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## **Fear and Trepidation: The Socio-Cultural Impact of Maritime Piracy and Illicit Smuggling in San Francisco De Campeche 1630 - 1705**

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**FEAR AND TREPIDATION: THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF MARITIME  
PIRACY AND ILLICIT SMUGGLING IN SAN FRANCISCO DE CAMPECHE**

**1630 - 1705**

A Master's Thesis

Presented to

The Graduate College of

Missouri State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts, History

By

Víctor Alfonso Medina Lugo

August 2019

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History

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**ABSTRACT**

Piracy has a long history globally, but one of the most extreme periods of pirate activity occurred in the Caribbean Sea during the 16<sup>th</sup> through the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. This thesis analyzes the socio-cultural impact that piracy produced in the port town of San Francisco de Campeche, located in the coastal area of the province of Yucatan in the Kingdom of New Spain. In this port and settlement, Spaniards, the Indigenous population, peoples of African descent and people from throughout the Spanish Empire suffered together the atrocities of the violent sackings and plundering by various groups of robbers from the sea (variously French Corsairs, English and Dutch Privateers, and buccaneers and pirates from all three nations). The objective of this work is to examine and chronicle the various changes that piracy produced in the daily lives of these people in Campeche.

**KEYWORDS:** piracy, smuggling, New Spain, Caribbean, everyday life, seventeenth century

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August 2019

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In the interest of academic freedom and the principle of free speech, approval of this thesis indicates the format is acceptable and meets the academic criteria for the discipline as determined by the faculty that constitute the thesis committee. The content and views expressed in this thesis are those of the student-scholar and are not endorsed by Missouri State University, its Graduate College, or its employees.

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Dedico esta tesis a mis padres, Víctor y Nancy, a mis abuelos, y mis hermanas. Patricia, mi esposa, esto igual va para ti.

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## INTRODUCTION

Shortly after I arrived in this government, in the last year of 1633, I came to take the possession of this mistreated province, sacked by an army of Dutch enemies that after having won and sacked the city and port of Trujillo on the coast of Honduras continued and next came to this province infesting it and sacking and looting the town and port of San Francisco de Campeche, the main port of this province, in which they made many damages, robberies and caused the deaths of many of the people who were put to the defense. And from others taken prisoner who had been captured and held in their ships, whom afterward they released on land, gave me certain notices of the many demonstrations that the enemy had given them that they had the intention to come with more a major force to win this very city of Mérida...

*Carta de Jerónimo de Quero, Gobernador de Yucatán, sobre el saqueo del puerto de San Francisco de Campeche, 1633, AGI, Audiencia de México, 360, ramo 2, numero 8.*

On the morning of August 12, 1633, four foreign ships appeared stationed at different points along the coast in front of the Port of Campeche, in the Province of Yucatan (See fig. 1).<sup>1</sup> This unknown fleet included four other major ships that stayed 30 miles away, as that part of the Bay of Campeche became too shallow for them to approach any closer. The townspeople from Campeche immediately noticed that this fleet was not friendly; it became evident shortly after that this flotilla actually served as part of a larger pirate fleet made up mainly of Dutch sailors and privateers, with some French, English, Walloon and Flemish people joining them. The pirates embarked with the entire crew of the fleet in four smaller ships, leaving only a small guard in the larger vessels. As the witness Doña Catalina Blanco, widow of Captain Pedro de Arce, later described:

...On August 13, 1633 this village and port of Campeche was attacked by the Dutch enemy with an armada of 7 reinforced *urcas* of people and artillery, and the people resisted and fought them back until they reached the town and fought hand to hand with swords, and they killed a lot people by force of arms and won the main town square of ours, and in this fray the said Pedro de Arce, my husband, died in the service of God and His King for the defense of his town and port fighting with his harquebus with much

---

<sup>1</sup> The introductory story is based on the document *Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses, escrita por un testigo ocular que participó en los hechos*, Archivo General de la Nación (AGN), Inquisición, 1503, ff. 1r-2v.

courage, as all the defenders saw that he was killed by the enemy who cut him into pieces in the main plaza, and afterward the enemy who took the plaza sacked and robbed the town and especially in the houses along the plaza, of which our home was one, and the enemy violently entered into it and robbed and plundered all that was inside....<sup>2</sup>

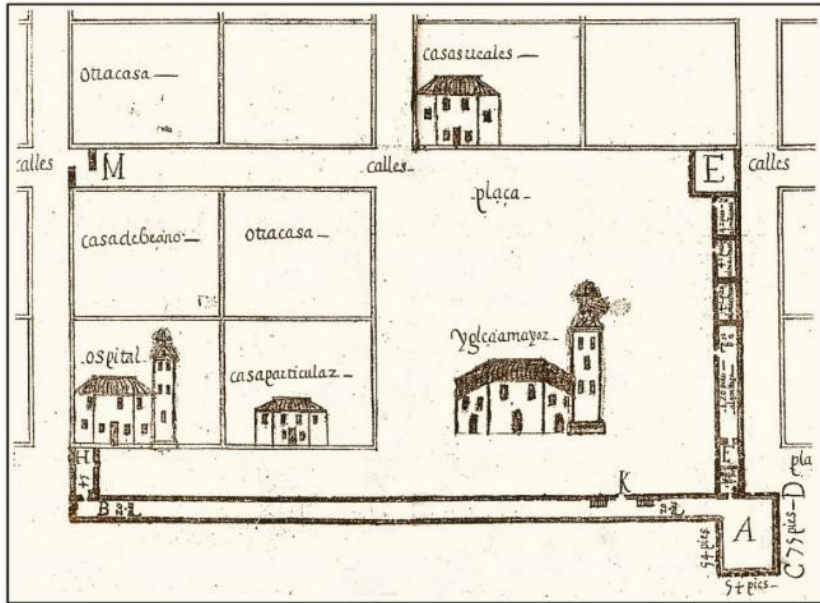


Figure 1. Plan of the Main Plaza of the Villa and Port of Campeche, the Site of the Most Intense Fighting During the Dutch Sack of Campeche in 1633. Source: Map of the plan of the Port Submitted by Governor Don Carlos de Luna y Arellano, 1604.

During the night the pirates had used small boats to ferry a contingent of armed people closer to the shore. The pirates had also placed two shallow hulled boats mounted with small artillery pieces in front of the convent of San Francisco, located on the east side of the villa of Campeche (See fig. 2).

<sup>2</sup> See *Testimonio de Doña Catalina Blanco, viuda Mujer de Capitán Pedro de Arce, escribano público sobre su muerte y la toma de Campeche por los enemigos holandeses*, Archivo General de Indias (hereafter AGI), Audiencia de México, 184, folio 20r-23v. The original text in Spanish reads: *Digo que a los 13 del mes de agosto de 1633 esta villa y puerto de Campeche fue acometida del enemigo Holandés con una armada de 7 urcas reforzadas de gente y artillería y habiéndose le resistido y peleado hasta llegar a las manos con las espadas y muertole mucha gente a fuerza de armas ganó la plaza de las nuestras en cuya refriega el dicho Pedro de Arce, mi marido, se lo uso del servicio de Dios y de Su Rey por la defensa de su villa y puerto peleando con su arcabuz con mucho valor, y a vista de toda la plaza de armas en ella le mato e hizo pedazos el enemigo a cuya causa y del saco y robo que hizo en esta villa y especial en las casas de nuestra vivienda que por estar en la misma plaza de armas donde puso el enemigo toda su fuerza fue muy grande robando quanto en ella había.*

With the sun rising, loud gun shots announced that first attack that began on the south side of the port, near the barrio of San Roman, in the southwestern part of the port of Campeche (See fig. 2). Indigenous people primarily populated this barrio and they suffered from the onslaught of nearly five hundred pirates who trudged through the woods and scrub-brush near the outskirts of the villa.

Figure 2. Plan of the Villa and Port of Campeche, 1663. Source: AGI, Mapas y Planos, Audiencia de México, 61.

of African origin, and one battalion of *indios flecheros*, or indigenous auxiliary archers. This multi-ethnic force met the pirates in a violent clash.<sup>3</sup> The pirates rapidly attacked the first defensive trench, and quickly overpowered the defenders and destroyed this barrier. Another battalion of *indios flecheros* from the barrio of San Roman joined the battle against the pirates. The Indigenous militia, made up mostly of Maya people, only had light weapons, mostly bow and arrows, and consequently, the pirates received minimal damage from their counter-attack. According to reports, the Maya militia battalion lost around 20 men, not including those the Dutch pirates had injured. According to one eye-witness of the event the Dutch pirates:

... marched with a lot of calm until they fought and engaged with the defenders of first trench, which they overtook quickly due to the small force that defended it, and at that point there they were engaged by a force made up mostly of Indians from the neighborhood of San Roman who attempted to push them back and cause them damage, but as the weapons they possessed were mostly bows and arrows, the Dutch received little damage and the Indians suffered a loss of more than twenty dead not counting the many wounded...<sup>4</sup>

The pirates pushed back the Maya militia and moved towards the second trench, the last defense before entering the port. The pirates had the support of the small boats filled with artillery that caused heavy damage to the Spaniards defending the place. The fight in the second trench, according to witnesses, lasted about half an hour.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Michel Antochiw, *Milicia de Yucatán y Unión de Armas de 1712*, (Campeche, México: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2006), 19.

<sup>4</sup> *Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses, escrita por un testigo ocular que participó en los hechos*, AGN, Inquisición, 1503, folio 1r. The original text in Spanish reads: *Marcharon con mucho sosiego hasta llegar a pelear con la primera trinchera, la qual fue desbaratada por la poca fuerza que en ella había, allí salieron los indios de San Román y procurando hacerles daño, como las armas que poseían eran flacas, recibieron los holandeses poco daño y ellos con pérdida de más de veinte sin los heridos.*

<sup>5</sup> *Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses*, AGN, Inquisición, Vol. 1503, folio 1v.

The defenders only had approximately thirty men and three pieces of artillery to defend the trench. After a brief and valiant defense, someone in the downtown of Campeche ordered the retreat towards the *Plaza de Armas*, in the middle of the town, to try to reorganize the remaining defensive forces. According to eye-witnesses, only three men stayed in the trench to defend it, including the public notary and prominent citizen Pedro de Arce. Gregorio Diaz Leandro, one of the surviving defenders of the trenches later testified about the events:

... This witness was in the main plaza in the trenches where the enemy attacked and saw in them the said Pedro de Arce with his harquebus fighting with the said enemy with much effort and courage; and being already wounded by a bullet in the leg in the scuffle that took place when the enemy won the main parade ground, while reaching for their swords for hand to hand combat this witness heard Pedro de Arce cry-out to the enemy saying "Come on!" and replied "You do not cause fear in any vassal of the King of Spain" and then they shot at him and gave him another bullet from which he fell dead; and this witness knows and saw this because he was in the same trench where Pedro de Arce defended the parade ground where he died.<sup>6</sup>

When the pirates saw this action, they charged against these men, killed two of them, and took the last one as a prisoner. The pirates then reorganized themselves into three squads to take the *Plaza de Armas*. The captain, the Dutch pirate/privateer Cornelis Corneliszoon Jol, called *Pie de Palo*<sup>7</sup>, gave the order, "Let's go, to charge against the Plaza, and the one who has to fall

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<sup>6</sup> *Testimonio de Gregorio Diaz Leandro, vecino de Tabasco, residente en Campeche, 5 de septiembre, sobre la toma de Campeche por los holandeses y la muerte de Don Pedro de Arce*, 1633, AGI, Audiencia de México, 184, N.41. The original text in Spanish reads: "... estuvo este testigo en la plaza de armas en las trincheras por donde la acometió el enemigo y vido en ellas al dicho Pedro de Arce con su arcabuz peleando con el dicho enemigo con mucho esfuerzo y valentía y estando ya herido de un balazo en una pierna en la refriega que se tuvo al ganar el enemigo la plaza de armas llegando a las espadas oyó este testigo que le dijo el enemigo al dicho Pedro de Arce "Date" y el respondió "No sea de dar así ningún vasallo del Rey de España" y entonces le dieron otro balazo de que cayó muerto y lo sabe y vido este testigo por haber se hallado en la trinchera donde estuvo el dicho Pedro de Arce en la plaza de armas donde murió."

<sup>7</sup> The Dutch pirate known as "Pie de palo" was none other than **Cornelis Corneliszoon Jol** (1597 – 31 October 1641), nicknamed *Houtebeen* in Dutch ("peg leg"). He had served as a 17th-century Dutch corsair and admiral in the Dutch West India Company during the Eighty Years' War between Spain and the Dutch Republic. Cornelis Jol served as one of the early Dutch privateers to successfully attack Campeche, looting the settlement in 1633, and was

should fall and the one who has to live, should live.”<sup>8</sup> The pirates then attacked the Plaza from three sides, and they left the fourth side, which faced the sea, to the small boats with artillery which continued to bombard the defenders.

The Spaniards had already entrenched the Plaza with wooden logs and sand, but this effort, however, was not enough to hold back the organized assault from the pirates. When the defenders saw that there was no hope, they decided to retreat towards Santa Lucía, a *barrio* located outside the town. At this point, the remaining people from Campeche had to flee their homes, which allowed the pirates to capture the entire town.

The pirates left Campeche the following Tuesday, August 16, 1633 four days after the initial attack, fearing that the city of Merida, capital of the province, would send reinforcements to the people of Campeche. During the time that the pirates remained in the villa of Campeche, they dedicated themselves to committing robberies and murders. The chaos was so pervasive that captain *Pie de Palo* decided to destroy the supplies of wines and liquors to avoid the pirates from getting too drunk. With this measure he tried to help the other captains to recover control of the situation. The Calvinist pirates, in an act of protestant desecration, used the parish church, *Nuestra Señora de la Concepción*, as a storehouse to keep all the booty before loading it to the major boats. When the pirates started to load the boats, they also used the Spanish ships that were already in the harbors, capturing them and adding them to their own fleet. There were eleven Spanish ships in Campeche at the time of the attack. The pirates took the seven best ships for themselves and burned the remaining four ships to stop any possible pursuit after their flight.

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active against the Spanish in the Spanish Main and throughout the Caribbean during the 1630s and 40s. For more information on his career in the service as a privateer in the Dutch West Indian Company see Kris Lane, "Punishing the Sea Wolf: Corsairs and Cannibals in the Early Modern Caribbean," in *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West Indische Gids*. Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies. (2003), Vol. 77 (#3): 201-220.

<sup>8</sup> *Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses*, AGN, Inquisición, 1503, f. 1v.



Finally, before the pirates left Campeche, they held a meeting to determine what to do next. The pirates decided to separate into two groups. One group decided to go back to Holland, since some people felt that it had been a long time abroad. The other group, led by *Pie de Palo*, chose to stay in the Americas and continue to pillage other cities and towns in the Caribbean.<sup>9</sup>

An anonymous witness recorded these events and that written testimony is in the Inquisition files, currently housed at the *Archivo General de la Nacion*, in Mexico City.<sup>10</sup> The document is only four pages long and these pages seem to be taken from an original folder that was much longer, and so it is not possible to know the full context of the production of this document. Sadly, the author of the document never mentioned his own name; however, the author did mention the role that he played during the events. This person was a first-hand witness, and at the end of the document, he mentions that he played an active part of the defense in San Roman, and that he was the only survivor of the attack that occurred in the second trench.<sup>11</sup> The declarant also mentions that he was taken as a prisoner by the pirates and that he was kept in the ship of *Pie de Palo*. The Dutch pirates later released the declarant with all the other captives when they left the town.

The brief, but desperate testimony of this attack gives us an idea of the fear that became part of everyday life for the people of Campeche throughout most of the later sixteenth and

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<sup>9</sup> *Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses*, AGN, Inquisición, 1503, f. 2r.

<sup>10</sup> There was a controversy with the date of the document. According to fray Diego Lopez de Cogolludo, the attack by *Pie de Palo* took place in 1633. However, the first time this present document was published, in Chantal Melis and Agustín Rivero, *Documentos Lingüísticos de la Nueva España. Golfo de México*, (México: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 2008); this testimony was dated in 1631. When I compared the document published with the original document in the AGN, it was not possible to confirm that date since the last digit is illegible. For this reason, I assume that it was a mistake from the authors that published the document and that this document corresponds to the attack in 1633, since there is no evidence of an attack in 1631. It is also the calendar of year 1633 the one that coincides with the days of the week and the dates mentioned in the declaration.

<sup>11</sup> *Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses*, AGN, Inquisición, 1503, f. 2v.

seventeenth centuries. In the Caribbean region, pirates attacked Campeche more often than most other locations. The Mexican historian Isaac García Venegas in his own work mentions that: “In 152 years, it [Campeche] was threatened four times, assaulted and looted six times, and taken in two... it suffered assaults, robberies and destruction at the hands of intentional fires in no less than 10 occasions.”<sup>12</sup>

Although pirates attacked other places around the Caribbean, nonetheless the port and town of Campeche became a frequent goal for these people, even though the port was not directly used for Atlantic commerce, nor did it play a part in the treasure fleet system and commerce of valuable metals such as the silver and gold from New Spain and Peru. Nevertheless, the geographic, economic, and social context of this often raided place is part of the interest in the study of piracy in Campeche and the Yucatan peninsula in general.

## **Overview of Chapters**

In the introduction, I will present and define the main concepts that I will be using throughout the thesis. These concepts are related to the study of the everyday life and are taken from a variety of other disciplines and fields, such as sociology, anthropology and psychology. This section will also include an overview of the topic, explaining the limits in time and space of the present study. This study will focus on the Yucatan Peninsula, specifically in the town and port of San Francisco de Campeche and its surroundings. The time limits and temporal limits of the scope of the thesis fall within the seventeenth century. The subjects of study are not specifically the pirates themselves, but rather colonists and the society of the province of Yucatan in general, and the people from the main port of the province of Campeche in particular.

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<sup>12</sup> Isaac García Venegas, “Los ladrones de los mares y San Francisco de Campeche,” *Enciclopedia Histórica de Campeche, Tomo II, Época colonial*. (Campeche, México: Gobierno del Estado, 2001), 533.

All the reasons and justifications for these delimitations will be explained in this introductory part of the thesis.

Chapter one, “Campeche: Pirates and Historians” will include a brief historiographic review that explains the main texts and secondary sources consulted in the historiography about the piracy in the Caribbean and the history of colonial Campeche. It will also discuss the authors and their contributions to the incipient literature on the topic of the history of piracy and colonial defense of the region.

Chapter two, “A Destiny in the Americas,” describes the Yucatan Peninsula and the region in and around the port city of Campeche. The first part describes the geography. The second part describes the natural resources in the area. The third part describes the economy and the commerce during the seventeenth century in the port city. This part must include a brief description of the Spanish economic and political system of the *encomiendas* (literally feudal-style grants in trust of conquered indigenous peoples’ tributes and labor), the production of cotton, cattle ranching and the economic activities of the ranches (*estancias*), the production of salt, and the commerce and the exploitation of the valuable dyewoods known variably as *palo de tinte*, or *palo de Campeche*. This last part describes the shipyard industry in the port of Campeche and the extraction of the valuable logwood, around the *Laguna de Términos*. This chapter will also describe Campeche as a port town and the nature of its inhabitants in general.

Chapter three, “Living in San Francisco de Campeche,” is about life in Campeche. As this chapter argues, piracy impacted both government and religious institutions. Though these institutions had different interests, they were all involved in the defense of the city in diverse ways. This chapter examines the defensive dynamic in the port, first in terms of the military response, organizing and creating of defense corps, battalions, and the organizing of

*encomenderos* into militias; as well as the religious response, which looked for divine help during the attack and after the attack punished and persecuted the “infidel enemies.” The next section examines the different motives that the inhabitants had to defend their town and place, depending on who they were, for example, to die for the king, for honor, to gain money, to further one’s economic interests, or to fight and die for one’s faith. The closing of this chapter examines the resistance against the pirates, including the measures promoted by the monarchy from Spain to defend the region, starting with the creation of a fleet and the establishment of a defensive fleet system. This resistance also included the organization of expeditions to free places like *Laguna de Terminos*, occupied by the enemies, and finally, the creation of a connected and fortified system of military forts and walled cities that the Spanish authorities coordinated across the whole continent.

Chapter four, “Sleeping with the Enemy,” talks about the different menaces Campeche faced both from without and from within. First, I will describe the external enemies, the pirates, and the internal enemies, the Maya rebels, who the Spanish authorities labeled as “savage Indians.” This situation of constant external and internal menaces leads to the next part of the chapter which discusses the spaces needed to create a sense of security, both inside the town and outside the town. In the case of the security inside the *villa*, I will consider the description of the use of fortified churches and convents first, and then the building of the first fortifications around the city. Regarding external defenses, I will offer a few descriptions that referred to the “*monte*,” the surrounding ranches, as well as other villages and the extreme case of forced migration to other places (Merida, Mexico City or the return to their original places in the case of many foreigners who resided in the port town of Campeche). I will close the chapter with the description of the nature of colonial contraband and the atmosphere created by it inside the *villa*.

I will explain how the element of the contraband and illicit trade by even local officials contributed to increasing the insecurity of the townspeople by affecting the trust in the Spanish authorities.

Finally, in the conclusion of the thesis, I will focus on the new routines in the life of Campeche, the speeches and the creation of a new images beholden to the Spanish Crown. It will finish with the description of what I call the “scars” left upon the town, which refers to what became modified and transformed by these fears of constant pirate attacks, including the architecture with the new walled system of colonial defenses built in the later decades of the seventeenth century.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Piracy is a criminal practice as old as navigation itself. All over the globe and in different historical times, the transportation of valuable goods through the sea aroused the greed of men. The wealth discovered in the Americas by the Spanish Empire in the sixteenth century was no exception. The most active point of this illicit activity during the Early Modern Period (c. 1500 – c. 1800) was the Caribbean.<sup>13</sup> Due to its multiplicity of islands and archipelagos, this region offered the pirates refuge and hiding places for their misdeeds. Another region with intense pirate activity was the area of the Gulf of Mexico, which together with Caribbean Sea, integrates what scholar Johanna von Grafenstein and other authors have called the *Circuncaribe* or Greater Caribbean.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Antonio García de León, *Vientos bucaneros. Piratas, corsarios y filibusteros en el Golfo de México* (México: Era, 2014), 25.

<sup>14</sup> Johanna von Grafenstein, “Auge y decadencia en las relaciones intramericanas. México y el Caribe en los años 1763-1821,” Conference Paper Presented at the 1997 LASA Conference, Guadalajara, México, abril 17-19, 1997: 2-29.

According to von Grafenstein, the *Circuncaribe* is the area that covers all the continental coasts of the Gulf of Mexico and the Caribbean Sea as well as the island chain of the Lesser Antilles (See fig. 3).<sup>15</sup> The concept of the Greater Caribbean does not remain based simply on geographical elements, but rather it also takes into account elements of a shared economic region and geopolitics, expanding from the Caribbean to the Gulf of Mexico and to the coastal region of Florida.

Although piracy developed and occurred throughout the Gulf of Mexico, the area most affected focused mostly on the leeward coast of Veracruz and the coastal areas of Tabasco and Campeche. This present study focuses on the study of the coastal region of Campeche, which suffered constant attacks on its port since the sixteenth century. These attacks increased during the seventeenth century, especially after the attack in the year 1633, previously described. The decade of 1630 saw this increase in the attacks in the Caribbean because Spain and the Netherlands mutually broke the treaties of peace that they had signed in the earlier decade, reigniting the so-called wars of the Dutch Revolt, also known as the Eighty-Years War in Europe.<sup>16</sup>

The Spaniards founded the *villa* of San Francisco de Campeche sometime between 1540 and 1541<sup>17</sup> which is located on the shores of the Gulf of Mexico, in what was the ancient Mayan

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<sup>15</sup> Marcelo Ramírez Ruíz, "Review of Johanna von Grafenstein Gareis, *Nueva España en el Circuncaribe, 1779-1808. Revolución, competencia imperial y vínculos intercontinentales*", in *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, Num. 18, (January 1998): 124 - 129.

<sup>16</sup> The name to this period is *The Twelve Year's Truce*. By 1621 the renovation of the treaty failed, and hostilities restarted.

<sup>17</sup> The original act of foundation is lost, the date is an estimation from declarations of the people that were with Francisco de Montejo *El Adelantado*, the conquistador of Yucatan.

settlement of Kin Pech.<sup>18</sup> Because of its coastal position, Campeche became the main point of entry and exit of the Yucatan Peninsula during the colonial era. During the seventeenth century, the port of Campeche became directly linked to the Caribbean through its commercial relationships and mercantile connections of its merchant elite, as it kept an active trade with the port of Veracruz, in New Spain, as well as the ports of La Havana, Caracas, Cartagena, Maracaibo, and Santo Domingo, in the Americas.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 3. Map of the *Circuncaribe* Region or the Greater Caribbean. Source: Google Maps

The port of Campeche kept a *cabotage* trade<sup>20</sup> with the port of Veracruz, as well as with the entire *Circuncaribe* region, which generated constant movement of merchandise in and out of

<sup>18</sup> *Relación de los méritos y servicios de Hernando Muñoz Zapata*, Yucatán, 1567. AGI, Patronato, 68, N.1, R.9, folios 10r-12r.

<sup>19</sup> *Carta de la Villa y Puerto de San Francisco de Campeche a su Majestad, recibida en 18 de julio de 1670, dando cuenta de la situación del puerto*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, folio 591v.

<sup>20</sup> *Cabotage* is the trade or transport in coastal waters within the same country. It comes from the French *caboter*, which means to sail along the coast. This means that the port of Campeche only traded with other close Spanish ports in the Americas. "Cabotage." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cabotage>.

its docks. Due to this activity, Campeche served as a permanent depot and warehouse of valuable goods and precious dyewoods, especially the highly prized and universally desired logwood<sup>21</sup> and mahogany.<sup>22</sup> Logwood became important because it served as a natural source of bright crimson dye for the textile industry.

During the seventeenth century, the *Villa* and Port of San Francisco de Campeche confirmed its primacy as the main point of entry and exit to the entire marginal zone of the province of Yucatan. Campeche served as the first Spanish settlement in the Province of Yucatan and due to its status as a port, Campeche became the starting point for the colonization process in Yucatan during the mid-sixteenth century.<sup>23</sup>

After the end of the process of conquest in the middle of the sixteenth century, the port of Campeche quickly moved to the sidelines of colonization because the region around the settlement did not have an adequate number of indigenous people.<sup>24</sup> To receive a feudal grant for an *encomienda*, or “trust” of Indigenous tribute and labor as a reward for services in the conquest, Spanish conquistadors needed a sufficient number of indigenous people to work for them. The Spanish historian Manuela García Bernal stated that by 1637 Campeche became the

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<sup>21</sup> *Haematoxylum campechianum*. This plant is also call logwood in the English Colonial documentation. The Spanish called the plant *palo de tinte*. Nowadays, the plant is also now as *Palo de Campeche*, because of its origin. This fact is also recognizable in the scientific name of the plant. "Logwood." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/logwood>.

<sup>22</sup> *Swietenia macrophylla*. The plant in this region is commonly known as West Indian Mahogany. This plant is present in almost all the Caribbean area. The wood from this plant was used for ship construction since the sixteenth century until World War II. It was also used for furniture construction and this continues until today. "Mahogany." Merriam-Webster.com. Accessed November 10, 2018. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/mahogany>.

<sup>23</sup> Adriana Rocher Salas, “Clerecía y sociedad en Campeche durante el periodo colonial,” In *Tzintzun. Revista de Estudios Históricos*, Num. 41 (January-June, 2005): 10-11.

<sup>24</sup> Manuela Cristina García Bernal. *Población y encomienda en Yucatán bajo los Austrias* (Seville, Spain: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas), 370-371; also see Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y Grupos de Poder en Yucatán, 1606-1699* (Seville, Spain: Diputación Provincial de Sevilla), 227-228.



only port in the Yucatan peninsula authorized for foreign trade.<sup>25</sup> This special status, added to the precariousness of its defensive system, and the great dispersion of the population in the nearby neighborhoods, soon put Campeche in the sights of the pirates. Due to the lack of human and material resources, the defense of the settlement became a very complicated issue for the Spanish authorities and the inhabitants.

According to historians, the last and most serious aggression that threatened the town took place in 1685. In that event, the Flemish pirate Laurent de Graff, also known as Lorencillo, and his lieutenant Sieur de Grammont led the attack. This attack revealed the great military strength of the pirates and the weakness of the Spanish authorities defending the *villa* of Campeche.<sup>26</sup> During the attack of 1685, the aggressors were not satisfied with only taking the villa of Campeche. The pirates violently moved inland, towards the city of Merida, and attacked the ranches of Multunchac, Ebulá, Castamay, Chibik, Uayamón, Kobén; and the towns of Chiná, Santa Rosa, Samulá and Tixbulul (now Lerma), all located in the area surrounding Campeche. The pirates used about 1,300 men and a dozen ships to carry out this aggression. After this event, the Spanish authorities realized that an assault of this magnitude showed the urgent need to approve a fortification project for the *villa*, and the possible creation of a royal company of dragoons in the town, both of which had been discussed for years but without reaching an agreement.<sup>27</sup> Based on these several attacks led by pirates around Campeche, historians have

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<sup>25</sup> Manuela Cristina García Bernal. *Campeche y el comercio atlántico yucateco (1561-1624)*. (Campeche, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma de Campeche, 2006), 107.

<sup>26</sup> Juan Juárez Moreno. *Corsarios y Piratas en Veracruz y Campeche* (Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1972), 331-366.

<sup>27</sup> José Ortiz Lanz, *Piedras ante el mar. Las fortificaciones de Campeche* (Campeche, Mexico: Gobierno de Campeche, 1996), 37-38.

distinguished different stages in the history of piracy in the region.<sup>28</sup> Historians defined and periodized these stages based on the attackers' origin, and the number of forces used to attack the town. The first stage (1557-1597) began in 1557, the year of the first recorded pirate aggression by French corsairs, until 1597, when English privateers under the command of Captain William Parker tried to capture the entire town. The second stage (1597-1633) began after the 1597 English attempted invasion and lasted until the arrival of the Dutch in the town in 1633, when the number of aggressions against the villa briefly decreased. Historians distinguish a third stage, characterized by a great increase in the historical records of pirate attacks. This third stage began in 1633, with the first successful capture of Campeche by Cornelis Jol (*pie de palo*), and lasted until 1685, when the Laurens de Graaf's assault occurred. In this third stage, unlike the first one, the attacks became more constant, larger, and better organized with new actors on stage: the Dutch privateers, pirates and later buccaneers.<sup>29</sup> This study will focus mainly on the effects that this third stage of attacks had on the daily routines of the people of Campeche. The frequent attacks provoked a constant state of fear that affected daily life within the Port Town. Piracy, its threat, and aftermath produced transformations in everyday life and living. Piracy not only provoked a military response from the people of Campeche, but it also deeply affected social roles, practices and customs, and the relations between the civil authorities and the people.

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<sup>28</sup> Leopoldo López Zea. "Piratas del Caribe y Mar del Sur en el siglo XVI" México, D.F.: Dirección General de Estudios de Posgrado, UNAM: Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNAM: Programa de Posgrado en Estudios Latinoamericanos (Undergraduate Thesis, México, 2001), 5-6.

<sup>29</sup> In 1633, Campeche suffered the first successful sacking by pirates. As I mentioned in the introductory story, there were several members of the pirate crew from the Netherlands. After the war between Spain and the Province of the Netherlands, there was a treaty of peace from 1609 to 1621. With the extinction of the treaty, the Netherlands created the West India Company, in June 3, 1621. This company oversaw organizing numerous privateering expeditions towards the Americas. This is one of the main reasons for the increase in the aggressions during the following decades. See I. A. Wright, "The Dutch and Cuba, 1609-1643," *The Hispanic American Historical Review*, Vol. 4, No. 4 (November 1921): 602.

This study begins with the attack of 1633 as this marked the beginning of increased hostilities. The research ends in 1705, because this date saw the conclusion and completion of the final defensive walled fortifications around the port of Campeche. This new fortified system created a very different defensive dynamic from the preceding century. The building of these fortifications resulted from the combined experience of the various assaults against the Port and Town throughout the entire seventeenth century, and these changes deserve a whole new body of research. In this timeframe, pirates and privateers carried out strong and constant irruptions, which influenced the way of life for the people of Campeche.

### **Theoretical Framework of the Study**

For a study of everyday life, I will consider some basic guidelines stipulated by the historians and theorists of the “everyday life” concept. Despite increasing interest in studies about everyday life, there is no universal definition of the term, and its meaning changes depending on the author or the discipline of the study.<sup>30</sup> In this thesis, I will use the definition of everyday life presented by the philosopher Humberto Giannini. According to Giannini, “everyday life” includes all the aspects of our lives, but also what he calls, the “not-everyday life,” that is, transgressions, or violations of law and order.<sup>31</sup> In the analysis of the work of Giannini, Itzkuahtli Zamora summarizes Giannini’s concept of “everyday life” as: the set of all good, benign and transgressive activities that a subject does, day by day, in different spheres of action.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Itzkuahtli Zamora, “La importancia de la vida cotidiana en los estudios antropológicos,” *Revista Líder*, Vol. 14, Year 10, (2005): 124-125.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 128-129.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 134.

This definition also includes the idea that everyday life is not only the trivial or insignificant, but everything that occurs daily within the possibilities of happening, regardless of whether it is a daily or a sporadic event. Using that definition, I intend to place maritime piracy within the everyday life of Campeche, because although the robberies did not happen on a daily basis, their threat existed and were within the probabilities of happening at any time: thus piracy and possible threats of an invasion became omnipresent in the minds of the townspeople and their authorities.

Everyday life will be understood as the space and time where human beings construct their knowledge and practices that allow them to interact with life and create actions.<sup>33</sup> As I mentioned, Giannini is the philosopher that integrates into the concept of everyday life the ideas of transgressions and routines, as two sides of the same coin. In this sense, I consider piracy as an element that generates and interacts with everyday life in Campeche. Although piracy is a break in the day to day routines, the constant attacks changed everyday life, especially, regarding the defensive actions that were taken by the populace.

The people from Campeche tested and discarded or approved strategies and actions against the pirates. Due to the frequency of the attacks of pirates, everyday life in Campeche became deeply affected by these threats, not only in the defensive-military field of action, but also in the very issues of urbanism, public festivities, local religion, and social and cultural aspects of how the townspeople reacted to these threats.

It is important for us here to first clarify the definitions of the concepts of the social sciences associated with the studies of the history of daily life that are considered relevant to the

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<sup>33</sup> Dulce María Orellana, "La Vida Cotidiana," *Revista Universitaria de Investigación y Diálogo Académico* 5, No. 2 (2009): 4.

present work. These are: 1) social roles, 2) social stratification, 3) community and collective identity, 4) social mobility, 5) reciprocity, 6) authority and power, and 7) values and belief systems.

**Social Role.** According to a definition presented by Peter Burke, consists in the patterns or norms of behavior linked to a certain position in the social structure.<sup>34</sup> It includes both what the individual thinks of his function in society and what the rest of his community expects of him. All individuals play a role within society, a role that is sometimes passively accepted and other times actively resisted. A social role is an external manifestation of what corresponds to each person according to their place in society. Within the colonial society of Campeche, there are different social roles, just like one would find in the rest of colonial America. I will study how the pirate attacks modified these social roles.

**Social Stratification.** It is linked to the previous concept as it refers to how social groups have a specific function. In everyday life studies, belonging to one group does not exclude belonging to another group: thus group identification is fluid. A person can play the role of father, son, merchant, and Spaniard at the same time, so it must be considered within this study to understand the ways people reacted according to the role they were playing during the moment of the event under analysis.<sup>35</sup>

**Community and Collective Identity.** They can be seen in attitudes and customs, values and collective projects.<sup>36</sup> Collective identity can be general or specific, this means people can identify themselves with a larger group as well as a subset within that group. The distribution of the privileges, responsibilities and commitments of the members of a community determine these subsets. The community is formed by a set of dependent and complementary roles. For example, the merchant class in Campeche made up part of the elite and the government group in that town, but this was not the same situation in the case of the other major towns of the Province of Yucatan: Merida and Valladolid.

**Social Mobility.** It is defined as the movement of an individual or group of people from one social group to another that can result in a positive or negative outcome. It is possible to appreciate this movement when the person is in a different social group compared to the group into which he or she was born. Social mobility can be granted through symbolic capital, or through the benefit of a sponsor and even though corruption or nepotism. The concept of social mobility and the strategies people used for the movement are elements to consider in the study of the society of Campeche. As a society of the so-called “old regime,” Campeche maintained a

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<sup>34</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 47.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, 58-61.

<sup>36</sup> Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, *Introducción a la historia de la vida cotidiana*. (Mexico, D.F.: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, 2009), 40.

social mobility based mostly on a person's actions in warfare, one's personal relations and the acquiring of prestige through actions or accumulation of position or wealth.<sup>37</sup>

**Reciprocity.** It is the practice of mutual exchange among individuals. The basis of this practice is the idea of receiving a gift and acquiring a commitment to accept this gift and offering something in return for it.<sup>38</sup> Reciprocity is the origin of the practices of corruption and seduction that I will study to be able to appreciate the rules of courtesy and civility within the society of the inhabitants of Campeche. The concept of reciprocity also helps to understand how at this time of fracture Campeche created, strengthened or broke ties and commitments.

**Authority and Power.** These concepts are not the same, since a person who holds the office of authority does not necessarily have the power to do things.<sup>39</sup> Many times, power was exercised with mechanisms that are not necessarily political, but rather economic or social, thanks to the commitments made through reciprocity. Due to the rupture caused by the pirate assaults, the authorities of the town did not always maintain the power of government. During these events, the authorities transferred their power, unconsciously, to other individuals with different social functions. These other individuals did not necessarily belong to the group of authorities but because of the circumstances originated by a pirate attack, these people led the society until the end of the threat, allowing them to acquire power, prestige, and social mobility.

**Values and Belief Systems.** In societies, these ideas are not static but slowly change. Values are linked to historical concerns because they are the expression of morality, that is, the codification of customs. The study of the changing defensive strategies from the people of Campeche allow historians to appreciate the valuation of things at that moment. What is defended and to what extent? Which things, people and values are worth risking and dying for?

Through the testimonies of the attacks, historians can identify how the authorities and settlers reacted differently. These different reactions were based on their values. This will help to better understand the reaction of the inhabitants against a pirate attacks and, in a broader sense, the behavior of this society in the face of extraordinary and unexpected events. These reactions also give historians an insight into the relationship of the people with their authorities. Some people organized with the civil authorities and others, acting independently, organized themselves and their defenses without them.

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<sup>37</sup> Peter Burke. *History and Social Theory*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 63-64.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 69-71.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 75-79.

Humans have always had physical and psychological needs, but the way to satisfy those needs changes over time. Safety is a fundamental human need. At the moment an individual faces a risky situation, he rarely realizes his reliance on a system of values. In the study of historical conjunctures, such as this thesis, historians in retrospect can gain an insight into what normally goes unnoticed.

Another important idea in this research is the concept of repetition, since it dominates our daily activities. These repetitions eliminate the necessity to reflect about the decisions that people need to make when they are facing different options. This fact is what creates routines and helps people to face unexpected issues, especially those when there is no time to think about what to do. Though a routine can be maintained for many years by a person or a social group, it is not exempt from change, since it is a man-made element.<sup>40</sup> Although the normal process is that the changes are made in a subtle way, the changes in the routines of a town can come to take place in a violent way, such in a reaction to a pirate assault. The practices of imitation and generalization also help to give confidence to the chosen option, even when people faced new situations since they used prejudice and experience. All these elements can be identified during the pirate attacks, since people were facing new situations that destroyed the safety of their daily routine. After analyzing these concepts and the extant documentation in the historical record, we can categorically state that piracy was a phenomenon that transformed daily life in Campeche. It caused a break in the practices of living and the creation of new ones. These new practices consisted of preventive and defensive actions whose goal was ultimately to eliminate, or at least minimize, the damage caused by pirate attacks. A study of everyday life such as this can serve to reveal to us the ways people change and adapt their routines to deal with threats to their very

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<sup>40</sup> Christian Lalive D'Epinay. "La vida cotidiana; construcción de un concepto sociológico y antropológico," *Sociedad Hoy*, No. 14 (2008): 9-31.

lives. That is why when we want to know a society, we must understand and interpret the way in which its groups live, work, think, feel and act.

Finally, I considered it necessary to make some clarification about the language used in this thesis. There are many words and names that are kept in Spanish. The reason for this is that some of the words do not translate well into the English language, and in cases when a translation exists, the meaning could be misinterpreted since the same word was used in a different way in the English language at that time. That is the case, for example, of the word *villa* that could be translated as village or town, however, these terms do not correspond to the whole idea of the Spanish *villa*, so I decided to use the Spanish word in most cases.



# CHAPTER ONE

## CAMPECHE: PIRATES AND HISTORIANS. A REVISION OF THE HISTORIOGRAPHY

The origin of the piracy practiced by the English, French and Dutch against the possessions of the Spaniards in the Americas was due to the inconformity that these nations had in the division of the New World, seeing that Spain and Portugal had made themselves the owners of all the Americas, imposing upon it their political economy, their colonization and their church ...

Héctor Pérez Martínez, "Piraterías en Campeche," *Enciclopedia Ilustrada Mexicana*, No. 6, 1937.

The historiography about piracy in the Americas depends on the perspective of the historians who are studying it, their approaches, themes and the protagonists studied. For this reason, it is important to conduct an analysis of the existing literature, because in that way, the present work can find its place among the vast number of works that have been published, especially in recent years.

When looking at a historiography, historians do not study the events in the past directly, but the changing interpretations of those events in the work of other historians.<sup>41</sup> For a proper analysis of the historiography of piracy in the Americas, it is necessary to understand the context of the authors. The way of approaching the study of piracy by various authors differs from those countries where pirates hailed, like England, France and the Netherlands to those countries that those pirates victimized. The authors from these former places often describe the pirates as "mariners," "explorers," "scientists" and "businessmen." To historians from the victimized countries, Spain for the most part, these historical actors are described as pirates, or "smugglers," "murderers," "kidnappers" and "robbers."

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<sup>41</sup> John Lewis Gaddis, *The Landscape of History*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 129-151.

In the texts that I analyzed, it is possible to distinguish the evolution among the authors about historiographical theories. This analysis is changing the position of the authors that address the issue of piracy in America in current research. The study of piracy in the world has been changing from works that were only devoted to mainly describing the pirates, their lives and their attacks against Spanish colonies to a new historiography which instead examines the effects of piracy on politics, economy, arts and culture. Scholars do not focus solely on pirates themselves anymore, but also on the victims of piracy, the people who suffered the consequences of the pillaging. Scholars also look at the relationship between pirates and authorities, and how the decisions made by politicians in Europe affected the expanding and interconnected greater Atlantic World.

There are many obstacles in the study of the history of maritime piracy in the world. These difficulties often stem from the illegal and criminal aspects of piracy. Consequently, the problem of access to available primary sources is central among the difficulties in studying the history of piracy, as pirates themselves did not document, for the most part, their activities in writing. Another obstacle is sorting through the biased views in the documents that were produced in the various conflicts with pirates. That conflict was viewed differently by those who practiced piracy and those who suffered piracy is incontestable.

These obstacles have been removed for contemporary historians who now have access to a wider variety of primary archival sources and other related materials. There are references to the activities of pirates at sea since ancient times. The Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans and the Medieval World recorded the encounters with sea-robbers on the seas. In the case studied here, piracy in the Colonial Americas, there are sources and works dating from the same era of pirates and privateers. These sources sometimes include even journals, letters and diaries written by the

pirates themselves. Several pirates visited the area of the *Laguna de Términos* and Campeche and they described the resources, the cities and towns, the English camps and the population, as well as major events. These sources can be combined with the documentation from the Spanish authorities and colonial Spanish American archives in order to have a more complete vision of the colonial society in Campeche.

### **Piracy in the Caribbean During the Early Modern Period**

The classical sources on piracy in the Caribbean are the works of Alexander Exquemelin, William Dampier and Charles Johnson.<sup>42</sup> These works are part of the set of works written in very early times, and some, like Exquemelin, collected direct testimonies in the same period of the pirates and buccaneers. In the case of William Dampier, there is a record of his own testimony as a navigator in the Caribbean in the company of these characters and his life as a buccaneer on the coasts of Campeche. In this first stage we also find the traditional works like, *A General History of Pyrates* by Charles Johnson,<sup>43</sup> and the text *The Pirates Own Book* by Charles Ellis and published by the Marine Research Society.

Alexander Exquemelin is perhaps the most classical and consulted source for piracy and buccaneering in the Caribbean. His work, called in English *Buccaneers of the Americas*, was published for the first time in 1678. First published in Dutch, it was later translated to German, Spanish and English (See fig. 4). Historians know few details about who exactly was Alexandre

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<sup>42</sup> There exist a few precious, and probably authentic, accounts of the life on buccaneer ships most notably those of Alexander Exquemelin, *De Americaensche Zee-Roovers*; William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World*; Basil Ringrose, *A Buccaneer's Atlas*; Raveneau de Lussan, *Journal du voyage fait a la mer de sud, avec les flibustiers de l'Amerique en 1684 & années suivantes*; and Jan Erasmus Reyning, *Zeer Aanmerkelijke Reysen Gedaan Door Jan Erasmus Reining*.

<sup>43</sup> *A General History of the Pyrates* continues to be reprinted in many different editions, often with additional commentary, sometimes published under Charles Johnson's name and sometimes under Daniel Defoe's name, although it is currently attributed to a Captain Charles Johnson.

Exquemelin. It is believed that he was either a French, Dutch or Flemish surgeon who enlisted in the French West India Company and later was captured by pirates. He traveled with the pirates around the Caribbean and visited Turtle Island (*Isla de Tortuga*), a pirate base at that time. During this time, he learned about the way of life of the pirates and the adventures of the most notorious buccaneers and robbers in the islands. His work also contains details and descriptions of the main attacks against the inhabitants of the Caribbean area.



Figure 4. Front Page of the First Edition of the Dutch Version of the Work of Alexandre Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of the Americas*. Source: Alexandre Exquemelin, *De Americaensche Zee-Roovers*. Amsterdam, 1678.

Another important text among the primary sources, and especially valuable for a study of Campeche, is *A New Voyage Round the World*, by William Dampier,<sup>44</sup> originally published in 1697 in London. Dampier, an English sailor, explorer and privateer is remembered for his contributions to biology.<sup>45</sup> Dampier stayed around the Yucatan Peninsula on two different occasions during the 1670s. The experiences and stories about these voyages are a relevant part of the book, *A New Voyage*. The book includes descriptions of the activities of the English woodcutters in the *Laguna de Términos* region and their interactions with the local indigenous people and some Spanish colonists.

*A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates* is another representative work about piracy in the Americas during the colonial era. The editor of the book was Manuel Schonhorn, and he attributed the work to the English novelist Daniel Defoe. There is no hard evidence to say that Captain Charles Johnson is a pseudonym, so it is still considered that the identity of the author of *A General History* is a mystery. This work helped the formation of the popular ideas about pirates and has served as the principal source for the biographies of the most famous pirates of the Caribbean since its initial publication in 1724.

Johnson writes his work with primary sources, as a witness, and though his identity is unknown, his handling of maritime vocabulary and his apparent knowledge of the naval life suggests that he could have been a real captain of that time. *A General History* is divided into two volumes, published four years apart. In the first volume (published in 1724) Johnson sticks close to the available sources, although sometimes he adds what scholars believe are fictional

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<sup>44</sup> William Dampier, *A New Voyage Round the World* (London, 1697).

<sup>45</sup> Others work by William Dampier are *Voyages and Descriptions* (1699), *A Voyage to New Holland* (1703), *A Supplement of the Voyage Round the World* (1705), *The Campeachy Voyages* (1705), *A Continuation of a Voyage to New Holland* (1709).

elements. This is not the case for the second volume, which apparently lacks the use of primary sources and which is avoided even among scholars, because it contains many elements that are far from reality, including three apparently fictional biographies.

The next text is *The Pirates Own Book. Authentic Narratives of the Most Celebrated Sea Robbers* published in 1837. This work consisted of a collection of information available from previous works, occupying an important place near the book of Charles Johnson. It adds other primary source accounts of the time, such as newspaper sources, journals and pamphlets of that time that chronicled criminal trials and proceedings against these characters. The editor was Charles Ellis, originally from Boston, who compiled almanacs and books on popular topics, such as the *United States Working Man's Almanac*, *American Comic Almanac* and *People's Almanac*, to name a few.<sup>46</sup>

The text is a facsimile of the original edition, the only modifications that it received were additional drawings commensurate with the original style. The work is composed of material from a variety of sources, as already mentioned, although it is possible to note how the author embellished with his own words to fill in some gaps. The main body of work can be checked, however, against documentation held in the archives and records of the British Admiralty Court and in newspapers published at the time the events took place.

In the early twentieth century, studies about piracy were focused mainly on the descriptions of the attacks, without any real analysis of the events. With the rise of new trends in history at the end of the twentieth century, especially cultural and economic history, new works about the history of piracy in the Americas started to appear. Historians, mainly from Spain, Mexico, England and the United States, presented new ideas about piracy. These works cover

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<sup>46</sup> Other works by this author, and probably more related with maritime topics, are *Shipwrecks and Disasters at Sea*, published in 1839, *The Tragedy of the Seas*, in 1841, and *Robinson Crusoe's Own Book* in 1842.

different aspects of piracy, from a focus on the economical to the cultural, political and anthropological.

In 1998, Kris Lane, a Canadian American historian, published his work *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500 – 1700*.<sup>47</sup> The book is considered the best synthesis of a world history approach to piracy. Lane wrote mostly from the perspective of the Spanish victims and he identifies four different waves of attacks against the Spanish colonies in the Americas. Lane also points out during his work the inefficiency of the Spanish defenses and how the new English laws against piracy contributed to the final solution of the problem of piracy in the Americas.<sup>48</sup>

Peter T. Leeson is another scholar with valuable research about piracy in the Americas. In 2009, he presented his work called *The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates*. Leeson focuses mostly on eighteenth century Western piracy, but the book also includes some information about seventeenth century piracy, as a background. The sources for this book are strong and rich, and the author organizes the information in a clear way. There is some criticism about this work because of the formation of the author. Since Leeson is an economist, he tries to explain the process of piracy using rational economic theory, arguing that this is the only way to understand piracy.<sup>49</sup>

Finally, another successful approach to the history of piracy is a personal biography of one of the main English Privateers. Harry Kelsey published in 1998 his book *Sir Francis Drake:*

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<sup>47</sup> Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500 – 1750* (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), xxiv-237.

<sup>48</sup> Jeffrey Bolster, “Review: Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500 – 1750 by Kris E. Lane,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 104, No. 4 (October 1999): 1270-1271.

<sup>49</sup> Virginia W. Lunsford, “Review. The Invisible Hook: The Hidden Economics of Pirates, by Peter T. Leeson,” *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 116, No. 1 (February 2011): 143-144.

*The Queen's Pirate*. This work explores the life of Drake, and analyzes the decisions made by him. The work includes how Drake was able to build a successful career in the English court. The reviews about this work highlight the knowledge of Spanish by the author, and how the use of the Spanish sources was a key part in the success of the book's appeal.

From this survey of the different works about piracy in the Americas, I noticed a focus on the figure of the pirate and privateer, especially from the English language sources. Then name of Campeche appears in these works, however it is only mentioned briefly, without having an analysis of the town. Those works with an economic background focus on the research of the impact of maritime piracy on the global economy and the transition to capitalism. The impact of piracy in the societies in the Americas, especially from the cultural perspective, however, is not well studied yet.

### **Campeche During the Colonial Era**

The historiography of Campeche during the colonial period can be divided into two parts. The first part has all the works dedicated to the Mexican state of Campeche itself. The second part involves all the works about the province of colonial Yucatan, which also contain valuable information about the Campeche region, since Campeche was an important part of the Yucatan Peninsula during the colonial era.<sup>50</sup> Campeche was the main port of the province of Yucatan,<sup>51</sup> and this makes the historiography of Campeche also part of the historiography of Yucatan.

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<sup>50</sup> It is important to clarify that the modern state of Campeche was part of the province of Yucatan during the colonial era. After the Independence of Mexico, in 1821, Campeche continued as a district of the state of Yucatan until its political independence in 1862. The Catholic Church of Campeche continued under the rule of the bishop of Yucatan until 1895, when a separate Dioceses of Campeche was created. These facts help to explain the why the history of both states is so interconnected.

<sup>51</sup> José Manuel Alcocer Bernés, "La historiografía sobre el Campeche del periodo colonial," in *Campeche. Una Revisión historiográfica, 1928 – 2000*, SOCAMHI, AC (Campeche: Sociedad Campechana de Historiadores, 2003), 15-24.



Hector Perez Martinez presented in 1937 the first work about piracy in Campeche. This book is called *Piraterías en Campeche (Siglos XVI, XVII, y XVIII)*.<sup>52</sup> This work was initially part of the Mexican Illustrated Encyclopedia publication and was republished as a separate book by the *Universidad del Sudeste*, Campeche, in 1984. The book is divided into five chapters; the first one is devoted to the description of the social conditions among pirates and privateers and the political and economic context of the Spanish colonies. The next chapters are dedicated to each century, and they contain the description of the attacks and the reaction of the people from Campeche. The last part of the book is about the history of the fortifications. The work of Perez Martinez is based on information that the author acquired from the *Archivo General de la Nación*, the national Mexican Archives, during his time living in Mexico City, and it was the first time that these sources were presented in Campeche. It is a basic book about the history of piracy in the region and it became the starting point for future scholars. However, one of the main problems of this work are the scarcity of references and the lack of notes inside the text, which makes it hard to prove or trace the sources of Perez Martinez's ideas.

The scholar Antonio Benavides presented *Geografía Política de Campeche en el Siglo XVI*, that contains reports about location, toponymy, demography and characteristics of the towns and villages of Campeche, based on the Spanish translations of the English language book, "The Political Geography of the Yucatan Maya," by Ralph L. Roys.<sup>53</sup> This last work was published by the Carnegie Institute of Washington and it is difficult to access in Mexico. Benavides, with the support of the National Institute of Anthropology and History, published the

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<sup>52</sup> Héctor Pérez Martínez, *Piraterías en Campeche: Siglos XVI, XVII, y XVIII* (Campeche: Universidad Autónoma del Sudeste, 1984), 5-84.

<sup>53</sup> Ralph Loveland Roys, *The political geography of the Yucatan Maya*. Vol. 613. (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1957).

translation of chapters 1, 2 and 16, divided them into four sections: Socio-political Organization, the Region of Ah Canal; The Regions of Chakanputún and Canpech; The Region of Acalán-Tixchel; and an appendix about Chontal Maya language texts.<sup>54</sup>

Similarly, Roman Piña Chan authored, *Campeche durante el Periodo Colonial*, published in 1977 by the State Government of Campeche.<sup>55</sup> This work is divided into three parts: the discovery and the conquest process of Campeche, followed by a section about colonization and piracy and the last part is called *Campeche through the colony*, a description of the culture and society of the city. The main aspect of this work is that it was the first study published locally and focused only on the colonial period. It has been republished three times since and it keeps its value even though more complete works about the topic have been published since it first appeared in print.

Another work is “*Historia de las Fortificaciones en Nueva España*”, by Jose Antonio Calderon Quijano, published in Seville in 1953.<sup>56</sup> This book contains an entire chapter dedicated to Campeche that was later published separately under the title, *Las murallas de Campeche*, edited by the local state government in 1974.<sup>57</sup> This work describes the process of the fortification of Campeche from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century. It contains information about the *Aduana*, *Casa del Cabildo*, *Cuerpo de Guardia* and *Atarazanas*, the *Torre de Lerma*, and information about Champotón and the presidio of Carmen. This book also includes

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<sup>54</sup> Antonio Benavides and Lorena Mirambell, *Geografía política de Campeche en el siglo XVI*. (Mexico: Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, 1991).

<sup>55</sup> Román Piña Chan, *Campeche durante el periodo colonial* (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 1977).

<sup>56</sup> José Antonio Calderón Quijano, *Historia de las fortificaciones en Nueva España* (Spain: Editorial CSIC-CSIC Press, 1953).

<sup>57</sup> José Antonio Calderón Quijano, *Las murallas de Campeche*. No. 3. (Campeche, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado, 1974).

references to the letters from the authorities about the convenience of building the fortifications and the problems that plagued the province, and especially the port. In this case, the author used references from the *Archivo General de Indias*, or the General Archive of the Indies in Seville, Spain.

Another work dedicated to Campeche's fortifications is, *Piedras ante el mar, las fortificaciones de Campeche*, by Jose Enrique Ortiz Lanz, published by the local state government in 1996.<sup>58</sup> This is a similar work to the previous one by Calderon Quijano. It includes a new chapter dedicated to the destruction of the walls and bastions during the nineteenth century. In this case, the work was an antecedent to a much larger research project later published by the *Secretaria de la Defensa Nacional* and called *Arquitectura Militar en México*, where Ortiz explores the different defensive systems around the country that were built during the colonial time.

In 1988, the College of Humanities was established, and the Autonomous University of Campeche started to offer the degree in history by the first time in the state of Campeche. By the end of the millennium a new generation of historians were working on new topics and new perspectives. Most of the previous works were written by people without formal training in history. Many of them were lawyers, news reporters or politicians, and in the case of Perez Martinez, a dentist. Now, the new researchers are more professional and have a better methodology of research. Improved communications helped greatly. Unfortunately, there are not a lot of sources for colonial history in the local state archives due mostly to the many invasions, the difficulties of the tropical climate, and other natural disasters such as hurricanes that routinely plague the state, and most of the primary sources available on this topic are found in

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<sup>58</sup> José Enrique Ortiz Lanz, *Piedras ante el mar: Las fortificaciones de Campeche*. (Campeche, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 1996).

Mexico City and Seville, Spain. With the arrival of the internet, nevertheless it has become easier to gain access to these sources, especially for students with interest in colonial Campeche.<sup>59</sup>

In 1995, Adriana Rocher Salas presented a thesis entitled *Los jesuitas en Campeche 1716-1776*. It was the first work for colonial history from a local Campeche university scholar and is one of the few studies about the religious order and its role in the education of the region. This same scholar wrote, *La actividad de las órdenes religiosas en Campeche. Siglo XVIII*, as a doctoral thesis in 2002. This was a more complex work that involved the three different religious orders that were present in Campeche during the colonial time and the socio-cultural impact of the Catholic Church. This thesis was later published as a book by the national Council of Culture and the Arts: CONACULTA.<sup>60</sup>

Shortly afterward, the Yucatecan historian Jorge Victoria Ojeda wrote the work, *El Emplazamiento Arquitectónico Defensivo en el Campeche Colonial*, edited by the Instituto Cultural de Campeche in 2000.<sup>61</sup> This work focuses on the strategies that the Spanish authorities, from different levels, applied to resist and stop piracy in the region. Victoria provides a description of the military architecture during the three centuries of the Spanish domination. The work of Victoria started with his thesis about the “vigias”<sup>62</sup> or coastal watchtowers throughout

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<sup>59</sup> In 2007, the Spanish Government, through the Ministry of Culture, created the website called *PARES: Portal the Archivos Españoles*. This allowed scholars from all over the world open and free access to the documents kept in different archives in Spain which have been digitized starting in the 1990s.

<sup>60</sup> Adriana Rocher Salas, *Las disputas por las almas*. (Mexico: CONACULTA, 2010).

<sup>61</sup> Jorge Victoria Ojeda, *El Emplazamiento Arquitectónico Defensivo en el Campeche Colonial*. (Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2000).

<sup>62</sup> Jorge Victoria Ojeda, “De la Defensa a la Clandestinidad. El Sistema de Vigías en Yucatán. 1750 – 1847,” (PhD diss., UNAM, 1999).

the Yucatan Peninsula, and he is one of the main authors about piracy, contraband and defense in the region.<sup>63</sup>

Another author for the topic of piracy is Isaac Garcia Venegas, who wrote a thesis in the *Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México* (UNAM) about the impact of the maritime piracy in Campeche.<sup>64</sup> In 2001 the *Instituto de Cultura de Campeche* published his thesis entitled *Puerto, Ladrones de los Mares y Muralla. Una propuesta de interpretación de la villa de San Francisco de Campeche en el siglo XVII*.<sup>65</sup> The book is divided into four chapters and it covers materials from the first expeditions of discovery until the completion of the fortified defensive system of the Port of Campeche at the end of the seventeenth century.

In 2003, the archeologist Roman Piña Chan oversaw coordinating the *Enciclopedia Historica de Campeche*, and Garcia Venegas was appointed as the coordinator for the volume dedicated to the colonial history of the region. This is one of the best and most complete works about the history of Campeche. The volume is the longest of the entire encyclopedia and each chapter was written by a different author, all of them were students in the history program at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM).<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> About this topic, Dr. Ojeda has published: *El vigía de la costa: funcionario olvidado de la historia de Yucatán. Siglos XVI al XIX; Redes sociales en el Yucatán Novohispano. Una aproximación a partir de la introducción del contrabando desde la costa; Nuevos vestigios de la defensa arquitectónica de la Mérida Virreinal; Piratas en tierra adentro. Estrategia defensiva de una ciudad novohispana. Siglos XVI al XVIII; Arquitectura militar en la región de Jaina, Campeche, Mexico. Falsedades en la historia defensiva colonial; Corrupción y contrabando en la Nueva España del siglo XVIII: La continuidad de una práctica; Vigías en el Yucatán Novohispano: Nota para un estudio complementario entre las torres costeras de España y las de la América Hispana; La piratería y su relación con los indígenas de la península de Yucatán: mito y práctica social.*

<sup>64</sup> Isaac García Venegas, "Impactos de la piratería en Campeche durante el siglo XVII," (Undergraduate diss., UNAM, 1997).

<sup>65</sup> Isaac García Venegas, *Puerto, ladrones de los mares y muralla: una interpretación de la villa de San Francisco de Campeche en el siglo XVII*. (Campeche, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2001).

<sup>66</sup> The work includes the following chapters and authors: *España en los albores del siglo XVI (1469-4516)*, y los *Viajes de Colon y la Guanaja* by Juan Gerardo López Hernández; *Los viajes de exploración* by Virginia Aguirre Arvizu; *Los primeros pasos de la conquista* by Liliana Ortiz Padilla; *La consolidación del dominio español en la península de Yucatán*, by Mayra Santos; *Campeche durante el reinado de Felipe II (1556-1598)* by Gabriela

## Campeche and the Province of Yucatan During the Colonial Era

The historiography of Campeche is also part of the larger historiography of Yucatan, since they were both part of the same state until the 1860s. In the colonial times, Campeche was the main port for the products of the Yucatan Peninsula, and for this reason, all the studies about colonial Yucatan refer to Campeche in some way or another. Some of these works have dedicated whole chapters to the relation between Campeche and Yucatan.

Most notably, the *Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos de Sevilla* has published several works about the Yucatan Peninsula. Some of the main authors here are Manuela Cristina Garcia Bernal, Victoria Gonzalez Muñoz, and Juan Juarez Moreno.

Garcia Bernal dedicated almost all her work to the study of colonial Yucatan, exploring topics like *encomiendas*, population, agriculture, economy and society in general. In 1972, she published *La Sociedad de Yucatan 1700 – 1750*. In this work, she examines the geography and population, the *encomenderos* and their political power, and the Native-American population. The work of García Bernal explores the territories of Yucatan and Campeche, at that time part of the government of Yucatan, and its focus from the perspective of the institution of the *encomienda*. Six years later, in 1978, Garcia Bernal published the second part of her work, called *Poblacion y encomienda en Yucatan bajo los Austrias*. In this work, she focuses again on the *encomienda* and population but now during the years of the House of Habsburg in Spain, from 1516 to 1700. With this research, Garcia Bernal received her doctoral degree. One of her most

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Ugalde; *Los afanes de una villa. Campeche durante el reinado de Felipe III* by Francisco de la Cruz; *Las misiones de la montaña: evangelización de mayas rebeldes e infieles. Procesos de huidas en el siglo XVII* by Manuel Chávez; *Ladrones de los mares y San Francisco de Campeche* by Isaac García Venegas; *Campeche en la monarquía española (1700- 1746)* by Iván Escamilla González; *Campeche a mitad del siglo XVIII* by Juan Gerardo López Hernández; *Campeche durante el reinado de Carlos III (1759-1788)*, by Gabriela Ugalde; *Campeche en el reinado de Carlos IV (1788-1808)* and *Proceso de Independencia en Campeche*, both by Francisco L. Jiménez Abollado. Finally, the book closes with the chapters of *Arquitectura Religiosa y Militar. Un baluarte espiritual y defensivo en la Historia de la Ciudad de Campeche*, by Ignacio Hernández García; and *La Identidad Colonial Campechana*, by Isaac Garcia Venegas.

recent publications was dedicated entirely to Campeche, and it is called, *Campeche y el comercio atlántico yucateco (1561 – 1625)*. It was published by the local government and the University of Campeche. This work explores the networks of commerce between the port of Campeche and Seville, as well as the place of this commerce in the economy of the Yucatan Peninsula, the competition with Sisal and the role of the merchants from Campeche as intermediaries in this commerce. Finally, many of her works, dispersed as articles among different publications, were reunited in two volumes and published by the Universidad of Yucatan, to facilitate the access to this work on this side of the Atlantic. The first volume is called *Economía, política y sociedad en el Yucatan Colonial*, and the next one is *Desarrollo agrario en el Yucatan colonial. Repercusiones económicas y sociales*. It is possible to summarize her work in three main lines of research: encomienda, commerce and agriculture.<sup>67</sup>

Juan Juárez Moreno authored *Corsarios y piratas en Veracruz y Campeche* in 1972.<sup>68</sup> This is a study about the attacks against the cities in the Gulf of Mexico. The work is divided into three parts. The first one focuses on the antecedents of the pirate attacks against Campeche and the different pirates that attacked during the sixteenth and first half of the seventeenth century. The second part of the book details the attacks against Veracruz in 1683 by Laurens de Graff, Van Hoorn and Michel de Grammont. The last part explains the attack against the port of Campeche in 1685 by de Graff and de Grammont. This work does not analyze the attacks, the causes and problems that allowed the pirates to complete their mission. The main contribution of

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<sup>67</sup> Adriana Rocher Salas, “In Memoriam Manuela Cristina García Bernal,” in *Estudios de Cultura Maya*, Vol. 47, (June 2016): 227-230.

<sup>68</sup> Juan Juárez Moreno, *Corsarios y piratas en Veracruz y Campeche*, (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1972).

Juarez Moreno that keeps the work as one of the main sources is that the book contains a great number of primary sources, the majority from the *Archivo General de Indias*, in Seville.

Victoria González Muñoz and Ana Isabel Ortega Martínez, also in Seville, presented a work in 1989 called, *Cabildos y elites capitulares en Yucatán (dos estudios)*, published by the *Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos*. In this work, each author worked with a specific century, Gonzalez with the seventeenth, and Ortega with the eighteenth. Years later, they presented more complete works separately, “*Cabildos y Grupos de poder en Yucatan (siglo XVII)*” and “*Estructura y configuración socioeconómica de los cabildos de Yucatan en el siglo XVIII.*” All these works include all the Yucatan region during the colonial period, so the *cabildos* present here are Merida, Valladolid and Campeche.

Finally, in recent years the *Fondo de Cultura Economica* published new editions of the series *Historias Breves* that are dedicated to each state in Mexico. The edition on Campeche and Yucatan includes information about the colonial period. *Yucatan*, by Sergio Quezada, evenly divides the chapters based on the social groups and the areas in the Peninsula.

In this brief summary about Campeche, it is possible to notice the focus on the fortification systems and piracy, with some works about religion and *cabildos*. There are many other topics that need to be explored, like the evangelization process, commerce, logwood, the *Teniente de Rey*, among others. The main excuse, lack of sources, is not valid anymore, especially with the modern technologies that allow us to connect with libraries and archives around the world.



## Primary Sources for the Study of Piracy in Campeche

The main sources for the study of piracy in Campeche during the colonial era are dispersed in different archives around the world. The main archives for this present work were the *Archivo General de Indias* (Seville, Spain) and the *Archivo General de la Nación* (Mexico City, Mexico). It is important to mention that additional information can be found in other places such as the local archives in the Yucatan Peninsula,<sup>69</sup> the National Archives of the United Kingdom, the *Nationaal Archief*, in the Netherlands, and the *Archives Nationales*, in France.

Of all documents that were consulted, the most important were the letters from the governors of Yucatan. The communication between the different authorities was by mail, and copies of these letters are held in the *Archivo General de Indias*. The governors used to send the king routinely long reports about the status of the Yucatan Province at the time of the governor's arrival. Also, the governors kept updating the king, and sometimes the viceroy, about the measures taken locally related to the defense of the region. It was common to find in these letters requests of help, asking for human and material resources to defend the cities and towns. The governors also generated many documents after the attacks of pirates, including scores of detailed testimonies and witness accounts of the events. Even a cursory analysis of these sources shows that it became important for the royal officials, the governors and local colonists to understand why the pirates attacked and if everyone in the town, especially the authorities, had fulfilled their duties and obligations in defending the town.

In the occasions when the Spanish authorities captured pirates, another group of documents were generated, which include detailed and lengthy investigations, trials, prosecutions, and punishments. The main institution that conducted these trials were the offices

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<sup>69</sup> The main archives for colonial studies in the local región are the *Archivo Histórico de la Diócesis de Campeche*, and the *Archivo Histórico de la Arquidiócesis de Yucatán*.

of the Governors and the Church court known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition which had a local commissary who conducted initial investigations in Campeche concerning heretical actions by Protestant pirates and privateers whom they captured. The sources, especially the inquisitorial investigations, can be found in the Inquisition files in the *Archivo General de la Nación*.

The documents created during these trials are rich in information. Normally, these documents contain several interrogations of the pirates, witnesses and interviews with any other person that the judges considered relevant for the case. The second civil investigations and trials of foreign pirates exist in the archives of the local Provincial Governors and their Lieutenants in Campeche who ran the equivalent of Admiralty Courts in the Port City, which heard civil and criminal cases that they often referred to the Royal Audiencia, or Supreme court in the vice regal capital in Mexico City, for final confirmation of the definitive sentences or ultimate punishments and executions.

All these sources can give the historians an approach to studying the everyday life in Campeche. In these sources, the authorities explained the context of the situations, the bishops asked for help, and the townspeople justified their actions and defended their active role during the defense. All of these were part of the day to day lives of the people of Campeche. Many of these sources are published and they have been used in previous works. What is different here in this present study is the kind of questions that are used during this research. With the creation of new questions, it is possible to have new answers and new explanations to an old topic in the historiography of Campeche.

## CHAPTER TWO

### A DESTINY IN THE AMERICAS: THE YUCATAN PENINSULA AND ITS RESOURCES

... All this coast and its ports are infested ordinarily by pirates and English corsairs who come to steal and take the many boats that deal with the trade of this coast which enter and leave the said ports, and they often pretend to plunder and seize the towns and villages of this province as they did the last few years when they took and plundered the villas of the Port of San Francisco de Campeche and the port of Santa María de la Victoria in Tabasco ... considering all the above the expansion of the fortifications is convenient and necessary, and the remedy and protection of it rests on me, the Governor and Captain General...

*Comisión a Don Alonso de Vargas Machuca por el Gobernador Don Diego Fernández de Velasco*, 1601, AGI, Audiencia de México, 242A, N.25

This chapter describes the scenario of maritime piracy in the region of Campeche. It is important to understand why pirates and privateers chose the Yucatan Peninsula, and the port of Campeche in particular, as an attractive target and a destination rich in valuable natural resources that was worth the risk.

The Yucatan Peninsula, located in the southeastern part of the Mexican territory, is surrounded by the Gulf of Mexico on one side and the Caribbean Sea on the other. It is connected to the continent on the south side starting from the coast in the Gulf of Honduras and its territory ends at the *Laguna de Términos* on the western side (See fig. 5). The surface of the peninsula has no notable major mountains. The only considerable topographical region of any elevation is a small range of karstic hills named the "Puuc" region, which peaks in its highest point at 300m (984 ft.).<sup>70</sup> The coasts in the peninsula are low and the ground slopes very gradually from the beach. The peninsula itself contains more than 1,600km (1,000 miles) of

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<sup>70</sup> Sergio Quezada, *Yucatán. Historia Breve*, (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Colegio de México, 2010), 17. Alicia Elidé Gómez Montejo, *Monografía del Municipio de Campeche*, (Campeche, México: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2010), 85.

coastline, making it one of the most exposed regions of Northern and Central America to possible pirate or marine attacks.



Figure 5. Satellite View of the Yucatan Peninsula. Source: Wikipedia.

There is a small exception to these lower elevations with the highest cliffs and rocks that start near the port of Campeche and which run 9.3 miles to the south. This northern coastline includes a large band of sand bars which contain several major lagoons. On the eastern side of the peninsula are four major bays, the Bay of the *Ascensión*, *Espíritu Santo* Bay, *Chetumal* Bay and the Bay of *Amatique*.<sup>71</sup> The few rivers that cut through the peninsula all are located at the base of the peninsula. No major above ground waterways exist in the northern peninsula, and most of the fresh water comes from accessible open wells or sink-holes, called *cenotes*, formed by water filtration through the karstic surface of the limestone shelf. The rivers connected to the Caribbean Sea in the southern region of the Yucatan Peninsula are the Rio Hondo, Rio Nuevo, Rio Balis and the Sibún river. Similarly, the San Pedro, Candelaria and Mamantel rivers<sup>72</sup> all flow in the direction of the Gulf of Mexico on the western edge of the peninsula.

The Petén Rainforest Basin is an area located at the southern edge of the peninsula. It extends for 62 miles, surrounded by low-lying hills and covered by a thick rain forest vegetation. By the time the Spanish arrived, the only important settlement in this interior jungle region was the Itza Maya capital city of Tayasal on an island in Lake Peten. The jungle becomes shorter and made up of lower-lying scrub brush forests towards the northern part of the peninsula, with an average tree or foliage height of no more than 35m. This kind of flora covers the south and center of the modern state region of Campeche, and almost all of the state of Quintana Roo along the eastern and southern part of the Yucatán peninsula. This area, known as "La Montaña," played an important role during the colonial era since it was the region to which renegade and unconquered Maya escaped from the Spanish control. This large territory, known as the

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<sup>71</sup> Sergio Quezada, *Yucatán. Historia Breve*, (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Colegio de México, 2010), 18.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

“despoblado” or “unpopulated region” continued to be used by renegade Maya people and also occupied at points along both the eastern (the region of modern Belize) and western edges (near the *Laguna de Términos*) by English and French logwood cutters (See fig. 6).<sup>73</sup>



Figure 6. Extract of Colonial Map Showing the Yucatan Peninsula. Source: *Yucatan Conventus Iuridici Hispaniae Novae Pars Occidentalis, et Guatimala Conventus Iuridicus*, Amsterdam, 1622 ca.

At the end of the sixteenth century, after the Spanish conquest, the entire peninsula became a colonial administrative territory called the *Captaincy General of Yucatan*. The main settlements in the region included the capital of the province, the city of Merida, and the *villas*, or towns, of San Francisco de Campeche, Valladolid and Salamanca de Bacalar. A majority of

<sup>73</sup> Ibid. 18-19.

the Indigenous Maya population of this region lived in semi-autonomous and self-governing indigenous communities known as *pueblos de indios* that lay scattered throughout the territory of the province, mostly in the interior regions. These *pueblos*, or Maya villages, existed mainly in the northeastern part of the peninsula, which corresponded to the regions of the provinces administered by the districts of the city of Merida and the town of Valladolid (See fig. 7).

### **The Coasts and the Seas**

The *Villa* of San Francisco de Campeche was considered a natural port, and due to its location in the bay of Campeche it enjoyed a natural protection against the torrential weather fronts known as “los nortes” that often plagued the region, made up of quick forming squalls and frequent storms that formed in the Gulf of Mexico, which often made the weather, and therefore sailing in the region, unpredictable. Therefore, the Port of Campeche had, from the very beginning of the colonial era, an advantage over the rest of the possible peninsular ports of trade—Champoton, Rio Lagartos, Santa Clara, Sisal and Bacalar—with all of which it maintained an active costal trade in the products and resources of the region.<sup>74</sup>

The windward coast of Campeche ranged from point known as the *Punta Piedra*, on the northwestern coast of the Yucatán Peninsula, to the port of Campeche itself. Along this widespread open coastline, no shelter existed for the vessels other than the small island of Jaina, nor did any coastal watch or guard posts exist along this vast stretch of coastline, nor any men to guard it, since the colonial authorities considered that an enemy landing in this region was

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<sup>74</sup> Juan Francisco Molina Solís, *Historia de Yucatán durante la dominacion española. Tomo I.* (Yucatán, México: Lotería del Estado, 1904), 301.



impractical because of the depth of the coast in this region. Moreover, no real towns or settlements existed throughout this vast coastline (See fig. 7).



Figure 7. Geographic Map of the Province of Yucatan, from the Laguna de Términos to the Bay of Honduras, 1784.



Instead, most of the towns and villages that existed in the region were located up to twenty miles inland, connected for the most part by numerous roads and trails (also visible on Figure 7). Thus, it was possible for the Maya inhabitants of the towns of Maxcanú and Bécab to travel safely back and forth along the paths to the salt mines located at certain desolate part of that coastline. A path also existed that went from the Maya village of Tenabo westward towards the beach along the coast of which legal logwood cutters used to dry their precious dyewood.

The colonial authorities also destined other roads for the traffic and trade of fresh fish for the towns all along the main royal road, or *Camino Real*, which ran northeast toward the capital city of Mérida. Nevertheless, at certain times, even these major thoroughfares the authorities closed for reasons of security. The thickness of the surrounding forests and scrub brush in this area also made them impassable for foreigners, as they did not know the few open roads and paths that led from the beach to the inland towns.<sup>75</sup> Still, as early as the middle of the sixteenth century, local colonial officials expressed their fears and despair that many places along the coast remained accessible to foreign raiders, like the French Corsairs who raided the port of Campeche in the decade of the 1550s. For instance, Joaquin de Leguizamo, the procurator of the port and province of Yucatan in compiling his information about the defenses of the coast lamented to the Council of the Indies on November 26, 1565: “All of this coast is one port due to the great shallows which extend out into the sea, and for this cause the ships which approach the coast are able to unload and jump off on land freely in almost any part of the coast, because the sea does not impede it...”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Mercedes Arroyo, “El “Reconocimiento de la Península de Yucatán” realizado por el ingeniero militar Juan de Dios González (1766),” in *Biblio 3W Revista Bibliográfica de Geografía y Ciencias Sociales*, Vol. III, No. 475 (November 2003), <http://www.ub.es/geocrit/b3w-475.htm>.

<sup>76</sup> *Información hecha ante el gobernador a pedimento del procurador general de Yucatán, Joaquín de Leguizamo, para el peligro que tienen con los franceses y lo que será necesario proveerse*, 26 de noviembre, 1565, AGI, Audiencia de México, 359, ramo 2, no. 2, folios 33r-34v.

The Bay of Campeche and its port town included the area between the village of Lerma and the northern *Punta de Jaina*. This region remained a shelter for all types of small boats and sea-going vessels, mostly because the coast there is shallow, but the large loaded ships had to anchor further out at twenty or twenty-four miles from the beach. While unloaded, many ships could approach closer toward the coast up to within 3 miles of land in several known places. Two channels allowed entrance to the port itself, but the path to follow through the shallows was very complex and knowledge of the proper waterway required the necessity of having expert pilots or navigators with local knowledge and much practice as the area became dangerous for ships because of the shallow depth and the turns of the bay.

The leeward coast of the region runs from the port of Campeche to the mouth of the rivers close to the *Isla del Carmen*, and these coastlines comprise about 138 miles of seacoast. The area of the town of Lerma, which is 3 miles from Campeche, remained an important point on this side of the coast. This side of the Port and Town became a weak point in the town's defenses as the defenders always feared that because of the shelter this region provided to the boats, it could serve as a staging point of a raid or attack. The region around the village of Lerma permitted the landing of men, as well having as "a lot of water,"<sup>77</sup> that is, a greater depth along the coast, which led straight away to the main square of the Port town of Campeche which lay near the accessible beach undefended mostly until the later seventeenth century. This landing area near Lerma remained out of reach of the Port's defensive cannons. Also, it was easy to re-supply any forces landed near the village of Lerma. Due to these factors, there was no doubt that an invasion of the Province would begin here at this point.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

The stretch of coast from Lerma to Campeche has several higher elevations and elevated promontories, known as the *Morros del Diablo*. These higher elevations run all along the sea, allowing the people of Campeche to look out to the sea for a great distance from both the windward to leeward sides, in addition overseeing and allowing a visual sighting all along the *Camino de la Playa* that connects the towns.<sup>79</sup> These elevations were used on several occasions by the Spanish to raise lookouts or small fortifications that would serve to confront the foreign enemy who often attempted landings in the area there.<sup>80</sup>

A vast region of dense, and often impenetrable forests of hardwood trees encircled the area around the Port and Town of Campeche. For this reason, the coasts and forests around the port of Campeche remained one of the three main exploitation areas of the valuable logwood trade controlled by the Spanish, together along with the wooded forest coastal regions along the *Laguna de Términos*, both in constant dispute with the English, and the coastal forests of the area of Tabasco and its region.<sup>81</sup> The large amount of forests of valuable logwood in the region remained plentiful throughout the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The contemporary descriptions of the area reported by the Royal Treasury officials of the province stated that the forests “... were of nature abundant, where the trees grew without order although a little apart from each other from four or six and up to twenty steps.”<sup>82</sup> Nevertheless, the scrub brush spread throughout these deeply wooded areas which held these trees created heavily foliated areas ideal for hiding, either

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> *Carta del gobernador sobre las amenazas de los enemigos en las costas de esta provincia*, 1663, AGI, México, 1008.

<sup>81</sup> Alicia Sánchez Contreras. “El palo de tinte, motivo de un conflicto entre dos naciones, 1670-1802.” In *Historia Mexicana*, Vol. 37, no. 1 (Jul. – Sep., 1987): 50-51.

<sup>82</sup> *Instrucción de los oficiales reales y tesorero de la Santa Cruzada de las provincias de Yucatán, sobre el árbol de hec y el añil*, AGI, Indiferente, 1530, N.4.

serving to shelter runaways or affording excellent vantage points from which to launch an ambush along the roads that crossed through them. To cross these roads, outsiders needed to have knowledgeable people or otherwise run the risk of quickly finding themselves lost, just like the situation they would face on the windward coast. Still, the authorities from Campeche described the common situation of pirate raids and attacks in a letter to the King of Spain:

“[Pirate raids] are the general damage suffered by the entire coast of the Province of Yucatan [...], but the region that suffers the most is the said Province and Port of San Francisco de Campeche, which is the only main port that this province has, and the only one which serves as a forced port of layover in the entire Mexican coastline, and it is usually besieged by three, four and more pirate ships at any one time.”<sup>83</sup>

In conclusion, the focus and space of the research region that I proposed for this thesis, is not bounded simply by its physical geography, but rather it also came to be bounded and connected intimately to its natural resources which had a value both within the regional economy of the province, as well as a value as a prime target for all of the piratical nations and raiders of the Caribbean. Thus, the space studied in this research also includes the varying conceptualizations and ideas of these spaces and their different social interpretations by the various social groups that lived and inhabited the Yucatan Peninsula.

In the end, the value of these spaces and regions were not limited to simply their different physical spaces, but instead these spaces became imbued with differing meanings based on the conceptions of the physical, economic and political spaces. These localized conceptualizations of these spaces evolved from the needs, anxieties, and fears of each social group involved which

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<sup>83</sup> *Carta de la Villa y Puerto de Campeche a su Majestad, dando cuenta de la situación del puerto y lo que conviene hacer para protegerlo*. AGI, Mexico, 1006, folios 591r-596v.

granted them with different values and meanings depending on the social, racial and cultural perceptions of the local populace.<sup>84</sup> At the same time, the reality of these coastal and interior spaces in the peninsula and their geography and orographic conditions ended up favoring the incursions of the pirates with their many bays, inlets and entrances along the coasts where they could hide (See fig. 8).



Figure 8. Rivers and Lagoons of Campeche. Source: *La entidad donde vivo. Campeche. Tercer Grado*, 15.

<sup>84</sup> Janice L. Reiff. "Rethinking Pullman. Urban space and working-class activism." In *Social Science History* 24:1 spring 2000: 28-29; see also Eric Nelson. "Commentary on Creating Spaces." Class lecture, *Places, Spaces and Landscapes* from Missouri State University, Springfield, MO, June 25, 2015.

Paradoxically, these same spaces also served as a refuge for the colonial society, and their defenders, who also invariably found in the *montañas*<sup>85</sup> and dense forested regions around the port an opportunity to survive during their enemies' incursions. The multiple conceptions and the defensive and offensive natures offered by these disparate spaces also remained intimately connected to the valuable natural resources that could be found in and along the vast coastline of the province (see fig. 8).

### **Main Natural Resources in the Peninsula**

The development of piracy can be understood as an extension of the many conflicts among the colonial European states; mainly the struggles between Spain and its rivals England, France and the Netherlands. For this reason, it is not strange that one of their most valuable mainland American colonies, New Spain, became a frequent victim of these attacks. One of the most appealing and lesser defended coastlines and fronts in the defense of New Spain for its multiple natural resources remained the Yucatan Peninsula, which also became one of the first and the most often attacked regions compared to the rest of the coastal littoral region of the Gulf of Mexico or the Pacific.

Multiple factors helped the development of piracy in the region: first, the great extent of the open coastlines of the province, which exhibited diverse geographical features that served to encourage pirate raids; second the wealth and high value of region's major products such as salt, meat and hides, cotton and mainly the valuable dyewoods, which due to their high demand in the

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<sup>85</sup> The term *Montaña*, Spanish for mountain, was the word used by the Spaniards to call the territory of the vast interior forests and hill regions without direct Spanish control in the Yucatan Peninsula. See for the best description of this term and its significance for the local Spanish population and royal authorities Adriana Rocher Salas, "La montaña: Espacio de rebelión, fe y conquista," in *Estudios de Historia Novohispana*, Num. 50, January – June 2014, 47-48.

English market, made them a valuable target; and third, the importance and vulnerability of its ports, with the port of San Francisco de Campeche, on the west coast, and the port of Santa María de Sisal on the northern coast of the peninsula being the most valuable and vulnerable.

These places remained the main points of entry and exit for trade; and, therefore, they were the major entrepôts for merchandise and main targets of the pirates. As early the period from 1602-1604, according to the Royal Treasury Officials of the Port of Campeche, routinely in the New Spain Fleets arrived three or more ships destined for Campeche "...loaded with merchandise and wines" from Spain.<sup>86</sup> By 1617, the Royal officials noted that each year at least "two, three or four ships arrive from Spain."<sup>87</sup> Nevertheless, during the earlier period, the Spanish colony relied mostly in a parasitic relationship with the local indigenous people. As the Spanish encomendero Cristobal de San Martin commented concerning the colonies access to imported goods, "all of this the Indians acquire from what they harvest, which they sow and reap in their villages, and with these mantas and wax we pay the merchants for debts we owe them, and they in turn send all of this to New Spain in exchange for the merchandize they bring here."<sup>88</sup>

### **A Brief Relation of the Economic Activities**

The primary motor of the economy in the Yucatan peninsula throughout the colonial period remained the indigenous population. The conditions for the exploitation of the region's natural resources required hard work and this task and labor fell mostly to the large Maya

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<sup>86</sup> *Carta de los oficiales reales al rey, Mérida*, 15 de mayo, 1606, AGI, Audiencia de México, 365.

<sup>87</sup> *Carta de los oficiales reales al rey, Mérida*, 26 de abril, 1617, AGI, Audiencia de México, 365.

<sup>88</sup> See Mercedes de la Garza, *Relaciones Histórico-Geográficas de Yucatán, Vol. I* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1983) 198.

population. For these reasons, the two main sources of goods and services for the Spanish population were the tribute and goods paid to the Spaniards in the *encomienda* system, and the regional economic activities conducted with the usage of Maya labor, both paid and unpaid, for the benefit of the Spanish *encomendero* and merchant classes, all of which fell heavily on the Indians. Between legal and illegal tribute impositions and fees and services demanded of the Maya from the Spanish Church and State eventually even took their toll on the diet and health of the Maya.<sup>89</sup> As one Spanish observer noted in 1579, the province had "...many villages of native Indians with lords and governors who come to this city and bring to it the necessary sustenance that the earth provides, with which we, the Spanish and foreign residents who live in it sustain ourselves."<sup>90</sup> Another Spanish *encomendero* also added in that same year, "If the Indian is lacking, so is everything else."<sup>91</sup>

Among the most valuable products coming from throughout the Yucatan peninsula in its regional trade and tribute networks that were stored and shipped from the peninsular ports were the annual tribute quota of woven cotton blankets supplied in tribute by the local indigenous people. This product, manufactured by the indigenous population, served as part of the annual payment of taxes to the Spanish conquistador feudal lords or trustees over indigenous Maya tribute and labor, called *encomenderos*. These high-quality woven cotton blankets, or tribute

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<sup>89</sup> For a detailed examination of the role of the *encomienda* tributes, Church fees, and illegal forced contributions on the local Maya communities, and their economy and diet see John F. Chuchiak, "'Ca numiae, lay u cal caxtlan patan lae' El tributo colonial y la nutrición de los Mayas, 1542–1812: Un estudio sobre los efectos de la conquista y el colonialismo en los Mayas de Yucatán." in *Iglesia y sociedad en América Latina colonial*, (México: Centro Coordinador y Difusor de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1998), 107–218.

<sup>90</sup> See Robert Patch, *Maya and Spaniards in Yucatan, 1648-1812*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993), 34.

<sup>91</sup> Mercedes de la Garza, *Relaciones Histórico-Geográficas de Yucatán, Vol. II* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1983) 70.



*mantas*, were much sought after across New Spain and especially in the mining areas and in the port city of Havana, Cuba and the mining regions of Honduras.<sup>92</sup>

Salt was another valuable good or commodity that came from the Yucatan Peninsula. The collection of the salt was made annually in the natural salt beds along the coast.<sup>93</sup> The commerce in salt was very important for the peninsula. As in all local commerce and industries, Maya labor furnished the majority of the work in the salt industry. The profits made from the salt beds increased over time. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, in 1605, the value of the exportations of salt reached the amount of 20,232 pesos, a considerable amount at that time, and after the exportations, there was still salt stored on the beaches. These loads of salt the merchants sent to Veracruz and a part of the remaining loads they destined for Spain.<sup>94</sup>

Agriculture was practiced around the whole territory once again with the Indian population as the major source of the workforce. The progress of the agricultural activities slowed in the seventeenth century, compared with the previous century.<sup>95</sup> The main product in Yucatan was maize. The Indians had to use part of this crop to pay tributes to the civil and church authorities, what remained was used for domestic consumption. Aside from maize, there was an attempt to cultivate sugar cane in the area of Champotón. The Adelantado, Montejo, introduced sugar cane in his encomiendas. Due to political problems that Montejo faced, he lost

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<sup>92</sup> For a more complete discussion of the Maya tribute production of cotton *mantas*, and their connection to the encomienda tribute system see Manuela Cristina García Bernal, *Población y encomienda en Yucatán bajo los Austrias*. (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos de Sevilla, 1978), 375-424.

<sup>93</sup> Juan Francisco Molina Solís, *Historia de Yucatán durante la dominación española. Tomo I* (Yucatán, México: Lotería del Estado, 1904), 301.

<sup>94</sup> Juan Francisco Molina Solís, *Historia de Yucatán durante la dominación española. Tomo II* (Yucatán, México: Lotería del Estado, 1904), 398.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*, 396.

the encomiendas and the production of the sugar cane was abandoned. This product remained an insignificant activity for the rest of the colonial era.<sup>96</sup> Indigo was successfully produced, and it was destined to the textile industry.

Cattle raising was practiced in the *estancias*, an agricultural model exported from Spain. It started in the sixteenth century with goats and sheep, since cattle had to be bought in Havana and transporting such large animals was very expensive. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, thanks to the increase in the industry, the *encomenderos* were able to establish beef cattle herds. In the *estancias*, the Spanish also dedicated some spaces to the production of honey.

Initially, the location of the *estancias* was around the city of Merida and the villas of Campeche and Valladolid. In the seventeenth century, there were more areas dedicated to cattle. Pirates and logwood cutters sought sources of meat, and their activities affected the location of the *estancias*. The *estancias* were concentrated in the north of the peninsula, because of the availability of workers in this region. There were also *estancias* in remote places like Xicalango, as well as in the *Laguna de Terminos*, that we will return to later in this thesis.

Commerce between Spain and the colonies around the Yucatan peninsula was common. In the ports of Campeche and Sisal it was possible to obtain a large variety of goods, such as hard liquor, cacao, tobacco, olives, cheese, wine, rice, sweets, lead, oils, soaps, fabrics, knives, among others (See table 1).<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, the Province of Yucatan suffered from isolation from the main trade routes of the Spanish Empire. This generated an increase in the prices of the main products of consumption for the Spanish population, such as wine and oil, as well as European clothing.

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<sup>96</sup> Sergio Quezada, *Yucatán. Historia Breve* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Colegio de México, 2010), 71.

<sup>97</sup> Sergio Quezada, *Yucatán. Historia Breve* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Colegio de México, 2010), 77.

Table 1. Example of Documented Value and Quantities of Trade Goods Shipped out of Campeche, 1601-1617. Source: *Cuentas de la Caja Real de Yucatán*, AGI, Contaduría, 912-913.

Year	Total Export Shipping Tonnage	Campeche Logwood (in <i>quintales</i> )	Tanned Animal Hides	Indigo (in <i>arrobas</i> ) 1 arroba=25 lbs)	Value in Pesos
1603	120	600	140	--	--
1612	500	500	3,794	110.12	2,750
1613	150	250	2,200	27	1,430
1614	100	620	608	200	2,081
1617	330	2,470	2,756	130	25,974

Even the highest Spanish officials in the land complained often of the exorbitant prices of imported goods, and even the basic necessities of life in the province. As early as the decade of the 1570s, the Royal Treasury officials complained of the scarcity of goods, and their high costs in the province stating that the province was a "...land so miserable and poor in terms of coins and money" and that manufactured goods were so scarce that "...if it does not come from New Spain, it does not exist here."<sup>98</sup> Even later, for instance, the governor of Yucatán, Don Carlos de Luna y Arellano, in 1603 complained bitterly to the Crown about the high costs saying that his

<sup>98</sup> *Certificación de los oficiales reales con las cuentas de la Real Caja de Yucatán*, 25 de octubre, 1571, AGI, Contaduría, 911, folios 217r-v.

salary in reality “was cut into a third, because the only thing that is cheaper here are the chickens, and everything else is so expensive and costs much more than in Mexico City, especially bread and meat which is our ordinary sustenance.”<sup>99</sup> In the end, high prices incentivized the trade in contraband goods and even eventual exchanges with foreign pirates and corsairs as we will see.

Because of the geographic conditions and the lack of precious metals in the peninsula, the Spanish population had to look for alternative sources of wealth. The *encomenderos* focused on commerce in cotton and wax for the most part. The Maya society had a long tradition of production of textile goods and collection of wax from the mountain areas, and this helped the Spaniards gain access to most of the exportable wealth in the region. Even as late as the eighteenth century, some people mention in their correspondence that “the cotton and the wax are the main products of the province.”<sup>100</sup>

### **The New and Old Actors: A Description of the Social Groups in Campeche**

In the seventeenth century, as we have seen, three main urban centers existed in the Yucatan peninsula. The capital city, Mérida, remained the seat of the provincial government and the seat of the Diocese or Episcopal See, and therefore, the place of residence of the main political, military and ecclesiastical authorities of the peninsula. The other two major Spanish towns were the *villas* of Valladolid, in the east, and San Francisco de Campeche, on the western coast.

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<sup>99</sup> *Carta del gobernador Don Carlos de Luna y Arellano al rey*, 13 de septiembre, 1605, AGI, Audiencia de México, 359, Ramo 9, No. 50, folio 6r.

<sup>100</sup> Sergio Quezada, *Yucatán. Historia Breve* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, Colegio de México, 2010), 75.

The town and port of Campeche differed from Mérida and Valladolid, in that it was a coastal town and had fewer *encomiendas* and Indigenous villages within its jurisdiction. Also, the port and town of Campeche possessed a mercantile elite not found to such an extent in the capital or in the villa of Valladolid, and this burgeoning merchant class in Campeche included a comparatively large number of recent immigrants, many of them originating from outside of the Spanish empire. These and other elements of social milieu of the inhabitants of Campeche created a special social structure with its own characteristics that differed significantly from the other Spanish population centers in the Peninsula.

At the top of the colonial society sat the *encomendero* class. These feudal-styled lords of Maya indigenous labor and tribute were uniformly Spaniards in origin and also descendants of the original conquistadors and first colonizers of the peninsula. They received a type of feudal style grant known as *encomiendas*, a grant of Indigenous labor and tribute from a specific town, though this grant did not allow them to lay claim to the land itself. The Crown awarded these grants based on the military service that they or their ancestors had given to the Crown during the conquest period.<sup>101</sup> The *encomendero* needed to educate the Maya population in their entrusted town in the Catholic Faith, and they maintained an expectation of militia military service as a requirement of holding their trust (just like a medieval knight or lord owed their own King). The *encomendero* in return received tribute from his charges in the form of products or labor. Not all the Spanish population in the region enjoyed the status as a member of this select group. The *villa* of Campeche had around a total Spanish population of 300 in 1660, and at that

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<sup>101</sup> For the most significant study explaining the Indigenous *encomienda* system in general in English see Lesley Byrd Simpson, *The Encomienda in New Spain: The Beginning of Spanish Mexico*. New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 2013. For the most thorough discussion of the institution of the *Encomienda* in Yucatan and in Mexico in general see Silvio Zavala, *La Encomienda Indiana*. (México, D.F.: Porrúa, 1992).

time only 15 of them served as *encomenderos* with access to the tribute and labor of these Indigenous feudal-styled trusts.<sup>102</sup> The explanation for these numbers is related to the stronger presence of a larger number of merchants and much smaller population of indigenous people in the Campeche region, compared to the city of Merida or the villa of Valladolid. As Victoria Gonzalez Muñoz noted in her own study of the municipal elites of the province of Yucatan, “although the *encomendero* elites were present in the town councils, they always served as a very reduced group.”<sup>103</sup>

If the *encomenderos* were the head of the society, the arms and legs were the clergy (Catholic priests) and the merchants. Now, it is important to clarify up front the "merchant" character of many of the councilmen and municipal government officers of Campeche, since they defined themselves alternatively as consignees, harbor porters or *encomenderos*, at times claiming to belong to different groups of people.<sup>104</sup> It is probable that the town councilmen of Campeche intervened in the purchase of tributary goods from Mérida and Valladolid as middle men and then they commercialized them on their own ships to other regions and ports like the Port of Veracruz. The councilmen of Campeche did not always occupy an important role in these exchanges, but they most probably oversaw shipping the items that arrived from other urban centers acting as consignees and middlemen in this intra-provincial trade, no doubt driving up the costs of imported goods so vigorously complained about by the general populace.

Due to the lack of importance that the *encomienda* tributes and cattle ranching represented in the economic life of the Campeche port, commerce instead of extractive industries

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<sup>102</sup> Manuela Cristina García Bernal, *Población y encomienda en Yucatán bajo los Austrias* (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos de Sevilla, 1978), 152.

<sup>103</sup> Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y Grupos de Poder en Yucatán, 1606-1699* (Seville, Spain: Diputación Provincial de Sevilla, 1994), 227.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid*, 232, 234.

defined the town and distinguished it and its commercial activities from Mérida and Valladolid. On the other hand, the development of the shipbuilding industry due to the presence of extensive amounts of local timber forests in the vicinity of the town of Campeche, also allowed the development of an important shipping class, which made its presence felt in the local council, sometimes in opposition to the *encomendero* and merchant classes. These conditions added to the port and commercial character of San Francisco de Campeche and dictated that the council would be composed mainly of merchants and ship-owners.

This situation was pointed out by the governor Don Diego de Cárdenas, who referred to the *alcaldes* and *regidores* as the richest and most powerful people in the town and noted that it was normal for them to own ships and frigates, which they used to trade with New Spain, Tabasco, the rivers of *Barlovento*, Havana, Santo Domingo and Cartagena.<sup>105</sup> The governor described these officials as “the richest and most powerful and well connected men of the port.”<sup>106</sup> Nevertheless, even these wealthy merchants who held municipal offices of prominence, in some cases had an envy of the *encomenderos*, and sought out the means to acquire an *encomienda* grant.

One case in point of the desire to acquire an *encomienda* grant as a means of enhancing one’s prestige occurred with the rich merchant, Juan Gutierrez de Cosgaya, who sought to acquire an *encomienda* grant for his own son. While he served as the local *alcalde ordinario*, or mayor of Campeche, Cosgaya offered a reported sum of 7,000 silver escudos for the acquisition

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<sup>105</sup> Manuela Cristina García Bernal, *Población y encomienda en Yucatán bajo los Austrias* (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos de Sevilla, 1978), 439-440.

<sup>106</sup> See *Real cédula al gobernador y oficiales reales de Yucatán*, 14 de mayo, 1616, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1065, folio 158r-v.

of the grant of the encomienda of the Maya town of Nunkiní in the Campeche district on the part of his son, the local *Alférez* Don Diego Gutierrez de Cosgaya.<sup>107</sup>

Thus, the socioeconomic groups present in the "*cabildo*," or the town council, were diverse and in many cases the individuals did not belong to only one social group. Social stratification refers to how social groups have a specific function; however, historians must be flexible with the fact that belonging to one group does not exclude someone from also at the same time belonging to another group. A person can play the role of father, son, merchant, and Spanish official at the same time and it is necessary to understand the role they are playing at any given moment.<sup>108</sup> Merchants and freight shippers, thanks to their economic and political influence, became the dominant elite in the Port of Campeche, in an environment marked by the growing presence of local government municipal officers linked to seamanship and shipbuilding, and a growing population of Afro-descendants, and local Indians of different origins and backgrounds.

The presence of the black population in Yucatan dates to the first half of the sixteenth century, and although they are usually linked to a plantation economy, the economic characteristics of the region most often characterized them as slaves. The town of Campeche, however, as a commercial port that lacked a plantation system and workable mines had little use for massive numbers of slave laborers. This fact determined that the black population in the port became mostly destined for domestic service as luxury servants or butlers in the homes of the

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<sup>107</sup> *Documentos sobre la concesión a Diego Gutiérrez de Cosgaya de la encomienda de Nunkini*, AGI, Audiencia de Mexico, 886.

<sup>108</sup> Peter Burke, *History and Social Theory* (New York: Cornell University Press, 2005), 47.



wealthy Spaniards, as well as serving as dockworkers in the port or workers in the shipyards or as more skilled craftsmen in these and other smaller industries.<sup>109</sup>

Belonging to the African ethnic group did not eventually mean slavery directly, because throughout the centuries of Spanish domination, many individuals could and did achieve their freedom.<sup>110</sup> One mechanism for freedom focused on the attaining of merits in military campaigns, as was the case of many black slaves who participated in the conquest of Yucatan. For this reason, it was not strange to find cases of black settlers who, thanks to their previous services provided to the Crown in the fight against foreigners, became able to rise socially, even having descendants who eventually gained access to positions of prominence even within the local municipal *cabildo* in Campeche. Few colonial institutions offered similar possibilities for social and racial mobility and recognition as a member of the militia, especially for the black population, was found in the *battalions of pardos* (mulattos or militias made up of townspeople of mixed African ancestry) which served as an attractive mechanism to achieve honor, prestige and eventual rewards. In the town of Campeche there existed a registered battalion of *pardos* that frequently faced both indigenous uprisings and invasions of pirates.<sup>111</sup>

Similarly, the indigenous population around the town of San Francisco de Campeche was never very large. Proof of this is seen in the number of *encomenderos* present in the villages, who never had a strong presence compared with the group of merchants, since they depended

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<sup>109</sup> Andrea Cucina, "Procedencia y estatus social de los africanos en la villa colonial de Campeche: un estudio químico y antropológico preliminar," *Estudios de antropología Biológica*, XII, (2005): 688.

<sup>110</sup> For the best recent discussion of the nature of the African origin population in colonial Yucatán see Matthew Restall, *Black Middle: Africans, Mayas, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan*, Stanford University Press, 2013.

<sup>111</sup> Michel Antochiw. *Milicia de Yucatán (Siglos XVI y XVII) & La Unión de Armas de 1712* (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2006), 19.

mostly on indigenous labor.<sup>112</sup> The Indians within the port proper were settled mainly one mile towards the northeast of the town, in the neighborhood of “San Francisco Campechuelo,” where the convent of the Franciscan Order was built, dedicated to the evangelization of the natives. The abuses and extortions of which the Indians were objects, especially during the government of Rodrigo Flores de Aldana, in 1664 and from 1667 to 1669, originated a constant movement of flight towards the “mountain.”<sup>113</sup> This fact was denounced by many of the town’s inhabitants and the local authorities. The people expressed both the fear of these runaway Maya joining the wild Indians of the mountain regions, and their eventual aid to foreign enemies, as well as the economic complications that their flight brought to the region by causing the excess and remaining tax burdens to be divided among fewer and fewer tribute paying indigenous people.<sup>114</sup>

The social milieu in the Port town of Campeche also presented a last but also important social group which infrequently existed in the other regions in the interior of the province: the existence of foreigners who lived in the town. Since Campeche remained the main port of entrance to the Yucatan Province, the number of foreigner’s resident in town, also called *estantes* in the colonial documentation, was bigger in this settlement than any other part of Yucatan. As the colonial records attest, there were people of different nationalities living and residing in Campeche. Surprisingly, the most common foreign residents in the port city were English and

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<sup>112</sup> Adela Pinet Plasencia, *La Península de Yucatán en el Archivo General de la Nación* (Chiapas, Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Centro de Investigaciones Humanísticas de Mesoamérica, Gobierno del Estado de Chiapas, 1998), 95.

<sup>113</sup> For more discussion of this see Chuchiak, “El tributo colonial y la nutrición de los Mayas, 1542–1812” especially 167-173.

<sup>114</sup> Laura Caso Berrera, “El miedo a los indios rebeldes e insumisos en Yucatán, siglos XVI y XVII,” in *Una historia de los usos del miedo*, ed. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, Anne Staples and Valentina Torres Septién, (Mexico D.F.: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, Universidad Iberoamericana, 2009), 88- 92.

French, but there were also people from other places from throughout the Spanish Empire, such as members of Flemish and Italian communities.<sup>115</sup>

During the times when pirates attacked with strength the port of Campeche, such as in 1678, the Spanish authorities talked openly about the problem of the foreigners living in the Province, since the authorities feared that these people could help the pirates as guides or even join their pirate crews. During the investigation of the contraband trade network discovered in Campeche in 1672 (to be discussed in more detail below), the authorities included a census of all the identifiable foreigners living in the port town:<sup>116</sup>

List and Census of all Foreigners Living in the Port Town of Campeche. Source: *Lista y manifestación de extranjeros en Campeche*, 9 de abril de 1672. Folios 217v-220r. AGI Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42.

1. Capitán Yles Belecar, owner and Captain of the frigate *Paja Larga*, Pichilingue<sup>117</sup>
2. Juan Remes, lieutenant in the frigate *Paja Larga*, Pichilingue
3. Don Phelipe Gerardino, Dutch
4. Rainiel Faques
5. Jacob Marin, Danish
6. Carlos Bud, English
7. Martin Osman, Pichilingue
8. Juan Lacay, Pichilingue
9. Jorge Coban, Pichilingue
10. Juan Vottellers Tendes
11. Jofre Yanson, Danish
12. Juan Burgras
13. Luis Blanco, Irish
14. Geraldo Varnes, Dutch
15. Jorge [Fraslequet], English
16. Guillermo Cobentri, English
17. Rolar Yansan, Dutch
18. Ricardo Yart, English
19. Juan Mergon [Miro], Brazilian

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<sup>115</sup> Marta Espejo-Ponce Hunt, "Colonial Yucatan: town and region in the seventeenth century" (PhD diss., University of California, 1974), 135-136.

<sup>116</sup> *Lista y manifestación de extranjeros en Campeche*, 9 de abril de 1672. Folios 217v-220r. AGI Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42.

<sup>117</sup> The term "*Pichilingue*" is known to be a corruption of *Vlissingen*, or the region of *Flushing*, in Holland, the home port of many of the Dutch privateers and pirates of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The term came to be applied to buccaneers of almost any Dutch region.

20. Juan Francisco, DutchPedro Jorge, Dutch
21. Aye Ansen Siceto
22. Geronimo Ercu, Irish
23. Jacob Yendaes, Dutch
24. Abraham Cornieles, Dutch
25. Ardan Yanosen, Dutch
26. Ricardo Yzar, English
27. Cornido Thoms, Dutch
28. Juan Fris, Dutch
29. Remen Jacob, Dutch
30. Enrique Teodoro, Dutch
31. Pedro Adolos, Dutch
32. Matheo Curnieles, Dutch
33. Pablo Federico, German
34. Jualian Arnazen, Pichilingue
35. Alexandro Extratton, Scottish
36. Diego Damisi, Dutch
37. Antton Freguen, Dutch
38. Tilman Joc, Dutch

It is possible to notice a significant number of Dutch people in the list, resident in Campeche, and apparently their presence in the port came from the fact that they were part of the crew of the Spanish commissioned privateer frigate *Paja Larga*, and they were living legally at the time in Campeche. Nevertheless, after the investigations, the authorities decided to expel all of the foreigners from the province due to their fears of their divided loyalties.

As we will see foreigners often made up an important element in the everyday life in Campeche. Since they were not from Campeche, they did not share the same attachment to the town as compared the local people. After the various pirate attacks, as can be expected, these foreigners were more likely to migrate to a more pacific place. Still, there was another way in which daily life in Campeche came to be affected by foreigners, and one example is seen in the earlier case of foreigners from 1672. After the expulsion of all foreigners, the crew of the Dutch privateering ship, the *Paja Larga*, joined pirate crews from throughout the Caribbean area, and

during the attack against Campeche in 1678, some witnesses declared to recognize some of the men from the *Paja Larga* helping the pirates, serving them as guides in their attack.<sup>118</sup>

In conclusion, as this chapter has shown, the society of Campeche in the seventeenth century remained very diverse and unique inside the Yucatan Peninsula. It shared some characteristics with the other major settlements, like Merida and Valladolid, but the port status of the town imprinted special features on society and social norms in Campeche. The prominent role of the merchants in the local town government, the much smaller amount of Indigenous people in the area, and the presence of foreigners in the town are the most relevant elements to consider in coming to understand the everyday life of Campeche and its experience with piracy and pirate attacks in the seventeenth century.

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<sup>118</sup> *Declaración del capitán Juan Ambrosio Patrón, sobre el ataque que el enemigo realizó en 1678*, 24 de julio de 1678. Folio 36r. AGI, México, 362, R.2, N.10.

### CHAPTER THREE

## LIVING IN SAN FRANCISCO DE CAMPECHE: FEAR, PREPARATIONS AND THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR COLONIAL DEFENSE IN THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

The lands and ports of the other provinces of the Indies are defended with fortifications and permanent military forces with immense expense of the Royal Treasury, and this being true, it is notable that in the defense of this province and its coasts and ports these expenses are excused by the tradition of having the said residents and townspeople undertake their own defense whenever it is necessary, doing this military service for Your Majesty, as they have done since this land was pacified...

*Carta del Gobernador de Yucatán, Don Diego de Zapata y Cárdenas sobre las defensas del puerto*, 1639, AGI, Audiencia de México, 360, ramo 5, no. 31.

Although pirate and corsair attacks became a feature of almost daily life for the residents of the port city of Campeche, plans for their active defense, and the defensive forces themselves, changed greatly over time. For much of the early colonial period, the Spanish Crown expected the descendants of the local conquistadors, who had received feudal grants of *encomienda*, to serve as the basic defensive militia. This plan might have worked had there been a significant force of Spanish feudal *encomenderos* in the port region of Campeche, but as we have seen in the previous chapter, the number of *encomenderos* in Campeche remained very low. As Captain Joseph Bruñon de Vertiz, wrote in 1663, the poor and scarce defenses of the Port of Campeche included mostly:

... the *encomenderos* of that province who each send a soldier paid at his expense according to the person appointed by the governor and they attend in the watch tower of the town, and this is never more than 30 men, and since all of the Spanish neighbors of the town only make up 60 men, Your Majesty will see what little force they have to defend a port where the enemy has made its face known time and time again And of all the coasts of this New Spain, Campeche is the least defended because Havana and San Juan de Ulua are today impregnable, but not having a greater defense, the enemy attends more often than not to avoid the other ports, and instead they conduct their assaults on

this one of San Francisco de Campeche, where they feel so safe to enter it whenever they want because, the strength of its defenses, as experience has shown them, is no more that referred to here ...<sup>119</sup>

As the few *encomenderos* of the town offered little military strength, it fell on others to defend the port. Instead, however, the port city, with mostly a burgeoning merchant class had to look to other sources of colonial defense and others would have to staff the colonial militias as no regular *presidial* troops were stationed in Campeche until the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The main actors during the episodes of the multitude of foreign attacks against the population were the very royal and town officials who served as the only available people authorized to take charge of the defenses. Unfortunately, those who were duly charged to defend the city often neglected their duties, and consequently, many of the port town's "common people" who were not legally obligated to take part in the defense, often came forward and offered to help and risk their lives. In this chapter we will identify those ultimately who took up arms and who defended the city, including those Royal and local officials authorized to defend the town, and those many more who volunteered to risk their lives in its defense. We will also we identify cases when those in authority neglected in their duty and examine how this affected the common perception of the townspeople and their belief in the ineffectiveness of their local authorities.

### **Summary of the Authorities' Functions Related to Defense**

The main royal and political authority in the Yucatán peninsula was the governor. After a series of changes in the administration of Spain's New World colonies, due to its strategic location in the Caribbean, the province of the Yucatan Peninsula was organized into a military

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<sup>119</sup> *Relación de las defensas de estas provincias y el temer de armar los indios hecho por Capitán Joseph Bruñon de Vertiz*, 1663, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, folios 299r-300v.

district known as a Captaincy General. Since 1565, the governor also held the title of *Capitán General*, a title more honorary and one of tradition, but still one that exercised some military jurisdiction.<sup>120</sup> When Francisco Ramirez Briceño became governor and captain general in 1616, the title of *Capitán General* was effective.<sup>121</sup> The reasons for the creation of the captaincy laid in the fact that the province of Yucatan was considered a frontier zone under constant menace from the rebel Indians in the interior, and pirates and privateers from the sea. The title of *Capitán General* was a military title and allowed the governor to be more independent in military affairs from the *Audiencia de México* and from the direct interference of the Viceroy of New Spain and his Council of War.

Nevertheless, the effective local defense of the port town rested on the local municipal town council and its officials. Thus, the first act of government on the part of the earliest Spanish conquerors focused on the establishment of the "*cabildo*," or municipal government, as established by royal decree which mandated that: "the *Adelantados*, *Alcaldes Mayores* and *Corregidores* organize the foundation of Cities."<sup>122</sup> These town councils had as their antecedents the Iberian peninsular councils of the Kingdom of Castile and they consisted of regular meetings of the town officials that included the mayor, councilmen and other members of the municipal governing body.<sup>123</sup> These municipal figures exerted local power in the name of the King, and they held most power, except for other actors within the military field and the church. In

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<sup>120</sup> For more information on the nature and issues with the creation of the Captaincy Generalship of Yucatan see Ignacio Rubio Mañé, *El virreinato: Orígenes y jurisdicciones, y dinámica social de los virreyes*, (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1983), Volume 1, 95-97.

<sup>121</sup> Sergio Quezada, *Yucatan. Historia Breve* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2011), 87-88.

<sup>122</sup> See *Recopilación de leyes de Indias*. Libro IV, Título III, Ley VIII.

<sup>123</sup> Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y grupos de poder en Yucatán (Siglo XVII)* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial, 1994), 25.



Campeche's case, being an important regional port city, the situation was different and the local municipal mayors, or *alcaldes ordinaries*, also had attributed themselves military functions which had been sub-delegated after 1616 by the provincial Governor and Captain Generals, who named them as "*tenientes de capitan general*" or his military lieutenants in the port. The appointment of these political and mercantile figures, frequently men without any serious military training, often caused problems, and some blamed this system for the ineffective defenses of the port (See table 2).<sup>124</sup>

Table 2. List of The Officers in the Cabildo and their Means of Acquiring their Positions.  
Source: Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y grupos de poder en Yucatán (Siglo XVII)* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial, 1994).

Officers Selected by Open Elections	Officers who Bought their Positions from the Crown
<i>Alcalde ordinario y de la Santa Hermandad</i> <i>Procurador general</i>	<i>Alguacil mayor</i> <i>Alférez mayor</i> <i>Depositario general</i> <i>Fiel ejecutor</i> <i>Escribano</i>

The government of the *cabildos* consisted in administering justice and ordering everything related to the common good. The main functions of the council were: control of the local police and the courts, control of labor and salaries, and the management of hospitals and prisons. The *cabildos* served as a means of communication between the Crown and the

<sup>124</sup> For instance, Captain Don Joseph Bruñon Vertiz complained about this custom of naming the *Alcaldes Ordinarios* as lieutenants of the Captain General, stating "the custom in this town of appointing each year one of the towns officials to the post of lieutenant Captain General, and especially forcibly appointing one of those elected as the Alcalde Ordinario, to this post is prejudicial, even more so allowing all of the town councilmen to be considered governors of arms and defense, when they cannot often even govern their own homes" See *Relación de las defensas de estas provincias y el temer de armar los indios hecho por Capitán Joseph Bruñon de Vertiz*, 1663, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, folio 305r-v.

townspeople people through occasional public open council meetings. These municipal councils, or *cabildos*, could be a vehicle for protest and the institution through which local townspeople sent petitions to higher authorities, and in the case of Yucatan, these municipal entities at least partially controlled the local militia and protection of their borders and the port.<sup>125</sup>

Among municipal officials in Campeche, there were three large groups or classes: one, the executive members of the town hall themselves, *alcaldes* (mayors), *regidores* (town councilmen) and the *escribanos* (municipal scribes); the second group included the important officials who were directly appointed by the municipal council, the *alguacil mayor* (chief constable), *alferez real* (royal standard bearer-sergeant at arms), *procurador* (procurator, attorney). The third class of municipal officials were those minor officials who were subordinated to the *cabildo* and also appointed by it, *mayordomo* (chief steward), *alarife* (master builder), and the *portero* (doorman),<sup>126</sup> In the case of the members of the council, the *regidores* had the right to speak and to vote in the municipal councils, along with the two *alcaldes ordinarios*, who served as joint mayors of the town in the old Roman notion of collegiality, each of whom had a voice and vote in the municipal councils, as well as a vote from the mayor who occupied the presidency of the council, and the *procurador general* who attended the boards' meetings and had the right to speak but not to vote.<sup>127</sup>

The *alcaldes ordinarios* occupied the presidency of the *cabildo* in all those towns where the governor or lieutenant governor was not present. In the case of Campeche, the *alcaldes*

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<sup>125</sup> Francisco Javier Guillamón Álvarez. "Algunas reflexiones sobre el cabildo colonial como institución," in *Anales de Historia Contemporánea*, 8 (1990-91): 155.

<sup>126</sup> Guillermo F. Margadant, "Los funcionarios municipales indianos hasta las reformas gaditanas," in *Memoria del IV Congreso de Historia del Derecho Mexicano T. II*, ed. Beatriz Bernal (Mexico: UNAM, Instituto de Investigaciones Jurídicas, 1988), 686-687.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid, 688-689.

*ordinarios* (mayors) headed the *cabildo*, just as these officials did in the town of Valladolid and the city of Mérida. Initially, the *alcaldes ordinarios* acquired their positions through the means of a popular vote. In terms of their obligations, they were to fulfill the requirements of being "honest, skillful people, who can read and write and have other qualities that are required for such trades."<sup>128</sup> The Spanish laws forbid the occupying of these positions of *alcaldes* by anyone who already occupied a position as a royal officer, and they also could not have any debts with the Royal Treasury or be simple common residents or *moradores*. They also had to have gone through and waited for a period out of office, known as the "gap" or "hole," which is how the local people used to call the waiting period before an outgoing elected official could return to occupy the same position, which in this case in the Spanish Colonial possessions required a three year term out of office. The *alcaldes* acted as judges, settling conflicts and civil cases that did not exceed the value of 50 pesos. They were also responsible for the resolution of civil and criminal matters within the limits of the town and for a district surrounding it consisting of seventeen miles around.<sup>129</sup> In the same way, the *alcaldes* had jurisdictions over the cases of the so-called *Santa Hermandad*, an institution created by the Spanish Crown and exported to the American colonies which served as a type of police force to take care of the crimes committed in the depopulated or the rural areas, such as cattle thieves and thugs who robbed people along the roads. In Campeche, however, the *alcaldes ordinarios* replaced the *alcalde de la Santa Hermandad*, and they directly controlled the local policing of the town and its surrounding region. There were two kinds of *alcaldes ordinarios*, one representing different classes of people within the town limits, and the *Recopilación de Indias*, the largest compilation of Royal Laws,

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 703-706.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

ordered that there could be no more than two of them in any municipal government. There was the *alcalde* of the first vote, and the cabildo elected him among the *encomenderos* (a group likened to a local feudal nobility) and this mayor was responsible for administering justice to the Spanish "*vecinos*" or those of wealth and means. The other mayor was the *alcalde* of second-vote, who represented the simpler folk known simply as residents "*moradores*" or householders "*domiciliarios*" and this mayor of the second vote remained responsible for administering justice among this sector of society. In this way, we can see the hierarchical conception of the stratification of wealth and class in colonial Spanish American towns, and how this structure became enforced even at the municipal level of government.

A uniqueness of the *cabildo* in Campeche, which distinguished it from the rest of the municipal governments in the peninsula, was that the *alcalde* of first vote was also named the lieutenant of general captain, so he oversaw everything related to the war and the defense of the town. This situation caused conflicts between the governor and the *cabildo* in Campeche, since the governor was often unable to impose his authority. On occasions when the governor tried to appoint a lieutenant-general captain different from the *alcalde* of the first vote, the *cabildo* protested before the Audiencia de México. The Audiencia's response was always in favor of the *cabildo* in Campeche. The response was based on a royal decree prohibiting the governor and captain general from having more than one lieutenant. More than a few of the provincial governors saw in this process the opening for malfeasance and corruption. Captain Joseph Bruñon Vertiz wrote to the Crown lamenting that the cause of the ineffective defenses of the town lay often with the poor military experience of the *Alcalde Ordinario* who served as the lieutenant-Captain General of Campeche:

“They are governed by a Mayor (*alcalde ordinario*) to whom the governor gives the title of Lieutenant Captain General, and this is only for lack of not having in the province a person with experience in war, and added to this is the knowledge that these men, often merchants, who have knowledge and interests in the entries of the ships, they often take an absolute hand, and whether or not they want to, or not, they cause vexation, and being such as these mayors are often merchants and controllers of the flow of goods and busy in their own mercantile affairs, they are often not very active in the execution of the royal rights, and this is so true here that we can say the port here has never been governed cleanly by the hands of these particular private residents.”<sup>130</sup>

Another privilege that the people from Campeche achieved was that the *alcaldes* of Campeche had the power to replace the governor within the jurisdiction of the town in cases of his absence or death, regardless of whether a lieutenant governor existed at that time. At the time when these instances occurred, the *alcaldes* had access to maximum political and military control, in addition to enjoying all the privileges that were reserved for the governor.

The next officer who occupied their position by means of an election in the *cabildo* was the *procurador general*. This person, similar to a public defender, oversaw the representing of the general population against the *cabildo* or the Crown. This position is considered by some authors not to be a part of the *cabildo*; however they all agree that it was an elected position. The election of these officials was initially open to the people, in what were called *cabildos abiertos*, or open town council meetings, but gradually over time this tradition changed, and the only open town council election meetings saw to the selection only of the town councilmen from the town's districts, known as *regidores*. It became common to see that people who once held the position as a mayor, or *alcalde*, often held the elected position of *procurador general* once out of office.

There were other officers in the *cabildos* during the colonial era, however, the ones mentioned here remained the main officers who played a role related to the defense of the

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<sup>130</sup> *Relación de las defensas de estas provincias y el temer de armar los indios hecho por Capitán Joseph Bruñon de Vertiz*, 1663, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, folio 302r-v.

territory. Interested readers can consult several other works dedicated to analyzing the *cabildos* in Yucatan in a more in-depth way.<sup>131</sup> Nevertheless, the evidence of the nature and socio-economic status of the office holders of the position of *Alcaldes Ordinarios* from the 1600-1620 period reveals an interesting pattern in their election. The evidence presented in the works of González Muñoz appears to reveal an apparent preference for electing a set of *alcaldes ordinarios* in the municipal government of Campeche with each representing one of the two major socio-economic sectors of society: the *encomendero* class and the merchant class.

### **The Role of the Local Cabildo Officials in Defense of the Port**

During the English privateering attack of 1597, led by the English Captain William Parker, the *alcaldes* of Campeche played a major role in the organization of the defense. In that year, don Francisco Sanchez and don Pedro de Interián served as the *alcaldes ordinarios* of Campeche.<sup>132</sup> According to the testimonies of the events, at the time of the attack Sanchez was out of town, supervising one of his ranches, or *estancias*, while Interián who had remained in town had not prepared for the attack at first sight of the English ships off the coast. This could be because the townspeople thought that Parker was leaving, but the pirate's apparent withdrawal out to sea served as a trick to confuse the inhabitants of Campeche. During the early morning attack, the *Alcalde Ordinario* Sanchez left his *estancia* when he heard the gunshots and returned to the port to start to organize the people from the surroundings around Campeche, especially bringing back many of the residents who had at first fled the attack, escaping into the hills. By

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<sup>131</sup> Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y grupos de poder en Yucatán (Siglo XVII)* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial, 1994).

<sup>132</sup> *Relación de los méritos de Martin de Güemes en la defensa del puerto de Campeche y en contra de piratas ingleses, pidiendo una ayuda de costa*, 1599, AGI, Audiencia de México, 242A, no. 22.

the time they arrived in the town, the *Alcalde Ordinario* Interián had barricaded himself inside the convent of San Francisco with a group of people ready to fight. By the early morning, the defensive force in the convent of San Francisco started the fight, meanwhile the forces of Sanchez quickly busied themselves with closing off and barricading the streets, so that the pirates did not have a way to escape.<sup>133</sup>

Later, during the attack of 1633, led by the Dutch privateer known as Diego el Mulato, there is no detailed explanation about the specific actions of the *alcaldes*. However, the description of the contemporary Franciscan Chronicler Fray Diego López de Cogolludo about the attack does mention that one of the *alcaldes*, Juan de Pita<sup>134</sup>, died during the defense of the town, as well as the *alferez* of the *cabildo*, Hernando Díaz. Finally, when the pirates captured the town, they took several people as prisoners, and among them were the captains Juan Ortuño and Iñigo Figueroa. The Dutch captains tried to seek a payment for the ransom of the town, however the local authorities refused. The argument behind their refusal was that after the attack, the Royal Authorities might accuse them of treason, and they would then lose their properties in confiscation.<sup>135</sup>

A few decades later, on February 9, 1663, the English buccaneering Captain Christopher Myngs and his buccaneering fleet attacked the port of Campeche. This event saw an attack of a great magnitude and the authorities at the time could not react appropriately due to their lack of manpower and weaponry which they would have needed to mount a defense. In a letter from the

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<sup>133</sup> Juan Juárez Moreno, *Corsarios y piratas en Veracruz y Campeche*, (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1972), 8-9.

<sup>134</sup> Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y grupos de poder en Yucatán (Siglo XVII)* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial, 1994), 319.

<sup>135</sup> Juan Juárez Moreno, *Corsarios y piratas en Veracruz y Campeche* (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1972), 15-16.

cabildo to the Viceroy, they mentioned that the enemy captured the port town and killed close to 54 people from Campeche, including both of the *alcaldes ordinarios* and the *sargento mayor*.<sup>136</sup> One of the protagonists leading the defenses during the attack was none other than the captain don Antonio Maldonado de Aldana, who at that time served as the general treasurer of the Santa Cruzada in the province.<sup>137</sup>

Maldonado took charge of the fort of the Santa Cruz, located on top of one of the hills above the town. When the enemy passed by the hill, Maldonado used all the ammunition available to his small group of defenders in order to try to stop the pirates, but his defense was unsuccessful. Maldonado noticed that the pirates had already reached the town and, since the townspeople hidden in the castle and fortress of San Benito on the main square did not have enough supplies to resist, Maldonado decided to leave the hilltop fortification and instead organize hit and run raids and ambushes in order to rescue the townspeople. After the capture of the town, it was Maldonado who went to talk to the pirates in order to seek a ceasefire, in order to collect the survivors, heal the injured, and bury the dead. Even the pirates recognized the important role played by Maldonado.<sup>138</sup> Although not a local town governing official at the time, Maldonado had already occupied the position of *alcalde ordinario* in 1650 and 1654, and was re-elected in recognition of his valiant defense of the town again shortly after in 1665.<sup>139</sup>

The news about the sack of Campeche reached Merida two days later. The bishop of Yucatan,

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<sup>136</sup> *Carta del cabildo de Campeche a su Excelencia el virrey, sobre la toma del puerto de San Francisco de Campeche por piratas inglesas*, 10 de marzo de 1663, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, 201v-207r.

<sup>137</sup> Juan Juárez Moreno, *Corsarios y piratas en Veracruz y Campeche* (Seville, Spain: Escuela de Estudios Hispanoamericanos, 1972), 22.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>139</sup> Victoria González Muñoz. *Cabildos y grupos de poder en Yucatán (Siglo XVII)* (Sevilla: Diputación Provincial, 1994), 318.



fray Luis de Cifuentes, described the reaction of the people in a letter to the King of Spain. The bishop's letter tried to show to the King that he played a role in organizing the defenses in the Province, since there was no person knowledgeable enough in the things related to warfare. Fray Luis even mentioned that he armed the priests in Merida because there were not enough soldiers to defend the city should the pirates come inland to attack it. Finally, the bishop recommended that His Majesty should name as governor of Yucatan someone who was single, with no family, and with significant experience in war.<sup>140</sup>

The next serious attack on Campeche occurred shortly after on July 10, 1678, led by the English buccaneer George Spurre.<sup>141</sup> This attack gives perfect evidence illustrating the myriad problems and conflicts involved with the different municipal authorities in the Province. Local political in-fighting, even before the attack came caused significant damage to mount an effective defense of the port. Even before the English arrived, a conflict existed between the *sargento mayor*, Gonzalo Borrallo against the *alcalde ordinario de primer voto* about the government of the fortifications in the town. These differences hampered the eventual organization of an effective defense against the pirates because the soldiers of the town refused to obey Sergeant Borrallo, who had greater military experience, and instead they only obeyed the *alcalde*. However, the later actions of Borrallo himself did not exhibit the bravery expected of a military officer, and according to his own declaration, Borrallo stated that he tried to escape from the pirates initially, and only later tried to alert the soldiers in the fortress of the town, but the pirates captured him while he was hidden inside a house.<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *Carta del señor obispo de Yucatán a su Excelencia sobre las defensas en contra de los cosarios ingleses*, 21 de marzo de 1663, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, 207r-215v.

<sup>141</sup> David Marley, *Pirates of the Americas* (California: ABC-Clío, 2010), 365-366.

<sup>142</sup> *El virrey de la Nueva España da cuenta a V. M. del saco que el enemigo hizo en el puerto de Campeche, en fecha de 17 de julio de 1678*. AGI, México, 1010, folios 550r-553r.

With just these few examples it is possible to see that the most common attitude of the local authorities in the town of Campeche often focused on taking active part in the defense of the town, as they had the obligation to organize and lead the soldiers on the battlefield. It does not come as a surprise that these elite people decided to risk their lives. Many of these people were immigrants from Spain or were descendants of conquistadores, and their prestige and family honor would dictate that they defend the town bravely. Thus, the historical memories of their own family members' military experiences during the Spanish Reconquista and the later conquest of Yucatan formed part of their own mentality, and the family honor demanded their actions. The combat against these many pirate attacks offered them an opportunity to show their value to the King, something that they expressed in their formal petitions and memorials of their services to the Crown, called *relaciones de meritos*, and they used these documents and the sworn affidavits that accompanied them as proof of their right to receive privileges, to hold public office, and to claim the honor and prestige connected with both.

### **The Defensive Dynamics Against Piracy**

The Yucatan Peninsula remained in a constant state of war because of the threat of the pirates and privateers from other nations and the constant risk and fear of an internal indigenous revolt. This combination of elements created the necessity of keeping a permanent armed force in the colonies. For most of the Spanish Indies, the Spanish *encomenderos* were the first line of defense in the colonies in the Americas. They had two main duties in the Americas, first they substituted for the Spanish Crown in its obligations towards the indigenous population, and secondly, they were also the defenders of the sovereignty of the Spanish Empire in the territories in the Americas. The second duty, the defense of the territory, was of special concern to the class

of *encomenderos* since it also included the defense of their own personal interests. This condition of defender involved different privileges, including military titles that helped the *encomendero* class reach a better status among the society.<sup>143</sup>

The role of the *encomenderos* in the defense of the peninsula was more important immediately after the conquest, but it decreased as time passed and the Spanish population of the territory increased. The consolidation of the main urban areas helped to reduce the danger of indigenous revolts. The city of Merida, and the towns of Campeche, Valladolid and Bacalar, created a defensive square that contained and surrounded the many Indigenous villages that already held evangelized indigenous people. Some evidence of the initial importance of the *encomenderos* as the main defense forces can be seen in 1571, when captain Gómez del Castrillo defeated a group of French pirates on the island of Cozumel; and in 1598, when Pedro Interián and Francisco Sánchez repelled the English forces of William Parker in Campeche; and finally, in 1599, when Alonso Sanchez de Aguilar faced more English pirates in the region of Rio de Lagartos.

Besides the *encomenderos* as a leading defensive force, the towns also counted on resident militias, which included all the Iberian origin Spanish people and the white criollos (Spaniards, but those born in the New World) with the status of *residentes* or landed townspeople of the territory. These people had the obligation to serve in the militias without any payment or remuneration. As prominent landed and propertied people, the prestige of military service added to their own high-level status. By the end of the sixteenth century, the militias in the capital city of Merida included around 200 men, while the town of Valladolid had a militia of 80 men, and in the port town of Campeche more than 100 men, including sailors, served in the official militias.

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<sup>143</sup> Michel Antochiw. *Milicia de Yucatán y la Unión de Armas de 1712* (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2006), 15.

The inclusion of the indigenous people in these organized militias became a difficult and tricky question. Governor Francisco de Solís, much earlier, tried to arm the indigenous men around the towns. The natives quickly took this order with enthusiasm and soon they composed an army of more than 60,000 Indigenous men, a number that soon alarmed the Spanish population. The authorities decided quickly to establish limits on the number of people and weapons that could be used by the members of these Indian militias.<sup>144</sup> These militias were also an important part of the defense of the territory. A good example of indigenous militia service is the case of don Pablo Paxbolón, who oversaw the region of Tixchel-Acalan and the Laguna de Términos region.<sup>145</sup>

Nevertheless, these armed forces composed of the *encomenderos* and local town militias were not a permanent army, since they only responded when the Spanish authorities officially summoned them. The governor Diego Fernandez de Velazco, especially after several pirate aggressions, sent a proposal to the king to create a permanent army in the colonies. He considered that having veteran soldiers serve alongside of the *encomenderos* and the *vecinos* that formed the militias would help the colony better face the foreign invaders who often were veteran soldiers from European wars.<sup>146</sup> By the seventeenth century, according to the historian Molina Solís, there were five different military companies in existence in the province: three

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<sup>144</sup> For more information on these Maya militias and their organization see John F. Chuchiak, *Unlikely Allies: Mayas, Spaniards and Pirates in Colonial Yucatán, 1550-1750*, (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, In Press 2019); as well as John F. Chuchiak, "His Majesty's Loyal Indian Servants: Maya Elite Cabildo Members' Militia Service and Indigenous Agency in the Colonial Defense of the Province of Yucatan, 1550-1750" Paper Presented on Panel 40: Caciques, Cabildos, Principales and the Indigenous Influence on the Consolidation of the Colonial Order, *Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies*, 62nd Annual Conference, April 11, 2015.

<sup>145</sup> Michel Antochiw, *Milicia de Yucatán (Siglos XVI y XVII) & La Unión de Armas de 1712*, (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2006), 14.

<sup>146</sup> *Carta del gobernador Don Diego Fernández de Velasco sobre la necesidad de formar una compañía de soldados para la defensa de la provincia*, 1600, AGI, Audiencia de México, 359, 5 folios.

Spanish companies of infantry, one company of *mulatos* and one company of *indios flecheros*. The captains of these companies were under the command of a *sargento mayor* and the *alcalde de primer voto* or the *teniente de general*. This last post or position involved a person with a direct commission named by the governor of the province since this person was also the Captain General of the province.<sup>147</sup>

The first reorganization of the military in the province during the seventeenth century was made by Governor Francisco Ramírez Briceño, who arrived at Yucatán in 1617. Ramírez ordered the creation of cavalry companies in all the villas and main towns. This order affected the privileges of the *encomenderos* who descended from *conquistadores*, who up until then had been the only ones authorized to serve as part of the cavalry.<sup>148</sup> With this order, the Spanish local town residents now were able to join the cavalry companies, provided that they had enough financial resources to support themselves with all the necessary military equipment that was required. This type of equipment often included more than just owning a horse. For example, in the documentation of the general mustering of September 1663, the local cavalry and militia Captain Don Gregorio Enríquez de Chaves, who served as the *Gobernador de la Caballeria*, presented for mustering with “...three harquebuses, one musket with its separate gunpowder horn and leather bags of prepared bullets and shot; two lengths of cord for the matchlock harquebuses, a large bottle of gunpowder, one carbine rifle, two bandoliers loaded with canisters of bullets and shot, as well as a bridled and saddled horse.”<sup>149</sup> Governor Ramírez also determined the number of weapons and ammunition that the *encomenderos* must have in their homes. The

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<sup>147</sup> Michel Antochiw. *Milicia de Yucatán y la Unión de Armas de 1712* (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2006), 19.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> *Alarde y Muestra General de 13 de septiembre, 1663*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 39, no. 9, 20 folios.

quantity chosen was based on the amount of the rent or indigenous tribute that each *encomendero* possessed. The *encomendero*'s widows and those incapacitated due to age or illness, also had to support local defense by hiring and naming a substitute, called an *escudero* who fought in their place and served as a member of the local militia. These orders did not modify the structure of the defenses, but Governor Ramírez's instructions did help to better distribute the burden and responsibility of the defense of the towns among the entire male population of the province.

Nevertheless, in an almost yearly fashion these small defensive forces found themselves overwhelmed very quickly as Campeche started to suffer from the aggression of pirates and privateers as early as 1557, only 17 years after the initial founding of the town. These first attacks were limited to the port and its ships, but over time more and more of the pirates attempted to capture the town starting with the attempted English invasion of the port by Captain William Parker in 1597. Even with all the attacks and aggressions, as we will see, the port and town of Campeche found its way to recover and to continue to grow in its population and its commerce. Nevertheless, a lack of major defensive fortifications in and around the port town would hamper even the best attempts at colonial defense. Without protective walls and a system of heavily armed fortifications, Campeche would remain a favored target for pirates.

### **Attempts at Defensive Preparations and Early Defensive Barriers**

As early as 1607, the governor of the Province, Don Carlos de Luna y Arellano visited the port of Campeche and became horrified at its lack of defense. Luna y Arellano quickly ordered the construction of some basic structures for defense purposes. He also organized a plan for the better defense of the province because of the news about a large number of pirates and

corsairs raiding around the area.<sup>150</sup> Governor Luna y Arellano sent 50 men to Campeche to help to protect the town during this period.

The records show that Governor Luna y Arellano oversaw the first fortification recorded built in the port of Campeche.<sup>151</sup> Although not a major fort, the defensive structure built instead was a small fortified structure, mostly to watch over the bay for any arriving threat from the sea, rather than for any major defensive purposes (See fig. 9).

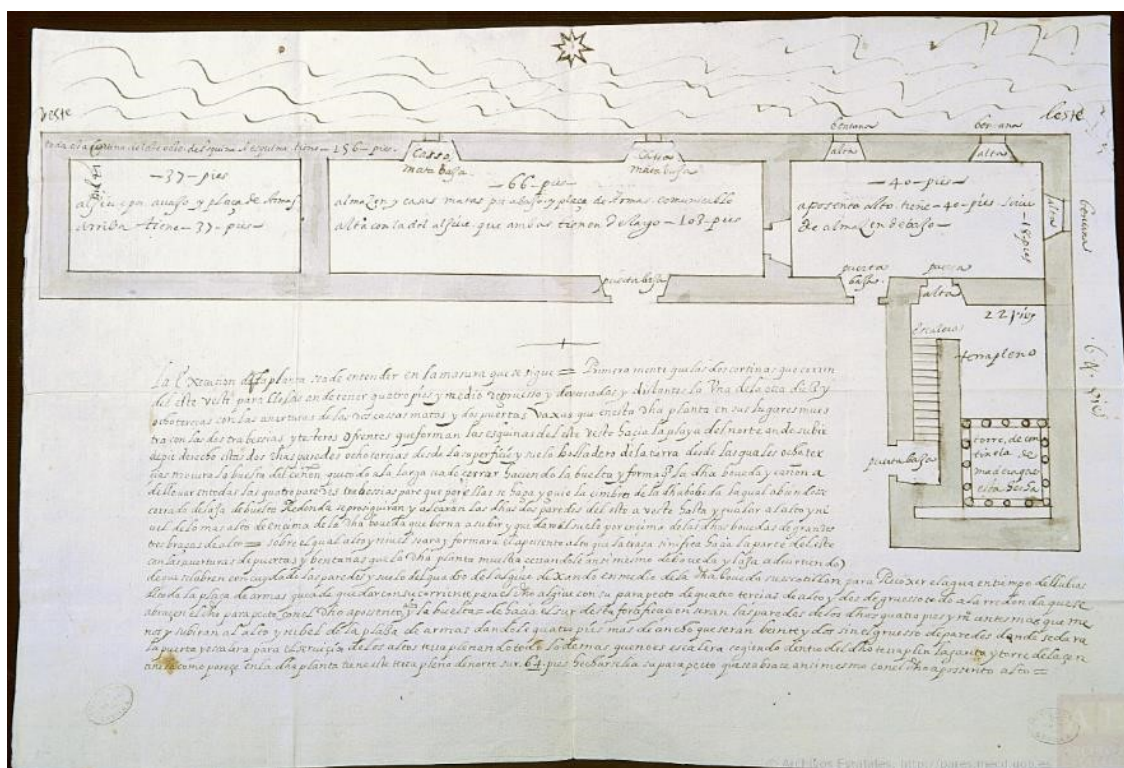


Figure 9. Drawing of the Fortification that Governor Luna Y Arellano Built in Campeche, in 1608. Source: *Plano de la fortificación hecha en la villa y puerto de Campeche por el gobernador de la provincia de Yucatán, Carlos de Luna y Arellano*. AGI, MP-MEXICO, 517. June 21, 1608.

<sup>150</sup> Michel Antochiw, *Las primeras fortificaciones de Campeche* (Campeche, Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2007), 52.

<sup>151</sup> Héctor Pérez Martínez, *Piraterías en Campeche*, (Campeche, Mexico: Universidad Autónoma del Sureste, 1984), 27.

This structure in the port of Campeche soon became part of a complex system of watchtowers or *vigías* which existed along the coasts. Throughout the coast of the Yucatan Peninsula there existed a system of 31 watchtowers that the colonial authorities ordered built during the colonial period. These watchtowers created and served as a system of protection against pirates, smugglers and any invading enemy navy that might try to reach the coast.<sup>152</sup>

Nevertheless, the colonial provincial authorities quickly realized that even these measures could not be effective in facing the constant menace of the foreigners and buccaneers living illegally in the *Laguna de Terminos* region who illegally collected logwood from the coastal forests of the zone. This led to one of the most repeated measures to secure the defenses and protection of the province, the various attempts to clean out and expel the foreign logwood cutters from the *Laguna*. As early as 1620, the local authorities organized an expedition which they sent with the main goal of clean the coasts of foreign vessels.<sup>153</sup>

Later, on February 6, 1629, King Philip IV ordered the creation of an official coastguard navy, called the *Armada de Barlovento*, in order to protect the Gulf of Mexico and its coasts from foreign depredations. This proclamation, however, remained powerless due to the political divisions, the carelessness of the local militias, and the lack of resources put towards the creation of this new fleet, all of which made the coastal defensive navy a non-viable strategy.<sup>154</sup>

The main problem with the creation of an armada remained one of finance, as the Crown expected inhabitants of the colonies to financially support the building and maintenance of the

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<sup>152</sup> Jorge Victoria Ojeda. "Vigías en el Yucatán Novohispano: Nota para un estudio complementario entre las torres costeras de España y las de la América Hispana," *Fronteras de la Historia* Vol. 14-2, (2009): 244-245.

<sup>153</sup> Héctor Pérez Martínez, *Piraterías en Campeche*, (Campeche, México: Universidad Autónoma del Sudeste, 1984) 28.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.



ships and the regular payment of the troops.<sup>155</sup> This meant that authorities had to create new taxes to get the funding. Especially in the province of Yucatan, the local Maya people resisted the imposition of the new tax for the payment of the *Armada of Barlovento*.<sup>156</sup> The final destiny of this first *Armada de Barlovento* after the complications with its creation was a trip back to Spain, where the fleet was dismantled in 1647 and its ships added to other fleets.

Without a regional coastal guard, the colonial provinces of the region had to seek out other means of defending their coastlines. One other resource that the Spanish authorities used to defend the seas and combat foreign predators was the use of and commissioning of local Spanish colonial privateers. During the reign of Felipe III, Spain was at peace with the rest of Europe and privateering was only allowed in the Mediterranean Sea, mostly against Berber pirates and the Venetian navy. But, in 1621, Spain broke the peace with Holland, and the Spanish Crown quickly passed ordinances to regulate privateering activities and their commissions in the New World.<sup>157</sup>

In the case of the Yucatan Province, the governor José Campero was one of the first authorities to try to use local Spanish colonial privateers to protect the coasts. In 1661, an English ship attacked the area, including the village of Champotón and the town of Campeche and Río Lagartos region. The English enemies, however, fled Campeche because of a storm. This rapid flight of the pirates saved a group of ships coming from Spain that were able to arrive

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<sup>155</sup> For the most comprehensive coverage of the *Armada de Barlovento*, see Bibiano Torres Ramírez, *La armada de Barlovento*, (Sevilla: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 1981).

<sup>156</sup> For a complete look at the local Maya tax rebellions concerning the imposition of the new tribute tax, called the “servicio del toston” for the creation of the *Armada de Barlovento*, see John F. Chuchiak, “For God and King, But not for the *Armada de Barlovento*: The Failed Imposition of the *Servicio del Toston* in the Province of Yucatan, 1632-1648,” Paper presented at the 62nd Annual Conference of the *Rocky Mountain Council of Latin American Studies* RMCLAS, Tuscon, Arizona, April 9, 2015.

<sup>157</sup> Oscar Cruz Barney, *El corso marítimo* (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Mexico, Secretaría de Marina, 2013), 16-18.

safely at the port. In an act of desperation, the governor Campero issued these ships and their commanders commissions as privateers and ordered these ships pursue and capture the English ship.<sup>158</sup>

Nevertheless, as we have seen, the local authorities did not chase away all foreigners and by the decade of 1670, there was even a Dutch privateer living in the town of Campeche, with authorization from the governor Don Fernando Francisco de Escobedo (1670-1672) to receive a commission as a Spanish privateer against the French and English.<sup>159</sup> The Dutch privateering Captain, named Yles Belear, took advantage of the peace with Spain, and the state of war with England during the period of the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672–74) to exercise his commission as a privateer for the province of Yucatan. Called by the local townspeople of Campeche, Xil de las Casas, the Dutch privateer used the nickname of *Paja Larga*. This was also the name of the ship used by these Spanish colonial commissioned Dutch privateers. When the governor Miguel Codornio arrived to substitute Governor Escobedo, he sent a letter describing the situation of this privateer. Codornio mentioned that Xil de las Casas was originally a pirate who had attacked frequently the coast of Yucatan with great success.<sup>160</sup> For this reason, the governor Escobedo issued a license to the Dutchman to serve as a privateer for the King of Spain. When Codornio arrived, the Royal Officers in Campeche demanded that the privateers should pay the tributes and taxes to the King, since governor Escobedo did not ask for these royal taxes from the

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<sup>158</sup> *Carta del gobernador José Campero de Sorrevilla al Rey*. Mérida, April 20, 1662, AGI, Audiencia de México 1006.

<sup>159</sup> *Carta del gobernador de Yucatán, Don Miguel Francisco Codornio de Sosa, a su Majestad que da cuenta de las medidas de su antecesor para la defensa de Yucatán con la fragata holandesa Paja Larga*, 25 de agosto de 1672, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006.

<sup>160</sup> *Carta de D. Miguel Codornio de Sola a su Majestad que refiere que en el puerto de Campeche andaba un holandés con una fragata haciendo muchos robos y su antecesor lo admitió bajo seguro para la defensa de la Provincia*, 17 de noviembre de 1672, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006

privateer before.<sup>161</sup> This situation was very delicate for governor Codornio and he decided to ask the Viceroy of New Spain for a solution to the issue. In this letter, governor Codornio described the great success his region had in having a privateer to help to protect the province.

As we will see below, the end for the adventures of the Dutch privateer *Paja Larga* came with the resolution of a case of contraband against a prominent merchant and resident of Campeche, Don Alonso Matheos in 1674. One of the eventual outcomes from this intriguing case of smuggling and contraband involved the orders from the Royal Prosecutor of that case to expel all foreigners from the Province of Yucatan, including the said Dutch privateers.

One of the major factors in the vulnerability of the Province of Yucatan and its port of Campeche was the corruption and self-motivation among the Spanish authorities. During one famous case against a merchant from Campeche, Don Alonso Matheos in 1674, the witnesses accused several Spanish officers and local officials of being friends with the foreigners. This notorious case of illegal trade and dealings with foreigners also affected the *encomendero* class, as the case focused on Matheos, who was the owner of the estancia of Xicalango. One witness declared that Matheos received a very good *espingarda*, a type of firearm, as a gift from the Englishmen in the *Laguna de Términos*.<sup>162</sup>

Despite several problems with the corruption and malfeasance of local Spanish officials, as we will see it was also possible to find people legitimately interested in the protection of the province. Nevertheless, as we have seen, the major issues in colonial defense focused more on the nature of the slow communication between the Province and the governing institution of the

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<sup>161</sup> *Respuesta del señor fiscal sobre la propuesta del gobernador de Yucatán con la fragata holandesa Paja Larga*, 17 de septiembre, 1672, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006.

<sup>162</sup> *Declaración del testigo don Juan Baptista Maroto, sargento mayor y vecino de Campeche*. AGI, México 48, R.1, N.42, folio 74r.

Council of Indies in Spain, the chief body which governed all issues of defense, and the poor financial support that the townspeople of Campeche received from the Crown.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### SLEEPING WITH THE ENEMY: PIRACY, CONTRABAND TRADE AND THE WEB OF CORRUPTION OF LOCAL OFFICIALS

And the government in this port, in all things political and military, is in the hands of an *Alcalde Ordinario*, a merchant with little practice in war and very transcendent for his own comforts which can never produce a good effect.... its defense is not safe from risk and it will never be if this place is governed by untrained military men who are not revered as leading citizens, and who every year have a new leader, seeing that the governor is unable to put a subject in place that protects the port since your majesties' laws forbid them from granting a military man the prerogative as a Lieutenant of War here, and that this title always goes to the local *Alcalde* of the First Vote which ensures that this port in the political is without government and respect, and in the military without proper defense, as each one of these merchant men lives as he wants ... in nowhere is there a greater need for such pure and independent ministers in military affairs. And since this port has been ruled by men of insufficient qualities, it has been plundered twice from the enemy with great offense to the nation and with great loss of the province because the sackings were made during a time of copious wealth, and thus the dispossession was of great consideration in quality and quantity...

*Carta del gobernador de Yucatán, Don Francisco de Bazán, sobre el camino a Campeche y falta de defensa*, 20 de octubre, 1659, AGI, Audiencia de México, 360, Ramo 11, No. 94.

After the long process of conquest, which lasted from 1526 to 1540, the Yucatan peninsula became a frontier zone between the independent Mayan lords of the interior and the pirates and privateers who occupied a great extent of the coastal areas.<sup>163</sup> By the second half of the sixteenth century, the Spaniards held control mostly over the northern part of the peninsula with the main settlements of San Francisco de Campeche, Merida and Valladolid and in the southern part the *villa* of Bacalar. As both Indigenous rebellions and attacks from the interior and foreign raids along the coasts proved, the Spanish authorities did not have complete control of the area.<sup>164</sup> The town at Bacalar was hard to support as a settlement until the end of the

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<sup>163</sup> Laura Caso Berrera, "El miedo a los indios rebeldes e insumisos en Yucatán, siglos XVI y XVII," in *Una historia de los usos del miedo*, ed. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, Anne Staples and Valentina Torres Septién (Mexico D.F.: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, Universidad Iberoamericana, 2009), 78.

<sup>164</sup> For coverage of the role of the pagan Maya of the interior and threats against the settlement at Bacalar, see John F. Chuchiak, "*Cuius Regio Eius Religio*: Yucatec Maya Nativistic Movements and the Religious Roots of Rebellion in Colonial Yucatán, 1547–1697" in *Ketzalcalli*, Vol. 1, N0.1 (Fall 2004): 44–59.

seventeenth century, and it was not secured until the final conquest of the last independent Mayan kingdom of the Itza in 1697, and the opening of a major roadway to Guatemala.<sup>165</sup>

### **A General Overview of the Enemies: Amongst Indians and Pirates**

The long and difficult conquest of the Peninsula created a strong fear in the Spanish population of possible Indigenous rebellious. For the region of Campeche, numerous early battles and revolts caused a perennial fear of possible rebellions. For instance, early Spanish conquest Battle of San Bernabé is a good example. This battle focused on a failed attempt of revolt by the indigenous people on June 11, 1531 in the region of Campeche. The Spanish imaginary recorded this event, further increasing the distrust towards the indigenous population.<sup>166</sup> So much so, that the townspeople of Campeche held annual commemorative parades and events to celebrate the Spanish victory over the rebellious Maya.

Spanish misgivings about the indigenous population did not end with the conquest but remained during the entire colonial period. On occasions, prominent encomenderos and residents of Campeche led military expeditions, called *reducciones*, into the forests and hills around Campeche to reduce Maya who had fled their towns, and to stop supposed rebellions. In some cases, the Catholic Church and local Franciscan missionaries joined these expeditions, in order to reduce the indigenous threats from the interior.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> For the best coverage of the conquest of the last independent Maya kingdom see Grant D. Jones, *The Conquest of the Last Maya Kingdom*, (Stanford (Calif.): Stanford University Press, 2000).

<sup>166</sup> Liliana Ortiz Padilla, “Los primeros pasos de la conquista,” in *Enciclopedia Histórica de Campeche, Época Colonial*, coord. Isaac García Venegas (Mexico: Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, Instituto de Cultura de Campeche, 2003), 213.

<sup>167</sup> See John F. Chuchiak, “By Faith, Not Arms: Franciscan *Reducciones*, the Frontier Mission Experience, and the Subjugation of the Maya Hinterland, 1602–1697” in John F. Schwaller (editor), *St. Francis in America: The Franciscan Experience in the Americas*, (Berkeley: Academy of American Franciscan History, 2006), 119–142.

All of these local fears were reflected in the regional authorities' frequent communications with the Crown, and many wrote about their fears that Indians would support possible foreign invasions, either by serving as informants and guides or by outright joining the enemy crews as combatants.<sup>168</sup> One example of this is found in the letter from the *cabildo* of Campeche to the Council of Indies, received in 1670. In this document, the Spanish authorities noted that between 1677 and 1679, more than 16,000 *indios* had revolted against the Spanish government in the region of Sahcabchen and fled to the *montes* bordering the district of Campeche.<sup>169</sup>

### **Looking for Shelters: A Description of the Main Places of Safety**

The constant piratical presence in the Gulf of Mexico, which impeded the development of trade and the Spanish economy, also forced the Spanish authorities, as we have seen, to seek effective means of protection against the enemies of the sea. These measures were both material and defensive practices. The first defensive structures and buildings that were used to protect themselves in the sixteenth century actually were the earliest churches in the region. One example of this is the heavily built construction and convent of the brothers of the Order of San Francis of Assisi in the eastern part of the town of San Francisco de Campeche. The Franciscans arrived in Campeche shortly after 1545 and by the year 1546 they had completed their major convent which actually served as the most secure and fortified place for the local population during the attack of William Parker in 1597. The temples and convents, thanks to their hardiness

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<sup>168</sup> Laura Caso Berrera, "El miedo a los indios rebeldes e insumisos en Yucatán, siglos XVI y XVII," in *Una historia de los usos del miedo*, ed. Pilar Gonzalbo Aizpuru, Anne Staples and Valentina Torres Septién (Mexico D.F.: El Colegio de México, Centro de Estudios Históricos, Universidad Iberoamericana, 2009), 77-78

<sup>169</sup> *Carta de la Villa y Puerto de Campeche a su Majestad, dando cuenta de la situación del puerto y lo que conviene hacer para protegerlo, en fecha 18 de julio de 1670*. AGI, Mexico, 1006, folios 591r-596v.

and solid construction, often served as places of refuge and physical protection which were able to withstand the siege of the enemies, and at the same time, they served as a house of God for spiritual protection, and their presence in times of peace and possible attack transmitted to the general population a feeling of divine help in a moment of misfortune.

The first line of defense and protection actually existed all along the northern part of the peninsula where later fortified trenches and redoubts reinforced by thick stone walls were added. The main purpose of these constructions was the prevention of any possible landing that might threaten the capital of the province, the city of Merida.<sup>170</sup>

Throughout the early seventeenth century, local Spanish authorities added other defensive constructions, like trenches, to the systems of lookouts to protect the roads that connected them with the population centers (See fig. 10). These buildings and defensive networks helped to defend the accesses to Merida and Campeche against any possible piratical disembarkation and possible land attack. They also constructed low and elongated buildings from which they shot light artillery in order to repel the enemy. Originally, moats and parapets existed; however, due to the geography of the Yucatan soil, these defensive works were superficial given the difficulty of excavating the solid karst limestone shelf of the peninsula.<sup>171</sup>

Even with all the infrastructure for protection that they built, pirates and privateers managed to successfully invade the peninsula and land troops and even take cities and towns on numerous occasions. Once the pirates actually gained entrance into the port town of Campeche, the inhabitants looked for protection inside the town itself. They also used the many town

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<sup>170</sup> Jorge Victoria Ojeda, "Piratas en tierra adentro. Estrategia defensiva de una ciudad novohispana. Siglos XVI al XVIII," *Millars: espai i història*, Vol. 26 (2003): 47-62.

<sup>171</sup> Jorge Victoria Ojeda, "Arquitectura militar en la región de Jaina, Campeche, México. Falsedades en la historia defensiva colonial," *Anuario de Estudios Americanos* Tomo LVI, No. 1 (1999): 266.



churches for this type of protection, including the churches and convents of San Juan de Dios and San Francisco de Asís (See fig. 11). If the pirates successfully took the settlement, the next measure of protection was to retreat to the surrounding hills around the town.

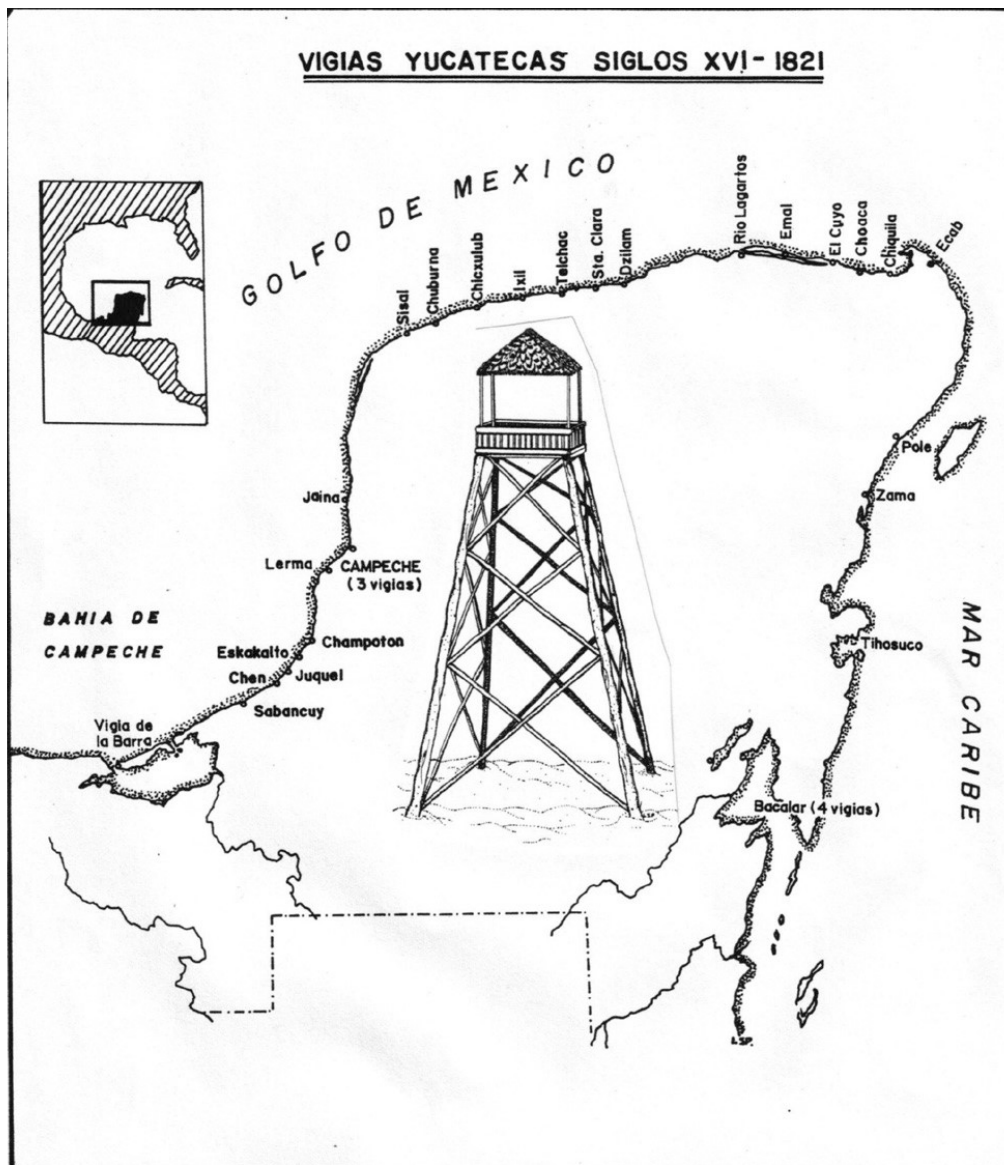


Figure 10. Watchtowers in Yucatan from the 16th Century to 1821. Source: Jorge Victoria Ojeda.



Figure 11. Church of San Juan de Dios with the Hospital on the Right. Collection: José Manuel Alcocer Bernés.

Nevertheless, if the enemy came from within the town itself, in the form of foreigners or local people who aided them, there was little warning and much danger. As we will see, not all of the officials and prominent residents of the town feared and hated foreigners. Some prominent merchants, ranchers, and even local Spanish municipal officials traded with and supported foreign enemies, against all laws and legal limits imposed by the Spanish Crown.

### **Sleeping with the Enemy: Smuggling and Contraband in Campeche**

On the night of February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1674, the *alcalde* of Campeche, Juan González de Ulloa, ordered two prisoners to be moved from the jail in Campeche to the Royal Prison in the city of Merida. These prisoners, Alonso Matheos and Pedro Garcia, both *vecinos* (neighbors) of Campeche had been arrested for suspected illicit trade with the enemy. González de Ulloa

ordered Joseph Gonzalez de Araujo, a soldier from Campeche in charge of the prisoners, and seven other soldiers accompanied him from the *presidio* in order to transfer the prisoners to the provincial prison of the governor in Merida.<sup>172</sup>

These prisoners and their transportation was very important for the Spanish authorities and the *alcalde* took several precautions in this operation, including ordering that the prisoners must be placed in stocks every time that they stopped during their travels. The *alcalde* also included the order that every Spanish person living in and around the road to Merida must aid the Spanish soldiers in anything they may need: “And likewise I order all the Spaniards who attend live in the towns of the Camino Real all the way to the City of Merida, to give aide and help if that the said Joseph Gonzalez de Araujo should ask for it, under a penalty of a fine of fifty pesos for which I condemn them in advance.”<sup>173</sup>

When the prisoners arrived at the Royal Prison of Merida, on February 21<sup>st</sup>, the governor of Yucatan, don Miguel Francisco Codornio de Sola, started the interrogations in order to investigate the charges against these two prisoners.<sup>174</sup> The Viceroy of the New Spain, Fray Payo Enriquez de Rivera, accused these prisoners of contraband and smuggling as well as the crime of helping English pirates to attack Spanish vessels in the Campeche area.<sup>175</sup> Alonso Matheos, the first one the governor interrogated, declared that, after having fallen under suspicion for some

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<sup>172</sup> *Carta del alcalde de Campeche, Juan González de Ulloa, sobre los prisioneros Alonso Matheos y Pedro García, en Campeche a 17 de febrero de 1674.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 1r-2r.

<sup>173</sup> *Auto para que se pongan los prisioneros en el calabozo de la cárcel de Mérida, en Mérida a 21 de febrero de 1674.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 2r-2v.

<sup>174</sup> *Auto del gobernador de Yucatán para que se inicien las investigaciones contra Alonso Matheos, por orden del señor Virrey de la Nueva España, en Mérida a 8 de marzo de 1674.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 3v-4v.

<sup>175</sup> *Mandamiento del señor Virrey de la Nueva España para que la justicia del lugar donde reside Alonso Matheos haga las averiguaciones en su contra, en Veracruz a 10 de marzo de 1674.* AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 3r-3v.

time, he surrendered himself to the Spanish authorities at the prison in the town of Campeche, under the advice of his father, Alonso Matheos *el Viejo*, but that he ignored and refuted the charges against him.<sup>176</sup>

The story of Alonso Matheos is a good example of the black market and illicit trade that existed between the inhabitants of the Spanish colonies and the foreign privateers and pirates. Matheos was the owner of the cattle ranch, or *estancia de Ganado mayor* of Xicalango, located near the border region of the *Laguna de Términos*, an area frequently infested by English and Dutch pirates and logwood cutters (See fig. 12). The Spanish authorities doubted Matheos's loyalty for some time, and the trial against him lasted from late 1672 until 1678.

The first time that the Spanish authorities mentioned any activities of Alonso Matheos occurred in a legal document, or *auto*<sup>177</sup> from the *alcalde* of Campeche at that time, Melchor de la Rosa, dated May 27, 1672.<sup>178</sup> In this document, De la Rosa informed the Spanish authorities that Matheos had come back to Campeche from Xicalango, and that he brought news about the English people residing and logging in the *Laguna de Términos* region, reporting on the vessels that were there. At this time, however, Matheos did not raise any major suspicious concerns.<sup>179</sup>

This document belongs to a file concerning the defense of the port city of Veracruz and the fortification of San Juan de Ulúa and it includes an overview of the pirate and logging activities of foreigners that occurred around the *Laguna de Términos*. Andres Velarde, a witness

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<sup>176</sup> *Declaración de Alonso Matheos sobre ser sospechoso de comercio ilícito con el enemigo, en Campeche a 28 de marzo de 1674*. AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 4v-9v.

<sup>177</sup> An *auto* was a decree and determination of a judge given and legally pronounced on the civil or criminal case. *Diccionario de Autoridades*. Tomo I (1726).

<sup>178</sup> *Auto del alcalde de Campeche, Melchor de la Rosa, sobre la noticia del regreso de Alonso Matheos con las nuevas de la Laguna de Términos*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.39, folio 5r.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.*

in this file, declared that most of the logwood cutters on the island of Tris were English, and they did not allow the people of any other nationality to sell their goods.

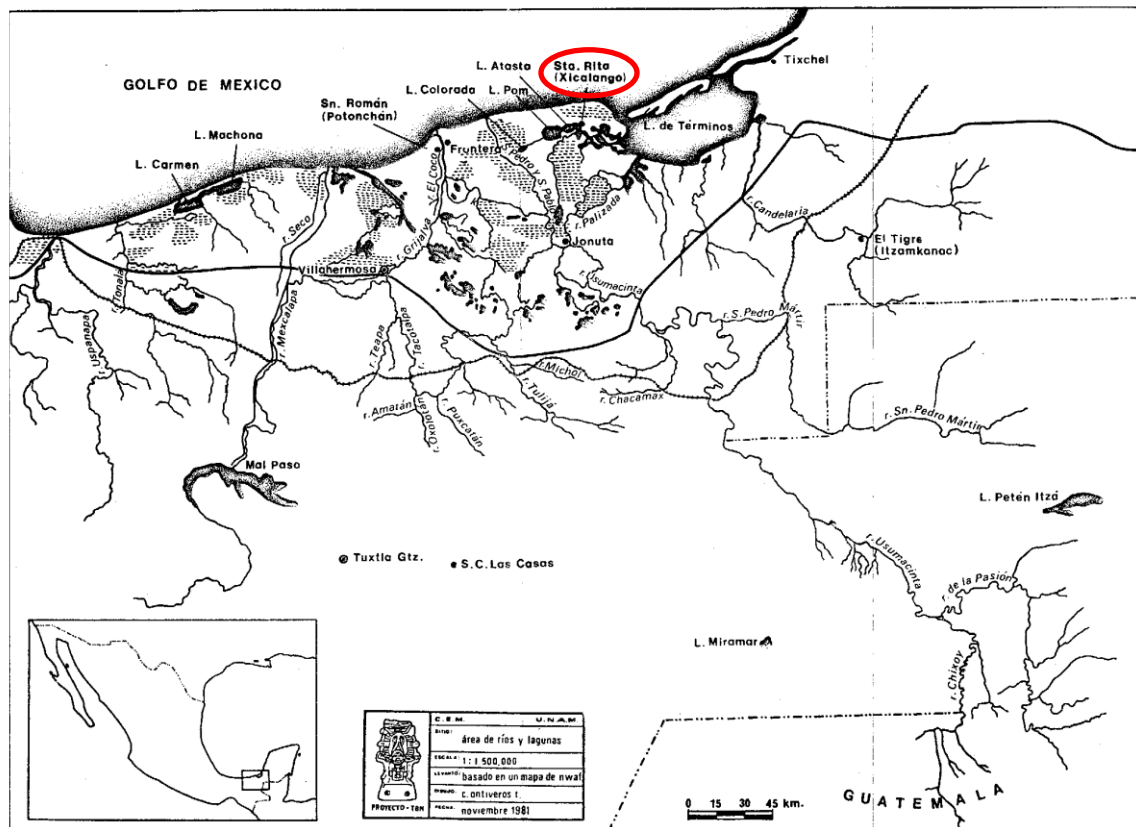


Figure 12. Map of the Area of the *Laguna de Términos* with the Location of Xicalango, Called Santa Rita Nowadays. Source: Lorenzo Ochoa, Ernesto Vargas. *Xicalango, Puerto chontal de intercambio: mito y realidad*.

This set of documentation also included mention of a prohibition of any trade with the Dutch and French, limiting their commerce only to trade and the buying of their logwood by Englishmen.<sup>180</sup> The Viceroy of the New Spain, however, had doubts about Matheos loyalty as soon as he read the files, especially because of the closeness of his ranch of *estancia* of

<sup>180</sup> *Declaración de Andrés Velarde en el expediente sobre las noticias de enemigos en Veracruz y la Laguna de Términos, en Campeche a 19 de mayo de 1672*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.39, folio 3v.

Xicalango to the English settlements. The Viceroy ordered a secret investigation of Matheos to see if “he is a double agent and a spy who gave information about vessels entering and leaving the port to the enemies, in addition to helping the invasions of towns neighboring his *estancia*.”<sup>181</sup> Perhaps not coincidentally, Alonso Matheos disappeared from Campeche and its records for about two years, until 1674, the year he decided to present himself to the Spanish authorities.

Alonso Matheos declared to the governor at that time what had happened to him during his fifth voyage to his *estancia* in the *Laguna de Términos*. According to his own declaration, when Matheos tried to return to Campeche, a pirate vessel commanded by an English captain named Sharpe had captured him. This captain gave Matheos letters and products to deliver to some people in Campeche, which he apparently agreed to do.

In his testimony, Matheos named more people from the port of Campeche involved in the black market with the English settlers. Four of the other suspects included the brothers Bartolomé and Gaspar Potes de Lima, Melchor de la Rosa and Juan Vejarano. It is important to mention that De la Rosa and Vejarano were both local Spanish municipal officials at that time. In fact, the second declarant, Andrés Velarde, claimed to have heard Juan de Quintana, Alonso Matheos’ uncle, saying that “if his nephew suffered, many would suffer because many people from the village bought Negroes and clothes from a [foreign] ship that was in the port of Campeche.”<sup>182</sup> The investigation against Matheos revealed more connections with events in Campeche in 1672. That year, two English ships coming from Jamaica appeared in Campeche.

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<sup>181</sup> *Mandamiento del señor Virrey de la Nueva España para que la justicia del lugar donde reside Alonso Matheos haga las averiguaciones en su contra*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42. folio 3r.

<sup>182</sup> *Declaración de Andrés Velarde en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en Mérida a 10 de abril de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folio 18r.

These boats carried two English ambassadors, Robert Ebert and Richard Cook, with the excuse of bringing letters from the governor of Jamaica, Sir Thomas Lynch, to the governor of Yucatan.<sup>183</sup> These letters claimed ownership of the silver that the Spanish privateers had seized from an English ship. These letters included specific orders to rescue and take back any English prisoner who wanted to return to Jamaica, ordering the men to:<sup>184</sup>

Pick up the people of his nation in accordance with the signed passes agreed to among their monarchs, besides recovering some wrought silver that had been deposited in the Royal Coffers of the colony which the Spanish apparently argued was stolen from Panama and confiscated when a boat from Campeche intercepted the ship carrying the silver around the *Laguna de Términos*.<sup>185</sup>

The residents of Campeche, surprised when these ships arrived, found it odd that the local mayor, Melchor de la Rosa, welcomed them and gave them lodging inside the town, and the foreigners stayed there for about twenty days. During this time, the English began to trade with the local people. Several residents later testified that:

Having arrived at the port of Campeche an English ship, they waded ashore and two men came with the pretext of being ambassadors of the governor of Jamaica... whom Don Melchor de la Rosa entertained much, and they were staying in a house where the vicar and lieutenant José Trillo lived, and this is evident and can be confirmed by a large number of witnesses.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>183</sup> In the collection of documentation known as the English Colonial State Papers, the initial instructions of the Jamaican governor Lynch explain in greater detail these events. See *Letter of Sir Thomas Lynch to the Council for Trade and Plantations*, CO 1/28, Nos. 27, 27 I, Jamaica, Mar 10, 1672.

<sup>184</sup> *Declaración del testigo Don Francisco de Solís en el expediente contra Alonso Matheos, en Campeche a 4 de mayo de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México 48, R.1, N. 42, folio 36r.

<sup>185</sup> *Consulta del gobernador de Yucatán al Virrey de la Nueva España en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en Campeche a 28 de junio de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folio 301r.

<sup>186</sup> *Pedimiento del señor fiscal en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en México a 6 de diciembre de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42. folios 305r, 306r

While in Campeche, the Englishmen publicly sold many of their products, and apparently, they walked through the streets talking with the townsfolk with the help of a Jew as a translator whom they had brought with them. The Englishmen even went from house to house, all with the consent of the local town mayor who, according to witnesses, allowed them to bribe him for the privilege of doing this both in money and with foreign products. Among the products mentioned in these testimonies, they gave him as bribes valuable materials, including silk, corals, knives, fabrics, mirrors, as well as many *piezas de ocho*<sup>187</sup> and several African slaves. They also brought logwood, butter and fish that they similarly used to barter with the residents of the Port. There are some similarities between the list and inventories of the products later seized in the houses of the suspected smugglers and the things that were reportedly sold by the Englishmen in the streets of Campeche in 1672.

Several witness statements indicated that when the Englishmen carried their profits away in silver *reales* and other objects of engraved silver, a battalion of soldiers from the crew of the Spanish commissioned Dutch privateer *Paja Larga* intercepted them and seized their money. The reaction of Melchor de la Rosa to the Dutch actions was to banish these Spanish commissioned Dutch privateering soldiers from the town and port and to return the captured goods with an apology to Captain Cook.<sup>188</sup> Apparently, those primarily involved in this trade in Campeche were the brothers Bartolomé and Gaspar Potes. The witnesses accused Bartolomé of trading over four thousand pesos in different goods, accusing him of personally going to the

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<sup>187</sup> The *piezas de a ocho* are the Spanish silver dollar in English, a silver coin worth eight *reales*.

<sup>188</sup> *Testimonio de don Francisco de Solís Osorio, vecino de Campeche, en 4 de mayo de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, R.1, N.42, folios 38r-38v; also see *Testimonio de Bernardo de la Rosa, vecino de Campeche, sobre el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en Campeche a 9 de mayo de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, R.1, N.42, folio 69r.



beach to look for the people from the English vessel, a mile and a half from the port, in order to get them and their goods home and from there to market their products as a middleman.<sup>189</sup>

His brother Gaspar, according to the witness statements, often went on official business to the *Laguna de Términos* region in order to bring letters from the governor of Yucatán to the English and Dutch captains who were there cutting logwood.<sup>190</sup> The letters asked them to return a boat that they had taken from Campeche and to leave the lagoon without hostilities. Nevertheless, according to the signed affidavits, while on these official expeditions Gaspar Potes also devoted himself to illicitly trading with the foreigners, bringing back a boat and a ship full of goods as well as a black woman and a young English boy.<sup>191</sup>

The Spanish authorities issued arrest warrant orders against De la Rosa, Vejarano and the Potes brothers, including the order to confiscate all of their properties. The inventories of the confiscated goods are a useful snapshot in time of the profits to be made by local Spanish officials and merchants in this illicit trade. I analyzed these inventories to extract specific information about both the smuggling and the society and their desires and claims for these prohibited products. I did this historical analysis cautiously, since there is no way to be sure of whether the property ultimately inventoried was either personal property and or smuggled goods.

These inventories included detailed lists of everything that appeared as noted or as used or brought, including common objects in small quantities which I considered normal for personal use. Another aspect to consider in analyzing these lists of confiscated goods is the fact that between the introduction of the suspected illicit products under investigation and the actual

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<sup>189</sup> *Pedimiento del señor fiscal en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en México a 6 de diciembre de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folio 309v.

<sup>190</sup> *Consulta del gobernador de Yucatán al Virrey de la Nueva España en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en Campeche a 28 de junio de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folio 301v-302r.

<sup>191</sup> *Ibid*, 302v-303r.

seizure of the property, two years had passed, at which time the suspects may have sold the greater part the goods. Given this we can assume mostly two things with some certainty: the first is that some materials that had been traded earlier that year were among the confiscated property; and secondly, as the amount of products is considerable, it is possible to assume that during those two years, the traffic of the goods most likely remained less visible.

I noticed in examining these two lists of confiscated contraband goods that large numbers of textile goods were seized, among which there are fabrics, costumes and clothing accessories of foreign provenience. This is evidence that a real demand for these products existed in the region. The inability of the local colonists to successfully obtain titles of nobility and the lack of resources to build large mansions or estates in the region, often left for the inhabitants of Campeche only distinct variations in clothing and dress as one of the means to distinguish the local elite for the lower members of the social hierarchy. By acquiring these rare foreign cloths and textiles, the local merchant elite could fill the need for prestige they had in a society dominated by the sumptuary customs of the Old Regime.

Included among the statements and documentation about the forfeiture made against Alonso Matheos, the authorities mentioned the confiscation of his cattle ranch, or *estancia de ganado mayor* in Xicalango, also known by the English as “Beef Island.” Following this piece of evidence, I found a corroborating piece of documentation that attests to the probable involvement of Alonso Matheos in this illicit trade with the English. This evidence comes from the testimonies made by the Englishman and Buccaneer William Dampier, who lived illicitly around the Campeche Bay precisely in the years when the judicial proceedings against Matheos occurred between 1674 and 1675. The English Privateer and Buccaneer William Dampier, in his work *Two Travels to Campeche*, stated that when he visited two Englishmen in the region of

*Laguna de Terminos*, these Englishmen had a Spanish ally whom they called *John D' Acosta* (Juan de Acosta). They had an agreement with him to exchange meat and food for European goods.<sup>192</sup> Interestingly, someone named Juan de Acosta does not appear in any Spanish documentation of the period. Nevertheless, there are many coincidences related by William Dampier that lead us directly to assume that in fact this Juan de Acosta was none other than Alonso Matheos, perhaps known to the English under a pseudonym. For instance, the English called the place where they traded with the said Spaniard, "Beef Island," and this was the same name that people used to call in Spanish Alonso Matheos' cattle *estancia* near Xicalango (*Isla de la Carne*).

More evidence exists for this association in that Dampier said in his book that this potential fruitful partnership could not continue since the Spaniard in question was denounced, arrested, and taken to Campeche. Dampier noted:

But some of his servants acquainted the Townsmen of it upon his return to Campeachy. And they are jealous of the English, and envying him, complained to the Governour; who presently cast him into prison, where he remained many years: This happened about the Year 71 or 72.<sup>193</sup>

It is possible that since Dampier visited the area two years after the visit of Alonso and wrote his book in 1699, twenty-five years after his visit, that he might have confused the name of the man mentioned, or perhaps Matheos might have used this assumed name in his dealings with the English.

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<sup>192</sup> William Dampier, *Two voyages to Campeche*, (London: James Knapton, St. Paul Church, 1699), 96-97.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid, 96.

Carrying out of this trial against “prominent” members of society in Campeche was not easy for the authorities and even the governor himself informed the Viceroy that he could not easily find witnesses who would speak up. They were frightened because the accused were among the most powerful people in the port. The Governor wrote:

Because of this Your Excellency, it was not possible to put an end to them since so many of the residents were frightened, and few would speak out about the case against these men such as Melchor de la Rosa, Juan Mayor and Bartolomé and Gaspar Potes and others who are the leaders of this Town.<sup>194</sup>

Due to the complexities of processing this case in the local courts, the Viceroy decided to transfer these prisoners to the city of Veracruz, and from there take them to the Royal Prison in Mexico City.<sup>195</sup> This precautionary measure was in part intended to reduce the power that the suspects held over other members of society in Campeche. The governor himself also claimed to not be able to find legal representatives or even official notaries who could deal with the matter, as the Royal Scribes and notaries were involved in one way or another, and as he stated they “were faithful friends”<sup>196</sup> of the accused. Similarly, prominent figures such as the royal official Juan Antonio de Cosgaya, hindered the prosecution and the open arrest of the suspects saying publicly that since they were “powerful and very noble people,”<sup>197</sup> such a trial would cause great

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<sup>194</sup> *Consulta del gobernador de Yucatán al virrey sobre el caso de contrabando de los vecinos de Campeche, en fecha de 28 de junio de 1674.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42. F. 303v.

<sup>195</sup> *Carta del Virrey de la Nueva España a su Majestad, en fecha de 29 de junio de 1675.* AGI Audiencia de México, 49, N.4, folios 1r-1v.

<sup>196</sup> *Consulta del gobernador de Yucatán al virrey sobre el caso de contrabando de los vecinos de Campeche, en fecha de 28 de junio de 1674.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 303v.

<sup>197</sup> *Pedimiento del señor fiscal en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en México a 6 de diciembre de 1674.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 306v. – 307r.

scandal. Finally, the authorities decided to arrest them secretly and to confiscate their properties so that the case could continue.

The same thing happened in the case of another suspect that was a cleric. His name was kept secret throughout the whole process, and the prosecutor requested that he be moved to the secular prison and be processed without the right to ecclesiastical immunity. Because of the gravity and seriousness of the crime of high treason, they also requested that his name must be revealed and put an end to him remaining anonymous.

One must be careful when analyzing this evidence and the witness testimony that claimed that the accused were the most powerful people in the town, as this evidence could be refuted. The explanation was not that they were the most powerful people, but rather people whose continued influences became prejudicial to the interests of the new Spanish governor. The reason for this may be that many of the new governor's own officials were those who were also mentioned as suspects in the testimony. Many of these were accused of making false visitations of ships and they were never charged in this case and most were not even called forward to testify. This was the case of the major official of the Royal Treasury, Don Juan de Barreda Azcarate, and the *Guarda mayor* (Chief Constable) of the port, Don Felipe de la Barreda Villegas. Even an African slave nicknamed, "Three Chickens" (*Tres Pollos*) stated that he loaded cargo of cacao onto a frigate called *La Pescadora* (The Fisherman), and that "if his shoulders could speak, they would tell a lot," since he was dedicated to load and unload cargo mostly at night, even from the English vessels.<sup>198</sup>

*La Pescadora*, it should be noted, was the frigate used years before by Felipe de la Barreda to officially carry the stones used in the fortifications of San Juan de Ulua from the

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<sup>198</sup> Ibid, 308v.

quarries in the region of Campeche.<sup>199</sup> It was also used by him for the first expulsion of the pirates from the Island of Tris in the region of the *Laguna de Términos*.<sup>200</sup> Despite all of this evidence, both of these suspected characters were not only not called to testify, but they managed to keep their positions and remained active in the political life of the region long afterward, especially Captain Felipe de la Barreda, who came to serve as the Town Mayor in the decade of the 1680s, and whom later the Crown called upon to gain his advice on the defense of Campeche and the region in the year 1704.<sup>201</sup>

The documents that led to the conclusion of the case are in another file that gives testimony to the death of the officer in charge of the legal process, the Chief Criminal Prosecutor (*Alcalde de Crimen*) from the Audiencia de Mexico, Don Gaspar Martinez Trillanes, in the year 1677.<sup>202</sup> This document reports that before his death, Don Gaspar had concluded the case concerning the illicit trade and had pronounced sentence against the defendants Melchor de la Rosa, Bartolomé and Gaspar Potes, Juan Mayor and Lorenzo Benítez Guerrero, all of whom had been imprisoned in Veracruz.

The governor of Yucatan concluded from these cases that the most essential thing that could be done to eliminate this illicit trade would be the complete expulsion of all foreigners in the province.<sup>203</sup> The *fiscal* (prosecutor) of the Indies shared the same idea and decreed the

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<sup>199</sup> *Relación de servicios de don Felipe de Barreda Villegas, en Madrid a 8 de enero de 1682*. AGI, Indiferente, 129, N. 83, folio 1r.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>201</sup> David Marley, *Pirates of the Americas* (California: ABC-Clío, 2010), 38-39.

<sup>202</sup> *Carta del Virrey de la Nueva España a Su Majestad que da cuenta de la causa del comercio ilícito en la provincia de Campeche, en México a 22 de febrero de 1678*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 50, R.1, N.27, folios 1r-1v.

<sup>203</sup> *Instrucciones del Virrey de la Nueva España al gobernador de Yucatán, en México a 15 de diciembre de 1674*. AGI, Audiencia de México, 50, R.1, N.42, folios 322v-323r.

expulsion of all foreigners "at least until the fourth generation," and he attributed that the reason and need for this was that the enemy could frequent these shores and receive notices of what happened in these lands from foreigners settled there. He argued that this was the problem of the case studied here, declaring that the prosecutor "be ordered to sink to the bottom a ship of the enemy in sight of port for more than ten months which was eating up fresh bread, and if these traitors were not here, they would be unable to make their damn boats and conduct all of the hostilities that they do on all these shores."<sup>204</sup> He also stated that these pirates received many reports from the Potes brothers, because they corresponded with foreigners who had reached the port, as was testified to in the court documents. He added that these pirates even began to build in the yards of the town "a large vessel with no more than their artful tricks," which he stated was commissioned by the Potes brothers and which had been embargoed in the legal process.

In the end, the case of Alonso Matheos allowed for the uncovering of a large covert network of smuggling and illicit trade that involved moving regional products such as salt, meat, cacao and logwood in exchange for textiles and other finished European products which ranged from Campeche, Veracruz, Jamaica and Spain. Following these events, the Viceroy of New Spain gave the instruction that all the 34 foreigners who resided in the town of Campeche be expelled immediately. As we have seen, these foreign people mostly belonged to the crew of the boat *Paja Larga*; a privateering ship that had been contracted as official Spanish corsairs by the previous governor of Yucatan for local coastal protection. Nevertheless, the order also saw to the expulsion of several other foreign residents who had resided for longer periods of time. It is interesting to note in the final analysis that the expulsion of these foreigners may have done more

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<sup>204</sup> *Decreto del Fiscal del Consejo de las Indias en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 50, R.1, N.27.

harm than good. It is likely that these expelled foreigners did not hesitate in joining in future attacks as informants considering their knowledge of the area and their ill will toward their previous neighbors. Eyewitnesses stated in their testimonies that they recognized among the assailants in the 1678 attack those that had been expelled by force from Campeche.<sup>205</sup>

In the end, this case of Alonso Matheos reveals the involvement of local authorities in illicit trade since the local *Alcaldes* did not account for the entire movement of ships which are in port, and that they often had trading links with foreigners. It was common for foreign vessels to approach the port without knowing whether they were allies, smugglers, or pirate enemies. These illicit ties with foreign traders on the part of the local merchant linked Spanish municipal figures quickly made useless the entire system of early warnings of approaching ships for the defense of the port that often came too late to avoid catastrophe.

We know that a vast majority of pirates and privateers did not have large armed parties when they made their attacks, so they knew that these forays and raids had to be brief and concise. To accomplish this, they needed accurate reports and support from the members of the town in order to attack the port successfully. Many of those who helped the pirates were foreigners whose only link with the King of Spain was the payment given to them to serve as Spanish Corsairs. Thus, when the Crown ordered the disappearance of this type of salary and commissioning of foreigners, all of these unemployed foreigners as ex-Spanish Corsairs with experience of the land and port became potential informants for their new employers, the English raiders and pirates. This is most likely what happened in the aforementioned case of the expulsion of the foreigners from Campeche in 1678.

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<sup>205</sup> *Declaración del capitán Diego García de la Gala, en los testimonios de la invasión que el enemigo hizo al puerto de Campeche, en Campeche a 23 de julio de 1678.* AGI, Audiencia de México, 362, R.2, N.10, folios 24r-24v.



In conclusion, we can see that smuggling became a present reality in the daily life of the port of Campeche, and that this illicit trade involved people from all social, economic, and ethnic backgrounds, including among their illicit number Africans, Indians, Spaniards, Englishmen, Dutchmen and even Jews; and that this type of illicit commerce could be tolerated while the influences of those involved permitted. However, any attempt at removing these commercial and economic ties, as might occur with the arrival of a new governor or any newly arrived Royal authority, could break the fragile chain of allies and illicit trading partners which more often than not could lead to armed conflict or open attacks on the port by would-be former foreign trading partners. Nevertheless the most important thing learned from the case against Alonso Matheos and his accomplices and fellow smugglers, was that Campeche existed in a state of constant risk, because literally, the very mercantile elite in charge of colonial government and defense were "sleeping with the enemy".

## CONCLUSIONS

### A DIFFERENT TOWN: THE SCARS AND TRANSFORMATIONS LEFT BY PIRACY IN CAMPECHE

All of these threats would cease with the construction of the said fortifications, and even though pirate enemies might come without any warnings of their intentions, the people and neighbors of the port of Campeche would be encouraged to defend their homes, animated by the protections of the fortifications, because otherwise as soon as the warning bells toll, the people flee into the hills with their families and all their belongings...

*Carta del gobernador de Yucatán, Don Miguel Francisco Cordonio de Sola sobre la falta de armas y prevenciones en la provincia de Yucatán*, 11 de mayo, 1672, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1008 folio 30r-31v.

Piracy ended shaping life in the Yucatan Peninsula, especially in the port of San Francisco de Campeche. The cases of Felipe de Barreda Villegas and Juan Gutierrez de Cosgaya are examples of how the people from Campeche created strong networks that could even help them avoid or be exonerated in the authorities' investigations. Barreda Villegas and Gutierrez de Cosgaya were Spanish officials, but as in the case of Alonso Matheos, some witnesses mentioned them during the interrogations, accusing them of being involved in the contraband networks that operated in Campeche.<sup>206</sup> Even with their investigation by the Spanish authorities, these men still managed to avoid prosecution and remain among the elite groups of power within the town, even reaching the new positions of prestige in the town during the following years.

The question, however, is how prominent men such as these officials became able to avoid prosecution and continue to serve in positions of prominence and social respect. The

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<sup>206</sup> For a detailed look at the role of this case against Alonso Matheos and its connection to illicit networks of smuggling in Campeche see Víctor Alfonso Medina Lugo, "Pirates and Smugglers in the Port of Campeche: The 1674-1677 Case against Alonso Mateos and its Historical Implications for Unraveling the Hidden Networks of Contraband Trade." Paper Presented at the at the Rocky Mountain Council for Latin American Studies, 64th Annual Conference, April 5-8, 2017, Salt Lake City, Utah.

answer to this question lies in the new social routines created in the later seventeenth century in Campeche.

### **New Social Routines**

Felipe de Barreda Villegas arrived in Campeche in the decade of 1650. He came as part of the entourage of the new governor of the Province of Yucatan, Don García de Valdés y Osorio. Barreda had good references in Spain and this helped him to achieve a good social position of prominence in Yucatan shortly after his arrival. As soon as he arrived, the governor appointed Barreda as supervisor of the construction of the defenses in the port of Campeche.

The case of Barreda is a prime example of how family connections and networks helped people to move in Campeche between and among the local groups of power. The great uncle of Barreda was Pedro de la Barreda, a member of the *Consejo de Indias*, and this relationship helped Felipe almost immediately to become part of the elite in the province of Yucatán.<sup>207</sup> Having access to the merchantile and encomendero elite, Felipe was able to marry Ana de la Oliva y Vergara, the daughter of Captain Pedro de la Oliva, who descended from a family of *benemeritos* in Yucatán. Nevertheless, Barreda also maintained his good social and economic networks and continued to ascend in the society of colonial Yucatán thanks to his own merits in the militia and colonial defense.

During the pirate attack in 1663, Barreda served as an infantry captain, and oversaw one of the infantry squads of Spaniards in Campeche.<sup>208</sup> Based on this and other military merits, in

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<sup>207</sup> See *Relación de servicios de don Felipe de Barreda Villegas*, en Madrid a 8 de enero de 1682. AGI, Indiferente, 129, N. 83, folios 4.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid

1673, the governor of Yucatán, Miguel Codornio de Sola, appointed Barreda as the captain of the ship *Nuestra Señora del Carmen*, aka *La Pescadora*. His mission was to transport stone slabs from the quarries in Campeche to Veracruz, for the construction of the defenses in that port. It was no doubt during this time when Barreda probably became involved in the contraband trade with foreigners. According to the testimony of Domingo Silvestre, aka *Tres Pollos*, he loaded illegal goods onto Barreda's ship *La Pescadora*, in 1672.<sup>209</sup> However, the accusation was discarded by the authorities, since another witness declared that it was only cacao beans that had been taken aboard the ship. The prosecutor of the case even called *Tres Pollos* "a vile person, with no good intentions and a liar by nature."<sup>210</sup>

The authorities never did call De la Barreda to declare or testify anything in these cases, even though at that time he was the main guard of the port of Campeche, and he knew, and allowed, the arrival of the English ship in 1672. No doubt Barreda's connections to both the mercantile and encomendero elite of Campeche shielded him from further scrutiny.

In the case of Juan Gutierrez de Cosgaya, the local authorities received the testimony from a single witness that he took part in the trade of the goods that the foreigners brought in 1672. However, in the words of the governor: "*la voz de uno no es de ninguno*" (the voice of one is no one). The authorities quickly discarded the accusation against Gutierrez since only one person declared against him. Nevertheless, both piracy and illicit smuggling increased throughout the seventeenth century in Campeche, changing forever the culture of the town and the inter-relationships of its people.

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<sup>209</sup> *Testimonio de Domingo Silvestre, por otro nombre, Tres Pollos*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N. 42, folio 98r-98v.

<sup>210</sup> *Parecer del licenciado Diego Carrillo sobre el estado de la causa contra los culpados de contrabando para que se proceda a tomar sus confesiones*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N.42, folio 132v.

## New Fortification System

The other effect that piracy produced in Campeche was the development of new defensive architecture and the re-design of the port and its activities as they became incorporated into a new system of defenses.<sup>211</sup> Each assault and seizure of the *villa* brought about new discussions about what was the best way to protect the port. Some plans merely replicated previous defensive designs, while others evolved from completely innovative ideas connected to the development of advanced fortification techniques coming from Europe. The residents and colonists in Campeche, however, struggled to finance these defensive projects as the authorities, *encomenderos* and merchants continued to divide into factions and disagreed on the plans.

In the attacks of 1672 and 1678, the ultimate failure of the defenses that the local authorities constantly informed of to the crown were completely useless against the enemy. The governor, Don Antonio de Layseca y Alvarado, decided to travel from Mérida to the port of Campeche to inspect, firsthand, the damages and take the measures deemed necessary to increase the protection of the population. The governor proposed the repair of the castle of San Benito and the raising of two new towers as a bastion. He ordered the demolition of houses near these fortifications in order to increase the effectiveness of these bastion's defense.<sup>212</sup>

Another measure Layseca adopted was the presentation to the Crown of a new plan of fortification that included the total walling and encirclement of the town with high defensive walls and bastions. A military engineer, Martín de la Torre, advised him on the best proposed design of the fortified wall. De la Torre's report, entitled "Speech on the plan for the fortification

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<sup>211</sup> For a thorough overview of the system of fortifications built in the port of San Francisco de Campeche see Víctor Alfonso Medina Lugo, "Los sistemas defensivos de San Francisco de Campeche," in José Manuel Alcocer Bernés, Luis Ángel Ramos Justo y Víctor Alfonso Medina Lugo, *San Francisco de Campeche, entre baluartes, piratas y leyendas*, (México, Gobierno del Estado de Campeche, 2013), 94-136.

<sup>212</sup> Jose Antonio Calderon Quijano, *Las murallas de Campeche* (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado, 1968), 28-29; also see *Carta del gobernador de Yucatán al Rey*, en Mérida a 8 de agosto de 1678. AGI, Audiencia de México, 1010.

needed by the city of Campeche in the province of Yucatan in the year of 1680", called for the urgent need of the construction of this defensive wall and its fortified network of bastions. De la Torre proposed a total circumvallation, inspired by places like the port cities of Havana and Santo Domingo. The military architect reported that the fortifications of the *villa* were ineffective as they existed, and; therefore; their demolition was necessary. The demolished materials, he argued, could also serve as materials for the new building campaign. His proposal included cutting out blocks around the squares throughout the town, that is, demolishing many of the houses of the townspeople. This, he proposed would serve as a necessary sacrifice in the service of the King.<sup>213</sup>

The death of engineer De La Torre in 1683 ultimately delayed the works of fortification. Thus, as late as 1684 only the first bulwark of the new wall system had been completed, and the sums collected for the construction fell far short of the funding they had expected. The authorities only collected a total of three thousand pesos of the necessary ten thousand pesos that had been budgeted through taxes for this construction project.

Without proper defenses in place, once again the pirates and a large group of French and Dutch buccaneers attacked under the command of *Lorencillo* and Agramont in 1685, an attack that lasted 56 days and affected not only the town and the port, but also the nearby towns.<sup>214</sup> Motivated by this great onslaught, the following year the governor urged the need to complete the works for the better protection of the town. With an increase in taxes on salt exports and the voluntary collection of funds among a large part of the population, in combination with added

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<sup>213</sup> Jose Antonio Calderon Quijano, *Las murallas de Campeche* (Campeche: Gobierno del Estado, 1968), 29.

<sup>214</sup> See *Carta del gobernador sobre las prevenciones contra la confederación de piratas*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, folio 108r.

contributions which arrived from the Viceroy of New Spain, finally the foundations of the walls and defenses opened on January 3 of that year.

Due to the death of the engineer De La Torre, the project was entrusted to the German engineer Jaime Frank, who had directed the defense works at the fortifications of San Juan de Ulúa in the port of Veracruz. The modifications made by Frank, who worked in conjunction with the *sargento mayor* don Pedro Osorio de Cervantes, shaped the final design of the walled system of defenses of the port of Campeche (See fig. 13).

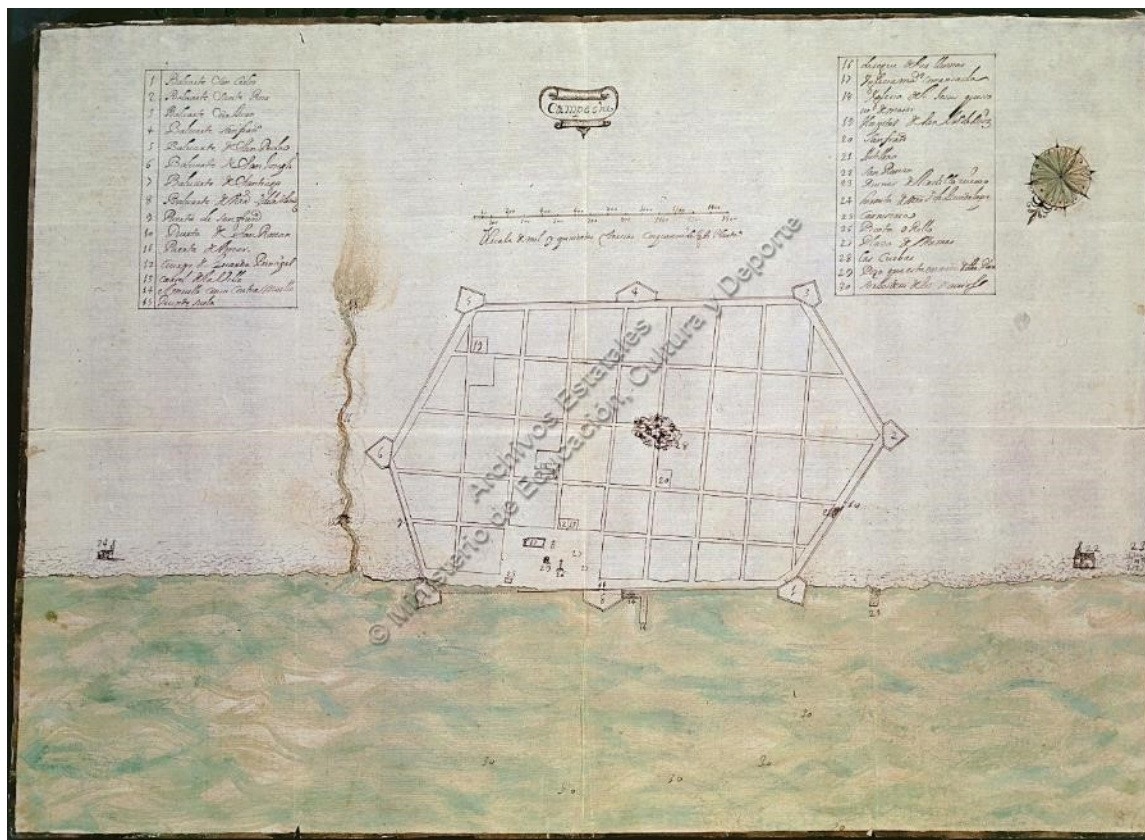


Figure 13. Plano de la Fortificación de la Villa de San Francisco de Campeche y de su Estado en 1690. Source: Archivo General de Indias, MP-MEXICO,87.

It was impossible to cover the entire town inside the walls, which is why the town was divided between those who were protected and those who had to look out for their own

protection. This defensive division was not only an urbanistic division but also a division inside the society of Campeche, since the people living inside the walls were mostly Spaniards who enjoyed their protections, while all those outside, mostly other castes, had to fend for themselves. The indigenous people, especially, lived outside of the walls in the barrios surrounding the newly walled city. This division between the insiders and outsiders remained active in the culture of the people of Campeche until the twentieth century, when the central part of the city lost almost all the constructed walls and the townspeople moved outside of the town from the houses in the old town center.

### **The Connection Between Illicit Contraband, Smuggling, and Piracy in Campeche**

The contraband network this thesis has unveiled in Campeche served as just a small part of a bigger network that operated in the Spanish colonies. As evidence of this is the fact, during the investigations, the authorities received accusations against three people that were not residing in the town. Geronimo Blanco, Bartolome Pretiner and Luis Ysleño, all three of whom had been accused of being part of this illicit smuggling network and trade with pirates, but the people from Campeche declared that they were sailors and they had no home or residence in Campeche. By the time the authorities tried to catch them, one of them was reportedly in La Havana, and the other one in Veracruz, and no one had news of the whereabouts of the last one.<sup>215</sup>

In the end, the mechanism of regulated commercial fleets, combined with the heavy tax burden of the monopolistic system of mercantile trade practiced by the Spanish Crown remained,

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<sup>215</sup> *Diligencia del capitán don Bartolomé Lorenzo de Andrade, alguacil mayor de Campeche, de haber buscado a Gerónimo Blanco para declarar*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N. 42, folio 128r; as well as *Diligencia del capitán don Bartolomé Lorenzo de Andrade, alguacil mayor de Campeche, de haber buscado a Bartolomé Pretiner para declarar*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N. 42, folio 128v; and finally *Diligencia del capitán don Bartolomé Lorenzo de Andrade, alguacil mayo de Campeche, de haber buscado a Luis Ysleño para declarar*, AGI, Audiencia de México, 48, R.1, N. 42, folio 128v.



without a doubt, one of the principal motivations for the increased nature of colonial smuggling. The *averia* and the *almojarifazgo* were two types of taxes imposed by the Monarchy and the increasing rates of these impositions were intimately attached to piracy and smuggling, because these taxes the Crown destined to help pay for the costs and investments in the defense of the ships of the fleets and the fortification and defense of the authorized colonial ports. Such fiscal burdens became so onerous, that even the authorized merchants and inhabitants in the Spanish Indies suffered under these heavy taxes.<sup>216</sup>

Facing increased tax burdens and reduced profits from these regressive fiscal measures, many New World merchants created unique ways to evade the payments and, in some way, keep more of their profits safe from these impositions and regulations. Some of the more common practices included the exchanges of goods from one ship to another while en route, and by this means, on the high seas, these “sales” incurred no traceable tax debt in the Americas upon arrival. Similar, other merchants issued falsified receipts without including some of the actual goods exchanged in order to avoid the sales and customs taxes when they arrived in the Indies.<sup>217</sup>

But one of the more unique means of avoiding the taxes to be paid were the so-called *arribadas forzosas* (forced arrivals) or what the customs authorities used to call in the judicial court papers as *arribadas maliciosas* (malicious arrivals).<sup>218</sup> The merchants managed to use this tactic when, outside of the scheduled itinerary of their merchant vessel’s voyage, they diverted their ships from the course of the fleet, and by means of claiming of ill weather or problems with

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<sup>216</sup> Milton Zambrano Pérez. “Piratas, piratería y comercio ilícito en el Caribe: la visión del otro.” *Revista Historia Caribe* 4, no.12, (2007): 24.

<sup>217</sup> Antonio García de León, *Contra viento y marea. Los piratas en el Golfo de México* (México, DF: Random House Mondadori, 2004), 122.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid*, 138.

the ship, they headed to other un-registered ports and smaller seaside towns where they introduced their products, well knowing that these ports and places were not stipulated originally in their ship's manifests or as the legal destination for their goods.<sup>219</sup>

Making the connection between pirate activities and smuggling with the illegal or un-sanctioned commerce of local colonial merchants and colonists is not a difficult task. Both served as measures used by the European powers to damage the earnings of the Spanish Crown, so these illicit commercial routes were often the same routes used by openly illegal smuggling and pirated commerce. Furthermore, many of the most successful privateers/pirates were also great smugglers. The privateer's profession was so dangerous that they had to take any measure available to gain as much as they could while on their voyages, and this was justified by the increased risk to their lives.

For the greatest buccaneers or renegade privateers of the seventeenth century, one of the main objectives of their raids was the taking of merchandise to sell or trade. In fact, this activity of trading in their plundered goods from one colony to another occurred more frequently than the open commerce of slavery.<sup>220</sup> In addition, the West Indies served as a valuable open illicit market, offering eager port cities and markets to quick and easily infiltrate for anyone with a ship and the ability to enter and sell products at a lower price than the legally regulated official Spanish merchants.

A vicious cycle quickly occurred, as the pressure of pirates and privateers increased, their successful raids and plundering of legitimate Spanish shipping caused the fleet system to become

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<sup>219</sup> Ibid; and Antonio García de León "*Comercio de balandra, contrabando y piratería en el golfo de México.*" *Orbis incognitus: avisos y legajos del Nuevo Mundo: homenaje al profesor Luis Navarro García* (2007): 183.

<sup>220</sup> Milton Zambrano Pérez. "Piratas, piratería y comercio ilícito en el Caribe: la visión del otro." *Revista Historia Caribe* 4, no.12, (2007): 40-42.

increasingly erratic and ineffective in supplying the Spanish colonies with products.<sup>221</sup> In turn, smuggling increased its presence and usefulness as a means of gaining access to prized European goods, especially on the part of the elite Spaniards, and those living in marginalized areas of the Indies, such as was the case of the Yucatan Peninsula.

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid, 38; and Antonio García de León “*Comercio de balandra, contrabando y piratería en el golfo de México.*” *Orbis incognitus: avisos y legajos del Nuevo Mundo: homenaje al profesor Luis Navarro García* (2007): 181-183.

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*Embargo de bienes a los Potes, en el caso contra Alonso Matheos, 1674, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 8.*

*Embargo de bienes de Juan Mayor, en el caso contra Alonso Matheos, en Campeche a 7 de mayo de 1674, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 3.*

*Información hecha ante el gobernador a pedimento del procurador general de Yucatán, Joaquín de Leguizamo, para el peligro que tienen con los franceses y lo que será necesario proveerse, 26 de noviembre, 1565, AGI, Audiencia de México, 359, ramo 2, no. 2, folios 3.*

*Instrucción de los oficiales reales y tesorero de la Santa Cruzada de las provincias de Yucatán, sobre el árbol de hec y el añil, 1577, AGI, Indiferente, 1530, N.4.*

*Instrucciones del Virrey de la Nueva España al gobernador de Yucatán, en México a 15 de diciembre de 1674, AGI, Mexico, R.1, N.42, folios 2.*

- Lista y manifestación de extranjeros en Campeche, 9 de abril de 1672, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42 folios 6.*
- Mandamiento del señor Virrey de la Nueva España para que la justicia del lugar donde reside Alonso Matheos haga las averiguaciones en su contra, en Veracruz a 10 de marzo de 1674, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 2.*
- Parecer del licenciado Diego Carrillo sobre el estado de la causa contra los culpados de contrabando para que se proceda a tomar sus confesiones, 1674, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 132v.*
- Pedimiento del señor fiscal en el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en México a 6 de diciembre de 1674, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N.42, folios 2.*
- Plano de la fortificación hecha en la villa y puerto de Campeche por el gobernador de la provincia de Yucatán, Carlos de Luna y Arellano, June 21, 1608, AGI, MP-MEXICO, 517.*
- Real cédula al gobernador y oficiales reales de Yucatán, 14 de mayo, 1616, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1065, folios 2.*
- Recopilación de leyes de Indias. Libro IV, Título III, Ley VIII, 1681.*
- Relación de los méritos y servicios de Hernando Muñoz Zapata, Yucatán, 1567. AGI, Patronato, 68, N.1, R.9, folios 4.*
- Relación de la toma de Campeche por los holandeses, escrita por un testigo ocular que participó en los hechos, 1633, AGN, Inquisición, 1503, folio 1.*
- Relación de las defensas de estas provincias y el temer de armar los indios hecho por Capitán Joseph Brunon de Vertiz, 1663, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006, folios 299r-300v*
- Relación de los méritos de Martin de Güemes en la defensa del puerto de Campeche y en contra de piratas ingleses, pidiendo una ayuda de costa, 1599, AGI, Audiencia de México, 242A, no. 22.*
- Relación de servicios de don Felipe de Barrera Villegas, en Madrid a 8 de enero de 1682. AGI, Indiferente, 129, N. 83, folios 4.*
- Respuesta del señor fiscal sobre la propuesta del gobernador de Yucatán con la fragata holandesa Paja Larga, 17 de septiembre, 1672, AGI, Audiencia de México, 1006*
- Testimonio de Bernardo de la Rosa, vecino de Campeche, sobre el caso de contrabando contra Alonso Matheos, en Campeche a 9 de mayo de 1674. AGI, Mexico, R.1, N.42, folio 69r.*
- Testimonio de Domingo Silvestre, por otro nombre, Tres Pollos, 1674, AGI, Mexico, 48, R.1, N. 42, folios 4.*

*Testimonio de don Francisco de Solís Osorio, vecino de Campeche, en 4 de mayo de 1674.* AGI, Mexico, R.1, N.42, folios 2.

*Testimonio de Doña Catalina Blanco, viuda Mujer de Capitán Pedro de Arce, escribano público sobre su muerte y la toma de Campeche por los enemigos holandeses, 1633,* AGI, Audiencia de México, 184, folios 6.

*Testimonio de Gregorio Diaz Leandro, vecino de Tabasco, residente en Campeche, 5 de septiembre, sobre la toma de Campeche por los holandeses y la muerte de Don Pedro de Arce, 1633,* AGI, Audiencia de México, 184, N.41.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A. Examples of Products and Goods Seized During the Case of Contraband in 1674



Image 1 and 2. Doublets were part of the men's clothing in the early seventeenth century. Men wore it with a pair of breeches with matching fabric and a cape. This example is from England and is dated between 1635-1640. It is made with a glazed linen and embroidered with linen thread. The use of linen was typically for linings and underwear. This piece presents an elaborate embroidery and buttons that indicate it was used as a formal dress. Because of the light color, it was probably used during the summers. The seams on the sleeves and back were left open to let the shirt show through. Source: *Doublet*. England. 1635-1640. V&A Collection. Museum number 177-1900. <http://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O77444/doublet-unknown/>



Image 3. The *casaca* is a male clothe, part of the fashion in Europe around the second half of the seventeenth century. Source: *Casaca*. 1680. Museo del Traje. Centro de Investigación del Patrimonio Etnológico. Inventario CE095517.  
<http://ceres.mcu.es/pages/Viewer?accion=4&AMuseo=MT&Ninv=CE095517>





Image 4. White Walloon, with the neck shaped like a wheel, pleated in the center, with hem on the edges. The Walloon has a large and turned neck that falls on the back, shoulders and chest. Source: *Valona*. Museo del Traje. Centro de Investigación del Patrimonio Etnológico. Inventario CE004171.

[https://www.europeana.eu/portal/es/record/2048215/europeana\\_fashion\\_http\\_\\_\\_ceres\\_mcu\\_es\\_pages\\_Main\\_idt\\_4216\\_inventory\\_CE004171\\_table\\_FMUS\\_museum\\_MT.html?q=gorguera](https://www.europeana.eu/portal/es/record/2048215/europeana_fashion_http___ceres_mcu_es_pages_Main_idt_4216_inventory_CE004171_table_FMUS_museum_MT.html?q=gorguera)



Image 5. *Espingarda* from the fifteenth century. There are very few examples of *espingardas* in the world. This was the kind of weapon that Alonso Matheos received as a gift from the English settlers in the Laguna de Terminos. Source: *Espingarda del siglo XV con polvorera*. Private collection.



Image 6. Game of billiard. During the confiscation, the authorities found a *mesa de trucos* (table of tricks) among the properties of Melchor de la Rosa. A *mesa de trucos* was the name for the table to play billiard. This game was already popular by the seventeenth century, mostly among the elites. Source: *A Game of Billiards*. C.1620. Adriaen van der Venne. The British Museum. Paints and Drawings. Object reference number: 1978,0624.42.28.



Source gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France

Image 7. *Fragata ligera* (light frigate) from the seventeenth century. During the confiscation of properties against the Potes brothers, the authorities captured a frigate that was under construction in the beach of Campeche. Source: *Recueil. Vaisseaux et galères*. 1626-1686. Bibliothèque nationale de France, département Estampes et photographie, IC-10-FT 4.



## Appendix B. Projects for the Fortification of the *Villa* and Port of San Francisco de Campeche

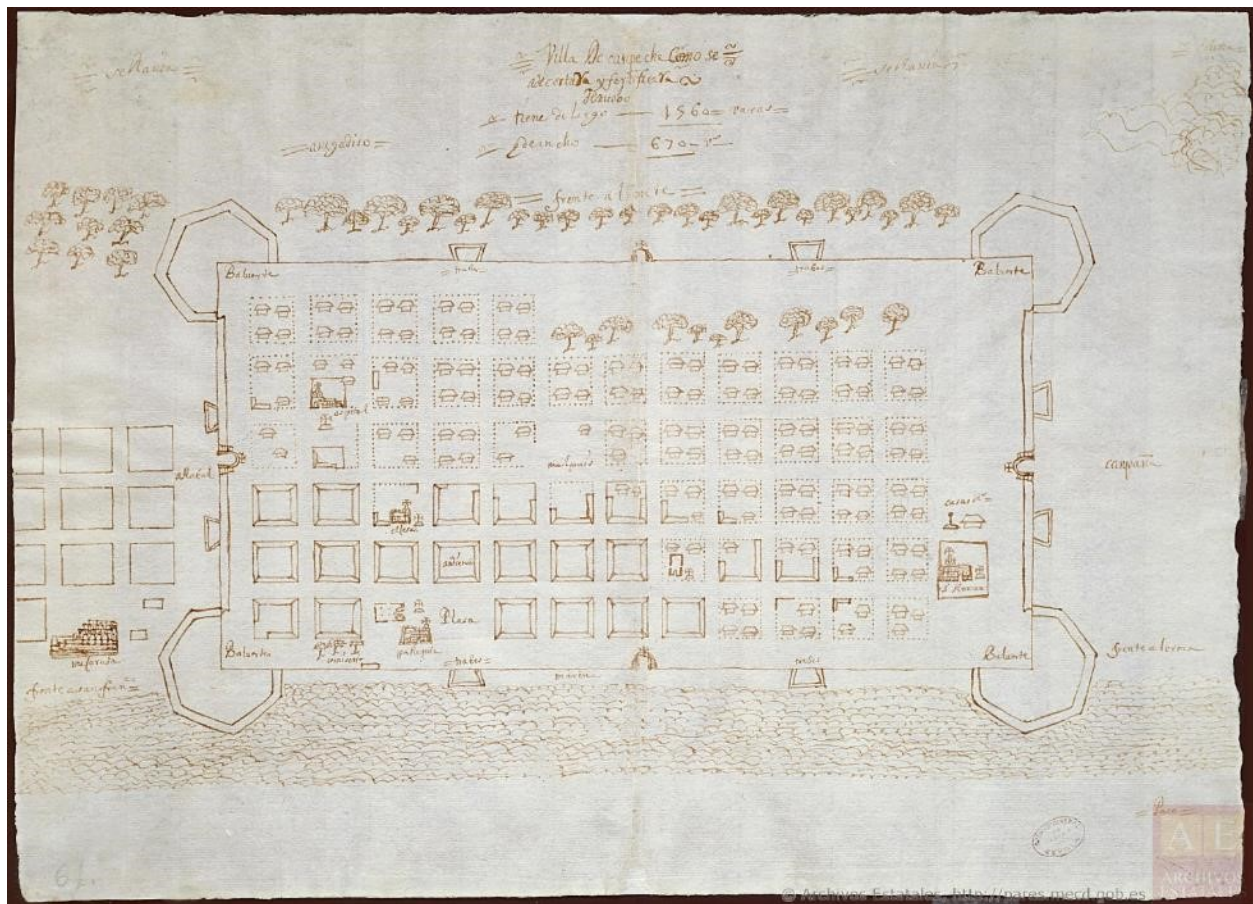


Image 1. Project of fortification by the governor Esquivel. It is possible to notice the four bastions in each corner and the wall surrounding the downtown and the *barrio* of San Roman in the right side. Source: “Plano de la villa de San Francisco de Campeche con las reformas propuestas para su mejor defensa por Juan Francisco de Esquivel, gobernador interino de Yucatán.” 1663. AGI, MP-Mexico, 61.

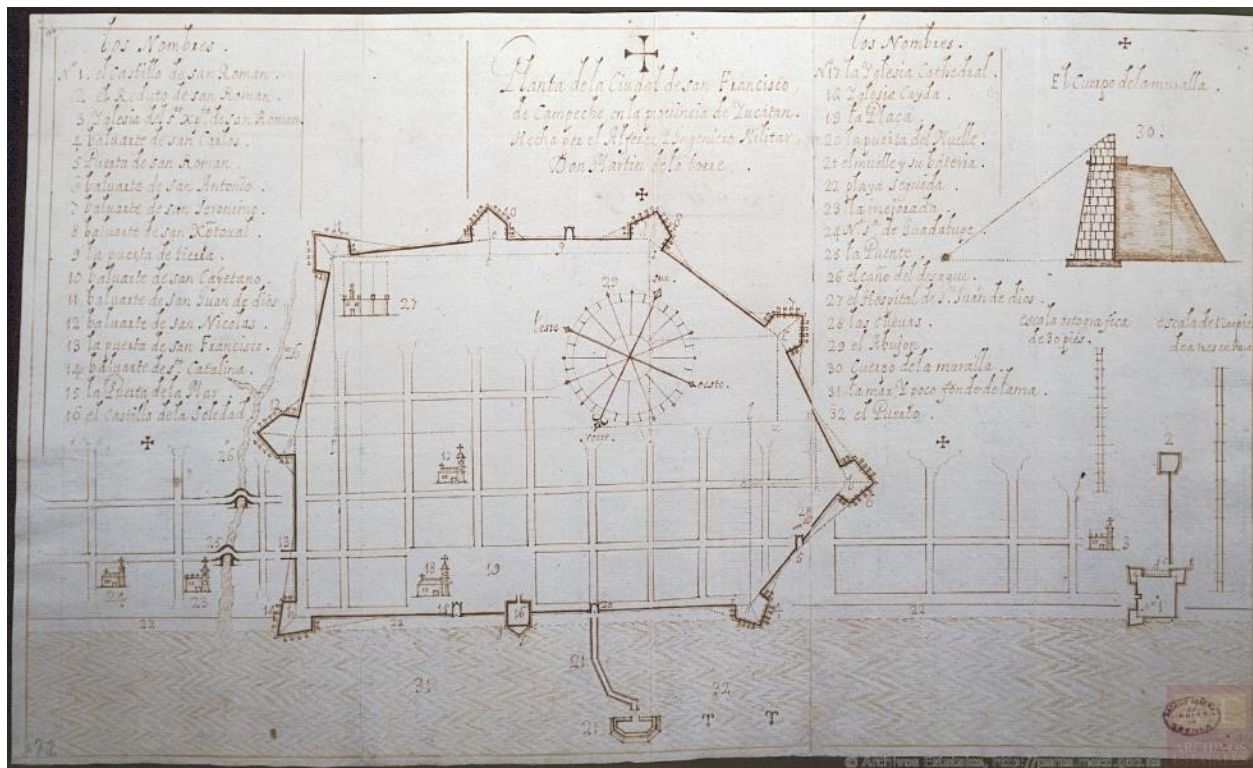


Image 2. Project of fortification for San Francisco de Campeche. It is possible to notice the proposal of a fort in the sea, like San Juan de Ulúa, in Veracruz. Source: "Planta de la Ciudad de San Francisco de Campeche en la provincia de Yucatán. Hecha por el Alferez i Ingeniero Militar don Martín de la Torre". 1680. AGI, MP-Mexico, 72.