[390]

Ships' boys held liminal status onboard; they were accessories to the crew, minimal participants in labor, and servants to all. They were children, or rather youths, between the ages of ten and twenty. At sea, sailors watched over them as they played, the youngest among them climbing the rigging or playing hide-and-seek, lifting them into hammocks which their small bodies could not reach, and brought them alongside to learn knots, manoeuvers, and the names of sails and rigging.[391] On land, youth were expected to be an unruly and turbulent group, carefully monitored by their neighbors and mastered by their fathers, employers and Church. While the lively Abbeys of Misrule were largely a thing of the past, youth still held a space apart in French communities, and while they were subject to constrictive laws regulating their sexuality and movement, they were also excused for transgressions by nature of their youthful proclivity to misbehave.[392] Their age in itself thus made them liminal players in the social body of the village. Aboard the ship, there was little room for misbehavior, but *mousses* still held this marginal position, initiates to the status of seafarer. They occupied the boundaries of community and marked the limits of classlessness. If captives were property, to be handled with an eye to the preservation of the entire cargo's value, ships' boys held social position, even if it was that of the lowest rank. In the end, the *mousse* originally threatened with violence aboard the *Marie de Grace* did not have his jaw severed, but died of illness. His death was reported to his family, his earnings deposited with them. Belloncle's father, too, received payments from the court. In both cases, their shipmates testified on their behalf. As the lowest members of the social body, they represented the edges of the wild, a bulwark which must be rigorously hardened against the raging chaos of the sea, and indeed, officers often took discipline to the extreme upon these young bodies. I described above that the term *mousse* also denoted sea foam or froth as a sign of the superfluousness of their labor onboard. It is worth noting that sea foam appears most frequently at the coastal boundaries of the ocean. Alain Corbin has shown that early modern Europeans saw this foam as "excreta of the sea . . . the ocean's sweat," a pollution that contaminated the shore.[393] Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's anecdote suggests that the physical disciplining of *mousses* appealed to contemporary understandings of the relationship between violence and order at sea. Whether in sincerity or in jest, it suggests a questioning hope that the whipping of boys might not only purge sailors of boredom and exorcise their aggravation, but also beat back the chaos of the sea and bring order to the reluctant winds. Maritime writers of the early modern period often noted the savagery of the sea, the wide-open mouth of the abyss and the hierarchy of eaters who populated it.[394] For those who sailed the eighteenth-century seas, this devouring world demanded the practice of violence, disciplined within the community of seafarers and unleashed upon outsiders.

Sailors

As I have suggested in the discussion above, sailors ranked just above ships' boys in the shipboard hierarchy, and for the most part, they shared a single social world, with the notable

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[390] Supplie Humblement Charles Fortin Professeur Royal d'Hydrographie, Procédure contre Capitaine Pierre Neau, 1705, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6 B 1115.)
[391] Rodger, 68-69.
[392] Natalie Zemon Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule" in *Society and Culture in Early Modern France* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1975), 97-123; Gillis, *Youth and History*, 32-35; Corley, 146.
[393] Corbin, 13-14.
[394] Corbin, 7.

difference that they led it and enjoyed considerable stability of status among their shipmates. Skill and experience formed the basis of this stability. They were essential to the functioning of the ship, as they animated its movements, from the grueling walk around the capstan that raised the heavy anchor and its sodden line, to the nimble work of the topmen, who stood upon "horses" (rigging for sailors to stand on or hold). Their work was highly skilled, as attested to by the sheer number of specialized terms for the ship's many components: gaffs and gantlines, halliards and mainyards,"hitches or knots . . . lanyards or lashings . . . coursesails, topsails, gallantsails and . . . jibs" and the profusion of terms for knots specific to each function.[395] Like the *mousses*, sailors followed the rigorous schedule of the watch, four hours at work, and four hours at rest until the dogwatch of the evening. Sailors worked in unison, coordinated to catch the wind and keep the ship on its true course. If their ship carried captives, seamen were charged with guarding these men, women and children onboard. Approaching land always presented the greatest hazards and required the greatest communication and cooperation among the men onboard, as the pilots navigated the route they would take and the seamen worked together to manage its sophisticated system of sails until a sounding indicated a reasonable mooring, and all hands worked to strike the sails and lower the anchor.

The romantic vision of robust sailors, riding the waves in the fresh ocean spray, little reflects the realities of eighteenth-century seafaring. Even in the open ocean, sailing could be arduous. While seafarers sought to make the best use of favorable winds and currents, contrary winds did arise. When they did, they compelled the constant work of tacking or beating, to bring the ship along its course, extending the voyage by days or even weeks. This work required the adept coordination of nimble topmen, for hours on end. The physical difficulty of this work was compounded by weeks of sleep deprivation and malnutrition, which weakened the body.

While the work of sailing the ship required a high degree of top-down coordination, from officers to crewmen, there was one circumstance which compelled crewmen to unite to make demands upon their superiors. From the *procès verbaux* deposited at the admiralty courts, it seems it was not infrequent for a captain to be compelled by his crew to leave his directed route for provisions or repairs. These *procès verbaux* served to demonstrate to the financiers of the voyage and to the courts that any unexpected stops on the voyage were not, in fact, the captain's attempts to engage in illicit trade, but rather undertaken only reluctantly under urgent circumstances and pressure from an exhausted crew. Therefore, there was some incentive to emphasize the captain's reluctance and the crew's commitment to forcing the unplanned mooring. Nonetheless, the ship's captain in general did hold a financial interest in speeding the voyage, even if it cost the health or even lives of sailors, and the sailors, of course, were genuinely committed to their own survival, and faced very real threats of illness, injury and physical depletion on these voyages. On less fortunate voyages and aboard less seaworthy ships, sailors were required to perform more constant and grueling work. The merchant fleet was plagued by old ships in varied states of repair, and the oldest ships could require near constant pumping to simply keep them afloat. Less than two weeks after it embarked from Bordeaux, the *Moine de Bordeaux*, a nearly 500-ton ship carrying beef, butter, flour and other merchandise to Saint-Domingue, was forced to make harbor at Port-Louis because of a leak in the hold. The

[395] Marcus Rediker names a "catspaw, a Flemish Eye, a sheepshank, a timber-hitch, or a diamond knot." Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 89-93. Amitav Ghosh has written on the flourishing of "Lascari" a language of South Asian seafarers that borrowed maritime terms from English and primarily Portuguese. Amitav Ghosh, "Of Fanás and Forecastles: The Indian Ocean and Some Lost Languages of the Age of Sail", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 43 (2008), 56–62.

crew reported that just hours after their departure, when strong winds forced the crew to lessen the sails, they found three feet of water in the hold. They immediately set to the pumps, and brought down the level to around eighteen inches over the next four hours, and came together to demand the captain bring the ship into port for repairs.[396] The *Comte de Maurepas*, sailing from India and Ile Bourbon to France in late July of 1777, faced an even more frightening prospect when, mid-ocean, the crew noticed water rising in the hull at a rate of nearly two feet every hour. Planks of sheathing had come loose, letting water seep between cracks that opened in the hull in rough seas. Despite attempts at repair and the crewmen's constant work at the pumps to expel water from the hold, the water continued to rise. For three days in late August as the ship rounded the Cap des Aiguilles on the southernmost point of Africa, the crew assembled to confront the captain and insist upon finding safe harbor in order to properly repair the ship. First, Captain Robin allegedly responded that "nine or ten inches of water that the ship makes every hour is not reason to lose time that may become prejudicial for the voyage and arrival in Europe." Upon their second demand, they received the same reply, but they coupled their third demand with the threat to abandon the pumps, forcing Monsieur Robin to change course towards the Cape of Good Hope, but rough seas made the harbor inaccessible. Finally, Robin, still insisting upon the primacy of speed, suggested they sail on to Loango, to which the crew agreed. However, they were refused entry at Loango, and forced to sail four more months until they arrived at Lisbon, Portugal, where, exhausted, the men could finally find some reprieve from their labor at the pump and repair the ship enough to return to Lorient.[397] This practice of the crew and officers gathering to demand reprieve at the nearest port in times of duress was standard aboard eighteenth-century ships, and it surfaces countless times among the declarations of damages and other *procès verbaux* drafted during the voyages and submitted to the admiralty court upon the ship's return. Captains were eager to expedite the voyage (and the return on their own investments in the voyage), just as they were to justify any delay to anxious investors at home. After all, these documents justified shipping delays to the investors in the voyage. Despite this commonality, it must have made for a dramatic scene. On the *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, just seven days after its departure from Bordeaux in June 1768, the bosun, the carpenters and other petty officers, followed by the rest of the crew gathered on the poop deck. The sea raged around them. It had buffeted the ship for hours, raising more than two feet of water in the hull every hour, tempered only by constant pumping, and just minutes before, it had swept a sailor overboard.[398] In the midst of this noise and aboard the rolling ship, the gathered men told their captain, "it [is] impossible for [us] to continue at the pump . . . every instant, the water is increasing more and more," and they warned that they were in danger of death if they did not find safe harbor immediately. As aboard the *Comte de Maurepas*, the men threatened to stop pumping if the captain did not promise to sail to the nearest harbor. The captain, in conference with his officers, reluctantly agreed, and they sailed to Port-Louis.[399] These scenes of men, exhausted by the untenable task of keeping a sinking ship, a collection of boards held afloat by their sheer muscle, underline the power of the crew, their cooperative might, as balanced against the fragility of their

[396] Extrait des Registres du Greffe de l'amirauté de Vannes Etabli au Port Louis, March 16, 1778, Minutes civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 227.
[397] Extrait du Registre du Consulat General de France en Portugal, Lisbon, 69 and 70, December 18, 1777, April 13, 1778; Copy of Proces Verbal aboard the *Comte de Maurepas* August 25, 1777 and April 12, 1778, Minutes civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 227.
[398] Remarkably, and luckily, the sailor was saved, though "half-drowned".
[399] Procès Verbal aboard the *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, June 17, 1768, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, AD56 9B 119.

bodies. It is significant that these *procès verbaux* consistently evoke the risk of death, the prospect that the men's bodies have reached complete exhaustion, and their refusal to continue pumping, as justification for the *relache*. Seamen's labor on the open ocean required a high degree of cooperation, whether to seamlessly guide the ship along its course or to simply keep it afloat.

This cooperation among sailors was evident as the night approached, bringing with it the series of alternating shifts when sailors could seize hours of sleep, swinging in their hammocks or curled on their mattresses in the *entrepont*. The close air and darkness of the *entrepont* discouraged its use as a space for socialization among sailors, who could easily climb to the main deck to smoke, tell tales and play music. However, the intimacy of the *entrepont* encouraged the formation of personal friendships and dependencies among the *gens de mer* of the merchant marine. The 'tweendecks was a space of great physical intimacy. At the end of their watch, men climbed in their bedding, still warm from the recently awakened bodies of their *matelots*. The ill were never far, as the sick bay was most often located in the *entrepont* or forecastle near the galley. It was the space used for physical care, where *matelots* could seek the comfort of sleep, where bunkmates comforted each other in times of illness, where the cook prepared meals to sustain the crew's bodies, and where he and the surgeon and the chaplain tended the sick.

This intimacy could produce friendships and even formal partnerships that rivaled familial and social ties seamen held on land. This is particularly evident in wills from the early decades of the eighteenth century, many of which make reference to a practice of *matelotage*. This institution was a kind of economic partnership between two sailors in which they agreed under contract to share their belongings during the voyage and bequeath them to the other in case of death. Historians of piracy have argued that *matelotage* was a sign of the deep camaraderie and democratic risk-sharing practices of buccaneers.[400] In fact, these commitments seem to have been common among sailors in the French merchant marine as well, particularly in the early part of the eighteenth century. It was very common for sailors to share a single trunk, and the *Règlement* of 1733 governing the marine of the *Compagnie des Indes*, required that sailors share one trunk of 3.5 feet by 16 inches width and height, for every two men.[401] Aboard the *Découvert* which sailed from Le Havre to China, at sea for almost a decade from 1707-1716, almost half of the eighteen sailors whose deaths are recorded in the archives left their used clothing to their "*matelots",* meaning sailor, but more specifically bunkmate in this context. Jean Faulin left all his clothing to his bunkmate Pierre Labert "pour des bonnes services qu'il m'a rendu pendant ma maladie."[402] Aboard the *Aurore*, which sailed from Nantes in 1713, André Limousin Guay left his clothing to Pierre Denis, "pour les bons soins qu'il a eu de luy pendant sa maladie" when he died in February, and when Pierre Denis fell ill in September of the same year, he used the same language to explain willing his belongings to his then bunkmate, Pierre Pistolet.[403] This

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[400] Burg describes *matelotage* as an explicitly sexual relationship of pederasty, which I have not found to pertain in the archival references I have found, which all describe *matelots* of the same age and rank. Peter Leeson, *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009) 174-5; B.R. Burg, *Sodomy and the Pirate Tradition: English Sea Rovers in the Seventeenth-Century Caribbean*, 2nd ed. (New York: NYU Press, 1995), 125-132. Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004)*,* 74.

[401] *Règlement touchant la marine de la Compagnie es Indes, arresté en l'assemblée d'Administration du 16 septembre 1733*, (Paris, 1733), 55.

[402] Jean Faulin, Donation, January 10, 1714, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP230.

[403] Testaments of André Limousin Guay and Pierre Denis aboard the *Aurore*, ADLA B4757, February 21, 1713, September 20, 1713.

convention seems to have pertained at times to the proceeds of probate auctions as well. In the probate auction for Guyaume Pulmoir aboard the *Découvert*, it is noted that he and François Desessart shared their belongings when they embarked, and thus Desessart would inherit the proceeds of the auction.[404] A note below the auction of sailor, Pierre Colonnec's shipboard possessions aboard the *Affriquain* in 1714 reads, "Notta que Pierre Gautier embarqué sur le mesme V[aisse]au a eu par ordre de Justice la moitié dudit inventaire comme estant son matelot," implying that the admiralty and officers alike understood *matelotage* to be a common practice among the crew. While the contents of a merchant seaman's sea chest may have been more modest than that of a buccaneer, these relationships of *matelotage* reveal at the least relationships of shared risk, trust and economic bondedness among the lower classes at sea.

The language of the bequests to *matelots* suggest relationships that extended beyond the purely economic. Historians of piracy have argued that these relationships approached a status of civil union and may imply the presence and tolerance of sexual relationships between men at sea aboard pirate ships. I have found no evidence of the presence or absence of sexual relationships among crewmen or officers in my archival documents, but relationships of mutual care certainly accompanied the financial arrangements of *matelotage.* The language "pour les bons soins qu'il a pris de luis pendant sa maladie" persists into the seaborne bequests of the1770s. Thus, it seems that the bonds of *matelotage* implied not only a security in terms of the significant investment in the clothing that would guard the body against sun, sea and cold but also a continuing relationship of caregiving. Shipmates took on the roles of their wives, sharing the means of subsistence but also the duties of care. In early stages of an illness, or on ships where the ill overflowed the available bunks in the sick bay, the ill likely took up the shared hammocks when their bunkmate would oblige. When a man at sea fell ill, it was his *matelot* in many cases who ensured he received food and drink, any warmth and comfort he could provide and who cleaned his brow and his body as he lay in the sick bay. In early stages of an illness, or on ships where the ill overflowed the available bunks in the sick bay, the ill likely took up the shared hammocks when their bunkmate would oblige. The duties of care were no small matter, as sickness aboard ship most often meant dysentery, pox or scurvy, all of which produced prodigious amounts of blood, waste and in many cases dangerously contagious effluvia. Good care during a fatal illness, the *bons soins* referenced in the bequests, surely implied significant contact with the body of the dying as well as good bedside manner, a tender attentiveness to his wants and needs.

After death, it is the type of inheritance garnered by *matelots* that suggests the intertwined personal and financial ties of *matelots.* It is notable that in many cases, it is only the *hardes* or used clothing that *matelots* in the merchant marine laid claim to. The pay of the deceased and proceeds from trade was often explicitly willed elsewhere, often to the church or his family. This suggests that *matelotage* was a supplementary relationship to those found on land, rather than a full replacement. Nevertheless, clothing was not a random category of inheritance. It meant that the bodily intimacy that existed between bunkmates in life perdured after death. Clothing was also expensive, and could be resold if needed. A survey of over two hundred probate auctions suggests that the proceeds from auctioning sailors' clothing could amount to almost a month's worth of wages or even as much as three months.[405] Another set of clothes, which could open up

[404] Probate auction for Guillaume Pulmoir, 12/5/1708, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216P 330-331.
[405] These auctions often also include merchandise, so I have excluded outliers on the high end from this estimate. From a smaller sample of auctions across the spectrum, it seems that auctions that amount to around three months' wages still can be composed of exclusively clothing, particularly among the lower-paid sailors of the Compagnie des Indes in the 1730s, while auctions that produced a larger value relative to wages tended to include more tobacco,

the (rare and precious at sea) opportunity to wash and dry clothing periodically, held potential immediate use value for the heir aboard ship. Clothing also held significant social value. At least until the end of the eighteenth century, clothing was not often purchased new, but rather inherited from parent to child, reworked as needed, a marker of social status as well as familial belonging. Employers handed clothing down to their servants, who could sell them for income as well. While a substantial market in second-hand clothes was growing over the century, the predominant method by which clothing changed hands was through personal, rather than market relationships.[406] To read a person's clothes was to read their place in society, their relationships to the others around them. Take this social meaning of clothing alongside the quite personal attributes of smell, sweat and wear that would have clung to a person's shirt, their stockings, their shoes, and the bequests from *matelot* to *matelot* unveil the depth of intimacy sailors could expect to find among their shipmates, and the structures of interdependency they built among each other.

Over the eighteenth century, these bequests between sailors receded in importance in favor of the probate auctions that predominated as early as the 1720s. While bequests still surface among documents of the probate auctions, they compose a small minority of the documents left behind after a death at sea, certainly the exception rather than the rule. This does not seem to indicate a change in practices of documentation or document storage. Testaments and bequests still occasionally show up among the probate inventories and documented auctions, but they seem to be rare, and often between men who had reason to have fewer connections with the rest of the crew. Aboard the *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, which sailed from Lorient to the East Indies in 1767, three of five testaments (out of seventy deaths onboard), were between men who embarked at Chandernagor, and in one of these cases both the men involved were Dutch. The two other testaments extant for this ship implicate André Gallery, who inherited a share of Jean Mauger's *hardes* in 1769 and left the entirety of his clothing to Jacques Thomas, "*son matelot*" in 1772, suggesting that Gallery may have been among a smaller cohort who continued to practice *matelotage* and partnerships of care among crewmen who increasingly had abandoned it. Correlations with crew lists reveal that on the overwhelming number of voyages, the possessions of every person who died on the voyage are accounted for in probate auctions, with rare exceptions, usually involving items of extremely high value, or a totally worthless item such entirely soiled clothing, in which a possession was not sold aboard the ship. In some cases, even when a man's clothing was not sold or thrown overboard, it was stored in a case "to be deposited for a year and a day" at the admiralty, so that it might be claimed by his heirs on land. This shift suggests a breakdown of the partnerships that structured the economic and bodily security of sailors in the earliest decades of the century, as sailors became more reliant on their employers and the market to secure their finances and their bodily. Correspondence from the *Compagnie des Indes* shows that the company occasionally purchased *chemises* for sailors in greatest need.[407] Aboard the *Argonaut*, which sailed in the early years of Law's *Compagnie* in 1722, at

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handkerchiefs and other items that may have more easily leant themselves to trade. See Appendix for probate auction references.

[406] Olwen Hufton, *The Prospect Before Her: A History of Women in Western Europe: 1500-1800* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996), 172-173.

[407] The ensign aboard the *Argonaute*, which sailed to Pondicherry and Moka in 1722 recorded the purchase, under the order of the captain of *chemises* for eleven ailing sailors along the voyage. Six of those eleven died in the following months. It is notable that one of these sailors, Joseph Le Port notes in his testament that he owes Poilly forty-five sols for the purchase of a *chemise*, though the only documented purchase of a *chemise* by Poilly for Le Port is the one in this *État*, costing only one *livre tournois* or twenty sols. It is thus unclear if sailors were expected

least eleven men who fell ill received *chemises* from the *Compagnie*. Among the sixty-five men who died on the voyage (over thirty percent of the crew), most left belongings to the process of probate auction. Several soldiers willed their belongings to a fellow soldier, several *officiers mariniers* left bequests of money, whether their salaries or the proceeds of their probate auctions or both, generally to settle their debts and to the church, including the chaplain onboard. Only two sailors left testaments that were preserved in the archive; the first, Jacob Denis, left fifteen *lt* to the chaplain to pray for his soul and left his clothing to a soldier, Antoine Ouvarinier dit Flamant for the *bons soins* he provided him.[408] Jacques Nergant, a sailor who had joined the crew at Ile Bourbon the previous year left his clothing to fellow sailor Martin Le Beau, for the good care he received, and gave a month's salary to the chaplain to pray to god for him.[409] Even by the 1720s, it seems to have been no longer the assumption that sailors would partner to invest in their clothing and supplies. The rarity of wills specifying a donation to a shipmate in recompense for care during illness suggests as well that this form of mutual care may have been increasingly the exception in the 'tweendecks, as men looked to the cook, the surgeon and the chaplain for comfort.

As probate auctions swiftly overtook testaments after death, sailors' employers provided advances against their own wages to purchase clothing at auction and to enter into a small scale but thriving market in second-hand trade goods, which sailors embraced enthusiastically. The proceeds of these auctions increasingly went directly to their families, who may well have invested them in masses or prayers to be said for their souls. This dwindling of *matelotage* suggests, rather paradoxically, that as the French commercial empire expanded, seamen became more closely economically aligned with their families on shore, who stood to inherit the entirety of their seaborne estate. What effects did this have on the social bondedness of sailors who shared the tweendecks? Their seaborne economic ties fanned out among the crew. Loans and debts created intricate networks among them, but also between crew and officers, arguably strengthening dependencies across groups rather than within them. These bonds were maintained primarily through access to and use of capital. It is unclear what happened to the less easily documented elements of *matelotage*, the care for the ill and dying, but it is possible that with the diminishment of this institution of interdependence, these partnerships of caregiving too fell out of use. *Matelotage*, and its accompanying comforts and protections, dwindled as the *matelots* integrated further into the world of overseas trade.

When not on watch or sleeping, men and boys moved about the deck more freely and socialized with whom they would in the forecastle and on the main deck. These periods of repose, during which friends reliably gathered over a meal or a smoke, brightened the lines of informal social division that ran through the ship. Those who found themselves without friends must have felt their isolation most poignantly, when their shipmates sought each other out to sit and talk together. It is in this context that we might consider Albert Castellin, a Dutch man who spoke very little French. Seated on a bollard near the kitchen, in the crowd but alone, he carved

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to repay the cost of the *chemises* purchased on their behalf. Therriat Poilly, État des chemises que Mr Du Poilly a donné aux matelots malades par ordre de Mr de Lamitrye Baudrand, 1722, Pieces eparses relatives aux equipages et aux vaisseaux de la Cie des Indes 1721-1729, SHD-L 1P 310 liasse 83, no. 21. Testament of Joseph Le Port aboard *l'Argonaute*, September 20, 1723, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pièces déposés en greffe, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 104.

[408] Ouvarinier received another bequest from a fellow soldier just two days later, also for the good care he provided during the man's illness. Declaration et dernier volonté de Jacob Denis, matelot sur *l'Argonaute* and Declaration et dernier volonté de Cire Remont dit Berry, soldat sur *l'Argonaute*, April 19, 1724 and April 21, 1724, AD56 9B 104.

[409] Declaration et dernier volonté de Jacques Nergant, matelot sur *l'Argonaute*, April 20, 1724, AD56 9B 104.

his bread and spread his allotment of lard across it. He had boarded the ship in India alongside over fifty replacement sailors, about half of whom deserted before the *Solide* left Pondichery. It seems likely, given his linguistic limitations and his relative newness to the crew that he had difficulty assimilating, and in a later testimony, one witness claimed that Castellin had been "mistreated often by the officers" often in the early weeks of the return voyage. He was in no mood to joke, when Jean Baptiste Nicolet, laughing, pushed past the men assembled at the door of the forecastle and stumbled towards the galley to light his pipe. Nicolet fell against the bollard and balanced himself on Castellin's knee. Castellin jumped to his feet and "began swearing in his language," or perhaps, according to his own testimony, simply asked "why [Nicolet] had hit him." According to the steward, part of the altercation between Nicolet and Castellin sprung from Nicolet's attempt to push Castellin off the bollard, arguing that this was an inappropriate place to sit, regardless of the fact that the master-of-arms, Denis Laboureur, sat on the bollard beside him. A verbal altercation ensued, with the men hurling insults at each other until it escalated into a physical fight. Before their shipmates could intervene, Nicolet had grabbed Castellin by the collar, and Castellin, knife in hand, had stabbed Nicolet in the thigh, severing an essential artery.[410]

While this is an exceptional case, it underlines some common realities aboard ship. It illuminates the lively social atmosphere of the ship, particularly after meals when petty officers, sailors, and likely ships' boys (though none appear as witnesses or in the testimony) gathered together. Physical play, indulgence in tobacco and jest brought relief to weary sailors. It also underlines the ways in which sailors drew the lines of social inclusion and ostracism. Many, it seems, cultivated friendships across rank, with seamen whose labor differed from their own, and class was not always a clear predictor of social ties. While the testimony gives a very incomplete picture of Castellin's time aboard the *Solide*, it gives no indication that he had any social contacts among his shipmates. When he gave his statement aboard the ship, he did so through a passenger, Pierre Becard who could speak Dutch.[411] Sailors taken on at ports of call and foreigners in general often deserted together, suggesting that class did not always overcome linguistic, cultural, religious or national boundaries aboard ship.[412]

For their place in this community and ultimately for their own bodily safety and health, it was essential that boys and men of the crew cultivated personal relationships. As demonstrated above, these friendships were not casual contacts. While men might joke, drink and work together, they also served as caregivers in times of illness, advocates in cases of abuse, and heirs and executors of the seaborne estate in case of death. To be an outsider was dangerous at sea, where violence, deprivation and illness threatened the lives of common seamen. This episode

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[410] Procedure criminelle contre le nommé Albert Castellin matelot sur le vau le Solide accusé d'avoir tué d'un coup de couteau le nommé Jan Baptiste Nicolet Matelot sur le mesme Vau, April to September 1721, Minutes Criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 242.

[411] All seafarers faced distance from their families, whether by force or by choice. Castellin's isolation onboard was only a continuation of the alienation that had pushed him from his home out to sea, to wander from ship to ship. Castellin later testified, perhaps to curry favor with the court or perhaps in all honesty, that he had gone to sea due to his discord with his own family. He claimed that he was a Catholic, like his deceased father, but the rest of his family in the Netherlands was Protestant and constantly badgered him to convert. To escape their efforts, he sought his fortunes as a seaman, sailed to India and there found passage on the *Dorade*. His appeal to familial dissolution to excuse his behavior underlines a second point, that the sea could be a lonely place, particularly if one failed to cultivate shipboard friendships. For some seamen, this isolation among shipmates followed the dissolution of their landed social bonds. Interrogation de Castelein, September 4, 1721, AD56 9B 242.

[412] Aboard the *Paix* from Bordeaux in 1702, foreigners revolted even while moored at the river. Procédure contre l'équipage de *La Paix*, May 27, 1702, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenns, AD33 6B 1107.

reveals the informal bounds of shipboard community, even among crewmen. It could be closed off against new arrivals or its lowest members. The risks of isolation to Castellin are only implied: the deprivation of physical and social warmth, leading to wasting health or psychological distress, and more seriously, the subjection to violence from one's shipmates, as mentioned in passing by one witness. The fates of *mousses*, who occupied the marginal lowest rank among seamen, illustrate these risks in greater contrast, and underline why all onboard needed to ensure their place, even if it was in the lowest rank, in the branching, hierarchical web of personal relationships aboard the ship.

Intermediaries: Petty Officers and Specialist Non-seamen

Between the sailors and the major officers in the hierarchy of the ship was a disparate collection of petty officers and craftsmen. This assembly of men in the middle was distinctive of large, oceangoing vessels. On smaller boats and shorter voyages, a captain and mate might participate in all shiphandling work except the most menial tasks, and even specialist work was shared among the shipmates.[413] However, even the smallest oceangoing vessels departing from France carried hundreds of tons of cargo and boasted crews that could stretch to over one-hundred men. Their sheer size required the specialization of work and officers to coordinate and supervise work. This specialization produced a diverse collection of orders more than classes, each granted their own set of privileges, which were more relational than linearly hierarchical. *Officiers mariniers*, translates uneasily to "petty officers" or "specialist seamen", and encompasses a range of men, from the mates, who managed the labor of seamen. It also included pilots, who guided the ship along treacherous coastlines, and might command a boat sent upriver in slaving expeditions. The *marinier*, or marine, aspect of this category is less clear in the cases of carpenters and gunners, whose duties did not relate directly to the work of sailing. However, they were essential to the slave trade. Carpenters built the *barricados*, nets and other instruments of confinement onboard as well as the barracoons onshore, while gunners maintained the weapons of the ship. *Officiers non-mariniers* was an even more capacious group, which included valets, coopers, cooks and others involved in food preparation and the subordinates of other officers, like the second surgeon or third carpenter. Depending on the ship, these categories could shift, with gunners moving between *officiers mariniers* and *officiers non-mariniers*, and cooks moving between *officiers non-mariniers* and *domestiques*. *Pilotins*, young apprentices to pilotage and seafaring, sometimes were listed with the *matelots* and sometimes with the *officiers majors*, perhaps based upon the rank of their family of origin. On some rollbooks, each man is listed by occupation rather than class, with headlines for the captain, lieutentant, *pilotin*, carpenters, *contremaistre* and sailors.[414] The rollbooks deposited at the *bureau des classes* in Bordeaux in 1713 list all officers, including the captain, under the title *officiers mariniers*.[415] The presence of *matelot charpentiers*, *matelot tonneliers* and others on some ships further complicates attempts to broadly categorize this group. In the rollbook for the *Affriquain,* captained from Nantes to Senegal and the Caribbean by Claude Gontard of Toulon in 1715, there is no category for *officiers non-mariniers*, and the cook, baker and coopers are instead listed

[413] Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 90-92.
[414] See for example the rollbook for the *Hermionne de Nantes*, which sailed to the "Guinea Coast" in September of 1730. September 8, 1730, Rôles d'armements, Quartier de Nantes, ADLA C 1200.
[415] See for example Rolle de l'Equipage du navire l'entreprent de Bordeaux allant a la Martinique, May 30, 1773, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 348/1.

among the forty-seven *matelots*.[416] Rather than a simple hierarchy of classes, their place on board seems to have been determined at least partly by their relationships with others onboard, the definition of groups onboard unsettled and the strict hierarchy of the ship more mutable (at least between voyages) than common conceptions of shipboard hierarchy might suggest.

Table 5. Pay Range by Class, 1730s and 1770s
These two graphs, drawn from roll books associated with probate auctions from 29 voyages, reveal the range of pay within each professional class onboard. They show that pay was not tightly associated with professional class in the 1730s, though there was greater consolidation in the 1770s.

[416] With the exception of the baker, who, like the youngest sailors, earned 18 livres tournois per month, the coopers and cook earned between 27 and 33 livres per month, similar to the highest-paid sailors, who earned at most 27 livres per month. Rôle de l'Affriquain de Nantes appartenant à Messieurs de la Compagnie Royale du Senegal, February 16, 1715, Rôles d'armements, Quartier de Nantes, ADLA C 1193.

The pay of these men, though on average higher than that of sailors and lower than major officers, also varied fairly widely. On the *Conflans*, which sailed from Nantes to Saint-Domingue in 1750, the surgeon, a major officer, earned 33 lt/month (less even than sailors, who on average earned around 37 lt/month). Indeed, all four *officiers mariniers* outearned five of the seven major officers, including the surgeon, the first and second lieutenant, and the two *pilotins,* and the sailors and *officiers non-mariniers* outearned four of the five.[417] Similarly, aboard the *Barron d'Arros,* which sailed the same route twenty years later, all the *officiers mariniers*, as well as the cook (the only *officier non-marinier* listed) earned more than the second lieutenant and the pilotin, while the the carpenter (an *officier marinier*) and mate matched the pay of the lieutenant and earned more than everyone else on the ship with the exception of the captain and second captain. These wages in part reflect the relative utility of certain professions aboard ship, most notably that of the carpenter, but their variability also likely reflects the role of personal relationships and that of negotiating power of any one seaman looking to embark. Most notably, however, they demonstrate a disconnect between pay and rank aboard ship. While roughly correlated with rank on average, wages varied greatly within any professional grouping and the pay range overlapped across groups, whether the *officiers majors*, *officiers mariniers*, *officiers non-mariniers* or seamen, undermining trends towards simple class-based stratification on these commercial vessels.

Seafarers with the *Compagnie des Indes* met with a more regimented order, particularly in terms of pay. The *Compagnie* regulated the composition of the crew and their pay with great specificity, and while captains and major officers enjoyed higher salaries than their counterparts from other ports, *officiers mariniers* often earned just over half, and sailors a third to a half of what their counterparts on other ships. Carpenters with the company from the 1730s to the 1760s earned 36 lt/month and I have found no cases of a carpenter earning more than any major officer. For the same period, most mates were paid 45 lt/month, just over the 40 lt/month paid to chaplains and surgeons, but mates remain the only *officiers mariniers* to outearn major officers, and only with respect to chaplains and surgeons. This was due in part to the *Compagnie'*s authority to press seamen from the *quartier* of Port-Louis into service but also to the potential profits promised by the *port-permis*, a privilege at least as articulated as pay.[418] Mates, gunners and first pilots were permitted to carry 15 *piastres* with them on voyages to India or China, which they could trade for particular merchandise to be carried, free of charge, back to Europe. Carpenters, bosuns and second pilots could carry 12 piastres, coopers 8 *piastres*, sailors 6 and even *mousses* were allowed to embark 2 *piastres* for trade. Much like the salaries, these permits were miniscule in comparison to the captain's permit of 300 piastres, but comparable to the 10 to 20 *piastres* allowed for the scrivener, chaplain and surgeon. The *port-permis* were intended to amount to about two months of wages, which seafarers could invest, allowing all members of the crew to benefit from a successful voyage. Seafarers sailing to Moka, Mahé or the Mascarenes

[417] The captain and second captain, earning 120 and 70 lt/mois respectively, were the highest earners onboard. The mate earned 55 lt/month, the contremaitre earned 42 lt/month, and the carpenter earned 60 lt/month. Among the *officiers non-mariniers,* the cook earned 40 lt/month. Remarkably, the lieutenant earned only 20 lt/month, but this seems exceptional, and perhaps related to the fact that the lieutenant was only 18 years old. The ship also carried a second captain, a title usually interchangeable with lieutenant. Thus it seems likely that the lieutenant's place on this ship was akin to an apprenticeship. Rollbooks from Bordeaux show similar relationships between the salaries of *officiers mariniers, non-mariniers* and *majors*, with the wages for the carpenter and mate consistently matching or exceeding more than the surgeon and pilots. Armement du *Jean Baptiste du Bordeaux* allant à la Martinique, May 6, 1751, AD33 6B 400/2. Rôle du *Conflans*, March 1, 1750, Rôles d'armement, Quartier de Nantes, *ADLA* C 1335.
[418] Haudrère*, La Compagnie française des Indes*, vol. II, 418.

were permitted a certain weight of peppercorns or coffee. Notably, only the major officers and the mate stood to profit from the captive cargo of slave ships, for which they were paid a sum for every person delivered alive to the French colonies.[419] Sailors and *officiers mariniers* on company slaving voyages had no financial incentive to preserve the lives of the children, men and women they held captive. This also meant that they were paid at around two thirds the monthly rate of their counterparts in Nantes or Bordeaux, while enjoying none of the privileges accorded to company sailors and *officiers mariniers* destined for India or China.

If these opportunities to engage in trade compensated for the lower wages of *officiers mariniers* relative to counterparts in other ports, they also reinforced the stratification of shipboard society in the company. The *port-permis* of *officiers mariniers* and *non-mariniers* strengthened the connections between status, privileges and pay. It is worth noting as well that over the century, the proportion of these intermediaries aboard ships of the *Compagnie* diminished from about 6 percent of the total men in the rollbooks in 1720 to about 3 percent after 1745 and about 2 percent after 1765.[420] While a comprehensive survey of relevant roll books is outside the scope of this chapter, an overview suggests that this decline in the proportion of crew made up by *officiers mariniers* is likely due to the increasing size of the ships, requiring more sailors in relation to specialists. However, this declining proportion was accompanied by a growth in the ranks of *matelots charpentiers*, *matelots canonniers,* as well as *matelots bouchers* and *matelot boulangers*, with correspondingly lower wages. These trends suggest that in the *Compagnie des Indes*, a stricter hierarchy applied, and that hierarchy adhered increasingly over the century to a stratification in pay and access to the market. The personal relationships that shaped the professional and social worlds of commercial vessels in other ports, while not irrelevant on ships of the *Compagnie*, was subordinate there to a powerful set of regulations conducive to class cohesion.

In terms of power aboard the ship, the middling seafarers represented a complex collection of responsibilities and privileges. The mates, subject themselves to the captain and lieutenant, held command over all crewmen and mediated between major officers and crewmen most directly. The *maître* or mate was in charge of directing and disciplining the crew, as he translated the captain's navigational instructions into concrete movements of bodies and sails, maintained discipline and relayed the captain's orders to the crew. He also carried out discipline upon the crew, whether on his own discretion or on the orders of his superiors. Like the crewmen, mates kept watch, and on large ships, the *maître* had his own mates, the *contremaîtres* and *quartier-maîtres*, who assisted in coordinating crewmen's labor. Below these *maîtres* and *contremaitres,* specialists tended to specific tasks onboard. Pilots, often younger men aspiring to the rank of *maître*, navigated the dangerous approaches to distant harbors, managing the *pilotage* or delicate movements that guided the ship towards its mooring without straying too close to shallows or rocky coasts. Carpenters maintained the body of the ship, made repairs as necessary and constructed temporary warehouses in certain slaving ports, barricades and other amendments to accommodate captive Africans on slaving ships. Coopers' work to craft and maintain the barrels that kept provisions and cargo safe from the assaults of the sea was essential for the safety of the

[419] *Règlement touchant la marine de la Compagnie des Indes, arresté en l'assemblée d'Administration du 16 septembre 1733* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1734), 22-29. Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes,* vol. II, 417-420.

[420] It would be interesting to see if there was a corresponding rise in what rollbooks generally listed as *matelots charpentiers* and others, perhaps pushed into the lower ranks. Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes,* vol. II, 412.

crew, and sail-makers ensured that the ship could catch the wind, even after a raging storm. These specialist seamen did not keep watch. They were the "idlers" who slept at night and awoke to work in the mornings. Legally, they were subject to the same forms of discipline as their shipmates; they were to share the same foods, though notably sometimes at a separate table, and they fell within the same chain of command, ranked with *matelots* and subject to the command of the *maitres*. Nevertheless, criminal court cases reveal differential treatment and greater anxiety to conserve their honor above that of the common sailors.

A case of mass desertion illuminates the ambiguity of *officiers mariniers*' social positions onboard. The voluminous testimony in this case exposes food and labor as the crucibles of status-production and status-anxiety for these men aboard ship. The 100-ton *Concorde,* captained by the penurious Alexandre Corbun, embarked for Ireland and Martinique in the fall of 1736, having returned only three months earlier from a slave trading voyage to Martinique.[421] Jan Le Herian, the ship's mate, was one of the oldest men onboard at 36 years of age.[422] He hailed from Nantes, and his headstrong manner perhaps testifies to the authority and privilege accorded to mates at that port. In early 1737, he stood accused before the admiralty court of Vannes of fomenting desertion among the crew of the *Concorde*. His testimony, and those of his shipmates, suggest that he at once assumed a protective, paternalistic posture *vis-a-vis* his crew, advocating for their fair treatment and, simultaneously, his own privilege aboard the ship.

From the start of his first interrogation in January of 1737, Herian states that Captain Corbun had not kept his promise to seat the mate "at his table, following the usage of the River of Nantes." He elaborates in the second interrogation, in March of that year, that the captain did not heed his "promise . . . to let him eat at his table, or to [share] his meals."[423] Petty officers in general were regularly treated to superior fare than that given to the common seamen. For breakfast, they could expect daily fish or meat, whereas sailors could only expect meat, fish or cheese at the midday meal, and instead of biscuit, they were entitled to fresh bread for the duration of the voyage, whereas sailors were to receive it only at port. Sailors later testified that they too had been denied "fresh bread" while moored at Vannes.[424] The denial of fresh bread to sailors and petty officers, even at port, was a particular insult. As Steven Kaplan has demonstrated, bread lay at the center of cultural, political and economic life of eighteenth-century France. As the bread of mass, it embodied the covenant between Catholics and the divine, and as the foodstuff of the people, it served as the link between the king and his subjects. Whatever other food might be available, eighteenth-century observers could comment that "the bulk of the people believe that they are dying of hunger if they do not have bread."[425] It was this failure of Corbin to supply bread to his crew that began to erode his legitimacy as captain.

For the mate of the *Concorde*, the refusal of bread compounded the dishonor of exclusion from the captain's table. Herian was forced to eat only hard tack for breakfast, dry herring for lunch, without butter or oil, and soup for dinner, with a meager portion of wine rationed out throughout the day. As shown above, mates from Nantes were accustomed to high pay, even

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[421] Mettas, Daget and Daget, *Répertoire des expéditions négrières françaises au XVIIIe siècle,* vol. II, 783-784.
[422] Even the lieutenant, Jacques Gandon, was younger by six years.
[423] Interrogatoire de Jean Le Herian, March 22, 1737, Minutes Criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 246.
[424] "il estoit deub à l'équipage du pain et de la viande fraiche." Testimony of André Baraban, garçon de navire sur la *Concorde*, Informations contre Jean Le Herian, February 19, 1737, Minutes Crimnelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 246.
[425] *Encyclopédie méthodique* (Paris, 1782-1832), Jurisprudence, police et municipalités, vol. 10, p. 168, quoted in Steven L. Kaplan, *The Bakers of Paris and the Bread Question, 1700-1775* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 23.

exceeding that of some major officers. It is likely that many, like Herian, also expected access to the captain's table and respect akin to that accorded the major officers, "according to the usage of the River of Nantes." A similar conflict aboard the *Pauline*, sailing from Bordeaux to Cayenne in 1705, in which the maître d'équipage accused the captain of refusing him a place at the captain's table suggests this was common more broadly as well.[426] To serve them otherwise, to treat them as sailors, amounted to an act of deliberate humiliation. On the voyage back to Vannes, Herian further rejected his relegation to the status of a sailor. According to several witnesses and Herian himself, he made a habit of sneaking into the second captain's cabin to drink the *eau de vie* stored there, and defended himself to the court in his testimony that "he had the right to drink it, since it belonged to the crew, and he had paid his part." The second captain, Dubodan simply replies that he locked the liquor up because some of the crew had already indulged "to excess" and almost thrown themselves to the sea as a result.[427] In this, he assumes that he is empowered to discern "excess" among the crew and entrusted to ration liquor accordingly. Herian seems offended both by the fact that Dubodan portrays him as a member of the crew (note that he did not invite others to join him in his libations), and by Dubodan's assertion that he had any authority over the liquor whatsoever. In his testimony, Dubodan states that Herian had "found the secret" of entering into the second captain's compartment and drinking the *eau de vie*. The use of the term "secret" offers a sense of the obscurity Dubodan and the officers aimed to cast over their own affairs, to the exclusion of all who ranked below them. Enclosed in their cabins at the aft of the ship, they had consolidated resources and authority over and against the *officiers mariniers* and sailors, who worked the deck and the sails. By crossing into these chambers, Herian violated the security of Dubodan's cabin and the higher officer's authority over the deliberate distribution of alcohol "by rule and measure." The dividing line between fore and aft pertained aboard all ships. However, Herian's expectations aboard the *Concorde* speak to differences between ports, as well as the ambiguous position of *officiers mariniers*.

He and many others claimed that contrary to custom, they had no fresh meat or bread during the period awaiting departure from port, before their salaries began. Every man testified that all sailors had plotted to abandon the ship in these early days of the voyage, in order to make a complaint to the court at Vannes, stopped only by Corbun, who threatened to beat them or to shoot them down should they attempt to leave. This violation of the terms of their employment continued throughout the voyage. Several sailors testified that the men were refused food unless already at work, or forced to swab the decks, even (uselessly) in stormy weather, to earn their supper. Others remarked that they were given no time to eat, or that they had no food until late afternoon. This continued until their arrival at Cork. A boy who worked in the kitchen testified that Herian ate "with the crew." He was treated to the same fare in the same wooden bowls, perched around the forecastle and main deck.[428] These meals proved a crucible for mutinous murmurings and activity. Pierre Lescornée, a ship's boy serving in the kitchen, testified that

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[426] Procédure Criminelle contre le capne Guoina sur le navire *La Pauline*, 1705, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 1113.

[427] "Il avoit droit d'en boire puis qu'elle estoit a l'équipage et qu'il en avoit payé sa part." Confrontation des temoins à Jean Herian, March 18-19, 1737, AD56 9B 246.

[428] Only one witness, a passenger, claims he saw squabs sent to Herian when this meat was likewise served at the captain's table. However, this did not assuage Herian's injured pride. Judging from Herian's seems the ostracism from the upper ranks of the ship bothered Herian as much as the demeaning quality and quantity of food provided for the crewmen. Testimony of Allexis Lucas, Confrontation des temoins à Jan Herian, March 18-19, 1737, AD56 9B 246.

Herian and his crewmen plotted their first desertion attempt at Vannes around their dry biscuit and thin soup. While this attempt was frustrated, it was at another dinner, at eight o'clock in Cork, while the officers were eating and the crew gathered in the galley for their soup that a canoe silently drew up beside the *Concorde*, whistles and whispers rushed through the crew, who grabbed their packed trunks or sacks and jumped into the boat so fast that Herian had to order the boatman push off from ship to keep every man from jumping aboard and foundering the little boat.

If the shortage of food propelled the desperate sailors of the *Concorde* to abandon ship in a foreign country, with no plan for their eventual escape, Herian claims that his motivation drew also from what he saw as the violation of his status and authority, namely his subjugation to the command of inferior major officers. It was his place in the shipboard hierarchy, not simply his subpar alimentation, that propelled him to attempt multiple complaints through formal channels, and finally his desertion. Herian asserted that he would only take commands from the captain and disputed that the second captain and lieutenant had any authority over him. Herian's disdain for Dubodan surfaces in his dismissive remark that Dubodan is the nephew of one of the primary investors in the voyage, Joseph-Ange Dubodan, and therefore unfit to testify against him. This claim rests on judicial standards that prohibited relatives or deeply interested parties from testifying, but also suggests a certain dismissiveness towards Dubodan's maritime qualifications. Passenger Allexis Lucas testified that Herian frequently disobeyed Dubodan and responded insolently when Dubodan, ten years his junior and perhaps less experienced at sea, gave him orders. Similarly, lieutenant Jacques Gandon testified that when he ordered him to ease a line upon their departure from Vannes, Herian resorted to profanities to convey his disrespect, saying that "he recognizes no command except that of the captain," and refused to obey, forcing Gandon to find another to perform the task.[429] Herian in turn accused Gandon of aspiring to take his place and command the crew himself, and to that end, of deliberately defaming him to Captain Corbun. In his testimony to the court, he portrays the second captain and lieutenant as bad advisors, who subjugated him unlawfully to their arbitrary whims and usurped his authority over the crew. Nevertheless, he is no kinder towards Captain Corbun. Regarding Corbun himself, Herian accuses him of "contradicting him in all," stripping him of his authority to command the sailors, with the sole purpose of causing Herian grief.[430] Several witnesses of varied status testify to his insolence towards the captain, second captain and lieutenant. In short, the thirty-six-year-old mate expressed to the court his shock at being subjugated to the command of younger, less experienced officers, whatever their rank, and deprived of his own duties aboard the *Concorde.*

Empowered to command the crew and privileged (at least on some ships) with access to the foods, drink and spaces reserved for officers, they also expressed anxiety over their status. As the case aboard the *Concorde* illustrates, they were vulnerable to the diminution of their status, to being treated as common sailors and deprived of those privileges and powers that set them apart. The particular anxiety surrounding status is perhaps best evinced by the language Herian uses in his very first defense of his desertion. Asked why he deserted, he stated that he and the sailors alike were "forced" to desert "in order to be slaves no longer."[431] This use of the term "slaves" is

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[429] Jacques Gandon testifies that Herian told him to "se faire foutre". This may be an invention for the benefit of the captain's case, but Herian does not deny this portion of his testimony outright. Testimony of Jacques Gandon, Procédure contre Jan Herian, April 8, 1737, AD56 9B 246.

[430] "Il le contrarioit en tout ne le souffrant faire faire aucun ouvrage aux Matelots quoy que pour le servise du Navire, on affectoit mesme de les luy enlever et de les commender pour faire d'autres ouvrages souvent Inutiles et uniquement pour chagriner luy interrogé." Interrogatoire de Jan Herian, January 16, 1737, AD56 9B 246.

[431] Interrogatoire de Jan Herian, January 16, 1737, AD56 9B246.

more than simple hyperbole; it encompasses a double argument. First is the argument that the major officers had violated the agreed upon terms of labor. This is simple; the Herian and the men were forced to work at all hours and whatever labor at the whim of the officers, and fed whatever victuals Corbun saw fit, without any regard to custom or contract. Second is the argument that the officers had damaged the social body, cutting down distinctions of rank into a binary of master and slave. A slave is without status, subject to obey any free man. The usurpation of Herian's role aboard the ship demeaned him and did violence against his distinctive status onboard and his dignity; the term "slaves" implies this social destruction. Herian argued that the ship ran, not as a linear hierarchy but as a complex set of relationships between men empowered with particular skills and responsibilities. While Corbun, Dubodan and Gandon suggest that all inferiors were duty-bound to serve the major officers in whatever capacity they were needed, Herian defends his distinctive function onboard, the speciality of his labor and the dignity due to him.

When Herian deserted, it was the carpenter alone that he willingly brought with him, leaving the sailors to jump to the canoe by virtue of their own daring and agility and, allegedly, against his design. When they arrived at Cork, he sent the five sailors who made it into the canoe on their way, bringing only the carpenter, Bertrand Rozo, with him to a lodging house in the neighboring town of Dongarvan. While Herian would vehemently dispute all of Rozo's testimony, jumping to his feet, swearing, and leaving the courtroom, in a display not repeated for any other witness, Rozo's testimony can still sketch a picture of what may have been believable at the time. Rozo, a twenty-five-year-old carpenter from a village near Vannes, claimed that while he was ailing below deck, Herian had taken pity on him and offered to bring a canoe so they might desert together and to pay his way. Herian, Rozo claimed, told him that "he would want for nothing" should he abandon the ship, and once they arrived onshore, the found lodging and a single bed in Dongarvan, Ireland, where they hid until they were found three days later.[432] Whatever objections Herian may have presented against this testimony, Herian and Rozo were found together and brought back aboard ship together. Sharing a bed would not have been uncommon for men finding lodging at port, but in the context of these other details, it suggests that these two men saw each other as bonded by more than simple circumstance. They were *officiers mariniers*, and more particularly, they were carpenter and mate, the two stand-out members of this class in terms of their pay and their rank; as such, they were united by their status as well as their stakes.

This case underlines the ambiguity of the position held by the mate and *officiers mariniers* aboard the ship. Herian claims he deserted because the sailors received too little food *and* because he received the wrong food, unfit for his rank. The testimony details how he objected to the captain's treatment of the common seamen, but also how master and carpenter deserted together, sharing costs and lodging, while they left the sailors to their own devices. Throughout the court case, it is clear that Herian was especially eager to preserve the distinction between himself and the sailors onboard and to illustrate his distinctive role as a respected and useful intermediary between them. Remarkably, both Dubodan and Herian testify that Herian warned the second captain of an impending desertion. He apparently told Dubodan that the officers' harsh treatment had pushed the crew to plan their desertion. Dubodan himself admitted in court that he dismissed the warning, citing his low opinion of the mate. This suggests that despite his own dissatisfaction with the ship's leadership, Herian sought favor with the officers. By betraying the confidence of the crewmen, he demonstrated his utility aboard ship as the

[432] Interrogatoire de Jan Herian, January 16, 1737, AD56 9B246.

confidante of the crew, his loyalty to the captain and shareholders as their informant, and his interest in serving the interests of both.

While this case of mass desertion is exceptional, food and specialization of labor surface in other cases concerning *officiers mariniers* and particularly the highly-paid *maîtres d'équipage* and carpenters. Food lay at the center of the conflict that erupted aboard the *Affriquain*, moored at Saint-Pierre, Martinique in 1696, when a captain imprisoned a carpenter and a *contremaître* for several days, including the feast of Easter, because they had demanded more food. When the same *contremaître*, Jacques Durand, contested the authority of the ship's second captain Louis François de la Frutière, recently (and informally) promoted from the rank of *volontaire*, Frutière hurled insults at Durand, calling him a thief and a rogue, and finally beating him so severely that he died shortly afterwards.[433] Again, it was a petty officer who makes demands upon the captain on behalf of himself and the crew, when food seems to run short. Again, it was he who resisted alleged overstepping by subordinate major officers. The appearance of a carpenter alongside Durand in prison for demanding food also speaks to a pattern of allegiance between men in these roles across ships. Durand demanded better treatment, and he refused to submit to what he considered illegitimate authority. In response, Captain Rambaldo used his legal authority to have him imprisoned, and Frutière used his cane and his words to assert his dominance and demean Durand. Even among the men of this middling rank, the master-servant relation of chain of command came into conflict with a model of status based on distinctive skills and privileges. Aboard the *Gouadaloupien* in 1788, a mate beat a cooper bloody when the cooper refused to prepare rations for the crew. The cooper had defended his status as a craftsman rather than a servant, while the mate insisted upon his authority to command his subordinates in any task.[434] These cases underline the significance of status to survival aboard ship. Access to food, as well as limits on one's subjugation, depended upon one's status aboard ship. Status above the crew enabled petty officers and craftsmen to make demands upon the captain and, if the attitudes of Durand, the cooper and Herian might reflect their expectations based on prior experience, to resist the commands of some major officers. The violation of that status risked the bodily security and even the lives of men of these middling ranks. It is in this context that one must consider their ambiguous loyalty, commanding the crew, while also representing their interests, and serving the officers while at times contesting their leadership.

Major Officers

At the top of the shipboard hierarchy were the major officers, including the captain, second captain, lieutenant, priest, surgeon, scrivener and ensign. With the exception of the priest and surgeon, the major officers were entrusted with navigation, trade, and the maintenance of order onboard. captains Like crewmen, officers often came from restricted social circles. On ships of the *Compagnie*, almost seventy percent came from either Saint-Malo or Lorient and over half of their officers were themselves sons of officers in maritime trade. Another twenty-five percent

[433] Interestingly, this particular conflict emerged around the feast of Easter, and all testimony recounts how the men were imprisoned for the holiday. Durand defends his honor by citing his service to the king. On his deathbed, at the inn of Madame du Grandemaison in Fort Saint-Pierre, he told his confessor that the second captain had murdered him. Cahier d'information a requeste de Françoise Largez veuve de feu Jacques Durand vivant contremaistre sur le navire l'affriquainne contre Jan Baptiste Rambaldo, Capitaine dud. Navire et Louis François de la Frutiere, volontaire, October 18, 1696, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4933.

[434] Sr. Gabriel Merlet Tonnelier, marin sur le navire *Le Gouadaloupein* contre Sr Boucher Maître d'équipage sur led. Navire, 1788, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4967.

came from families otherwise associated with the *Compagnie* or the port of Lorient. All three sons of captain Étienne Lobry would become ensigns in the service of the *Compagnie*, while his two daughters married captains, Elisabeth marrying Louis Canivet and Thérèse marrying Nicolas Fremery. These familial connections did not always isolate the officer classes from the lower ranks. Jean Caro, master of the Port of Lorient, sent his sons to sea as *mousses*, and they rose through the ranks, albeit with exceptional alacrity, to the officer class.[435]

Most aspiring officers began as unpaid volunteers or as pilots, living and eating among the *officiers mariniers*, while they worked towards life of greater honor, wealth and comfort. Those who could afford it embarked without salary, as a *volontaire* or ensign *ad honores.* If volunteers had to possess the resources to go without pay for the duration of the voyage, ensigns *ad honores* faced even higher barriers to entry. The families of those who embarked on *Compagnie* ships as ensigns *ad honores*, paid the substantial cost of their meals at the captain's table, around 700 livres, compensated only partially through a small *port-permis*, the right to embark up to 55 livres worth of goods or money to trade on their own account. After two years of this, they could become an *enseigne surnuméraire,* at which point the *Compagnie* would undertake the cost of their provisions, and the value of their *port-permis* was doubled, but they still had to wait a further four to five campaigns before they were eligible for the role of *enseigne en second* and earn a salary and double (again) their *port-permis*. Others began their careers as *élèves-pilotins*, who ate the fare of *officiers mariniers* and received a small salary. Those who distinguished them as pilots could then become *enseignes en second,* which opened opportunities for promotion to the highest ranks onboard.[436] The ascent to the position of captain followed a fairly predictable pattern; receptions at Bordeaux formulaically recite an aspiring captain's many years of service (often around twenty) aboard the King's ships and merchant voyages, as well as his specific experience as a *pilote hauturier* and as a *maitre d'équipage*, testifying to his skills in navigation and in leading a crew of seamen.

The predominance of familial connections among major officers demonstrates that access to these higher echelons of seaborne society depended more on social networks and familial wealth than it did on simple skill.[437] Even those officers who began their careers as *mousses*, like the sons of Jean Caro, relied upon their familial connections to rise to the officer class. Whatever their path through the ranks, it is clear that a sequence of advancements defined the careers of officers to a much greater degree than it did for *officiers mariniers*, and certainly more than it did for ships' boys and sailors. Their decades at sea were defined by repeated promotions in status, pay and privilege, social capital which redounded to their families through opportune marriages and valuable positions among the merchant elite of French port cities.

In addition to simple experience, officers were required to complete specific education in hydrography, geography and navigation. Many officers collected essential texts, particularly those by Jean Bellin and, later in the century, d'Après de Mannevillette's *Neptune Orientale*, in their libraries.[438] Pilotin Jean Pierre David carried with him a *Traitte de Variation*, an *Instruction de Pilotes*, a *Quartier de reduction* and *Quartier de proportion* on his 1730 voyage to the Caribbean.[439] Most rose to the rank of captain through the officer class, beginning as a pilot,

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[435] Haudrère*, La Compagnie française des Indes*, vol. I, 378-9.
[436] Haudrère*, La Compagnie française des Indes*, vol. I, 381-382.
[437] Receptions de capitains de vaisseaux, chirurgiens, maîtres de barque, pilotes hauturiers, etc. 1718-1721, AD33 6B 23.
[438] Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, vol. I, 380-81.
[439] Probate Auction, Jean Pierre David, *Le Neptune,* Captain Pimont, 1730-1732, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP230.

pilotin or ensign, then rising to the rank of lieutenant, then to captain. This series of promotions was relatively rapid, with some ensigns in independent trading voyages achieving the rank of captain within ten years. In the highly regimented order of the French Company of the Indies, this process was often prolonged; the average age of an ensign was twenty-four and the average age of captains was forty-two.[440]

The captain was an experienced seafarer, having embarked for at least five years aboard merchant ships and for at least two campaigns with the French Navy. He completed a combination of theoretical and practical education, attending lectures in hydrography, where he would learn to read maps and nautical instruments, particularly the techniques for determining latitude and longitude. He would learn too, the general architecture of the ship and the principals of its manoeuvres. In order to receive his license to navigate as a captain, he underwent examinations of practical maneuvers and coastal pilotage by at least two experienced captains, preferably officers of the admiralty, and of his knowledge of the globe and oceanic navigation by a professor of hydrography. Captains also had to provide a certificate of their Catholicism until 1717, when the regent eliminated this requirement and recommended that the state turn a blind eye to the religious affiliation of seafarers.[441] Beyond tests and promotions, it was the owner of a ship who ultimately determined which captain would sail on any voyage.

Aboard ship, the captain's primary functions were to navigate the ship as efficiently as possible to its intended destinations, to maximize profit, to maintain the victuals, and to maintain discipline among the officers and crew. A captain's failure on any one of these tasks could decimate the voyage's chances of financial success; major mistakes in navigation or in the provisioning of the ship could be fatal for all onboard. It was through the proper exercise of these primary tasks that the captain asserted and maintained his superlative rank aboard ship. Likewise, the display of expertise, wealth, disciplinary authority and sexual privileges came to signify status among the major officers as well.

Captains' wealth and status on land varied, but all could at least aspire to the social circles of merchants at their home port. Captains enjoyed (and depended on) social connections with merchants and ship owners to obtain their next command, and many captains were family relations to the merchants who funded their voyages.[442] Success on a particularly profitable voyage could propel them and their children to higher social connections. Certain voyages, notably those destined for the slaving coasts and for the Indian Ocean, offered higher pay for captains and more opportunities for side-profits through rites to a proportion of the final sales or through "pacotilles," the right to trade for a certain amount of otherwise controlled goods from foreign ports. Jean Duval, who sailed the *Marie de Nantes* to Leogane 1732, made 90 livres each month, whereas Jacques de Marquisac, captain on the 1734-1735 voyage of the *Apollon* from Lorient to Madagascar, Pondicherry, Sumatra and the Mascarenes, made almost four times that amount.[443] Captains of slaving ships destined for the Caribbean received 3 lt per enslaved person who reached the destination, whereas those who sailed the captive cargo to the Mascarenes were paid 10 lt per enslaved person sold in the islands. For Joseph Le Houx, who delivered at least

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[440] Eric Saugera, *Bordeaux, port négrier: chronologie, économie, idéologie, XVIIe-XIXe siècles* (Paris: Karthala, 1995), 226. Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, 118.

[441] René-Josué Valin, *Nouveau commentaire sur l'Ordonnance de la Marine du mois d'Août, 1681* (La Rochelle: Jerôme Legier; Pierre Mesnier, 1760), I: 445.

[442] Merchants often sent their sons to sea to learn the mechanics of the business that they might one day inherit. Saugera, 223-4.

[443] Rôle d'équipage de la *Marie de Nantes*, 1732, Rôle d'armements, Quartier de Nantes, ADLA C 1201. Rôle d'équipage de l'Apollon, 1734, SHDL 2P 26-II.21, ed. A.S.H.D.L.

377 men, women and children to Saint-Domingue in his 1741 voyage of the *Comtesse*, this *port-permis* amounted to over 2,800 *livres tournois*, a full 600 *lt* more than he was paid in salary.[444] For Bertrand Gilbert Des Chesnays, whose ship carried over 330 captives from Madagascar to the Mascarenes from 1736 to 1739 aboard the *Duc d'Anjou*, this amounted to over 1,000 *livres tournois*. This was six times the amount paid to mates on the same voyages, and no crewman ranking below the mate was entitled to these payments. On non-slaving voyages, captains were allowed to carry 1,800 pounds of pepper, 1,200 pounds of Moka coffee, and 900 pounds of coffee from Île Bourbon, three times the amount allowed for the first lieutenant, twenty times that for the surgeon, mate or pilot, fifty times that allowed for the sailors, and one hundred and fifty times that allowed for *mousses*.[445] In addition to these stunningly high financial benefits, captains for the Company of the Indies were also eligible for proxy military honors through their service.[446] These outstanding benefits further suggest that captains and the highest ranking officers aboard ship were highly invested in the profitability of the voyage and in the hierarchy of rank aboard ship. It also suggests that they were likely to enjoy and display material wealth that underlined their distinction from all others onboard.

Some of this wealth surfaces in the probate auctions of goods captains carried aboard ship. In the summer of 1730, Hugues Cantaul Dentuly, captain of the slave ship *Néreide*, died at Gorée with sixteen pairs of silk stockings, culottes embroidered with silver thread, a hat with silver borders, two black wigs, silver watch and five silver rings, not to mention his crystal goblets, pot of jam and fourteen books.[447] Third Lieutenant, Jean-Baptiste Dornouage, carried with him a silver sword, a clothing of silk and fine cotton, including silk gloves, a black wig, a hat with silver embroidery, seven books, a pistol, two mattresses and a pillow.[448] Similarly, Marc Jambert, the second lieutenant aboard the *Aurore*, a slaving ship which sailed from Senegal to Louisiana in 1735, had with him a silver sword, silk stockings and other fine clothing, maps, two hats, two wigs, soap, eleven gold buttons, gunpowder, a mattress and (remarkably) two parakeets.[449] While some of these rich objects may have been destined for sale, many likely enriched their lives at sea. Silver and silk adorned the clothing of the highest officers; they slept on mattresses and pillows, covered by sheets and blankets, and they boasted knowledge, both specialized and general. It was not only officers of the *Compagnie* who wore swords aboard ship. Captain Herisson on the *Pierre Daniel* sailing from Nantes in 1745 wore a sword (and allegedly threatened to run it through one of his crewmen).[450] The surgeon aboard the *Aurore*, which sailed from Nantes in 1714, drew a sword on the captain when denied a place at the captain's table.[451] The significance of the sword itself as an indicator of rank, particularly on company ships, can be seen in a conflict at port, when a surgeon contested the right of a ship's pilot to carry a sword at port, seeing as he was not an ensign (or major officer).[452] Swords had long been the accessories

[444] Role de *la Comtesse*, 1740-1741, SHDL 2P 29-I.19, ed. A.S.H.D.L.
[445] *Règlement touchant la marine de la Compagnie des Indes, arresté en l'assemblée d'Administration du 16 septembre 1733* (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1734), 22-29.
[446] Philippe Haudrère, "Les Officiers des vaisseaux de la Compagnie des Indes", 123. Idem, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, II: 621.
[447] Probate Auction of Hugues Cantaul Dentuly, aboard the *Nereide*, August 14, 1730, AD56 9B 106.
[448] Probate Auction for Jean-Baptiste Dornouage, aboard the *Flore* April 28, 1735, AD56 9B 108.
[449] Probate Auction for Marc Jambert, second lieutenant aboard the *Aurore*, November 3, 1735, AD56 9B 109.
[450] Procédure contre Herisson, capitaine abord le *Pierre Danniel*, 1745, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4950.
[451] Procédure contre Jullien Legras Chirurgien Major sur la Fregatte *L'Aurore*, 1714, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4938.
[452] Suit against a ship's pilot, 1743, Minutes criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 248.

of the nobility in France, although the upwardly mobile, whether servants, clerks or wigmakers also increasingly wore swords adorned with silver or brass, particularly in the later half of the eighteenth century.[453] Their appearance in the hands of major officers signify the military honors often accrued by officers in the king's service, as well as the confluence and concentration of wealth, weapons and honor around the persons who occupied these highest offices onboard.

The highest officers kept their profusion of material goods in their private quarters. Even the hundred-ton *Dorade de Bordeaux*, mentioned earlier in this chapter, had a private quarter in the entrepont, complete with a bed and locking armoire, and the captain's cabin boasted a bed with two locking drawers, eight locking armoires, benches with storage, a desk and several cabinets, including one for his guns and sword. This space was very likely filled with the personal belongings, rather than market goods, of the captain, as captains generally enjoyed the privilege to stow cargo on his own account in the hold. This abundance of personal storage aboard ship is remarkable, particularly when compared to the half a sea-chest that most sailors brought with them. It is even more remarkable when considered in the context of the ship itself, where every possible effort was made to maximize space available for merchandise, even constricting the amount of provisions, and it underlines the importance of material wealth as a sign of status for the major officers and most of all, the captain. His crystal goblets, his two wigs, his silver-lined hat and dozen silk stockings, could not be left behind. While sailors wore the same rough clothing day after day, while they shared a hammock and a sea chest, the captain appeared in great contrast, in relatively clean linens and finery that spoke to his importance, his social connections, and his wealth.

As suggested by the case of Herian aboard the *Concorde*, access to the captain's table signified one's membership among honored officers aboard ship. The captain's table was located in the wardroom, adjacent to the captain's chamber.[454] Those who dined with the captain could expect superior nutrition, particularly an ample supply of meat. On his voyage to Siam in 1685, courtier François Timoleon de Choisy remarked that, though it was Lent, officers found it difficult to maintain a diet of "bad butter" and salted herring. "Thank God," he wrote, "that our zeal is not indiscrete; & we will eat our chickens and our pigs when we need them."[455] Marine animals supplemented their diet as well, including tuna, porpoises, dolphins, and tortoises. To Choisy's disgust, officers licked their beards in avid indulgence after wolfing down a tortoise stew.[456] Inventories for sale of two enormous East Indiamen, built in the 1770s, evoke the finery of the captain's table. Aboard the *Sevère*, seven silver place settings, four silver serving spoons, seven "spoons for coffee," 51 tablecloths, 54 dozen napkins, 50 tea towels, and 6 porcelain plates would have adorned the table. A copper cauldron, pans, and pots, as well as specialized ware for cooking fish, for pureeing, for pies, crowded the kitchen, alongside a coffee mill, a marble and a wooden mortar and pestle, and iron cooking pots.[457] The captain's table of the *Superbe* boasted a similar table, with twelve sets of silverware, 12 silver spoons for coffee, serving spoons, tablecloths, 65 clay plates, 45 porcelain plates, a porcelain sugar dish, 21 goblets, and many other items.[458] Even on the much smaller *Dorade* in 1725, the captain's table was covered with a

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[453] Arlette Farge, "Les Théâtres de la violence à Paris au XVIIIe Siècle" *Annales* 34, no. 5 (1979): 1008-1009.
[454] Gilles Proulx, *Between France and New France: Life Aboard the Tall Sailing Ships* (Toronto, CA: Dundurn Press Limited, 1984), 102.
[455] François Timoleon Choisy, *Journal du Voyage de Siam Fait en 1685. & 1686* (Paris: Sebastien Mabre-Cramoisy, 1688), 7-8.
[456] Choisy, 23.
[457] Inventaire du vaisseau Le *Severe*, December 2, 1777, Minutes civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 226.
[458] Inventaire du vaisseau le *Suberbe*, November 1, 1777, Minutes civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 226.

tablecloth and adorned with copper candlesticks, and officers used napkins and forks, while the kitchen equipment suggested they might dine on pies, casseroles and purées.[459]

These material distinctions bolstered the primary claim of expert knowledge that underpinned officers' authority aboard ship. In the wardroom, officers used the display of expertise to confirm and elevate their status. Expertise found expression not only in captains' successful navigation of a ship from port to port but also in the erudite conversations that filled the wardroom, the site of the captain's table, where officers gathered to eat, to deliberate, and to exchange ideas. Choisy studied Portuguese, astronomy, and maritime jargon on his 1685 voyage to Siam.[460] This heavily documented missionary and diplomatic voyage was undoubtedly unusual. Nevertheless, the libraries that officers brought with them on other ships suggest a similarly learned officer class. The chaplain who served aboard the 1736 slaving voyage of the *Duc d'Anjou* to Madagascar and the Mascarenes carried with him four volumes of Madeleine Angelique de Gomez's best-selling novel *Journées Amusantes*, as well as three volumes of Aesop's Fables, eleven tomes on medicine, three on history, and fifteen on prayer and theology.[461] Most were purchased at his probate auction by the first or second lieutenant onboard. The third lieutenant on the slave ship *La Flore* (1734-1736) had with him "different books" including several on navigation and the construction of ships.[462] The mere possession of books does not necessarily indicate that their owner read them.[463] At the very least, it does not seem likely that the books in these cases were intended for sale. The chaplain on the *Duc d'Anjou* died two years into his voyage, and more than a full year since the ship arrived at Île de France. He had carried these volumes, almost certainly purchased in France, on a series of eight slaving expeditions from the Mascarenes to Madagascar and back. The intended use of the books in the inventory of the lieutenant aboard the *Flore* is more ambiguous, as he died while the ship was moored at Keta in Ghana. However, the specialized maritime subject matter again suggests that these were personal property. Finally, while the simple possession of books may have signified wealth and learning, the nature of storage aboard ship would have precluded the display of books or their titles. It seems most likely that the titles seamen chose to carry with them were actively read, borrowed and lended, the knowledge of their contents surely the most potent and portable signifier of the reader's learning in the cramped quarters of the ship. It seems likely that officers read for diversion and aimed to display their mastery of the contents of their library through conversation with their shipmates.

Debate aboard ship was not mere pleasantry; it bore upon the status of participants, as evidenced by a fatal dispute that erupted between an *écrivain,* Sieur Foubert, and a lieutenant, Jean Granjan, in the last month of a three-year-long voyage around the world from 1721 to 1724.

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[459] Invantaire de la fregatte nomée la dorade Commandée par monsieur Bonté de la Constructions Agrées & Appareaux & Armement de present levant la ville de Bourdeaux, October 16, 1725, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B1182.

[460] He studied Portuguese with the Jesuit Père Visdelou, "Monsieur Basset teaches me the sacred Orders, I observe the moon with Père de Fontenei, I talk about pilotage with our ensign Chammoreau,. . . and all in passing" as he walked the decks. Choisy, 5, 24-25.

[461] Probate auction for the belongings of Jacques Neveu, Aumônier on the *Duc d'Anjou*, December 31, 1738, AD56 9B 111.

[462] Probate auction for the belongings of Jean Baptiste Dornouage*, La Flore*, April 28, 1735, AD56 9B 108.

[463] There was a market for books in French colonies, which did not establish printing presses until the later eighteenth century, and these generally specialized in shorter publications. Roderick Cave, "Early Printing and the Book Trade in the West Indies" *The Library Quarterly: Information, Community, Policy* 48, no. 2 (Apr. 1978): 166-169; Robert Darnton, "First Steps Toward a History of Reading" in *The Kiss of Lamourette*, 162-163; Daniel Roche, *Le Peuple de Paris: Essai sur la culture populaire au XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Aubier Montaigne, 1981), 204-41.

Captain de la Salle had navigated the *Atalante* from Lorient to Brazil to Ile de France, before sailing north to Puducherry and Chandannagar, then back south to Ile Bourbon, then finally, after an emergency stop at Martinique, home to France. From the start, they were short on provisions, the crew was plagued with illness and the ship hit with bad weather, which flooded the hold and 'tweendecks and damaged the mizzen mast beyond repair. Three men were lost when a canoe capsized off the coast of Île Bourbon. Twenty-five more died of illness, a quarter of the entire crew. Throughout these travails, Foubert and Granjan became "good friends," according to the testimony of Granjan and his shipmates. However, a dispute over "maritime facts" erupted between them on the evening of May 3, 1724, and quickly turned deadly. The subject of the debate centered on navigational knowledge, the provocation of conflict was the insulting tone taken by a younger, subordinate officer in challenging his lieutenant, and underlying it all was the deadly toll of the wandering, ill-fated voyage and the question of the legitimacy of the major officers.[464]

James Farr, building on the vast literature on honor in early modern Europe, argues that "honor was a salient component of legitimacy."[465] Although he may not have realized it at the time, Foubert's challenge to Granjan threatened the honor and the expertise of the lieutenant, and thereby also the legitimacy of his claim to a position of leadership onboard. Foubert and Granjan were gathered in the wardroom, smoking and talking after most of the officers had retired to their quarters after dinner. The chaplain and a Dutch passenger sat with them at the captain's table, lit dimly with candles, when the conversation turned to a question of hydrography. Foubert insisted "in terms somewhat bad-tempered" that the Strait of Bahama was marked by much rougher seas than the mid-Atlantic. Granjan maintained the opposite, and contested Foubert's presumption.[466] In his testimony, second Lieutenant Gouvello remarked on Foubert's use of "terms a little too sharp" in speaking to an officer, while the chaplain Eusebe Rabia cited Foubert's support for an "erroneous thesis of navigation" and the "haughty terms" Foubert used. Throughout, witnesses and Granjan himself emphasized Foubert's unwarranted claims to navigational knowledge, his lack of deference to a superior officer (in the presence of honorable witnesses no less), and Granjan's appropriate use of force to subdue this insubordination. Tragically, and not without some irony, all witnesses also cite the wild rolling of the ship in the rough seas of the mid-Atlantic as the primary reason that Granjan's punch, pipe in hand, landed on Foubert's face

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[464] Procédure contre Sr. Granjan, lieutenant sur le vaisseau *l'Atalante*, deffendeur et accuse, 1724, Minutes criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 242.

[465] Scholars have often described the culture of honor through the lens of the duel and violent exchanges, presenting honor as a culture of violence, in opposition to reason and civility. Nevertheless, recent scholarship exposes the multivalent ways early modern men and women cultivated honor, as well as the expanding use of this language and system of practices over the eighteenth century to inflect even the construction of credit in commercial relations. François Billacois, *Le Duel dans la société française des XVIe-XVIIe siècles: essai de psychosociologie historique* (Paris: Editions de l'école des hautes études en sciences sociales, 1986); Kristen Neuschel, *Word of Honor: Interpreting Noble Culture in Sixteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989); Robert Nye, *Masculinity and Male Codes of Honor in Modern France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), chapter 2. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1994). James R. Farr, "The Death of a Judge: Performance, Honor, and Legitimacy in Seventeenth-Century France", *Journal of Modern History*, 75 (2003), 1–22; Linda A. Pollock, "Honor, Gender and Reconciliation in Elite Culture, 1570-1700", *Journal of British Studies*, 46 (2007), 3–29; John Smail, "Credit, Risk and Honor in Eighteenth-Century Commerce", *Journal of British Studies*, 44 (2005), 439–56; Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016), 153-157; Alexandra Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 56.

[466] "en termes un peu emporté" Informations, May 24, 1724, AD56 9B242.

rather than his stomach. The plaster pipe penetrated Foubert's eye and killed him. Yet again, a conflict arose in the hours of repose after the conclusion of dinner, as several officers lingered in the wardroom to smoke and talk at the close of the day. Several bottles, scattered on the table perhaps suggest the role of alcohol in the dispute and in broader modes of officers' sociability. Most notably, this episode suggests the tight link between navigational knowledge, honor and legitimacy aboard ship. It is possible that Foubert did have a rather inflated sense of his own status aboard ship, as a scrivener who had struck up a "good" friendship with a lieutenant. If he was the same *écrivain* Foubert who appears on the rollbooks of two previous ships sailing from La Rochelle, he was exceptionally ambitious (or exceptionally in need of work); he would have spent five years at sea, with at most eight weeks between each return to France and his next embarkation.[467] Whatever his experience, this episode shows that a scrivener could not easily make a claim of superior knowledge against a lieutenant, not at least without careful consideration of phrasing and tone. Moreover, the challenge contained within it the implicit accusation that Granjan was either a fool or a liar, and perhaps one who had contributed to the high death toll on the *Atalante*. At stake was not simply a "bad thesis" but Granjan's reputation as a capable and honest man. Granjan and his shipmates understood Foubert's assertion of his own expertise as an inappropriate effort to elevate his status, and recognized Granjan's intention to punch the scrivener in the stomach as a legitimate use of corporal punishment to reassert his honor and legitimacy. Much of the historiography on honor in early modern France has focused on the landed nobility, citing honor as a system of practices, largely among peers, used to construct one's social and political legitimacy and to hold one's status against the incursions of social inferiors.[468] While void of the elaborate ritual of dueling, the shipboard brawl suggests that officers at sea were eager to preserve their claim to legitimate authority.

The claim to legitimate authority was accompanied by the privilege of bodily integrity at sea. The lieutenants, second captains and captains reserved extraordinary powers over the bodies of their subordinates. Like magistrates onshore, these major officers were empowered to administer whippings, floggings, and public humiliations, among other punishments, on the men under their command, while they themselves were legally protected from such discipline.[469] As the testimony in the case of second captain Vallere Martin and Belloncle above, they modeled these powers on an ideal of patriarchal authority over the bodies and labor of crewmen, and justified their exercise on the basis of the need for strict discipline in the extraordinary circumstances at sea. Court cases suggest that officers were to act without ire with the sole intent of disciplining the crewman; they might hit a man in the stomach, but hitting an officer in the face, kicking or using a hard weapon (whipping was allowed), risked falling under the category of "cruel" or "excessive," as did any punishment that resulted in lasting injury.[470] Captains and

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[467] An écrivain, Foubert, embarked on the *Duc de Noailles*, from La Rochelle in July 1719, then returned to La Rochelle in late 1719 or early 1720. Foubert, écrivain next appears aboard the *Africain*, having boarded in February of 1720 from La Rochelle, returning to Lorient in June of 1721. Finally and fatefully on the *Atalante*, Foubert embarked as an *écrivain* in late June of 1721. This turnaround time is fairly extraordinary, but not impossible, particularly for a well-connected young man eager to build his experience and advance in the ranks of the new and growing *Compagnie des Indes*. His father may have been Captain Foubert of La Rochelle and the *Compagnie d'Occident*, who appointed a certain "Foubert" as an écrivain aboard the *Duchesse de Noailles* in 1719. Rôle de la *Duchesse de Noailles* (1719-1720), SHDL 2P 20-II.8, ed. A.S.H.D.L.; Rôle de l'*Africain* (1719-1721) SHDL 2P 20-III.12, ed. A.S.H.D.L.; Rôle de l'*Atalante* (1721-1724) SHDL 2P 21-I.13, ed. A.S.H.D.L.

[468] Farr, 1-22.

[469] Vickers, *Young Men and the Sea*, 224.

[470] This is similar to norms of household corporal discipline on land. See for example the case against second captain Dalivent on the *Flore* in 1743, accused of beating the surgeon to death, Procédure contre Sr. Dalivent, 1743,

lieutenants held this power to order and to execute corporal discipline upon crewmen and *officiers mariniers*, while the major (with rare exceptions) could rest secure that they would not suffer similar bodily humiliations.

Officers on merchant and particularly *Compagnie* voyages accumulated the trappings of honor, from the swords hanging at their sides, to the deference they demanded, to their claim to bodily integrity (and the descending hierarchy of bodily integrity of their subordinates). One case, in which an ensign allegedly died of shame after a particularly humiliating punishment, exposes the high stakes of social demotion at sea, and particularly on ships of the slave trade. In the summer of 1772, while the ship was moored at Ouidah, Captain Emmanuel Millon de Villeray of the *Aimable Jeannette* accused Philippe Fauval de la Dugerie of stealing and distributing bananas, purchased for the ship during the passage from Gorée to Ouidah. He had noticed the dwindling supply from where they were kept "attached to the back of the ship," and cut back the crewmen's rations until someone agreed to confess or accuse the offender. Eventually, someone did come forward and accused de la Dugerie of stealing many bananas, locking some in his sea chest, and eating the rest on the main deck.[471] Others, however, testified that many of the crew and de la Dugerie had purchased bananas on their own accounts. Nevertheless, the captain was convinced that de la Dugerie had stolen the fruit. Villeroy ordered the ensign put in irons at the *parc aux cochons* (or pig pen) on the fore portion of the main deck, and a pig cuffed to his foot. While this particular humiliation lasted only a few hours, witnesses testify that the captain and second captain continued to treat de la Dugerie to insults and testified that the ensign refused to eat in the company of others, due to his deep shame, for the several months between the incident and his death in December of 1772 in the passage from Princes Island to Saint-Domingue. In a later civil suit against the captain, the cook testified that the ensign had been condemned to sailors' rations from the start of the voyage, and that when he was eventually called to the captain's table, it was only for the amusement of the captain and second captain, who "ridiculed him" and turned him away. They further humiliated him, ordering him to read and right but only to "mortify the young man," and after the incident with the pig, they forced him to eat with the pilot. In labor too, the cook stated that de la Dugerie was forced to undertake work below his station; in the passage from Ouidah to Princes Island, he was forced to gather rainwater and to guard the captives below deck, "a post only fit for *officiers mariniers* and sailors."[472] The ship's carpenter testified that his poor treatment "in words and insults probably caused the chagrin to this officer, who fell ill from them and died."[473] Others echoed this testimony, almost verbatim. The second carpenter stated that he never saw the ensign beaten in body, but "the insults he received probably occasioned much chagrin, and the malady of which he died, without being able to receive any medicine." When confronted with this accusation, the Captain asserted, not that humiliation cannot kill, but rather that "he did not think that the punishment . . . could have caused such chagrin because [de la Dugerie] was only in irons for

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Minutes criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 248. Susan Dwyer Amussen, "'Being Stirred to Much Unquietness': Violence and Domestic Violence in Early Modern England", *Journal of Women's History* 6, no. 2 (1994), 71. Julie Hardwick, "Early Modern Perspectives on the Long History of Domestic Violence: The Case of Seventeenth-Century France", *Journal of Modern History* 78, no. 1 (2006), 10.

[471] Interrogation du Villeroy, July 26, 1773, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA 4958.

[472] Testimony of Antoine Buchetay, cuisinier sur le navire l'*Aimable Jeannette*, Requeste civile contre Sieur Millon de Villeroy, April 22, 1774, ADLA B 4958.

[473] Testimony of François Button, Extrait des Minuttes du greffe au siège de l'Amirauté du Havre de Grace, June 12, 1773, ADLA 4958.

two hours."[474] Moreover, the admiralty court at Nantes found that Captain Villeroy be forbidden from commanding any ship for three consecutive years and sanctioned him against "falling back into a similar error" or risk greater punishment, this despite the fact that not one witness accused the captain of any physical injury against the young officer.[475]

The oblique references to enslaved people in the testimony obscure what was surely an important factor in the stakes of status aboard the *Aimable Jeannette*. De la Dugerie was chained to a pig at the "front" of the vessel, on the main deck, where, as the captain testifies, any sailor would have been chained. This evokes not only the remarkable crowd of animals kept alongside captives aboard ship, but also suggests that de la Duguerie may have been chained to a pig in full view of the captive men onboard. Trade had begun in early April, and by summer, the ship likely held dozens of African men, women and children, with the captive men kept in the fore of the ship.[476] Surely these men recognized de la Duguerie when he descended below deck to guard them. While witnesses fail to mention the gaze of captive men, this visibility must have demeaned his status in their eyes, as this display of his shame in the full view of captives onboard, likewise redoubled his humiliation, which was again compounded by the knowledge that sailors and officers witnessed this display of his dishonor before the captives. Pigs, introduced by the Portuguese in the seventeenth-century, were very common livestock in Dahomey and the surrounding region in the eighteenth century, although, unlike in Europe, they seem to have held no specific association with lowness or corporeality.[477] For de la Dugerie and his French shipmates, pigs carried a connotation of gluttony, drunkenness and filth.[478] The association with unbridled appetite might have struck with particular potency in this case, where the ensign was accused of hoarding bananas. If enslavers aimed to envision their captives as mere bodies, de la Duguerie was quite literally chained to his own corporeal nature, his specific animality made plain to all onboard.

Whatever the physiological cause of de la Dugerie's death, it is clear that his contemporaries, from the sailors to the cook, the captain and the courts, believed that shame could kill. His case touches upon the layered facets of shipboard honor—access to special food, access to the dignity and social recognition of the officer's table, the legitimacy of his social and political position as an officer of the ship and the preservation of the body from particular forms of punishment and labor. Indeed, his case is particularly revelatory of the tight links between bodily security and status aboard ship, in the fact that he was accused of stealing fresh fruit and in the fact that his shipmates blamed his death on the demeaning treatment of him by the captain

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[474] "Chagrin" is a tricky word to translate in part because of shifting connotations in French, English and across the centuries, but based on its usage in this and other cases, it seems to be used in particular in relation to psychological pain.

[475] Sentence against Emmanuel Millon de Villeray, November 20, 1773, ADLA B 4958.

[476] Captives from the Bight of Benin were generally traded in smaller groups and forced aboard slaving ships shortly after purchase.

[477] They were used in sacrifices, and Melville Herskowits mentions their association with stubbornness among twentieth-century Dahomeans. French Naval officer Dralsé de Grandpierre described Ouidah in the eighteenth century as "very cultivated" with bananas, coconuts and other fruits, as well as many goats, cattle, elephants, pigs and chickens. Sieur Dralsé de Grandpierre, *Relation de Divers Voyages faits dans l'Afrique dans l'Amerique & aux Indes Occidentales* (Paris: Claude Jombert, 1718), 164; Robin Law, "Posthumous Questions for Karl Polyani: Price Inflation in Pre-Colonial Dahomey" *Journal of African History* 33 (1992), 401, 406-7; Herskowits, vol. I, 184-6.

[478] Allison G. Stewart, "Man's Best Friend? Dogs and Pigs in Early Modern Germany" in *Animals and Early Modern Identity*, ed. Pia Cuneo (New York: Routledge, 2016) 21-24.

and lieutenants.[479] While eighteenth-century seafarers would not have known it, bananas do have enough vitamin C to prevent scurvy, and they could provide other vital nutrients missing from the standard sailors' fare.[480] Fresh meat, also prepared liberally for major officers, while crewmen relied primarily on salted meat, tasted better and contained more nutrients, including small amounts of vitamin C. Status aboard ship manifested in the body. Captains and major officers had access to better, fresher food, cleaner quarters and clothing. While no man was safe from epidemic disease or dysentery aboard ship, scurvy was generally a sailors' ailment that rarely struck the officer class. The captain decided when sailors and *officiers mariniers* could eat fresh meat and fruit, or drink wine and eau-de-vie, and notably, all of these surface in cases of mutiny, slave revolt and theft. Major officers were also empowered to inflict pain on their subordinates' bodies and to humiliate them socially in order to compel obedience. In this way, care for the body through alimentation and through medicinal practices lay at the crux of the construction of the social body at sea.

Healers: Surgeons, Priests and Cooks

In a setting where status was so deliberately and immediately embodied, through access to adequate provisions and through the exercise of violence, surgeons, priests and cooks were the go-betweens, men who could redeem the status of ailing seafarers who were falling into decline, victim to the system of ranks that placed them at the bottom. This final set of intermediaries fits uneasily in the tripartite division of seafarers. Surgeons, priests and cooks all performed labor that linked them to men across classes. While surgeons and priests enjoyed the rank of major officer, they were often paid less than the mate or carpenter (as shown above); while priests appear as the beneficiaries of sailors' wills, surgeons as the caregivers for the ill, they also appear with frequency as isolated members of shipboard society. While they ranked among the major officers, court cases often reveal their acute anxiety over status, as well as their propensity to be ostracized, dishonored, drinking to excess and at times suffering from suicidal impulses.

Both were required by law on these voyages, although ship owners and captains often filled only the surgeon's post, embarking the ship without a priest.[481] The surgeon earned significantly higher pay, particularly aboard slaving ships, a reward for his expected efforts to protect and maintain, as much as possible, the health of the crew and any captives on board.[482] He boarded the ship with medical manuals, his personal tools and a box of tinctures and simples, from rhubarb to special oils, provided by the ship owner for the treatment of common ailments like dysentery and scurvy, fevers and injuries. Early in the century, surgeons onboard may have been examined by fellow surgeons at port, their supplies inspected, and at least in some cases,

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[479] The bananas aboard the *Aimable Jeannette* may have been intended for the captives, as slaving captains often bought them alongside other African foodstuffs to supplement provisions for the Middle Passage. However, it was not uncommon for crewmen and officers alike to indulge in fresh fruit at ports of call.

[480] While Lind demonstrated that lemon and orange juices could cure scurvy in 1748, other remedies and preventatives continued to circulate until the nineteenth century, and the root cause of scurvy, a deficiency in vitamin C, would not be discovered for another century. Mustakeem, "'I Never Have Such a Sickly Ship Before'", 483-5.

[481] It was very difficult to recruit priests on such long and dangerous voyages. In addition, Protestants who composed large but dominant minorities among ship owners, surely had little interest in seeking out and paying the salaries of catholic priests onboard. Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes*, 421-424. Perry Viles, "Slaving Interest in the Atlantic Ports" *French Historical Studies* 7, no. 4 (Autumn, 1972): 536-8.

[482] Haudrère, *La Compagnie française des Indes,* 425-8. Sheridan, "The Guinea Surgeons on the Middle Passage", 601–625.

they kept careful records of the treatments they provided for those onboard, but they had no standard training. Only in the second half of the century, as part of the state's more general push to create schools dedicated to the maritime professions, did the Marine establish hospital schools in Toulouse and Brest, and professional surgeons published and debated their medical theories in treatises and submissions to the Académie.[483] Like the captain, the surgeon's position required certification, registered in the admiralty court, through an examination by experienced professionals in the field. Ships with especially large crews and slaving ships had second and sometimes third surgeons, who ranked among the sea officers and earned half the salary of the first surgeon in general.[484] Men relied upon surgeons for care, and for their ability to bring health crises onboard to the attention of the captain. Likewise, the captain relied upon the surgeon's expertise to guard against costly delays due to sickly crewmen and against unexpected loss of life among the captive men, women and children on slaving ships. This expertise, in reality, could do little to diminish loss of life, and death rates remained remarkably high over the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, they were more often than not highly valued men among their shipmates.

The priests who embarked on long distance voyages generally had few other options, though a few might have felt a calling to this dangerous and often thankless job. Even with possible proceeds from smuggling, merchants and even the *Compagnie des Indes* could never quite offer enough of a salary to attract priests to months spent in filthy conditions, risking death by disease far from the few emerging comforts of eighteenth-century life in France.[485] Add to this the dwindling number of men entering the priesthood over the eighteenth century, and the relative concentration of French Protestants among merchants, ship owners and (likely) captains, and the difficulty and disinterest in providing priests for every long distance voyage becomes fairly clear.[486] When they did embark, priests could build strong relationships with their congregation on board. Dying men in their testaments occasionally expressed deep gratitude for the care and spiritual comforts provided by the almoner, some leaving relatively large portions of their worldly possessions on board to these priests.[487] In other cases, the bonds seem to have

[483] Among many others: Henri-Louis Duhamel Du Monceau, *Moyens de conserver la santé aux equipages des vaisseaux* (Paris: H. L. Guerin & L. F. Delatour; Thomas d'Aquin, 1759); Étienne Chardon de Courcelles, *Mémoire sur le régime végétal des gens de mer* (Nantes: Brun l'aîné, 1781); Antoine Poissonnier-Desperrières *Mémoire sur les avantages qu'il y auroit à changer absolument la nourriture des gens de mer* (Paris: Impr. Royale, 1771).
[484] The Reglement du 5 Juin 1717 specified that one surgeon was required for crews of less than 50 men, and two surgeons required with crews of more than 50 men. See Valin, *Nouveau Commentaire*, 470-473.
[485] Historians point to a "consumer revolution" in eighteenth-century Europe, which allowed families to invest in an expanding catalogue of popularly available (and newly affordable) comforts, luxuries, and fashionable goods. Roche. McKendrick, Brewer, and Plumb, *The Birth of a Consumer Society* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1982). Annik Pardailhé-Galabrun. John Brewer and Roy Porter, eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (New York: Routledge, 1993). T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford UP, 2004). Jan de Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the present* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2008). Michael Kwass, *Contraband: Louis Mandrin and the Making of a Global Underground* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014).
[486] Jean Delumeau, *Catholicism Between Luther and Voltaire: a new view of the Counter-Reformation* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1977), 221. Viles, "Slaving Interest" 536.
[487] Michel Le Fevre left all his possessions aboard ship to the almoner. Testament of Michel Le Fevre, April 22, 1714, Enquetes et Procedures de L'Amirauté, Minutes des Sentences, Amirauté de NantesADLA B 4759.

been worldlier, as when a priest and ensign deserted a ship of the *Compagnie des Indes* in 1768.[488]

Both priests and surgeons seem to have found themselves caught in between ranks. As described above, they represented the interests of the merchants and major officers, as well as those of the sea officers and sailors; which may help explain animosities that at times arose against them. The admiralty court records reveal surgeons who demanded (or stole) more than their captain was willing to offer, many who testified against their captain on behalf of a crewman, and a few who deserted with ensigns or sailors.[489] Punishments by the major officers could be extreme, as aboard the *Flore* in its 1741 voyage to Senegal, Gorée Whydah and Martinique, where a second captain beat the second surgeon for delaying in responding to his orders, leading to the death of the surgeon.[490] However, surgeons also at times colluded with the captain to extract personal profit from supplies dedicated to the crew.[491] It seems probable that their independent expertise and their professional position, which called them to serve merchants, officers and crew, allowed them particular leeway in the transoceanic voyage, but also opened them to critique from all sides.

Cooks, in contrast, worked at the center of sailors' social lives; they cared for the ill with specially made broth and meat, and at mealtimes, lively crowds surrounded the galley as cooks worked the stove. They were at once implicated in all levels of seaborne life, though they were paid little and ranked low, most often among domestics in the rollbooks. Philippe Haudrère terms these men "auxiliaries." However, I argue that they lay at the crux of seaborne social life. At sea, where social order and bodily security were tied so tightly, these men mediated others' access to health, dignity and belonging aboard ship.

Cooks, chefs and bakers were at the center of shipboard life in many ways. Generally hailing from maritime regions and major ports, they represented a relatively hodgepodge group. Many were older, as far as seamen went, in their thirties or even forties, while most sailors were in their twenties. While the overwhelming majority of cooks were white Frenchmen, Black cooks (and sailors) were not unknown. Eighteen-year old Laurent Scipion, a Black man from Senegal, embarked aboard the *Comte d'Argenson* as a cook for 15 *lt* per month on its voyage to Senegal, India and the Mascarenes in 1749.[492] The cook aboard the *Ville d'Archangel* in 1776, was Pedre, an enslaved man belonging to the ship's supercargo, Jasper Coen of Amsterdam.[493] The position of cook seems to have been one viewed as particularly unskilled, as evidenced by captains' propensity to order sailors and *officiers mariniers* to tend to those duties when a cook fell ill or

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[488] While we cannot know what motivated these desertions, it was more likely a desire to escape a dreadful voyage than a deep devotion to God. Proces verbaux des déserteurs de differents batimens, 1768-1773 Documents relatifs aux équipages, Documents divers, SHD-L 2P 71-6. On aumoniers see: M. C. Varachaud, "La Formation des aumoniers de la Marine du Roi Soleil" *Revue d'histoire de l'Église de France* (1994), 65-83. Alain Cabantous, *Le Ciel dans la mer: Christianisme et civilisation maritime, XVI-XIXe siecle* (Paris: A. Fayard, 1990), 222-3, 234-5.

[489] Procès verbaux des déserteurs de differnets batimens, 1768-1773, SHD-L 2P 71-6.

[490] This was not an isolated occurance. The surgeon aboard the *Tigre* and many others also complained to the court of excessive, persistant abuse by their captains. Procédure, Sr François Nicard Chirurgien de Navire demandeur et accusateur c/ Sr Paulaine Dubignon Capne du Navire *Le Tigre*, 1778, Minutes Criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4962. Declaration de Jean Nechagu, chirurgien sur *le Mars de Bordeaux*, 1737, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6 B 1244 (1737); Procedure: *La Flore* de la Cie des Indes, 1743, Minutes criminelles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 248.

[491] Procedure contre Capitaine Dufay de *La Marianne de Bordeaux*, 1702, Procédures Criminelles, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 1107.

[492] Rôle du *Comte d'Argenson* (1749-1751) SHD-L 2P 34-I.18, A.S.H.D.L.

[493] Rôle de la Ville d'Archangel (1776-1778) SHD-L 2P 47-II.7, A.S.H.D.L.

died, with no need for training. The job was also one of low status, as *officiers mariniers* and even chefs found it demeaning to be asked to cook for the crew. The widow of one chef claims he died of shame, after he was beaten for refusing to prepare food for the crew.[494] In contrast, the work of preparing food for the captain's table implied particular skill, as suggested by the array of cookware and serving ware for the captain's table, and a certain degree of status and honor through proximity to the officers and their finery. Several chefs who died in the 1730s had wigs, and at least one died with a "livre de raison," a portable writing desk, and a set of seven bonnets, perhaps originally intended for sale in the Caribbean.[495] On ships sailing from Nantes, chefs and bakers were generally classed as *officiers non-mariniers*. Cooks appear less frequently in the roll books, with some roll books listing no cooks or *cuisiniers*. Nevertheless, someone had to tend the fire, alot the meat, beans, lard and grain for the day, and quite literally stir the pot to keep it from burning. This suggests that in many cases the appointment was informal. When *coqs* did appear in the rolebooks, they were usually *matelots coqs*, sailors or novices who served as cooks for the crew. On slave ships, another cook, likely another sailor, would have prepared food for captives aboard the ship. While cooks were paid on par with sailors, *cuisiniers* often earned marginally more. Chef Louis Frerot de Codbec earned forty *lt* per month, while the ship's baker and sailors earned thirty on the *Parentiere,* sailing from Nantes to St. Domingue in 1770, which seems to have been fairly typical.[496] On ships of the *Compagnie*, the primary distinction between *cuisiniers* and *coqs* was their class, as their pay was often identical, around fifteen *lt* per month, which was right within the average pay for sailors as well. Nevertheless, *cuisiniers* of the *Compagnie* were consistently categorized as *domestiques*, or servants, and cooks (*coqs*) were ranked among sailors.

Whatever their rank, their role placed cooks and chefs at the heart of the social worlds of the ship, whether in the forecastle, the social gathering place of sailors and *officiers mariniers* or adjacent to the *grand chambre* where officers gathered to strategize and socialize. They were astute witnesses to the goings-on onboard. One *cuisinier*, who cooked for the officers aboard the *Duc d'Harcourt*, took notes on the unusual trading activity of the captain, tracking his repeated suspicious stopovers in Ile-de-France and Bourbon, recounting his near failure to trade for slaves in Angola, and detailing his alleged theft of captive women and children from the ship's account.[497] Cooks were also responsible for maintaining the health of the crew and the alimentary distinctions of officers aboard ship.[498] When men fell ill, it was up to the cook or *cuisinier* to prepare bouillon, meat and other special foods to restore their health. When they obtained fresh meat, the cook or *cuisinier* prepared it for consumption. Bakers secured fresh

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[494] Informations contre Le Terrier, capitaine du *Duc d'Harcourt*, 1751, Informations, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B 883.

[495] The proceeds from the auction, around 65 *lt*, were to be distributed to his mother, Marie Dodin, and his widow, Marie Anne Savatur. Probate auction for the possessions of Jan Salmon aboard the *Postillon de Nantes*, March 21, 1733, ADLA B 4983.

[496] Roll book of the *Parentiere*, captained by Jacques Brochard, 1770, Rôles d'armement, Quartier de Nantes, ADLA C 1263, n. 49.

[497] This cook, it is claimed, was beaten severely when the captain discovered that he had kept this record. This case also suggests a differential in honor between chefs and cooks, as this chef refused to cook for the crew. His widow claims he died of shame. Informations contre Le Terrier, capitaine du *Duc d'Harcourt*, AD33 6B 883 (1751).

[498] It is worth noting that eighteenth-century chefs enjoyed higher status than common cooks, as they prepared the more delicate fare for the captain's table. One chef claimed to have felt shamed by being ordered to prepare food for the crew. However, many ships embarked only one cook, suggesting that he was responsible for preparing both a rough soup for the crew and finer meals for the officers. Informations, Procédure contre Le Terrier sur le *Duc d'Harcourt*, 1751, AD33 6B 879.

bread and fresh meat for the men onboard, and in doing so, they secured the bodies of the seamen and demonstrated the stability of the social order of the ship.

One case demonstrates this defense of health, status and social order at work. *Cuisinier* Pierre Ridard was either exceptionally unlucky or exceptionally forthright in his defense of his prerogatives aboard the ship. Ridard had already lost his left eye to the abuse of a captain a decade earlier, when he embarked on the *Bourbon de Nantes* in 1742.[499] On this voyage, he was hit so hard, he was temporarily blinded in the other eye. This time, the abuse came at the hands of second lieutenant Le Febvre and the captain, Sieur Mechen. It was the feast of Marymas, the ship moored at Saint-Domingue, and the officers had finished their meal of freshly caught fish, which Rirdan had prepared for their dinner. As the twilight faded into night, Captain Mechen noticed the galley's fires were still alight, a fire risk and an activity prohibited by law. However, when lieutenant Le Febvre arrived at the galley to order Rirdan to extinguish the flames, the cook refused. Rirdan argued that the fire must remain lit, so that he might prepare bouillon at a moments' notice for the second captain, who was sick. According to the ship's pilot and other witnesses, Le Febvre fell upon Rirdan viciously, kicking him and beating him with his fists until his cries awoke the second captain from his sickbed, and he came to Rirdan's defense, brandishing a stick "as big as his arm" in order to bring the lieutenant to heel.[500] This was not simply a misunderstanding between two men, a case in which a cook forgot to dampen the fire; it follows a broader pattern. Conflicts between the major officers, most notably, captains, second captains and lieutenants, were among the most common aboard mercantile vessels in the eighteenth century, and cooks often stood at the center, as guardians of the established order. Lefebvre very likely coveted the position of second captain, perhaps even welcomed the prospect of the man's demise through illness. Although unstated in Rirdan's plea to the court or in the testimony of witnesses, Rirdan's adamant refusal of Lefebvre's order to put out the fire suggests firstly that he questioned the lieutenant's authority to make such a command, much like Herian above. Secondly, it suggests that he felt his defense of the second captain's health was paramount.

Contemporaries saw broth and fresh meat as the primary tools for fighting scurvy and other ailments. Instructions to captains on voyages to the East Indies, often plagued by scurvy because of their extraordinary length, noted where to find tortoises, the preferred meat for this purpose. Marias Dufresne was instructed to stop at Ascenscion, because the tortoises found there are "a sovereign remedy for scurvy and for many other ailments"[501] In his treatise on maritime medicine in 1786, ship's surgeon G. Mauran suggests that "the custom of giving light soups and broth during fever is so prevalant, and so widespread among seamen, that a sailor is no sooner attacked by fever, that for want of fresh meat, the cook will kill a chicken, which he puts in a pot to make broth." Mauran himself rejected this custom but claimed that surgeons "do not dare rid themselves of it" for fear that, should a sailor die after being denied broth, they would be held responsible for that death.[502] Most ships' surgeons took a practical approach to this simple,

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[499] His captain hit him at a cabaret in Marseilles in 1733 after months of abuse at sea. The captain of the *Maure* was convicted. Procédure, Pierre Ridart abord *le Maure,* 1733-1734, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4942.

[500] Procedure, Pierre Ridard contre Sieur Le Febvre, March 30, 1743, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4949.

[501] Instruction de mr Marias Dufresne sur la navigation en France, 17??, Correspondance, Compagnie des Indes, ANOM C/2/278 no. 116.

[502] One can only imagine seamen's reactions to Mauran's proposal that men sick with fever should submit to a "severe" diet of only fresh water or tea, in order to limit the putrafaction processes in the body. This rather ill-

soothing food for the ailing men aboard ship, and for most seamen, the denial of broth evoked specters of ghoulish intent. Sailors aboard the *Sirenne* in its 1713 voyage to Martinique implied that their captain harbored murderous sentiments, when he allegedly denied broth to a cooper, bedridden from the physical abuse he had suffered at the captain's hands.[503] In his self-defense, the captain argued that "he had ordered the cook to have great care for them," underlining the central place of cooking in the language of care at sea.[504] Aboard the *Bourbon de Nantes*, Pierre Rirdan's insistence on keeping a fire in the galley after hours, simply to prepare broth, further testifies to this belief in the curative powers of broth, as it does to the belief in the unique responsibility of the cook to maintain the health of his shipmates.

The work of cooks and bakers reached beyond the simple care of ailing bodies; their work could uphold the legitimacy of the captain's authority on board by providing the right kinds of food to the right people. Through their discerning preparation of feasts for officers and soup for crewmen, they were the workers' whose labor most directly and regularly underlined social differences aboard ship and mediated access to luxuries and to foods attributed with medicinal properties. Like the bakers of eighteenth-century France, food-workers on board were the most direct contacts between the magistrate, as the guardian of his subjects and the social body, and the men they served. Their work thereby carried political significance beyond the simple matter of feeding the crew. The political cadence of food-preparation aboard ship comes into even greater clarity in a libel case against baker Jean Leytour aboard the slave ship, the *Roy de Cabinde* in 1767. According to all witnesses, Jean Leytour told all who would listen in the easy hours after the ship's arrival in Cap François that the ship's lieutenant, Sieur Lagoanere, had attempted to bribe the baker into tipping a slim envelope of white powder into a soup, which was intended for the captain, officers and African courtiers gathered at Angola for the slave trade. Leytour claims that he poured the suspicious powder surreptitiously into the sea, rather than poison his captain or challenge the formidable and sinister (in his telling) Lagoanere. When the lieutenant died along the Middle Passage, Leytour felt he could divulge his scandalous power play. Whatever the truth of this tale, which Leytour reaffirmed under questioning from the captain and officers, it identifies a malicious and transgressive political actor, Lagoanere, identifies poison as the means of his illegitimate political action, and places the baker at the center of the shipboard conflict and the safeguard against this transgression of political order.

Poisoning had long been associated with witchcraft in early modern Europe, the tool of illegitimately empowered agents of the devil and the method of disrupting holy and natural order.[505] While witchcraft was officially decriminalized in late seventeenth-century France, poisoning surfaced in allegations against supposedly malevolent political actors, and became a particularly potent fear for white colonists in the Caribbean .[506] A mere decade before the *Roi de*

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advised program was based upon the theory that food decomposed inside the body, creating poisons. J. Worth Estes, "The Medical Properties of Food in the Eighteenth Century" *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* vol. 51, 2(April, 1996), 140-141; M. G. Mauran, *Avis aux gens de mer, sur leur santé. Ouvrage nécesaire aux Chirurgiens-navigans, & à tous les Marins en général, qui se trouvent embarqués dans des Bâtimens où il n'y a point de Chirurgiens* (Marseilles: Jean Mossy Père & Fils, 1786), 41.

[503] Informations contre Bertrand Rozé, capitaine de la *Sirenne*, March 4, 1715, AD33 6B 1152.

[504] Interrogatoire du . . . Daniel Bertrand, July 12, 1715, AD33 6B 1152.

[505] On "political sorcery" as a suspected form of rebellion in the minds of early modern theorists, see Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2006), 60-61, 147-9.

[506] Brian P. Levack, "The Decline and End of Witchcraft Prosecutions" in *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, ed. Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Levack, and Roy Porter (London: Continuum International Publishing, 1999), 1-93, 52.

Cabinde set sail for Angola, Puerto Rico and Saint-Domingue, Makandal, an African who had escaped slavery in Saint-Domingue, was accused of a mass poisoning attempt as the first stage in a wide-scale revolt against whites in the colony. Approximately 6000 people's deaths were attributed to poisoning from 1756 to 1758, though they were more likely the result of the consumption of fungus-ridden flour, due to the short supply of food during the British blockade of the Seven Years War. Nevertheless, a panic set in among colonial authorities, and thirty people were executed for poisoning by early 1758.[507] Captain Kanon, and likely many of his officers and crew, had surely heard tell of Makandal and the poisoning crisis. Kanon himself had captained one of the first slaving voyages to St. Domingue after the war, departing from Bordeaux just over one month after the signing of the Treaty of Paris. Although several years had passed since the height of the panic, the fears still permeated white society.[508] This particular crisis occurred amidst a more general atmosphere of suspicion and fear of poisoning plots, many of which cast suspicion on enslaved people in domestic service.[509] The common occurrence of food workers in poisoning accusations suggests that some domestic workers did seek to poison their enslavers and that this proximity and access provoked a discomfort and fear among enslavers; it also suggests that contemporaries recognized the fact that cooks and other domestic workers held power over food, the stuff of sustenance and status. While Leytour's role in this alleged conspiracy was to foil the poisoner's plans, it is clear that his direct role in food preparation made him an ideal and perhaps necessary accomplice for an aspiring poisoner. Through his account of his own refusal to comply, albeit secretly by pouring the powder overboard, Leytour figures himself as the savior of political order aboard the *Roy de Cabinde*, the man who safeguarded the food and thereby the wellbeing of the commanding officers against the malign plots of an overambitious subordinate.

Strikingly, the second lieutenant of the *Roi de Cabinde*, twenty-three-year-old Gabriel Guilhem, makes his own accusation against Leytour. He tells the court that Lagoanere had in fact uncovered "fraud" by the baker, when he ordered the bread to be weighed and found it wanting, given the amount of flour provided for each loaf. Guilhem is the only witness to give this testimony (even the captain is silent on this case), but he states that the lieutenant beat Leytour severely as punishment. This was a different kind of violation, an accusation of the deliberate deprivation of the crew, with the implication that Leytour was skimming flour for his personal profit. Given the political potency of bread in eighteenth-century France, where its fair pricing was seen as a sign of good government order (and deviations from that pricing seen as signs of corruption and exploitative conspiracies), and given the salience of bread aboard ship as a sign of good faith and government between the captain and his crew, baking a light loaf was no minor offense. It could amount to a breach of trust between the captain and crew. Significantly, no other complaints surface in the court case regarding the weight or quality of bread. Nevertheless, this accusation seems an adroit parallel to Leytour's accusation of attempted poisoning. In both, the baker stands at the center. While he possessed none of the protections or powers of officers, while he could easily be subjected to severe corporal punishment, his preparation of proper food maintained order and trust between captain, officers and crewmen.

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[507] Diana Paton, "Witchcraft, Poison, Law and Atlantic Slavery", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 69 (2012), 253-254.

[508] The *Intrépide*, set sail from Bordeaux on March 12, 1763, and arrived in St. Domingue in January of 1764. Voyage 31526, slavevoyages.org, accessed 11/9/2022.

[509] Sasha Turner Bryson, "The Art of Power: Poison and Obeah Accusations and the Struggle for Dominance and Survival in Jamaica's Slave Society", *Caribbean Studies*, 41 (2013), 61–90.

The accusation of poisoning gave a name to the alleged avid ambition of the lieutenant and identified that ambition as illegitimate and malevolent. Like sorcery, poison was the tool of one who seeks selfish gain through the destruction of social and natural orders. As the next chapter will highlight, serious plots against a ship's captain manifested most often among the major officers. This was even more the case in the slave trade, where the lieutenant or second captain often took charge of the ship for long periods, while the captain conducted trade on land, and where the financial benefits accorded to the captain so dramatically outweighed the compensation of all his subordinates. The rumor spread by Leytour lays bare the spirit of competition between major officers and unveils the place of the cook as the mediator, the safeguard that prevented the outbreak of catastrophe, that mollified the potential danger of rivalries onboard.

The daily routines of work, food and sleep wore on over the months these men spent at sea and divided men between those who ate at the captain's table and the men who perched on bollards, between those who wore swords and those who wore rags, between those who ate fresh poultry and those who ate bread and lard, and between those whose wine ration was tightly controlled and those who indulged freely in liquor. Nevertheless, the lines of division between these two groups were inconstant and moveable; as seen above, *officiers mariniers* could aspire to the captain's table on some ships, and while a general hierarchy of pay pertained, mates and carpenters could out-earn certain major officers, while a second mate, though classed among the *officiers mariniers*, could earn less than some sailors.

In this moving world, there was a distinct anxiety over rank, suggesting that despite a historiographical impression of an immobile society, the social order at sea was anything but secure. The compression of the social world aboard ship, compounded with the deadly stakes of status-loss, made the preservation of status and even personal advancement an imperative for many who sought their livelihoods at sea. In addition, the wealth of captains and major officers was increasingly conspicuous and quite literally within the physical reach of seamen lower officers, whether through probate auctions or through career advancement. Men at sea were constantly at work to secure and advance their station, and at risk of social decline, from the *mousses*, desperate to demonstrate their inclusion in the rank of seamen and elevation above the rank of captive, to the mate who strove to protect his distinction from crewmen, to the lieutenant provoked to rage by the impertinence of an *ecrivain*. The ship contained a collection of men and boys of varied social origin, where a *mousse* might be the son of an officer, and a lieutenant of noble origins might serve a captain of a merchant family. The spatial compression of the ship exaggerated the potential for conflict, as time and space were severely curtailed; the display of status was necessarily constricted to food, clothing, and command, and for one subjected to humiliating treatment, there were few ways to redress or escape his shame. Moreover, status, honor and humiliation were issues of life and death at sea, their immediacy compounded by the spatial compression of the ship. Humiliation and ostracism could precipitate bodily decline, both through the psychological pain induced by the insult and by the bodily abuse and deprivation it precipitated. Similarly, with fewer opportunities to display and enact status through grandiose estates or social gatherings, where even the captain's outstanding personal wealth had to fit in the confines of his cabin, the bearings of the body, the wig, the stockings, the clothing, all took on exaggerated weight as social signifiers, as did the state of the body.

While brute force functioned throughout the century as a means of controlling the seaborne population, the cases described above hint at differing registers and languages of violence at work. In cases involving an officer beating a subordinate, the normative language is one of

corporal discipline, in which the master of a household was empowered to physically assault his wife, children and servants according to his discretion and within common norms; beating with open hands, hits to the stomach, lashing with a switch were all allowed, whereas a disfiguring hit to the face or the use of a cat-o-nine-tails or weapons used against the captives and slaves transgressed norms of behavior.[510] What emerges through a close reading of this violence is not a single violence bearing down upon all subordinates onboard, but a clear differentiation of the forms of suffering a person could be expected to endure at sea. William Miller describes "big H humiliation" as a sadistic and distinctly modern practice of subjecting the victim to an imposed status of humiliation, in which the abuser takes delight in showing that a person, who they know well is a person, is in fact subhuman. Jacques Belloncle was not a slave, but his second captain took pains to force him into the humiliation of seeing himself seen as one. This case suggests with greatest economy the stark division between crewmen and captives; captives were so far below the communal body of the seamen, that to be treated as one was dehumanizing and life-threatening. This sadistic humiliation operated in a broader field of status and fear of its loss. If the possession of status could protect a major officer from corporal discipline, it guarded a mate from austerity and potential nutritional deprivation, the sailor and the *mousse* from overwork, starvation, bodily decline and deadly violence. Notably, the rites and rituals that brought together seamen and officers, that articulated their social order and bonded the men together, celebrated their bondedness through the indulgence in and exchange of food and liquor.

Time Together

The previous section discussed the social divisions and groupings aboard ship. This section will address the feasts and festive occasions that brought crewmen and officers together as members of a collective community onboard. Special days aboard ship afforded the opportunity for crewmen and officers alike to feast, celebrate and cement the ties that bound them together.

On ships that sailed beyond the Tropic of Cancer or the equator, the most distinctive of these special days was the practice of Baptism of the Tropics, often termed "baptism of the sea," or "ceremony of the line" in French travel narratives. This practice, which seems to have been most common among French mariners, was an elaborate initiation ritual, led by sailors themselves upon the crossing of either the Tropic of Cancer, at 23 28' N. or the equator.[511] In the historiography of seafaring, sea baptism or equatorial baptism has largely been treated as a colorful illustration of sailors' festivities, a cathartic release from the monotony of the sea, a form of hazing and a rite of passage that transformed landlubbers into seafarers. Kieth Richardson and Henning Henningson have shown how the ritual could resolve the social paradox of newly-appointed officers in command of experienced sailors, through their subjection to the rule of common seamen for a day. However, there has been little attention to the historicity of the rite or its manifestations. Its specific forms illuminate the social structures that the ceremony

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[510] Susan Dwyer Amussen, "Punishment, Discipline, and Power: The Social Meanings of Violence in Early Modern England", *Journal of British Studies*, 34 (1995), 17-18.

[511] While not all travelers noted this ritual, those who do describe it as "habitual," and by 1614, the Dutch East India Company prohibited the ritual, though later promises to double alcohol rations if crews chose to forgo the ritual suggests that the prohibition was ineffective. Jaime Rodrigues, "A New World in the Atlantic: Sailors and Rites of Passage crossing the Equator, from the 15th to the 20th century" *Revista Brasileira de Historia*, 33, no. 65 (2013): 245.

(temporarily) inverted, and, in the case of eighteenth-century voyages, reveal the interplay of race and status on early modern oceangoing vessels.

The earliest descriptions of the rite come from the sixteenth century, noting prayers, coins tossed overboard and a meal of fish aboard the French vessel *Parmentier* in 1529. In his account of his 1556 voyage to Brazil, Jean de Léry described his shipmates "bound with ropes and plunged into the sea; or else their faces . . . blackened and besmeared with an old cloth rubbed on the bottom of the cauldron." Those who could afford it could purchase exemption from the rite with money, wine, or later, liquor.[512] These aspects of the rite were largely conserved. Though later renditions preferred submersion in an onboard basin of seawater to the risky practice of suspending a sailor off the yardarm, it remained common to demand payment from officers and passengers who sought to spare their dignity, to insist upon the submersion of all who did not pay, and even the blackening of faces seems to have been a general practice. While most references to the practices in logbooks and travel literature are brief, referencing simply that they had performed the "ceremony of the line," several very detailed accounts from the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century suggest that this was a very particular and carefully orchestrated structure to the rite, one that honed closely to other rites of professional initiation in early modern France. Notably, the first two accounts describe an equatorial baptism on ships destined for Siam and the East Indies in the late seventeenth century, the third describes a "Baptism of the Tropics" at the Tropic of Capricorn, about 23 degrees north of the equator, parallel with El Hierro in the Canary Islands. Notably, this third voyage was a destined for the slave trade at Ouidah. It seems likely that many seamen and their captains sought to limit raucous celebrations while captives were onboard. However, astoundingly, some slavers continued to celebrate the passage of the line even with a cargo of captives onboard.[513] I will return below to the implications of the ceremony in the context of the slave trade and aboard slaving ships, but first it may be useful to outline the early modern structure of the rite. The descriptions provided by travel literature evoke its complex theatrics.

The most senior members of the crew planned and led the ceremony. Several late-eighteenth century works of travel literature describe the *officiers mariniers* taking leading roles. On the 1686 diplomatic voyage to Siam, French diplomat Choisy wrote that the pilots were in charge of deciding the date for the ceremony, though they required approval from the major officers. The French Jesuit, Pierre Tachard, who led the scientific and missionary arm of the expedition described the ceremony as "an invention imagined by the mates, the pilots and the other *officiers mariniers* of the vessel, in order to have the money to buy refreshments for themselves and the crew."[514] Robert Challe sailed aboard the ship *L'Ecuiel*, bound for the East Indies, as a purser in

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[512] This form of sea baptism does not seem to have been most common. Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*, trans. Janet Whatley, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), 21; Kieth P. Richardson, "Polliwogs and Shellbacks: An Analysis of the Equator Crossing Ritual" *Western Folklore* 36, no. 2 (Apr. 1977): 155; Rodrigues, 242-243.

[513] See for example the *Venus* of Lorient, which traded for captives at Ouidah in late 1723 and early 1724 for the *Compagnie des Indes*. The seamen celebrated the rite on the same day as a captive man died of smallpox, while nearly four hundred captives were held aboard the ship as it crossed the equator on the passage to Martinique. The fact that ship's route would just barely dip below the equator for several days before sailing back north to the Caribbean. Bacheler (pilot), Journal de bord de la *Vénus*, March 14, 1724, Journaux de Bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/27, pièce 6.

[514] In this case, the officers delayed the ceremony one day out of respect for the Sabbath. Guy Tachard, *Voyage de Siam Des Peres Jesuites, Envoyés Par Le Roy, Aux Indes À La Chine. Avec Leurs Observations Astronomiques & Leurs Remarques de Physique, de Géographie, d'Hydrographis & d'Histoire. Enrichi de Figures* (Amsterdam: Pierre Mortier, 1688), 46-47; Choisy, 35.

1690. He remarked that "the mate . . . the bosun, the carpenters & other *officier mariniers* who had already passed the Line [on a previous voyage] presided over the ceremony" and marine officer Dralsé de Grandpierre lists the pilots as predominant players in the ceremony. [515] In other words, the rite positioned *officiers mariniers*, most notably those with nautical expertise, including the mate, carpenter, and pilots, at the top.

Choisy describes a carefully choreographed, if playful, ritual, which began in the early morning with a procession of experienced seamen, carrying "tongs, pincers, pots & cauldrons." At their head was a drummer whose face had been blackened with the soot from under the cauldron. Their "captain" was a trembling old man (an able-bodied seaman in disguise), who sang out, "It's a heavy load, the burden of eighty years!" The procession circled the deck three times before they came to rest at the foot of the foremast or near the capstan, where they had positioned a basin of seawater, three feet deep and four feet wide. Experienced seamen, their faces blackened too, climbed the rigging, so that the shrouds and maintop sails were "full of sailors who had made the voyage, all armed with buckets of water." Challe describes the humor of the scene on the 1790 voyage: "They were all dressed in the most grotesque way possible to laugh and make others laugh. The Mate impersonated everyone onboard, as much officers and soldiers as sailors, ships' boys and valets. He and the others blackened their faces and wore frightful beards." Dralsé de Grandpierre describes the men wearing sheepskin over their shoulders, with rags "in the guise of cravates,"[516] carrying "casseroles and cauldrons." Once gathered around the basin, one man, likely the pilot, held a book of maps or a chart of the globe, carefully wrapped in paper or cloth so as not to damage it during the ceremony. He wore a sailor's hooded coat, and "resembled a hermit by his clothing and a devil by his face," wearing a false rosary made of trucks (*pommes de racage*, large beads or balls used to facilitate the movement of yards along the mast) that hung from his neck down to his feet.[517] A thick cable formed his belt, tying closed his coat, and two knots in the mooring rope that wound round his body adorned his head like horns. His wig and false beard were made of a hundred strands of old rope. Beside him a sailor dressed in worn canvas, a bonnet of the same sat upon a barrel at a makeshift table, where "his *cornet*, his paper and a dish for the offerings" had been arranged.[518] "He resembled a village parish warden at his work," wrote Challes.[519] Starting at the top of the normal shipboard hierarchy of ranks, men called upon any among the captain, major officers, clergy and passengers who had never crossed the equator to come to the fore-mast. In the place of a bible, the warden offered them an atlas or map, where they placed their hand to swear to uphold the tradition of sea baptism on every future crossing, and submit their payment or be

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[515] Challe, 336-337.

[516] Dralsé de Grandpierre, 157.

[517] The *pommes de racage* attached to the *bigots*, or ribs of the parrel, by way of the *bâtard de racage*, or parrel-rope. William Falconer, "Parrel" in *An Universal Dictionary of the Marine: Or, A Copious Explanation of the Technical Terms and Phrases Employed in the Construction, Equipment, Furniture, Machinery, Movements and Military Operations of a Ship* (London: T. Cadell, 1769).

[518] Should the ship be making its first equatorial crossing, it underwent a baptism of its own. After the warden had been installed at his table, the *officiers mariniers* mounted the forecastle, and the carpenters took their axes on their shoulders and played out a drama of preparing to cut the spritsail-yard. The mate and other *officiers mariniers* then ran to fetch the purser (Challe himself) to "buy it back." The price was a half-pig for the crewmen's feast the following day and a vow to uphold the tradition of sea baptism forever after. Once these promises had been secured, the crew all cried "*Vive le Roi*," and the sea baptism of the men proceeded. Challe, 336-339.

[519] Challe, 336-339.

submerged in seawater, whether by being thrown into the basin, by the buckets of water held ready by the men aloft, or most often, by both.[520]

Those who could not pay in money, paid through their comic humiliation.[521] More commonly, a neophyte could offer his humiliation willingly, as a young soldier did on the *Ecueil*. Monsieur de la Chassée paid for all of the soldiers on the ship except for one, his personal servant and "the most clownish person of the company." This man, understanding the intent of his commander, immediately doused his hands in soot, then dashed to the bosun and rubbed the soot all over the man's face. The seamen in charge of the ceremony then chased the soldier down and blackened his own face "like a Moor," then dunked him in the basin, where they plunged him, his body "turned and turned again, and over and under and through and to the side." All the sailors threw their buckets of water at the man, and Challe remarked "one could not laugh more than we laughed at this spectacle of buffoon." Eventually, the men let him free, and he climbed out of the basin, soaking wet and "black like the Devil" and, with good humor, helped the sailors refill it. Finally, he approached de la Chassée on the forecastle, saying "By god, you made me get soaked and I made you laugh, so give me something to drink," and de la Chassée obliged with a cup of eau-de-vie and the Captain gave him a bottle of wine, which he took up with him into the rigging to drink with bread as he watched "the rest of the comedy." The ritual proceeded, and once all initiates had received their "baptism," all shipmates, with the exception of the captain and the clergy, joined in a water fight, dousing each other in the heat of the equatorial sun. Finally, the money in the dish was counted and stored, to be used to buy refreshments for the crew at the first landing (in this way, the conclusion of the rite was postponed until the men could enjoy the full fruition of their exchange), and seamen indulged in the donations in kind, namely eau-de-vie, around the mizzenmast.[522]

The *ceremonie de la ligne* enacted a playful drama; one can almost hear the laughter shaking down from the sailors at their perches in the rigging, as their captain-for-the-day made a mockery of the shipboard order, as they watched the raucous rite and as major officers were brought low, if only temporarily, forced to obey the command of mates, bosuns and pilots and to indulge the men in food and drink at their own expense. This hilarity depended on an adherence to the rules of the game, most importantly a spirit of reciprocity and playful exchange, moderated by the warden. When the crew aboard the *Ecueil* learned, to their great disappointment, that their captain had already crossed the equator, the major officers proceeded to mock the revelers, yelling out profanities, whistling and making faces. Once they had their fill of laughter, however, the captain consoled his crew with four *piastres*, or around twenty *livres tournois*, which the warden accepted with an affected air of gravity and grace.

Behavior and reputation outside of the ceremony shaped one's treatment as well, and seamen knew how to censure shipmates who had transgressed social norms. According to Challe, initiates received a humorous nickname, based on a real geographical place, when they placed their hand on the map and swore to uphold the ritual. One passenger, "who had a spirit like a demon" was named *le Ressac du Diable*, for an eddy in Saint-Domingue, and a woman who, rumor had it, "did not pass as a vestal virgin," was named "*le Cap Fourchu*," likely evoking the

[520] Challe, 338-9.
[521] One suspects that the crew found particular delight in extracting this payment from Lieutenant Bouchetiere, who had earned a reputation for his cruelty, ego and sullennesss. A crewmen, likely dressed in a comic costume of the officer, strutted the ship, wearing a mustache of soot in mockery of Bouchetiere's own finely-coiffed facial hair. Challe, 337.
[522] Challe, 341-343, 345.

image of spread legs, for a landmark in Newfoundland. In contrast, a "gallant" woman was nicknamed "*la Baye des Chaleurs*" for the entrance to the Saint-Laurent river in Canada. Similarly, the warden permitted the chaplain to be "baptized" on the poop deck (the highest deck of the ship), as a matter of respect, but refused such a dignified treatment for the much hated Lieutenant Bouchetiere who found himself mocked unrelentingly as he approached the warden's table and dropped an écu in the dish.[523] The warden gave him the unsubtle name, "*Île aux Rats*" for an island near Madagascar.[524]

Thus, sea baptism worked to cohere and police the shipboard community. It did so at a crucial time and place in the voyage, as the start of the voyage fell behind them and they faced the months ahead, cramped in the same ship until their arrival in overseas ports and, for most, their return home. Conducted in the midst of the doldrums, where weak winds could strand a ship, and where the entire crew could easily afford to abandon their posts, it offered respite from the boredom, heat and exhaustion of daily labor. More importantly, however, it underscored the significance of trust, balance and fair exchange between the fore and aft of the ship. From the start, the procession dramatized the integration of the ship into a single social body, while the participation of all free people onboard, through the payment of fees and liquor, through their oaths and through ducking in the basin, underlined their shared participation in a seaborne community and their shared commitment to the fair exchange the rite modeled.

The evocation of the visual language of the church—a procession around the bounds of the ship, the costumes of hermits and parish wardens, a text on which to swear an oath—these all echo landed festivities that also worked to cohere social or professional groups. Seventeenth-century initiations to *compagnonnages* parodied church baptism, and, like sea baptism, they included the swearing of an oath on an instrument of the trade and the giving of new, often vulgar, names.[525] The initiations of printers' journeymen into the Griffarins (a professional Company made up of journeymen) in sixteenth-century Lyons included the sprinkling of water on the head of the initiate; how much more fitting immersion must have seemed for the initiation of *gens de mer*. Men new to the Griffarians also treated their fellow journeymen to a banquet and paid an initiation fee. Luckily for the sailors and ships boys crossing the line for the first time, officers and passengers bore the burden of this cost. Unlike the initiation rites of journeymen, which by the seventeenth century had become highly exclusionary and secretive, sea baptism was a mass event, involving all aboard ship in initiating seamen, passengers and officers alike, though in slightly different forms.[526] "Neophytes," as Dralsé de Grandpierre terms them, could compose over half the crew onboard, and the rite demanded even passengers and major officers to pay or suffer ridicule in the baptismal basin. While many commentators acknowledged the impiety of the use of the term and ritual language of baptism, even the zealous Jesuit missionary Pierre Tachard contributed some coins to the collection plate, thereby securing his status as an initiate among the seamen. Notably, it seems that only seamen blackened their faces for the ritual. Finally, the oath had nothing to do with the working conditions and pay that lay at the center of oaths in landed *compagnonnages*, but only required the neophyte to promise to uphold the ritual on future voyages.

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[523] One sailor, perhaps the mate, drew Bouchetiere's moustache on his lip and strutted the deck in a mocking impersonation of the lieutenant.
[524] Challe, 343.
[525] Natalie Zemon Davis, "A Trade Union in Sixteenth-Century France" *The Economic History Review* vol. 19, 1 (1966): 60-61.
[526] Davis, "A Trade Union in Sixteenth-Century France," 67.

Sea baptism could also worked as a policing mechanism, by which seamen could air grievances, expose and correct transgressions of social norms. In this, it shares some similarities with the "rough music" and charivaris of early modern Europe.[527] E.P. Thompson suggests that there were four main provocations for "rough music" in early modern England. The first three deal with violations of sexual norms or norms of marital relations. However, the fourth names extraordinary violence against wife or children by the master of the house.[528] While marriage could not be the target of behavioral policing at sea (though remarkably Pernety recorded oaths to respect sailors' wives among those sworn by initiates on Bougainville's voyage to the Falkland Islands), seamen certainly concerned themselves with the appropriate application of patriarchal discipline. Sea baptism offered established seamen an opportunity to shame and harass shipmates, both high and low. If, aboard the *Ecueil*, Bouchetière and a woman of questionable reputation suffered rude nicknames for behaving outside the norm for the station, one can imagine that transgressive sailors could be subject to very rough treatment. According to Choisy, whipping of ships' boys to "make the wind come," discussed above, concluded the ceremony, though Challe disputes this. The soldier who blackened his hands and was turned round and round in the water may have moderated the severity of his treatment by embracing it with enthusiasm, but less good-humored boys and men may have endured worse, including near drownings as the crowd of seamen, armed with heavy kitchen utensils, plunged them repeatedly into the water. Notably, however, I have found no records of seamen's deaths as a result of rough treatment during the rite.

Most importantly, sea baptism dramatized the interdependence and exchange among shipmates. It functioned as a celebration of the trust garnered between masters and servants, officers and crew in the social body of the ship. With money and liquor, officers and passengers literally bought the good will of the seamen. Likewise, the seamen provided the officers with amusement, which the officers repaid with laughter and good-natured jests. The rite brought captain, officers, passengers and crew together, underlined their membership in a single society, as they traversed the waves. It is in this context that the blackening of sailors' faces requires particular attention.

Men at mischief often painted their faces black in European towns and villages. It hid their identity, made them difficult to see in the dark, and in general worked as a kind of mask, a persona to embody as they embarked on suspect or raucous behavior, whether theft, revolt, or mummery.[529] This language of mischief is perhaps alluded to by the descriptor of a blackened faces as devilish.[530] It is likely that this landed tradition spawned the seaborne one, and yet, it seems nearly unbelievable that such a tradition did not take on racial meaning, as the men traversed the boundary between North and South and into a realm populated by Black people and a climate which some of their contemporaries believed "blackened" the skin.[531]

It is difficult to imagine the scene of sea baptism aboard the *Vénus* in March of 1724, about four months after the ship departed from Mesurade with over four-hundred captives, in no small part because of carnivalesque atmosphere of the ritual must have troubled the extraordinary vigilance generally insisted upon by slaving captains, particularly when still in sight of land. The

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[527] Davis, "The Reasons of Misrule," 52.
[528] E. P. Thompson, "Rough Music Reconsidered", *Folklore*, 103 (1992), 3–26.
[529] Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, 139, 147-149; Thompson, "Rough Music Reconsidered," 17.
[530] Challe, 336-339.
[531] Voltaire, "Des singularités de la nature", in idem, *Oeuvres complètes*, 27: 184, quoted in *Anatomy of Blackness*,145.

predominance of alcohol and drunkenness as a primary component of the rite, particularly later in the day, would seem to create the perfect preconditions for revolt. Surely, slavers forced their captives below deck before the seamen donned their costumes, took up their kitchen instruments and began the day of ribaldry and drink. Others avoided this potential for disorder by opting for a Baptism of the Tropics in lieu of the equatorial baptism, celebrating the ceremony at the Tropic of Cancer (around 23 degrees North of the equator), prior to conducting the trade.[532] What did captives aboard the *Dauphin* make of the shouts, screams, laughter and noise that thundered above them as the ship steered away from Sao Thomé and out into the open ocean? Did the sailors hear their captives' own shouts and murmurings as they rubbed soot and oil over their faces and limbs? While the logbook for the *Vénus* only states that the seamen and officers completed the ceremony, without detailing its contents, it is all but certain that they blackened their faces according to tradition. Dralsé de Grandpierre describes sailors "painted black" aboard the *François* in 1713, with four-hundred and seventy captives from Ouidah held below deck. Challe remarked that the face blackening made the sailors look "like a Moor," and in his account of Bougainville's 1763 voyage to the Falkland Islands, Dom Pernety suggests that the face and body paint of sailors in the ceremony was used to construe its bearers as "savages." Notably, I have seen no evidence that the rite entailed a performance of stereotyped speech or behavior; this does not mean it did not happen as an accessory to the rite. Rather, the emphasis was on a ritual transformation, not a comedic performance. In donning the paint, the sailors evoked the tradition of "rough music" and mischievous masking in Europe, but also the image (if not the stereotyped speech or gestures) of the "savage," the human representation of the Southern Hemisphere. It is notable that "shellbacks," or seamen who had crossed the equator before, painted their faces black, while neophytes had it smeared on them only once they had completed the oath. All free people onboard were liable to be smeared with some blackening in the mock battle with water and soot that followed the ducking and swearing of oaths. Bearing black paint at the line signified one's knowledge of the nautical realm below the equator; it demonstrated one's belonging among the "shellbacks." However, it was also meaningful that this blackness was temporary, something that could be washed off to reveal the true nature of its bearer. The free white men who traveled below the equator could return, could cross again into the Northern realm, unburdened by the stigma of blackness. They laid claim to mastery over the Southern realm, while demonstrating that they were not truly "the savages" they held captive below deck.

Of course, there were Black seamen aboard eighteenth-century ships, all of whom would have participated in sea baptism. It is unclear what treatment they received, though it is difficult to imagine that racist jokes and abuse did not form some part of the rough rite. Aboard whaling ships in the nineteenth century, in which the man presiding over the ceremony as Old Neptune told the initiates "Never eat brown bread when you can get white—Never—a black woman when you can get a white one," underlining the explicitly racialized elements that wove through the practice, at least by that time and likely earlier.[533] We can only begin to imagine what the ritual painting of skin could mean to the individual Black man among his overwhelmingly white shipmates, or what it might have meant to wash the soot off. Unfortunately, I have found no accounts by Black men and no accounts that mention them. At the very least, it seems that the

[532] "Cejour la Ceremonie du Baptesme, cejour me suis trouvé par la latitude observée de 22d 16." *Le Dromadaire* would conduct its trade at Ouidah. Gabriel Richard Delamarre, capitaine, Journal de bord du *Dromadaire*, armé par la Compagnie des Indes, August 2, 1733, AN MAR/4JJ/70, pièce 25.

[533] Nancy Shoemaker, *Native American Whalement and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 55-56.

meaning and spirit of the rite must have depended heavily on context, with the rite itself predominantly one of inclusion but with great leeway to articulate through naming, through treatment or general play, the terms of difference.

The ritual of sea baptism underlines the spirit of reciprocity that held together a community of officers and seamen. Captives belonged only as a costume, a blackened face that signified place (the Southern Hemisphere), the rough and festive strangeness of the rite, and perhaps the upside-down world often evoked by European rites of this nature. While *officiers-mariniers* controlled the rite, they dressed as captives, the lowest class of people aboard ship. Ritually, it placed the bottom of the social order at the top, without risking the lives of enslavers or the economic fortunes of the voyage. In this, it suggests the particularly liminal place of captives aboard ship. As I have shown in chapter one, captives performed labor on the ship, their children were baptized, and their songs and voices, though overwhelmingly ignored in the historical record, would have predominated the soundscape onboard and testified to their social beings. Nevertheless, in the quintessential maritime initiation ritual, they could be present only figuratively, as sailors evoked their presence in order to more clearly delineate the lower bounds of dignity, rank and social belonging.

As seen in the numerous cases in this chapter, the social world of the ship in the eighteenth-century was motivated by a predominantly informal code of fair exchange, the currencies of which included labor and victuals, servitude and privileges, as well as humiliation and honor. It operated, at least until mid-century, akin to a household or workshop, with a master and a cascading set of skilled workers and servants, and corporal discipline, not wage decreases or firings, was the primary tool for maintaining order. While the terms of this exchange emphasized reciprocity, this did not imply equality. Rather, the amount and quality (of food, of liquor, of honor, of clothing and even of merchandise) due to a person varied by his rank. Even the price of sea baptism, whether in humiliation or in monetary cost, varied by rank.

As the century wore on, the terms of this exchange shifted increasingly towards reliance on money and the market to mediate status and social belonging. It is notable that in his account of the rite, Dom Pernety notes that it was called either the "baptism" *or* the "ransom," suggesting that by the middle of the century, the purchase of exemption from ducking had become increasingly common, and that the exchange, the treating of sailors by neophyte officers and passengers, was beginning to take on the tinge of coercive extraction.[534] Surely, those who sought to avoid the humiliation of being dunked in a basin of water had long found the cost burdensome. However, "ransom" suggests a more mercenary connotation than the "driots" or rights or entitlement cited by Dralsé de Grandpierre.[535] Dignity (and distinction from the crowd of revelers) could be purchased by those with money to spare.

While wealth and the market rose as a means of mediating status over the century, the stakes of status, and particularly its loss, remained extraordinarily high. As the next chapter will illustrate, this heightened experience of status, its concentrated manifestation in the body, and the isolation of seaborne men from landed social context converged with expanding access to the market. The spatial compression of the ship hindered the practices social distinction—no matter what degree of honor one possessed, there was no place more honored than the captain's table, and one's cabin, of necessity, adjoined those of major officers and offered few, if any, opportunities to demonstrate one's social elevation. Similarly, the markers of religious belonging

[534] Antoine-Joseph Pernety, *The History of a Voyage to the Falkland Islands made in 1763 and 1764, under the command of M. de Bougainville* . . . (London, T. Jeffreys, 1771), 31.
[535] Dralsé de Grandpierre, 157.

(and exclusion) were extraordinarily difficult to maintain, particularly as the risk of prosecution for religious crimes fell over the course of the century. Sailors and officers alike would increasingly make use of capitalist investment and personal relations of credit to secure and advance their status. Increasingly, their status, both within the hierarchy of seamen and officers and against that of the unfree shipboard population, was a matter of their participation in the market, their ability to purchase necessities, comforts and the trappings that secured their bodies, their health, and their dignity against the ravenous acquisitiveness of transoceanic trade.

Chapter 3. Let Them Eat Sugar: The Market and the Social Safety Net

In December of 1700, on their return voyage from Martinique to Nantes, the crew of the *Ange Gardien* approached the captain to demand bread. They had been at sea mere weeks, but the victuals were falling short, and the men were starving. Captain Moret replied that if they were hungry, they could eat sugar instead. The desperate men took him at his word. They cracked a hole, about the width of an arm, through the bulwark of the gunroom and into the barrels of sugar within. The crewmen and at least one passenger thrust their arms through the splintered wood time and again, and scraped away whatever their hands could carry. Over the following three or four days, they consumed pounds of sugar in lieu of bread and wine to assuage their hunger and guard their survival for the remainder of the voyage.[536] Like hundreds of men who followed them across the seas, these men had the literal goods at their fingertips as they starved. Their story underlines the deadly risks of mismanagement and the mercenary balance struck between merchandise and the stuff of life in the bowels of the ship. Taking place at the very start of the century, it is also an eerily prescient parable of the seamen's growing dependence on the market, as their status, social bonds and wellbeing increasingly depended on their ability to grasp enough global goods.[537]

The eighteenth-century maritime world depended upon exchange and conversion. The exchange of exotic goods, the trade in human beings, and the transformation of bounded things into elastic capital, propelled the hulking ships across the oceans. Within these wooden walls, women, men and children too bartered intimacies, expertise and goods to secure their safety and social standing. This chapter follows these exchanges between social groups onboard over the course of the century as reflections of relational patterns onboard. While the early decades of the eighteenth century were marked by the interplay of multiple intersecting sources of identification, status and political power, from professional groups to religious confession, aboard ship, by midcentury, material wealth and relation to the market had come to define seaborne community, solidifying the boundaries between captives and captors, and softening the salience of religious difference or affiliation. Recent scholarship, most notably by Charly Coleman, has uncovered the ease with which capitalism and Catholicism productively folded together in the eighteenth century through the cultivation of an "economic theology" that stressed "consumption and the pleasures of enjoyment, over delayed gratification." The miraculous was located, not in the turning of a renegade Huguenot's soul to God and the Roman Church, but in "the perpetual, endlessly creative expansion of the economic domain."[538] The material lives of and exchange practices of men at sea reflect this embrace of consumption and the fantasy of endlessly reproductive wealth, and these transformations carried significant

[536] I have attempted to discern how much sugar they ate, but the amount is only mentioned in the testimony of Joachim des Boullain, who claims they ate "un cent et demi", perhaps 150 livres of sugar (or one and a half quintals) over several days. Testimonies of Gabriel Yuon, cannonier on the Ange Gardien, and Joachim des Boullain, matelot on the Ange Gardien, Information faitte par le Siege general de l'amirauté de Nantes a Requeste d'Augustin Moret, Capitaine du Navire *l'Ange gardien* January 3, 1701, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4935. John J. McCusker, "Weights and Measures in the Colonial Sugar Trade: The Gallon and the Pound and Their International Equivalents," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 4 (1973), 599-624.

[537] Information, Augustin Moret, Capitaine du navire *L'Ange Gardien* de Nantes contre l'équipage, January 3, 1701, ADLA B4935.

[538] Charly Coleman, *Spirit of French Capitalism: Economic Theology in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021), 3-4.

implications for meanings of religious communion, the significance of conversion, and practices of exchange aboard ship.

Captive Africans were the earliest group aboard ship to be defined, at least by their enslavers, solely in terms of their relation to the market. However, crewmen and officers increasingly relied upon the construction of a web of market relations, credits, debts and wealth, to mediate social bonds, articulate status and secure their bodily and social safety. For captives, the creation of temporary spaces of autonomy required the navigation of these market bonds, in full recognition of their enslavers' desire to at once reduce them to interchangeable parts and to manipulate their very human capabilities, as companions, spies, translators, and guards. Bound together by their captivity and grief, they too built their own social worlds below deck, taking on duties of physical and spiritual care, and in many cases plotting and enacting revolt and escape from these bonds of ownership. While earlier chapters recovered the sources and dynamics of social solidarities within groups, this chapter will follow forms of exchange across them. It begins with religion, focusing on the early decades of the century, then moves to material exchange and its social effects above and below deck, focusing on the period after 1730.

The changes outlined in this chapter reveal shifting economic and social modes of relation at sea over the eighteenth century. As Natalie Zemon Davis has argued, drawing from Marcel Mauss and Karl Polanyi, the ascent of the market as the predominant sphere of exchange transformed social relations in early modern Europe.[539] Early in the century, seamen, officers and captains fulfilled complementary norms and obligations in the form of religious practice, discipline and spiritual care, food, shelter and labor. By mid-century, market exchanges had become the stuff of obligation, profit equated to necessity. Men in revolt demanded wages and access to profits. E. P. Thompson described bread riots in eighteenth-century England as a politically-informed, traditionalist movement to preserve social norms and obligations, "the moral economy of the poor."[540] Seamen too insisted upon their access to necessities, particularly medical care and adequate food, suggesting the erosion of these crucial elements of a captain's obligations to his crew. However, seamen were also eager adopters of market practices, and their reliance on the ship, particularly for the provision of medical care through the surgeon or cook, underlines the diminishment of other avenues of mutual obligation aboard ship. This following section traces the world of religious exchange aboard ship, and in particular the collaborative work of Catholics, both laymen and priests, to maintain orthodox practice and discipline at sea. It then turns to African religious practice and its deprivation aboard ship, and finally describes the fading of religious activity from the communal work of seamen and officers.

Religion: Communion and Commerce at Sea

The unsettled nature of the ocean called upon those at sea to re-articulate spiritual as well as social bonds, asserting anew their relationship to spiritual communities and spatialities grounded in landed life. However, this was not simply a project of extension, of stretching the geographic bounds of religious worlds. The world of the ship, and particularly the slave ship,

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[539] Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1944; 1957); Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies*, trans. by Ian Cunnison (London: Cohen & West Ltd., 1966); Natalie Zemon Davis, *The Gift in Sixteenth-Century France* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 6-10.

[540] E. P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century", *Past & Present*, 50 (1971), 79.

implicated new understandings of the numinous and the relation between social and spiritual order. Captive Africans, whose origins stretched across thousands of miles of coastline and as far into the continent, brought widely variant spiritual beliefs about the ocean. Some encountered the ocean for the very first time through their enslavement, while some had spent their lives on the water, as fishermen, sailors or simply swimmers. Kevin Dawson has surfaced a wealth of evidence of African swimmers and maritime workers in the eighteenth century. Asante people living around Lake Bosumtwi swam with reed traps, and by the late eighteenth-century, water provided refuge from processes of enslavement, as Tofinu people established a village on stilts in Lake Nohoué, protected from Dahomean slavers, and fugitives from slavery swam to freedom, establishing maroon communities on São Tomé, St. Vincent Island and the Sea Islands of South Carolina.[541] If many people in Africa and the diaspora used the water for physical and economic security and protection from the processes of enslavement, others, caught at sea with no hope of worldly refuge, found a dire escape from enslavement in self-drowning. For many, the water represented either a boundary between the living and the dead or the spirit realm itself, layering a deep spiritual meaning atop the thousands of acts of desperation in which men and women jumped to their deaths. This spiritual meaning must have resonated inconsistently among enslaved people aboard ship, among those who chose to end their worldly lives, and those who witnessed these attempts. Aboard the *Aigle,* which sailed from Senegambia in 1737, a mother placed her infant in another woman's arms before she jumped overboard and drowned herself in the sea. While we will never know where her thoughts turned in those final moments, her fragmentary story speaks to a deep ambivalence, to the social bonds she may have shared with at least one other on the ship, to the unbearable weight of intermingling love, pain and desperation. She had carried the ten-month old in the trek to the sea, protected her in the months in the disease-ridden warehouses at Gorée or at a fort along the Senegal River. She had nursed her and cared for her in the midst of intense suffering. As the ship departed from land, she could carry her no further. She could not bear to bring her along to the spirit realm, nor could she survive the violence of shipboard slavery or the prospect of witnessing her child's demise in the ensuing weeks. It seems that her shipmate continued to care for the infant, who died two weeks later.[542]

The devastation of this history, the immediacy of pain, can foreclose an examination of spiritual resonances. The archival documentation of enslaved life in logbooks and captains' reports constructs the 'tweendecks as a proto-social space, a space where terror and devastation broke whole people into atoms, animated by the violence of their oppressors or the bare will to survive. However, the archives also betray the limits of these processes of social destruction. Beyond the spectacle of violence is also a woman who took her shipmate's infant into her arms, sharing the burden of care in bondage. These women, like most women who embarked from Gorée, were likely of Wolof or Fulbe origin, and they likely shared in a belief common across West Africa that the dead would join departed friends and family.[543] Perhaps in her sorrow, this mother hoped to return to a realm of belonging, where she could make claims upon ancestors and deities to restore order to the world. While her thoughts are forever her own, undisclosed to the

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[541] Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*, 23-27.

[542] I have attributed a female gender to this infant, though the logbook gives no indication. This is simply to avoid the clumsy construction of "him or her," but please note that this may have been a male infant. Devastatingly, the logbook notes the age of each departed captive, including those of six infants who died onboard, who ranged in age from two months to eighteen months old. One five-year old girl also died on this voyage. Journal de bord, *L'Aigle*, July 9, 1737 and July 23, 1737, AN MAR/4JJ/29, pièce 46.

[543] William D. Pierson, "White Cannibals, Black Martyrs: Fear, Depression, and Religious Faith as Causes of Suicide Among New Slaves", *The Journal of Negro History*, 62 (1977), 150-151.

archive, they did not exist isolated from her history, from the five or more other nursing mothers onboard, from the hundreds of Africans held captive aboard the ship, or from the Catholic seamen who so callously witnessed her passing. Religious beliefs and commitments informed the experiences of captive women, men and children and informed their choices, constrained as these choices were by the dehumanizing processes of enslavement.

The shock and devastation of transoceanic enslavement, the dislocation from the realms in which familiar deities held greatest power, engendered deep spiritual anxiety for enslaved people. Most would have seen their circumstances in the context of spiritual forces acting in the world. The religious and cultural composition of any one ship could encompass people from a range of thousands of miles, whose linguistic and cultural diversity testified to the vast geographic reach of routes to the Atlantic slave trade. Ships sailing from Senegambia carried men, women and children of Bambara, Fulbe, Wolof, Malinke, Sereer, Sonninke or Serrakole origins, and mostly spoke related but not mutually intelligible languages. Most would have followed traditional, local spiritual practices, Fulbe and Mandinka peoples were most likely to be Muslim. Captives from the Bight of Benin were primarily of Yoruba and Ewe Fon origins, carrying shared voodoo traditions and gods. A smaller number of Hausa people, captured and carried to the coast, would have brought their Muslim beliefs and practices with them as well.[544] While early Catholic missionary practices to West Africa had been abandoned by the mid-seventeenth century, those to west-central Africa had thrived, and in concert with state support, fomented a broad embrace of Catholicism by the eighteenth-century. According to John Thornton, "Christianity was the source of Kongo identity," and "virtually all of the population [knew its] practices and tenets."[545] Disorientation, deprivation and grave despair posed high obstacles to Africans' ability to carry out visible ritual life aboard ship. The vast majority of Africans were deprived of every object of even minimal value prior to embarkation. A small number may have brought amulets, beads or perhaps a tobacco pipe, objects of no trading value to their African captors or European enslavers. Others were given similar objects by their captors on the slave ship as diversions, intended to stave off the inevitable despair that fell upon all those stolen from their homes and sold across the sea.[546] In most cases Africans aboard ship had no material basis for ritual life. This severe deprivation did not preclude some Africans from finding ways to observe some semblance of belief and practice aboard ship, a thread of continuity to cling to as they were carried ever further out on the black water. As the first days or weeks of shock and disorientation settled into the groaning monotony of life on the slave ship, women and men talked about their dire circumstances, and they did so in the terms, cosmic and worldly, that had shaped them prior to capture and in the trek to the coast. As James Sweet has demonstrated, African religious beliefs shaped their interpretation of their enslavement and their actions to temper, remediate and redress the ills inflicted upon them.

For Catholic captors and Christian seamen on transoceanic voyages more broadly, the deep sea voyage could evoke the precariousness of both worldly life and life everlasting. Biblical passages provided descriptions of the ocean as the site of Godly intervention in the form of wrath and love, damnation and salvation.[547] This juxtaposition lent a sense of emergency to the

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[544] Gomez, 43-8, 54-57, 62-65, 144.
[545] John K Thornton, "'I Am the Subject of the King of Congo': African Political Ideology and the Haitian", *Journal of World History*, 4 (1993), 188-189.
[546] Handler, "The Middle Passage and the Material Culture of Captive Africans", 1–26.
[547] Two of the most celebrated writers of sermons during this period, bishop Jacques Bénigne Bossuet and the Jesuit Louis Bourdaloue, make multiple references to metaphors and imagery of the sea to illustrate their sermons. See

question of faith, true worship and conversion. The story of Noah and the flood echoed through the New Testament and into early modern biblical commentaries as an illustration of salvific faith, and the spiritual death of nonbelievers.[548] Similarly, the crossing of the Red Sea became a common trope in Protestant writings, which linked the salvation of the Isrealites to that of their coreligionists, and represented Catholic rulers as the Pharaoh and who drowns under God's wrath.[549] In the Gospels, Jesus's power to subdue a storm at sea inspires fearful awe in his disciples, as does his miraculous ability to walk on water. At the same time, the sea is the site where Peter's faith is tested, when Jesus calls him to walk on water, but Peter begins to doubt, and so to sink, midway.[550] These biblical stories established the sea as the site where God reveals his power to mankind, but simultaneously where human faith is severely tested.

Expanding on this theme, late seventeenth-century French sermons described the sea as a space of earthly torments, but also of the immanence of God.[551] The renowned late seventeenth century Catholic priest and orator Louis Bourdaloue was one of many to draw from biblical passages and the work of early church fathers to equate mortal life, full of dangerous temptations, with a "stormy sea" upon which the righteous "find themselves embarked by the orders of divine providence."[552] Here, "God is with them, . . . he illuminates them and supports them," helping them come to a greater faith through the trials they face.[553] François Timoleon Choisy, a diplomat and passenger on a 1685 diplomatic and missionary voyage to Siam, wrote of his sea voyage, “we are at every moment here, or we must be, ready to be held accountable before God."[554] A frightening storm, as well as the increasing numbers afflicted by illness over the course of the voyage, led him to reflect more deeply on death and the heavenly paradise that awaits believers. "A tempestuous sea is a moving preacher," he wrote, and he warns the reader, "Nothing is so fragile as life."[555] For the pious Frenchman at sea, the ocean was the immediate precursor of the final judgment. The sea called men and women to spiritual conversion, whether to Catholicism, the dominant and indeed only legal confession aboard ship during most of this period, or simply to a deeper faith.

Huguenots too evoked the revelatory potency of the ocean, though the emphasis lay upon constancy in faith rather than religious transformation, in line with Reformed doctrine and the

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Pierre Bourdalouë, *Sermons Pour Les Dimanches* (Paris: Rigaud, 1766), i, 139-140, 268-271, 569; Jacques Bénigne Bossuet, *Sermons Choisis de Bossuet*, ed. Abbé Maury (Paris: Librarie Garnier Frères, 1922), 182-206, 251.

[548] Don Cameron Allen, *Legend of Noah: Renaissance, Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters*, (Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1963).

[549] Scott Langston, *Exodus through the Centuries*, (Malden, MA.: Blackwell Publishing, 2008), 139, 235

[550] Matt. 8: 23-27, Mark. 4: 39-41, Matt. 14: 23-33, Mark 6: 45-52, John 6: 16-21.

[551] There also existed a long tradition, based on 2 Cor. 3, that invoked the parting of the Red Sea, an instance of monumental providential intervention, as a symbol of baptism. However, this symbolism is less present in the available seventeenth-century Catholic sermons, possibly because of Protestants' extensive uses of Exodus tropes. Langston, 139, 235; Thomas Worcester, "The Classical Sermon" in *Preaching, Sermon and Cultural Change in the Long Seventeenth Century*, ed. Joris Van Eijnatten, (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 133-172.

[552] "Les élus de Dieu, vivent dans le monde, que nous pouvons considerer comme une mer orageuse; & s'y trouvent embarquez par les ordres mesmes de la providence. Dieu est avec eux, & ne les quitte jamais." Bourdaloue, 140. Blumenberg discusses a similar comment by Pascal, "you are embarked", echoed later by Nietsche to illuminate the shift in the metaphor from describing the (doomed) *option* of adventure in premodern times, to describing a necessary condition of human life. Hans Blumenberg, *Shipwreck with Spectator: Paradigm of a Metaphor for Existence*, trans. by Rendall Steven (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 17-23.

[553] Bourdalouë, 140.

[554] "Nous sommes içi à tous momens, ou nous devons estre, prêts à rendre conte à Dieu." Choisy, 17-18.

[555] " . . . en vérité la mer en colere est un prédicateur pathétique" (Choisy, 161); "Quand on en use ainsi, on doit craindre les dangers. Rien n'est si fragile que la vie" (Choisy, 160).

political pressures of the day. In 1688, François Barbauld, a Huguenot refugee and ship's lieutenant from Brittany published a duodecimo prayerbook for Protestants at sea, entitled *Priéres pour ceux qui voyagent sur la mer*. Barbauld, in refuge in the Netherlands, dedicated his volume to the Directors of the VOC, surely hoping to win their patronage, and he cites the "poor French, exiled for the Gospel, & in refuge in the Provinces."[556] Like Catholic writers, Barbauld evokes the extreme uncertainty of the sea, the vacillation between the abyss and the divine. He writes, "The sea is in effect the veritable theater of [worldly] vanity, & of this inconstancy of worldly things." Stalwart in their faith, the saved look beyond the "thousand dangers" at sea, the "air, land, water, fire, wind, storms, banks, rocks, hunger & thirst [that] seem to conspire against them" to find an "infinity, which produces pleasure more than pain." This infinity derives from the divine and unlimited power of God, from a radical submission tantamount to immersion in his will. "Those who know God, who know that he directs all things by his adorable Providence, see him as the Lord of the sea & as the Master of all that occurs, whether vexing or unfavorable; they place themselves entirely in his hands." This spirit of reverence, Barbauld writes, "unknots their tongues and opens their lips"; "it places in their hearts and their mouths" prayers and acts of grace in whatever circumstances they encounter.[557] What follows in the volume is forty-four prayers for those who have difficulty finding the words themselves. The prayers are comprehensive, and they give a sense of idealized Huguenot practice onboard. Each morning, evening and watch deserved a specific prayer, and Barbauld envisioned his coreligionists celebrating the Lord's day with prayer and meeting, including prayer "before the reading of the Holy Word" "Action of Grace after the reading of the word of God," "Prayer before the sermon," "Action of Grace after the sermon", and prayer for Sunday evening. The prayers enumerate a slew of circumstances, including "#20: Prayer during a storm" and "#21: Short prayer for those who are occupied while others engage in this general prayer"; "#37: Prayer for those who fall in the hands of enemies after a lost battle" and "#38: Prayer for those whom the enemies threaten to throw to the sea", "#46: Prayer for the sick," "#47: Prayer for the sick when their sickness continues and worsens," and "#48: Prayer for those whose sickness is entirely hopeless." One gets the sense that Barbauld aimed for completeness rather than efficiency in guiding potential readers to piety amidst the dangers of the sea. While I have not found any clear indication of the distribution or readership of the volume, its contents suggest that pious Huguenots looked to regular and spontaneous prayer, the reading and recitation of scripture and the Lord's Supper to guard their faith at sea. These literary texts describe prescriptive or idealized manifestations of

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[556] Barbauld, vi. I am working from the 1766 edition. Elizabeth Tingle describes Barbauld as a preacher, writing prior to the Revocation. However, I was unable to locate the source of this description. Remarkably, I was able to locate a marriage record for a Théophile Barbauld and Françoise Cotonneau, both born in St. Martin de Ré, and married in Rotterdam in 1710. I must disabuse the reader of any illusion that I possess a my command of the Dutch language or familiarity with Rotterdam archives; this was a happy accident by which Google directed me to the page in the Rotterdam City Archives. The fact that this Barbauld was born in France, and that his occupation was lieutenant suggests very strongly that this is indeed the same Théophile Barbauld. Théophile Barbauld, *Prières pour ceux qui voyagent sur la mer, Tant à l'occasion des divers accidens qui leur arrivent, que des maladies dont ils peuvent être travaillés pendant leurs voyages* (Amsterdam: Jacques Desbordes, vis-à-vis le Comptoir de Cologne, 1766), vi. Rotterdam City Archives in Rotterdam (Netherlands), Church records marriages, Archieven van de Waalse Hervormde Kerk te Rotterdam, Rotterdam, archive 143, inventory number 112, January 22, 1710, Trouw Waals, folio 42b https://hdl.handle.net/21.12133/6D13C2D061964088BBFB0962EB6653FD

[557] Il y en a même une infinité, qui s'en font un plaisir, plutôt qu'une peine. Ceux qui connoissent Dieu, qui scavent qu'il conduit toutes choses par son adorable Providence, le regardent comme le Seigneur de la mer & comme le Maître de tout ce qui y arrive ou de fâcheux ou de défavorable; ils se remettent entiérement entre ses mains . . ." Barbauld, ix-xii.

Christian faith at sea, and they draw attention to the fact that religion deeply informed the daily lives of sailors and officers at sea, though they do little to describe what that life looked like. The next section outlines the normative practice of seaborne Catholicism that dominated religious life at sea for the eighteenth century.

Normative Catholic Practice

For the entirety of the period from 1685 to the close of the eighteenth century, Catholic worship was the sole legal form of worship aboard French ships, and for the majority of this period, the state supported the faith at sea through regulations. The most significant of these was the requirement that shipowners employ a chaplain for every ship on a *voyage au longue cours* with a crew of over twenty-five, and later forty, men; failure to do so could result in steep penalties, though these declined in the later decades.[558] The language of the *Ordonnance* betrays significant anxiety regarding the spiritual state of sailors and their "too ordinarily licentious" lifestyle. Indeed, the very conditions of long-distance voyages led directly to ritual privation, as men sailed far from their parishes and the dense pattern of religious practice that structured time, space and communal life. On most voyages, men attended Mass only when their ship was at port, and practiced faith at sea primarily through prayer, vows and private worship.

Even when a chaplain did accompany the voyage, they faced the challenge of celebrating Mass in a movable, secular and unsanctified space. Chaplains carried portable chapels onboard, complete with the necessary ritual objects. Aboard the *Affriquain*, sold in 1715, the chaplain was provided with vestments and a biretta to maintain the solemnity and dignity of his office. For the sacraments, he carried with him silver chalice, paten, and ciborium, and a silver box of holy oils. An iron box held the Sacramental bread. For the Mass, the chaplain used a small bell, purificatory cloths, cruets for the blessed wine, a burse to hold the Host, a Missal cushion, an ivory crucifix, a Missal and the Gospel, along with copper candlesticks, tablecloths, and several other materials. A dedicated font, as well as additional cruets, could hold the Holy Water.[559] This collection of ritual objects, considered in relation to the absence of those for African ritual practices, was still only a minimal stand-in for the grandeur, sanctity and deep time that inhered in landed churches and cathedrals.

Echoing the hierarchy of space in a Catholic church, where the priest led Mass from the separated and often raised chancel, the chaplain led Mass "at least Feast Days and Sundays" from the forecastle to the congregation assembled on the deck below.[560] He administered the sacraments to the dying at their hammocks or mattresses, though Jesuit missionary Guy Tachard claimed that the dying preferred to receive their last rites on the main deck, the shipboard equivalent of the church nave. Likely positioned at the main mast, the priest was to "conduct

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[558] The *Ordonnance de la Marine* of 1681 at first set the crew number for the requirement at 25, with a penalty of 1500 lt to be paid 2/3 by the shipowner and 1/3 by the captain himself. A consistent shortage of willing chaplains, coupled with apparently low enthusiasm for the policy among merchants, pushed the crown to increase the minimum crew number and decrease the fine, which settled at 200 lt, paid exclusively by the shipowner. At this rate, it is surprising that any shipowners followed through, considering the entire salary for a chaplain far exceeded the fine, and indeed many ships sailed without chaplains, regardless of the crew size. Valin, *Nouveau commentaire*, I: 439-443

[559] Inventaire du Corps, Agrez, Apparaux, Garniture, & Rechange du Navire *l'Affriquain*, desarmé à Painbeuf à la Consignation de Monsieur de Luynes, June 28, 1715, Minutes de sentences, Enquêtes et Procédures, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4759.

[560] This was the case aboard the French ship *l'Oiseau* on its religious and diplomatic mission to Siam in 1687. Tachard 87-88.

public prayer each morning and night, which all must attend, if there is no legitimate excuse." The *Angelus*, led by the chaplain but spoken by every person onboard, was to precede every meal. Like the forecastle, the mast had physical properties that evoked comparison to similar spaces in a Catholic church. The mast may have been chosen not only as a central site on deck and for its central role in the navigation of the ship, but also because it takes the form of the cross, with the main yard that holds the sail resting perpendicularly across the mast. Jesuits on Tachard's mission to Siam gave the catechism from the mast, and when they finished, their shipmates kneeled around them to sing the canticle.[561] Finally, regulations required the chaplain to instruct the members of his seaborne flock. On Sundays and Feast Days, chaplains were to conduct catechism, and at least one additional time each week, they were to convey in plain French "all that had been said in Latin."

Logbooks, court cases and travel literature document remarkable persistence of religious observance at sea. While the physical circumstances of the voyage, the dislocation from churches and consecrated ground, the limited types and quantities of food and drink, constricted the possible forms of observance, sailors and officers regularly observed Sundays, and feast days, especially Easter, the Feast of Saint John and the Feast of Saint Louis. Feast days were particularly important at port, where captains were instructed to treat important political and mercantile figures at feasts hosted onboard. In 1755, the *Compagnie des Indes* instructed a slave trader headed to Mozambique to celebrate the feast of Saint Louis on August 25 by hosting a dinner aboard the ship for the Portuguese Governor and other people of importance at port.[562] This, the company hoped, would smooth relations in a fraught project to smuggle slaves from the Portuguese settlement to the French Mascarenes.[563] Feast days at port allowed crewmen and officers alike to bolster their spiritual security, and their professional networks. It offered them a reprieve from the grueling work and supervision of the ship, and the opportunity to indulge in camaraderie and revelry, whether in the fine cabins of fellow officers, in the cabarets that lined the shore or in the ships that shared the harbor.

Feast days at sea offered none of these opportunities to forge connections with landed political and economic power. If a chaplain was onboard to lead services, these services could provide spiritual connectedness, and the corresponding celebrations provided the opportunity to enjoy and solidify social and political networks aboard ship. However, the isolation of this social world, the absence of extended family and constricted political and economic networks, undermined opportunities to connect seafarers' professional world with other intersecting webs of community through ritual celebration. Easter aboard the *L'Ecueil* in 1690 was marked by fervent religious observance, according to Robert Challe. Challe remarked that all the men of the captain's table, including officers, missionaries and other passengers "fasted like anchorites," eating only bread and water on Good Friday and Holy Saturday.[564] On Easter, Challe describes

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[561] Tachard, 22-23.

[562] Other logbooks signal the importance of feast days as opportunities to enact mutual rituals of honor through salutes and treating. The men of the *Mercure* celerated the Feast of Saint Pierre on June 28, 1714 in honor of Pierre Dulivier, Governer of French Puducherry while moored at port. Moored at Anjouan in July of 1732, the men of *La Reine* and *L'Atalante* celebrated the Feast day of Saint Bonaventure in honor of the captain of *L'Atalante*.

[563] Instruction pour le capitaine du Jupiter, 1755-1756, Correspondance, Compagnie des Indes, ANOM C/2/27 f'70.

[564] While Challe maintains a playful tone and bemusement towards the Breton sailors, so easily pleased by the chaplain's profuse evocation of "Angels, Saints and the Devil, whether he mixes them together in a fricassée or in a salad," he remarks that he and his shipmates observed the fast. One officer snuck two full bottles of liquor under his dressing gown, before the ship's alcohol was locked up for the duration of the fast, but he turned them over to Challe voluntarily on Saturday, so as to avoid the temptation to indulge prematurely. Challe, Vol. I, 229-239.

devotion among the crew. "Monsieur Charmot [of the *Congrégation des Missions étrangères*] and the chaplain had no shortage of occupation from four in the morning until eight, when Mass began," presumably hearing confessions from their seaborne congregation.[565] Similarly, aboard *L'Oiseau* in 1685, François Timoléon de Choisy described prayer, liturgy and celebration on Easter Sunday, and seamen celebrated All Saints' Day and the Feast of Saint Louis on the vessel. Only the extreme violence of the waves battering the ship prevented the Jesuits onboard from saying Mass on June 24, "this Sunday and day of Saint John," but as soon as the seas had calmed the following Thursday, missionary Père Tachard led the ship in a liturgy.[566] Much like Challe, Choisy casts sailors' religion as mere superstition, writing, "when a sailor has sung the Litanies with all his might and [said] the prayer for the King, he is content and wants his dinner."[567] While the presence of missionaries on these voyages suggests that these accounts relate particularly observant ships, the texts nevertheless give a sense of the texture of rites referenced briefly in other documents, most commonly logbooks and court testimony. However, feast days at sea carried few of the political and mercantile benefits that accompanied their celebration at ports of call. Treating one's own officers at the captain's table may have nourished comradery aboard ship, but it did little to expand the trading networks or political clout of captains and major officers, relative to treating guests on land. Likewise, while cannon salutes did mark deaths at sea, it seems they rang on feast days only at port, suggesting that even the signs of political power and honor that accompanied those celebrations on land were weakened at sea.[568] Finally, the eagerness with which seamen at port embraced landed celebrations of Mass and Feast Days when moored at port surely drew, in part, from the compelling notion of the sanctity of consecrated ground, the grandeur of a church building relative to the dubious space of the ship, and the appeal of a more established clergy, in contrast to the reputedly dissolute men who embarked as chaplains.[569] Nevertheless, as their superiors aboard ship often suspected, the revelry at cabarets and spaces of sociability that seamen frequented also exerted significant attraction. It was at port that feast days held the greatest potential to connect seamen with religious, political, and mercantile power.

As the century wore on, and especially on ships with no chaplain, religion fell out of sight as a matter of legal contestation. A series of letters to the bishop of Vannes suggests that it was persistently difficult for the *Compagnie des Indes* to secure and maintain chaplains of high quality, particularly in the later decades of the century.[570] In his 1760 commentary on the 1681 *Ordonnance de la Marine*, René Josué Valin remarked that by midcentury, one could only find Mass celebrated on naval ships and ships of the *Compagnie*, and on all other ships one had to rely entirely on the spiritual rigor of the captain if one sought the regular practice of collective

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[565] "Monsieur Charmot & l'Aumônier n'ont point manqué d'occupation depuis quatre heures du matin jusqu'à huit, que la Messe a commencé." Challe, vol. 1, 234.
[566] Choisy, 92.
[567] Choisy, 44.
[568] While I have been reticent to take logbooks omissions of references to feast days at face value, given their explicit function as navigational, rather than religious, documents, captains did tend to note cannon salutes, both to record the use of powder and to document the detailed management of honor (both of the crown and its representatives) across the globe.
[569] Correspondence between the *Compagnie des Indes* and the bishop of Vannes repeatedly evokes the poor quality of chaplains, who were often seen out of their vestments, and expressed great laxity in their behavior both on and off the ship. SHD-L 1P 299 liasse 32 (1721-1771).
[570] This subject occupies around 40 documents spanning the years from 1727 to 1771 held in the archives of the *Compagnie des Indes*. Correspondance échangé avec l'évêque de Vannes etc. 1727-1771. SHD-L 1P 299 liasse 32 (1727-1771).

prayer in the morning and evening. Indeed, court cases unveil a shift in the power and impetus to enforce religious conformity over the course of the century, eroding that of sailors and the plurality of believers onboard and concentrating in the person of the captain himself, a change that suggests a shifting understanding of the political relevance of religious communion and the practices of spiritual care. Court cases allow us to trace some of this change.

Conversion and Exchange

The tightest link between religious affiliation and communal boundaries came in the decades surrounding the 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Prior to the Revocation, Protestants and Catholics made space aboard ship to worship, though regulations officially restricted the times and spaces of Protestant religious practice. The *Réglement du 6 Octobre 1674* had required any Protestant service or prayer to take place at the mizzen mast, the aftmost and third tallest mast of a full-rigged vessel, where they were permitted only to pray softly. Singing psalms and any loud prayer were prohibited. Catholic Mass and prayer centered on the main mast. In the wake of the 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Huguenots sought to preserve worship on the open ocean or sought refuge overseas, and Catholic seamen took advantage of heightened royal interest in religious uniformity to bring cases against officers and captains onboard until 1717, when the regent eliminated the requirement for captains and pilots to provide certificates of Catholicity, and recommended that the state turn a blind eye to the religious affiliation of seafarers.[571] The archives from the intervening decades preserve few and fragmentary records of Protestants aboard ship. What survives are records of contestation and intense pressures to work out the boundaries of religious cohesion or coexistence aboard ship.

Huguenots had long held significant influence in the merchant marine and French port cities, particularly La Rochelle and Bordeaux.[572] While their positions were increasingly precarious over the seventeenth century, they faced extraordinary persecutions in the final years leading up to the Revocation. These accelerated from 1679, when new regulations were introduced to facilitate the rapid closing of Protestant chapels, with 186 chapels forced to close between 1681 and 1683. 1680 to 1681 saw the introduction of prohibitions on non-Catholics occupying professions in law, printing, medicine, bookselling, and, most infamously, the billeting of soldiers, or *dragonnades*, in the homes of Huguenots, with directions to cause deliberate damage and abuse the families who housed them. In 1682, the state began enforcing the prohibitions against the emigration of Huguenots.[573] Waves of previous emigration had established substantial refugee communities in Britain, the Netherlands and across the seas, a transoceanic network that facilitated dissidents' commercial success in many cases. However, the intensified persecutions of the early 1680s, followed by the Revocation in 1685, increased the urgency to escape France, for those who could manage the journey.

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[571] Valin, I: 445.

[572] While Huguenots dominated the commercial worlds of Bordeaux and La Rochelle, they were also important participants in commerce in Rouen, Nantes, Le Havre and other port cities. John McManners, *Church and Society in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Clarendon Press, 1998), vol. 2, p. 566.

[573] Persecutions accelerated from 1679, when new regulations were introduced to facilitate the rapid closing of Protestant chapels, with 186 chapels forced to close between 1681 and 1683. "A rush of penal legislation" followed in 1680-81, including prohibitions on non-Catholics occupying professions in law, printing, medicine, bookselling, as well as the billeting of soldiers, or *dragonnades*, in the homes of Huguenots, with instructions to cause excessive damage. In 1682, the state began enforcing the prohibitions against the emigration of Huguenots. McManners, *Church and Society*, vol. 2, 571-572.

Many Huguenot seamen and their families were among the roughly 200,000 French Protestants who fled France from 1680 to 1700.[574] They used their access to ships and maritime networks to escape France. In May of 1686, Le Havre merchant David Godin, his wife, Anne Bouzelin, their two children, Marie Marthe and David Godin, and Elizabeth Polay and Pierre du Clos, his accountant, all *nouveaux convertis,* attempted a midnight escape by boat to join relatives and acquaintances in foreign lands.[575] Huguenots also made use of the robust network of Dutch merchants in Nantes and Bordeaux, paying for passage or embarking as sailors, contrary to French prohibitions against emigration for all lay Protestants.[576] In August of 1686, authorities in Nantes searched a Dutch ship at port and found a clandestine cabin, outfitted with pillows and a psalter, for the purposes of transporting Protestant refugees.[577] Eusaye Dupont embarked on a Dutch ship, and was captured along with his shipmates by a French privateer in 1688, claiming he had never heard that French Protestants were forbidden from leaving the country or sailing under foreign flags.[578] Louis Batteman's story reveals the particularly international quality of Protestant French sailors, who forged lives on foreign ships out of necessity and opportunity. He was born in Dieppe to Huguenot parents, well connected to the Atlantic world. His father died in America shortly after his birth, and by age ten in 1683, he had embarked as a ship's boy on a small barque that traded between Dieppe and London. The following year, aboard a ship in Amsterdam, he heard news that his mother, Marie Breton, had been imprisoned in Neufchatel and then exiled to England with her sister Madeleine because of their faith. His mother and aunt soon met him in Amsterdam, where they established a life in refuge. Batteman rose in the ranks of foreign merchant ships until he attained the rank of captain on his most recent voyage to Senegal. There, he was captured, alongside one French sailor from Bordeaux, by a French ship belonging to the *Compagnie de Senegal*.[579] His story and the many others like his, illustrate the connectedness of French protestant trading networks and the ways in which seamen could escape the French state, at least for a time.

Some Huguenots looked to the sea not as an route to escape but as a refuge in itself, a separate space that they hoped would be beyond the reach of their Catholic sovereign. The practice of Huguenot worship aboard ship, both clandestine and instituted by captains and high officers, underlines the unsettled relationship between religious and social communities at sea. Ship's boy François Gaichard and sailor Guillaume du Fau, both eighteen years old, came to the admiralty court in Bordeaux in January of 1687 to accuse their captain and the pilot of *Le Saint-Jean de Bordeaux* of eating meat on Christmas Eve, despite its designation as a fast day in the Catholic calendar. Compounding the offense, Daniel Monteil, the pilot, allegedly commanded Gaillard to cook the meat for him and invited du Fau to join them at the table. Gaichard and du Fau declined, citing the obligation to fast and the fact that they still had ample herring aboard.

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[574] Owen Stanwood, "Between Eden and Empire: Huguenot Refugees and the Promise of New Worlds" *The American Historical Review* vol. 118, No. 5 (December, 2013): 1319.

[575] Court Summons for David Godin, Anne Bouzelin sa femme, Marie Marthe et David Godin, leurs enfans, Pierre du Clos son Caisier, Elizabeth Polay, Estienne Godin, Samuel Banquier, Henry de la Barre, June 25, 1686, Procédures de l'Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP303.

[576] Marzagalli, Silvia. "The French Atlantic and the Dutch, Late Seventeenth–Late Eighteenth Century," in *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680-1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman eds. (Brill, 2014):105–09.

[577] Proces verbal des meubles trouvés dans le navire nommé *le Portenseigne*, August, 1686, Minutes et sentences, Enquêtes et procedures, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B 4735.

[578] Procédure contre Eusaye Dupont, 1688, Procédures, Amirauté du Havres, ADSM 216BP303.

[579] Procédure contre Batteman, July 1700, Procédures, Amirauté du Havre, 216BP303.

Guiton and Monteil also stood accused of refusing to leave the ship for the celebration of Christmas Mass, and of "singing psalms" so loudly every night that Guiton had to tell Monteil to lower his voice so that they might not be caught in the act. Both of the accused, Captain Guiton and pilot Daniel Monteil, hailed from the previous Protestant stronghold of Royan, and both were *nouveaux convertis.* Monteil had given his abjuration to the curé at the parish of Saint-Pierre in December of 1685. During his interrogation in this case, Monteil placed all the blame on Guiton, claiming it was he who ordered the meat be cooked. Most dubiously, he claimed that he was simply retrieving some "maritime charts" from his sea chest "to instruct and divert himself" when Guiton glimpsed a book of psalms hidden among his possessions. Guiton, according to Monteil, seized the volume and began singing, though quietly and "without scandal." Ultimately, Monteil attributed his behavior with "great regret" to temporary weakness, brought about by his companionship with Guiton.[580]

Several aspects of the case jump out. The first is the significance of "scandal" caused by the visibility of their worship, or rather its audibility. From the sixteenth century on, Protestants had turned to singing Psalms as a sign of their solidarity and their defiance against Catholic oppressors. In 1558, Henri II forbade the public singing of psalms, which only fueled their potency as a political and religious media for Protestants, who used them to disrupt Catholic services, to declare support for Protestant prisoners, and as rallying cries in religious war.[581] Alongside psalms, the questions of when meat could be eaten and whether and how to honor Sundays and holy days had all been battlegrounds between Catholics and Protestants throughout seventeenth-century France. As du Fau's testimony suggests, the command to assist in preparing meat on a Catholic fast day and the invitation to share in its consumption stoked the very fears that undergirded the late seventeenth-century efforts to push Protestants out of positions of political leadership, including officers at sea. At the heart of du Fau and Gaillard's claims to the court is this threat of religious pollution. As individuals, they evoked a fear that they might be compelled to violate Catholic religious duties. On a communal level, they suggested that Guiton and Monteil's visible and audible practice onboard pushed back against Catholic possession of ship space. There is also the question of the economic significance of the meat itself. As the previous chapter suggests, meat aboard ship was a significant matter in terms of the moral economy of the ship, and often implied as part of payment at port. Might this meat have been intended for the Christmas feast the following day? Surely the invitation to share at the captain's table on a day of fasting broke several conventions in terms of the political, religious and economic relations between the sailors and their commanders at sea.

As Barbara Diefendorf writes, the confessional contest in early modern France comprised not only theological questions but also "fights about urban culture—about how to live and not just where to worship."[582] Aboard *Le Saint-Jean*, the conflict was about two officers, *nouveaux convertis,* from Royan, two Catholic sailors from Bordeaux and power aboard ship. What is particularly fascinating about this moment in French and in maritime history is the way that the commitment to asserting religious control over space carried out onto the sea and into the smallest spaces of the ship. Despite Monteil's protestations to the court, it seems likely that he

[580] Plainte et Information fait à la requete de Monsieur le procureur du Roy contre les nommés Montril et le Capitaine Guiton de Royan, January 1-13, 1687. AD33 6B 1046.
[581] Barbara Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 136-7.
[582] Diefendorf, "Religious Conflict and Civic Identity: Battles over the Sacred Landscape of Montpellier", *Past and Present*, 237 (2017), 89.

and his captain did attempt to preserve some semblance of Protestant space at sea, where they could enjoy meat on Christmas Eve, and even, perhaps with a degree of antagonism, implicate their Catholic subordinates in their practice. To their misfortune, the Revocation had empowered crewmen, even a teenage ship's boy, with powers to instigate real economic and legal penalties against them, powers that exceeded any other legal protection offered to common seamen.

In the eyes of seamen, a violation of religious cohesion not only disturbed spiritual and political order aboard ship, but it also invoked divine wrath and raised an imminent threat of demise at sea, particularly when the blasphemous pronouncements fell from the mouths of captains. On *Le Saint-Jean de Bordeaux*, captain Joseph Trebuchet fell upon two Capuchin missionaries onboard after they intervened to prevent him from breaking a boy's arms. Twenty-nine-year-old sailor, François Cherboneau testified that Trebuchet "blasphemed the name of God in such an outrageous way that he and the rest of crew feared that God would sink the vessel".[583] Aboard the *Confiance* in 1707, boatswain Bernard du Boit exploded at the cook when he was denied brandy and extra rations. Mate Julien Le Landait testified that he had "never heard such swearing with so little respect for God," as du Boit allegedly cried out not only the typical "chien" and "boujaron" but also, "I will eat your soul . . . I will kill you." He swore against the chaplain and attacked the scrivener, who was busy transcribing each blaspheme. As aboard *Le Saint-Jean*, shipmates on *La Confiance* referenced a fear that God would take vengeance on the ship and sink it. Some scholars have described sailors' apparent penchant for crude language as a sign of their particular irreligion. Indeed, the apparent shock of du Boit's crewmates at his diabolical eloquence surely derives at least in part from the violent actions that accompanied his words. He beat down the purser, leaving his shirt ripped and bloodied, and when officers tried to put him in irons alongside his co-conspirator and fellow bosun Julien La Ferre, the two men threatened to kill any men who approached them. In addition, the legal weight of blasphemy accusations, especially when leveled alongside other charges of mutinous insubordination, suggests that the circumstances elevated blasphemous offense from a general disturbance to the rank of a criminal religious transgression.

Nevertheless, it is worth considering the circumstances that led to this particular attention to blasphemy aboard ship. If "the seaman's work experience also tended to generate irreligion . . . [through] subordinating religious preferences to practical activity," general beliefs in the dire reliance on God's Providence at sea also motivated the state to regulate religious behavior and speech at sea with great diligence.[584] The urgency of this regulation was underlined by the fact that blasphemy was "speech of provocation," and posed untenable risks of social and political disturbance in the tightly wound world of the ship.[585] This elevated regulatory attention to blasphemy at sea, particularly but not exclusively aboard naval ships, likely made no small contribution to the perception of seamen as particularly egregious swearers. Among the blasphemous murmurings that scatter throughout the admiralty court archives, the apparent shock of all witnesses to du Boit's language suggests that his diction really was beyond the pale, and threatened his shipmates with a sinister and potent violation of God's Law.

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[583] Plainte et information faites à la requete de Mr. Le procureur du Roy prenant le Fea & Cause pour le Reverand Pere Cabasson contre Joseph Trebuchet Mtre du Vaisseau nommé le Saint Jean de Bordeaux, August 7, 1701, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6 B 1102.

[584] Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 174-5.

[585] Alain Cabantous, *Blasphemy: Impious Speech in the West from the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 83-86.

The ships' officers conclude that both du Bois and La Ferre were men who lived "without faith, without law, or religion." They reference that La Ferre had "not confessed in five or six years, not wanting to approach the sacraments or reconcile with God." Moreover, they describe du Bois an "atheist . . . who, considering his cruelty to his mother and father, has been a villain and a bandit since his life began."[586] The accusation of atheism draws upon early modern usage of the word, which placed emphasis on an ungodly life, lived in reckless refutation of God's sovereignty, and not necessarily a philosophical position on the existence of the divine.[587] Nevertheless, the testimony of purser, Joseph Macé, suggests that the officers at least feared that a broader denial of God's power underlay du Boit's behaviors. According to Macé, as the seamen prepared for their eight o'clock prayers, La Ferre exhorted his companion to join in, to which du Bois allegedly responded, "do you want to stop me from being a heretic?" Another sailor asked, "and what about our benevolent Saint Nicolas, who watches over us passing the [Raz de Sein]?", referring to a notoriously treacherous stretch of water off the coast of Finistere. Du Boit allegedly responded "I don't give a damn. We will pass the [Raz de Sein] in the manner we chose."[588] These blasphemies did more than simply offend. They risked alienating God from the entire enterprise, daring him to remove his blessing and guardianship over the ship and the men onboard. More than forty pages of testimony construct an image of a devilish manipulator, a fiend bent upon collective destruction. In this moment in maritime history, du Bois's blasphemy carried significant power; it frightened his shipmates, and it transformed his character from that of a man seeking his due privileges aboard ship to a satanic presence, born bad, whose actions threaten to sink his shipmates both literally and spiritually in mutual destruction. Like the cases involving Protestants and *nouveaux convertis*, Du Boit's story underlines the power of speech, the collective stakes of men at sea, and a tight connection between religious and political order aboard ship at the turn of the eighteenth century.

Du Boit's case also underlines the significance of common seamen in the arbitration of spiritual order aboard ship in the early eighteenth century, and the intertwined but distinct threads of political, spiritual and economic order. In the decades surrounding the turn of the eighteenth century, seamen and petty officers acted as arbiters of religious order, and as enforcers of a moral economy. However, through processes that took root with greatest aggression in the slave trade and bled into relations of hired labor, hierarchical economic relationships increasingly enfolded and dominated all other facets of ordering, consolidating power among the financial powerhouses aboard each ship. Du Boit's case hints at this erosion of professional allegiance and moral economy in favor of an imminent order manifested in relationships of debt, credit, and economic possession.

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[586] "des cruautez qu'il a Exerceez envers son per et sa mer il sera aizé de prouver qu'il a toujours esté un scelerat et un bandy depuis le commencement de sa vie jusqua presant." Plainte et information . . . contre Joseph Trebuchet, August 7, 1701, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6 B 1102.

[587] Lucien Febvre, *The Problem of Unbelief in the Sixteenth Century: The Religion of Rabelais*, trans. B. Gottlieb (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 131-46; François Berriot, *Athéismes et athéistes au XVIe siècle en France*, I. (Lille, France: Atelier national de reproductions des thèses, Université de Lille III, 1977), 128-39; Stuart B. Schwartz, *All Can Be Saved: Religious Tolerance and Salvation in the Iberian Atlantic World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 75-76.

[588] " . . . on dit les prieres du huit heures; la Ferre dist a son Cammarade de prier Dieu, du Bois luy repondit sil voulois l'empescher d'etre heretique, et lors qu'on dist, et le bienheureux Saint Nicolas, qui nous veuille [sic] passer le Ras, il dist tout haut Je t'en fout nous passerons le ras de la maniere que nous nous y prenons." Informations contre Bernard du Boit et Julien La Ferre, July 16, 1707, Minutes criminelles, AD56 9B 240. "Raz" in Henry Witcomb and Edmond Tiret, eds. *Dictionnaire des Termes de Marine, Français-Anglais & Anglais-Français* (Paris: Challamel Ainé, 1883), vol. 1, 550.

Du Boit rests at the cusp of changes to come to seaborne mercantile communities, changes that would erode traditional relationships of mutual care and interdependence and pull sailors into a singular capitalist status system centered on relation to the means of exchange. Remarkably, the probate auctions for the *Confiance* have been preserved along with this criminal case. Despite his alleged claim to five hundred *écus*, du Bois made a single purchase from one auction over 1706 and 1707, abstaining from the nine other auctions that preceded his arrest. He bid for three "old shirts" from the inventory of the sailor Joachim Feron with two *piasters* and six *reals.* Du Boit's absence from these documents is no definite indicator of his separation from his shipmates. Perhaps his claim to riches was not as secure as he may have suggested. Nevertheless, it shows that unlike the majority of his shipmates, he did not actively participate in the best-documented market for goods aboard ship. Rather, according to several witnesses, he sought out independent enterprise outside the commercial networks of the ship. Witnesses suggest that du Boit solicited Denis to abandon ship together, offering to divide five-hundred *écus* in his possession, "half and half and make our fortune here" (in Chile).[589] One witness claims that du Bois suggested he would abandon his own wife in the process. Du Boit's alleged solicitation is similar to other accusations against deserters, in which men seeking to abandon ship were accused of offering a kind of partnership to those they implicated in their plans. This offer, with its evocation of shared property, the promise of shared reward and the suggestion that marital ties would be extraneous, is reminiscent of the practice of *matelotage*.[590] Denis and du Bois were of similar social standing in that they were both petty officers, Denis a mate and du Bois a bosun. Crucially, in this case, the partnership du Bois proposed required the abandonment of duty and raised the threat of social erosion posed by the ruthless pursuit of wealth. Witnesses believed du Bois sought not security but the exuberant riches that he witnessed among the officers.[591] While du Bois's blasphemy carried the threat of irreligious contagion aboard the ship, his solicitation of Denis comprised a more direct threat of corruption, tempting his shipmate with a false fantasy of wealth, secured through independent venture in contradiction to contract, to sworn duties and to communal norms established aboard ship. Thus, du Boit was an outsider in several senses, antagonistic towards religious community, disengaged from commercial markets, and defiant towards political authority.

While sailors and officers watched their shipmates with a careful eye, reporting to the court what they said, what they ate, how many prayers or masses they attended and their embrace or disdain of the sacraments to discern true from affected Catholic faith, they are overwhelmingly silent on the religious practices and beliefs of African captives on slaving ships. The relationship between Catholicism, conversion and enslavement was complex in the early modern period, though historiographical consensus holds that by the eighteenth century, race had overtaken religion as the marker of difference that justified enslavement, though race carried implicit notions of religion and nationality, as Winthrop Jordan described it, "in a generalized

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[589] Informations contre Bernard du Boit et Julien La Ferre, July 16, 1707, Minutes criminelles, AD56 9B 240.
[590] Remarkably, only the probate auction records of Joachim Feron explicitly state that he left half his belongings to his *matelot*. One wonders if du Bois's purchase suggests an affinity for Feron's loyalty to his *matelot*, or simply that three shirts could be bought for a good price. Feron, who was one of the wealthier (or less impoverished) members of the crew to die on the voyage, was likely also a well established sailor with greater social claut. Inventaire et ventes des hardes et effets du Joachim Feron, Inventaires fait abord *La Confiance*, February 19, 1707, AD56 9B240.
[591] While the median proceeds of the twenty-four probate auctions from the voyage totalled only forty-four *piastres*, the average came to over five hundred *piastres*, with the captain's probate auction producing over 7000 *piastres* for his heirs. Idem.

conception of 'us'—white, English, free—and 'them'—black, heathen, slave."[592] The demotion of Christianity as a legal determinant of freedom or unfreedom is underlined in the 1685 *Code Noir*, which required the baptism of all enslaved people in the French colonies. While an enslaved person's baptism could bolster her suit for freedom, it is clear that by the late seventeenth century, the sovereign and his slave-owning subjects were not only comfortable with owning Catholic slaves, they had enshrined a missionary justification for enslavement in law.[593] The *Code Noir* also forbade public exercise of any religion except Catholicism, and required that even slaves refrain from working on Sundays and holidays.[594] Enslavers' efforts to dehumanize and commodify the people they held in bondage conspired in this transformation to weaken the relationship between religious communion and social community, the bonds of obligation shared between members of a single faith. Nevertheless, the presence of baptized Africans on some slaving ships troubled the boundaries between captors and captives.

The ritual deprivation of Catholic Africans aboard ship is perhaps most striking because of their proximity to practitioners who at the very least claimed membership in the same Church. Catholic Africans composed a small minority of Africans on French slaving ships in the early decades of the eighteenth century, as the French trade at that time focused on Senegambia and the Bight of Benin, both regions rich in traditional religions and Islam, with little sustained Christian missionary activity. However, by 1750, the weight had shifted decisively to West Central Africa, which would remain the source of around half of all captive people carried on French ships for the next fifty years.[595] Catholicism had taken root in West Central Africa by 1700, albeit on African terms. Sacred stones and the graves of ancestors, drawing from deeper Kongolese traditions, maintained spiritual importance for African Catholics, who also demonstrated substantial knowledge of Catholic doctrine. Both in Africa and in captivity across the Atlantic, European catechists found that Kongolese Catholics knew the major prayers, including The Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, and the Salve Regina, as well as the "Ten Commandments, the nature of deadly sins and venial sins, the sacraments of the Church," and the elements of a proper Christian life.[596] They also observed Catholic feast days, most notably Halloween and All Saints' Day, which embraced traditional Kongolese veneration of ancestors at family burial sites. Catholic families gathered on Halloween for a candlelit procession to the graves of their ancestors, where they placed their candles and said the rosary, followed by an evening of prayer and procession. The following morning, they would attend Mass. Saint James Day was the second major feast day celebrated in Kongo, where it was observed as a civic and religious holiday on July 25, complete with festivities, a military review and dance and a mock battle, reenacting King Afonso I's defeat of his pagan brother with the mystical assistance of

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[592] Gillian Weiss identifies a similar shift in the rationale for selecting which French people would be ransomed from captivity in North Africa over the eighteenth century, from French Catholics to individuals who fell within the "overlapping categories of Christian, European, and white." Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death: A Comparative Study* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982); Winthrop Jordan, *White over Black: American Attitudes toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 94-97; Gillian Weiss, *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2011), 130.

[593] Sue Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 80.

[594] Sue Peabody, "'A Dangerous Zeal': Catholic Missions to Slaves in the French Antilles, 1635-1800", *French Historical Studies*, 25 (2002), 53–90.

[595] David Geggus, "The French Slave Trade: An Overview," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 58 (2001), Table 1.

[596] John K. Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony: Dona Beatriz Kimpa Vita and the Antonian Movement, 1684-1706* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 29.

Saint James Major in the early sixteenth century. This was followed by a feast for all the soldiers, hosted by the king.[597] If Catholic Africans continued to mark ritual time at sea, their efforts left no written record. Their religious status was inscribed only at their deaths.

The captain of the French corsaire *L'Aurore* noted the Catholic faith of each Black Angolan captive who died en route to Portugal in 1705 by writing their Christian name and marking the death with a cross. Michel Joien, Dominge Yosh, Hieromes André, Antoine Paul, Paul Perrere, Jean Loppe, François Louis, Paul Antoine, and Mathieu de Matte had been captured along with around fifty other Africans and an unstated number of sailors on a Portuguese slaving ship, seized near Benguela on June 16, 1705. Fifteen of the African captives were forced aboard *L'Aurore* on June 29, likely having been held aboard the prize for the previous two weeks. The crew had celebrated Corpus Christi as *l'Aurore* drew close to the Angolan coast. It is very likely that the crew likewise observed the Feast of Saint John on June 24, while the ship was at harbor, and perhaps also the feast of Saint Louis on August 25. While few logbooks note the celebration of Feast Days, they are occasionally mentioned, as in the feast of Corpus Christi above. On the eve of Saint-John's Day in 1733, the slave ship *La Vierge de Grace* celebrated with fifteen cannon salutes, echoed by "many rifle salutes" ringing throughout the harbor of Saint-Paul, Ile Bourbon. On August 24, after trading for twenty-eight men and boys and one woman, all forced aboard with the forty other captives on the ship, the sailors on *Le Vierge de Grace* fired twenty-one cannon salutes and cried out "Vive le Roi!" twenty-one times for the feast of Saint Louis. This all suggests that the main deck of *L'Aurore* rang with cannon shots on feast days at port, and that on the other feast days, like that of Saint James, which was celebrated as a major civic and religious holiday in eighteenth-century Kongo, would have been occasions for rituals onboard as well, marked by feasting, prayer and Mass. It is very unlikely that Michel, Dominge and their captive shipmates were welcome to join in the sacraments or the feast that followed, though they surely recognized elements of worship, and though their death records demonstrate that their captors recognized them as Catholics. If the logbook's reference to "fifteen negros that our commander sent aboard" in late June denotes the total number of captive men transported aboard *L'Aurore* in the final months of the voyage, the nine deaths by scurvy of African men over the next three months, underlines the reality that shared confession was no protector against the ravages of enslavement. Even scattered among the fifty-two out of two hundred crewmen and officers who died of scurvy in the same period, their deaths illustrate the particularly cruel devastation inflicted upon captives at sea.[598]

In the week before *La Flore* embarked from Loango on December 23, 1742, already, a woman, four young boys, and three men had died, all very likely from bloody flux, and captain Johannet du Colombier marked their deaths with simple crosses in the margins of his logbook.[599] These people and their captive shipmates likely originated inland and adhered to Lega and Bakongo cosmologies, but many were likely Catholics of the kingdom of Kongo and surrounding region, baptized early in life and brought up in the Church.[600] The ship set sail from

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[597] Thornton, *The Kongolese Saint Anthony*, 33-5.

[598] Journal de bord, *L'Aurore*, June to August, 1705, AN MAR 4JJ/93, pièce 12; Journal de bord, *La Vierge de Grâce*, July and August, 1733, AN MAR/4JJ/86, pièce 15.

[599] Journal de bord, *La Flore*, December, 1742, AN MAR/4JJ/71 piece 35.

[600] Captain du Colombier's insistence on marking all captive deaths with a simple cross (in contrast to the cross on a burial mound that marked the deaths of crewmen) may stem from ignorance or laziness, seeing as Loango, unlike Angolan ports, was not under Portuguese control, and therefore captives were not subject to baptism *en masse* prior to embarkation. Paul E. Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery: A History of Slavery in Africa* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 93-4.

Loango on Christmas Day; while du Colombier did not write the time of his departure, it is possible that the sounds of celebration might have echoed out to sea, mingling with the roar of the wind and waves. After Mass, Catholic Africans in Loango and the surrounding villages would have gathered in the streets for the *sangamentos*, danced mock-battles of civic and religious importance that marked Christmas, Easter, Saint James' Day and other major feasts of the Catholic calendar in the region.[601] Africans onboard may have witnessed these elaborate stagings from ship in the long months between August and December as the captain completed his trade. Their departure from the coast also marked their departure from civic and religious community, from the ritual time that had marked the years of their lives to that point, from belonging in place, time and community. Each of the five hundred and twenty-two children, women and men on this voyage suffered their own private series of bereavements; together they faced the loss of over sixty of their shipmates over the following months. Whatever work they undertook to reform spiritual lives and communities at sea and in bondage across the water, had to be rebuilt from the wreckage of this devastating rupture.

The baptism of adult captives at sea was exceedingly rare. Aboard le *Duc d'Anjou* on 26 April of 1738, one week after the ship departed from Antongil Bay in Madagascar, the second pilot, Guillaume Liout wrote, "Tonight, a negress died, whose little boy aged 3 months we baptized, as well as another who looked to be dying, aged around 18 years." The baptized eighteen-year-old man died in the early morning hours of the following day, "and we threw him to the sea with the ceremonies ordinary for a white."[602] Jacques Neveu, the chaplain aboard *le Duc d'Anjou*, likely performed both baptisms.[603] Leaving aside the question of infant baptism, why did Neveu baptize this young man and not the mother of the three-month old infant? Or the "very old" woman purchased for the ship at Manzary in December of 1737, or the man who died of leprosy in June of 1738? It is possible that the young man had expressed unusual interest in the Catholic faith. Perhaps he was among the many Malagasy seamen who had long contact with the European maritime world through experience at sea or port. It seems likely that he had cultivated a relationship with the almoner of the ship, whether strategically for his own security onboard, for a sense of spiritual anchoring and solace or some mixture of the two. Neveu himself had no prior experience in the slave trade, suggesting that either the captive himself or another onboard was able to provide at least rudimentary translations between French and Malagasy languages. Whatever the nature of the engagement between Neveu and the Malagasy man, it is almost certain that some form of communication passed between them, which would have given adequate assurance to Neveu that the man understood the basic tenets of the faith. His sea burial "with the ceremonies ordinary for a white [man]" suggests that seaborne enslavers followed the proscriptions of the *Code Noir*, which required baptized slaves be buried in consecrated ground, though it leaves much unsaid.[604] Did Neveu read a funeral mass? Did his captors sew his corpse into a shroud? Perhaps the "ceremonies" referenced here simply denote the dignity of a solemn

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[601] While Loango was not a part of the kingdom of Kongo, *sangamentos* were staged there as well. Cécile Fromont, "Dance, Image, Myth, and Conversion in the Kingdom of Kongo, 1500-1800" *African Arts* vol. 44, no. 4 (Winter 2011): 54-56, notes 7-8.

[602] "Cette nuit il nous est morte une négresse dont on a baptisé le petit négrillon, âgé d'environ 3 mois, et un autre qui parait mourant, âgé d'environ 18ans . . . Le nègre de 18 ans qui fut baptisé hier mourut vers les 2 heures et on le jeta à la mer avec les cérémonies ordinaire à un blanc." Bousquet, 180.

[603] Any Catholic could perform an emergency baptism, but there is no suggestion here that it was not the priest onboard.

[604] Erik R. Seeman, *Death in the New World: Cross-Cultural Encounters, 1492-1800* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010), 198.

observance as his body slipped over the starboard rail, this in contrast to the mere disposal ordinary for the corpses of a Black man at sea. In short, this description of his burial, the phrase "ceremonies ordinary for a white" underlines the exceptionality of this treatment, the yawning gap between the dignity due to whites and the denigration due to Blacks. This gap haunts his baptismal record as well. Consigned to a mere half sentence, the afterthought of an economically minded death record, his baptismal record is barely that. It recognizes the fact of his baptism, but it does not name him, it does not indicate any godparents or any family at all. It does not even mention the name of the man who baptized him, though we can presume it was Neveu.

These omissions were not simply products of the seaborne environment, as the baptismal record of an infant boy born at sea to two white passengers aboard the *Duc de Béthune* on April 24, 1754, underlines. This declaration of baptism, drafted by the ship's scrivener, was signed by the captain, lieutenant, chaplain and the scrivener himself. It named the newborn Etienne Alexandre, the son of Pierre Alexandre and his wife, Jeanne Claude Eglé. Pierre Alexandre's mother, Henriette Fournier, also a passenger onboard, signed as the baby's godmother, and Étienne Durand, a blacksmith in the company's employ, signed as the godfather. All were passengers *à ration*, meaning they ate and slept as the sailors did. They were afforded no special luxury, at least insofar as the documents tell us. Nonetheless, four of the most important officers onboard authenticated the baptism, and the document acknowledges the child's Christian name, his family and his spiritual kin.

Thus, there was a strange dichotomy at work for Catholic Africans in bondage, and particularly those at sea. Their enslavers at times recognized their shared faith, but they refused to recognize any place for Africans in Catholic spiritual community or worship aboard ship. For those new to Catholicism, baptism could confer an honorable burial, and it could perhaps offer solace at sea when other medicines failed to ease an individual's suffering. However, there is no evidence that priests ministered to baptized captives among their seaborne flock, nor that Mass and prayer, regularly observed by crewmen, were open to captives who shared the Catholic confession. In other words, no official spiritual ministry awaited enslaved African Catholics at sea. Even in the case of the man aboard the *Duc d'Anjou*, baptism subjected the baptized man to the Christian god without integrating him into the Catholic community aboard the ship. It is a testament to baptism's limited advantages for the enslavers or the enslaved that I have encountered only one instance of adult baptism within my archival corpus of the slave trade from the eighteenth century. This liminal status of baptized Africans, at once subjugated to Christian authority and excluded from Christian community, evokes a deep bifurcation in eighteenth-century Catholicism at sea, a growing slippage between the spiritual communion of souls and the practice and regulation of religious community in the world. It suggested that membership in spiritual communion need not entail belonging in religious community.

I have located no French logbooks that make any reference to Africans' disruption of prayer, Mass, or to any form of celebration. Africans were most often treated as belonging nowhere, their names, cultures and histories deemed irrelevant and erasable. Their songs, unlike Protestant psalms, were not treated as threatening to Catholic order.[605] Although drumming and dancing were outlawed in British and French colonies due to their association with revolt and the political and spiritual power that could consolidate around such gatherings, the archival record suggests they did not arise as points of tension between enslavers and captives aboard ship. This

[605] Despite the *Code Noir*'s mandate to baptize enslaved Africans in French colonies, there was very little attention paid to the enforcement of Catholic orthodoxy of the enslaved in French colonies, suggesting the attitude aboard slaving ships was not exceptional. Paton, 250.

is particularly striking given the prominent role of military dances as a form of training and a precursor for war in West Central Africa, and the power of drumming, lyrics, and dance to carry covert meaning among the enslaved.[606] Rather, enslavers aboard ship enforced movement and song as a means to exercise the bodies and enliven the spirits of captives.[607] As scholars have underlined, this explicit rationale for the practice occludes the sinister range of ways the practice served the interests of enslavers. Crewmen and officers found greedy delight in dancing with the women, and in this enactment of white control over Black bodies.[608] Under the supervision and the violent coercion of overseers aboard the ship, the practice of "dancing the slaves" represented clearly for captor and captive alike the domination of enslavers over the bodies of their captives, their power to grotesquely manipulate the movements of another human being. While contemporary references suggest that captains and officers especially encouraged Africans to perform tribal dances (or dances that would seem so to white observers), the fact that many captains used a whip to force captives to jump underlines the grounding of the practice in the demonstration of bodily control.[609] Nevertheless, the instructions to ships' captains underline an assumption that dancing could soothe the spirits as well as the bodies of enslaved Africans, staving off the despair that enslavers feared would spoil their cargo. Enslavers understood singing and especially dancing as distinctly African practices that, under rigorous domination, could be stripped of cultural context and put to use to amplify slavers' profits.[610] The appropriation of African cultural forms for the purpose of creating market value, "dancing" their bodies to increase their potential sale price, suggests a deeper integration of spiritual, social and political domination in the service of orderly trade.

This religious salience of political and economic order might be seen in a single case of revolt aboard a slaving ship. On the twelfth of October of 1723, as the *Courrier de Bourbon* sailed within view of the coastlines of Puerto Rico and Saint-Domingue a "young negro," likely a child or young teenager, gathered the officers at the poop deck to inform them through "gestures" alone, as he very likely spoke no French, that "a sedition was forming among the negroes to undo the Whites."[611] The captain, in response, summoned two Senegambian women to the main deck, one purchased at Gorée and the other on the Gambia River. The first woman, tortured and forced to witness the torture of their shipmates, accused a man of forty-five years of being "the Sorcerer who abused [young man] with vain hopes." A second woman, who "could

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[606] Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion" *The American Historical Review* vol. 96, no.4 (Oct. 1991), 1112.

[607] Paton, 250-253.

[608] Apologists for slavery in later eighteenth-century polemics and legal cases appropriated references to the practice as evidence of the oversexed nature of Black women and the cheerful and unintelligent disposition of Africans in bondage, neglecting entirely the place of the whip in coercing captives to dance. Katrina Dyonne Thompson, *Ring Shout, Wheel About*, 48-55.

[609] Ramesh Mallipeddi, "'A Fixed Melancholy': Migration , Memory , and the Middle Passage", *The Eighteenth Century*, 55 (2014), 242.

[610] In some ways this echoes the practices of bioprospecting in the Atlantic world, in which naturalists relied upon indigenous knowledge to source *materia medica* and plants of scientific interest, but stripped their own descriptions of their "discoveries" of all reference to cultural context. Londa Schiebinger, *Plants and Empire: Colonial Bioprospecting in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

[611] "Au jourd'huy mardy 12 par la sollicitation d'un jeune Naigre qui vouloit nous faire atandre qui se formait une sedition parmis les naigres pour se defaire des Blancs il Sa dressa sur le Gaillard derrier a mois et a nos officiers pour cexpliquer comme ces jestte nous faiset connaitre quelque chosse de mauvais." I am unsure that my transcription is correct, but it suggests that that the boy (as slavers often overestimated rather than underestimated age) communicated with gestures rather than words. René Nurat Dugras, Journal de bord du *Courrier de Bourbon*, October 12, 1723, AN MAR/4JJ/15, pièce 21bis.

not suffer" further torture, accused the same man, saying that he had planned to cut the throats of the "whites" onboard. The connection between the words transcribed here and the voices of the two women vanishes with the slightest interrogation, their testimony under extreme duress an infuriating smokescreen constructed by the ship's officers to excuse the ensuing violence against the accused man. If the specifics of the testimony can bear no stable relationship to the truth of the accusation, the statements do unveil slave traders' vision of the shape of order and disorder on the slave ship. They unveil slavers' fears and recreate a story of rupture as one of "vain hope" and a mere fantasy of violence in a cohesive narration of slavers' "white" command. The word "sorcerer" is striking, particularly because of its rhetorical force. It underlines the enslavers' assertions that individual charisma and impossible promises, rather than careful observation, planning and organization were at the root of slave revolts. It links political revolt to sinister spiritual sway, an uncanny ability to hold others in thrall by, quite literally, devilish power. It consigns the considerable organization that went into slave revolts to the realm of magic, of irrational sway. Even the simplistic suggestion that the primary goal of revolt would be to "cut the throats of whites" draws from European images of the savage cannibal, of the desecration of white bodies in service of superstitious fantasies.[612] The syntactical link between "sorcerer" and "vain hope," suggests that in this case, the use of the word sorcerer is operating primarily on a political level, but even the metaphor of sorcery implies an easy slippage between political and religious disorder.[613]

It is possible that this revolt was wholly invented, cobbled together from the frantic gestures of a child and a series of testimonies coerced through torture. A forty-five-year-old man was very likely the oldest captive onboard and very likely the least valuable plausible target, in the eyes of enslavers, a fact that captives and captors alike would have recognized at this point in the voyage. Whatever the connection between the writings of the scrivener and the reality aboard the *Georgette*, the narrative exposes certain norms aboard the slave ship, and particularly the exchange of information above and below deck. As I discussed in chapter one, enslavers often used captive children as personal servants or as entertainers, and children cultivated connections with the powerful onboard. Enslavers saw them as less threatening, and as this story suggests, children could provide crucial information about the happenings below deck, even across a language barrier. An improvised language of gestures must have been extremely common on slaving ships, among the enslaved and in particular between enslavers and the enslaved. However, gestures were not the only means of communication. It is unclear how the captain or crew chose the two women summoned before the officers, but the text specifies that they were purchased in two different locations, and the circumstances suggest that both women could communicate in French. The first woman, purchased at the Gambia River, would have embarked on the ship alongside ten other women and two nursing infants in late June of 1723.[614] The second woman had embarked at Gorée alongside sixty men and boys, thirty-nine other women and girls and "four or five" nursing infants at the end of July, 1723.[615] By the time of the alleged

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[612] Frank Lestringant, *Cannibals: The Discovery and Representation of the Cannibal from Columbus to Jules Verne*, translated by Rosemary Morris (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1997).

[613] Jessica Marie Johnson also describes this revolt in the context of the important place of women in slave revolts. *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 91-94.

[614] "Nous avons embarqué nos noirs cette aprest midy au nombres de 44 noires et 11 naigresses et deus enfans a la mamelle" René Nurat Dugras, Journal de bord du *Courrier de Bourbon*, 6/23/1723, AN MAR/4JJ/15, pièce 21bis.

[615] "Embarqué nos noires 60 malles, tant grand naigre que naigrillons / 40 Naigraisse avec 4 ou 5 petite enfans a la mamelles." As the slave traders were not always attentive to age, I have assumed that some of the women were

attempted revolt, the woman embarked at Gorée had likely worked at the French fort, perhaps learning some French during their captivity there as well. Coercive sexual relationships onboard may have also been linked to French language skills. The logbook does not mention the names of these two women, nor the names given to them by their enslavers, but other documents mention the use of European names for women aboard slave ships, particularly in the context of sexual slavery, and it is very likely that the captain and officers identified them by name, likely a European name assigned aboard the ship, and that they were specifically targeted. Aboard *La Georgette* in 1788, a woman, perhaps the woman called Julie by her enslavers, complained to the major officers when an ill cooper took refuge in the women's quarters, likely due to his violation of shipboard norms of sexual violence. The officers hauled the man out of the 'tweendecks with a rope.[616] Coercive sexual relationships formed an important component of the particular commodification women and girls faced in the slave trade. As Jessica Marie Johnson argues, African women underwent the violent processes of dehumanization and de-gendering, intent upon converting human beings into a trans-Atlantic currency. However the value of women and girls in the slave trade was always caught up with their value "as receptacles of licentious misuse." On many slave ships, officers were granted the perquisite of choosing women to serve as their personal slaves over the duration of the voyage.[617] In the context of the potential for unbounded abuse from crewmen, officers and even captive men, these arrangements could imply tenuous standing to make claims against certain transgressions of norms of violence aboard the ship. As the case aboard the *Courrier de Bourbon* shows, closeness, the language skills and political connections carried their own risks.

Perhaps the boy who alerted officers to the plot had targeted these women because of their access; perhaps the officers were aware of the significant role women often played in slave revolts, cognizant of the power certain captive women held by nature of their proximity to the officers' quarters, their coerced intimacy with officers' bodies, and some women's political sway among their fellow captives. What is certain is these were two women whose voices were valuable to their captors insofar as they could be forced to speak, and speak in French, and insofar as their Blackness operated as a transparent sign of their authenticity, of their unimpeded access to conspiratorial knowledge of the enslaved. These women's words, torn from their mouths by torture, speak to the thin margins of survival, the cruel differentiation of violence meted out to individuals aboard the ship.[618] Their place in this story underlines the fact that,

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teenagers or possibly older children. René Nurat Dugras, *Journal de bord du Courrier de Bourbon*, July 28, 1723, AN MAR/4JJ/15, pièce 21bis.

[616] Accounts vary on whether the rope was attached to his arm or his neck. The man died shortly afterward. While most witnesses mention only that the captive women complained, the captain mention "Julie" as the particular victim of the man. The fact that the captain named her, in connection with witness statements that mention women complaining to the officers, suggests that Julie was likely among those who resisted the man's transgressions. Procédures contre Sr. Le Breton, capitaine abord *La Georgette*, 1788, Procédures criminelles, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B4969.

[617] Jessica Marie Johnson, *Wicked Flesh: Black Women, Intimacy, and Freedom in the Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2020), 7,83.

[618] The logbook refers to particular extremity explicitly. "Notre Capitaine fis monter sur le pont deux Naigresses Lune de Goray et Lautre du Cenegalle elle discimulere de ne point entandre ce que voullest nous apprendre ce jeune noire pour nous garantir de leur paction apres les avoir esposse tous les deux sur un Canons pour estre fustigée le faint quelle nous euse espliquee ce que voullest dire ce jeune noire apres avoire fait chaticé plusieur autre noirs en ferocité quond nous avest dit estre du party la naigresse du Cenegalle ne voulan pas atandre ce Chatiment declara qun Naigre agée den Virons 45 ans estet le Sorciere qui lui a Bussait de Vainne Esperance ce que la Naigraisse de Goray Savest ausy Bien quelle mais elle ne voullu a Vouer sur le Champs ou Commanca a Chatiere cette Naigresse

despite the depersonalizing efforts in logbooks, enslavers knew their captives, sometimes by a name. Webs of interconnection were threaded through with violence and coercion. They unveil the means and avenues of communication that ran through the ship, the meager, unstable protections these avenues might promise enslaved people and the risks intelligibility could carry aboard the slave ship.

The archival record performs the work of the enslavers, effacing the cultural and social histories Africans carried with them into slavery, recreating people as commodities to be sold. Activity with religious valences, whether "dancing" or "sorcery" come to into the archival record insofar as they bear upon the fundamental question of political domination and processes of production for the market. This precedes a disinterest in religious behavior in general at sea, including the religiosity of crewmen and officers. While crewmen and officers alike continued to practice their faith at sea, efforts at conversion and religious uniformity aboard ship fell away once the state withdrew from the arena. Scholarship on eighteenth-century religion has traced similar transformations in religion, the emergence of new strands of religiosity that emphasized transcendence and interiority, as well as the translation of theology and religiosity into secular institutions and practices.[619] Charly Coleman argues that understandings of exchange and spiritual wealth embedded in early modern Capitalism, and particularly in the logic of the post-Tridentine Eucharist, fueled the French pursuit of wealth and informed a distinctly Catholic capitalist ethic.[620] With regard to colonialist theologies, Jared Hickman has argued that one strand of eighteenth-century Christianity that underpinned and gave religious cover to the slave trade, slavery and colonization was a view the social as the immanent and readable site of divine order and Providence.[621] This argument is particularly amenable to the incorporation of capitalism as a driving force in this process, as invested parties sought to cultivate power through the navigation of a predictable system. Predictability rather than uniformity became the new ideal, domination rather than conversion the path to that ideal. This explanation could bring coherence to the dual impulses of the 1680s to the 1720s, as French seamen all but ignored the religious status of their captives, while they watched their free shipmates with meticulous attention. Perhaps whatever threat Africans may have posed to the religious security of the ship was neutralized by the severity of their subjugation to Christian sovereignty. Devout slave traders likely also felt bolstered by the belief that they were carrying pagans to their salvation, leaving

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comme les autres Noires ce quelle ne puis souffrire sans aussy deClareur ce que la premiere avest Dit monstrant toujour ce Naigre pour Chef de la Resolution quille avest pris de Couper le Couls au Blancs a Cette deClaration on delibere du Consantemant Generalle tant pour linteray de la Compagnie que pour la surette de lequipage qui est en petit nmbre a Causse des desarteurs et des malades que pour lesxemble quillle est Nessessaire de Donner a de paraille Cargaison de le faire hisser au Boust de la Grande Vergue et de le tirrer a Coups de fusils jusque a ce que Mort pour imprimmer la Crainte outre de vouloire formee de paraille intantion a ce sugait." René Nurat Dugras, Journal de bord de *Courrier de Bourbon*, October 11, 1723, AN MAR/4JJ/15, pièce 21bis.

[619] David Bell, *The Cult of the Nation in France: Inventing Nationalism, 1680-1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001); Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); Jonathan Sheehan, *The Enlightenment Bible: Translation, Scholarship, Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Charly Coleman, "Resacralizing the World: The Fate of Secularization in Enlightenment Historiography", *The Journal of Modern History*, 82, 2 (2010), 368–95.

[620] Charly Coleman, *Spirit of French Capitalism: Economic Theology in the Age of Enlightenment* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021).

[621] Jared Hickman, "Globalization and the Gods, or the Political Theology of 'Race'", *Early American Literature*, 45 (2010), 145–82.

the tricky matter of conversion and baptism to specialists, priests in the colonies.[622] However, it would be unwise to overstate the coherence of Frenchmen's theological convictions or their attitudes, or to underestimate their capacity to compartmentalize, to live in contradiction. The evidence of callous indifference stains every page of the logbooks in the litany of unnamed deaths that lined the margins. Enslavers targeted their efforts towards simple physical security, to guard against any threat of revolt and preserve the lives and bodies of captives for a feverish market in the Caribbean. For the slave trader, the potential capaciousness of religious faith could only unsettle the tight line between the glittering promise of riches and the specter of death and financial ruin. Writing in defense of his officers' extreme punishment of insubordinate crewmen, on the Congo River in 1788, captain Le Breton of *La Georgette* expressed this fusion of economic need and physical security. He wrote to the Admiralty court, "their orders, their threats, the temporary corrections which, out of place and perhaps reprehensible under other circumstances, are found legitimate and even imperiously demanded by the first and most imperative of all laws, that of Necessity."[623] If the peculiar form of the punishments inflicted on the crew of *La Georgette* brought the captain to court, his defense expresses a common conviction, not unfounded, that life at sea slipped easily into a state of emergency.[624] Maritime trade produced a constant crisis that conjoined physical and financial security.[625] Seamen and officers lived their working lives in this state, recognizing that their lives as well as their livelihoods depended upon the swift execution of the voyage. It is this hyper-focus on profit as tied to survival, the ineluctable pull of capital accumulation, that gripped and transformed the boundaries of community at sea in the eighteenth century.

Seaborne Commercial Networks

Recent interventions in the economic historiography of early modern France have illustrated how credit, debt and money carried with it social and religious meaning. As Natalie Zemon Davis suggests, these forms of exchange operated alongside and often entwined with the powerful networks of meaning that inhered in the gift in early modern France. The well-to-do had access to significant credit, and all but the poorest conducted most of their business in bills of exchange and account books; the poor relied upon small coins and barter.[626] Status inflected practices of repayment as well, as lenders were often reticent to ask for payment, particularly when borrowers were of higher status. In addition, as Steven Kaplan has shown, credit was not simply a financial transaction, but it was also used "to stabilize ties between buyers and sellers, .

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[622] Robin Blackburn, *The American Crucible: Slavery, Emancipation and Human Rights* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2013), 88-89; idem, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso,1997), 64-65.

[623] "Leurs ordres, leurs ménaces, les corrections passageres qui, déplacées et peut-être répréhensibles dans d'autre circonstances, se trouvaient Légitimes et même imperieusemens ordonnés par la premiere et la plus imperative de toutes les lois, celle de la Necessité" Revolt abord *La Georgette,*1788, Procédures criminelles et affaires jugés par l'amirauté, Amirauté de Nantes, ADLA B13165.

[624] For extraordinary justice and emergency law in the *Ancien Régime* and its transformation in the Revolution, see Carla Hesse, "The Law of the Terror", *MLN*, 114 (1999), 702–18.

[625] Paul Cheney discusses the significance of precarity and crisis as defining aspects of the plantation economy on Saint-Domingue in the eighteenth century as well, while also noting the perdurance of traditional institutions and mentalities as shapers of early commercial capitalism. Paul Cheney, *Cul de Sac: Patrimony, Capitalism, and Slavery in French Saint-Domingue* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2017).

[626] Rebecca Spang, *Stuff and Money at the Time of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 10-14.

. . to give form and persistence to exchange."[627] If people in France and the colonies were increasingly dependent upon credit for their economic and social positions, this was even more the case at sea, far from other institutions of aid, social formation and support. The early decades of the century were marked by mutual obligations, by payment in diverse forms, from wages to specific victuals and services, but by the later years, wages and credit had become the primary mode of relations aboard ship.

In 1711, Antoine Douzonnille, second carpenter aboard *Le Solide*, dictated his testament to the ship's scrivener while moored at Wampou on the Pearl River. It begins with the formulaic preamble that starts every testament on this ship: "I leave my soul to God the Father, praying that by the merits of his son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the intercession of the Holy Virgin, to join the ranks of the blessed in his Holy Paradise." He left 300 *lt* to the widow Calvé, to repay her for the 116 *lt* loan she had granted him prior to his departure from Lorient. He owed 70 *lt* to the merchant Corbiller at Dieppe, 36 *lt* to a Dieppois ship's captain, 15 *lt* to the merchant Yvard at Dieppe. The remainder of his wages and profits would be given to the church at Lorient for prayers to be said for the repose of his soul. His matelot, the master carpenter François Britteuille, would serve as executor of his will, and for this, and for his "good friendship," Douzonnille "gave and made a present" to him of all that might be found in his sea chest. Lastly, if any money remained from the sale of his merchandise, it should be given to Jeanne Douzonnille, his daughter of around fifteen years at Dieppe.[628] Master sailmaker, Henry Cosic also listed the church as a central beneficiary of his will, donating 30 *lt* to his parish church, Notre Dame de Bon Secours in Quevin to pray for his soul and 20 to Notre Dame Sainte Anne Doray to fulfill a vow he made during a particularly rough storm after their departure from China. To the ship's chaplain, Père du May, he left 5 *lt* to pray for his soul, and that these three bequests be honored "in preference to all things." Beyond this, second sailmaker, Guillaume Hyvon could take whatever clothing or goods in his sea chest that might be useful to him; the remainder would be sold to the highest bidder. Cosic asked that his merchandise, however, be sold in Peru rather than aboard ship, in order to obtain the highest price. The proceeds, he implored his captain, must be delivered to his wife and children, "according to the custom of our province of Brittany." In comparison to his shipmate Douzonnille, Cosic had borrowed enormous sums over the course of the voyage. In China, he had borrowed 135 *lt* worth of merchandise from Robert Beins, the valet of Monsieur de Montaurant. He had lent Monsieur de la Brousse 252 *lt* and 8 *sols*, 50 *piastres* of which was owed to a Mr Staffort, second captain and the executor of the will, to be paid in Peru, and the ship's pilot, Jacques Chaulaud owed to Cosic 24 *lt*, in the form of a bill, the money for which must be given to "Richard, the King's baker at Port-Louis or to his wife." Cosic signed with an "X" suggesting that he possessed limited literacy at best.[629] Nevertheless, he, like so many others aboard ship, balanced a fairly remarkable set of credits and debts.

Church, family and seaborne community figured prominently in the wills of common seamen as well. Louis Cardinal, who died aboard *Le Solide* in 1712, left 10 *lt* to Notre-Dame-d'Auray. Any remaining salary would be paid to his cousin, Marion Mahay, and he left his seaborne personal possessions to his "matelots," Charles Oliero and Lucas Cangalle.[630] The first

[627] Kaplan, *The Bakers of Paris*, 377-378.
[628] Testament of Antoine Douzonnille aboard *Le Solide*, May 22, 1711, Minutes civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 101.
[629] Testament of Henry Cosic aboard *Le Solide*, August 10, 1712, AD56 9B 101.
[630] Testament of Louis Cardinal aboard *Le Solide*, September 4, 1712, AD56 9B 101.

statement after the preamble in the will of sailor Louis Marin is a debt owed to Sr. Michel Ory for 32 *lt* and 10 *sols*, which he asks the company to fill from his salary. "If any money remains" after paying that debt, he asked it to be used to pray for his soul, half given to "the Church" and half to François Azennere, assistant gunner on the vessel. Finally, his personal possessions onboard were to be given to his *matelot*, Bernard Le Brion, "for the care he took of him during the course of his illness. A later addition in another hand mentions an attached bill for two French *écus*, owed to Antoine Rouache to pay for needful goods supplied for Marin's voyage, signed aboard *Le Solide* on June 19, 1709. Pierre Raoul of Belse en Bretagne left all the proceeds from his possessions and salary to his "wife and very dear spouse," and asked her to make 11 separate donations to churches in Brittany, for a total of twenty masses and prayers for his soul. Later wills and testaments make no mention of donations to the Church. This pattern reflects what Pierre Chaunu has found for Paris over the eighteenth century, where the donation of masses in testaments fell dramatically after 1750.[631] These testaments are consumed by the donation of clothing and shipboard necessities to a *matelot* or several shipmates, and the payment of debts. Pierre Lorcy aboard *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste* in 1770 left all his necessities onboard to his *matelot*, while his debts included eight *roupies* to a ship outfitter, eight to two caulkers on the ship *L'Eléphant*, eight to a mate aboard *Le Saint-Charles* and 3 *piastres* to a gunner on *Le Saint-Jean-Baptiste*.[632] The webs of indebtedness reflect the interconnectedness of seaborne life, that men on three ships could be tied together by lending and borrowing in three separate currencies. Within the ship, debts and credits unveil the intertwined nature of social and economic bonds.

Seamen of the *Compagnie des Indes* regularly borrowed against their wages from the company for purchases from probate auctions, or to buy essential items, most commonly shirts and stockings, from the company. Aboard the *Neptune* on its 1723-1725 voyage to the East Indies, the vast majority of petty officers and seamen purchased shoes, shirts, pants, and tobacco from the *Compagnie*, bought a wide variety of items from probate auctions, and received advanced wages prior to embarkation, all using credit against their expected pay for the voyage. The widespread resort to credit advances, particularly among sailors, signals their utility to seamen on long distance voyages. An analysis of pricing and purchasing patterns on several axes suggests that these were market exchanges, not charitable giving or works of social solidarity. There is no indication that prices rose or fell for particular items due to shared place of origin or shared class aboard the ship, and sailors and officers alike bid for items regardless of the class of the deceased, if still cognizant of price. Moreover, the availability of company credit for use in probate auctions offered a unique access to liquidity for seamen on long distance voyages. Following the purchase and resale of items on a single ship can illustrate the role of credit and liquidity in probate auctions, as a component of broader trade aboard ship.

If probate auctions worked as market exchanges, their draw lay not necessarily in capital investment for profit but in the way they could provide use value and liquidity to men at sea. On May 18, 1735, less than a week after *La Flore* departed from Ouidah with 300 captives, sailor Jean Eon purchased a new pair of shoes, a *blanchet,* a used pair of tartan culottes, a necktie, a handkerchief and a cotton bonnet from the inventory of his departed shipmate, Etienne Dufresne. The crew had embarked nearly a year prior, and scurvy had begun to take its toll. Of 83 crewmen, only 65 would return to France. Eon survived the month-long passage to Principe, bidding on items from the auctions for two of the four men who died in the intervening weeks,[633]

[631] Pierre Chaunu, *La Mort a Paris* (Paris: Fayard, 1978), 411-436.
[632] Testament de Pierre Lorcy, March 27, 1770, SHD-L 2P 71-3.
[633] One of these men died just three days before Eon.

but he died shortly after the ship arrived at the island. By the time of Eon's own death, only Dufresne's shoes, and possibly his handkerchief remained among Eon's other possessions. Five of the six items Eon won from two auctions on May 30 and June 1 remained in his final inventory.[634] The sale value of those items that were resold from his inventory after his death was largely conserved. The new shoes were auctioned for 3.5*lt*, 3 sols over what Eon originally paid. The handkerchief likely also conserved its value, if it is the same item he purchased in a lot of three. The pair of ratine culottes, purchased on May 18 for 3.5*lt* sold on June 19 for the exact same price, though the black vest that sold on June 19 held only around half the value of the black vest Eon purchased on June 1. Elie Desmortiers, a sailor on *L'Aurore* in 1735, purchased three "old" shirts for 3.3*lt* each in February of 1735, and when he died in November, 5 "used" shirts sold from his inventory, again for 3.3 *lt* each. Other items that he won in auctions disappeared from his inventory before his death. Two pairs of shoes and a hat, bought for 15*lt* altogether, are nowhere to be found by November 12, 1735. He spent 16 *lt* total on four *pagnes*, Madras cloth wraps worn by free women in Gorée as symbols of distinction, that were also absent from his inventory after death.[635] He very likely traded the *pagnes* at Gorée in the ten days between their purchase and the ship's departure for Saint-Domingue in mid-August for food and drink, comfort and entertainment, industries often dominated by African women.[636] Shoes and hats, among other clothing, if not likely to be sold for a profit, could at least be sold or traded for something. If *piastres* and *écus* were found stored carefully in about half of all officers' belongings, just over ten percent of seamen carried money with them to sea.[637] Bonnets, shoes and shirts, among other items, could all serve as commodity money at sea. The destination and duration of the voyage could inflect the value, and prices fluctuated from decade to decade. Nevertheless, certain items maintained a robust baseline. *Chemises,* available by standard issue from the *Compagnie* at 1*lt*, but also a simple staple of any seaman's wardrobe, generally ranged in price from about 1*lt* to 3*lt*, depending on the quality and material, degree of use, and on the route traveled.[638] The average price for handkerchiefs likewise ranged within 1 and 3 *lt*.[639] Beverly Lemire has demonstrated that secondhand clothing operated as an alternative currency in early modern Europe, and spurred the extension and intensification of involvement in the market across a broad swath of the population.[640] If sailors could not borrow cash or credit directly from their employer for use at port or in independent exchange, they could borrow against their pay

[634] Probate Auction Records for Etienne Dufresne (May 18, 1735), Jean Hue (May 30, 1735), Claude Chauvin (June 1, 1735), and Jean Eon (June 19, 1735) aboard *La Flore* AD56 9B108.
[635] Jessica Marie Johnson, 29. Probate Inventories of *L'Aurore* (1734-1736), February 21, 1735, August 5, 1735, November 12, 1735, AD56 9B 109.
[636] Johnson, 19-24.
[637] This is based on an analysis I conducted of two-hundred probate auctions
[638] A preliminary analysis of 100 individual purchases of chemises from 9 voyages in the 1730s and 4 from the 1770s suggests that *chemises* were most expensive on voyages to China, then on Atlantic slave trade voyages, both of which saw averages of over 3*lt*, then the Indian Ocean trades, both slaving and direct, on which *chemises* averaged at around 2.5*lt*, then in the direct Atlantic trade to the Caribbean, on which *chemises* sold for around 1.8*lt* on average.
[639] My deepest thanks to Sean O'Connell for bringing this to my attention through his work on the database of French shipboard probate auctions from the 1730s and 1770s, and particularly for his analysis of the prices of *mouchoirs*. See also Beverly Lemire, "Men of the World: British Mariners, Consumer Practice, and Material Culture in an Era of Global Trade, c. 1660-1800", *Journal of British Studies*, 54 (2015), 288–319.
[640] Beverly Lemire, *The Business of Everyday Life: Gender, Practice and Social Politics in England, c. 1600-1900* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2005), 96-105.

and use the items they won at auction in turn to furnish comforts and needs at sea and at ports of call.

If this currency fueled the market activity and funded basic necessities and indulgences of seamen, it was not equally advantageous for all. There were few Black seamen aboard French ships during this period, but the documentation of their involvement in probate auctions suggests barriers to their successful exploitation of the market. Charles Antoine, a Black sailor from Mozambique, died at sea in May of 1736, as the 450-ton *La Reine* sailed its return voyage to France. He had embarked at Port-Louis in 1734 at a pay of 9*lt* per year.[641] It is likely he was enslaved, though the probate inventory makes no mention of his status, and his race is mentioned only in the roll book. Despite his extraordinarily low pay, Antoine purchased just over 34 *livres* worth of items from probate auctions onboard, mostly paying an amount comparable to that paid by his shipmates.[642] When those same items went up for auction after his own death, however, they were sold at a significantly lower price point, though their collective revenue, plus his salary, would just cover the debts he incurred through his prior bids. A wool blanket that Antoine purchased from a ship's boy's inventory in 1734 for over 4 *livres* sold in a lot alongside knitted stockings and a pair of shoes for 2.75 *livres* altogether.[643] He had paid 6 *livres* for a lot of two *chemises* purchased in 1735, but when ensign Jacques Lars purchased three *chemises* and one coat from Antoine's inventory, they went for one *livre* and five *sols.* It is likely that Charles Antoine wore his clothes heavily. His poverty, even relative to the ship's boys and sailors, would have made it nearly impossible to reserve clothing for resale, to use it as a currency rather than a necessity. This rapid rate of depreciation may also speak to white sailors' racist assumptions about the Black body. The probate auction of Jean-Baptiste Ollivier, a free Black man from Saint-Malo who embarked on *Le Maure* for its 1720 voyage to China, paid twenty *livres* per month, reveals a similar pattern. Again, trackable items from his purchase to their sale in his inventory show significant depreciation. A suit in gray cotton, which Ollivier purchased from the ship's cook in December of 1720 for the hefty sum of 45 *livres*, was sold for the sum of 15 *livres* at his own probate auction the following year.[644] Similarly, an "old" suit in brown ratine, purchased for over four *livres,* sold for around 1 *livre.* Only a pair of shoes, purchased one week before Ollivier's death, sold for their full purchase value at 11 *livres*, suggesting their durability and perhaps that Ollivier did not wear them. With this exception, the traceable items in Ollivier's and Antoine's inventories sold at around a third to a fifth of their original cost. While this is a very small sample, it contrasts with the general stability of clothing prices aboard ship. Even where prices did depreciate for white sailors' items, it was a matter of losing fifteen to twenty percent of their value, not sixty to eighty. I have yet to do a systematic analysis of comparable purchase and sale prices among the poorest white sailors. However, it seems likely that Blackness was a significant factor in the evaluation of clothing on a secondhand market,

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[641] The next lowest paid sailor was Jean Thomas Le Cos, paid 9 *lt* per month. Rôle de la Reine (1734-1736), Bureau des classes de Port-Louis puis de Lorient, SHD-L 2P 27-I.13, A.S.H.D.L.

[642] Without access to the *Compagnie*'s account book for this voyage, it is impossible to determine how he managed this. However, it seems potentially significant that the sale of his possessions totalled 18.25 *livres*, which, if added to the 15 *livres* he would have earned for just over one and a half years at sea, just covered the cost of his previous bids.

[643] In the table, I have suggested that each of the three items (the blanket, stockings and shoes) composed a third of the total value. This likely undervalues the shoes. Needless to say, 2.75 *livres* was a very low price for these three, particularly as they are not described as "old" or "dirty" or used as some other items are in the inventory.

[644] The auction specifies that the suit was "returned to Gaspard Housse" suggesting an arrangement outside of the usual here, perhaps involving a loan or credit agreement with Housse.

particularly one in which buyers were so familiar with the deceased. These cases, while limited, suggest that probate auctions, among other markets in credit, debt, commodities and currency, did not flow freely regardless of race and status. If all men relied upon these auctions to clothe themselves in the long years at sea, when cash and credit were short, not all men profited equally from that engagement. In an economy fueled by the clothing of the known dead, racist beliefs about Black bodies colluded with poverty to obstruct Black seamen's efforts to cultivate economic power aboard ship.

These same inventories unveil the ways Ollivier and Antoine used auctions to supply not just necessary clothing, but also goods for global trade. In 1734, Charles Antoine won a bid on two knives (another durable commodity currency), which do not appear in his 1736 inventory. Ollivier purchased two embellished shirts, also missing from his probate inventory. Likely, the two men traded these informally aboard the ship or at port, just as Adrien Duplessis, a free Black man from Martinique, would do forty years later. He worked as a cook for forty *livres* per month on the Nantes slave ship *La Duchesse* in 1772, where he purchased six pairs of stockings, one of them silk, a bonnet, a calico vest, two wigs and four handkerchiefs among other items.[645] Antoine, Ollivier and Duplessis illustrate the pull of seaborne markets and the broader pattern of accumulation of goods and particularly goods for global trade that defined the changing material life of all seamen over the second half of the eighteenth century.

Over the course of the eighteenth century, seamen's auctions suggest a greater participation in global trade, as well as a widening wealth gap between sailors and officers. A survey of 216 auctions from 29 voyages, 21 from the 1730s and 8 from the 1770s, shows a gradual and steady accumulation of objects in their possession. In the 1730s, sailors' inventories contained an average of 39 items, but by the 1770s they had 47 on average. Officers' inventories show a similar change, from 177 items to 237. Across the board, the number of items in a person's possession at the time of their death increased by about 25% from the 1730s to the 1770s, though the value of officers' inventories ballooned, from around 127 *livres* to over 1000 *livres*. Even the auctions *officiers mariniers*, or petty officers, in the 1770s produced nearly three times the average value of those in the 1730s, whereas those of seamen increased about fourteen percent.[646] This profusion of wealth, the silver buttons, crystal goblets and silk stockings, and the proximity to its making could only have encouraged seamen and petty officers to pursue similar, if more modest objectives. The number of items of clothing in the average sailors or major officer's inventory remained remarkably stable over the decades, at around twenty articles of clothing for sailors and around eighty-five to ninety articles for major officers in the 1730s and 1770s. Nevertheless, as a percentage of the total number of items in their inventories, clothing declined to around forty percent. Sailors' comforts rose gradually. Bedding became a standard item by the 1770s, as did tableware. By the 1770s, other items had crowded in, most dramatically stimulants, including coffee and tea and their accessories (pipes, *cafetieres* and teacups), and trade goods, including knives, *pagnes,* sugar loaves, and fabrics of varied sizes and qualities. While stimulants and associated items made up around two percent of sailors' items in the 1730s, they made up over ten percent in the 1770s. This steady increase in the number of comforts available to seamen reflects a "widening circulation of goods and the proliferation of public sites of consumption," as well as thriving illicit markets in tobacco, calicos, salt and other controlled

[645] Inventaire et vente des hardes de Jean Baptiste Zamite de Malta, March 4, 1772, ADLA B 4997.
[646] My sample size for the 1770s is small. It over-represents voyages to China, which could offer more fruitful options for trading on a small scale. Nevertheless, there is no indication that it represents an exceptional set of voyages or crews.

goods.[647] Like their contemporaries in France, sailors and officers alike invested with greater enthusiasm, and for many, greater urgency, in trade items, which in both cases rose from about twelve percent of their total items to over twenty, an increase of sixty to seventy percent. Many seamen hoped to supplement their wages with the profits from the *pagnes*, knives, and profusion of handkerchiefs that filled sea chests. After all, what else was sailor Nicolas Touroux to do with 159 pounds of coffee, purchased on his homeward voyage to Lorient in 1774, or Joseph Mallet with 13 cotton bonnets?[648] However, profits must have been slim and hard won, even at port, as Touroux likely discovered when he returned to France. He had paid just over nine sous and four deniers per pound coffee, but the going rate in Nantes was just nine sous in 1774, having fallen from thirteen sous over the course of his voyage.[649] Nevertheless, his decision to invest nearly a quarter of his yearly earnings in such a purchase underlines the draw of the market, the way it pulled men under its sway.[650]

As I suggested in my chapter on seamen and officers, probate auctions largely overtook the shared financial stakes and seaborne inheritance practices of *matelotage* that bound sailors together in the early decades of the century. In exchange for relationships of mutual care, men relied upon the surgeon for medical care, the captain for victuals, and capital to fill the gaps. A bundle of commodities, from blankets to teacups, had become the social safety net, with a wide-cast network of creditors that funded this net, and the debtors who put it into motion. In April of 1769, Yves Le Bret died on the Ganges River, indebted to an innkeeper, a fellow sailor, two priests, a merchant, a fiscal agent and the *Compagnie des Indes*. The two priests and the fiscal agent, all came from Le Bret's hometown of Saint-Germain de Matignon near Saint-Malo. The largest amount was credited with the fewest restrictions, only that Le Bret used it to compose a *pacotile*, keeping good account of his trade, so that he might share half the profits of the venture. With this exception and that of the *Compagnie*, every credit was loaned for the express purpose of purchasing red handkerchiefs or a variety of red and white or blue handkerchiefs on behalf of the buyer.[651] Le Bret acted as an agent for local connections, city merchants, clergymen and fellow seamen, weaving new routes to global trade. Every connection, and particularly those to merchants and higher officers, could smooth a seaman's own access to capital and opportunities to trade. The first bill listed underlines the way this additional work wove credit, debt and market exchange into the fabric of survival at sea. The innkeeper's bill was originally made out to a sailor from Le Bret's hometown of Saint-Germain de Matignon near Saint-Malo, who had embarked on other *Compagnie* voyages, for thirty-three *livres* and twelve *sols* "to live according

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[647] Kwass, 3,10.

[648] Probate Auctions for Denis Jego and René Gouello aboard *Le Bruny* (1773-1774), August 8, 1774, AD56 9B121; Probate auction for Yves Salaun aboard *Le Dauphin* (1773-1774), October 16, 1773 AD56 9B 121.

[649] This price is taken from sales of the *Compagnie des Indes* in Nantes. Henri Hauser, *Recherches et documents sur l'histoire des prix en France de 1500 à 1800* (Paris: Les Presses Modernes, 1936), 505.

[650] One surprising trend, which I have not had the time to fully test, is that there seems to be a decline in the proportion of seamen who spent more than a month's wages on probate auctions. In the 1730s, sailors spent between one and two months of wages on probate auction purchases, while in the 1770s, the average dropped to less than one month's wages. This may be simply an artifact of the small sample size from the 1770s, but it seems fairly remarkable, especially as twenty percent of seamen spent more than two months' wages on probate auctions in the 1730s, whereas that figure is only six percent in the 1770s. If this holds up across a broader sample of voyages, it suggests that probate auctions were of declining value for seamen, who likely relied on increasingly well networked and sophisticated trading and lending opportunities at port.

[651] A Saint-Malo merchant also lent him sixty-three *livres* and twelve *sous*, and the *Compagnie des Indes* had leant him fifty sous. Probate inventory and auction for Yves Le Bret, *Le Massiac* (1768-1769), April 21, 1769, Inventaires des Hardes des morts et pieces déposées en greffe, AD56 9B 120.

to [his] needs." If a growing majority of day laborers, who earned roughly equivalent to seamen over most of the century, died with debt, seamen's distance from other communal institutions accentuated their reliance on commerce to supply needs and comforts and to mediate social and political bonds.

Consumer Revolutions?

The historiography of seamen has shown them often to be at the forefront of revolutionary movements, essential conduits for news and goods, both illicit and as agents of the state.[652] Some, most notably Marcus Rediker, have made compelling arguments that seamen lived on the cusp of the cresting wave of emergent global capitalism, and pioneered working-class strategies of resistance. Nevertheless, as Alain Cabantous has shown for France, coordinated rebellions at sea generally targeted the captain, not the entire officer class, a revolt against poor leadership rather than one against class inequality. Moreover, armed mutinies (as opposed to work stoppage or other forms of resistance and insubordination) were extraordinarily rare.[653] I came across only four cases of armed mutiny on long distance voyages in my survey of admiralty court criminal cases in Rouen, Bordeaux, Vannes, and Nantes across the eighteenth century, though the peculiarities of preservation suggest that this is a better indicator of rough scale than final number.[654] Sailors tended to resort to other methods of resistance, from shirking and striking to property destruction and theft.[655] Some resorted to violence at port and rumors to attack their former officers and captains.[656] Nevertheless, the apparent rarity of revolt is striking when compared to the frequency of slave revolts, which are documented on almost 150 French slaving voyages from 1680 to 1790.[657] Clearly, seamen had much more to lose from open revolt, much less to gain, and a greater variety of avenues by which to register and redress their grievances. Moreover, the motivations for armed mutiny expose an investment in, rather than rejection of, the values of the capitalist market.

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[652] Lemisch, "Jack Tar in the Streets"; Scott, ''Negroes in Foreign Bottoms'", 69–98.

[653] Cabantous found around thirty total "mutineries" (a category that certainly includes insubordinate speech, shirking and work stoppage) in the admiralty records of Dunkerque, Calais, Boulogne, Dieppe, Le Havre, Morlaix and Bordeaux. The Archives nationales preserved closer to one hundred, and he estimates around 200 to 250 episodes of rebellious activity in the French maritime world from 1680 to 1789, again including all categories of resistance. While there were undoubtedly countless "murmurings" and less serious offenses that slipped through or never made it to the archives, but it is very unlikely that full scale, armed revolts against ship leadership are seriously underrepresented. Alain Cabantous, *La Vergue et les Fers: Mutins et Déserteurs dans la marine de l'ancienne France (XVIIe-XVIIIe s.)* (Paris: Éditions Tallandier,1984), 17, 391.

[654] This focus on coordinated, armed rebellion, in combination with the restriction of my study to four admiralty courts in France, helps explain the dramatic difference between my count of four mutinies from 1680 to 1790 and Marcus Rediker's estimate of sixty for all of Britain in the first half of the eighteenth century. Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 227.

[655] Property destruction and theft could take the form of the men eating sugar from the cargo on the *Ange Gardien* (see above) or dumping oranges, destined for the table of a colonial elite rather than the messes of the nutritionally deprived sailors, into the sea. Information faite à la requête de Bernard d'Arbeins cy devant maistre du vaisseau nommé *Les Trois Frères* de Bordeaux contre Arnaud Constans, François Faure, Jacques Martin, August 31, 1700, Procédures, Amirauté de Guyenne, AD33 6B1099.

[656] Procedure contre Divers Matelots abord *L'Esperance de Bordeaux*, 1706, AD33 6B1120.

[657] These were not criminal offenses, and generally produced little documentation. Nevertheless, I came across seventeen slave revolts among logbooks and *procès verbaux* over the course of my research. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/TMvsPqJG, Accessed June 6, 2023.

Crewmen led two of these four mutinies, which bookend the century. When news of recent persecutions reached Huguenot captain, Pierre Pain, upon his arrival in Cayenne in 1681, he resolved to sail to Barbados, and settle in Boston. His ambitious plans were frustrated by seamen, perhaps pious Catholics, but also likely men eager to complete their voyage as planned and return to France to be paid. They seized control of the ship and attempted to sail it to Martinique. Fortunately for Pain, the sailors and petty officers of the *Trompeuse* were forced to rely upon their captain's navigational skill when they missed Martinique entirely, and they enlisted Pain to sail to Saint-Domingue. Pain deceived his subordinates, guiding the ship safely into port in Jamaica even as he claimed he was directing them to Saint-Domingue. In Jamaica, Pain managed to secure several years of refuge before he was ultimately returned to Saint-Domingue under international political pressure from the French governor.[658] Pain was eventually executed by the French state; the sailors were not. Their mutiny, though unsuccessful, rested upon the legitimacy of their duty to the state and financiers of the voyage, and on their role as communal arbiters in matters of religion. While duty still held its rhetorical and legal potency by the later half of the following century, seamen made many fewer appeals to religion; captains might be "barbarous" and sailors "disobedient," but the creeping threat of devilish inspiration made few appearances in court testimony.[659] Necessity, and in particular the necessity of profit, ruled the day. Aboard the *Jeune Félicité* in 1774, six replacement sailors mutinied. Five Frenchmen and a Brit, they had been taken on at Saint-Domingue to replace deserters from the original crew. As Azores came into view on the return voyage, the men seized the deck, murdering the sailor on watch and the bosun in the process, and demanded their promised wages, 330 *livres* in total, in coin. When the captain revealed he was not carrying enough silver to meet their demands, they held the ship hostage, with captain, officers and other crewmen locked in the wardroom. They eventually raided the crew's sea chests for clothing and money, and seized a barrel of wine, tafia, beef, carpenters' tools, a compass, navigational tools and texts, and two hams. They loaded this all into the ship's longboat and rowed out of sight, presumably to the Azores.[660] These sailors' demands, and what they took instead, underline the poverty of seamen and their reliance on liquidity for basic necessities. It also underlines the accentuated importance of financial connections for seamen in the late eighteenth-century. It is no accident that these men were all taken on as replacements and therefore very likely had few to no creditors onboard, making them particularly reliant on hard currency. Likewise, the captain's lack of coin reveals the pervasiveness of credit aboard ship. The mutineers aboard *La Jeune Félicité* risked their lives in pursuit of a total of 60 *livres* each, or 30 *livres* per month, roughly equivalent to the pay of a Parisian laborer at the time.[661] While their shipmates were content with the promise of payment, these sailors wanted it in cash, or at very least in fungible items like clothing. If food and drink

[658] Interrogatoire de Pierre Pain, Intendant de Justice Police et Finances des Isles Françoises de l'Amerique, August 2, 1684, Procédures de l'Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP303.
[659] Procédure contre Sieur Cleret Capitaine du navire *Le Bailly*, voyage de New York, ADSM 216BP286; Procès Verbal des officiers et Equipage aux Iles des Idoles sur *Le Boufflers*, capitaine Rio-Kerlauret, April 12, 1787, AD56 LZ 71.8; Procédure Entre Msr le Procureur du Roi au Siege de l'amirauté de Guyenne, accusateur et demandeur en réparation d'exces commis sur la personne du lieutenant du Navire la Delphine, pendant le voyage etc retour dudit navire de St Mark a Bordeaux, June 28, 1771, AD33 6B 664.
[660] Procédure criminelle contre l'équipage du navire *La Jeune Félicité* révolté à bord, 1773, AD33 6B 1670.
[661] George Rudé, "Prices, Wages and Popular Movements in Paris during the French Revolution" *The Economic History Review* vol. 6, no. 3 (1954), 248.

were necessities, so were the tools and guides that would help them navigate to safe harbors, and so were the means of trade.[662]

The slave ship, *La Douce Marianne*, sailed from Dunkirk with a crew of 28 to the Sierra Leone estuary in 1763. At Sierra Leone, more than 300 men, women and children were forced aboard the ship over the months of November and December before it set sail for Saint-Domingue in late December of 1763. While moored at the coast, Frederic Roguin, the supercargo (an agent of the shipowner in charge of the cargo), fought with the captain, and with the help of the crew seized the ship and took command, imprisoning captain Pierre Sauvage onboard, first in his own cabin, then on a shed on deck. Newly empowered, Roguin and his allies indulged at the expense of the people they held captive and the account of the ship. A statement to the admiralty court at Le Havre recounts that the mutineers "abused the provisions" to the extent that they were forced to restrict food to their captives, which Roguin chose to carry out by starving the old and infirm in order to better preserve the value of healthier young men. Other documents recount the mass sexual abuse of captive women onboard, as the mutineers laid claim to rape as one of several privileges generally reserved for officers. The statement to the admiralty credits mismanagement, abuse and deliberate deprivation for the high rates of death among African captives on the voyage.[663] Roguin and the mutinous crew revelled in the thrill of transgression, in their full bellies, and in the enactment of their ownership over the bodies of others. Nevertheless, this was not uncalculated libertinage. Rather, mutineers balanced their desires against the demands of the market, and they invested scarce resources, in this case food, in the captive people who were most likely to bring a high price at sale. Crewmen and officers alike increasingly pursued access to the market, not only as a font of fantasies but as the source of basic needs. This stood in contrast to the people they held captive, who were not simply excluded from participation in the market but treated as objects of trade. These few cases of mutiny underline this power of the market and the weak points of shipboard solidarity.

African captives on slaving ships took every opportunity to resist their commodification aboard the slave ship. This resistance took myriad forms, from caring for shipmates and their children to exploiting the desires of their captors for translators, servants and companions. The most dramatic illustration of resistance came in the high rate of slave revolts. An estimated ten percent of all slaving voyages witnessed the uprising of captive people against their captors.[664] According to the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, 101, or just over four percent of the slaving voyages that departed from Bordeaux, Le Havre, Lorient, Vannes and Nantes in the years between 1715 and 1800 have extant documentation of a slave revolt onboard. Of the just over one hundred extant logbooks from Nantes and Lorient, fourteen mention slave revolts. What is immediately clear is that slave revolts occurred with much greater frequency than mutinies. These revolts required extraordinary coordination, political and military savvy, and in many cases, relied upon cultural and religious practices to cement bonds between the men, women and children who took up arms, and bolster them for the fight to come.

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[662] This case also suggests that many sailors may have held onto as much of their advances as possible, or at the very least relied upon probate auctions throughout the voyage for currency with which to support themselves upon their return.

[663] Procédure contre Frederic Roguin, 1764, Minutes diverses, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216BP307. The shipowner and financier of the voyage was Charles Davy de la Pailleterie, uncle of Alexandre Dumas. Tom Reiss, *The Black Count: Glory, Revolution, Betrayal, and the Real Count of Monte Cristo* (New York: Crown Publishers, 2012), 49-50.

[664] David Richardson, "Shipboard Revolts", 72.

Few indications of cultural beliefs or background filtered into the spare accounts of slave revolts, written by ships' officers, who were overwhelmingly interested in conveying a sense of surprise, the unexpected failure of careful measures of defense, and the processes by which they restored order to the ship and secured the captive cargo. Nevertheless, the recurrence of broken barrels of wine and liquor in several revolts suggest that negotiations and plots below deck were not simply consumed with political and military strategy, but also with spiritual potency and, perhaps, rites of socio-spiritual cohesion.

The revolt aboard the *Concorde* on July 7, 1732, is particularly suggestive because of the level of detail in the *procès verbal*, including references to liquor and drunkenness and because of the particular violence against women and children during the revolt. According to the enslavers' informant, a "*captive de l'infirmerie*", his shipmates were at work undoing their fetters, and, under the leadership of six slave guardians and three captive women, were plotting to kill all their captors and to "have the women" to themselves. When six crewmen descended into the darkness of the 'tweendecks, "which [they] had made a custom of doing each night at the slightest sound", their captives knocked the lanterns and candles they carried to the floor, plunging them all into darkness before the captive men fell upon the sailors. The crew pulled five of the six men up through the hatch and blocked it with iron bars, leaving gunner Michel Alis, already dead, below. The revolt continued on throughout the night, with the African men continuing their pressure on the hatches, with the aim of seizing the main deck. Eventually, repulsed from the hatches by gunshots, grenades and bayonets, they broke through the barricado separating the mens' from women's and children's quarters. In the *procès verbal*, the enslavers suggested that they aimed to "enjoy" the women and hoped to gain access to the officers' quarters through the *parc des femmes*. Once there, however, they found that their captors had already reinforced the barrier to the officers quarters, making passage impossible. Meanwhile, the enslaved men of *La Concorde* broke into the hold and retrieved supplies of rum, allegedly to give to the women and to the men who still worked to unchain themselves. The sailors, or likely enslaved allies, shouted down offers of peace "in their language" if the captives stopped their noise ("bruits"), to which the revolters replied that they simply wanted to kill their enslavers and return to their country, and "then continued their work and cries." Others worked throughout the night to open the portholes and, grabbing wood from the hold, jumped to the sea and swam to shore under the shelter of a moonless night. Daybreak made escapees at sea easy targets for officers shooting from the deck and brought an end to the revolt, and the crew heard sounds of the men putting their chains back on, resigned to their enslavement for the moment, and likely hoping to evade the worst punishments. The crew forced the men up to the main deck, two by two, and replaced irons where they had been removed. When officers inspected the *parc des femmes*, they found fourteen women dead, suffocated, violated and smelling of alcohol. Ten teenage girls also lay dead, suffocated and raped, and three boys or teenagers "drunk and suffocated." One man was found dead, also drunk and suffocated, and seven others whose bodies bore the scars of the bayonets, bullets and grenades wielded by their captors. The overall outcome of the revolt is unclear. The *procès verbal* only declares 32 captive deaths in the revolt, though only 266 of 510 people originally embarked at the Bight of Benin arrived in the French Caribbean. It would not be surprising for survival rates in the Middle Passage after a revolt would be severely curtailed. The stress of the revolt likely took a toll. Most importantly, however, enslavers surely employed elevated security measures and punitive violence, including keeping men in fetters, curtailing rations, and perpetrating a higher level of quotidian violence against enslaved people, as vengeance against rebellious cargo. Nevertheless, it is likely that

many of the people who jumped to the sea off the coast of Keta made it to shore, and perhaps to at least temporary safety (though recapture would have been a serious threat). The 244 people between the 510 who embarked on the African coast and the 266 who arrived at Martinique likely represent a mix of escapees and the dead.[665]

The brief reference to captives' seizure and consumption of barrels of rum onboard, as well as the description of many of the dead as "suffocated" and "drunk" bears further interrogation. While the distribution of rum among the men and women of the 'tweendecks could have been simply an effort to fortify people's bodies and courage in their effort to escape bondage, captives onboard very likely understood it in the context of rum-based oaths. Most of the captives aboard *La Concorde* had been traded at Ouidah, and most likely shared in Aja-Fon cultural traditions that penetrated among inland groups. Rum-based oath drinks were common among Aja-Fon peoples in the Bight of Benin, and they surface among people of Aja-Fon origin or descent, held in bondage in the Caribbean. In Dahomey and Saint-Domingue, oath drinks mixed rum, gunpowder, dirt from ancestors' graves, and cock's blood, but aboard ship, of course, only rum was readily available. More than simply ceremonial, rum was seen as holding the power to recruit the spiritual aid of ancestors and to bind participants with supernatural force. Moreover, the *Concorde* was not the only ship on which captives in revolt broke into reserves of rum and drank heavily. Aboard the *Jeannette* in 1743, which also carried slaves from the Bight of Benin and the Ivory Coast, the scrivener wrote that the captives were drunk on rum. In both cases, no other barrels were damaged, suggesting captives deliberately sought out rum, as opposed to water or food.[666]

This context may shed some light on the women and children killed during the revolt below deck. The claim that captives were motivated to revolt by promises that they might "have the women," seems incongruous with the acts of the majority of captives, who devoted their energies to loosing their chains and preparing to swim to shore. That three women were accused of leading the revolt, alongside the slave guardians, suggests that at the very least, not all women were subjected to the same treatment. It is very possible that the women and the teenage girls victimized in the revolt were among those selected for particular abuse and attention from the officers. The three boys who were killed might likewise have been forced to work as servants, informants or entertainers for the officers of the ship. To force them to drink alcohol to the point of suffocation created a spectacle of their subjugation and, through the spiritual power of the oath drink, bound their loyalty and spiritual power to the resistance movement, undermining any assistance they might have leant to their enslavers.[667] The sexual violence allegedly enacted against the women is harder to assess. It calls up familiar tropes in European racist thought of hypersexual Black men and the associated paranoid fears that enslaved men in revolt sought primarily to rape white women or keep them as concubines.[668] Every woman aboard the

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[665] Declaration abord *La Concorde*, July 7, 1732, Minutes civiles, Amirauté de Vannes, AD56 9B 208.

[666] Aboard the *Annibal*, which sailed from Senegambia in 1729, as captives broke into the wine and the rum. Adam Joullain, Journal de bord de *La Jeannette*, October 5, 1743, ADLA B 5006/1; Journal de bord de *l'Annibal*, May 26, 1729, AN MAR/4JJ/17 pièce 42.

[667] There were other occasions when enslaved people forced their opponents to drink oath drinks during a revolt. Frederick H. Smith, "Rum, Oaths, and Slave Uprisings in the Age of Revolution" *Age of Revolutions*, https://ageofrevolutions.com/2016/12/07/rum-oaths-and-slave-uprisings-in-the-age-of-revolution/ (December 7, 2016). Accessed 5/1/2023. Idem, Caribbean Rum: A Social and Economic History (Gainesville, FL, 2005). Neville A. T. Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies: Saint Thomas, Saint John and Saint Croix*, B. Higman, ed. (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 1992), 223.

[668] Sharon Block, *Rape & Sexual Power in Early America* (University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 219-220.

Concorde would have been vulnerable to sexual assault aboard ship, but perpetrators aboard slaving ships were overwhelmingly, if not always, the enslavers. Nevertheless, in context, it seems plausible that captive men, including the slave guardians and their three female co-conspirators, targeted fourteen women and ten "older girls" for forced drinking to the point of death and for sexual assault, laying claim to them through violence, bringing them low to evince their weakness, and importantly, the weakness of their French allies below deck. If oaths aboard ship carried spiritual significance, as they did in Africa and in the Caribbean, these practices may illustrate one way African religious beliefs informed shipboard revolt, and cohered spiritual and political energy around resistance and escape amidst and through the extraordinary violence of the trade.

The use of rum itself underlines the transformations to African religiosity in the Atlantic and across global trade routes. Palm wine and a variety of beers had long been staples in West Africa, but there was no distilled alcohol prior to European imported rum. Rum was an important component of European trade for slaves, comprising around 5% to 10% of European imports to West Africa in the eighteenth century, where it was used for oaths, but also for religious rituals of varied forms.[669] Trading on the coast often relied on rum as a payment for intermediaries, as a gift for powerful African merchants and political powers, and as a lubricant for congenial trade. It was also frequently given to captives aboard slaving ships to slacken their fear and distress, and as a preventative health drink. This place of rum in oaths was a distinctly Atlantic practice, one impossible without integration into global markets. If European slave traders purchased the men, women and children aboard *La Concorde* with rum, enslaved people made use of rum to forge new communal bonds within slavery; they made spiritual and social meaning through the consumption of new global goods. In a way distinct but not entirely separable from that of sailors and officers, many of the captives aboard *La Concorde* articulated their liberty, their social and spiritual order through claims to ownership, most particularly through the abuse and consumption of global products. For most, rum sufficed. Others, it seems, constructed their freedom upon their own capacity to lay claim to another's body, forcing others to partake in rum, perhaps a coercive mockery of the oath drink, that demonstrated their own power to determine the limits of their jurisdiction below deck and to coerce submission. The 27 women and children who suffocated on *La Concord* were victims of contested claims of possession, but surely they made their own claims of belonging, some perhaps recently sewn among them onboard, and many that stretched out across the surf to their communities of origin.

Slave revolts were necessarily opportunistic, their form and strategies varying dependent upon the particular weaknesses of each ship, each crew, and by the opportunities that arose. However, those who revolted against their oppressors were not simply atoms, bound together by impersonal force, but people who carried their traditions and cultural tools into extreme circumstances and put them to use for their survival. Scholars have demonstrated the cost these revolts imposed upon the trade, directly through loss, but also through insurance, through the cost of extra crewmen to guard against uprisings, through the chains and varied implements used to constrict movement aboard the ship. Historians of slavery have demonstrated that, by resisting their enslavement, in revolt and in the myriad ways they resisted commodification social death,

[669] C.H. Ambler, "Alcohol and the Slave Trade in West Africa, 1400-1850" in W. Jankowiak & D. Bradburd (eds.) *Drugs, Labor and Colonial Expansion* (Tucson, AZ: University of Arizona Press, 2003), 75; José C. Curto, "Alcohol under the Context of the Atlantic Slave Trade", *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines*, 51 (2011), 52; Sweet, *Domingos Álvares*, 50; Robin Law, 'West Africa's Discovery of the Atiantic', 44 (2011), 17.

people in bondage articulated a new concept of freedom.[670] Jessica Marie Johnson illuminates this concept of freedom as a practice, centered around "safety and security for themselves and their progeny," which is particularly meaningful for the varied practices described in this chapter.[671] The woman called Julie aboard *La Georgette*, the people in revolt and those who suffocated on *La Concorde*, the woman who left her child in the arms of a shipmate before sought the refuge of the sea, all sought some form of security, some promise of solace and protection in the fragile social bonds aboard the ship. Closed out of the seamen's world of credit and the fantasies of profit, they transformed the goods of trade into the medium of spiritual and social communion to create social worlds aboard ship. Perhaps less than one percent of all captives stolen away in the transatlantic slave trade managed to escape through shipboard revolt. Nevertheless, those Africans who managed to escape to shore, as some of those aboard *La Concorde* must have on the night of July 7, 1732, represent thousands of people who clawed back a chance at survival, an opportunity to insist upon their belonging among their shipmates in resistance, among the ancestors they called upon and among their families and communities, whom they carried in memory and to whom they hoped to return.

Conclusion

With the strengthening of the market as a defining social force, crewmen cultivated the power to participate and the visible signs of participation (clothing, accessories, the ornaments of the body). This pursuit of market goods weakened their affinity to their professional groups, and it weakened their financial security, but it put greater pressure on the need to cultivate allies among their social superiors. At the same time, for Africans held captive aboard ship, the market was the engine of their oppression, but in rare cases it could also supply the material for their spiritual and social formation. Their shared status as property of the ship, most often overwhelmed the privileges and meager protections that might be afforded to individuals based on their service or intimacy, as a driver of action. Through remarkable collaboration with their newfound shipmates, men, women and children drew upon expertise, talents, access, shared cultural traditions, and on religiously and politically informed practices of consumption to forge alliances and force their captors to recognize their bodily autonomy and their place in webs of belonging rather than speedy networks of trade.

[670] Eric Foner, "The Meaning of Freedom in the Age of Emancipation", *The Journal of American History* 81, no. 2 (Sep. 1994), 435–60; Rebecca J. Scott, and Jean M. Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, 2012).
[671] Johnson, 3.

Chapter 4. Death, Place and Belonging

17 degrees, 7 minutes North, 37 degrees, 12 minutes West of the Tenerife Meridian, two men, one woman, and one nursing infant died of dysentery. The crew threw their bodies unceremoniously over the side of the 350-ton frigate, *La Comtesse*, and the slave ship sailed on. They died on November 17, 1740, twelve days' sail from Fort Senegal, in the waters just Northeast of the meeting of the Canary Current and the North Equatorial Current.[672] This location, this moment in history shimmers in and out of visibility. Like a flash of sunlight reflecting off the water, it blinds us with a spectacle of violence, and in a moment, the dullness and brevity of the language in the sources cover it in darkness.

Captain Le Houx and his pilot do not name these four people in their meticulously kept logbooks. They do not pause to witness a mother's sorrow or a companion's song of mourning. They mention only the sex and relative age for these dead and for the 77 other captive people who died in the Middle Passage. Yet, the dead chart the route of this voyage. Two captive men and five crewmen died before their departure from Senegal, and devastating losses struck the men, women and children below deck as they crossed the Atlantic in the five-week passage, when deaths averaged fourteen people weekly. Twenty-one enslaved people had lost their lives in the seven days preceding November 17, 1740.

Despite the brevity of Captain Le Houx's logbook entries, the events noted in the margins were not just glimmers, brief moments of blindness and visibility, but processes that took time and took place. Their shimmering in and out of sight in the archives is merely a sleight of hand by the pilot, a product of his callous indifference to these human lives and a further violence against their memory. It is the work of this chapter to uncover the places of the dead in the voyage, to attempt to reconstruct the ways they marked the shifting waters of the sea.

The Specter of Disappearance

We can only begin to imagine the last moments between the infant and his mother on *La Comtesse*, the warmth of his cheek, the beat of her heart, the last touch of a child's light fingers on his mother's shoulder. We can only imagine, and even the act of imagining tempts us to construct a romance of those last moments, something livable from the abyss.[673] These last moments aboard *La Comtesse* enfolded into millions more aboard the roughly 35,000 slaving voyages that sped the expansion of global capitalist investment across the Atlantic from the sixteenth through the nineteenth century.[674] Scratched hastily into the margins, or noted with care in the text of their *journaux de bord*, captains recorded the deaths of enslaved people, passengers and crewmen, marking the events that filled up deep sea lanes with the wreckage of lives.

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[672] Joseph Le Houx, Journal de bord de *La Comtesse*, November 17, 1740, Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81.

[673] Saidiyah Hartman writes of a similar impulse to "fill in the gaps and to provide closure where there is none," and to create a story of friendship between two girls who died aboard a slave ship. She argues that this impulse serves only to console herself, and that to do justice to the enslaved requires historians to "imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal death—and to reckon with the precarious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance." Hartman, "Venus in Two Acts", 8.

[674] Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 188.

Engulfed by the enormity of the numbers of the dead and the speed with which the death rates swept away lives, the individual losses appear to bleed together. The places of burial, the events of November 17, 1741, sink below the deluge of death. However, through attention to place, we can hold the individuality of each person, while contemplating the significance of the collective story. It mattered where a woman lost her child, and each of the 84 burials on this voyage marked a moment of meaning, a place where time stopped.[675] Each human loss carried grief, and each demanded ritual address to articulate where and to whom the dead belonged.

The question of belonging bears not only upon the grief and bonds of individuals at sea, but according to a model proposed by anthropologist Tine Gammeltoft, it bears upon the very construction of subjectivity.[676] She argues that "rather than conceiving subjectivity in . . . terms of autonomous agency, the anthropology of belonging attends to the ways in which individuals come into being through mutual relations of possession, attachment, and dependency."[677] Gammeltoft distinguishes this existential form of belonging from mere economic possession. However, recent scholarship on eighteenth-century networks of credit and debt suggests that the social, spiritual and economic facets of belonging and possession are not so easily disentangled. The slave ship was a site where these facets pressed up upon each other. Despite enslavers' efforts to define their relations to captives in purely economic terms, Africans were, of course, social beings whose selfhood was expressed not only through the binary of submission or resistance, but also through "imagined, claimed or socially practiced dependencies and commitments."[678] Placing belonging at the center of the analysis recognizes the places and work of enslaved people in the broader social and cultural world of the ship. While these dependencies were practiced and claimed in many ways, death broached the question of belonging with particular imminence, and particularly on slaving ships where different groups contested the meaning of belonging, ownership and who could lay claim to the dead.

Mortality at Sea

Losses aboard ship could be staggering, particularly on slaving voyages and particularly among the enslaved. Scholars of the Middle Passage have debated the meaning of counting the bodies. At the most basic level, it depends on a logic that seems to approach that of the slave traders—a kind of reduction of the significance of a person and their human suffering to a number, and an implication that the meaning of the Middle Passage could depend upon the addition or subtraction of bodies in the long list of the dead.[679] Ian Baucom describes this

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[675] This count of 84 includes 77 captives and 7 crewmen and officers.

[676] Gammeltoft's approach, building on a broader literature on belonging and subjectivity, opens a more nuanced understanding of "agency-in-subordination." Matei Candea, "Anonymous Introductions: Identity and Belonging in Corsica", Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute, 16 (2010), 119–37; Tine M. Gammeltoft, "Belonging: Comprehending Subjectivity in Vietnam and Beyond", Social Analysis, 62 (2018), 77; Elspeth Probyn, *Outside Belongings* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[677] Gammeltoft, 88.

[678] There is a tendency in the historiography of slavery (and of subaltern populations in general) to recognize agency only in those whose resistance to enslavement is documented. Looking to belonging as a source of agency widens our recognition of historical action beyond the question of submission or resistance to consider the myriad ways people reconstructed social bonds in slavery. Gammeltoft, 77-78.

[679] Morgan writes, "Demographic projections suggest that the methodological requirements of quantifying the totality of the trans-Atlantic slave trade will resolve the passions that fuel accusations of *Maafa* (atrocities committed against Africa and Africans, underdevelopment, and persistent European and Euro-American depravity)." She notes that this kind of quantification can also serve to minimize the human cost as high numbers are

capacity of modern finance capital to convert "anything it touches into a monetary equivalent," as a kind of "specter of capitalism," which subsumed a second specter of a "wounded, suffering human body, incessantly attended by an equal sign and a monetary equivalent."[680] An unscrupulous reading of slave traders' accounts of the dead threatens this kind of historiographical violence against the enslaved, an erasure of their experience and social bonds from history, much as the violence of Atlantic slavery snuffed out their lives.[681]

Beyond the troubling erasure that accompanies the records of humans-as-numbers, the calculation of death rates as a numerical figure can obscure the partiality of the records. The archival record reflects most closely the interests of slaving captains aboard a fraction of the total vessels who sailed the Middle Passage. Multiple records from the same voyage often offer different information for the place of purchase, number of enslaved people onboard, even the tonnage and rig of the ships. The largest database on the Middle Passage, the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, is estimated to include 95% of all French slaving voyages and a similar percentage of British and Dutch voyages, though the data on Iberian voyages, many of which date from before the eighteenth-century, are much less complete.[682] Thus, even counting the totality of people enumerated in account books and ships' logs threatens to only contribute a false sense of finality to a number that leaves out those deaths a captain neglected to include (or sought to hide) and the ships whose records are forever lost.[683]

Nevertheless, numbers can give a sense of scale, and the information they convey, as well as the information they hide, broach new questions.[684] The numbers signify the scale and proportions, but not the totality, of loss of life aboard these ships. On average three out of every

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often "dismissed as 'dogmatic Afrocentrism' while lower numbers are accepted as scholarly, rational." Morgan, "'Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 188. See also Vincent Brown, *Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), 28-29.

[680] Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*, 7.

[681] This terrible silence echoes through Saidiya Hartman's *Lose Your Mother*, where she traces the inheritance of loss and disconnection that makes the Middle Passage flicker in and out of visibility in the historical record. Hartman also theorizes the replication of violence and the spectacle of excess in historiography in her article "Venus in Two Acts." She argues for the production of "counter-histories" which do not "give voice to the slave, but rather . . . imagine what cannot be verified, a realm of experience which is situated between two zones of death—social and corporeal—and to reckon with the precearious lives which are visible only in the moment of their disappearance." Saidiya Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007); idem, "Venus in Two Acts", 12-13.

[682] David Eltis, David Richardson, *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on The New Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 11.

[683] While any archival set inherits the conceptual framework of its creators, documents that yield numerical data require particular attention because of their tendency to obscure partiality. Jennifer Morgan writes, "the very data through which the specificity can be attained is part and parcel of the technology by which Africans and their descendants are rendered as outside the scope of Man." Barbara Solow comments on this inherent partiality of demographic records, and the importance of the reader to remain attentive to the intended political uses of documents. Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 189; Barbara L. Solow, "The Transatlantic Slave Trade : A New Census", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 58 (2001), 10-11.

[684] Jennifer Morgan challenges the division between quantitative and narrative historical approaches to the Middle Passage. She argues that the deliberate choice by most slavers to not record the gender of their captives, juxtaposed with the high number of women aboard ships where gender is recorded, suggests the need for a closer examination of gender in the Middle Passage, both in terms of the distinctive experiences of women, men and children, and in terms of the significance of the erasure of gender in the project of reducing captive people into a sellable cargo. Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 185–207.

twenty enslaved people died in the Middle Passage.[685] On a slaving voyage of average size, those onboard could expect to witness at least two captives' deaths each week. Crude death rates help illustrate the swiftness with which disease and death swept through the enslaved population, striking men, women and children onboard. Joseph Miller's estimates of crude death rates for captives on French slaving ships range from 219 people per thousand per year (d/y) to the astronomical 2241 d/y. This latter number is comprehensible only when considered for the shorter period of days and weeks on the Middle Passage, at around 6 people per thousand per day. Most slaving ships suffered death rates for the enslaved somewhere between 380 and 580 d/y.[686] The death rate for the enslaved aboard Le Houx's voyage of *La Comtesse*, at 1509.9 d/y, though meaninglessly high when considered in conventional demographic units of deaths per thousand per year, is well within Miller's scope.[687] To put this predominance of death in perspective, it comes from a time when crude death rates even in war-torn regions ranged around 90 d/y.[688] This landed death rate encompasses infants, young children and the elderly, while the majority of the enslaved aboard most ships were young adults, who had been purchased in part based on their relative appearance of health. This makes the high death rates of captives particularly striking.

In comparison, a rough estimate of crude death rates aboard ship in my dataset reveals lower, if still surprisingly high mortality rates for the, on average, young, physically able population of sailors and officers. Death rates ranged in the 40s and 30s per thousand people per year in Strasbourg and Marseilles over the eighteenth century, and were likely closer to 10 per thousand per year for people between the ages of 10 and 34, similar to the age range of crewmen.[689] Death rates for crewmen and officers in my dataset reveals an average of 99.4 deaths per thousand per year (d/y), ranging from 56.15 d/y in voyages to China, to 83.58 d/y on

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[685] This number is for the eighteenth-century and is likely lower than for earlier voyages. Using a subset of the voyages in the Du Bois Institute's Slave Trade Database CD-ROM, selected for the completeness of the data for those voyages, Klein and Engerman calculated a 15.6% loss rate for the first half of the eighteenth century and 12.5% loss for the second half of the eighteenth century. Herbert S. Klein and Engerman, "Long-Term Trends in African Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade', in *Routes to Slavery: Direction, Ethnicity, and Mortality in the Transatlantic Slave Trade*, ed. by David Eltis and David Richardson (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1997), Table 1; Herbert S. Klein, Stanley L. Engerman, Robin Haines, and Ralph Shlomowitz, "Transoceanic Mortality: The Slave Trade in Comparative Perspective", *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 58 (2001), 99.

[686] Joseph C. Miller, "Mortality in the Atlantic Slave Trade : Statistical Evidence on Causality" The Journal of Interdisciplinary History , 11 , No . 3 (Winter , 1981), 400, Table 4.

[687] I calculated this and the following death rates using the following equation, where d=number dead, n=total number, t=days aboard ship, r=death rate. : ((d/n)/t)*1000*365=r

[688] James H. Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World* (University of North Carolina Press, 2003), 47.

[689] Steckel and Jensen estimate the death rate for young adolescents and adults through their evaluation of historical demography of Europe in comparison with death rates broken down by age group in modern demographic studies. They also reference for comparison soldiers' death rates among the Dragoons in the United Kingdom from 1830-1836, who experienced death rates of around 14 per 1000 from disease and 1.3 per 1000 for suicide, accidents and murder. It is worth noting that their calculations of slave and crew mortality aboard British slave ships in the wake of the passage of Dolben's Act in 1788 produced higher crew death rates and lower death rates for the enslaved. John McManners, *Death in the Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), 92. Richard H. Steckel and Richard A. Jensen, "New Evidence on the Causes of Slave and Crew Mortality in the Atlantic Slave Trade" *The Journal of Economic History,* 46, no. 1 (Mar., 1986), 57-77, esp. discussion in note 11. Parliamentary Papers, *Statistical Report on the Sickness, Mortality and Invaliding Among the Troops in the United Kingdom* (London, 1839), 4; B. R. Mitchell, *European Historical Statistics, 1750-1970* (New York, 1975), table B6; Ansley J. Coale and Paul Demeny, *Regional Model Life Tables and Stable Populations* (Princeton, 1966).

Indian Ocean voyages, 126.48 d/y for crewmen on direct Atlantic voyages, and 127.12 d/y for crewmen on Atlantic slaving voyages.[690] On a ship with 92 crewmen (average in my sample size across Atlantic and Indian Ocean voyages), those onboard could expect to witness one crewman or officer die every one to two months, although deaths rarely scattered across the voyage; men fell in quick succession when dysentery or scurvy swept through the crew. On voyages that lasted over a year, a crew could lose over a tenth of its members. While death rates of crewmen and officers did not approach the devastation in the 'tweendecks over the Middle Passage, they too witnessed outsized mortality and buried many of their shipmates in the sea.

Historians of the Atlantic Slave Trade have dealt most profoundly with the question of death in transoceanic history. The predominance of sickness and death in the experience of captive Africans in the Middle Passage, as well as the second threat of social death that loomed in the bowels of the ship, has spurred deep consideration of the sinister consequences of dislocation and transoceanic mobility. Some scholars, following the model articulated in Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) have emphasized the oceanic passage as a space defined by death, a traumatic and irreparable break in the lives of enslaved people from their communities and cultures.[691] Others have attempted to calculate deaths as a first step in an assessment of the demographic and economic affects of the slave trade. More recently, scholars who have stressed cultural continuities and creativity across the Atlantic argue the transatlantic voyage was a horrifying crucible within which enslaved people nevertheless found ways to

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[690] These estimates are drawn from my current sample of 25 logbooks, and correlated with data from the Transatlantic Slave Trade Database at slavevoyages.com and the database on voyages of the *Compagnie des Indes* administered by the *Service historique de la Défense*, *Mémoire des Hommes* at https://www.memoiredeshommes.sga.defense.gouv.fr/. I accessed eight of the logbooks (and eighteen others that I have not yet analyzed) at the *Archives Nationales*, where I attempted to sample logbooks for the East India trade from around 1700, 1720, 1740 and 1760 (logbooks from the 1780s and 1790s are more difficult to come by in large part because of the dissolution of the *Compagnie des Indes*). Many of the logbooks from the Atlantic and Indian Ocean slave trades have been digitized by the national archives, and 169 are available online through the *Archives Nationales*. From this set, I have chosen to prioritize logbooks for which I have probate inventories or other corroborating documents. I will be continuing work to expand this database to at least 38 logbooks, and perhaps as many as 62, time permitting. This selection for documentary weight and substantiation, rather than for maximizing the number or periodic distribution of the database introduces several likely biases. The fact that many documents from these voyages have survived suggests that they may be the products more scrupulous captains and pilots, those who were most interested in keeping good books and perhaps ran tight ships. The overwhelming number of logbooks from the *Compagnie des Indes* also suggests that the dataset may include ships with lower than average loss percentages among captives, considering Robert Louis Stein's calculation that *Compagnie* ships sailing from 1730-1743 lost 7% of the captives they embarked from Africa, a remarkably low death rate, even considering company bonuses offered to captains for low slave mortality and the relative efficiency of company-coordinated trades on the African coast. The broader average he gives for French slaving ships' loss percentages ranges from 18% early in the century to 12% in the later decades. These numbers derive from Robert Louis Stein's analysis of captains' *rapports de mer*, delivered to the Admiralty upon their return to port. Stein, *The French Slave Trade*, 23, 98-99.

[691] Patterson himself noted that social death, or the violent stripping of a person's social connections, personhood and identity, was an ideal type rather than a lived experience, but his concept has at times been used as a shorthand for the condition of slavery. W.E.B. Du Bois and Carter G. Woodson argued a strong rebuttal to an earlier iteration of the position that enslaved people brought no remnants of their cultural backgrounds with them to the Americas, first articulated by Robert Park, but also embraced in another iteration by Edward Franklin Frazier, who emphasized the trauma of the Middle Passage as a psychologically and socially destructive force. See Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Negro* (1915, repr. Philadelphia, 2001); Carter Godwin Woodson, *The African Background Outlined; or Handbook for the Study of the Negro* (Washington, D. C. 1936); Robert Park, "The Conflict and Fusion of Cultures with Special Reference to the Negro," *Journal of Negro History* 4, no. 2 (1919); Edward Franklin Frazier, *The Negro Family in the United States* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1939).

create diasporic communities and identities.[692] Jennifer Morgan writes that the enormity of the catastrophe of the Middle Passage and the archival silence on the human experience of the enslaved, has encouraged the figuring of the ocean as "a timeless space," an obliterating void, and a "womb of sorts, a place from which the African diaspora originated." The paradox in the historiography, Morgan writes, emerges in part from "The inability to chart with certainty the passage of time and the location in space of the cross-Atlantic passage."[693] Morgan proposes the integration of demographic and narrative methods in historiography to transcend this paradox, but if dislocation in time and space are at the root of historiographical disorientation and the vacillation between narrative and traumatic retelling, it seems most important to bring space and time into consideration. Locations in time and space were in many cases the most regularly kept (and preserved) records in the transoceanic voyage. Historians have most often treated this data in aggregate as records of paths between ports, to calculate the length of the transatlantic voyages or to trace patterns of forced migration from Africa to the Americas.[694] However, what has been overlooked is the way in which records of the dead at sea were tied up with records of time and place. While the experiences, the thoughts and words of the living are mostly lost to the archival record, the places of the dead are meticulously plotted along the trajectory of the voyage in the ships' logbooks. Bodies moved with the waves, were subject to predation and disintegrated as they sank the thousands of miles to the sea floor. Most are truly lost to history. But for thousands of the dead, the place of burial, if not the final resting place of their bones, is preserved in the archival record.

Locating these deaths makes the history of oceanic violence readable. It connects the realms of the living and the dead. In doing so, it secures a spatial underpinning to the the novel scholarly approach of the "submarine" or "Sub-Atlantic," which has recently emerged to restore the place of the ocean in oceanic history, and to interweave the history of traumatic loss in the Middle Passage with a history of transoceanic connections.[695] Resurfacing the places of the dead from the archives can articulate individual experiences within the collective story of the slave trade, while highlighting the importance of the dead to living communities, at the time of their deaths and in historical memory. By integrating individual moments of crisis into a narrative, without erasing their "places", it helps surpass the dichotomy of trauma and narrative. It exposes the place of death, of human breakage, in the weaving of diasporic webs. The places of these

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[692] Sweet, *Recreating Africa*, 30-33; ibid., *Domingos Álvares*; 32-43; John Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Walter Hawthorne, '"Being Now, as It Were, One Family": Shipmate Bonding on the Slave Vessel Emilia, in Rio de Janeiro and throughout the Atlantic World', *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 45 (2008), 53–77; Mintz, and Price, *Birth of African-American Culture*; Gomez, *Exchanging Our Country Marks*; Paul E. Lovejoy, and David V. Trotman, "Introduction: Ethnicity and the African Diaspora", in *Trans-Atlantic Dimension of Ethnicity in the African Diaspora* (London: Continuum, 2003); Elsa V. Goveia, *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origins, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1967); Philip Curtin, *Two Jamaicas: The Role of Ideas in a Tropical Colony, 1830-1865* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955);

[693] Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 192-194.

[694] Robert Harms notably diverges from this to use the route of a single voyage to illuminate patterns of interconnection, and the political and economic depth and reach of the Atlantic world. Still, the passage of time and individual places in the open sea are not his focus. Harms, *The Diligent.*

[695] David Armitage, "The Atlantic Ocean" in *Oceanic Histories* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 103, 85-110. James Delbourgo, "Divers Things: Collecting the World Under Water", *History of Science*, 49 (2011), 149–85. Kevin Dawson, "Enslaved Swimmers and Divers in the Atlantic World", *The Journal of American History*, 92 (2006), 1327–55.

bodies mattered to those who cared for them, to those who despised them, and they matter to an attentive retelling of the human costs of an emergent capitalist world. However blinding the pain of loss, however obscure the content of the human story, the place remains in archival memory. The dead stained the waters; their memory did not vanish, and disconcertingly their bodies did not always disappear from view once dropped into the rolling waves.

Sea Burial

All people who died at sea were necessarily thrown overboard. However, this was merely the final component of a series of rituals and behaviors that served to assert belonging or ownership of the dead. The communities who cared for the dead strove to preserve essential elements of landed burial, to articulate the social and spiritual places of the sea dead.

The ocean was a disturbingly fluid setting for burial. However, crewmen and officers possessed material and spiritual resources that allowed them to conduct Christian funerary rites and burials at sea. In early modern France, a death ushered in a series of rituals, beginning with the ringing of the church bells, which called the parish to the family's home to view the body and console the family. In the evening, neighbors gathered together to jest, tell stories of the dead and sing litanies. The following day, confraternities led a procession to the church, carrying the deceased in a shroud or coffin. There, the community honored the dead with a funeral liturgy, followed by a graveside ceremony before the body was finally laid to rest in the parish churchyard, at the center of communal life.[696]

Seaborne rites attempted to preserve the Christian honor of the dead by approximating these rituals. Upon the death of a crewman, his shipmates began the process of preparing his body. His *matelot* or bunkmate, assisted by the ship's surgeon, stripped the body, then sewed it in a sheet or other makeshift shroud. Cabin boys, carrying a cross and torch, led an abbreviated funeral procession from the sleeping quarters to the main deck, where the captain, if there was no priest onboard, spoke the Office of the Dead and sprinkled holy water on the body. A cannonball was sewn at the feet of the deceased to weigh the body down and ensure its descent below the waves. Lastly, the crew slid the body over the starboard rail into the sea, accompanied by one or more cannon shots to honor him.[697] These final rituals, minimal though they were, guided the dead to supposed rest.[698] They honored his place in the Catholic community onboard, and they provided at least the illusion of the preservation of his body, so that he might rise with the saved on Resurrection Day.[699] They asserted the status of the deceased as a captor rather than a captive, a Christian rather than a heathen, and a person who belonged in the communion of Catholic souls rather than a body owned by the ship. This distinction between the people whose bodies belonged to the ship and people whose labor belonged to the ship lay at the base of new worlds of the dead at sea, gleaming reflections of a society in motion, powered by debts and payments and the cruel extraction of wealth from human bodies.

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[696] McManners, *Death in the Enlightenement*, 35-36.
[697] Harms, *The Diligent*, 195.
[698] They offered an adaptation of landed burial though notably the record of each individual grave departs from the communal nature of the churchyard, approaching more closely the individual gravestones of nineteenth-century cemeteries; Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), 472; Laqueur, *The Work of the Dead*, 138-9, 311.
[699] In the words of one author, the cannonball allowed the dead to "make his own grave," fixing him in place, and sparing his shipmates the horror of witnessing a drifting corpse or its desecration by curious feeders. Challe, 280-281.

Officers and crewmen on slaving ships sought to assert that captive people belonged to the ship, as property rather than as members of community and communion, through the refusal of such funerary honors. Even captives who had been baptized were very rarely granted a Christian burial, and it was common for surgeons to conduct autopsies upon Africans who died on their ships, another assault on the bodily integrity and dignity of the deceased.[700] Enslavers generally awaited nightfall before disposing of a captive's body, with no shroud or covering, over the portside rail, a further sign to crewmen of this person's exclusion from Christian community.[701] Stephanie Smallwood writes that captives aboard ship "confronted a dual crisis: the trauma of death, and the inability to respond appropriately to death."[702] Aboard ship, catastrophic death rates must have coupled with the daily horrors of survival in such conditions to harden many people to the loss of their shipmates. Nevertheless, as Vincent Brown has argued, the considerable caution enslavers exercised to dispose of captives' bodies after dark, suggests that death was politically potent onboard.[703]

For the enslaved, the time spent in the presence of the corpse, while awaiting its discovery by the crew or perhaps in the hours spent awaiting nightfall, must have brought particular horrors to the survivors, while it made possible rudimentary, if devastatingly curtailed, rituals for the dead. When illness flew through the hold, as it did aboard *La Comtesse*, corpses lay among the living. Six men died over the day of November 9, 1740, and the crew awaited nightfall (and the descent of enslaved people below deck) before they unceremoniously shoved the bodies of the enslaved dead, unshrouded, overboard.[704] What care were the others aboard ship able to provide in the intervening hours for the bodies and spirits of the dead to usher them into the afterlife?

Across West Africa, the worlds of the dead and the living intertwined, and proper care for the dead required the proper expenditure of social, spiritual and material resources. For Aja-Fon peoples in the region surrounding the Bight of Benin, the dead took part in a hierarchy of spiritual beings and held the power to help or harm the living, and funerary practices aimed to solidify bonds with ancestors and to provide them with materials befitting their station in the afterlife. Eighteenth-century European accounts describe long periods of mourning in Ouidah, stretching out to a full year for the head of a household, and marked by changes in dress and

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[700] One enslaved man was accorded "the ceremonies ordinary for a white" after his baptism on the 1738 voyage of the *Duc d'Anjou* from Madagascar to the Mascarenes, suggesting that this was exceptional, even for baptized Africans. "Le nègre de 18 ans qui fut baptisé hier mourut vers les 2 heures et on le jeta à la mer avec les cérémonies ordinaires à un blanc." The record of the death of this man underlines his ambiguous status. Unlike the other Christians whose deaths are recorded in this logbook, he is not given a cross in the margin, nor is he named in the records. While the majority of autopsies were likely conducted out of view for the same reasons that sea burials waited until nightfall, one trader's advice to avoid autopsies in the presence of enslaved people suggests that this was not always the case. Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 25-26. Journal de Bord of *Le Duc d'Anjou*, April 27, 1738, Journaux de bord, Archives de la Marine, AN MAR/4JJ/76/22.

[701] If shackles bound the body to his living neighbor, a terrifying prospect that, at least among men, who were more often shackled, was not uncommon, they would be removed, and the body moved to the deck. Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 151; Harms, 274; Vincent Brown, "Social Death and Political Life in the Study of Slavery", *American Historical Review*, 114 (2009), 1231–49, 1231-1232.

[702] Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery*, 152.

[703] Brown, "Social Death and Political Life."

[704] While practices may have varied between captains, it seems most attempted to wait until nightfall, when enslaved people had returned below deck, to throw captives who died overboard. This was likely a strategy to forestall potential outbursts or even revolt spurred by the sight of family members, friends, or even spiritual leaders thrown overboard without ceremony. Harms, 274; Brown, "Social Death", 1231-1232;Le Houx, Journal de Bord, *La Comtesse*, November 9, 1740, MAR/4JJ/65 pièce 81.

avoidance of the home of the deceased. Graves of great men were filled with weapons, the shield and sword, bow and arrow of the dead, and surrounded by ritual objects.[705] These recall descriptions of twentieth-century Dahomean funerary rituals, which required family and friends to furnish the dead with ample food, drink and especially with a wealth of gifts and fabrics. These would assist in the elevation of the status of the dead among the ancestors in the afterlife.[706] Funeral ceremonials could last over a week, involving a large community of family, friends and ritual specialists, who assisted in preparing the dead physically and spiritually for their passage to the afterlife through a complex series of gift exchanges, songs, dances and drumming, culminating in the procession of the official mourners who danced the coffin through the village and back to its grave within the family compound.

Rituals of preparation for burial aimed to speed the dead to the other world while they worked towards settling grievances or correcting social disorder in the communities of the living left behind. Along the Gold Coast, friends and relatives of the deceased entrusted the dead with a mortuary fetish, whose powers were strengthened by blood from a sacrificed hen and herbs from a priest's necklace, to help guide the departed spirit to the afterworld.[707] Mourners provided the spirit of the deceased with food, drink and tobacco for their journey to the afterlife. Funerary goods, including pipes, jewelry, and other objects served as gifts for ancestors or to ensure the deceased's social status beyond the grave.[708] Song, dance and drumming carried messages to the departed, and the blood of sacrificed animals protected against a spirit's ill-will and aimed to earn their benevolence. Those spirits left without ritual were likely to take vengeance on the living.[709] Likewise, unaddressed grievances carried to the grave were sure to perpetuate decay in the physical and social health of the community.[710] Illness and other causes of untimely death were seen not as "natural" causes but as the result of ill will or malevolent forces. Interrogations of the corpse sought out the cause of death, lingering grievances that may have rushed an individual to her grave, and to determine the remedy to heal the causative breeches of social and spiritual order. As the Atlantic trade further penetrated African societies over the eighteenth century, funerary rituals became increasingly expensive, with cannon shots, a late-seventeenth-

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[705] This observation is taken from missionary and botanist Jean-Baptiste Labat's four-volume work, based on travel accounts by Chevalier Desmarchais of two voyages to West Africa, the first in 1704-1706 and the second in 1724-1726 and other works. See Karine Delaunay, *Voyages à la Côte de l'Or (1500-1750): étude historiographique des relations de voyage sur le literal ivoirien et ghanéen* (Paris: AFERA, 1994), 36; Jean Claude Nardin, "Que savons-nous du chevalier Des Marchais" in *De la traite à l'esclavage: Actes du colloque international sur la traite des Noirs*, ed. Serge Daget, vol. 1 (Paris: Societé Française d'Histoire d'Outre-Mer, 1988), 331, 337; Jean-Baptiste Labat, *Voyage du Chevalier Desmarchais en Guinée, isles voisines à Cayenne, fait en 1725, 1726, 1727*, (Paris: Saugran, 1730), 210-211.

[706] The elaborate funerary rituals among twentieth-century Dahomean people led anthropologist Melville Herskovits to suggest that the funeral was the "veritable climax to the life of individuals" both because of its role in perpetuating or lifting the status of the deceased's family in the land of the living, and because the richness of the funeral directly correlated with the status of the dead in the afterlife. Herskovits, *Dahomey*, 352-387, 402; see also Le Herissé, *L'ancien Royaume Du Dahomey*, 159-162.

[707] Seeman, *Death in the New World*, 17-19.

[708] Jerome S. Handler, "An African-Type Healer/Diviner and His Grave Goods: A Burial from a Plantation Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies", *International Journal of Historical Archaeology*, 1 (1997), 102-3.

[709] In Jamaica, *duppies*, spirits of the dead, were known to take the form of friends or relatives in order to lure people to their death. Brown, *Reaper's Garden*, 63-67.

[710] As Vincent Brown writes, the dead, through their ability to expose communal divisions and to enforce social norms and as symbols of the links between "human life and the spirit world", held "enormous power to enforce communal value." Brown, *Reaper's Garden*.

century development, funerary goods, and in the case of very wealthy men and kings, the sacrifice of enslaved people.[711]

I have been unable to locate rich eighteenth-century sources on funerary practices among Wolof, Fulbe, Mandinka or Bamana peoples, which would better inform a discussion of the cultural worlds of captives on *La Comtesse*. A twentieth-century ethnography can give at least outline the forms of funerary remembrance among Muslim Senegambians in the eighteenth century.[712] After a death among twentieth-century Muslim Wolof and Mandinka people, the women of the compound raised a death cry and compound members beat a drum to mark the departure of their loved one. The body was then washed with warm, perfumed water as those present recited prayers to Allah. Among the Wolof, the corpse was washed by members of the same gender, and among the Mandinka, it was usually women who undertook the task. Even this procedure followed a deliberate order, beginning with the palms of the hands, the mouth, the face, the lower arms, each three times, then continuing on to the rest of the body. After washing, the body was shrouded and sewn into a length of white cloth. Once the body was prepared, the bereaved aimed for a quick burial to prevent further death in the village. Visitors arrived at the compound, bringing money or gifts for the family. Male relatives then processed the body to the Mosque, wrapped in a mat and carried on their shoulders, and as they passed, the women of the village raised a cry of mourning. At the Mosque, the body was laid on its right, facing East, and mourners recited the merits of the deceased. After prayer, new carriers brought the body to a grave, oriented north to south, and placed the corpse again on his right side facing East. Once it was laid in the grave, mourners left spiritually significant leaves and sticks on the corpse before burying it. Mourners followed the burial with further washing and prayer, turning their backs on the grave so as not to disturb the angels, believed to visit the dead once the living had turned away.[713]

It is unclear what measures a mother took in the bowels of the slave ship *La Comtesse* to safeguard her infant's spirit as he passed into the afterlife. Captive Africans onboard had already suffered the loss of 32 of their shipmates since their embarkation two weeks earlier. Each death was marked by the demand to honor the dead, to prepare the body and soul for the afterlife, to articulate where and to whom they belonged, and with each death, survivors endured the searingly painful inability to properly answer each of these needs. James Sweet suggests that priests and spiritual leaders who found themselves aboard slaving ships may have used their skills and authority to attempt to begin to repair communities and rebuild identity insofar as they were able aboard ship, despite the fragmented nature of these communities and the severe physical and emotional toll of their dislocation.[714] Women and children, usually left unshackled, may have had greater opportunity to care for the dead, to offer each other comfort or to gather in mourning. It is likely that death cries echoed through *La Comtesse* in these bitter days, announcing bereavements across the *barricado* that divided the men from the women and

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[711] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 39-40. Seeman, 21-22.

[712] I have chosen to focus on Senegambian Africans here. Although most of the men aboard *La Comtesse* likely originated far inland, many of the women and children would have come from regions closer to the coast.

[713] David Gamble and A.K. Rahman, "Mandinka Ceremonies", Gambian Studies, no. 34, 82-84; David Gamble, Linda K. Salmon and Alhaji Hassan Njie, "The Wolof", Gambian Studies, no. 17, 35.

[714] Sweet traces an African Atlantic intellectual history, which developed out of the encounter of African religious and intellectual traditions with Iberian Catholic and indigenous traditions in Brazil. In particular, he traces possible routes of Sakpata traditions from Ouidah to Brazil, and discusses the development of a kind of political medicine which used communal healing to treat major social and political upheaval and alienation. Sweet, *Domingos Álvares,* 40-41.

children. Men and women likely did not let their shipmates' spirits depart without prayers and drumming to usher them on their way. Perhaps the invisibility of the burial itself opened space for Muslim shipmates to contemplate the angels that guided departed friends and strangers to the awaiting afterworld. As it was not uncommon for captains to provide the captives onboard with liquor and tobacco, some may have shared their portions with the dead in hopes that, even in the middle of the ocean, their spirits might find sustenance for their journey to the spirit world.[715] Most often, there were few or no materials to carry the dead to the afterworld, no water to cleanse the body, no shroud to cover it, and meager rations to share with the departing spirit. Once the sun had set and the captives had been locked below deck, the corpse would be thrown overboard, without any covering, and left to the predation of sharks.[716]

Watery Graves

It is common across cultures to care for the dead and to place them deliberately in a way that bears meaning for the community. An exposed corpse, a corpse devoured by animals, or a corpse out of place, is unbearable to human society.[717] Moreover, it matters not only that the dead have *a* place, but that they have the *right* place. Thomas Laqueur and Vincent Brown have recently highlighted the political and social uses, or "work" of the dead among the living in early modern and modern Europe and Jamaica. Laqueur argues that the dead continued (and continue) to conduct social and cultural work long after life left the body. The places of the dead wove the tales of social and spiritual structures; they revealed the places of rich and poor, Christians and non-Christians, honored and marginal members of the social and religious community; in short they "make civilization."[718] Brown argues that the predominance of death in Caribbean society forged a kind of "mortuary politics," a "seedbed for particular forms of being, belonging and striving appropriate to this world of relentless exploitation."[719] For slave owners, mausoleums and memorials emphasized their membership in British imperial society and Christian communion, whereas the tombs and burial plots of the enslaved, whether congregated in designated cemeteries or buried in family plots beneath their houses or in their gardens, anchored the social community through mapping the connections between the living and the spirits of the dead.[720] Unlike the dead on land, the corpses of the sea dead, though their locations were marked in the logbooks of captains and pilots, were necessarily out of place because they did not stay put and because their movements were out of human control. This did not merely unnerve the people who survived the voyage; it destabilized the symbolic systems that underlay cultural and social life. I argue that the sea dead took part in the building of social and cultural worlds. As they moved with the currents, these bodies presented particular challenges for the communities of the

[715] Taylor, *If We Must Die*, 27.
[716] Harms, 274; Brown, "Social Death", 1231-1232.
[717] For a survey of philosophical, anthropological literature on burial, its social significance and prehistoric practices, see Laqueur, 8-9 and the accompanying notes. The extensive efforts to properly place and distinguish between the dead at sea underscores the argument for the elementary functions of the dead for living communities.
[718] Laqueur, 16, 11. Laqueur's contrast between the places of the poor in the churchyard in medieval and early modern Britain with the pauper's grave in nineteenth-century Britain. Laqueur, 325.
[719] Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 59.
[720] The appeal to familial burial grounds in claims to real estate suggests the high value enslaved people placed on the places of their dead. Brown, 239-249.

living aboard ship. They composed symbolic systems that dragged and twisted the contours of landed social order and the cultural construction of oceanic space.[721]

Enslaved people were especially vulnerable to the destabilizing effects of death at sea because of the disorientation of the Middle Passage and because of their enslavers' deliberate omission of their names, their social being, from their records of death. The discussion of twentieth-century burial practices in Senegambia above underlines the importance of the placement of the corpse, both in terms of orientation and in terms of the burial site, to concepts of spiritual order. Correct placement and orientation marked the deceased as an honored member of the community. Other African societies placed similar importance on the places and placement of the dead. Burial sites among Akan speakers in the Gold Coast and Dahomey in the Bight of Benin were located within the family compound, and thereby facilitated the active maintenance of material and spiritual ties to ancestors. Many Africans stolen from the Gold Coast would have been accustomed to subfloor burials, which allowed the family to share food and drink and their daily life with the dead.[722]

For enslaved people aboard ship, the displacement of the dead at sea was most likely a continuation of practices towards captive dead that they had witnessed in the long journey from their place of origin to the coast. In the passage to the coast, which likely claimed between a quarter and half of all who were forced to travel it, captives who died were often left unburied along the roadside and in the inland markets. At the coast, enslaved people sold to Dahomey kings or men of great wealth in the Bight of Biafra and Slave Coast could be sacrificed with other enslaved people at the funerals of their owners, a practice which Vincent Brown argues forged one of many links in the chain connecting slavery, death and wealth in the Atlantic world. Enslaved people destined for Atlantic markets were denied customary burials and even the very dubious honor of inclusion among the slaves chosen to serve a deceased king in the afterlife. Captives who died on the coast awaiting the Atlantic passage were often thrown to the sharks, further baiting the waters.[723]

It speaks to the power of the dead aboard slaving ships that the crew could not withstand the enslaved to witness the disposal of their dead, particularly aboard the slave ship, where violence against the living was a constant spectacle. The grotesque movement of the corpse with the waves lapping the ship, and the attacks of predators and scavengers were glaringly exposed to the crewmen, but hidden from enslaved shipmates. The inability to complete funerary rituals deepened the anxiety of dislocation and it fed profound fears of the further desecration of the corpse. Many Africans feared the corpses of captives would be cannibalized, their blood drained and used as dye, or otherwise desecrated in some other malign final extraction of value from the

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[721] Thomas Laqueur writes "The dead in the ground, or anywhere that they have been thoughtfully put, constitute a symbolic system that defies cultural nihilism and carries within itself a long, iterative, slowly changing history of meaning"(Laqueur, 106).

[722] Africans oriented bodies deliberately as well, as discussed above, although the specific orientations varied. Jerome S. Handler, Frederick Lange, Robert Riordan, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 171-215; Christopher R. DeCorse, "Culture Contact, Continuity, and Change on the Gold Coast, AD 1400-1900" *African Archaeological Review* 10 (1992): 183-184; Ross W. Jamieson, "Material Culture and Social Death: African-American Burial Practices," *Historical Archaeology* 29, no.4 (1995): 52-53; Handler, "A Prone Burial from a Plantation Slave Cemetery in Barbados, West Indies: Possible Evidence for an African-Type Witch or Other Negatively Viewed Person", *Historical Archaeology*, 30 (1996), 76–86; Handler, "An African-Type Healer/Diviner and His Grave Goods", 91–130; Brown, "Social Death and Political Life", 1231–49; Brown, *Reaper's Garden*, 246-248; Seeman, *Death in the New World*, 19-21.

[723] Brown, *The Reaper's Garden*, 33-40.

exhausted body. Along the coast, traders' practices of examining the bodies of captives before purchase lent credence to rumors of white cannibalism. Traders licked captives' faces to discern the presence of a beard, or tasted a person's sweat to test for signs of illness. Aboard ship, autopsies exposed the cruel indifference, perhaps even the vicious appetite, that the men in power exercised upon the bodies of their captives. This fear of cannibalism, bolstered by the sights and experiences aboard ship, led many to commit suicide early in the voyage, to give their bodies to the sea rather than to the horror of mutilation.[724] On October 25, 1725, two men, shackled together, jumped from the 200-ton *Duc de Bourbon* as it set sail from Ouidah. Their ultimate aim is unclear, as is their relationship. Perhaps they had met on the long trek to the coast, or in the crowded barracoons, or only at the moment a sailor hammered their shackles closed.[725] Kevin Dawson suggests that "swimming abilities and desire for freedom were among the first traits that many realized they shared."[726] Perhaps for two young men who had already seen more than they could bear, the sea and the shore both offered a kind of refuge. Given the strong evidence of a swimming culture among many West Africans at the time, it is not unreasonable that they may have hoped to swim to shore.[727] But the sea also offered its own form of grim sanctuary. Some West Central Africans shared spiritual beliefs which placed the realm of the dead beyond a large body of water or at the bottom of the ocean. Some considered sharks to be deities, guardians of the passages to freedom rather than low and vicious animals.[728] As Dawson writes, "[Self-] drowning funneled souls into channels of repatriation as water guided them home toward rebirth."[729] Whatever the intent of these two men, whatever words and glances they shared before they rushed the side of the ship, and despite "such diligence that could be done [to rescue them] by the longboat and the ship's boat, they were eaten by sharks."[730] Captive shipmates were witness to the gore and cries of the men, but this did not discourage another man from jumping to the sea eleven days later.[731] Suicide exposed the rude fate of bodies left to the sea. Their loss of life and the fate of their bodies were glaringly visible to all onboard. Nevertheless, a successful attempt ensured that those bodies found their way out

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[724] Taylor, 25-26.

[725] Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 234.

[726] Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*, 32.

[727] Kevin Dawson relates accounts of slaves who, when tossed overboard by illegal slavers after Britain outlawed the trade, swam to shore despite being shackled by their feet, and many other accounts of African swimmers, enslaved and free. Dawson, *Undercurrents of Power*, 27 and chapter 1.

[728] Ibid., 33.

[729] Ibid., 33. On the kalunga, the barrier between the realms of the living and the dead, water and death in Atlantic African culture, see Desche Obi, "Combat and the Crossing of the *Kalunga*" in Linda Heywood, ed. *Central Africans and Cultural Transformations in the American Diaspora* (New York: Cambridge UP, 2002), 360-361; Walter C. Rucker, *The River Flows On: Black Resistance, Culture and Identity Formation in Early America* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 2006) 52-55.

[730] "Sur les 9h du soir deux de nos negre onfere se sont precipité a la mer et telle diligence quon a peu faire avec la chalouppe et le canot il ont eté mangé par les requin" Rodolphe Carné, 1er pilote, Journal de Bord, *Le Duc de Bourbon*, October 25, 1725, AN MAR/4JJ/69, pièce 14.

[731] Slaving captains welcomed the threat of shark attack, as they hoped it would discourage escape or suicide attempts, although they surely regretted the loss of property. Another case of a man eaten by sharks near Ouidah arises in the Journal de Bord of *La Flore*, captain Jacob Le Roux de Touffreville in 1742, and many others have recounted similar stories in other records. See Rediker, *The Slave Ship*, 37-40; Jean-Louis Barbotin, 1er pilote, Journal de Bord de *la Flore*, July 14, 1742, MAR/4JJ/71, pièce 33.

of the power of their captors.[732] These deaths, desperate and painful, secured a kind of limited certainty to the place of their human remains.

There was something horrible about the abandonment of the corpse to the waves, to the assaults of devouring mouths, something alien about burial without family, unclothed, devoid of honors, and cast within seemingly immeasurable space. For the enslaved people on the Middle Passage, the inability to complete the care of the dead, having to leave them with their captors at nightfall, underlined the ominous imbalance in the spiritual and social worlds below deck. Even if fears of cannibalism subsided, the enslaved were left to imagine their dead turning and mixing in the sea. There was no way to orient the dead, as they would have been oriented in landed graves. The corpses of suicides, infants and the ill, all considered dangerous dead in landed communities, mingled below the waves, and each spirit improperly cared for contributed to the malevolent forces threatening the ship.[733] The psychic cost of this spiritual dislocation and its attendant physical and social threats weighed upon the captives aboard slaving ships. However, every death invited the living to make some attempt at repair, to find common languages of mourning and to heal their social and spiritual worlds. The transatlantic slave trade pulled the living into the realm of the dead, where corpses lined the watery route and fomented fragile social worlds.

Crewmen and officers shared this watery realm of the sea dead. Indeed, one of the particular problems of death at sea was the difficulty of distinguishing the dead and articulating order in the rolling waves. Cast across the changeable waters of the open ocean, the communities who cared for their dead strove to preserve essential elements of landed burial while they improvised to satisfy the novel demands of their world in motion. As for enslaved people, for crewmen and officers, the ocean figured ambiguously as a space of the dead, churning, far from sacred ground, a disturbingly fluid setting upon which to construct socially meaningful places of the dead. However, crewmen's greater access to material and spiritual resources allowed for greater control over the practices of mourning and laying the body to rest. In contrast to the radical devaluation of the enslaved dead, the funerary rituals for crewmen granted them limited but important honors, including the respectful illusion of the body's disappearance into a "grave" at sea and the preservation of their names and memory aboard ship.

In early modern France, burial placed deceased members of Christian communities in the earth at the center of communal life. Interment and inhumation, both building on Latin root words for earth, *terra* and *humus*, suggest a deep immersion in the solid ground that formed the foundation for communal life and held the palimpsest of bodies and bones of the community's dead.[734] The Christian dead lay together on the south side of the parish church, supine with their

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[732] This evokes the (ultimately frustrated) efforts of Charles Byne, an Irish giant, exhibited as a curiosity in nineteenth-century Britain, to have his corpse thrown to the sea rather than seized for study by the acquisitive anatomy professor at the Royal Academy John Hunter. Aboard ship, captive Africans could not ask friends to dispose of their bodies; suicide was the only option to ensure their bodies would not be subject to unknown horrors by the crew. Laqueur, 349.

[733] In twentieth-century Ghana, dangerous bodies were buried above ground, under mounds, in order to avoid disturbing the Earth and its activities of caring for human life. Handler, "A Prone Burial", *Historical Archaeology*, 30 (1996), 80-83.

[734] Laqueur describes the churchyard as a kind of "work in progress" of the Christian community, rather than a site of individual commemoration. Susan Karant-Nunn writes that the ossuaries and churchyards of late medieval Europe "were the meeting places fo those who had gone before and those who were temporarily still drawing breath. They were the symbols and substance of the eternal Christian community." Laqueur, 138. Susan Karant-Nunn, *The Reformation of Ritual: An Interpretation of Early Modern Germany* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 170.

feet to the East, in parallel to the axis of the church "like waves lapping a wall."[735] Come Resurrection Day, they would rise to face the sun, Jerusalem and Christ in his Second Coming.[736] Occasional gravestones marked notable members of the community. Wealthy and notable families competed over the socially and spiritually powerful places within the 'doubly-blessed' ground of the church, nearest the altar.[737] However, most graves lay unmarked, a practicality considering the frequent reopening of the ground and migration of remains to the charnel house, but also a sign of its function to represent and invoke communal tradition and belonging, rather than the mourning and memory of individuals.[738] The dead of questionable or dishonorable status were barred from the crowded mounds on the south side of the church. Nevertheless, they too had a place where they belonged. Members of dishonorable professions, including sex workers and even gravediggers themselves, the unbaptized, the diseased, excommunicates, suicides and others, lay either on the shady north side of the church or, in the case of many suicides, unbaptized infants, and criminals, completely outside of consecrated ground. The importance of the churchyard to ideas of belonging and community in early modern France is reflected by the insistence of French Protestants on rights to burial in traditional communal churchyards. Despite even Reformed doctrinal denial of the sacrality of particular places, Huguenots shared Catholic churchyards in the early decades of the seventeenth century, suggesting the powerful foundational work of the dead to build the structure of living community, even across confessional divides. As state policies turned increasingly against Protestants later in the century, Protestant burials were forced out of city boundaries, a sign of broadening divisions and a harbinger of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685.[739] However, the struggle for access to decent burials in churchyards continued into the eighteenth century, and helped spur the development of new alternatives to traditional burial grounds. Until then, the remains of the poor, the middling sort, and the wealthy intermingled in the dirt, as did their bones in the charnel house; they called the living to pious reflection on the afterlife, the generations that had gone before and the glory (or damnation) to come.

In some ways, the sea was akin to a churchyard, a communal grave of unfathomable depth, the site of daily activity, both sacred and profane, which reminded the living of their constant proximity to death and to everlasting life. In others, however, it was deeply disorienting and forced transformations to the order and orientations of the dead. As such, it evokes comparisons to what Thomas Laqueur terms the "New Regime" of the dead, embodied in the modern European cemetery. While the last ship in my study returned to port years before the first modern cemetery opened its gates at *Père Lachaise* in 1804, a similar need for alternative

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[735] Laqueur, 124.

[736] Laqueur notes that the significance of the East had ancient, pre-Christian roots, in the association of the East with the rising sun, birth and goodness, although the practice of East-West burial is not universal. McManners, *Death in the Enlightenment*, 303-304; Laqueur, 114-116, 123.

[737] Pierre Chaunu, *La mort à Paris*, 427; McManners, 301-302. Keith Luria, "Separated by Death? Burials, Cemeteries, and Confessional Boundaries in Seventeenth-Century France" *French Historical Studies* 24, no. 2 (2001), 203; Benjamin J. Kaplan, *Divided by Faith: Religious Conflict and the Practice of Toleration in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 95. Karant-Nunn, 165-170.

[738] Laqueur draws this contrast between the work of the dead in medieval and early modern churchyards and in modern cemeteries. Laqueur, 138-9, 311. Mcmanners, 303-38; Seeman points to the cherished place of the bones of saints and holy figures in Catholic worship and religious culture as demonstrative of the continuing importance of the body in Catholic communities even after death. Seeman, 30-31, 126-127.

[739] Keith Luria, "Cemeteries, religious difference, and the creation of cultural boundaries in seventeenth-century Huguenot communities" in *Memory and Identity: the Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora*, ed. Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks (Columbia, S. C.: University of South Carolina Press, 2003), 58-60.

"necrogeographies" to suit the social worlds at sea shuddered through and shaped the seaborne worlds of the dead.[740] If the cemetery arose in part to meet the demand for pluralistic burial grounds, the religious pluralism in an oceanic graveyard was unavoidable, even problematic for seafarers. In both cases, living communities found ways to represent their divisions. Within the cemetery, grave markers, walls and other divisions often distinguished between faiths. At sea, zealous Catholics aboard, particularly in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, found ways to dishonor the bodies of suspected Protestants through burial practices, though confessional divisions eroded over the eighteenth century. The corpse of Jean Sangerant, the surgeon and suspected Protestant who refused last rites aboard *La Découverte* on its 1707 voyage to China, was shoved without ceremony through the porthole of the ship's gunroom in the dead of night, on the insistence of the priest onboard.[741] Most Protestants were not subjected to such ingenious desecrations in death, but their corpses may have been thrown from the port side, where animal carcasses and likely the enslaved were also thrown.[742] By the 1730s, references to religious difference fade from criminal court and admiralty records. This, combined with the urgency to distinguish between enslaved people and crewmen aboard slaving ships suggests that confessional divisions in burial practices may have faded to in order highlight the privileged position of all crewmen over their captives, at least upon slaving ships. The meager provisions of a shroud and weight for the professional seamen and passengers rose to primary importance over the century, dividing the dead of consequence from mere cadavers, food for the fish. These efforts to order the dead at sea structured a ghostly architecture that reflected and informed the social orders of the living. Once dropped to the sea, however, only a thin illusion of order remained.

Cemeteries moved the dead out of the center of communal life and enshrined them as idols to "new gods" of "history, memory and sentiment."[743] Burial at sea too brought the dead into new realms, far from consecrated ground, and put them to work in service of new gods. The sea defied traditional patterns of ordering the dead. If cemeteries liberated the dead from orientation to the east, placing their monuments instead to please the eye and invite edifying reflection, bodies at sea could have no final orientation except, crewmen hoped, feet down.[744] Bodies scattered across trade routes, their necrogeography (or necrohydrography) determined by navigational constraints and the urgency for speed of travel.[745] The monuments to dead crewmen, passengers and officers were their names, inscribed in the ships' logbooks in the service of the efficient calculation and distribution of their debts and earnings. The marking of their names, town or parish of origin, and often their age in the logbooks, located their graves with greater

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[740] I borrow the term "necrogeography" from Laqueur.

[741] Proceds extraordinairement encommencé allencontre Du Sieur Jean Sangerant Chirurgien decedé sur la navire nommé *La Découverte* Capitaine le Sieur Dubollages Venand de la Chine, October 1716, Procédures, Amirauté du Havre, ADSM 216 BP 305.

[742] Guignard writes, "C'est un deshonneur parmi les gens de mer de jetter les morts à basbord: on ne jette par ce côté-la que les charognes des bêtes qui meurent a bord." Guignard, M. *L'Ecole de Mars ou Memoires Instructifs sur toutes les parties qui composent le Corps Militaire en France, avec leurs origines, & les differentes maneuvres ausquelles elles sont employées,* (Paris: Simart, 1725), 621; Challe, *Journal d'un Voyage*, vol. 1:308; Aubin, *Dictionaire de Marine*, 569.

[743] Laqueur, 260.

[744] It is worth noting that feet down, or burial upright on land was unknown except in the case of radical printer, John Baskerville, who was buried upright in his garden in Birmingham in 1775, following the iconoclastic dictates of his will. Laqueur, 294.

[745] Laqueur uses the term "necrogeography" to describe "the space of corruptible bodies, the space in which the cultural norms of the living dictate their fate." Laqueur, 110.

precision than those parishioners whose bodies mingled unmarked in traditional churchyards, and with greater honor than the paupers of the nineteenth century cemeteries, where the poor were buried in communal graves, dozens to the same pit, with only the occasional communal tombstone to index the names of those buried below. At *Père Lachaise*, the poor remained in these communal graves only five years before they were disinterred and disposed of in order to make room for more bodies and optimize profits from the site. This bare burial of the poor sped their erasure from society and their elimination from the community of the dead.[746] In contrast, even the lowest ranking and lowest paid members of the crew, the ships' boys, were marked as diligently, if not always as elaborately, as their officers in the margins and text of the logbooks. At sea, each corpse found a single "plot," a solitary place marked in degrees and minutes of latitude and longitude, tied to his identifying characteristics in the roll book. His pious aspirations for eternal life, his character in life were flattened in service of the calculations of the financiers of the voyage. However, the novel geographies and markers of the dead failed to fully satisfy the needs of the living to secure the seaborne dead.

In contrast to the perpetual presence of bodies and bones of the dead in the churchyard, the practice of sea burial produced a strange oscillation between the presence and absence of the dead.[747] An early eighteenth-century burlesque poem recounts the haunting presence of the dead on a return voyage from Saint Domingue. The poet, a certain Sr. D'Aragon who describes himself as a naval surgeon, begins by extolling the happy climate of the Caribbean, blessed with perpetual autumn.[748] However, this serves primarily as an introductory foil for his harrowing description of the return home to France. Not long after setting sail, illness and scurvy swept through the crew, as it did on many longer voyages, and the dead seemed to fill the seas around them. D'Aragon writes, "I am in this moment a neighbor to many dead / who are thrown the sea each day from our decks." A quarter of the crew had died, and the remaining crewmen, incapacitated by illness, filled the 'tweendecks with their miserable cries. Fish chased the ship, eager to gobble up the "carnage" that stained the waters. The unceasing accumulation of corpses, and of "hats, shoes & stockings / of the men who departed, never to return" makes D'Aragon feel "in all [his] senses that [his] soul is gone." Even in sleep, that echo of death, he dreams of dying, that he like the "strongest men" aboard their ship had descended "to the tenebrous Empire below the waters."[749] The Empire of the dead, their grisly bodies, press up against the living in this passage. Their unfilled shoes and stockings flood the saturated market for the clothes of the departed. The fish that swarm the ship devour the corpses in a grisly scene, making carrion of the corpse.[750] And yet, D'Aragon turns swiftly from this eerie scene to a praise for music and drink and then to a playful discussion of the Caribbean. Surprisingly, the poem concludes with no reference to the strange and somber imagery of the first pages. The dead flit in and out of view in

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[746] Laqueur, 311-312.

[747] This was not altogether dissimilar from the way in which the smooth lawns of cemeteries hid the presence of bodies, displaying instead their memorials, inscribed on monuments. However, solidity of cemetery grounds conveyed an image of stability while the undulating waters exposed the unsettled movements below the surface.

[748] I have not yet been able to identify the poet or to attach other names from the poems to historical figures. He addresses the collection to a friend and fellow military man, Monsieur Rafin in Rochefort, and dedicates it to Mr. Le Chevalier Regnaud, captain and Inspector General of the Marine. Sr D'Aragon Train, *Histoire du voyage de l'Isle de S. Domingue dans le vaisseau l'Esperance Escadre de Mr. le Chevalier Regnaud. Ecrite en Vers à Monsieur RAFIN à Rochefort, Par un homme de Guerre Bachelier en Mea. Avec le Recueil de ses Poësies Galantes, Burlesques, Critiques, & Morales* (1701).

[749] "Les plus forts de nos gens quittoient nôtre navire, / Pour aller sous les eaux au tenebreux Empire:" Train, 8.

[750] Laqueur discusses this particular horror through his evocation of Diogenes's provocative order that his body be thrown over the wall to be eaten by beasts. Laqueur especially 1-5, 42 and passim.

this passage, first thronging about the poet, then apparently vanishing from view. This ambiguous status of the dead troubled the voyage. They were unsettled, eaten by fish, and while their corpses descended to a sepulchral "empire," their shadows persisted aboard ship in the clothing that no doubt still bore the imprints of their feet, encrusted with salt, sweat, and their particular stench from long wear.

Robert Challe, a philosophically inclined *ecrivain du roy* on a voyage to the East Indies, reflects on this troubling presence of the departed. Challe was a marginal figure among the illustrious authors of the era, but his *Journal de Voyage* is alive with frank wit and provocative discussions (as is his libertine novel *Les Illustres Françaises*, published anonymously in 1713).[751] Written in 1690 on the request of the Marquis of Seignelay, Secretary of the Marine, his *Journal de Voyage fait aux Indes* was published posthumously in 1721. Rarely a day passes in the *Journal de Voyage* without a long diversion into the nature of the soul, the impermanence of self, or the infinity of worlds. When the crew lost François Nicole, a hardworking sailor who fell from the sails leeward into the sea and could not be rescued, Challe made recourse to Ovid's *Tristia* to evoke the debasement and alienation of death at sea. Peter Green translates Ovid's passage, "Whether you're caught by cold steel or natural causes,/ it's something, when dying, to lie on solid ground, to bequeath your remains to your kinsfolk, in expectation of a proper tomb, not to be fishes' food."[752] Ovid's passage contrasts inhumation, the integration into historical community and a place of meaning, to the dehumanizing disintegration of the cadaver at sea. However, Challe pushes this contrast further, translating Ovid's passage as "It's something at least for those who finish their days / Following the Laws of Nature, It's something at least to those who find death / in Military Adventure / to hope for a Sepulchre! / They speak to their friends, they speak to their family: This consoles in some way / But to see oneself devoured by living abysses, My God in these cruel moments / Is the soul strong enough to die in [your Grace]?"[753] Death at sea is death outside of the "Laws of Nature," outside heroic memory, outside of community and history. The corpse is lost without an earthen grave. In this reflection, Challe poses the horror of watching one's own corpse gobbled up by the gaping mouths of unnamed creatures. These "living abysses," are they hellish mouths or do they represent only darkness, nothingness, disappearance? Beyond the alienation from social worlds, the spirit is forever riven from the body, the self forced to witness its own annihilation, snapping the brilliant sinews that once linked the soul to the divine. Challe weaves this image to confront the concept of the immortality of the soul and the mutability of the self. However, the passage is not wholly a philosophical construction. It arises from a real occurrence and plays upon the broader anxieties rising from the wandering nature of bodies at sea.

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[751] Some authors have also attributed the deist text, *Difficultés sur la religion proposées au père Malebranche,* to Robert Challe. See Frédéric Deloffre and Melahat Menemencioglu, *Difficultés sur la religion proposées au père Malebranche* (Oxford, 1982), 361-421. On his participation in broader enlightenment literary culture, see Frédéric Deloffre, "Robert Challe et le *Journal Litteraire* de la Haye, 1713-1718" *Annales Universitatis Saraviensis*, III 1/2, 1954; Michèle Weil, "Robert Challe et le *Journal Littéraire*: du dialogue à la Méprise" *Cahiers de l'AIEF* 48 (1996), 43-56.

[752] Challe transcribes the poem, "Est aliquid fatoque sui, ferroque cadentem /In solida moriens ponere corpus humo! / Et mandare suis aliqua, & sperare sepulchrum / Et non AEquoreis Piscibus esse cibum." Robert Challe, *Journal d'un voyage*, vol. I (Rouen, J.-B. Machuel le jeune, 1721), 221. Ovid, *Ovid: The Poems of Exile,* Tristia *and the* Black Sea Letters*,* Trans. Peter Green, (Berkeley, CA: UC Press, 1994), 8.

[753] "C'est quelque chose au moins à qui finit son sort/Suivant les Loix de la Nature, C'est quelque chose au moins à qui trouve la mort/ Dans une Guerriere Avanture, /D'esperer une Sepulture! / On parle a ses Amis, on parle à ses Parens: Cela console en quelque sorte;/ Mais se voir devorer par des goufres vivans, Mon Dieu dans ces cruels momens, / Pour bien mourir en vous, l'Ame est elle assez forte?" Challes, 221.

The disturbing impermanence of sea burial surfaced most shockingly in the lingering presence of bodies that did not sink. Challe remarks on the death of a second sailor on the voyage as fever crept in among the officers and crew. As was customary, they recited the appropriate prayers, and they wrapped him in a sheet with two cannonballs at his feet "so he might make his own grave." When his body was dropped in the ocean, however, it refused to sink. His floating corpse drifted behind the ship and was caught in the wake, where it rolled, trailing the ship for almost four hours. Challe asked, contemplating the rising numbers of sickly people onboard, "This body, does it await another?"[754] His question haunts the voyage, as it must have many other voyages.[755] Early seventeenth-century Breton adventurer and merchant, François Pyrard evokes the problematic visibility of the dead at sea in an account of his voyages to the East Indies. He writes of an alleged Portuguese belief that a corpse thrown to the sea north of the line never sinks below the surface. It floats, aligned with the equator, its head to the West and its feet to the East. Even when pulled by winds or currents, it realigns itself like a compass. South of the equator, by contrast, it sinks directly into the depths.[756] Pyrard himself relates that this is not the case on French voyages, where cannonballs assist the dead in "making their own graves," in the words of Challe. However, the imagined possibility of this geographic division of the sea dead evokes the difficulty of arranging the dead in oceanic space. In this legend, the equator serves as the axis of the church. The Northern Hemisphere becomes the northern churchyard, the place of the troubled dead, where bodies did not sink, though they obeyed the divine pull of the East. In the Southern Hemisphere the dead descend to stable graves, to a communion or perhaps an Empire of souls in attendance for eternal life. This absurd tale of the bifurcation of the world, disproven immediately by the experience of its author, underlines the problem of placing the dead at sea. In a mutable medium, how could one ensure the dead would rise to meet their Savior when He called them? It also raises the problem of the visibility and invisibility of the dead. In Pyrard's account, the sailors may have never seen the body slip into the sea. When the time came to drop the corpse overboard from the leeward side of the ship, the crew was commanded to look windward as the cannon shot, echoing the death knell of church bells, over the windward side.[757] Perhaps this was intended to allow time for the corpse to sink, to ensure it would not be caught and dragged below the ship, and to preserve the dignity of the dead. Eighteenth-century authors, including Challe, suggest that the directionality of burial aboard ship was oriented with regard to the prow, not wind direction, with the corpses of honorable men buried on the starboard rather than leeward side of the ship.[758] Whatever side the

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[754] Challe, 280-281.

[755] Consider the gruesome task assigned to the unnamed sailors aboard the *Saint-Louis*, when the headless, naked "cadavre" of their late lieutenant, who had died and was thrown to the sea the previous day, reappeared on the surface in the late afternoon of Monday, September 27, 1729. They were sent in the lifeboat with rocks and bags to tie to the corpse—the slip and swell of rotten flesh, the sheer horror of touching the shredded flesh of a dead man one once knew. "It was the sharks who tore him apart" Journal de bord, *Le Saint Louis*, AN MAR/4JJ/144/A pièce 3.

[756] Perhaps the legend originated in some exaggerated retelling of a chance occurrence or particularly fatal voyage in the Indian Ocean, where swift monsoon currents often carried ships off course and could have towed bodies North of the equator to the East, though the South Equatorial Current was just as strong. François Pyrard, *Dv voyage de [F]rancois Pyrard, depuis l'arriuee à Goa iusques à son retour en France. [T]raite' et description des animaux, arbres & fruicts des Indes Orientales, obserués par l'autheur. Plus vn brief aduertissement & aduis pour ceux qui entreprennent le voyage des Indes. Auec vn dictionaire de la langue des isles Maldiues* (Paris: S. Thibovst et R. Dallin, 1619), vol. 2, 215.

[757] Ibid.

[758] Challe, vol. 1:308. Aubin, 569. Guignard, 621.

body fell from, as the writings of Challe and D'Aragon expose, the practice of diverting one's gaze did not erase the sickening memory of a drifting corpse or the image of the eager approach of curious feeders.

The horror of displaced and possibly desecrated bodies haunted seamen and the enslaved. Whoever witnessed the departure of a corpse below the waves could not be certain of their final resting place, and any effort to distinguish between the dead aboard ship quickly disintegrated as the body sank and the shrouds, clothing and bodies of the dead decomposed. The Santa Lucian poet Derek Walcott's 1978 poem "The sea is history" evokes the "monuments . . . battles . . . martyrs . . drowned women" and "bone soldered by coral to bone" that lie below the waves, remnants of generations lost in the Middle Passage from West Africa to American colonies.[759] His poem draws attention to the way in which the ocean has come to symbolize loss, persistence and traumatic memory in histories of Atlantic Slavery. The bones of the sea dead forge with the imagined undersea flora, which holds and hides them simultaneously. The ocean becomes a deadly abyss, but also the physical remnant of diasporic connections, the void and the womb alluded to by Jennifer Morgan, a graveyard of lost history and shimmering fragments of memory. British Nigerian activist and filmmaker, Toyin Agbetu evoked this vanished graveyard, when he pronounced in protest before Queen Elizabeth II at the 2007 British commemorative service marking the two hundredth anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade, "Millions of our ancestors are in the Atlantic."[760] Agbetu's words signal the enormity of the losses during the Middle Passage, and the persistent disorientation caused by the uncertainty of their resting places, consigned by historiography to an enormous collective grave scattered across the entire ocean. Walcott and Agbety are right. The bones of millions are lost in the ocean, or rather they are unplaceable, integrated into its vast and rolling tides. However, the places of the burial, are not. The sites where bodies slipped into the water were carefully conserved in the logbooks. Despite the futility of efforts to fully segregate corpses in the fluid environment, the places of the dead mattered to the seaborne living. The next section traces how logbooks marked their graves, gave the dead places in the sea, and how these logbooks can weave their shimmering fragments, moments of death and burial, into grim, partial, but legible narratives.

Placing the dead

The human losses aboard ship were marked in the margins of logbooks. However, their laconic treatment, and particularly that of the enslaved, occludes the stories that lay beneath their minimal notations. It leaves little room for pause, and it implies that the deaths and the miseries that precipitated them were abstract points on a trajectory towards a more important destination. The logbook's format, designed for the benefit of the merchants, ship-owners and the state, encourages us to move on, to follow the progress of the ship towards its destination, leaving these lives, their stories, their songs behind. It suggests that these places, in contrast to ports, coasts, centers of trade and state power, were of no real significance, simply segments of a continuous line.

For the French admiralty officers and merchants alike, deaths over the course of the voyage were trivial in relation to the voluminous records of mercantile and navigational activity. The 1681 *Ordonnance de la Marine* required the captain, pilot or *ecrivain*, on transoceanic

[759] Derek Walcott, "The sea is history", in *The star-apple kingdom* (New York, 1979), 25-8.
[760] Royson James, "This is a disgrace" *The Toronto Star*, Wednesday, March 28, 2007. https://www.thestar.com/news/this-is-a-disgrace/article_a998616b-87ee-5885-b2ea-52b246b77d9f.html.

voyages to keep a daily journal of the ship's progress, marking latitude and longitude, the directions of winds and currents, and any notable events or observations.[761] The logbooks provided essential documentation of a captain's faithfulness to the king and to his employers. They showed that the captain had stayed true to his course, had made no suspicious calls to foreign ports, and had the required expertise to conduct a speedy, fruitful voyage. The *Ordonnance* also required captains to keep a record, whether in the daily entries of the *journaux de bord* or in a separate register, of "names of those who died during the voyage, the day of their death, and if possible the characteristics of their illness and the cause of their deaths."[762] These entries served as official records of death and allowed for the accurate calculation of the pay owed to the heirs of the deceased. If a sailor was paid by the month, which seems to have been most common, the ship owner or company owed his heirs his pay up to the day of his death. If he was contracted for the voyage, they owed half on the condition that he died during the outbound voyage and the full amount if he died on the return.[763] Slaving captains recognized no heirs, no widows, no children and no community for the enslaved men, women and children who died during the voyage. For the investors in a slaving voyage, records of the deaths of the enslaved were important only insofar as they documented loss of merchandise and aided insurance claims in case of revolt or other "unnatural" death.[764] Nevertheless, captains also understood that they might be held to account for losses during the voyage, even when their employers expected high proportions of their captives to die. The logbook was one way a captain could attempt to exonerate himself in the case of extraordinarily high numbers of dead or accusations by the crew of cruelty or misbehavior. For the enslaved, crew members and passengers alike, there was no legal requirement to give the geographic location of death or burial. Nevertheless, the majority of captains chose to keep these records in the logbooks, nestled into the margins or entered into the text just beside or below the entries for latitude or longitude.

The rhetorical structure of the logbook enables this prioritization of trajectory over place. The logbooks could take on several forms, from freehand to regimented columns, but most could be read horizontally or vertically. Captain Le Houx marked the deaths of the four people on November 17, 1740, along with all other deaths aboard *La Comtesse*, on the left margin, adjacent to the navigational entry for the day (Figure 3). Read as a column, the woman, two men and infant lay beneath a grim list of eighteen men and two women who had died in the previous six days: "m. 2 noirs de Dissenterie/mort 4 negre dont 3 de Dissen. & 1 de petite verole/mort 2 noirs de Dissenterie/mort un noir de dissenterie/mort 3 noirs & 1 negresse de la dissenterie/mort 6 noirs & 1 negresse de dissenterie/mort 2 noirs 1 negresse & 1 enfant a la mamelle de Dissenterie & verette pourprée."[765] The accumulation of death in the left margin for this week alone is staggering, composing a cruel litany of unknown dead. The center column, or main text

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[761] *Ordonnance de la Marine*, 159.

[762] By the 1760 publication of his exhaustive collection and commentary of French maritime law, the *Nouveau commentaire sur l'Ordonnance de la marine* (1760), French jurist René-Josué Valin stated that this register of death had become "indispensable." Valin, 450-451. *Ordonnance de la Marine*, 152-3.

[763] Valin, 708.

[764] James A. Rawley and Stephen D. Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), 16.

[765] I have preserved the French here to give a sense of the abbreviation of these notations. A translation that approximates similar abbreviations is as follows: "d. 2 blacks of Dysentery/ dead 4 negros, of whom 3 of Dysen. & 1 of smallpox/dead 2 blacks of Dysentery/dead one black of dysentery/dead 3 blacks and 1 negresse of dysentery/dead 6 blacks & 1 negresse of dysentery/dead 2 blacks 1 negresse & 1 nursing infant of dysentery & chickenpox." Joseph Le Houx, Journal de Bord*, La Comtesse* November 11, 1740 to November 17, 1740, AN MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81.

of the journal entries, is composed of the day and date, the wind direction and speed, the route taken and, aligned with the right margin, the distance traveled. Below this, the captain recorded the latitude and longitude. Visually, the numerals that mark the distance traveled and the longitude of arrival construct a right hand column running parallel to the corpses signified on the left. Read vertically, top to bottom, this column gives a brief overview of the course and speed of travel. It leads the reader along the path of the ship, speeding towards the next mooring. Similarly, a vertical reading of the latitudes and longitudes, winds and currents, sketches the seascape and plots the trajectory of the voyage, excising the deaths set aside in the left hand margin.

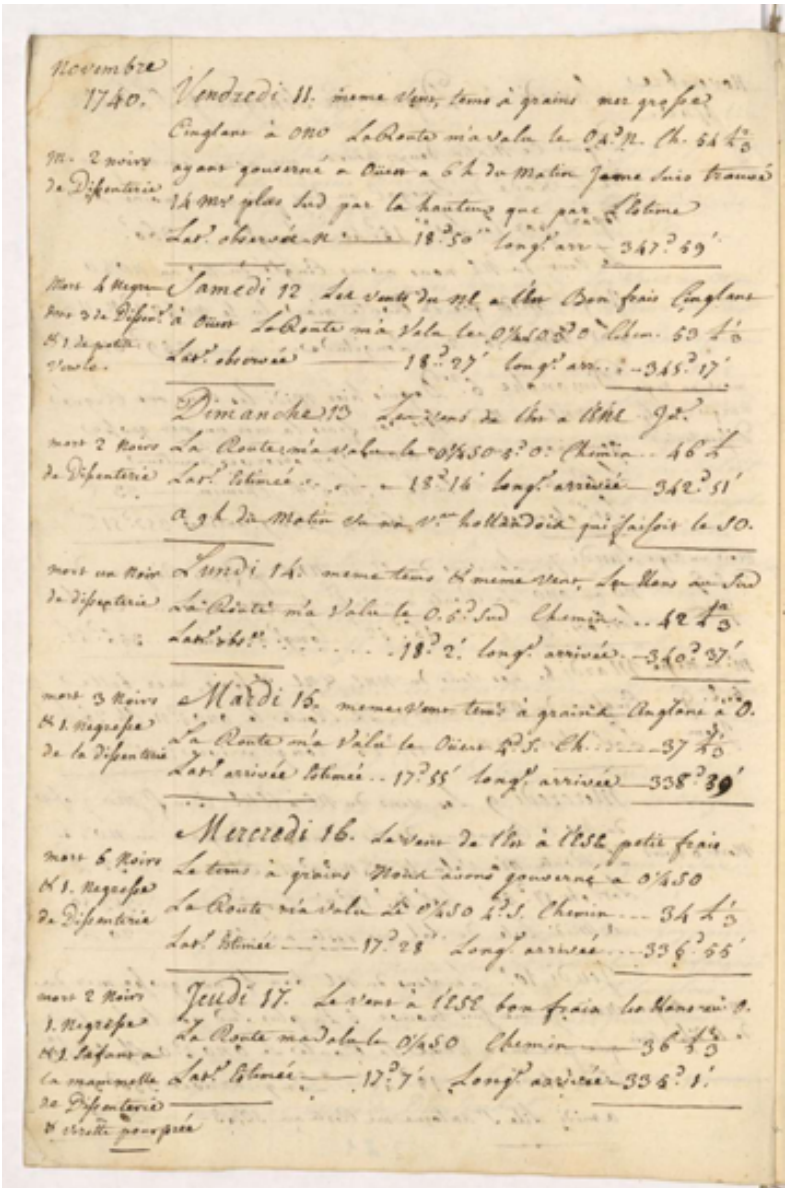

Figure 3. Joseph Le Houx, Journal de bord de La Comtesse*, November 11, 1740 to November 17, 1740, MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81.*

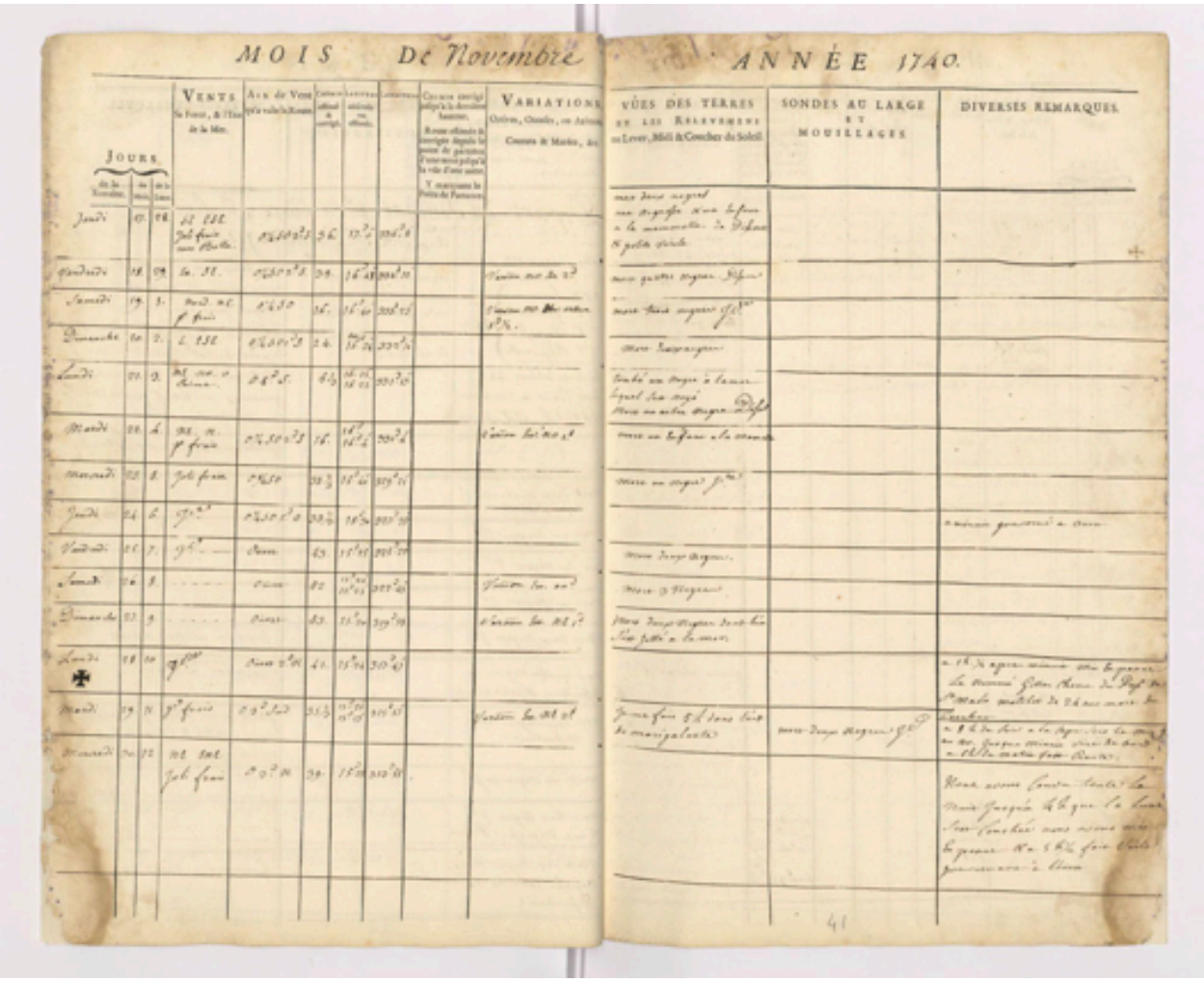

Figure 4. François Grieu, Journal de bord de La Comtesse*, November 17, 1740 to November 30, 1740. MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81bis.*

Tabular formats were even more efficient at displacing the dead, particularly the enslaved dead. Their rigid divisions left no designated space for the dead. They thereby underline the dilemma of exactly where to put them. The columns in these logbooks were printed, with the eight columns on the left hand page labeled as follows from left to right: Days / Winds / Point of Compass / Headway / Latitude / Longitude / Headway corrected / Variations / Views of land surveys / Soundings at sea and anchorages / Diverse remarks.[766] Of these columns, only the first six, which give basic information about the date and navigational maneuvers and progress along the route, are consistently filled in, while the other five have entries only when deemed necessary. Aboard *La Comtesse*, the pilot, François Grieu, kept a logbook in this tabular format. He placed the deaths of captives in the column,"*Views of land and Surveys*," the deaths of

[766] The full text in French reads as follows: "*JOURS {de la Semaine / du Mois / de la Lune} / VENTS Sa Force & l'Etat de la Mer / AIR de Vent qu'a valu la Route / CHEMIN estimé & corrigé / LATITUDE observée ou estimée / LONGITUDE / Chemin corrigé jusqu'à la derniere hauteur. Route estimée & corrigée depuis le point de partance d'une terre jusqu'à la vûe d'une autre. Y marquant le point de Partance. / VARIATIONS Ortives, Occases, ou Azimutales, Courans & Marées, &c. / VUES DES TERRES ET LES RELEVEMENS au Lever, midi & Coucher du Soleil / SONDES AU LARGE ET MOUILLAGES. / DIVERSES REMARQUES.*" François Grieu, Journal de bord de *la Comtesse*, 1740-1741, MAR/4JJ/65, pièce 81bis (1740-41).

crewmen under "Diverse Remarks," though he occasionally placed the dead under "Soundings at sea and anchorages" when other topics filled the other two columns (Figure 4). He drew crosses for the deaths of crewmen in the leftmost column of the lefthand page, under the day of the week. Was his choice to list the enslaved dead among descriptions of views of coastlines deliberate? In some ways it echoes another convention in some logbooks, where the deaths of crewmen, marked by crosses and sometimes a brief note in the lefthand margin, would be fully described in the central column of the logbook, directly below the latitude and longitude, while the deaths of the enslaved were relegated to the lefthand margin. Given that "Diverse Remarks" remained empty for most of November, while the deaths of captives piled up under the "Views" column, it seems likely that Grieu made use of the spatial divisions of the logbook to articulate distinctions between the enslaved and unenslaved dead. His journal evinces the difficulty of placing the dead at sea, the inability to fully erase them, and it suggests the differential experience of capitalist spaces dependent on gender, race, religion and social status.

Beyond the question of *where* to place the dead in the logbooks lay the particular dilemma of *how* to mark them. Many captains resorted to a simple "mort" in the margin for any death onboard, but most used iconography, the illustrations of crosses and skulls that punctuate the left margins of many logbooks, to signal membership in religious communities and distinguish between the enslaved and all others aboard ship. Although larger, more ornate illustrations at times memorialized prominent officers, the primary distinctions drawn between the dead at sea were binary: Catholic or not, enslaved or not. The logbook of *L'Aurore* from a trading and privateering voyage to the East Indies in 1704-1705, in the midst of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1714), offers an instructive early example. Over the course of its return voyage from the East Indies, *L'Aurore* captured one Dutch and one Portuguese ship and brought crewmen and captives onboard.[767] The captain used two main styles of notation to distinguish between Catholics and non-Catholics, and between enslaved Africans and others onboard. A cross potent marks the oceanic graves of all Catholics who died aboard the ship, even enslaved Catholics.[768] On August 28, 1705, Michel Joien and Domingue Yosh, "negroes of Angola, Roman Catholic" died aboard *L'Aurore*, roughly six weeks after they were stolen from a Portuguese brigantine in an act of privateering off the coast of Benguela. Unlike in almost all other logbooks I have seen, the names of these and other captives who died during the voyage are recorded, and their deaths marked with crosses in the margins.[769] The markings for other enslaved Catholic Africans also include estimations of their ages, as in the note for Paul Perrere, "agé de 45 ans," who died of scurvy on September 17, 1705. On August 29, the death of Jean Baptiste Michelin, a passenger originally from Troyes in the Champagne region of France, was

[767] The first of these was the Dutch ship, *Le Phoenix d'Or*, of 52 cannons, which they captured on January 13, 1705. Of the carrying over 200 European and Indonesian soldiers and sailors, they brought 30 aboard *L'Aurore*. The second ship was a Portuguese brigantine off the coast of Benguela, which was carrying 60 enslaved women and men. The *Aurore* seized the manioc, tobacco and slaves aboard the brigantin, though they ransomed the women to their "friends" on land in exchange for eight heads of cattle. The logbook specifies that these "friends" of the women were "gens de terre", perhaps the *filhos da terra*, who were the "locally born descendants of European men and local women" and classified as white. This is all the more likely considering that the captain also arranged for the return to these "gens de terre" of "tous les ornements de l'eglise de beingalla" which had been taken during the raid on the fort. See Marina P. Candido, *An African Slaving Port and the Atlantic World: Benguela and Its Hinterland* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), esp. 81-2.

[768] While their status as Catholics and likely vassals of the Portuguese Crown should have legally protected them from slavery, this was often not the case. On Catholics and the Portuguese vassalage system, see Candido, 50-57.

[769] "naigres d'angolle Catholiques Romains" Journal de bord, *L'Aurore*, Capitaine Houssaye, August 28,1705 to August 29, 1705, AN MAR/4JJ/93, pièce 12.

marked similarly, with the exception that beside his cross, the scrivener had scratched the number "47". Joien, Yosh, Perrere and Michelin's shared status as Catholics ensured that their watery graves would be inscribed with crosses in the logbook, an indication of their inclusion in the eternal Catholic community of the living and the dead.[770] In contrast, a Dutch sailor Nicolas Hiance, "de la Religion pretendu Reformé agé d'environ 36 ans . . . de Trehaut près d'Amsterdam," captured from the crew of the Dutch ship *Le Phénix d'Or*, has no marginal cross above his name. Merely the word "mort" and the number 51 mark the margin on the day of his death, indicating his exclusion from the Catholic community of the dead, but his inclusion in the long list of dead seamen aboard *L'Aurore*. No numbers mark the burials of captive Africans aboard *L'Aurore*. This effort to distinguish between the deaths of Catholics and non-Catholics, enslaved and others, including European captives of war, suggests that the iconography that marked dead in the margins of logbooks were not mere asterisks for accounting purposes; they had more substantial work to do. They marked the honor or dishonor of the dead. They revealed the limits of religious and social communities aboard ship, and anchored the names of the living, their social and religious existence, to their places of burial.

Crosses mark the deaths of Catholic African captives well into the 1740s. However, I have seen no cases apart from *L'Aurore* where the names of deceased captives were consistently preserved in the logbooks. It seems likely that the officers aboard *L'Aurore*, steeped in the worlds of Indian Ocean trade and privateering, carried alternative conceptions of religious communal boundaries into their encounter with the Atlantic slave trade. In the logbook of Captain Johannet du Colombier, captain of *La Flore* on its 1742 slaving voyage to Angola and the Caribbean, the deaths of enslaved Catholics taken from the port of Saint-Paul, Loango were marked with crosses, but not their names.[771] In the 1783 slaving voyage of the ship *La Creole* from Saint-Paul on Ile Bourbon to Kilwa in East Africa, the captive dead are marked with crosses too, although again, their names are not recorded.[772] It is difficult to assess how widespread this practice was, due to the paucity of extant French *journaux de bord* from slaving voyages to West Central Africa and other regions where captives may have been Catholic or Christian. However, these two examples evince an ambiguity regarding the status of their enslaved dead, their bodies marked with crosses, congregated with the Catholic sea dead, but their names forgotten, erased from the historical record.

The non-Catholic status of enslaved people aboard ships departing from Whydah and Senegal eased efforts to distinguish the dead in the logbooks. Religious difference allowed captains and officers to further distance the enslaved dead from dead seamen and passengers. Even the seemingly cross-confessional sign of death, the skull and crossbones accumulated attributes to mark differences among the dead. Aboard *La Gironde* on its 1733 slaving voyage to Senegal, captain Jean-Baptiste Prudhomme placed crosses above the skulls and crossbones marking the site of his crewmen and officers, but not those marking the graves of enslaved people. A man died of dysentery on February 16, 1734. He was the first enslaved person to die on the voyage, just two days sail from Senegal. Upon his embarkation with the other 401 captive men, women, boys and girls, it is possible he had already lived years in slavery in close proximity to the sea, watching the departure of slaving ships for seasons on end. Captain

[770] The fact that the logbook preserves the names of the dead rather than the living enslaved people onboard suggests that, at least aboard *L'Aurore*, there may have been at least a disinterest in forgetting the names of departed Catholics, if not a sense of duty to remember them.
[771] Journal de bord de *La Flore*, 1742-1743, AN MAR/4JJ/27, pièce 9.
[772] Journal de Navigation, *La Creole*, AM La Rochelle, EEARCHANC 43, (1783).

Prudhomme marked the place of his death with skull and crossbones and the number one. His entry reads as follows: "Died today of diarrhea a Bambara negro marked with an 'O' on his right thigh."[773] His name, place of origin, besides the captain's dubious identification of him as "Bambara," his age, his beliefs and place in community are erased, while the scar on his leg, a record of his commodification, is preserved. The emblem of his death, a skull and crossbones, in the context of the others adorned with crosses that mark the graves of sailors and officers reminds the viewer of his bare physicality. His body, dropped into the waves, was doomed to become only his physical remains. In contrast, the cross atop the skulls marking the deaths of seamen promised their spiritual salvation, the inclusion of their graves in a Catholic geography of death, and their soul's transportation to the realm of everlasting life.

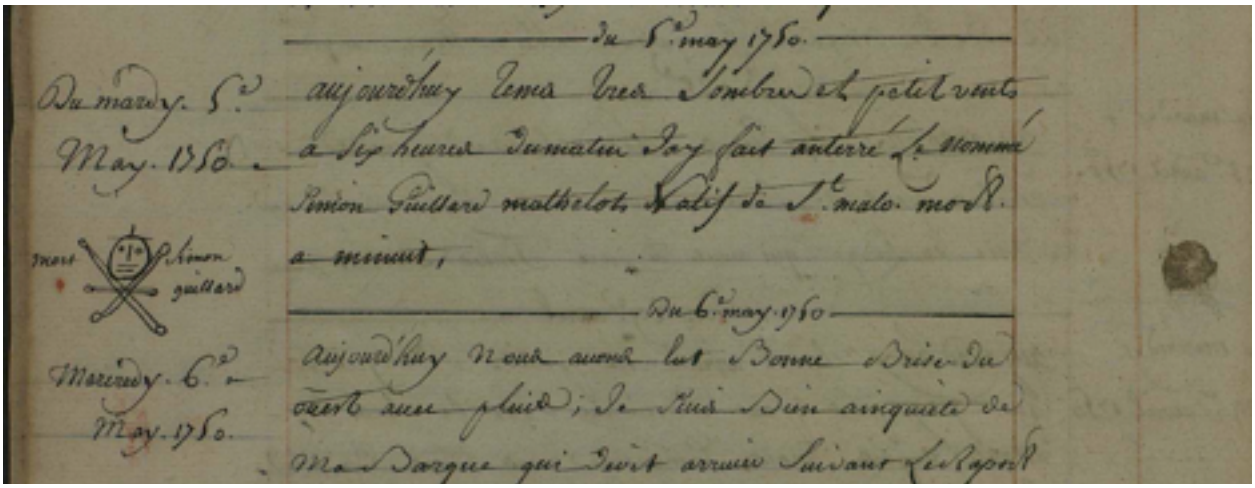

Figure 5. Death and burial of Simon Guillard aboard Le Diligent. *Journal de Bord du* Diligent, *May 5, 1750 ADLA B 5004 / 4.*

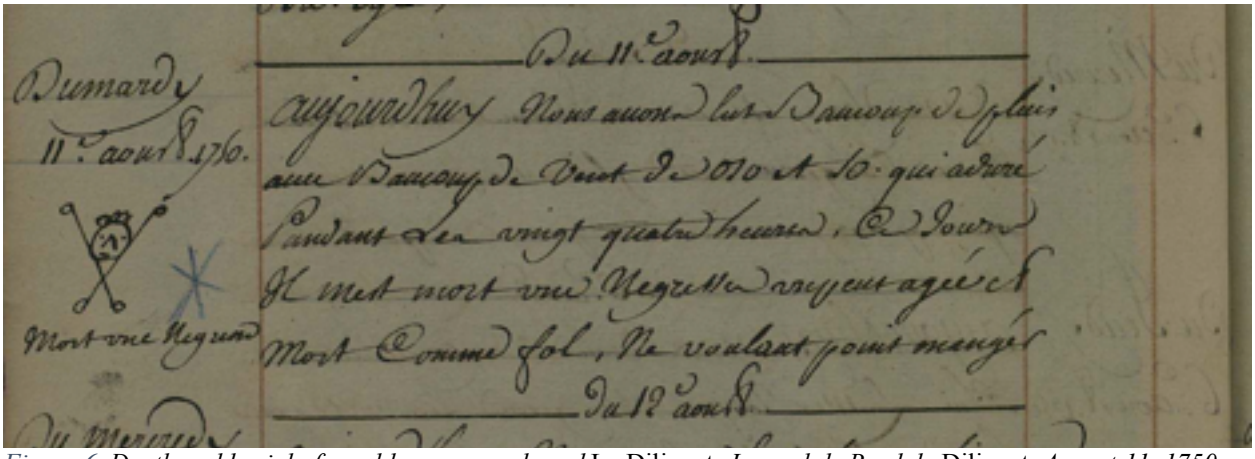

Figure 6. Death and burial of an older woman aboard Le Diligent*. Journal de Bord du* Diligent, *August 11, 1750. ADLA B 5004 / 4.*

[773] "Il nous est mort un Nésgre bambaras de la Dierrée marqué d'un : O : à la Cuisse Droitte." Jean-Baptiste Prudhomme, capitaine, Journal de Bord de *La Gironde*, (1733-1735), February 16, 1734, AN MAR/4JJ/28.

If religious difference determined the iconography of death in eighteenth-century logbooks, one logbook suggests the solidification, even priority, of racial distinctions between the dead. In the margins of the logbook for the 1750 voyage of *Le Diligent*, captained by Bréton Lavallé, the scrivener altered the image of the skull and crossbones to distinguish between the enslaved and crew dead (Figures 5 and 6). Simon Guillard, a sailor from Saint-Malo who died on May 5, 1750, near Sierra Leone, is depicted by a stylized skull: two open circles form eyes on either side of a nose, represented by a slim vertical line above two horizontal lines forming his mouth. The skull rests atop three intersecting bones. As the ship followed the coast to Cap du Monte, the purchase and deaths of captives surface in the logbook. The marking for the watery grave of the woman "un peut agée" who died "comme fol, ne voulant point manger" while the ship was moored at Cap du Monte on August 11, 1750, depicts two dots for eyes on either side of a nose, represented by an inverted "V". A single horizontal line marks her mouth, and a spiral at the top of the skull represents her hair. Two crossbones rest beneath the skull. Similar representations mark the graves of the other enslaved dead in the logbook, insisting that even in death, their separate status must be maintained and displayed in the representation of their bare bones.[774]

Most scriveners and captains, however, chose to rely on the presence or absence of crosses to distinguish between seamen and the enslaved. They recorded the graves of the enslaved verbally if at all. Simple crosses, whether Roman crosses with longer vertical arms or crosses potent with arms of equal length, were the most common form used in the logbooks. Among the 60 logbooks I have surveyed, twenty-five noted deaths in the margins with similar simple crosses. Seventeen of the sixty use monumental crosses in the form a cross atop what appears to be a burial mound, or a calvary cross, a roman cross posed on a small pyramid of three (or, often in the logbooks, more) steps. Aboard *La Jeannette*, which sailed from Nantes on a slaving voyage to Epe in 1743, the officer and journal-keeper Adam Joullain inscribed giant calvary crosses for the crewmen and officers who died on the voyage (Figure 7). The largest stretches over a quarter page of margin and sits above an inscription for the deceased, the second captain, killed during a slave revolt onboard: "prie Dieu pour Le Repos de l'âme de Defunt Mr. Alexandre de Latour Segond Capne sur le ditte navire." This cross, with five steps at its base, was only slightly larger than that for Philbert Micheau, a sailor who died of fever in late October. Whatever their form, the crosses that scattered along the margins of logbooks marked the places of Catholic dead in the waters and strung their places and eternal fates together in religious community. Monumental crosses especially contributed a kind of visual solidity that further distinguished the places of the Catholic dead from all other points in the transoceanic trajectory. Their weighty bases declared the permanence of these graves in spite of the natural and commercial forces that pulled the ship from port to port.

[774] Journal de Bord, *Le Diligent*, Capitaine Bréton Lavallé, (1750) ADLA B 5004/4.

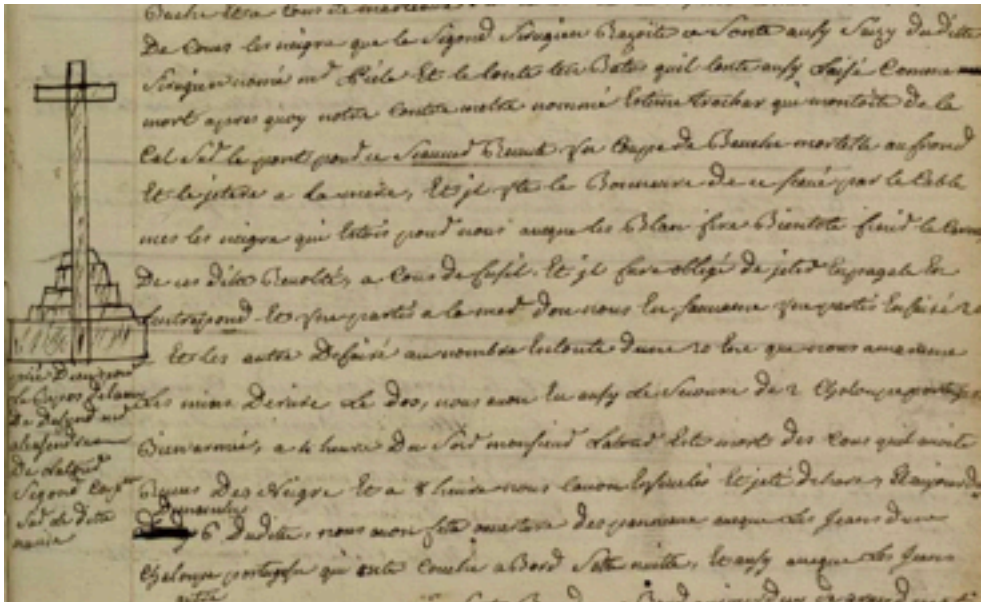

Figure 7. A large modified calvary cross for the Second Captain aboard La Jeannette*. Adam Joullain, Journal de bord de* La Jeannette*, October 5, 1743, ADLA B 5006 / 1.*

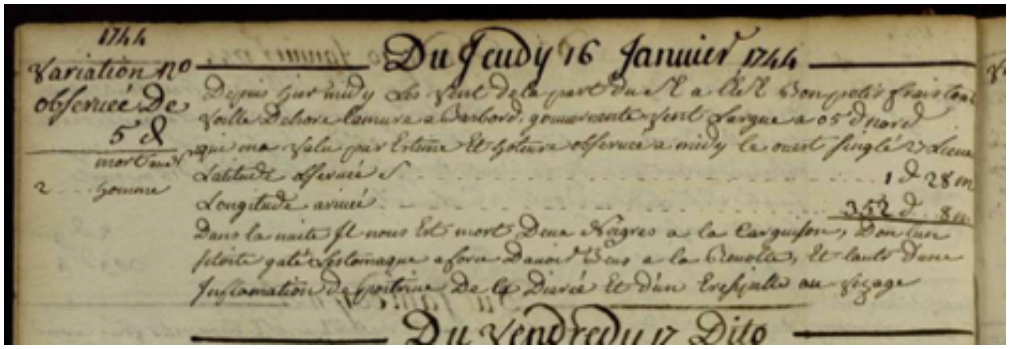

Figure 8. The entry for two men who died aboard La Jeannette *on January 15, 1744. Adam Joullain, Journal de bord* de La Jeannette*, January 16, 1744, ADLA B 5006 / 1.*

Most captains simply refused the enslaved dead iconographic markers. If they made any notation of a captive's death in the margins, it was verbal, a descriptive notation rather than a grave marker. "Mort" or "mort une negresse" fill the margins Le Houx's logbook for *La Comtesse*, as it does many others.[775] In the context of the proliferation of crosses in memory of the crewmen in the logbooks, the reduction of the places of the enslaved dead to mere words, and to the simple fact of death, is intended to efface the social existence of the enslaved dead. In contrast to the monumental crosses inscribed in honor of departed crewmen and officers aboard *La Jeannette*, when two enslaved men died on January 16, 1744, their deaths were marked in the margins as follows, "mort au N[avire]. 2 - - - hommes" (Figure 8). This note reveals almost

[775] While some captains also marked the deaths of seamen verbally rather than iconographically, they always named the deceased crewman, passenger or officer, and placed him in his social and professional context in the margins or the text. In the entry for Micheau's death, for example, Joullain notes that he is "natif d'Orleans et est depuis nombre d'années resident avec sa mere a Nantes et est classé au Bureau des Classes de Nantes." Adam Joullain, *Journal de bord de La Jeannette*, October 28, 1743, ADLA B 5006 / 1.

nothing about the people, their lives or afterlives. Only the ghost of a human relationship, of social existence, slips through in the words— "2 dead . . . men." The work of the entry serves two masters, straddles the contradictory need to remember that the enslaved dead are forgotten. It serves to account for property loss by recording the death of two men, while somehow articulating their exclusion from the social realms of death and from the full meaning of human life. It serves to underline the privileges of the un-enslaved by placing the corpses outside (but frustratingly within the shared space of) the ocean-wide communion of honorable dead. This doomed effort evinces what Stephanie Smallwood calls the "counterfactual logic" of the slave trade, the insistence that "seven [white men] is more than thirteen [enslaved men]", in this case, the effort to simultaneously record and erase the death of men, women and children aboard ship, to place them in order to displace them. Smallwood suggests that the inability to resolve this counterfactual reveals the failure of attempts by slave traders to reduce their captives to cargo. Indeed, the ghostly remnants of human beings, evident in these marginal markings have recorded their burial places in many cases with greater certainty than those of parishioners in traditional churchyards, or the poor or enslaved in modern cemeteries.

The brevity of death records in the logbook, this literal marginalization of death, evokes the concept of space-time compression often associated with expanding global capitalism, and exposes a troubling contradiction between the concept and the historical experience of deterritorialization. Geographer David Harvey, building on the work of Henri Lefebvre, reflects that Enlightenment science, in conjunction with global capitalist forces produced an "overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds" through homogenization and even the "annihilation" of space through speed.[776] What is lost, "pulverized" by these processes of acceleration and spatial compression, is place. Human geographers describe "place" as a kind of historical, communal home, a stable font and repository for memory, identity, meaning and belonging. It encompasses social position and geographical location, but also semi-metaphysical qualities like enclosure, wholeness, and in the case of burial places, sacrality.[777] Movement, from this perspective, rips the boundaries of place, transforming places into "merely scenes and images" and rendering the mover placeless, both in terms of physical location and identity. Philip Steinberg applies these narratives to his history of the social construction of oceanic space, arguing that formal legal treatments and cartographic representations of oceanic space across the eighteenth century constructed the ocean as an unpossessable, featureless expanse, and by the end of the century, as a "great void."[778] *Journaux de bord* were the primary technology for these cartographic projects. Most notable among these is the authoritative collection of maps and nautical charts of the Indian Ocean, the *Neptune Orientale*, created by hydrographer for the *Compagnie des Indes* Jean-Baptiste d'Après de Mannevillette (1707-1780), who collated navigational data from his own logbooks and those

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[776] Henri Lefebvre writes in his groundbreaking discussion of the social production of space that capitalist forces aim to homogenize social space, erasing historical and cultural distinctions between places in favor of swift communication and exchange. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 52-3; David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990), 240; idem, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (London: Routledge, 2001), 244.

[777] Yi-Fu Tuan,, "Space and Place: Humanistic Perspective", in *Philosophy in Geography*, ed. by Stephen Gale and Gunnar Olsson, (Boston: D. Reidel Pub. Co., 1979), 387-413.

[778] This argument reflects broader trends of reordering, identified by Marxist geographers like David Harvey, as well. Philip E. Steinberg, *The Social Construction of the Ocean* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 11-21.

collected from all *Compagnie* ships returning from the East Indies from 1735-1742. For theorists, the ships that wove together global markets embodied the qualities of space-time compression; they were defined by mobility rather than stasis; the navigational data they recorded as they sped the circulation of goods and capital shaped increasingly homogenous representations of the ocean. These theories capture the aspirations of capitalists to speed the circulation of capital. However, the preservation of the dead in the logbooks, an important technology for the collection of navigational and market knowledge for the state and capitalists in the eighteenth century, suggests that the concept of space-time compression fails to capture something essential about the changing social spaces produced through the processes of global capitalism.

The troubling resurfacing of deaths in the logbooks suggests that the representation of capitalism as speed and spatial compression belies the real spatial presence of people and human community that populated the routes of capitalist exchange. Vertical readings of the logbook enabled the reader to divorce navigational information from records of death. However, the logbook could also be read horizontally, line by line. Reading a full entry across the page tied deaths to their surrounding environment, the winds, rain or searing sunlight, the noise of seabirds flocking to Cape Agulhas near the tip of South Africa, and to their geographic location. "Dead 2 blacks 1 negresse & 1 nursing infant of dysentery & pox / Thursday 17 [November] The winds to the ESE brisk, crosswinds to the W. Route valued to the O1/4SO. Distance — 36L2/3 / Estimated Lat. 17d7m Longitude 335d1m." Read horizontally, the dead appear first and cast their shadows on the brisk winds, the calm seas, the latitude and longitude where the crewmen threw their bodies overboard. If we stop with them, if we look straight at their archival echoes, they resurface and demand our attention, not as a number in a ghastly ledger, a shimmering glimpse collapsed into a blinding sum, but as four people who suffered, who felt the winds and rolled with the seas; as people whose bodies succumbed to months of disease, deprivation, captivity and abuse. The deaths aboard *La Comtesse* stretched out across the Middle Passage, marking almost every midday measure of longitude and latitude with a corpse. If our narrative of the spatiality of capitalism collapses the spaces of travel, it also falsely denies the spatiality of death aboard the *Comtesse*, the power and social relations embedded in that spatiality.

Geographer Doreen Massey offers a compelling alternative model for capitalist spatiality that allows us to recognize these places of death. For Massey, movement is not equivalent to destruction or erasure. Reminiscent of the way socially constructed patterns of violence scattered graves across the oceans, she argues that the spatiality of global capitalism is a kind of "stretching out over space" of power and social relations.[779] Following the methodologies of gender analysis and Black feminist critiques of conceptions of "home" and place, Massey builds a dynamic, open model of place as a "complex location where numerous different, and frequently conflicting communities intersected,"[780] a concept that eighteenth-century seafarers likely would have understood. Similarly, Philip Steinberg's recent proposal for a Lagrangian model of oceanic space takes movement, rather than boundaries, as its starting point. In this model, the ocean emerges as "a dynamic field that --- through its movement, through our encounters with its movement and through our efforts to interpret its movement --- produces difference even as it unifies," a field constituted by moving particles, physical characteristics in

[779] Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 158.
[780] Massey, 164.

motion which change because of that motion.[781] As Massey and Steinberg propose, and as the socially differentiated places of the sea dead demonstrate, the space of travel was not absent of social and power relations. The sea dead did not collapse under the weight of spatial compression and, devastating as the passage was, the ocean was not a black hole; it was a costly trek. Deaths were marginalized. Uncounted numbers, particularly of the enslaved, were never recorded. But many were not fully extinguished from the historical record.

The Map

Gammeltoft describes "territorial belonging" as "the ways in which people develop, practice, claim and nurture attachments to places" and "the ways in which places sustain, define and determine people."[782] In many, perhaps most, ways, no person, and particularly no grave, belonged at sea. No point on a map could hold a body for long, with or without the weight of a cannonball. For survivors, the passage itself more likely cultivated aversion than any attachment to the ocean. And yet the sea did define and determine people through the way it ripped through the social worlds of millions of strangers and forced them to forge bonds anew. This final section addresses these opposing and intertwined forces to uncover the costs of connection.

Atlantic historiography evinces a kind of double vision of oceanic space. Historians of French empire and commerce envision the ocean as a space of travel, crisscrossed by networks of trade, power and communication, with an emphasis on increasing, if not always fluid, connectedness.[783] In contrast, many historians of the Atlantic slave trade expose the social breakage that characterized the Middle Passage.[784] In either case, the ocean figures as a featureless expanse or an abyss, homogenous and undifferentiated. The records of death in the logbooks refute the image of frictionless transoceanic mobility; they suggest that the places (and placement) of the dead mattered to the living at sea. Mapping these sites exposes the real

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[781] Philip Steinberg, "Of Other Seas: Metaphors and Materialities in Maritime Regions" *Atlantic Studies* 10, no.2 (2013), 156-169.

[782] Gammeltoft, 86.

[783] See for example Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 307; Kenneth Banks, *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2002); Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660* (New York: Oxford UP, 2008); Marcy Norton, *Sacred Gifts, Profane Pleasures: A History of Tobacco and Chocolate in the Atlantic World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2008); Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *Nature, Empire, and Nation: Explorations of the History of Science in the Iberian World* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006), among many others.

[784] The predominance of sickness and death in the experience of captive Africans in the Middle Passage, as well as the second threat of social death that loomed in the bowels of the ship, has spurred deep consideration of the sinister consequences of dislocation and transoceanic mobility. Some scholars, following the model articulated in Orlando Patterson's *Slavery and Social Death* (1982) have emphasized the oceanic passage as a space defined by death, a traumatic and irreparable break in the lives of enslaved people from their communities and cultures. Others have attempted to calculate deaths as a first step in an assessment of the demographic and economic effects of the slave trade. More recently, scholars have stressed cultural continuities and creativity across the Atlantic argue the transatlantic voyage was a horrifying crucible within which enslaved people nevertheless found ways to create diasporic communities and identities. Jennifer Morgan writes that the enormity of the catastrophe of the Middle Passage and the archival silence on the human experience of the enslaved, has encouraged the figuring of the ocean as "a timeless space," an obliterating void, and a "womb of sorts, a place from which the African diaspora originated" (Morgan, "Accounting for 'The Most Excruciating Torment'", 192-194). Key works include the following. Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death*; Sweet, *Recreating Africa*; Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400-1800.*

presence of people and human relations that populated these routes of exchange, and it unveils a constellation of oceanic places, anchors for seaborne social worlds.

As described above, logbooks documented deaths of crewmen, officers and captives aboard ship alongside navigational notations. With a group of five undergraduate researchers, we read through 75 logbooks, and for each death, we created an entry in Google Sheets, indicating the identifying information for the voyage, including the ship, captain, and year, the archival references, and identifying information for the deceased, including their social category, dates and locations of embarkation and death, and, when available, their names and attributed causes of death. I then uploaded the data for over 2000 deaths into ArcGIS to map their places.

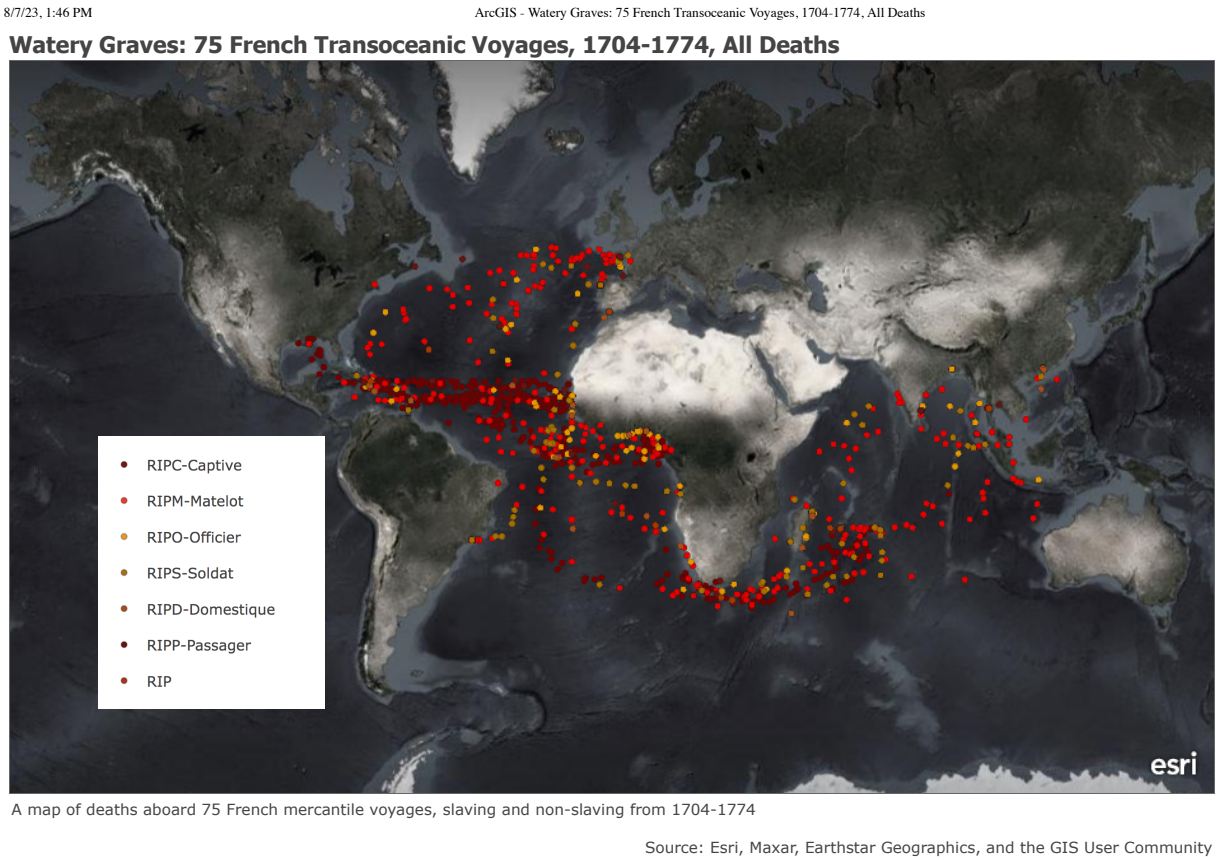

Figure 9. Mapping the Sea Dead: 75 Voyages, 1704-1774
This represents a total of 1,125 Africans who died in captivity at sea, and 1,261 crewmen, officers and other non-captives who died on these ships. Of the 75 voyages, 38 carried enslaved people to the Caribbean and North America, 11 carried captives to the Mascarene Islands, and 26 were direct trading voyages to India and China.

Who were the dead?	Number of the Dead (recorded)
African Men	889
African Women	142
African Children and Infants	94
Crewmen	879
Officers	186
All Others (not captive)	196

Table 6. Map of the Dead: Demographic Composition

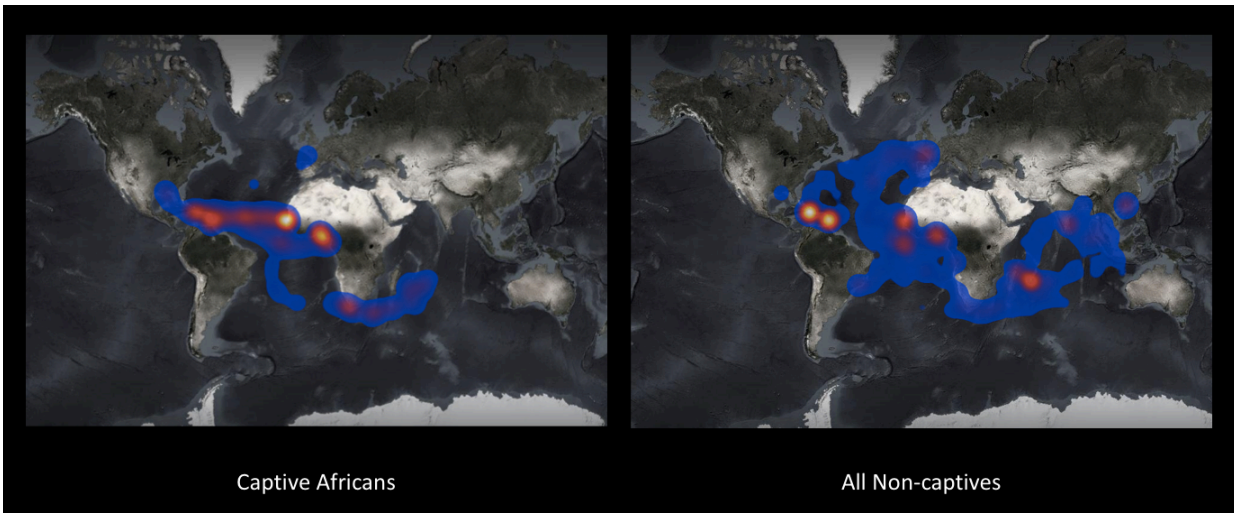

Figure 10. Heat map of 2,386 deaths at sea on 75 French transoceanic voyages.

The map reveals a differentiated geography of death, with the graves of crewmen and officers scattered across the ocean and clustering at ports of call (Figure 2), while those of captive Africans saturate the sea passages to the French colonies. This is in part attributable to the processes of record-keeping, in which logbooks notate crew deaths wherever they might occur, while enslavers generally recorded deaths among their captives only after embarkation, omitting the immense mortality in the trek to the sea and at the warehouses where people were held captive onshore. What emerges most strikingly is the catastrophic scale of loss in the slave trade, the constancy of death in those routes, where on average a captive person would lose two shipmates every week, and over thirty people before the conclusion of the voyage. Secondly, it exposes how the threat of death undergirded all routes of early modern trade.

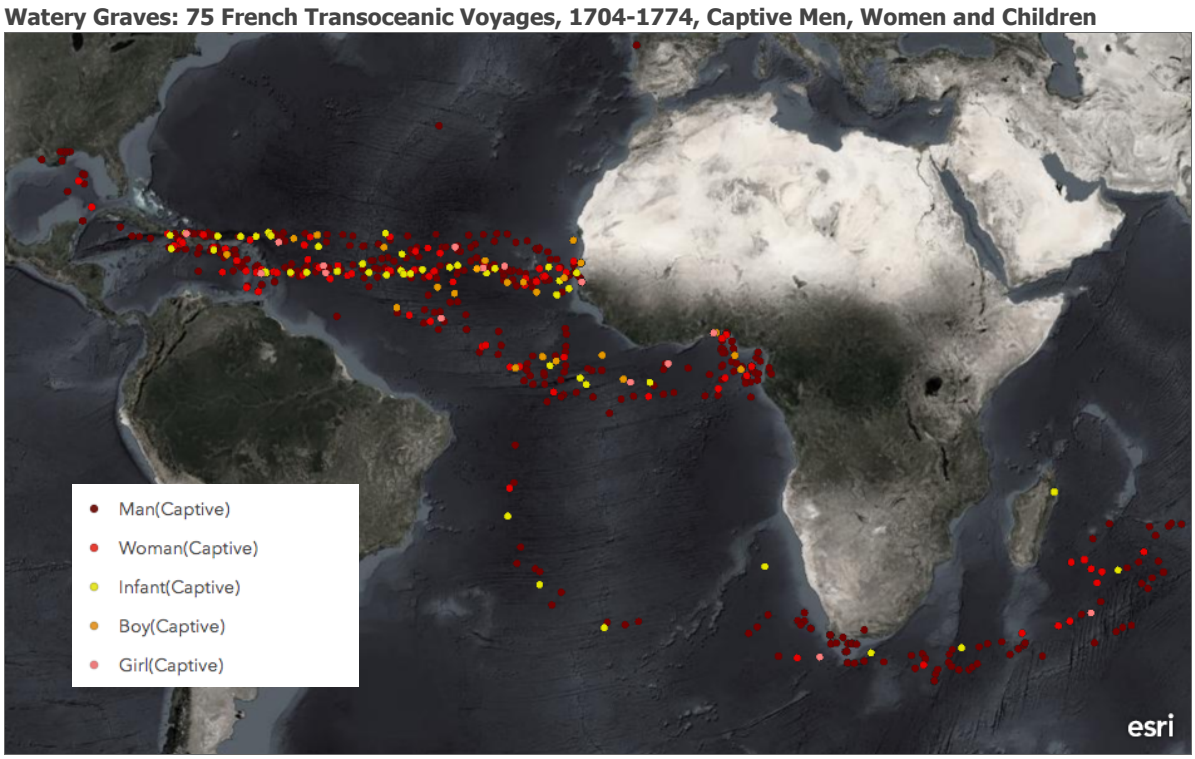

Figure 11. Mapping the Captive Sea Dead: 75 Voyages, 1704-1774
This represents a total of 1,125 Africans who died in captivity at sea on 49 slave trade voyages. It should be noted that many of the points indicated above represent several deaths, as ArcGIS has no easy way to represent overlapping points. This is particularly important along the African coast. For example, a single point represents 134 people at Saint-Louis and Gorée, Senegal, and at Ouidah, a single point on this rendition of the map represents 84 people. At sea, many of the single points on this map represent two or more deaths, often from different voyages. In the digital version of this map, it is possible to zoom in to further differentiate locations, and to navigate through each overlapping point to identify each person lost, according to the archival information available.

Millions of Africans lost their lives in the forced oceanic passage to European colonies. For thousands of those who died, the places of their bodies' disposal are not lost to the historical record. The loss portrayed in this map is staggering, though it represents less than a miniscule fraction of all those who died on long distance trading voyages over the eighteenth century.[785] Resurfacing these places of death uncovers a devastating geography of death, a visceral chart of the transatlantic route, paved by the destruction of human lives. Nursing infants, women, girls, boys, and men, are joined together in the unceasing dislocations of global trade. The map also testifies that these losses were not complete, that death did not erase a person from human

[785] This rough estimate is based on the ratio of the 1,127 Africans' documented in these logbooks to the estimated nearly two million Africans who died in the middle passage. Notably, when considered in relation to captive deaths on French ships alone, these 1127 people account for less than one percent of of those deaths. For figures on the French slave trade, see https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyages/fbQJWDNf; David Eltis, "Methodology: Coverage of the Slave Trade," Transatlantic Slave Trade Database, slavevoyages.org, Accessed February 22, 2023.

memory. Each point on the map demanded grief and mourning, and each person lived on in some other's memory. The dead also carried their own memories, love, despair and human connection into the vastness of the ocean.

Historians have used the metaphors of "webs", "networks" and "nodes" to describe the emergent interconnectedness of the early modern world, but the sinews have been imagined as silken threads or copper wire.[786] This map of death exposes the sinister stickiness of these webs, revealing two thousand of the millions whose corpses line the routes. It underlines the devastating human cost of global capitalism, while revealing thousands of places in the ocean where shipmates may have gathered to mourn, practice rituals and build meaning out of a fractured, moving world.

Eighteenth-century France witnessed an accelerating involvement in global markets, with consequences that ricocheted back through the Metropole. Scholars have demonstrated how overseas trade transformed the political order and legal culture of the *Ancien Régime*, while the proliferation of the spaces and goods of popular consumption transformed the material, social and spiritual lives of common people.[787] Historians have argued that this realignment of social worlds liberated consumers from traditional social hierarchies, and elevated personal choice in all matters of life.[788] Consumption and the new world of goods thereby pushed forth anew the question of where and to whom people belonged, and of the relation between economic and social bonds. Nowhere was this question more urgent than at sea, nowhere more troubled than in the slave trade. While many of the people aboard ship would never set foot upon French soil, they lived and died at the heart of the transformations wrought by early modern capitalism. They unveil in the starkest terms the ways that the market forced the reordering of the structures and means of belonging, and they suggest that death was inseparable from the creation of communities along the sinews of the market.

The special attention given to the iconography of the dead in the logbooks, the rhetorical effect of the logbook as opposed to a separate list of the dead, and the broader anxieties about the death and burial at sea suggests that the preservation of the places of the dead at sea was not incidental. The ocean currents carried the corpse, which likely trailed the ship on a rough course westward, even as it sank and drifted for the four weeks or more that it took for fish, mollusks, sea scallops and other scavengers to reduce it to a skeleton. With time, the sea took the bodies, eaten by fishes, far from their original sites of submersion, and defied attempts to secure a final resting place. Nevertheless, people aboard ship persisted in their attempts to construct places of the dead, to account for loss of life by locating it in the scope of their voyage. The records of their efforts, from bare records of death to monumental (illustrated) tombstones,

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[786] Glen O'Hara draws attention to this influence of digital terminology on imperial historiography, citing Linda Colley and Kerry Ward, though the evocation of "'webs', 'nodes' and 'networks'" emerges much more broadly in the historiography. Glen O'Hara, "'The Sea is Swinging into View': Modern British Maritime History in a Globalised World," *The English Historical Review* vol. 124, no. 510 (Oct. 2009), 1113.

[787] Shovlin in particular outlines the ways in which capitalism and the state co-evolved as interdependent entities. Roche, *La Peuple de Paris*; Kwass, *Contraband*; Rebecca Spang, *Stuff and Money at the Time of the French Revolution,* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Coleman, *Spirit of French Capitalism*. Shovlin, 5-13.

[788] T. H. Breen, "The Meanings of Things: Interpreting the Consumer Economy in the Eighteenth Century", in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. by John Brewer and Roy S. Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 249–60; Cissie Fairchilds, "The Production and Marketing of Populuxe Goods in Eighteenth-Century Paris", in *Consumption and the World of Goods*, ed. by John Brewer and Roy Porter (New York: Routledge, 1993), 228–48; Michael Kwass, "Big Hair: A Wig History of Consumption in Eighteenth-Century France", *American Historical Review*, 111 (2006), 631–59.

unveil differentiated geographies of death that circled the oceanic globe. While the inclusion of deaths in the logbooks, alongside winds, tides, soundings and geographical coordinates may have come about as a matter of convenience in the service of landed powers, it became a way for people at sea to tell the stories of the dead, to situate them in a narrative and to use their watery graves to build a realm of meaning.

Attempts to make place in the open sea occurred against the constant experience or threat of disorientation and the continual displacement of the voyage. Despite the inadequacy of all efforts to fix corpses at sea, the burials that scattered across the seas shaped vernacular geographies of the oceans. These oceanic geographies, assemblages of overlapping, fragmented and conflictual places, were created through thousands of moments of rupture. As burials filled up the broad sea lanes, they tied together the living and the dead, the submarine and those who sailed above the waves. Plotting death at sea on a global map reveals a disastrous embodiment, an emplacement that is the human cost of global capitalism, of the dislocation and deterritorialization of communities and bodies. And yet it is from this wreckage that communities, riven, fragmentary, and tenuous attempted to rebuild, with a hollow grave at their center.

Conclusion

This dissertation has attempted to examine the social consequences of deterritorialization through the close reading of social production aboard the ships that crossed the globe in the eighteenth century, interweaving the emergent global capitalist routes of exchange. Marxist interpretations of capitalist spatiality have described the imperative to accelerate the speed of trade, to "strive simultaneously for an even greater extension of the market and for greater annihilation of space by time."[789] In this analysis, maritime trade was an accomplice to space-time compression, to the obliteration of places and connections of human meaning in the wake of increasingly swift market transactions. The preceding chapters demonstrate that the market decidedly did stretch and rip through social bonds, rending captives, seamen and officers from the complex, interlocking institutions and communities that shaped status and structured practices of care on land. The human costs of this disruption were enormous, as illustrated by the map of deaths on 75 voyages, a miniscule fraction of all merchant ships that embarked across oceans over the century. However, a close reading of life, and even death, aboard ship exposes the structure of novel social bonds and hierarchies that arose around these losses. The clothing of the dead became the currency of the living, who in turn relied ever more heavily on the market to mediate social relations and ensure bodily security and care. Among enslaved Africans onboard, the death of a shipmate propelled collaboration below deck to provide the departed with spiritual protections and reinforce bonds of care among the living; above deck, the deliberate dishonor shown to the corpse and the omission of names from records of captive death propelled seamen to clutch their claims to privilege and expertise, and, increasingly, to turn to the market, grasping at capital and profits to secure their physical and social selves from the threat of annihilation. The sea was a crucible of capitalism, not a space apart; the immanence of death and oblivion lay at its heart and trembled up through the transformation of social bonds at sea.

The world that came into being at sea over the eighteenth century was not one of cold rationality, a smooth clockwork dance of abstract transactions. Looking in detail at the mechanisms of social practice aboard ship exposes the significant residues of social meaning that flowed through market transactions, and the inflections of intangible qualities and qualitative relations, from domination to care, dignity to humiliation, that clung to economic bonds. Recent economic historians of France have emphasized the social power of credit, debt, and capital in the *Ancien Régime*. The words, "credit" and "debt" themselves carried both moral and financial meanings, while the fantasy of exponential growth echoed the Catholic salvific theology.[790] Weaving the history of the slave trade into this discussion unveils the breadth of this transformation, by which human bonds were rearticulated as market relations. Like the webs of credit and debt that Parisian dressmakers managed in the eighteenth century, enslavers' claim to own the people they held captive did not evacuate the relationship of its social import. Rather, it exemplified a process at work across the social spectrum, binding market value to social value

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[789] Karl Marx, *Grundrisse* (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, 1973), 539, cited in David Harvey, *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (London: Routledge, 2001), 244.

[790] Coleman, *Spirit of French Capitalism*; Spang, *Stuff and Money* (2015).

and financial security to physical security. Enslavement was not simply a process of commodification, of attempting to reduce a person to a product, but at its heart also a practice of domination, emplacing children, men and women in a fragile but structured hierarchical society. Captive men scrubbed the decks, hauled the anchor and at times assisted in policing their fellow captives; women likely ground grain and certainly cared for the many children onboard. Women and girls were also particularly targeted for sexual assault and coercive sexual relationships, while crewmen and officers alike deliberately cultivated informants among their captives, particularly women and children. If enslavers found economic value in the labor and humanity of their captives, they also found social value in practices of domination. Quotidian and exceptional violence against captives, the denial of funerary rituals and the mere disposal of the corpse after death, carried their rhetorical power for enslavers because they made socially meaningful claims about the ease of slippage between utility and worthlessness and about the fusion of market and human value at sea. They illustrated in gruesome detail the distinction between ownership and belonging, while underlining the abyss that underlay the social structure aboard the ship.

Scholars of Atlantic slavery have shown that the institution was a key component in the emergence of global capitalism.[791] I have aimed to illuminate the social implications of this by looking at global change through the lens of the human scale, narrating both moments of rupture and the intertwined routes of trade that stretched across Atlantic and Indian Oceans. Aboard the slave ship, the synthesis of domination and economic ownership exposed a raw and gaping void of physical and social annihilation that underpinned and propelled the emergent capitalist social world at all levels. It illustrated on a constant basis the precariousness of life at sea, the danger of exclusion from market society, and the desperate tightness between financial and physical viability. The chapters examine the reconstruction of social bonds, once actors were decoupled from place, revealing the transformation of belonging and ownership in the early modern world.

Enslaved people lived on the edge of this chasm, the threat of annihilation, subjected to unrelenting cruelty, dehumanizing treatment and quotidian violence designed to demonstrate their subjugation. They were forced to forge their own paths to survival or escape, whether by refuting or exploiting their enslavers' interests. The paths included those chosen by women who bonded over childbirth and those who took their own lives, by men who starved themselves and those who attempted to negotiate for better food. Some improvised informal structures of caregiving and others organized resistance, articulating alternative forms of belonging at sea, each with its own hierarchy forged from particular sets of relations, claims to belonging that stood in contestation to their captors' claims to ownership. Others attempted to navigate within a web of market ties, using their value to the ship, and to individual officers, for tenuous protections in exchange for service onboard. In all cases, the social element of lived experience formed an essential component of navigating the joint processes of commodification and domination.

For crewmen and officers, the liminal status of enslaved Africans displayed the urgency to distance oneself, by race, by rank, and by access to capital, from the men, women and children who formed the stuff of trade. The deliberately dehumanizing treatment of the captive people compounded crewmen's urgency to distinguish themselves, to draw the lines between

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[791] This bibliography is too vast to cite here, but key works include Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic*; Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power*; Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*.

community and crowd. Rites and rituals, from sea baptism to collective prayer, worked to solidify this distinction. Men donned blackface so that they might make claim to the Southern Hemisphere, and they washed it off to assert their freedom from it, their membership among free and white seamen; they kneeled to confess before their chaplains and revelled on the feast of Saint John the Baptist but refused to recognize the pastoral care or communal responsibilities owed to Catholic Africans forced aboard their ship. While religious status formed a significant boundary of belonging among crewmen early in the century, by mid-century, the market had pulled nearly all seamen under its sway. Crewmen and officers, and particularly those in the slave trade, increasingly recognized the market, the dual social and economic power of credit, as an essential part of their distinction from captives. Writing of desperate and destructive acts of arson in her sci-fi novel, *The Parable of the Sower*, Octavia Butler writes, "the only way to prove to yourself that you have power is to use it."[792] Officers held the privilege of violence, the ability to evince their status through the exercise of abuse upon crewmen and particularly captives, with the vast majority of this power in the hands of the major officers. All seamen embraced their power to buy and to sell, to borrow and lend, to claim ownership as actors in the market, rather than commodities within it. Conventions of mutual care among sailors, best expressed in the practice of *matelotage*, fell away as men came to rely on financial credit to furnish the needs of the living and on auctions to pay the heirs and the debts of the dead.

In this moving world, the visible body and its protection came to bear outsized importance as a determinant and sign of status. Race was the single most significant category to weigh upon status, followed by gender and visible health. Racial difference was most visible in the slave trade, and almost all Black people on French long-distance voyages in the eighteenth century were captive Africans. The interchanging of *noir* and *nègre* in slave trade logbook notations underlines the conflation of blackness and bondage in the minds of enslavers. Crewmen were eager to lay claim to their whiteness, when they complained to the court that they were treated, unjustly, "like a slave" or their bodies blackened by excessive beatings. Whiteness presented a legally significant barrier against the excesses permitted against enslaved people; it established the requirement to weigh dignity, honor and rank in matters of labor, discipline and shame as well as in the bare question of provisions, medical care and physical health. Black seamen represented a miniscule fraction of crews on long distance voyages, and they worked as cooks, ships' boys and occasionally sailors. I did not encounter any petty or major officers who were identified as Black in roll books, suggesting that seamen of color were often relegated to positions of de facto servitude or domestic service in relation to their fellow crewmen. Paired with this relegated status was limited access to market participation. While the evidence I have found on Black seafarers on long distance voyages is very small, a sample of Black participants in probate auctions suggests that seafarers of African descent faced heightened cost to participate in shipboard market exchanges, as buyers or as sellers, particularly when the items in question were shirts worn by a Black crewmember.

The vast majority of women aboard ship were African captives, with a small number of female passengers occasionally embarking as passengers between France and its colonies. The status and lived experience of African women on the slave ship was undeniably related to their apparent gender, to the forced display of their bodies, stripped of clothing. Officers targeted them for sexual abuse, identified them as potential wet nurses for infants, and evaluated their sale value based in large part, though not exclusively, on their physical attributes. White female

[792] Octavia Butler, *Parable of the Sower*, (New York: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1993), 123.

passengers were protected from such assaults, defined primarily by their position as paid passengers rather than cargo or members of seaborne community.[793]

For crewmen and officers, dignities and privileges, along with the specialized skills of topmen and *officiers mariniers*, operated alongside a hierarchy of wealth, but the proliferation of comforts, clothing and accessories across classes, though especially among major officers, evinced the readability of rank in the possession of tradable goods. A change of clothing permitted a reprieve from the stench of encrusted seawater and sweat. Bedding and soap promised to at least reduce vermin and produce an image of wellness. Illness aboard ship was hyper-visible. Scurvy, smallpox and dysentery marked the skin and clothing of sufferers, particularly those deprived of necessities and those without strong bonds of mutual care. In the fragmented world of the slave ship, these deficits compounded with grief and the grueling deprivations of months of bondage prior to debarkation to make even the simplest care a project of great effort, resilience and compassion. Sailors had access to considerably more resources. "The good care" that sailors provided to their *matelots* in times of illness likely included at the very least assisting in changing and washing clothing when possible, alerting the surgeon or cook of the ill man's needs, or simply wiping his brow during a fever. As the century wore on, the probate inventories of seamen demonstrate a rising investment in bodily comforts like soap, bedding and clothing. A cared-for body illustrated one's capacity to obtain healthful food and drink, to protect against illness and unsavory environments, and most importantly, the ability to secure the capital, whether social or economic, to ensure a healthy body amid obvious suffering. In the absence of interlocking institutions and communities of care, it was increasingly important to cultivate the body itself as a readable site of status.

The acceleration of global trade in the eighteenth century tightened connections across oceans, as it sped more people and goods at a faster rate for the profit of investors. However, it has been the work of this dissertation to unveil the texture of human travel, the places of meaning that emerged in and through these processes of dislocation. Temporary and fragmentary, these places, thousands mapped and millions more undocumented, reveal death at the heart of emergent global capitalism. Communities at sea, disconnected from stable places, were founded upon grief, upon fear of imminent crisis, and upon the threat of eternal obscurity. This evokes the dread of the pauper's grave that grew to prominence in the nineteenth century; whereas earlier centuries saw respectability in communal burial without a coffin, burial in a communal grave had become a sign of one's worthlessness, the "*mise en abîme* of the dead who had no place where they belonged or anyone who wanted them" in the words of Thomas Laqueur. At sea, every corpse was buried or disposed of *en abîme*. Nevertheless, to be thrown overboard without even a name listed, without any ritual, without any kin to notify, this horror propelled all to cultivate bonds, credit, and capital. Death was not simply a passage out of life at sea or simply a tragic consequence of trade; it was the originator and the motor of deterritorialized community-formation at the heart of emergent global capitalism.

Black artists and activists working on the Atlantic slave trade have evoked these questions of movement and stasis and explored ways to reconstruct and locate human meaning from the Middle Passage, in the absence of secured places, in the depths of human suffering and

[793] This question is more complex and could be more fully explored by examining in greater detail the circumstances of the woman who accompanied Daniel Bertrand aboard *La Sirenne* in 1713, as well as two other cases in which wealthy female passengers were publicly humiliated and sexually threatened by the captain. Procedure contre Daniel Bertrand, March 9, 1713, AD33 6B 1152; Procedure contre Toussaint Braheix, 1722, ADLA B 4939; Procédure contre Jean Pelier, 1784, ADLA B 4964.

loss. Charles Gaines evokes the intersection of capitalist commerce and human loss in his 2022-2023 exhibition, *Moving Chains and Mound*, a monumental sculpture on Governors Island in view of the Statue of Liberty. Visitors can walk through the bowels of the barge, while above their heads, eight massive chains grind across the sculpture in a grim canopy. Their movements, attuned to the speed of the river currents and to the speed of barges, juxtapose natural time and the speed of trade. The installation creates an unrelenting sound environment and evokes the grinding effects of space-time compression on the body and human society.[794] Since 2011, the Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project has mapped 52 sites where slave ships arrived in North America. They have erected plaques and conducted ceremonies at 29 of these sites to commemorate the lives lost at sea, those who carried forward their legacies in the Americas and the historical, spiritual and ancestral ties that connect their stories to the living.[795] Their use of ritual, language and the establishment of concrete places of remembrance insists upon the recognition of the spiritual, cultural and human fullness of the two million people who died at sea. The organization, Diving with a Purpose similarly seeks to identify and conserve places of historical significance in the transatlantic slave trade by documenting shipwrecks from the trade and training young people in underwater archaeology.[796] Woven into these projects are many others. Identifying discreet places of sea burial could open new opportunities for memorialization and memory of the Middle Passage. This spatial construction also undermines traditional thinking about routes of trade, particularly visualizations of Atlantic trade and communication in the eighteenth century, often depicted as a series of lines of equal weight stretching across the ocean.[3] It contrasts with the excellent maps composed by David Eltis and David Richardson to illustrate the magnitude, geographic differentiation and historical changes in the slave trade, which underline demographic volume over individualized experience, movement rather than emplacement.[4] By looking at distinct points marking individual sites of death, the map of chapter four forces the viewer's attention to the human level and to the way transoceanic trade was founded upon catastrophic loss of life.

Afro-futurist artistic projects elaborate the continuities between the trans-Atlantic slave trade, contemporary life, and Black futures. The electronic music group, *Drexciya*, formed by James Stinson and Gerald Donald in the late 1990s, imagined a futuristic submarine society, born of the children of pregnant women who were thrown overboard in the slave trade. The concept inspired artists to reimagine continuity amidst the vast breakage of the Middle Passage.[797] Jackson draws upon Drexciya in her contemporary film, photography and sculpture collection, *From the Deep: In the Wake of Drexciya*. In this reimagined realm, she evokes the richness of the losses, the infinite articulations of relationships, of status, of enjoyments and expression that captive Africans carried with them, even as their enslavers stripped them of clothing and denied their social existence.[798] I hope that this dissertation might contribute to this conversation by conveying the fullness of each human story, as well as the inseparability of the human and global scales.

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[794] Charles Gaines, *Moving Chains and Mound*, Governor's Island and Times Square, NYC, Smale Riverfront Park, Cincinnati, OH and Covington Riverfront, KY, October 15, 2022-Summer 2023.
[795] "About Us" Middle Passage Ceremonies and Port Markers Project (MPCPMP) https://www.middlepassageproject.org/about-us, Accessed 7/5/2023.
[796] Diving with a Purpose, https://divingwithapurpose.org, Accessed 7/5/2023.
[797] Ruth Mayer, "'Africa as an Alien Future': The Middle Passage, Afrofuturism, and Postcolonial Waterworlds." *Amerikastudien / American Studies* 45, no. 4 (2000), 555–66.
[798] Ayana V. Jackson, *From the Deep: In the Wake of Drexciya*, The Smithsonian National Museum of African Art, (June 2023-April 2024)

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