

## Chapter II

# Piracy and Piratal Aggressions in the pre-c.1750 Western Indian Ocean (WIO)



- **Henry Morgan: Pirate of the 17<sup>th</sup> Century**  
Active in Atlantic and Western Indian Ocean,  
In Nigel Cawthorne, *Pirate An Illustrated History*, London, 2006, p.16.
- **Adventure, Ship of Captain William Kidd, the English Pirate,**  
in M. S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, Vol. III, 1978, p. 428
- **a Malabari Pirate: Kanhoji, Angria, his fleet in the Western Indian Ocean**  
Depiction in painting and photograph from Wikipedia Collection

A survey of literature<sup>1</sup> on maritime violence or maritime aggressions suggests that seafarers engaging in aggressions have been pigeonholed as predators, parasites, criminals, outlaws, rebels, heroes, evildoers, buffoons, opportunists, armed robbers, raiders, plunderers, bandits, brigands, liberators, rogues, robin hoods, rascallions, and blood-thirsty killers in novels, films, comics and story books; as “splendid villains”, “common enemies of mankind”, “an alternative to civilization”, “enemies of no one and the enemies of everyone”, and “custom officials” in scholarly discourse and their act piracy (piratical aggressions) as “undeclared war,” “violent maritime predation” or the “indiscriminate taking of property (or persons) with violence” or “tribute taking”, “commerce raiding”, “taxing foreigners by force”, or “a business”. Debate has also encircled for constructing reasons for aggressions, titles in terms of single role or dual role or multiple roles.

Oxford English Dictionary records the appearance of the term “pirate” in lexicon world since 15<sup>th</sup> century and it is observed that

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<sup>1</sup>Babits *et. al.*, “Pirate Imagery” in Skowronek and Ewen (eds.), *X Marks the Spot: The Archaeology of Piracy*, 2006, pp. 271-281; David Braund, “Piracy under the Principate and the Ideology of Eradication” in J. Rich and G. Shipley, (eds.), *War and Society in the Roman World*, 1993, pp. 195-212; Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. II., 1972 pp. 1220-1232; Anne Pérotin-Dumon, “The Pirate and the Emperor: Power and the Law on the Seas, 1450-1850”, pp. 25-54; John L Anderson, “Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation”, *Journal of World History*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 82-106; Goncal Lopez Nadal “Corsairing as a Commercial System: The Edges of Legitimate Trade.” in (ed.), *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, 2001, pp. 125-136 in C.R. Pennell (ed.), *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, pp. 125-136. Also see Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700.

the word “pirate” and its derivatives were used frequently in official documents not related to property-rights cases before the Admiralty courts between mid-16<sup>th</sup> and mid-17<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>2</sup> Since then it acquired a meaning as a vague beginning for mounting English assertions of jurisdiction.<sup>3</sup> It has also been observed that the term “pirate” used for an individual by the ‘other’ who comes with charges may not be necessarily putative because an accused may refuse to get trademarked. Narrations available for pre-c.1750 suggest (refer table II) that the piracy and aggression never happened by individual but by groups in organized manner. Therefore, general definition could be based on idiom ‘No Pirate Works Alone’ as “a form of morally ambiguous property seizure committed by an organized group which can include thievery, hijacking, smuggling, counterfeiting, or kidnapping”. Piracy therefore, is a process by coastal people who formed a group to attack with arms on armless seafarers (merchants / traders / pilgrims for 16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries) in the waters of Indian Ocean or elsewhere. It may also be noted that the initiative can be made by relatively less rich individuals group who after getting exploit may form bigger groups for carrying out such piratical aggressions. Trading vessels as well as armed vessels were prone to attack of pirates. Philip Gosse<sup>4</sup> in *History of Piracy* (1934) places it as “the poor seafaring people settled in coastal areas

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<sup>2</sup><https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/pirate>

<sup>3</sup>Alfred P. Rubin, *The Law of Piracy*, 1988, pp. 40-50.

<sup>4</sup>Philip Gosse, *History of Piracy*, 1934, p.1 & 232-94 and 295-300.

joined hands and formed a group to attack ‘weakest merchants’ on vessels which were unarmed. As a part of organization, large group of pirates defeated small groups and assimilated them to their group in order to carry out their business on larger scale”.

Medieval maritime historian, Pius Malekandathil<sup>5</sup> opined that piracy is a link with some aspect of criminality and they engage in activities like robbery at sea, attack, confiscation of vessels and merchandise, torturing of merchant in return for ransom money and raiding of the port. Their act depended on their circumstances which could be political, economic and socio-cultural.

For J. L. Anderson piracy is indiscriminate taking of property (or persons) with violence or by descent from the sea.<sup>6</sup> Arne Bailuschewki opined that “Piracy is the arbitrary and indiscriminate seizure of vessels, goods and persons at sea”.<sup>7</sup> Colonel John Biddulph, a retired British army officer, wrote of the early 1700s which illustrates the piracy scenario:

...From the moment of losing sight of the Lizard [the southernmost post in England] till the day of casting anchor in the port of destination an East India ship was **never safe from attack**, with the chance of slavery or a cruel death to crew and passengers **in case of capture**. From Finisterre to Cape Verd[e] the Moorish pirates made the seas unsafe, sometimes venturing into the mouth of the [English] channel to make a capture. **Farther south, every watering-place on the African coast was infested by the English and French pirates who had their headquarters in the West Indies**. From the Cape of Good Hope to the Head of the Persian Gulf, from Cape Comorin to Sumatra, every coast **was beset by English, French, Dutch, Danish,**

<sup>5</sup>Pius Malekandathil, “Criminal and Legitimization in Seawaters: A Study on the Pirates of Malabar during the Ages of European Commercial Expansion (1500-1800)”, *Fluxos & Riscos*, n.1, 2010, pp. 56-58.

<sup>6</sup>J. L. Anderson, “Piracy and World History: An Economic Perspective on Maritime Predation”, *Journal of World History*, Vol.6, No.2 (Fall, 1995), pp.175-199.

<sup>7</sup>Arne Bialuschewski, “Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c.1690-1715”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 38, 3 (2005), pp. 401-425.

Portuguese, Arab, Malay or other local pirates...There was no peace on the ocean. The sea was a vast 'No Man's domain, where every man might take his prey.'<sup>8</sup>

John Biddulph<sup>9</sup> also opined that in case of piracy 'slaver and privateers' were interchangeable terms. Their favourite destinations were 'undefended ports', and pirates visited as either 'merchant or slaver' with an intention to plunder. Their *modus operandi* remained in bribing vulnerable individuals on shore in order to get the support of coastal lot. In this situation probably both benefitted mutually as the coastal lot purchased goods at very low price and shared information on traversing merchant's ship or armed ship in the Indian Ocean waters or Atlantic waters alike. People from shore are recorded as their informers and they may possibly belong to pirates group as well. It may also be noted that this differed in case of native pirate groups coming from western seaboard of coastal India or indigenous pirates from Persian Gulf, Red Sea, Horn of Africa, Swahili Coast and Madagascar, European pirate and privateer or indigenous pirate from Coromandel, Odisha, Bay of Bengal, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Japan, China, etc. on the side of Eastern Indian Ocean engaged in plunder and hailed from far flung areas in the Atlantic Ocean from America and Europe in Western Indian Ocean.<sup>10</sup>

Based on the understanding of piratical aggressions in Indian Ocean, both M. N. Pearson and Lakshmi Subramanian have

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<sup>8</sup>Max Boot, 'Pirates, Then and Now How Piracy Was Defeated in the Past and Can Be Again', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2009, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup>John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. vii-xi and 1-36, 69-83 & 132-160.

<sup>10</sup>Philip Gosse, *History of Piracy*, 1934, pp. 141-231 & 232-94.



opined that piracy is a complex term and it is difficult to offer universal definition because it involved variety of individuals who were seafarers as well as merchants/traders, and carried out multiple roles depending upon the opportunity they indulged.<sup>11</sup> They also referred about the ‘thin line’ with reference to pirate and privateer. Further, in order to understand this ‘thin line’, following discussion is pertinent.

Piracy at sea is the counterpart of robbery on land. Privateer is the term used by the European seafarer, where a Privateer was given letter of *marquee* or permit to attack enemy’s ship in wartime. Both plundered enemy’s ship and the ‘plundered goods’ were ‘shared’ among themselves in case they were sponsored by the state (East India Companies in case of Atlantic & Pacific Ocean; native rulers in case of Asia & Africa)<sup>12</sup>. Indian Ocean trade networks amply bear that the coast and its hinterland on either side was engaging in terms of commodity, craftsmanship, fiscal exchanges and mobility. Europeans, in particular, were fascinated by the available description of the port towns.<sup>13</sup> Conflict in Europe led to use of privateer to safeguard merchants’ ship from enemy’s attack. With reference to Western Europe, and contesting companies in South America, Africa & Asia, it was in this period (all) fastened their hold on the trade of Europe with the West

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<sup>11</sup>Lakshmi Subramanian, “Piracy in Northward Coast: Problems of Definition”, in Sara Keller and M. N. Pearson (eds.), *Port Towns of Gujarat*, 2015, pp. 163-82.

<sup>12</sup>Clinton V. Black, *Pirates of the West Indies*, 1989, pp. 27-41, 60-70, 122-23.

<sup>13</sup>See Lakshmi Subramanian (ed.), *Ports, Towns, Cities: A Historical Tour of the Indian Littoral*, Vol. 60, No. 2, Marg, 2008 and Philip Gosse, *History of Piracy*, 1934, pp. 141-31 & 232-94.

Indies and the American colonies, largely because ordinary seamen were unable to find honest employment, and especially when a considerable number of them had been turned adrift at the conclusion of a European war<sup>14</sup>. Discovery of Cape of Good Hope by Vasco da Gama in 1495 unfolded new opportunities for the Europeans and several East India Companies came to existence during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries to carry out trade and commerce in the Indian Ocean. New opportunities threatened the ‘maritime monopoly enjoyed by the Asian merchants’ and a process of contestation was initiated between the Europeans Companies. Portuguese *Estado da India* was the first Company to make their stronghold in the Indian Ocean. J. G. Lorimer and C. R. Low considered that the Portuguese brutality had forced some of the locals in the region to resort crime, a situation that required more civilized Britons to re-establish law and order when they arrived on the scene.<sup>15</sup> Incidences of privateers’ act are documented in chapter III of this monograph.

Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” and Lauren Benton in “Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism” provides definition to various categories based on relationships between economy, law, and social organization that often gets endured under the

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<sup>14</sup>John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 38-68. & M. S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat: The Maratha Period 1758 A. D. to 1818 A. D.*, Vol. III, 1980, pp. 440-42. Also see Clinton V. Black, *Pirates of the West Indies*, 1989, pp. 27-41, 60-70 & 122-23.

<sup>15</sup>*Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, Vol. II, 1908, p. 79.

“pirate” label for all Oceans (Westerners and Easterners) during pre-c. 1750. These are illustrated in table I<sup>16</sup> and help us comprehend the categories based on the narrations appearing in table II of this chapter during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**TABLE I: Categories of Pirates**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Descriptive meaning</b>	<b>Regions of Operations</b>
Pirate	Sea bandits, or sailors who seize property and/or people by force.	Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean
Privateer	Pirates who operate with a legal license from a state government to attack enemy ships and ports during wartime, keeping a contractual share of seized goods.	Were Westerners and active in Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean
Smuggler	Trader who deals in contraband (illegal) goods, or who trades with the enemy, or who trades to evade taxes, customs, or international blockades.	Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean
Freebooter from Dutch	A soldier who works for “booty” or plunder (i.e., a profit-sharing mercenary).	Were Westerners and active in Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean
<i>Filibuster</i>	Term evolved from freebooter, but in English meant adventurers (primarily American) who attempted to stage coups and take over foreign states, particularly in Latin America. For instance-Filibusters such as William Walker and John Quitman were intent on taking over foreign governments in order to establish colonies where property interests would be unfettered—i.e., where plantation slavery and untaxed trade could expand.	Were Westerners and active in Atlantic and Pacific
<i>Buccaneer</i> from French	Originally castaway colonists (usually French or English) on Hispaniola who survived by hunting or raising livestock, and then smoking it ( <i>boucaneer</i> ), to sell meat and hides to passing ships.	Were Westerners and active in Atlantic and Pacific
<i>Corsair</i> from French	Originally a type of fast sailing ship, extended to apply to mercenary coast guard or customs agents along the Barbary Coast of North Africa. For instance-the corsairs of the	Were Westerners and active in Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Ocean

<sup>16</sup> Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700 and Lauren Benton, “Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism” *CSSH*, Volume 47, Issue 4, October, 2005, pp. 700-24.



	Barbary Coast were understood by many North Africans to be the enforcers of a legitimate customs or port tax imposed on European ships passing through their coastal waters. Like privateers, they were paid for their labour through agreed-upon shares of seized property.	
Indigenous lot among Pirates in the Indian waters of WIO	<b>Malabar:</b> <i>Kunjali, Nair;</i> <b>Konkan:</b> <i>Kolis, Angrias, Sangameshwar, Meds/Mers;</i> <i>Chanchiya/Baharwatiya</i> known to the <b>Gujarat-Kolis,</b> <i>Kharwas,</i> <i>Sanganian/Sanghar/Sanjanian,</i> <i>Wagher/Vagher, Bhadel/Vadhel, Mianas;</i> <b>Persian Gulf:</b> <i>Jaosmi/Qawasimi, Wahabees</i>	Were Easterners and remained active in Indian Ocean Waters
Indigenous lot among Pirates in the Indian waters of EIO	<b>Indonesia:</b> <i>Baja, Laut, Lanun,</i> <b>Malayan:</b> <i>Iranum and Balangingi</i>	Were Easterners and remained active in Indian Ocean Waters

Scholarly readings of the early modern phase of mercantile history (c.1600-c.1750) of western Europe suggests that the act of piratical aggressions can be pronounced as “Renaissance Piracy” as it happened due to augmented bustle in the Mediterranean by Barbary Coast and French *corsairs* as well as privateers working in the service of expanding imperial states, particularly the ‘English Sea Dogs’ such as Francis Drake and John Hawkins and several other freebooters (Dutch).<sup>17</sup> Privateers operated under “letters of *marque*” (also called a *patente*) which were legal licenses that authorized their actions by a sponsoring government, such that the distinction between sea crime and naval action depended upon a piece of paper. These early mercenaries, however, often expressed loyalty to the states that backed them,

<sup>17</sup>Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II*, Vol. II., 1972, pp. 1204-44.

particularly in the global wars of religion between Ottomans and Christians, or between Catholics and Protestants. During the Renaissance, both pirates and privateers often identified themselves by national origin and religion.<sup>18</sup>

However, in the subsequent period, or what Marcus Rediker<sup>19</sup> calls “The Golden Age” of piracy in the Caribbean (c.1650-1730), pirates proclaimed themselves “nationless”. The first generation of nationless pirates were the *buccaneers*<sup>20</sup>, who were castaways and runaways (from slavery, military service, impressments, and/or forced immigration) living on the colonial fringe. Due to their casual employment as pilots in local waters and an effort by the Spanish to remove these “*squatters*” from their Caribbean possessions, the *buccaneers* jumped to ships and joined a growing, floating counter culture in late 17<sup>th</sup> century. It is during this period, when a large number of impressed sailors and ex-soldiers were mustering out with few economic possibilities that the ranks of pirates grew exponentially, accompanied by a greater articulation of social organization and ideology through institutions such as the pirate “Articles of Agreement.”<sup>21</sup> This short-lived culture was

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<sup>18</sup>Kris Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*, 1998 and Nina Gerassi-Navarro, *Pirate Novels: Fictions of Nation Building in Spanish America*, 1999 in Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700.

<sup>19</sup>Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*, 1987 in Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700.

Visit: <https://forum-network.org/lectures/Atlantic-Pirates-Golden-Age/>

<sup>20</sup>Philip Gosse, *History of Piracy*, 1934, pp. 141-75.

<sup>21</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 213-31.

characterized by anti-nationalism that expressed resentment against English impressments, but also a tendency to expressly reject central political authority, and even religion.<sup>22</sup> Pirates in this period also practiced a pronounced form of “binge consumption,” to use Richard Wilk’s<sup>23</sup> term, in which their personal fortunes fluctuated wildly ‘from wealth to poverty’. Pirates exerted social pressure upon one another not only to share their gains but to spend them lavishly in port havens such as Tortuga and Port Royal on instant gratifications such as liquor and prostitution, and on extravagant consumables such as fancy clothes and jewellery. Pirates did not expect to live long, nor did their criminal reputations allow them to settle down and invest in real estate, family, or the future. A fast moving and merciless crackdown on pirates instigated primarily by the English and their trading company ensued in the late 1710s, leading to the execution of at least 500 suspected pirates by 1726.<sup>24</sup>

Many survivors became smugglers and privateers to the always-warring empires, particularly the French, Spanish, and English. This “Smugglers of the Caribbean” period lasted up until

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<sup>22</sup>David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*, 1996 and Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*, 1987 in Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700.

<sup>23</sup>Richard Wilk, “Loggers, Miners, Cowboys, and Crab Fishermen: Masculine Work Cultures and Binge Consumption,” Paper presented to the Yale Agrarian Studies Program, Nov. 30, 2007 in Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700.

<sup>24</sup>Marcus Rediker (2004, p. 163) in lecture <https://forum-network.org/lectures/atlantic-pirates-golden-age/>

about 1815 when a period of relative peace and liberalized trade ensued. Throughout the early modern period, piracy was ‘global’, with ‘actors moving back and forth between the Mediterranean and the Caribbean’, between the “South Sea” (originally the Pacific coast of South America) and the Indian Ocean, between New England and the African coast. The same individuals could show up to raid the coast of Spain, and move on to attack its colonial possessions 3,000 miles away. By far, the targets of the great majority of pirate attacks both in the Mediterranean<sup>25</sup> and the Caribbean were Spanish ships and Spanish settlements. In addition to the usual hunt for booty, pirates often took captives and sold them into slavery (if infidels) or held them for ransom.

In the Renaissance period, pirate crews were led by elite military men and ‘ambitious entrepreneurs’ who captained their expeditions with firm discipline and authority, and little pay-out or democracy; this was the age of “aristocratic piracy’, quite different from the shipboard democracy idealized for the “Golden Age”. This typology is important because clearly only some of these pirate “types” map onto the ideal-typical social bandit even if some of the cultural references get thrown onto the same patchwork pirate doll (thus Henry Morgan, a brutal but elite privateer, ends up, in his swashbuckling codpiece, on rum bottles

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<sup>25</sup>Henry A. Ormerod, *Piracy in the Ancient World: An Essay in Mediterranean History*, pp. 50-73.

as a symbol of Caribbean good-times that actual, later pirates did practice in places like Tortuga).<sup>26</sup>

The ‘Golden Age of Piracy’ occurred during capitalism’s mercantilist phase (c.1492- c.1783) when emerging states either owned or strictly licensed colonial companies with exclusive trading or extraction rights in new territories. Trading companies such as the *Vereenigde OostIndische Compagnie* (VOC, The Dutch East India Company), the English East India Company, and the French Company of the Indies were essentially ‘economic privateers’. Whatever their political stripe, most scholars agree that mercantilism was one of the major conditions that helped ‘create piracy by dislocating maritime workers from their familiar ports, keeping smaller traders out of the shipping-business, and making economic survival in colonies’ even more difficult when the import of foodstuffs or other deemed necessities were strictly controlled.<sup>27</sup> Nevertheless, pirates and company agents shared something in the spirit, methods, and goals of their enterprise. Both were types of “venturers” intent on high-risk extractive gain in far flung locales achieved through armed ships. The parallel between high seas adventurers and venture capitalists would not have been lost on early modern observers, as suggested in titles such as “Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa” or

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<sup>26</sup>Clinton V. Black, *Pirates of the West Indies*, 1989, pp. 27-41.

<sup>27</sup>David J. Starkey, “Pirates and Markets”, 2001a, pp. 107-24 and “The Origins and Regulation of Eighteenth-Century British Privateering”, 2001b, pp. 69-81 in C.R. Pennell (ed.) *Bandits at Sea: A Pirates Reader*, 2001.

pirate ships such as ‘The Adventure Galley’ (Captain Kidd)<sup>28</sup> or Royal Fortune (Captain Bartholomew “Black Bart” Roberts).<sup>29</sup> Two important differences, however, were that the companies of course operated legally under royal charters that funnelled profits to company investors while pirate ships not only worked extra-legally (and often violently) but, it is well-documented, were in some ways employee owned enterprises with a formalized system of profit sharing.<sup>30</sup> The monopolies enjoyed by the early mercantile companies came to be viewed as so unreasonable; both at home and abroad, that few early modern consumers went out of their way to comply. ‘Illegal but licit’ smuggling created doubt about the legitimacy of the state and its royal companies, as well as a growing demand for “free markets.”<sup>31</sup>

Piracy was an additional extreme form of ‘economic dissent’. Pirates preyed upon these powerful companies, not only skimming their profits, but in some cases, such as the South Sea deprivations and Indian Ocean raids of the late 17<sup>th</sup> and early 18<sup>th</sup> century, shutting down international trade altogether.<sup>32</sup> By the 1710s,

<sup>28</sup>John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 38-68.

<sup>29</sup>Clinton V. Black, *Pirates of the West Indies*, 1989, pp. 60-70.

<sup>30</sup>Robert Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates*, 1989 in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700 and John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 38-68.

<sup>31</sup>R. Montgomery Martin, *The History of the Possessions of the Honourable East India Company*, Vol. I, 1837, pp. 54-60 & 250-282; K. N. Chaudhuri, *The English East India Company*, 1965, pp. 56-74.

<sup>32</sup>Angus Konstam, *Piracy: The Complete History*, 2008 in Shannon Lee Dawdy & Joe Bonni in “Towards a General Theory of Piracy” *Anthropological Quarterly*, Vol. 85, No. 3, pp. 673–700.



pirates were cutting deeply into the profits of slave companies in particular. Governments responded to the strong tactic lobbying of the trading companies by initiating an international crackdown.<sup>33</sup>

During the Golden Age, the pirate hunt began in earnest in the 1710s and continued through the 1720s. In some cases, when these same companies had state-like operations and even armies (such as the VOC and French Company of the Indies) they served as their ‘own enforcement officers’ and imposed a kind of extra-national sovereignty over international waters and trade. The parallels as well as the conflicts between old-time pirates and merchants are illustrated by the case of Henry Every who in 1695 led a lucrative raid against Moghul ships in the Indian Ocean, collecting \$ 96,000,000 in gold and jewels before changing his name and vanishing into history.<sup>34</sup> The political repercussions from his success were experienced worldwide. The East India Company (EIC) was essentially shut down in India for several years while it tried to placate an irate emperor who imprisoned dozens of English nationals as retribution. Every and pirates like him came to be seen not simply as an irritating risk to merchant shipping, but as a global threat to the developing ‘worldwide economic order’. As a defensive response, a group of ‘noble politicians and investors’ in the English East India Company (EIC) decided to back a

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<sup>33</sup>Angela Sutton, “Infested with Piratts”: Piracy and the Atlantic Slave Trade, M.A. Thesis under Professor Jane Landers Professor Katherine Crawford, Faculty of the Graduate School of Vanderbilt University, Nashville, May, 2009, pp. 1-17 (summary).

<sup>34</sup>Johnson, Charles, *A General History of the Pyrates, from their First Rise and Settlement in the island of Providence, to the Present Time*, 1724, pp. 45-62 and Nigel Cawthorne, *Pirates: An Illustrated History*, 2006, pp. 109 & 114.

mercenary expedition to root out Every and other pirates operating in the Indian Ocean. Although it may seem circular, this was a ‘for-profit’ privateering operation aimed at taking out pirates. The hired privateers would get the pirate’s already-stolen booty. No provision was made to return the stolen goods to the Moghul or other victims. In fact, the crown issued two types of licenses—one to attack French ships (during one of the perennial cross-Channel wars) and another to attack pirate ships. Thus begins another famous pirate story—‘the tale of Captain Kidd’. Understanding the complexities of his story helps us see the thin legal sword that privateers and entrepreneurs dance upon—a blade that then, or now, can send them tumbling into alleged criminality (**my emphasis**). It also allows us to witness how a bandit-hero is made in the local narrations which further symbolises the larger picture in distant locations. Narration is as follows:

An experienced New England captain and ship-owner, William Kidd was pressured, and some say extorted, by the New York governor to serve as captain on privateer expeditions against pirates financed by investors in the late 1690s.<sup>35</sup> He eventually accepted the commission and sailed to England to pick up his ship and crew. There, he learned that he had been cut a raw deal in the contract, with the crew to get only ‘15% instead of the usual 50% of the privateer’s profit’. Once under sail, Kidd’s men allegedly

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<sup>35</sup>Willard Hallam Bonner, “The Ballad of Captain Kidd”, *American Literature*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Jan., 1944), p. 362-380; Nigel Cawthorne, *Pirates: An Illustrated History*, 2006, pp. 109 & 114; and John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 38-68.

began to threaten mutiny, although he did mollify them by beginning to take ships. Whether these were legitimate targets or not remains a matter of dispute (one was allegedly a Moghul ship under the protection of an English captain, another Armenian ship captained by an Englishman who carried French papers). By all accounts, Kidd was reluctant and choosy in selecting ships to attack and had trouble identifying bona fide pirate vessels. When Kidd's ship arrived at Madagascar, the men mutinied and abandoned him there, taking one of the expedition ships and joining a pirate named Culliford, an old nemesis of Kidd's who was active in the area (refer table II). By some accounts, Kidd naively returned to the Caribbean where he was shocked to learn he was wanted as a 'global criminal'. By other accounts, he skulked back and scuttled a prize ship to hide the evidence that he himself had turned pirate. He returned to New York for his trial, although some say only after first burying his personal treasure in the sands of Long Island. Kidd's high-profile case, which provoked much sympathy among the mariners and merchants of New England, was sent on to London. The key to his self-defense, besides the mutiny of his men, was that the ships he had captured carried French passes and were thus fair game. This ship was later found as a shipwreck studied by Charles Beeker, with whom I interacted in Vadodara in 2010 in the *Darshak Itihas Nidhi* Conference.

In other words, in the complex arrangements of mercantilism in which legal permissions were required for certain ships to trade in certain ports with certain cargoes, often restricted by national protections, the papers carried by his prize ships nominally identified them as French, although they seemed to have been associated with crews and home ports of various nationalities, from Indian to French, Portuguese, Armenian, and English. Unfortunately for Kidd, the company officials who were embarrassed by the failure of the anti-piracy expedition happened to “lose” Kidd’s papers and so he could not prove his legally protected right to violent trade (200 years later, these same papers were found by a historian working in the London Public Records Office [Dalton, 1911]).<sup>36</sup> Kidd was hanged twice (the first time the gallows trap door failed to open) and his body hung in chains to rot above the Thames, as recounted in a well-known folk song. Many historians date the explosion in piracy of the Golden Age to the Kidd trial which was popularly perceived as a great injustice perpetrated against a hardworking seaman by a monopolistic company that controlled the Empire’s legal system.<sup>37</sup> It was also a case of the English crown turning against one of its loyal own, bringing the value of national fealty into grave doubt.

Kidd’s execution can be interpreted as one of the events that crystallized resentment in the colonies against mercantilism,

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<sup>36</sup> Lecture by Brian W. Jacque, “Piracy in a Mercantilist Society”, Western Oregon University June 14, 2007, pp. 2-18 and Cornelius Neale Dalton, *The Real Captain Kidd*, 1911, pp. 39-195.

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.natgeotv.com/int/captain-kidd-the-kings-pirate>

eventually leading to all-out anti-mercantile rebellion during the American Revolution.

Before initiating discourse on Piracy and piratical aggressions in Western Indian Ocean we need to introduce Eastern Indian Ocean piracy because the frequency of piracy was more in the arms of EIO due to geomorphological features such as numerous islands, creeks, islet bay, inlet and estuaries discussed in chapter I (Figure 2 and Index).<sup>38</sup> Large size ships of the European Companies were not able to chase them in creeks, inlet, and estuaries; and also they had no knowledge on the topography of the regions.

Nicholas Tarling<sup>39</sup> on EIOs piracy has comprehended that Europeanization of Indian Ocean had impacted the political and socio-economic circumstances of the Malay World and the British policies in the region since mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Term piracy was used in this region to enforce the use of naval power to intervene in ‘trade and commerce’. Robbing, slave-raiding and pirate became part of state. Morphological features of Malay Peninsula, political circumstances and socio-economic condition of the people led to piracy. James F. Warren<sup>40</sup> focuses on Sulu Zone<sup>41</sup>,

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<sup>38</sup> John Kleinen and Manon Osseweijer (eds.), *Pirates, Ports, and Coasts in Asia: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, 2010, pp. 31-289.

<sup>39</sup> Nicholas Tarling, *Piracy and Politics in the Malay World: A Study of British Imperialism in Nineteenth Century South-East Asia*, 1963, pp. 1-25 and *The Cambridge history of South East Asia*, Vol. 2, (edited), 1992, pp. 5-26.

<sup>40</sup> James Francis Warren, *The Sulu Zone, 1768-1898: The Dynamics of External Trade, Slavery and Ethnicity in the Transformation of a Southeast Asian Maritime State*, 1981, pp. 5-214.

<sup>41</sup> Economy of Sulu zone depended on sea trade and forest products which required labour in large amount.

where Jolo is reported as important entrepot for Sultan of Sulu in commodities like opium, guns, bird's nest, *tripang* (sea cucumber) and slaves. Tea being significant item which the English East India Company (EIC) wanted to trade in China; subsequently they were successful in replacing silver by exchanging it with opium obtained from India during late 18<sup>th</sup> century. Merchants exchanged opium, firearms, pearls shell, *tripang*, bird's nest and other product from Jolo and traded in China since 1775. Merchant ships were plundered by slave raiding communities: *Iranum* and *Balangingi* pirates as the presence of Portuguese, the Spanish and the Dutch disrupted existing trade pattern of Southeast Asia because of their attempt to monopolies trade and commerce.

John Kleinen and Manon Osseweijer<sup>42</sup> have also opined on EIOs piracy and equated it with robbery, raiding and terrorism. It is committed by coastal marginal population for their livelihood and associated with small contending states. Chinese pirates helped Tayson in curbing of rebellion in Vietnam (1786-1802) and evolved as state-former. Giang Binh port situated between Vietnam and China served as pirates' haven where illegal activities related to crime, violence, gambling, smuggling and piracy remained in vogue for livelihood in late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century till maritime piracy was completely quashed.

**[Table II in landscape layout is enclosed in this chapter and refer map on piracy for pre-c.1750 (8 pages).]**

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<sup>42</sup> John Kleinen and Manon Osseweijer (eds.), *Pirates, Ports, and Coasts in Asia: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, 2010, pp. 31-50.



## **Piracy & Western Indian Ocean: since antiquity to c. 1750**

Indian scholar R. N. Saletore<sup>43</sup> (1978) traced the origin of piracy from seafaring communities of Assyrians (northern Iraq) and Phoenicians (Eastern Mediterranean). According to Saletore, Assyrians or *Asuras* are referred in *Mahabharat* and their dwelling was an ocean or sea. Similarly epic *Ramayan* termed *Asuras* as people with strength from Sri Lanka and carried commerce after training from merchant of Sumer and Akkad (Iraq). Saletore submission suggests that the pirates or *samudridaku* remained present since antiquity and mercantile activity in those times in Indian Ocean was full of challenges.<sup>44</sup> He traces the incidences of

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<sup>43</sup>R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, p.11.

<sup>44</sup>Although the Assyrians (*Asuras*) have not been directly called pirates, still they had all their characteristics. They were a sea-faring people, powerful, deceitful, cruel, savage, addicted to wine and women, terrible in battle, treacherous and given to luxury. They moved about without hooks, bonds of iron and iron nets, spoke a barbarous dialect, lived in fortified cities, hunted with fierce dogs, the lion, the wild ass and mutilated the slain. They led their prisoners with ropes through their under lips, gouged out their eyes and flayed them with knives. They were haughty, arrogant and sensuous. They practiced trade, scouring the seas with only one object – gain or profit. Nahun described their capital Nineveh as “the bloody city, full of lies and robbery.” All these characteristics were typical of pirates in India and elsewhere... Those marts were stocked with Indian goods for sale to the near-eastern countries like Persia... ...the Arabs remained almost the sole carriers of Indian trade and incidentally the participants of piracy in the Indian Ocean. The Arabs, prior to Alexander’s invasion, had commenced trading with India, as we learn from Pausanios (479-394 B.C.) and, after Alexander’s death in 323 B. C., the Ptolemies opened the Canal to the Red Sea, which became such an ignoble haunt of piracy which was quelled only in 1835. With the rise and expansion of Ptolemaic trade with India and the eastern countries, Arabic commerce declined and their monopoly of that trade was snuffed out as noted in the Quran when their largest cities like Carmana were completely ruined and abandoned. One of the Ptolemaic kings, Antiochus IV Epiphanus (c. 215-163 B.C.) held a grand pageant in which many Indian animals like the tiger, panther, rhinoceros, Indian attendants carrying parrots and peacocks, and “cow-men” leading Indian bulls, Indian women, Indian hunting dogs and Indian spices were prominent... The Ptolemies were conquered by the Roman emperor (p.15) Augustus in 30 B.C. The Ptolemies and the Seleucids came to be known as the Yavanas or Yonas, a term applied to all Ionians and later to the Muslims of India. The Arab intermediaries also joined the ranks of the pirates and Panini (c. 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.) refers to the military

piracy and presence of pirates from Sanskrit, Pali, Greek and Latin texts since 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. in the arms of the WIO along the coast of Malabar, Andhra, Konkan and Gujarat.<sup>45</sup> Subsequently these have been verified by inscriptions, report of ASI, Imperial *Gazetteers and Gazetteers* of Bombay Presidency-Baroda, *Kachchh, Kathiawad*, Konkan; Madras Presidency-Malabar and the Princely States.<sup>46</sup> It is recorded for fourth century, “pirate ships (*himsrika*) or vessel bound for the country of an enemy, as well as those, which violated the customs regulations and the rules prevalent in port towns (*pattana*), were to be destroyed. This was the responsibility of the Superintendent of Ships (*Naukadhyaksha*). It is likely that, in view of excessive risks of sea voyages from pirates especially, not to mention the inherent dangers of sea-travel itself, the legal interest leviable among sea-traders (*samudranam*) was 20 *panas* per month whereas 1 ½ *panas* per month per cent was considered equitable, while ordinary commercial interest

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corporations of the Parsu (Persians), Asura (Assyrians) and the Yava script...; *ibid.*, pp. 12-15.

<sup>45</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 15-27 and see Pierre Schneider, “ Before the Somali Threat: Piracy in the Ancient Indian Ocean, *The Journal of the Hakluyt Society* , July 2014 pp. 1-28 & Prithwis Chandra Chakravarti “Naval Warfare in ancient India”, *The Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No.4 1930. pp. 645-64.

<sup>46</sup>*The Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Cutch, Palanpur and Mahi Kantha*, Vol. V, 1880, pp. 131, 140 & 154-58; *The Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Rewa Kantha, Narukot, Cambay, and Surat States*, Vol. VI, 1880, pp. 220-21; *The Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Kathiawar*, Vol. VIII, 1884, pp.153-54 & 303-309; *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency: Satara*, Vol. XIX, 1886, p. 265; *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman, and Central Arabia*, Vol. II, 1908, pp. 630-718; *The Gazetteer of Bombay City and Island*, Vol. II, 1909, pp. 80-83; *Gazetteer of Bombay Presidency-Gujarat: Surat and Broach*, Vol. II, 1877, pp. 80-90; John De La Valette, *An Atlas of the Progress in Nawanagar State*, 1932, pp. N.6-N.20; Maharashtra State Archives, *Maps of India, 1795-1935*, 1978, pp. 1-4; *The Times, Atlas of the Oceans*, 1983, pp. 187-88 and see R. G. S. Cooper, *The Anglo-Maratha Campaigns and the Contest for India: The Struggle for Control of the South Asian Military Economy*, 2005, pp. 327-34.

(*vyavaharika*) was only 5 % and 10% was the interest among the forest traders. The inference, therefore, is that among sea traders the legal interest was the highest, viz., 25 times the equitable rate, 4 times that of the commercial rate and twice that current among the forest merchants”.<sup>47</sup> Saletore has also identified the pirates as “Medieval Pirates” (Chapter II) and documents piracy of indigenous lot as “Indian Pirates” for the period between 11<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries terming as “The Heyday of Indian Piracy” [(Chapter III), can be equated with Golden Age of Piracy] wherein, he opines that there was no respite from piracy since 10<sup>th</sup> century and is traceable in the Gulf of Cambay, Makran, Konkan, Gujarat and Malabar Coast till 14<sup>th</sup> century and later the piratical aggressions got frequented at other *bandars* and *baras* as well depending upon the ‘trade and commerce potential of the hinterland and intra-regional trade’; and the ‘politico-economic circumstances’ in forthcoming centuries.<sup>48</sup> Saletore while documenting Indian medieval pirates also refers to pirates of *Kish* operational in Persian Gulf, who inflicted aggressions between Makran coast up till the Gulf of Cambay during the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries; pirates from Malabar and Konkan- belonging to different pockets are identified as *Kolis*, *Kunjalis*, *Shirkes* and from Jagat, Shankhodar, Valsad, Byet, Dwarka, Okha, Veraval, Mundra, Mandvi, etc. in Gujarat who were mainly Hindus, and Arab seafarers along the

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<sup>47</sup>R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, p. 15.

<sup>48</sup>I have considered incidences of Piracy in the arms of WIO only. See R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 28-70.

seaboard who indulged in ‘piratical’ aggressions. It must be considered here that what has gone into making of an individual a pirate or community emerging as plunders on sea? Quick reading of Saletoore suggests that the political and economic circumstances played crucial role, for example: if the state was not benevolent in terms of revenue extraction and other related conditions a seafarer may emerge belligerent and attack the state owned ships depending upon the opportunity individually or supported by his crew and fellow-persons; another condition could be that the seafarer is engaged by the state or merchants to vanguard there commodities on board and vessels against the other seafarer who may belong to indigenous lot from the surroundings or far-flung areas or by privateers venturing in the Indian Ocean in post fifteenth century for commercial reasons. Western Indian Ocean has narrations from both the perspectives which can be verified from travellers accounts; chronicles where the execution of plunderer seafarer is hailed and in those documents they are branded with several titles to be understood as pirates; while, the natives, erected hero-stones / *palias* in *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh* in the memory of the slain.

M. N. Pearson (1981) mentioned that piracy was widespread in Malabar and Gujarat during the 15<sup>th</sup> century and it further spread to the Persian Gulf in 16<sup>th</sup> century. Ships were attacked and robbing of merchants by pirates was a frequent phenomenon. The Portuguese were also responsible for ‘piratical’ aggressions<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup>M. N. Pearson, *Coastal Western India: Studies from the Portuguese Records*, 1981, p. 32.

Table II sketches the details of piratical aggressions in WIO to reflect upon pirates, piracy, ‘piratical’ aggressions, plunder after shipwreck, life on sea board, arms of the pirates and measure taken to curb piracy, protection of travellers (female or male) by crew or by the ruler in whose territory the instances were taking place. As sea was free zone, the categories mentioned earlier as seafarers in chapter I and the rulers in the various arms of WIO preceded with their interests, strength and policies. For instance, Ibn Battuta refers to ship wrecking and plunder at Quilon. Description is provided here:<sup>50</sup>

I remained on land to perform the Friday prayer and then to join them, while **Malik Sumbul and Zahir-ud-din boarded the boat with the presents.** Then a servant of mine named Hilal came to me on Friday morning and said, **‘The cabin which we have taken on the junk is too small and unsuitable.’** I informed the captain of the ship (*nakhuda*) who expressed his inability to help in the matter. ‘But would you prefer to be on the *kakam*?’ He asked. ‘On it,’ he added, ‘there are cabins to suit your choice.’ ‘Right’, said I and gave my people the order. They brought my female slaves and goods on to the *kakam* and embarked on it before the Friday prayer. Usually the waves on this sea rise regularly after the ‘asr prayer when nobody can embark. The other junks had already departed and the only one left was the one on which were the presents; **and there was a junk whose owners had decided to stop for the winter at Fandarayna;** then there was the above-mentioned *kakam*. We spent Friday night along the shore without being able to reach the *kakam* and the people on it could not come to us. Nothing had remained **with me except a carpet on which to lay myself.** The junk and the *kakam* were far out of the harbor by Saturday morning. The junk on which the passengers were bound for Fandarayna was shattered by the sea and broken (shipwreck), and some of them were drowned while some were saved. Among the survivors was a slave girl, who belonged to one of the merchants and was very dear to him. He desired to give ten gold *dinars* to one who might save her, and she had clung to a piece of wood at the back of the junk. **One of the sailors of Hormuz heard her cry and saved her.** But he declined to accept the *dinars* saying, ‘I have done that only for...the sea shattered also the junk which contained the presents, and all who were on it died. In the morning we looked at the place where their corpses

<sup>50</sup> Mahdi Hussain (trans.), *The Rehla of Ibn Battuta (India, Maldives Islands and Ceylon,* 1976, pp. 191-92; H.A.R. Gibb, *Ibn Battuta: Travels in Asia and Africa 1325-1354*, 1953, pp. 225-30 and H. P. Ray, “Contested Sea Spaces: Of Piracy and Sea Battles Along the West Coast of India” in *Bridging the Gulf: Maritime Cultural Heritage of the Western Indian Ocean*, 2016, p. 130.

lay and I saw that Zahir-ud-din had broken his skull, and his brain had come out, and that a nail had penetrated one temple of Malik Sumbul and had come out at the other. We prayed over their corpses and buried them. Then I saw the heathen ruler (sultan) of Calicut who wore a large piece of white cloth around his middle from the navel to the knees and on his head he wore a small turban. He was barefooted, and a servant held an umbrella over his head. A fire was lit before him on the coast and his police officers (*zabaniya*)<sup>1</sup> belaboured the people so that they should not plunder what the sea had cast up...it is the custom in the country of Malabar that whenever a ship is destroyed whatever is saved from it goes to the treasury. Such is not the custom in this town alone. Here, the lawful proprietors collect whatever is thrown up by the sea and therefore, the town is flourishing, and great is the influx of foreigners.

On return journey towards Gujarat, Ibn Battuta once again mentions about the presence of local pirates along the west coast of India in Gujarat, the description is provided by Saleore in following words which are identified largely as *Malabar*is:

...Two years later, he had another bitter experience **with pirates who were not Indians**. After his return to Calicut, he heard from two of his slaves who had been on the *Kakun*, the **smallest of three Chinese boats**, which will be described after, that the ruler of Sumatra had seized his slave girls, that his goods had been captured by various hands and that his companions had been driven away to China, Sumatra and Bengal. This discloses that the pirates of Sumatra were **no better than those of Debal, Thana, Goa or Malabar**. In 1326 while sailing from Calicut to Honnavara in North Kanara, relates Ibn Battuta, “at the end of the season for voyaging,” viz. the beginning of June, his ship met **four “fighting vessels” on his way and, though they “were afraid of them” were not harmed by them in any way**...Alien mercenaries were employed on board ships to combat Indian pirates at sea. Ibrahim, the captain of the ship mentioned earlier, sent his son with Ibn Battuta’s party, on a ship called *al-Ugayri*, which resembled a galley but was rather broad. It had sixty oars and was covered with a roof during any encounter with pirates or enemies “to protect the rowers from arrows and stones.” Ibn Battuta himself went on board another ship called *al-Jagir*, which had a complement of fifty rowers, who were locals and **fifty Abyssinian men-at-arms**. The latter were the “guarantors of safety on the Indian ocean.”...Ibn Battuta thought so highly of them that he stated “Let there but one of them on a ship, and it would be avoided by the Indian pirates and idolators.” This was no doubt a gross exaggeration for Indian pirates and the people in general were never so terribly in awe of **such Habshis as they were called for they had been in India from centuries and were well-known to the common people, who had never been in any terror of them at any time** (*Siddis*). Had that been really the case, at least so far as ships were concerned, then all the ships would have gladly recruited the *Habshis* who were available by the ship-load on all occasions...Ibn Battuta’s encounters with Indian pirates **continued in 1344**. On returning to Fattan (Patan?), he found eight vessels sailing to Yemen. On one of them he embarked and they fell in with four war-ships, which engaged them for



a short time. Later they retreated and Ibn Battuta's ships proceeded to *Kawlam* (Quilon in Kerala). **These ships could not be of Malabari pirates for Fattan was outside Malabar jurisdiction and into such areas their ships rarely encroached, although they roamed about freely on the west coast.** Later he sailed in another vessel with the intention of visiting Sultan Jamaluddin of Hinawar (Honnavar). When they reached the small island between that place and Fakanur (Pigeon Island? Barakur?) they were **"assailed by the infidels with twelve war-ships" who fought them vigorously**, getting the better of Ibn Battuta's party, **seized all what he had got, kept in reserve, together with the jewels and precious stones which the king of Ceylon had presented him, his clothes and travelling provisions, leaving him no covering excepting his trousers!** In addition, **those pirates seized the possessions of everyone on board and abandoned them on the shore of the west coast. A precisely similar fate overtook Samarkhandi when he was attacked and captured by the pirates of Jagat in Gujarat...**

Saletore<sup>51</sup> further inform us of piracy on the basis of information from Abdur Razzak, the ambassador to the court of the Vijayanagar Emperor Deva Raya II, in 1442 who found that the inhabitants of Calicut were "adventurous sailors" and were famous as *"Tchini-Betchegan"* or the sons of the Chinese. They were pirates who did not dare to attack the vessels of Calicut. Their name implies that they were the illegitimate children of the Chinese sea-men and traders who were constant visitors of the Indian sub-continent. Indian pirates were no respecters of any one, rich or poor, king or commoner when it meant to **their prey on the high seas from Hormuz to China.** In 1442, Abdur Razzak discovered how several individuals had brought with them a certain number of horses and 'all sorts of things'. When this cargo arrival was known to these pirates, whose intelligence system seems to have been fairly efficient, they captured this ship, seized all the wealth on board as well as the crew and passengers "who

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<sup>51</sup>R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, p. 34.

narrowly escaped with their lives.” They are called by Abdur Razzak as **“cruel pirates” who remained engaged in the hazardous occupation of piracy, fraught with such incalculable dangers.** Another significant reference to piratical aggression along the Malabar and Sri Lankan coast is reported in c. 1536 by one Ali Abraham *Marka*‘ a bold pirate and gallant cavalier, who arrived in Colombo<sup>52</sup> at *Kottee*; this incidence engaged the local ruler and the Portuguese active in South-East Asia. Seize by the mentioned pirate and his crew was gruesome and plunder remained intense; it heavily impacted the maritime traffic in the Indian Ocean with stories and narrations of terror.

Reference to Malabar pirates are also known for the years 1606 and 1607 where the indigenous lot seized the ship owned by Portuguese and gave them tough fight. This in fact reflects the maritime rivalry for commerce among those faring in the Indian Ocean for fortune. Saletore<sup>53</sup> expresses the same in following words:

In 1606 a Portuguese Viceroy, Martin Affonso de Castro, was expected to arrive with a powerful fleet to drive out the Dutch from India. **It came with 9 warships and “six” for the voyage.** They were in the “calm of Guinea” and never united later. After many vicissitudes of varying fortune, they finally came to Goa and sailing from Goa sailed “along the coast of Malabar, spoiling and burning all they could meet with.” The Zamorin is said to have permitted them to build a fortress at Chaul. At that time the Malabars were considered “masters of all these (Indian) seas.” **In this year (1606) the Malabarres (Malabars) vexed the Portugals and took or sank “at times 60 sails or more.”**

<sup>52</sup>Donald Obeyesekere, *Outlines of Ceylon History, The Times of Ceylon*, 1911, pp. 212-13.

<sup>53</sup>R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 170-71.

In 1607 the English received information that the Malabars captured “an Ormuz ship” and three frigates, probably Portuguese and shortly afterwards, a Portuguese fleet of 25 frigates from Cochin, whose ruler was friendly to them, was attacked by the Malabar pirates. **They captured 16 of them and burnt them while the rest escaped “if miserable spoil can be an escape.”** Frigates and galleys of the Malabars were “spoiling on the coast” but details of the destruction they wrought are lesser known.

It is interesting to note that the narrations of travellers spread so largely that the reports of the 19<sup>th</sup> century British Officials found them true. To cite an example are the memoirs by Captain MacMurdo,<sup>54</sup> Alexander Burnes,<sup>55</sup> Marianna Postan<sup>56</sup> and Tod<sup>57</sup>.

Rawlinson<sup>58</sup> also reports about Malabar pirates carrying out aggression in the Konkan coast, the victim mentioned is the ship ‘Hope’ in the year 1640. Though this ship was saved by Portuguese but the pirates (for Portuguese) ran away with booty and imprisoned the passengers. The prisoners were also taken away by them. In fact, Rawlinson draws our attention to several other incidences where the indigenous / native pirates and the European pirates carried out aggression for several reasons and their brutality towards each other remained unmatched. Sometimes the ships of the native lot were inoffensive, however, they became target of ‘piratical’ aggressions by Europeans, particularly

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<sup>54</sup>James MacMurdo, *Memoirs on the Province of Kattywar with remarks on the Runn of Kutch and the District of Okhamandal*, 1856 pp.12, 15, 18, 23, 47, 55, 59-60.

<sup>55</sup>Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara Being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia; Also Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore in Three Volumes*, Vol. I, 1835, pp. 12 & 42.

<sup>56</sup>Marianna Postan, *Cutch or Random Sketches, taken during a Residence in one of the Northern Provinces of Western India; interspersed with Legends and Traditions*, 2001 & also see Western Indian in 1838-1839, p. 5, 45, 47, 48-49, 56, 59 & 152.

<sup>57</sup>James. Burns, *A Sketch of the History of Cutch*, New Delhi, (reprint), 2004, pp. 13-20.

<sup>58</sup>H.G. Rawlinson, *British Beginnings in Western India 1579-1657*, 1921, p. 109.

Portuguese in the 17<sup>th</sup> century in the Indian waters. In this case, English were making raids to secure Surat port for themselves and they also became actors in ‘piratical’ aggressions. Here, reference to two ships – *Mahmudi* & *Taufiqui* is noteworthy<sup>59</sup>. Role of William Cobbe also needs attention, to understand the nature of ‘piratical’ aggressions which is discussed further in this chapter.

Ruby Maloni (1991) based on papers of Surat Factory Records<sup>60</sup> constructs Piracy in Indian waters within the territory of Western Indian Ocean highlighted in first Chapter while ascertaining curves and choke points in gulf, strait and bay. She observes following for the 16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> century pirates world:

- “The sixteenth century was a watershed between ‘peaceful trading’ and ‘armed trading’ in the Indian Ocean.
- From the very beginning, the Portuguese discovery of the Cape route to India was accompanied by a determination to place ‘coercive methods’ before those of normal ‘peaceful commerce’. For instance, Pedro Alvarez Cabral's instructions in c.1500 were that if ships trading with Calicut were encountered he would take possession of them. For example: "of their merchandise and property and also of the Moors who are in the ships."
- Therefore, every Indian ship had to buy a *cartaz*, if it was to avoid seizure and confiscation of its cargo. The revenue earned

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<sup>59</sup>*ibid.*, pp.101-103. Also see Ruby Maloni, “Piracy in Indian Waters in the Seventeenth Century” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, PIHC, Vol. 52, 1991, pp. 410–15. [www.jstor.org/stable/44142635](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44142635).

<sup>60</sup>Ruby Maloni, “Piracy in Indian Waters in the Seventeenth Century”, *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, PIHC, Vol. 52, 1991, pp. 410–15. [www.jstor.org/stable/44142635](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44142635).

through this redistributive enterprise was substantial, and made the *Estado da India* a ‘piratical’ state or in Braudel’s terms, simply ‘customs officials’.

- The violent overture of the Portuguese was taken up by the English and the Dutch, continuing the undisguised use of sea power and payment for protection en route.

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, one finds references to indigenous shipping<sup>61</sup> in the Indian Ocean equipped with passes from several European nations.<sup>62</sup>

- The Surat Factory Records contain clear references to the capture of Indian vessels without English passes, and the organisation of *kafilas* or convoys with an aim at control. By 1630 the English fleet at Surat was trying to protect Indian ships plying the Red Sea trade, such as the *Shahi*, after richly laden ships like the *Musahi* had been seized by the Portuguese. In 1690’s, the English continued to escort Indian vessels in this area, particularly Aurangzeb's Mocha 'junks'.

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<sup>61</sup>A. J. Qaisar, *The Indian Response to European Technology and Culture* (A. 1498-1707), 1982, pp. 20-36 and 143-50 and Chapters on shipping in Mughal India in Shireen Moosvi, *People Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, 2008, pp. 243-296; Pierre-Yves Manguin, “Asian Ship-building Traditions in the Indian Ocean at the Dawn of European Expansion” in Om Prakash (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, 2012, pp. 597-632; B. Arunachalam “Technology of Indian Sea Navigation (c. 1200-c. 1800)”, *The Medieval History Journal* 2008; Vol.11, pp. 187-227; “Traditional Sea and Sky Wisdom of Indian Semen and Their Practical Applications” in Himanshu Prabha Ray & Jean-Francois SALLES (ed.), *Tradition and Archaeology Early Maritime Contacts in the Indian Ocean*, 1996 & see David Parkin and Ruth Barnes (eds.), *Ships and the Development of Maritime Technology in the Indian Ocean*, 2002.

<sup>62</sup>Anne Bulley, *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833*, 2000 pp. Introduction & 38-86 (Refer Map 1 & 2)

➤ Convoys were organised with a dual purpose: to protect against pirates, first to ensure that the protected ships traded according to their conditions. This means that expenditure on the pass was ‘un-reciprocal extortion’ by the Europeans: the Portuguese, then by the Dutch and the English leading to birth of monopolistic system in Indian Commercial history.

In response to this a challenge on a bellicose level originated from the '*Malabaris*', who were skilled and determined enough to resist. Factory records often mention this indigenous group. Portuguese held their ships and restricted their mobility. And as per the Portuguese records termed them as '*Malavares*', who were frequently attacking on them. We find mention to *Kunjalis* as '*corsairs*' or *corsario* in the Portuguese records and in the files of Foreign Department and Secret Diaries of the Political Department consulted by me.

*Malabaris* were described by Careri<sup>63</sup> as the most ferocious of pirates, consisting of men from 'nationalities' like "the Moors, Gentiles, Jews and Christians". They belonged to the seafaring merchant community of *Moplahs* / *Mappila*. Ralph Fitch (1583-91), English traveller visited in Malabar and he commented on Zamorin's people that: "His people go to the sea to 'robbe and steale'... Their chief Captain is called Cogi Alli (Qazi Ali); he had three castles under him... When the Portugal complains to the

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<sup>63</sup>Thevenot and Careri, *Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, S. N. Sen (ed.) 1949, p. 185.



king, he said he did not send them out; but he consented that they go”.<sup>64</sup>

It is recorded in Surat papers<sup>65</sup> that heads of powerful *Moplah* families armed their own fleets; among them was Muhammad *Marakkar* who received the title of *Kunjali* from Zamorin. Becoming his naval auxiliaries, the *Moplah-Kunjalis* clearly did take part in politics at sea. Their area of operations was positioned at the northern most part of Malabar, ruled by the Kolattiri Raja with his power base at Kannur/Cannanore. The coastal creeks, lagoons and estuaries of these two domains harboured the Malabar pirates. Porakkad, Ponnani, Kappatt, Pantalayini, Kollam and Chaliyam offered sites for clandestine activities and served as safe havens for natives. The Malabar's naval strength showed an increased vigour in direct challenges to European naval power in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. In fact, some historians hold that the Portuguese were exhausted by the naval war waged against them. *Sambuks* and *Almadias* sailed the length of the west coast, escorted by Malabar *paraos* / pirates. These were fast small galleys of approx. 60 tons, manned on each side by 20-10 oarsmen; they could carry 3 or 4 pieces of artillery and more than 100 archers or arquebusiers. They were open decked and lateen rigged, with one or two masts. The Malabar sailors who were

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<sup>64</sup>Ralph Fitch (1583-91) in William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India 1583-1617*, 1921, p. 45.

<sup>65</sup>Ruby Maloni, “Piracy in Indian Waters in the Seventeenth Century” *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, PIHC, Vol. 52, 1991, pp. 410-15.  
[www.jstor.org/stable/44142635](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44142635).

intrepid seaman could outmanoeuvre bigger vessels, their common mode of attack was to throw 'fire pots' on the deck of the enemy ship.

To the English factors the *Malabaris* continued to be a tangible threat and an obstructive presence. This was seized as an excuse for condoning or even initiating seizure of Indian merchant vessels and freebooting on the high seas. As an incentive to the freighted English ships for this kind of activity, the Company servants offered 1/6 of the loot to the commander and crew. President Matthew Andrews implicitly instructed the commander of the American Frigate<sup>66</sup>:

The Mallabars that you may encounter, we desire you if possible not to let escape, but to seize on the vessels, empty the goods, and then fire them, setting the men on shore the next land you can conveniently come at. For your so doing, 1/6th part is yours, and the ship's Company's share.

In functional terms among *Malabaris*, some were pirates; some were guerrilla warriors and many inoffensive traders. The movement of the *Malabari* merchants and traders was extended in Gujarat as well during the 17<sup>th</sup> century with the emerging prosperity of Surat *bandar* and several other *baras* along the *Konkan*, *Kathiawad* and *Kachchh* (Mandvi and Mundra in 1682 & 1690)<sup>67</sup> coast which in turn extended to Persian Gulf, Red Sea and

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<sup>66</sup> Surat Factory Diary 1600-69, Commission dated April 13, 1661 in Ruby Maloni, "Piracy in Indian Waters in the Seventeenth Century", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress, PIHC*, Vol. 52, 1991, pp. 410–15. [www.jstor.org/stable/44142635](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44142635).

<sup>67</sup> Adhya B. Saxena, "Mandvi & Mundra: Port-Towns of Kachchh, Gujarat c.1550-c.1900", Chapter XIV in *Urbanization & Cities Histories*, Yogesh Sharma (ed.), Primus, Delhi, 2014, pp. 575-642 and Adhya Bharti Saxena, "Capitalism, Colonialism and Cities in Early Modern India" Block 6, Unit 28, *IGNOU Module for Master's in History Degree*, 2017, pp. 1-21.

East Africa in the first half of 18<sup>th</sup> century. Eighteenth century being the century of ‘continuity and change’ has evidenced rise of major and minor ports for example, Mumbai in place of Surat, Mandvi and Mundra in place of Lakhpat and Jakhau.

According to William Finch, in 1609, rich laden of Diu which was accompanied by 13 frigates<sup>68</sup> were plundered by the *Malabaris*. In 1619, the English East India Company (EIC) seized two Calicut ships to recover Zamorin’s debt. It led hostility between Zamorin and the English East India Company. Sinnappah Arasaratnam<sup>69</sup> mentions that increase of piracy by the Malabar pirates in the water of western India and the reason for it was due to defeat and destruction of *Khunjali Marakkar*. Virji Vohra<sup>70</sup>, Surat merchant paid the ransom on the English East India Company (EIC) behalf for the release of crews. In 1640, a Malabar ship was taken by the English East India Company (EIC) after furious battle with *Malabaris* and the ship was carrying cargo value of Rs. 2,00,000/- which was sailing from Mocha to Kannur/Cannanore<sup>71</sup> The English East India Company (EIC) was expanding their trade from Surat to Malabar to gain pepper monopoly. Second Anglo-Dutch War of 1666 isolated the English factories in Malabar. The Dutch East India Company (VOC) also focused their attention to the Malabar after they defeated the

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<sup>68</sup> William Finch in William Foster (ed.), *Early Travels in India 1583-1619*, 1921, p. 129.

<sup>69</sup> Sinnappah Arasaratnam, *Maritime India in the Seventeenth Century*, 1994, pp. 96-97.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.*, p.97.

Portuguese in Sri Lanka.<sup>72</sup> I had an opportunity to visit Dutch fort in Kannur in December 2008 which has given me an insight to understand the relationship between land and sea, navigational life and navigation acumen. It was here I located an inscription at Kannur depicting the pirate symbol.

At the same time European piracy in the Arabian Sea became a source of repetitive conflict with the Mughal authorities, the most prominent example of which was the capture of Aurangzeb's ship *Ganj-i Sawai* by the English pirate Henry Every. It was commonly believed in Surat that the servants of the English factory had dealings with English pirates. The Emperor's suppressive measures against the English factors highlight a system of balance of threats.<sup>73</sup> This is recorded by Biddulph<sup>74</sup> as:

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<sup>72</sup>Abdul sheriff & Engseng Ho (eds.), *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies*, London, 2014, pp.11-23.

<sup>73</sup>Exasperated at the breakdown of protection on the pilgrimage route, Aurangzeb ordered Sir John Gayer, the 'old' Governor and his fellow servants to be thrown into prison, an episode taken advantage of by the 'new' Company's Governor Sir Nicholas Waite (1700-08). At Masulipatam also, Aurangzeb's demand to Sir William Norris was to give Protection to Mughal shipping. Whenever a dispute broke out between one of the trading companies and the Mughal authorities, the first step taken by the latter was to cut-off the supplies. The reply of the factors was to make prizes of Indian vessels. There were many instances of such a policy of brinkmanship. In so far as the European factories until they developed into fortified settlements- were at the mercy of the Mughal, there was a balance of threats. Ruby Maloni, "Piracy in Indian Waters in the Seventeenth Century", *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, PIHC, Vol. 52, 1991, pp. 410-15. [www.jstor.org/stable/44142635](http://www.jstor.org/stable/44142635). Also see Biddulph, John, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, London, 1907, pp. 15-16 and Hamilton, Alexander, *A New Account of the East Indies*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, Vol. 1, New Delhi, 1995, pp. 42-43.

<sup>74</sup>Biddulph, John, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, London, 1907, pp.15-16 and (The Life and Adventures of Capt. John Avery, written in 1709, claimed that he had not only scarpered off with **the Emperor's ship but with his granddaughter as well, who happened to be on board**. The couple, it suggested, was living in Madagascar in marital bliss... The enraged Aurangzeb then swiftly closed down four of the Company's factories in India, threatened to attack Bombay, and expel the English from the subcontinent. The Company had still not

President Harris knew that the least interest shown in the fate of the rovers would be fatal to the interests of the Company, and was relieved when he heard that they had been sent to Aurungzeb's camp; after which they are heard of no more...In the beginning of 1692, authority was given to the Company's commanders to seize pirates and hold them till the King's pleasure was known, but the measure was of small effect. **The pirates were prime seamen, who out sailed and outfought the Company's ships; while among the Company's crews they had numerous sympathizers.** The prizes to be gained were so great and the risks so small, that the Company could hardly restrain their own men from joining the sea rovers. Thus, in 1694, John Steel' ran away with the long boat of the Ruby frigate. Sixteen others who had plotted to join him were detected in time, and clapped in irons. **The French and Dutch gave passes to all who applied for them,** so Steel placed himself under French protection, and for two years 'that rogue Steel' finds frequent mention in the coast letters. Four years later Steel was arrested in England. But though the directors had been supplied with many accounts of his misdeeds, no sworn evidence could be produced against him, so Steel escaped scot-free...**All other pirates, however, were destined to be eclipsed in fame by Henry Every, alias Bridgman, who now made his appearance in the Indian seas.** His exploits, the great wealth he amassed **by piracy, and his reputed marriage with a Mogul princess, continued to excite the public mind long after he had disappeared from the scene.** Several biographies of him were written, one of them attributed to Defoe, all of them containing great exaggerations; and a play, **The Successful Pirate, was written in his honour.** His biographers generally give his name as John Avery, but it was as is here given. According to the account of Van Broeck, a Dutchman, who was detained **on board his ship for a time, and was on good terms with him, he was born at Plymouth, the son of a trading captain who had served in the navy under...**



Illustration I: Henry Every<sup>75</sup>

recovered from the disastrous Child's War, and its fortunes were almost entirely dependent on trade with the Mughals. To appease the Emperor, Avery and his men were declared exempt from all pardon by the British Parliament in 1696, and the Company promised to compensate for the loss of Aurangzeb's treasure fleet. By this time Avery was in the Bahamas and outside the jurisdiction of the East India Company. His capture became a matter of critical national importance, but he continued to evade escape.).

<sup>75</sup>From *The Hindu* (Newspaper) <https://www.thehindu.com/society/how-an-english-pirate-nearly-sunk-the-fortunes-of-the-east-india-company-when-he-attacked-aurangzeb-treasure-fleet/article22783704.ece>



On the Konkan and Andhra coast one comes across pirates in the 15<sup>th</sup> century who are referred as ‘Maratha Pirates’ by Saletore (Konkan coast).<sup>76</sup> According to Nikitin, the Russian traveller, in 1468 “Sea” (western seaboard of Indian subcontinent) was “infested with pirates, all of whom were *kofars* (*kafirs*) and prayed to stone idols”. It means that Nikitin was referring to indigenous Hindu pirates. Firishta also inform us of one Shankar Rao of Kehlina (Vishalgarh) who constantly maintained a fleet of three hundred vessels and interrupted the traffic of muslims on way to *hajj*. He was lately suppressed by Mahmud Gawan. Similarly on the Goan coast Mahmud Gawan, himself ‘a pirate’ conquered Goa by means of piracy after reducing Shankar Rao’s Kehlina fortress and “took ample revenge for the slaughter of the former *Malik-ut-Tujar*<sup>77</sup> and his army”; Gawan marched against the fort and island

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<sup>76</sup>(the area Nikitin mentions is **Junnar in Maharashtra** was the pirates haven. By then the Marathas, who had been under the administrative tutelage of the Vijayanagara Emperors (1346-1646) and the Muslim Sultans of Bijapur and Ahmadnagar, had become well-trained in many of the aspects of administration; **reference to Visalgarh pirates is as follows:** During the reign of Allauddin Shah Bahmini II of Gulburga, Malik-ut-Tujar, one of his chief nobles, was lured by a Raja named Sitka (Shirke) by his alleged family jealousy with Shankar Rao of Kehlina, who was **also a pirate, to attack Kehlina in 1453**. In this venture, Shankar Rao, with Shirke’s connivance, according to Firishta, who cannot be wholly relied upon, being highly prejudiced and anti-Hindu, destroyed 7000 of Malik-ut-Tujar’s troops, 500 nobles including Tujar himself, in the woods of Vishalgarh into which he had been lured by Shirke. They died a well-deserved death and for this massacre Mahmud Bigarha wreaked a base revenge later) by R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 35-36; Also see. M. S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat*, Vol. I, pp. 19- 29.

<sup>77</sup>*ibid.*, p. 39, (In 1431 complaints were made to Ahmad Shah Bahmani that Malik Hassan called Malik-ut-Tujjar, one of the great nobles of that ruler, had come from the Deccan and had taken forcible possession of Mahim, in Bombay near Bandra, then under the Bahmanis of Golconda, and the neighbouring districts and captured some Muslims. Tujjar appealed to Mahmud Begarha for support and he sent 10,000 horse in response to an appeal from Ahmad Shah, who had sent a large force with ships and men under his son, Zafar Khan, Malik Hassan was attacked and in a fierce battle defeated, several of his ships being captured (according to some accounts 700 which may be an exaggeration)



of Goa, then belonging to the Vijayanagar empire, “sending a hundred and twenty vessels to attack it by sea,” while he marched against it by land, without any cause or provocation, and “before the Ray (*Raya*) of Vijayanagara could oppose his design, he made himself master of the place”.

Konkan<sup>78</sup> has long coastline and good harbour near to the Arabian Sea. In the early 17<sup>th</sup> century, the Europeans- Portuguese, English, Dutch and French established their factories in Konkan as well.<sup>79</sup> The Marathas built several forts since the time of *Chhatrapati* Shivaji; the Konkan hill-fort along the coast, which for some time was their capital came under control of Tukoji, father of famous Maratha admiral Kanhoji Angria.<sup>80</sup> Kanhoji Angria<sup>81</sup>, admiral of the Marathas controlled Konkan, had skirmishes with *Estado da India*, VOC, English East India Company (EIC) and French East India Company. Like Portuguese *cartaz* system they created *dastak* system which was issued to those who cross the water of Angrias’ in Konkan.<sup>82</sup> It depended

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and many ships loaded with rich stuffs, clothes and precious stones, sent as offerings to Ahmad Shah Bahmani, Mahim was reoccupied, the region divided among the *amirs* and officers and after the battle the parties returned to their original positions.)

<sup>78</sup> *Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: History of the Konkan, Dakhan and Southern Maratha Country*, Vol. I, Part II, 1896, p. ix & K. Jagjit Singh, *Struggle for Supremacy: A Study in Anglo-Angria Relations*, 1984, p. 13

<sup>79</sup> A. R. Kulkarni, et. al., *Medieval Deccan History*, 1996 pp. 113-23.

<sup>80</sup> C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp.87-103 and K. Jagjit Singh, *Struggle for Supremacy: A Study in Anglo-Angria Relations*, 1984, pp.18-19.

<sup>81</sup> John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp.78-80; Derek L. Elliott, *Pirates, Politics and Companies: Global Politics on the Konkan Littoral, c.1690-1756*, Working Paper No. 136/10, 2010, pp. 7-15 and K. Jagjit Singh, *Struggle for Supremacy: A Study in Anglo-Angria Relations*, 1984, pp. 18-31.

<sup>82</sup> Derek L. Elliott, “Pirates, Politics and Companies: Global Politics on the Konkan Littoral, c.1690-1756”, Working Paper No. 136/10, 2010, pp. 9-11.

upon the merchants to follow or refuse the regulation but the European Companies particularly the English East India Company (EIC) refused to accept the regulation.<sup>83</sup> Those who refused the *dastak* were plundered and vessels, crew and passengers seized.<sup>84</sup>

Kanhoji Angria in 1702 had plundered the East India Company's ship and told Reynold<sup>85</sup>, a delegate of the English East India Company (EIC) to buy or carry *dastak* otherwise their ship will be plundered.<sup>86</sup> During *Chhatrapati* Sambhaji's times he received the command of *Survarnadurg* fortress. The English East India Company (EIC) declared him as pirate because he resisted their authority and was against the colonial rule of the British Government.<sup>87</sup> Later, during *Chhatrapati* Rajaram's tenure he became *Subedar* of the northern section of the Maratha fleet based out at Gheria and *Survarnadurg*. Kanhoji Angria established Maratha sovereignty over Konkan and improved Marathas ship-building. Several docks were built in *Vijayadurga*, Kolaba, *Sindhuvarga*, Ratnagiri, Anjavanvela.<sup>88</sup> Kanhoji Angria commanded the Maratha fleet and he was honoured with title of *Darya-Saranga*. During the 16<sup>th</sup> century emperor Akbar had fleet

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 11-20 and K. Jagjit Singh, *Struggle for Supremacy: A Study in Anglo-Angria Relations*, 1984, pp. 20-67.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> "Tarnslate [Sic.] of Conajee Angria's Letter to the President, Bombay Castle 24 May 1724," in *The Angreys of Kolaba in British Records (1719 A.D. To 1884 A.D.)*, (ed.) B. K. Shrivastavya, 1950, p. 10 and Manohar Malgonkar, *Kanhoji Angrey Maratha Admiral: An Account of his Life and his Battles with the English*, 1959, p. 130.

<sup>86</sup> Rene J. Barendse, *Arabian Seas, 1700 – 1763*, 2009, pp. 401-20 & 812-60.

<sup>87</sup> C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 87-103.

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.*; and see Anne Bulley, *The Bombay Country Ships 1790-1833*, 2000 pp. 38-48 & 177-204.

known as *Nowwara* deployed in Dacca in the Bay of Bengal but they did not have such fleet in the west coast of India.<sup>89</sup> Both the Mughals and the Marathas realised the need of creating naval fleet to protect interest against European Companies.<sup>90</sup> After Aurangzeb became the emperor of the Mughal, he appointed *Siddis* as his admiral; in the same way, Kanohji Angria became admiral of the Marathas.<sup>91</sup> The *Siddis* had their base in Janjira and the Angria in Kolaba<sup>92</sup>, later at Gheria. The *Siddis* were entrusted with the protection of Surat. The Angria's navy included people belonging to Europe, Arabia and Africa as sailors. Kanhoji Angria plundered not only the Portuguese but also the English East India Company's ship. In 1706, his fellow-men captured 'Monsoon' ship near Karwar and it was brought to Gheria port but storm compelled them to release near Goa.<sup>93</sup> Next year, he attacked the English East India Company's frigate Bombay which had sunk. The English East Company officers have recorded him as 'Rebel Independent of the Rajah Sivajee/Shivaji'<sup>94</sup> In 1712, he attacked Portuguese *armada* of merchant ships escorted by two powerful warships

<sup>89</sup>Shireen Moosvi, *People, Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, 2008, pp. 230-57.

<sup>90</sup>See Manohar Malgonkar, *Kanhoji Angrey Maratha Admiral: An Account of his Life and his Battles with the English*, 1959 & N. Keshorjit Singh, *Siddis and the Janjira State Glimpses of Courage, Entrepreneurship and Identity*, in Chattar Singh (ed.), *Minorities Entrepreneurship and Empowerment*, 2018, pp. 78-91.

<sup>91</sup>B. Bhattacharya, "A Note on the Shipbuilding in Bengal in the Late Eighteenth Century", *Itinerario*, 19(03), 1995 pp. 167-174. doi:10.1017/s0165115300021380

<sup>92</sup>*Gazetteer of the Bombay Presidency: Kolaba and Janjira*, Vol. IX, 1883, pp. 146-52.

<sup>93</sup>C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 87-103 and Manohar Malgonkar, *Kanhoji Angrey Maratha Admiral: An Account of his life and his battles with the English*, 1959, p.150.

<sup>94</sup>John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 77-78 and C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 87-103.

under the command of Luis da Costa.<sup>95</sup> In the same year he captured two ships belonging to the English East India Company. One yacht belonged to the Governor of Bombay and Anne Ketch belonged to chief of the factory in Karwar. The *Siddis* and the Portuguese jointly attacked Kanhoji Angria in 1713 which led to signing of treaty with the English East India Company.<sup>96</sup> In this treaty, Kanhoji Angria allowed company to trade in his port and the company would supply ‘gunpowder and help in the emergency’.<sup>97</sup> However, this treaty did not materialise in true sense and remained forfeited. Kanhoji Angria had good strength of naval fleet operated as freebooter or runaway sailors belonged to Europe and Dutch; his fleet ‘commanded by Dutch’<sup>98</sup>. In 1716, Bombay had Charles Boone as a Governor; he undertook building of war-ships such as ‘Brittania’ with 18 guns, ‘Fame’ of 16 guns, ‘Revenge’ of 16 guns and ‘Victory’ of 24 guns. Boone was ready after having many ‘frigates’, ‘grab’, ‘ketch’, and ‘gallivat’ for expedition against pirates. C. R. Low<sup>99</sup> mentioned that in 1717 Angria’s cruiser plundered a ship ‘Success’ carried the English East India Company’s pass. Boone resolved to begin active ‘piratical’ suppression against pirates.

<sup>95</sup>*ibid.*, p.147 and C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 87-103.

<sup>96</sup>C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 87-103.

<sup>97</sup>Derek L. Elliott, “Pirates, Politics and Companies: Global Politics on the Konkan Littoral, c. 1690-1756”, Working Paper No. 136/10, 2010, pp. 22-37.

<sup>98</sup>John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, p. 83 and C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 87-103.

<sup>99</sup>C. R. Low, *History of the Indian Navy (1613-1863)*, Vol. I, 1877, pp. 97-99.

In 1720, Kanhoji Angria plundered a ship of *Mulla* Muhammad Ali<sup>100</sup>, a great Surat merchant and he requested the Governor of Bombay to take action against Kanhoji Angria. Governor of Bombay knew about number of forts under him and observed about him as ‘terror of the seas’.<sup>101</sup> Officers at Bombay at this juncture decided to control expanding power of Kanhoji Angria. *Siddis* were allied with the English East India Company (EIC) and the governor suggested *Siddi* Yakut Khan and the *Nawab* of Surat to take action against the Angrias’. In 1720, Walter Brown was appointed as Commander in chief by the President and Secret Committee of the British Government at Bombay. He was sent for expedition on *Defiance*, ‘*Elizabeth*’ and a *gallivat* from Gheria against the Angria. He also used local boat *prahu* which was very effective to destroy two of the best *gallivat* of Angria.

In 1717 and 1722, the company sent two expeditions to wipe out Angria from his hideout but remained unsuccessful. ‘Piratical aggression’ by Angria continued and now the victims were Dutch ships which led to Dutch intervention; they sent naval ships to suppress Angria navy. These and Dutch seafarers were rebuffed by the Angria fleet. After the death of Kanhoji Angria there was conflict among his sons for the succession. The succession weakened the Angria’s navy which led to division of fleet. In 1729, one of the son, Sambhaji Angria succeeded his father. He

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<sup>100</sup>A *Statistical Account of the Town and Island of Bombay: History*, Vol. I, 1893, p. 150.

<sup>101</sup>*ibid.*, p. 151.

had experience of attacking and plundering many ships during his father's time which belonged to the European Companies: such as Bombay frigate (1707); Godolphin (1710), Success and Otter (1716). Kanhoji Angria's death at *Suvernadurg* in 1729 and his predatory policy was carried forward by him. During his time he captured Bengal Galley in 1730 and then attacked Indian Ockham in 1731. Sambhaji Angria also plundered the Derby in 1735. In 1738, the Dutch again attacked *Vijaydurg* but Sambhaji Angria pushed them back and captured Dutch Ship 'Angelsea' which has on its board officers and crews. His half-brother Toolaji Angria also captured a ship known as 'Restoration' which belonged to the Bombay Marine. He was more aggressive than Sambhaji Angria and controlled west coast of India towards south. Later, Admiral Watson and Colonial Clive dispersed the Sambhaji Angria's navy fleet and captured Gheria. Sambhaji Angria had plundered the great cargo vessel Derby in 1739. In 1743, Sambhaji Angria died and succeeded by Toolaji Angria further carried policy laid down by Kanhoji Angria. His influence extended between *Kachchh* and Cochin. In 1754, Toolaji Angria destroyed three vessels of Dutch which were loaded with ammunition. In order to destroy Angria's naval superiority, the English with the help of Peshwa attacked *Suvernadurg*.<sup>102</sup> Under Admiral Watson and Robert Clive's leadership, Gheria was attacked and Angria's fleet (three vessel of three mast, nine vessels of two mast carrying twelve to sixteen

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<sup>102</sup> James Grant Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas*, 1918, pp. 95-102.



guns, thirteen *gallivants* carrying six to ten guns, thirteen *gallivants* carrying six to ten gun was burnt completely. Toolaji Angria was supported to plunder by the Poona Court<sup>103</sup> as well; he was given to command one of the two fleet of *Peshwa* at Bassein. Another fleet of the *Peshwa* was under Anand Rao Dhoolup as admiral of Toolaji Angria at Vijaydurg and as per mutual understanding they did not plunder vessel carrying the English East India Company's pass till 1775.



**Illustration II: British-Portuguese-Indian Naval Force attacks the Fort of Geriah, 1756**

<sup>103</sup>James Grant Duff, *A History of the Mahrattas*, 1918, p. 95.



Illustration III: Captain Roberts and Pirates on Malabar Coast<sup>104</sup>



Illustration IV: Indian Postal Stamp Commemorating Kunjali Marakkar, Maritime Heritage<sup>105</sup>



Illustration V: Seals of Kanhoji Angria<sup>106</sup>

<sup>104</sup> <https://www.magnoliabox.com/products/captain-roberts-and-pirates-on-malabar-coast-us002943>

<sup>105</sup> iStampGallery.Com

*Sangameshwar* pirates<sup>107</sup> were other category of pirates who also hailed from Konkan and targeted Portuguese ships. One finds reference to incidence of ‘piratical’ aggressions frequent and intense during the sixteenth century, the Portuguese Viceroy has to seek help from the monarch in Portugal.<sup>108</sup> *Sangameshwar* Island can be entered through creek having shallow waters and cliff; the entry of large size ship was not possible. The king gave him permission to punish pirates and 15 *armada* of *foistas* (small ships) as an assistance for such confrontation. He appointed his nephew, Dom Juliancs Mascarenhas as commander to suppress the *Sangameshwar* pirates. But when the Portuguese *foistas* landed in this island the *Sangameshwar* pirates ran to the adjoining hills and saw the mess caused by the Portuguese but they attacked some of the *foistas* which were left in the coast. They killed Dom Juliancs Mascarenhas, the Admiral of the Portuguese *foistas* and plundered the crew of the *foistas*. The Portuguese sent another expedition but that failed too.<sup>109</sup> They burnt down houses, trees were felled and embankment was also destroyed. The frequency of piratical aggressions was so intense and recurrent that they reached out to

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<sup>106</sup>[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seal\\_of\\_Kanhoji\\_Angre.jpeg#/media/File:Seal\\_of\\_Kanhoji\\_Angre.jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Seal_of_Kanhoji_Angre.jpeg#/media/File:Seal_of_Kanhoji_Angre.jpeg)

<sup>107</sup>*Sangameshwar* pirates had base in **Jaigad fort in Maharashtra**, and is said to have been built by Bijapur Kings in the 16th century. Later, it passed into the hands of *Naiks* of *Sangameshwar*, who had 7-8 villages and 600 troops under command. Their leader defeated combined forces of Bijapur and Portuguese in 1583 and 1585. In 1713, Jaigad was one of the ten forts which was ceded by Balaji Vishwanath Peshwa to Angre. In June 1818, this fort was captured by British without any struggle. R. S. Whiteway, *The Rise of Portuguese Power in India*, 1989, pp. 47-53; & R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 46-47.

<sup>108</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 46-49.

<sup>109</sup>*ibid.*, p. 50.

Zamorin for controlling the situation. However, *Sangameshwar* pirates remained menaces to the Portuguese. This island later emerged as a strong hold for *Angrias* once *Sangameshwar* pirates were subdued in the region. There is a possibility that the *Sangameshwar* pirates joined the group of *Angrias*. However, their region geographically served as the safe haven for many seafarers who were pirates or were mere warriors.

Among other seafarers of the Konkan coast were the *Siddis*; who offered challenge to the Maratha Navy.<sup>110</sup> They were the only non-European admirals in the Indian waters and therefore their services were hired to protect the interest of the Mughal's trade and *hajj* travels; they constituted the command of the Mughal navy.<sup>111</sup> In 17<sup>th</sup> century, they had plundered many ships belonging to merchants on way to *hajj*; their 'piratical' aggression was also noticed by the English East India Company. In 1673, *Siddi Sambal* reached Bombay harbour and plundered their goods and several persons were taken away by them from Kurla. *Siddis* power was checked by the Marathas and *Siddis* allied with the English East India Company (EIC) against the Marathas. The *Siddis* and the English East India Company (EIC) had signed an agreement to fight against the Marathas.<sup>112</sup> Their agreement included sharing of

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<sup>110</sup> Lincoln Paine, *The Sea and Civilization*, 2013 (Chapter 15).

<sup>111</sup> *ibid.*; the author establishes *Siddis* as navigators and seafarers in the times of Mughals who attempted to control Marathas from the side of the sea to protect *Shah-i-Bandar* Surat from incursion of Marathas.

<sup>112</sup> See Alliance, Defensive and Offensive Treaty, No. CXXV, pp. 329-31 in C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties and Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries: State Within the Bombay Presidency*, Vol. IV, (revised



the booty seized from the Marathas. Treaty was effective on the paper only; the *Siddis* also committed ‘piratical’ aggressions along other arms of Western Indian Ocean which is discussed in this and next chapter. The English East India Company (EIC) paid a large sum to the *Siddis* to protect ship belonging to company and their clients.

### Gujarat/ Gujarati Pirates:

Gujarat coast along with north Konkan coast records several references to the pirates’ community (Chapter I) who had been referred as *Chanchiyas*. Campbell provides detail description in the *longue duree* to them.<sup>113</sup> The pirates of Jagat and Beit/Byet in

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edition), 1876; Suresh C. Ghosh, “Fresh Light on the Peninsula of Gujarat in the Early Nineteenth Century”, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, Vol. 96, No. 4 (Oct.-Dec., 1976), pp. 570-75.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=00030279%28197610%2F12%2996%3A4%3C570%3AFLOTPO%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Z>

<sup>113</sup> ...Of these the *Sanghars* and *Vaghers* would seem to be *the oldest pirates*. The *Sangadas* or *Sangari* tribe are mentioned by Nearchus (B. C. 325). Pliny (A. D. 70) says that the merchant ships carried a guard of archers. The author of the *Periplus* (A. D. 247) noticed pirate haunts in the south Konkan, likely to be Konkan pirates. Later the *Jats* and *Meds* or *Mers* seem to have openly practiced piracy. In the time of the Baghdad Kaliphs they infested the Tigris and occasionally made raids as far up the Red Sea as Jedda. In the beginning of the eight century (A. D. 712) it was the excesses of the *Sangamaras* or *Tangamaras* associated with the *Meds* and *Kerks* of the Sind Coast that brought upon Sind the Arab invasion and conquest. The Chavda kings Vanaraja (A. D. 720-780) and his son Yogaraja (A. D. 806-841) are recorded to have **made great efforts to put down piracy on the west Kathiavad coast**. In A.D. 834-35 large bodies of *Jats* driven from the Gujarat coasts made a descent on the Tigris. In A.D. 892 **Al Biladuri describes as seafarers and pirates who scoured the seas, the Batia or Bet Mers, the Mers, and the people of Saurashtra. During the reign of the Abbasi Khalifah Al Mamun (A.D. 813-833), Muhammad Fazl sailed with sixty vessels against the Meds, and captured Mali/Malia in north Kathiavad after a great slaughter of the Meds**. In A.D. 980 Chudasama Grahari, the Ahir chief of *Sorath* and *Girnar*, so passed the ocean that no one was safe. In A.D. 1021, Al Biruni notes that the *Bawarij*, taking their names from their boats *behra* or *bira*, were *Meds*, a seafaring people of *Kachh* and *Somnath*. In A.D. 1290, Marco Polo found the people of Gujarat the **most desperate pirates in existence, forced their merchant prisoners to swallow tamarindi mixed with sea-water which**

*Kathiawad* are known for piracy since 7<sup>th</sup> century, their ‘piratical’ aggressions are reported during the reign of Mahmud Beghada in the 15<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>114</sup> It was in c.1472 that the *corsairs* of Jagat, on learning of Muhammad *Samarkhandi* travelled to Samarkand with

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**induced a violent purging, in case they had swallowed their jewels.** As in the ninth century, they infested Sokotra, a place of great trade, where they encamped and sold their plunder to good profit, to the Christians. **Musalman ascendancy drove the Rajput chiefs to the coast and turned them into pirates. The Gohils under Mokhdaji Gohil, from his castle on Piram Island near Gogha, ruled the sea and levied tribute from every ship till his power was destroyed about A.D. 1340 by the Emperor Muhammad Tughlak Shah. The large ships the sailors of Gujarat managed before their overthrow is shown by Friar Oderic,** who crossed the Indian Ocean in a ship that carried 700 people. After Mokhdaji Gohil, the Vaja chieftains of Vejalkot in the Gir, and of Jhanjhmer on the east Bhavnagar coast **openly practiced piracy.** Till the arrival of the Portuguese (A.D. 1500-1508) the Ahmedabad Sultans maintained their position as lords of the sea, and kept in check the pirates, who were terror-stricken by the fate of Mokhdaji Gohil. During 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries the Kachh and Dwarka pirates, generally called *Sanganians* after the *Sanghars*, were much dreaded. In A.D. 1670 the *Sanganians* had about this time grown important enough to give their name to the whole of Kachh. In A. D. 1690 Ovingt on describes them as living between Sindh and Cape Jagat (Dwarka), infesting all the western coast and cruising to Ormuz. About this time (A. D. 1695) the author of the *Muntakhabu-l-lubab* speaks of the Bawaril or Sakanas, a lawless sect of Sorath, notorious for their piracies, boarded **small trading craft from Bandar Abbas and Maskat, but did not venture to attack large pilgrim ships.** In A. D. 1750 Grose describes the small cruisers of the *Sanganians* troubling boats going to the Persian Gulf though they seldom attacked large ships. **In A. D. 1772 Vakhatsingji of Bhavnagar wrested Talaja from the Nawab of Cambay and establishing his authority over the south-east Kathiavad coast, reduced the predatory tribes who lived on piracy.** Bhatias from Chanch near Diu seem to have formed a **pirate settlement near Dahanu on the Thana coast.** In A. D. 1792, Major Price notes the cautionary speed with which, in travelling from Surat to Bombay by land, they passed **Dahanu through the Chansia wilds, the tract of the piratical community** of that name. Rennell describes them as from their chief ports of Bet and Aramra, cruising as far as the Persian Gulf. In A. D. 1799 the *Sanghars*, the *Vaghers* of Dwarka and the *Vadhels* of Aramra, were attacked by British ships of war, their pirate fleets were destroyed, their castles were not taken. In A.D. 1809 they were reduced to order by Colonel Walker. But in A.D. 1816 they again broke out as pirates. In A.D. 1816 Dwarka and Bet surrendered to a British detachment. After Okhamandal was ceded to the Gaekwar in 1820, the *Vaghers* rose against the garrison but were destroyed by British force in Dwarka and Byet. The pirates were *Vaghels*, *Bhattis*, *Kharwas*, *Lohanas*, *Makvanas*, *Rathods*, and *Vadhels*, and *Vaghers*. After A. D. 1820 the *Vaghers* remained in revolt, till they drove out the Gaekwar’s garrison in A. D. 1857. In A. D. 1865 the *Vaghers* of Okhamandal again became unruly, overran the whole of *Kathiavad*, and did immense damage before they were finally brought to order in A. D. 1873 in James M. Campbell (ed.), *Hindu Castes and Tribes of Gujarat*, 1988, pp. 527-29.

<sup>114</sup>M. S. Commissariat, *A History of Gujarat*, Vol. I, 1957, pp. 173-75.



numerous and costly presents, cunningly lay in wait for his ships as their informers notified them about the arrival; the vessel, in which *Samarkhandi* was travelling with his wife, children and companions was driven to the port of Jagat. The Jagat pirates, boarded his ships seized all his goods, women and men, but left him on the shore to fend for himself. He took with him his two young sons and appeared before the Sultan in the court. *Samarkhandi* however attempted from his side for the destruction of pirates of Jagat with the support from Sultan. This lately happened, as Sultan appointed *Furhut-ul-Mulk*, the Governor of Byet and Jagat for the cause. The inhabitants of Jagat, on being attacked by Beghada fled to Sankhodar (Beit/ Beyt) and made them secure. That island, about three *kos* (leagues) from the mainland was inhabited by Raja Bhim's subjects who plundered seafarers. When the Sultan (Beghada) found that the "infidels" had taken refuge in this island, he collected ships from the neighbouring ports and, filling them with well-armed men, sailed to attack that island. He surrounded that refuge on every side with his fleet and gave battle<sup>115</sup>:

The inhabitants "resisted bravely and kept up a sustained discharge of arrows and muskets and fought hand to hand" Begarha disembarked on the island and dispatched some soldiers to chase the fugitives and capture them but how far they were successful...Begarha laid the foundation of a mosque, collected a large provision of stores and left Malik Toghan in charge of the island.

According to *Firishta*, the other pirates from Gujarat during the time of Beghada were from Valsad who carried out piratical

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<sup>115</sup>R. N. Saletore, *Indian Pirates: From the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 1978, pp. 36-38.

aggressions at port of Gogha and South Gujarat coast and also challenged the *Malabari* pirates. For instance:

..in November, 1482, when preparing an army to move towards Champaner, hearing that **the Bulsar pirates had gained such an ascendancy at sea so as to threaten the invasion of his dominions and already intercepted the trade**, he called a fleet, on board of which he embarked **a force consisting of gunners, musketeers and archers, with which he sailed from Cambay**. After some days, the fleet fell in with the enemy and gave chase a running fight was sustained for some hours, during which several of the piratical vessels were captured. The fleet returned to Cambay and the king repaired to Ahmadnagar. ...Begarha captured **some of the piratical ships without mentioning any of the losses suffered by him**. The *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, on the other hand, notes that, according to the expressions used in the *Tabakat-i-Akbari*, Muhammad Begarha commanded the fleet in person and in the naval action **“several of the pirate ships were captured.”**...In this naval campaign mention is made, according to some sources, of artillery and musketry, for the first time in the history of Gujarat and that they were probably (p.139) introduced by the Arabs and Turks from the Red Sea and the Gulf of Persia.<sup>116</sup>

According to Saletore,<sup>117</sup> South Gujarat coast also remained inflicted by piratical aggression by Europeans in the 15<sup>th</sup> century:

Surat port was harassed by certain **“European”** pirates, who, though not specified, were obviously Portuguese, who had by then gained a firm foothold in the coastal activities of western India. According to a tradition recorded by Nizamuddin Ahmad, a chronicler of the reign of Akbar, a slave of Sultan Mahmud Gujarati, ... named Safar Aka Khudawand Khan, had built a “small but exceedingly strong and secure” citadel “remarkable among fortresses”, on the sea-shore in 1440 on the river Tapti, 20 miles from the sea, to resist the attacks of the Europeans for, before that fort was built, the European did all kinds of mischief...**When Khudawand Khan was engaged in its construction the Europeans “several times fitted out ships to attack it but could not succeed in their object”, viz., piracy.** Khudawand Khan then called for his architect “a very clever man, to provide for the security of the fort.”...After a little reflection, the careful builder determined to proceed with his plan of making that stronghold impregnable. On the two sides of that fort, which faced the land, **he excavated ditches reaching to the water, twenty yards (*dara*) in length (?) and filled them with water. They were built of stone, *chunam* and burnt bricks.** The thickness of the double walls (*diwar-i-dutahi*) was fifteen yards, and their height was twenty yards. They too were built of stone, *chunam* and burnt bricks. Each stone was firmly fastened to the next with clamps of iron, having molten lead poured into their interstices. The battlement embrasures were formed of stone and appeared formidable to look at. **On the top of the tower, there was a *chaukandi* (Badauni calls it *ghurfa* or upper room or a watch-tower) which, according to the Europeans, was**

<sup>116</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 38-39.

<sup>117</sup>*ibid.*, p. 40.

**“an invention of the Portuguese.”** This is an unwarranted supposition for such watch-towers in the forts were known in India in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C...The *Mirat-i-Sikandari* gives another version of this fortification against the European pirates, among whom may also, besides **the Portuguese, be included the English and the Dutch who by then were also well-established in the piracy business and at each other’s throats in the Indian Ocean.** They were attacking often the port of Rander which Begarha wanted to make unassailable. **Sikandar, the chronicler, calls the architect Safar Agha, perhaps an error for Asghar Agha, whose construction of that citadel was often disturbed by the European pirates, but, in spite of all such opposition, he succeeded in completing his work by raising its walls 15 to 20 yards in height, solidly built and mounted with heavy guns and equipped with arms. Thereupon** those pirates were repulsed. This formidable fort was reduced by Akbar in March, 1572, after a siege of one month and seventeen days.

In this context M. S. Commissariat<sup>118</sup> informs us that in the last decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the opening years of the 18<sup>th</sup> century around, Surat saw the sinister advent of European piracy in the Indian seas, which led to disastrous consequences to Indian shipping, as also to the trade of the East India at Surat. Surat was occasionally affected by the *Sanganian* pirates<sup>119</sup> as both merchant ship and pilgrim vessels were often well-armed and had ploughed the seas for generations without any other danger than that of the local *Sanganian* pirates. In 1691, Abdul Gaffar / Gafur a rich merchant of Surat lost his vessel to the pirate near the coast of Surat. The vessel possessed rupees nine lakhs in cash. He complained to the government and the latter issued order to prohibit the English East India Company (EIC) to trade. Fortunately, the English East India Company (EIC) captured a pirate. It was discovered that the pirate was Dutch. Similarly,

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<sup>118</sup>M. S. Commissariat, *History of Gujarat: The Maratha Period 1758 AD to 1818*, Vol. III, 1980, pp. 423-57.

<sup>119</sup>*ibid.*, p. 443.

Surendra Gopal for this occasion opines: “Hamilton calculated that the wealth of Abdul Gafur, a *Bohra*, another leading merchant of Surat, was equal to that of the English East India Company. He had twenty ships between 300 and 800 tons, each of which carried a cargo between ten and twenty five thousand sterling.<sup>120</sup> After the death of Abdul Gaffar the Mughal authorities confiscated from his house valuables worth more than one million pound sterling.<sup>121</sup> Attacks by Marathas, *Kolis*, *Rajputs*, *Kathis* and others continued which made transport of goods from one point to another difficult. The governors of Gujarat were compelled to undertake special measures to suppress these lawless elements. As a result their efforts had not effect though Thevenot in 1664 and Careri in 1695 affirmed that in spite of the presence of robbers one could pass through the country unharmed.<sup>122</sup>

According to English Factory Records and travellers’ accounts, as cited by Surendra Gopal: “The port to port trade,

<sup>120</sup>Manucci, *Storia Do Mogor* (1653-1708), Vol. III, 1907, p. 308. Father Manuel Godinho who was in Surat in 1663 asserted that the local traders owned fifty ships ‘going out to all the countries’. According to him some of the merchants here were ‘worth more than five to six millions’ G.M. Moraes, “Surat in 1663 as described by Fr. Manuel Godinho.” *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bombay*, Vol. 27, Part II (1952), p. 128 in Surendra Gopal, *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, 1975, p. 181. [I am thankful to Prof. Radhika Seshan (Pune University) who has shared with me travellers account from her personal digital collection and also to Prof. Adhya Bharti Saxena (MSU Baroda)].

<sup>121</sup>Hamilton I, pp. 147-48. For more details about him, see Ashin Das Gupta, “The Merchants of Surat c. 1700-50”, *Elites in South Asia*, Edmund Leach and S. N. Mukherjee (ed.), 1970, pp. 206- 207. He was granted concession in payment of custom duties at the port of Surat in the 46<sup>th</sup> regnal year of the emperor in *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, New Delhi, 1975, p. 181.

<sup>122</sup>Thevenot, 20; Careri, 216 in Surendra Gopal, *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, New Delhi, 1975, pp. 181-82.

despite being impeded by Arabs, *Sanganis*, *Baghelas* and other pirates continued”.<sup>123</sup> According to Thevenot, boats plied between Cambay and Surat but they ventured out only in night owing to fear of pirates.<sup>124</sup> In 1681, several Bharuch vessels were found sailing under English colour unauthorized to escape piracy,<sup>125</sup> Carre refers to a Parsi trader of Bharuch, who traded with Cambay<sup>126</sup>.”

Similarly Biddulph<sup>127</sup> reports about pirates and their aggressions in other parts of Gujarat as:

Pirates of Vingorla:

...the pirates were beaten off, and Fryer and his companions were mightily praised by the Dutch. **These pirates hailed probably from Vingorla, where the Sawuntwaree chief, known in those days as the ‘Kempsant,’\* carried on a brisk piratical trade.** The name was a corruption of Khem Sawunt, a common name of the Vingorla chiefs; the Portuguese changed it into Quemar Santo, ‘the saint burner,’ on account of his sacrilegious treatment of their churches...**There were no more determined pirates than the Arabs of Muscat and the Sanganians of Beyt and Dwarka, who, between them, intercepted the trade of the Persian Gulf, while the Coolee rovers of Guzarat took their toll of the plunder.** In 1683 the Company's ship President was attacked by the Muscat Arabs with two ships and four grabs, and fought a gallant action. The grabs were generally two-masted ships, from one hundred and fifty to three hundred tons burden, built to draw very little water, and excellent sailors, especially in the light winds prevalent on the

<sup>123</sup>EFI (1661-64), 306; EFI (1668-69), 11, 47, 210 in Surendra Gopal *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, 1975, p. 184.

<sup>124</sup>Thevenot, p. 18-19 in Surendra Gopal, *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, 1975, p. 184.

<sup>125</sup>EFI (1678-84), p. 278 in Surendra Gopal, *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, 1975, p. 184.

<sup>126</sup>Carre, 138 in Surendra Gopal, *Commerce and Craft in Gujarat 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries: A Study in the Impact of European Expansion in Pre-capitalist Economy*, 1975, p. 184.

<sup>127</sup>John Biddulph, *The Pirates of Malabar and an Englishwoman in India Two Hundred Years Ago*, 1907, pp. 73-75. \* *The ‘Kempason and King Kemshew’ of Downing*. (p. 73); \* *From the Arabic ghorab ‘a raven.’* p. 74. Also see table III in this chapter.

**Western coast.** ... Being built for fighting, and not for trade, they could sail round the clumsy merchantmen that hailed from the Thames, and, if pressed, could find safety in the shallow bays and mouths of rivers along the coast. Three grabs grappled the *President* at once, but the boarders were beaten back, and all three were blown up and sunk, on which the rest of the squadron made off. **The *President* was set on fire in sixteen places, and lost eleven men killed and thirty-three wounded.** In the following year the *Josiah* ketch was attacked by the *Sanganians* while at anchor, and in the heat of the engagement blew up. A few of the crew saved themselves in a skiff, but the greater number perished, among them the commander, Lieutenant Pitts, whose father was known in Bombay as 'the drunken lieutenant.'

### **Attack on Phoenix:**

In September, 1685, the *Phoenix*, a British man-of-war that had been sent for a two-year' cruise in Indian waters, was **attacked by a *Sanganian* vessel** that mistook her for a merchant-man. It was almost a calm, and Captain Tyrrell hoisted out his boats to capture the *Sanganian* ship, but they were beaten off, so he sunk her with a couple of broadsides. **Forty-one of the pirates were picked up, but many of them refused quarter, and one hundred and seven were killed or drowned.** The *Phoenix* had three men killed, one wounded, and two drowned. According to Hamilton, Sir George Byng, the first lieutenant, was dangerously wounded; **but the log of the *Phoenix* is silent on that point, though it gives the names of the casualties.**

### **Attack by Captain Lavender:**

Three years later, the *Thomas*, Captain Lavender, was less fortunate. **Attacked by four Beyt ships**, after a brave resistance, the *Thomas* took fire, and all on board perished. Their depredations were not confined to the sea. In 1697 **some Beyt pirates landed and plundered a village within sight of Broach (Bharuch). But the losses occasioned by native pirates were at first nearly lost sight of in the more serious losses occasioned by European corsairs.**

"As for those *Sanganians* and those *Mallabars* and professed pirates," wrote the Directors in 1699, "we see no cause why you should not wage an offensive as well as a defensive war against them when they fall in your way: but it is hardly worth the while to keep small vessels to look after them, for they are poor rogues and nothing to be got of them to answer any charge"...

The above mentioned four narrations suggest that by 17<sup>th</sup> century difference between the pirate and merchant was obvious despite there were no laid down rules. Merchants (interchange) Pirate: Aggressions on sea could be war for possessions on board or for revenge or for establishment of superiority. Important thing was that the seafarers' skill and potential to wage attack, fight and



command. According to Pyrard de Laval, a visitor to south India in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, “When in the winter they (pirates) return from the sea they become good merchants, going hither and thither to sell their goods, both by land and by sea, using then merchant ships that also belong to them. They often go to Goa and Cochin to sell their merchandise, and trade with the Portuguese, obtaining Portuguese passports, though in the previous summer they may have been at war.”<sup>128</sup> Hence, *Malabaris* or *Siddis* played a ‘double role’; they were essentially merchantmen who took to plundering whenever opportunity came, otherwise offered their services and reached the ranks of admiralty in the centralised state like Mughals or Marathas.

A peep into the life style of pirates, their weapons and strategy for the western seaboard is offered:

The Malabar pirate chieftains had built forts with their suzerain’s permission. Ralph Fitch, an English traveller (1583-91) informs about one of the Malabar pirate chiefs Cogi Ali (Qazi Ali) had three castles under him. It indirectly refers to *Kunhali* who had three such forts under him at Marakkar Kotta/Kotte and Kollam. A variety of vessels for different purposes; places of residence as safe havens, arms, dresses and related accessories, traditions and beliefs and mode of socialisation were owned by the Gujarati and the Konkan pirates. Table III offers a description of their transport on coast and high-seas. Their acumen in navigation and

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<sup>128</sup>Neelima Joshi, “Sea Piracy during the Mughal Period (1556-1707): Major Players, Disposition and Motives” *National Maritime Foundation*, pp. 2-8.

instruments, navigation charts etc. are notable. They were probably aware of the prevalent technologies evolving in Western Europe but during the English attack they lost ground as traditional navigational skills restricted their advancement before the large size fleets and methods of naval warfare adopted in Atlantic and Pacific oceans.

Shireen Moosvi (2008)<sup>129</sup>, opined on shipping and navigation under Akbar that ‘he enjoyed travelling by *taori* (vessel) on sea’. Cambay-1572 and Surat-1573 were conquered by Akbar and he built *Salimi* and *Illahi* which went to *hajj* carrying Gulbadan Begum in 1576. Ladies were boarded on *Salimi* vessel and escorted by *Illahi* under Sultan *Khwaja* from Surat to Mecca in 1580. Large ships were built and headed by *tandil*, (head of sailor), *Maullim*, (navigator), *Sukangars* (course changer or direction), *mallah/mallam* (sailor), *bhandari* (storekeeper), *panjri* (look-out) and *gunamti* (bailing out water). The names provided by Abul Fazl are still in use and can be verified in the surviving log books of pilots of the vessels use by sailors during the medieval centuries. One such *mallam ni pothi* was observed by Alexander Burnes,<sup>130</sup> Marianne Postan,<sup>131</sup> R. Leech<sup>132</sup> and others for region of *Kachchh*

<sup>129</sup>Shireen Moosvi, *People, Taxation and Trade in Mughal India*, 2008, pp. 243-51.

<sup>130</sup>Alexander Burnes, *Travels into Bokhara Being the Account of a Journey from India to Cabool, Tartary and Persia; Also Narrative of a Voyage on the Indus from the Sea to Lahore*, in 3 Vols. Vol. III, 1835, pp. 1-29.

<sup>131</sup>Marianna Postan, *Cutch or Random Sketches, taken during a Resident in one of the Northern Provinces of Western India; interspersed with Legends and Traditions*, 2001, pp. 9-28.

<sup>132</sup>R. Leech, “Memoir on the Trade, &c., of the Port of Mandvee in Kutch” (1837) in *Selection from the Records of Bombay Government*, New Series, 1855, pp. 211-26.

and *Kathiawad* where they also record for ‘piratical’ aggressions by the indigenous lot (*Kharwa* and *Vagher*). Hornell in particular, provides categorically the types of boats and sea vessels plying in the Western Indian Ocean waters. A description of which is provided in another section of this chapter. It must be remembered that whether it were merchant ships or pirate ships, the navigators were mostly from the natives or hired sailors from the other region. Clive Dewey in *Steamboats of the Indus: The limits of Western Technological Superiority in South Asia*, 2014 is another treatise to help us understand claim lay above by me.<sup>133</sup>

**Table III:**  
**Sea Vessels of Indigenous / Natives & European Pirates pre c. 1750**

<b>Vessel/Boat</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Brigantine</b>	A two-masted vessel, square-rigged on the fore-mast, fore and aft and the main mast. It was very handy and a fast sailing ship, a favourite with pirates ; medium size; used by merchants as well
<b>Ply Boat</b>	A large boat, flat bottomed and high-sterned, common with the Dutch
<b>Frigate</b>	A vessel with the fore-caste, quarter-deck raised above the waist making it well-decked and manned with 20-40 guns for armed warfare
<b>Galleon</b>	A 3 or 4 decked Spanish ship with 20-40 guns, varying with its size. It was largely used in colonial trade and also in piratical operations.
<b>Galley</b>	A large or medium sailing and rowing vessel with flush decks and equipped with guns varying with its size
<b>Galliot/Galio</b>	A kind of galley or war boat
<b>Gallivant</b>	A large country vessel either manned by sails or rowed with a latten sail, two masts, with 4 to 8 guns and nearly 20 oars. It was occasionally used as a war vessel when it was mounted with light swivel guns; capacity- 70 to 150 tons depending upon mast
<b>Gurabs</b>	Derived from the Arabic <i>gharab</i> – a raven, was generally 2 masted, with a burden varying from 150 to 300 tons. It was built to draw very little water and was an excellent “sailor” especially in the light winds prevalent on the west coast of India. They had no bow-spirit but the main deck was continued into a long over-hanging prow. The popular

<sup>133</sup> According to Murari Jha, reviewer of the book by Dewey expresses that author tries to weave in tradition and modernity while understanding the steamboats whose precursor are the traditional boats. ‘Traditional became the hallmark of stagnation’, while ‘modern signifies progress’. These categories have been questioned. The themes are Constraints, Activities, Competitors and Rationale. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2016.1207290>

	mode of using such boats was for 2 or 3 of them to run aboard their victim at the same time and attack, sword in hand, along the prow. Being built for fighting and not for trade, they sailed round the clumsy merchantmen which sailed from the Thames and, if pressed, sought shelter in the shallow bays and mouths of rivers along the coast
<b>Ketch</b>	A 2-masted vessel rigged like the brigantine but with the main shorter than the much shorter cruiser; capacity-100 to 120 tons
<b>Long Boat</b>	The largest ship's boat fitted with a stepped mast, sometimes armed and decked for short cruises
<b>Pados</b>	Derived from the Malayalam <i>patak</i> – a country craft, intermediate in size between a <i>manji</i> and a <i>pattimar</i> . It was frequently mentioned by Portuguese writers with 2 or 4 mast
<b>Pink</b>	A very narrow-stemmed sailing vessel
<b>Schooner</b>	A 2 or 3 masted sailing ship with fore and aft rig, with also more, usually square-rigged, the stump mast with a try-sail
<b>Sloop</b>	A small vessel with either one or two masts
<b>Snow</b>	The largest vessel with a stump mizzen-mast, removable at will
<b>Tall Ship</b>	An English type of vessel with 2 very tall masts and a short hull. Spanish types had the reverse
<b>Yawl</b>	A small ship's boat next in size to the Long Boat, usually with a stepped sail
<b>Carrack</b>	Large size with 1000 tons
<b>Chunk/Junk</b> (Indian/Chinese)	In 1326 Chinese vessels were of three types: the larger ships called chunks (junks), the middle sized ones, the <i>zaws</i> ( <i>dhow</i> s) and the small ones, the <i>kakuns</i> . The large ships, like the Mughal vessel <i>Ganj-i-Sawai</i> had 3 to 12 sails, made of bamboo rods plaited like mats. They were never lowered but turned in the direction of the wind. At anchor they were left "floating in the wind"

Source: See Glossary of Clinton V. Black, *Pirates of the West Indies*, 1989, pp. 126-29

European travellers often observed native crafts/vessels, especially those belonging to Malabar or Konkan or the Gujarat pirates.<sup>134</sup>

William Finch (1608-11) explains: "How the *Malabaris* were "good soldiers" (i.e. sailors) and each of their frigates carried 100 soldiers and 200 of those fighters in their *galiots*. They moved their small boats, the so-called *parrowes*, each having 50 or 60 sailors. These boats were similar to *pados* or *Malabaripatak* ship type. *Malabaris* boarded the boats "presently" and put them along the coast from Goa to Cochin, especially in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>

<sup>134</sup>Lotika Varadarajan, "Traditions of indigenous navigation in Gujarat", *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 1980, pp. 28-35, DOI: 10.1080/00856408008722997

centuries, seizing many *foistas* and boats of Portuguese. According to Fitch, Muslims (*Moplahs*) ruler's country, commenced 12 miles from Cochin up to Goa. It does not imply that the *Malabaris* either controlled the entire region or that it formed a part of Kerala. The Portuguese regularly sent their annual *kafila* or fleet or caravan, from Goa to Cambay either to sell or buy Indian goods. The *Nairs* (*Malabaris*) were always at war with the Portuguese, with whom their *Zamorin*, "was always at peace."

The Chinese traversed Indian waters since ancient times and interacted with their Indian counterparts.<sup>135</sup> In 1326, Chinese vessels were of three types: the larger ships-chunks (junks), the middle sized-*zaws* (*dhow*s) and the small-*kakuns*. The large ships similar to the Mughal vessel *Ganj-i-Sawai* had 3 to 12 sails, made of bamboo rods plaited like mats. They were never lowered but turned in the direction of the wind. At anchor they were left "floating in the wind." A ship carried a complement of 1000 men, 600 sailors and 400 men-at-arms, including archers, men with shields and "arbalists" who threw naphtha. Every large vessel was accompanied by three smaller ones, the "half" and the "quarter", built in the towns of Zaytun and Sin-Kalan (Canton). The vessel had four decks, containing rooms, cabins and saloons for merchants; cabin had chambers and a lavatory and usually locked

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<sup>135</sup>R. Mookerji, *A History of Indian Shipping and Maritime Activity*, 1912 and George Raleigh Gray Worcester, *Sail and Sweep in China: the history and development of the Chinese junk as illustrated by the collection of junk models in the Science Museum*, 1966 and Pierre-Yves Manguin, "Asian Ship-building Traditions in the Indian Ocean at the Dawn of European Expansion" in Om Prakash (ed.), *The Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500–1800*, 2012, pp. 597-632.

by its occupants who brought their slave girls and wives along. Often a person in his cabin sailed “unknown to any of the others on board until they met on reaching some town.” The sailors children often lived on board. They cultivated green vegetables and ginger in wooden tanks. The ship’s owner on board was “like a great *amir* and, when he went ashore, he was preceded by archers and Abyssinians armed with javelins, swords, carrying drums, trumpets and bugles”.

According to Ibn Battuta, the junks were often used in *Malabar*. The Sultan *Zamorin* equipped for him one of the 13 junks in the port of Calicut to sail for China. The Chinese practice was to have each junk towed by three vessels forward. Each junk had 20 or 30 oars, as “big as masts” each manned by a muster of about 30 men, standing in two rows, facing each other. Two enormous ropes thick as cables were attached to the oars. One of the ranks pulled on the cable at its side and let it go and the other rank pulled it on its side. They chanted in musical voices as they did this, most commonly saying “la la, la la”. Ibn Battuta’s party passed 37 days on such a junk and he was surprised at the facility of their crossing the sea for they usually had to spend 40 to 50 days on it, and 40 days was the shortest time required under the most favourable conditions.

Portuguese vessels<sup>136</sup> like *frigates*, *galiots* and *galleons* came forth from their several ports and havens to join their fleet (*kafila*).

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<sup>136</sup>Salgado, Augusto Alves, “Portuguese Shipbuilding in the seventeenth - eighteenth Centuries”, *XIV Reunião Internacional de História da Náutica e da Hidrografia* (2012).



Those vessels were all well-armed for, they went in to anchor at all the ports of their friends and allies, take along with them those who cared to follow and for “refreshment” of their fleet and trade. A great number of trading vessels and *galiois* (*galleys*) called *Navies de Chatie* to distinguish them from the *Navies d’ Armadade*, also set out with these ships. The merchants awaited the convoy of the armadas for fear of natives pirates who rendered it “impossible for them to sail the seas alone.” The battleships were equipped at the expense of the King of Portugal, but the *chaties* were furnished by their owners who had freighted them. They were “subject and obedient” in all matters to the General of the Armadas called the ‘Capitaine Major’. The great *galleys* were manned by two or three hundred men-at-arms and *frigates* (so often attacked, burnt and sunk by Indian pirates) about 100. The smaller ones, the *navires* were manned by 40 or 50 men; there were still smaller boats, *manchones* accommodating perhaps 15 or 20 men; the round ships, viz. *carracks*, *galleons* and *caravels*, numbers varied with their sizes.

Saletore, while discussing Indian Pirates brings in discussion on the on-going rivalry between the Portuguese and pirate groups on various points along the WIO.

The details are as follows:-

Different types of measures were taken to combat their nefarious activities of the pirates. One of the most ancient and probably efficient in its own way was ‘the chain, in use prior to the

c.900 in Palembang and later adopted on Indian coast'. The citizens of Palembang in "olden times" employed an 'iron chain as a barrier to keep the pirates in check'. It could be either raised or lowered. After many years of peace, it was removed and during Chau Ja Kua's time c. 998 - c. 1023, it lay "coiled on the shore." The local inhabitants revered it "like a Buddha". It shone like new when rubbed with oil. This device was employed in India till the 18<sup>th</sup> century. It was adopted by one of the noted nobles of Muhammad Beghada, Malik Aiyaz, on account of which "no *Firangi* ship dare enter a port of Gujarat" (referred by Commissariat as well). Even in the 18<sup>th</sup> century such a chain was utilized by the piratical *Siddis* of Janjira. On the 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 1751, there was a row between the English Factors and the *Siddis*. The English *ketch*, *sloop*, *gallivants* and the *prahm*, which had committed some mischief there were seized by the *Siddi* and, through the intervention of the Dutch, released later. The *Siddi* then "laid a chain with booms ashore" and installed 'a battery of 18 guns to guard it'.

Among other devices were the passes or permits mentioned earlier. Such permits were first issued by the Portuguese, and then followed by the English, Dutch and other European powers operating in the Indian Ocean. In c. 1612, Sikandar bin Muhammad, author of the *Mirat-i-Sikandari*, observes that "not a vessel" dared to leave a port of Gujarat "without a pass from the *Firangi*, except perhaps from Surat, and then only by boldness and

*gallantry* on the part of the crew.” Forts were built like embankments to keep pirates at bay. Malik Aiyaz built fort at Diu which the *Firangis* had destroyed and he built another to fight their ships. He also erected a bastion in the middle of the sea, which was called *Sangal Kothah* and from such a citadel he drew chains to the shore to prevent *Firangi* ships passing through that way. It was standing but, after the death of Bahadur Shah, Muhammad Beghada’s grandson, that fort, city, port and also a bridge, fell into the hands of the *Firangis* (Portuguese) and became mere relics. The Portuguese introduced their armadas to protect the entire coast from Goa to Cambay and some time as far as Hormuz on the one side and Cape Comorin in the north and south respectively to prevent the raids of the “*Malabar* pirates”, who caused them incalculable loss of material and prestige. They dispatched two armadas: the *Armada del North* sailed for Hormuz while the *Armada del Sud* went to Cape Comorin. Each of these fleets was composed of 50 or 60 *galiots* other than the *Chatie* or merchantmen. These armadas departed in October, when the Malabar pirates were active. These Portuguese *galleys* were rowed by prisoners and convicts, the *galiots*<sup>137</sup> had 15-20 benches on each side with only one man for each oar. They were “*Canarins*”, the people of Goa, Bardez and Salsette or elsewhere, Colombins (*Kunbins*) who were “the most vile drudges of people” and their captain (Macadao-Arabic *Mukaddam* or head-man) in the *galiot*

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<sup>137</sup> *Galiot*: a smaller galley with only one mast.

*Navie* and those of the *Malabars*, Pairaux. All these armadas were equipped at the “expense of the King of Spain”. M. P. Singh<sup>138</sup>, a medieval historian while discussing ports and port towns’ administration and management speaks of various categories involved in the management of maritime navigation within the category of native crafts. One finds the similar situation in case of south Asian mercantile nodes. However the terminology differs depending upon the colloquial or court language. The lexicons on navigation, boat-building referred by me suggest that all navigators during medieval centuries were facing similar challenges whether it were due to oceanic currents or wind flow.

A discussion on combat between Portuguese and *Malabari* pirate is pertinent:

In 1606 a Portuguese Viceroy, Martin Affonso de Castro, was expected to arrive with a powerful fleet to drive out the Dutch from India. It came with 9 warships and “six” for the voyage.” They were in the “calm of Guinea”..., they finally came to Goa ...sailed “along the coast of Malabar, spoiling and burning all they could meet with.” The Zamorin is said to have permitted them to build a fortress at Chaul. At that time the *Malabars* were considered “masters of all these (Indian) seas.” ...**the Malabarres (Malabars) vexed the Portugals and took or sank “at times 60 sails or more.”** In 1607 the English received information that the *Malabars* captured “an Ormuz ship” and **three frigates, probably Portuguese and shortly afterwards, a Portuguese fleet of 25 frigates from Cochin...**They captured 16 of them and burnt them while the rest escaped “if miserable spoil can be an escape.” Frigates and galleys of the *Malabars* were “spoiling on the coast” ... in January, 1609, 30 Portuguese frigates, destined for Diu, which being “richly laden” were seized by the *Malabaris* who, according to Finch, proved “good soldiers” and better sailors.

**On 12<sup>th</sup> February, 1610, a huge armada of 50 Portuguese ships (frigates) and two galleys, being dispersed by foul weather, “were suddenly, out of diverse creeks attacked, ransacked, set ablaze and captured” by *Malabars* and those which escaped, fled.**

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<sup>138</sup>M. P. Singh, *Town, Market, Mint, and Port in the Mughal Empire, 1556-1707: An Administrative-cum-Economic Study*, 2007, pp. 170-92.

**On January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 1639, Mandelslo, during his voyage at about noon at 13 degrees latitude lost sight of land. His ship's company, which intended to go towards the coast of Malabar, received information that an English ship, coming from Bantam, loaded with precious spices, had been set upon and spoiled by the Malabar pirates. On the next day, they changed course, sailing eastwards to reach the shore. The Malabaris, taking advantage that the ship was overburdened and could use only six guns, found indeed (no difficulty in boarding it. But they were no sooner in than the English sent "above 600 of them" on the upper deck into the sea and dispatched as many on the second deck into the water below. But afterwards being themselves forced to go to the stern to avoid the fire they yielded to the *Malabaris* who took the ship, captured the captain, the Master's Mate, the Clerk and 14 others!**<sup>139</sup>

Similarly, Saletore provides information from Freyer and Pyrard about the pirates in Malabar and down south. The description is as follows:

Freyer in 1674 relates how he participated in **an attack on a pirate ship ... Freyer's ship faced the pirates in this action between Goa and Vinguria and ... they turned to Freyer's ship to fight for two hours, striving to board it, casting "stink pots among them" ... The pirates were well-manned and had at least sixty fighting men besides rowers.** Freyer's men had none to manage their small guns, their gunner having deserted at Goa. Finally, the pirates were beaten and this "feat was mightily praised" by the on-looking Dutch. These pirates were from Vingurla, the subjects of Khem Sawant, stigmatized as the Quemar Santo by the Portuguese and the Saint-Burner by the English, on account of his sacrilegious treatment of their churches.

Another eye-witness, Francois Pyrard (1601-11), mentioned earlier, at **Badara (Vadakkara) was sailing towards Calicut, Sixty Portuguese galiots and two galleys, proceeding from Cochin to Goa, reached Badara, one of the Malabar pirate forts.** But this arrival hardly perturbed the *Malabaris*, for they "treated matter lightly." Immediately, on the arrival of the Portuguese armada, the *Malabaris* drew their *pados* (*patak*) boats on the beach. All the Portuguese galiots and galleys were lying at the entrance of that "great bay" and one of the *pados*, none perceiving it, found itself all of a sudden engaged with those 60 sails. Retreat being impossible, its sailors took the bold decision "to run through the middle of the fleet and so to make for its own port of Chombaye, lying to the south of the Kotta river on the Cannanore side". ...by swimming saved themselves. Pyrard, ...remarking that this was a "most gallant behavior." ... the mischievous Portuguese "got nothing for their pains" and, after their fleet had left the bay, "the owners brought their *pados* safely to shore."

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<sup>139</sup>M. S. Commissariat, *Mandelslo's Travels in Western India (a.d.1638-9)*, 1995, pp. 51-72.

*Modus Operandi* of pirates while attacking merchant ship was “Sea-Cordon”, the jetsam practice and different types of strategies. A description of each is offered here:

This system of piratical attack had been noticed by foreigners from the 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Marco Polo in 1291-92 rather enigmatically relates how systematically from “the kingdoms of Gujarat and Kerala” pirates “went every year” in large groups of a hundred vessels on a cruise. The pirates remained on the seas during the entire summer with their wives and children. Their *modus operandi* was to sail in fleets of 20 to 30 *pados* together and formed a “sea-cordon.” They sailed away, separated by a distance of 5 or 6 miles between two ships, covering roughly a distance of 100 miles of sea so that no merchant ship could escape them. At the sight of a vessel, a fire or smoke signal was made by corsair and the whole lot of those pirates went swiftly towards it, seized the merchants and plundered them and then they let them go, saying “Go along with you and get more gain that may be helpful to us also.” The sea-faring merchants, sailed well-armed and well-manned in “great ships” and did not dread the corsairs but still mishaps befell them at times...This mode of attack was adopted especially in the case of islands by the foes of pirates also like Mahmud Begarha who, in 1473, attacked the islands of Jagat (Dwarka) and Sankhodar (Byet) in a similar manner.



Native pirates stationed their ships in the staff-like formation (*danda*). They sailed in their boats in a line, designated as the detached (*asamhata*) arrays. The staff-like array was one of equal strength, with its own wings, flanks and front. When its flanks were made to project in front was the *pradara*, breaking the enemy's array. The *Malabar* pirates in attacking Portuguese armadas often adopted this method. The *pradara* mode of attack, when its wings and flanks were stretched back, was called firm or *drikhaka*. Such a method was used in the attacks of the Hughli pirates in the 17<sup>th</sup> century on one of the royal ships returning from Mecca. The pirates, on finding nearly 10 or 12 Mughal vessels, coming up against them, pretended to flee and drew them away to the open sea.

The Mughal ships tried their best to capture the pirate ships. But the pirate vessels used great courage and presence of mind, veered round shot continuously at the Mughal ships, caused them to flee away in disorder. The pirates found their chance and made capital of it. After plundering everything in it, the corsairs, destroyed the ship and all those in it, including women, children and beasts of burden.

Ovington<sup>140</sup> called the *Sanjanian* pirates, great tyrants lived by prizes they took at sea ranging from the Strait of Hormuz to the Gulf of Cambay and down to the Malabar Coast, cruising from one place to another. They infested the entire western coast of India.

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<sup>140</sup> B. G. Gokhale, *Surat in the Seventeenth Century*, 1978, pp. 23-24, 57-58, 127-154 & 163.

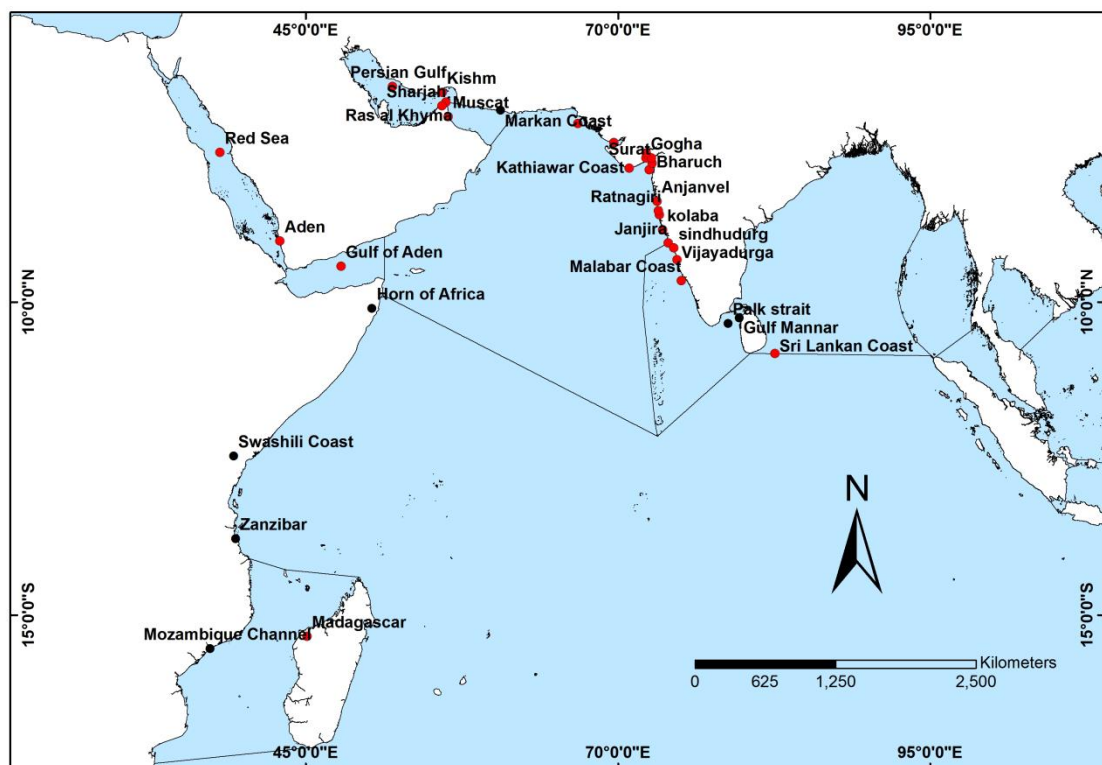
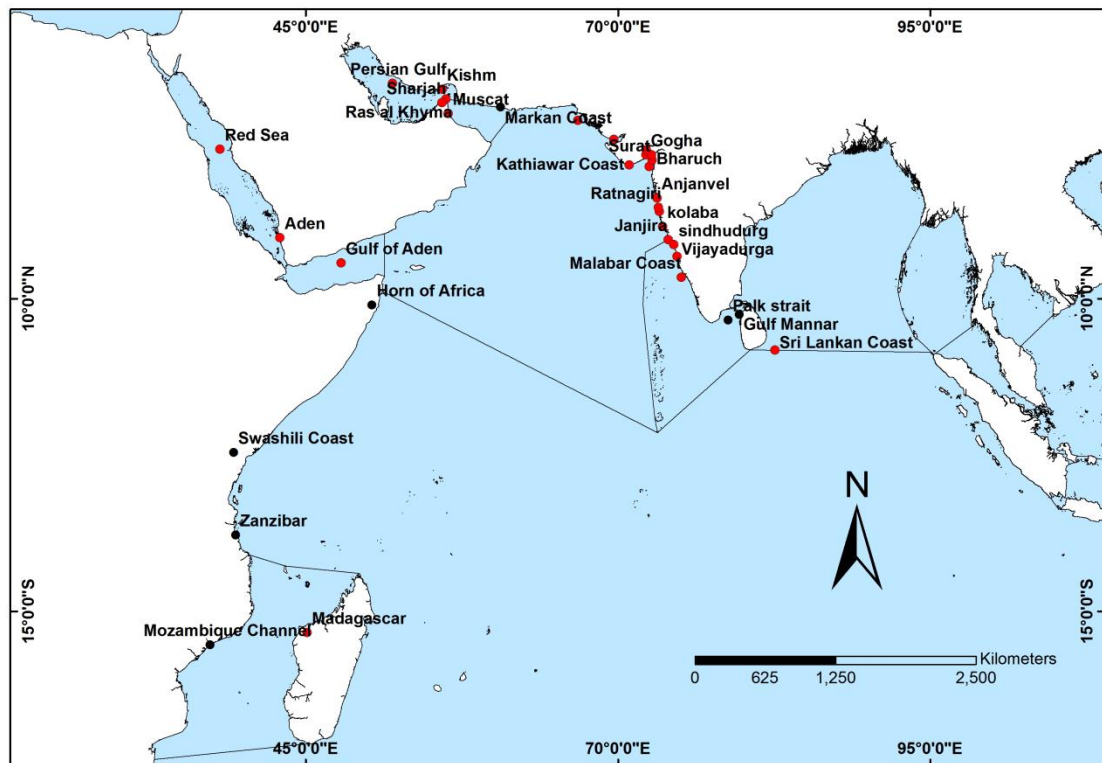
Their ships had no “great force” implying striking or gun-powder, were “made so well for sail” that would run when they saw any vessel of any countenance and those they thought they were able to encounter, they endeavoured to make a prey.

The *Sanjanians*, strove to board all ships they attacked scampered away if failed. They drank *bhang* to intoxicate themselves and once they let ‘their long hair loose, they gave no quarter to any foe’. The *Sanjanians* carried their prisoners to Byet and laid them for a ransom.

In 1290, Marco Polo observed another *Malabari* system of attacking their prey at sea. He observed this at Eli-Yeli-Mala, the only spur of the Western Ghats, which reaches the present Kerala State. This was the first land seen by Vasco da Gama in August, 1498. If any ship entered this Kerala estuary and anchored there while it was bound for another port, the pirates seized it and plundered the cargo saying “You were bound for somewhere else and it is God who has sent you hither to us. So we have a right to all your goods.” It was not considered a sin to make such seizures and this strange and “naughty” custom prevailed “all over the province of India.” A ship was sure to be plundered if it reached some other port than to which it was bound. But, if a ship came bound “originally to the place” the populace received it with all honour and protected it. The ships of Manzi and other countries that reached Yeli in summer, laid in their cargoes in 6 or 8 days,

and departed as fast as possible as there was no harbour, “a mere road-stead and sand-banks” so it was unsafe to stay there.

The *Sunda* (Sonda) pirates resorted to this in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The Sunda Raja in May, 1717, seized an English privateer, Elizabeth, with £s. 15,000 treasure on board as it had run ashore near Karwar. The consequences proved serious to the English.



**Illustration IV: Map on Piratical Aggression Sites for the period pre-c.1750 and c.1750-c.1850 in WIO**

Drawn by Mr. Sukanta Kumar Saha, Department of Geography,  
Faculty of Science, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Vadodara

## Pirates and Piracy in Persian Gulf, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden before c.1750:

Gulf of Persia (refer maps in figure 4, 5 & 6 in Chapter I) recorded piracy since antiquity and reference to Bahrain pirates are copious. Ibn Hawqal, a 10<sup>th</sup> century history chronicler, alludes to piracy in the Persian Gulf in his book, *The Renaissance of Islam*.<sup>141</sup> He describes it as follows:

...the year 815 the people of Basrah had undertaken an unsuccessful expedition against the pirates in Bahrain in the 10th century. People could not venture to sail **the Red Sea except with soldiers and especially artillery-men (*naffatin*) on board. The island Socotra in particular was regarded as a dangerous nest of pirates, at which people trembled as they passed it. It was the point d'appui of the Indian pirates who ambushed the Believers there. Piracy was never regarded as a disgraceful practice... does not even call them "sea-robbers," but designates them by the far milder expression "the predatory."** Otherwise the Indian term the *barques* is used for them...on the increase of trade in the Persian Gulf around 825, he makes **references to Bahraini pirate attacks on ships from China, India and Iran. He believes the pirates were attacking ships travelling from Siraf to Basra.**

According to the *Gazetteers*<sup>142</sup> of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, after the eviction of Portuguese in 1602 from Bahrain, Joasimi/Joasamee/Jawswami/Al-Qasmi/Qawasimi (people from Qatari peninsula) to Ras Musandam raided the gulf waters and attacked merchant as well as *hajj* vessels. Edward Balfour<sup>143</sup>, informs that Masqat Arabs were "highly predatory" between 1694 and 1736.<sup>144</sup> It is further verified in *Political and Foreign Department Files of Maharashtra State*

<sup>141</sup> [https://howlingpixel.com/i-en/Piracy\\_in\\_the\\_Persian\\_Gulf](https://howlingpixel.com/i-en/Piracy_in_the_Persian_Gulf).

<sup>142</sup> John Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf: Historical*, Part I, Vol. II, 1915, p. 1-70; and Sultan Muhammad Al-Qasimi, *The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf*, 1986, pp. 1-79.

<sup>143</sup> Edward Balfour, *The Cyclopaedia of India and of Eastern and Southern Asia*, 1885, pp. 189, 224–25 and 367–68.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 189-224.

*Archives*, Mumbai and *National Archives*, Delhi perused by me, establishing them as pirates. However, Sultan Muhammad Al-Qasimi reports that the British attempted to popularise the gulf as pirate zone in order to establish their hegemony and fulfil commercial interest. The Persian Gulf coast got nicknamed as “Pirate Coast”.<sup>145</sup> Edward Balfour proclaims that the Pirate Coast was said to have encompassed the area between Khasab and Bahrain, and the principal stronghold was in *Ras al-Khymah*. The first and second chapter by Sultan Mohammed Al-Qasimi highlights the nature of gulf trade; networks with Zanzibar, East Africa and Red Sea and the Indian coasts and other intra-regional trade extending up to Europe. It also provides lists of various vessels and ships of different regions coming from Europe, traversing through Atlantic coast (West Africa) and Indian Ocean for trade in the gulf. The trade was so lucrative that the British planned to control it and were successful in establishing their ascendancy. A description of Persian Gulf and circumstances in the first half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century are provided herewith to understand the piracy and piratical aggressions between c.1750 and c.1850 in the forthcoming chapters:

.... portions of the coasts of the Persian Gulf which are not occupied by tribes having treaty relations with the British Government are either under the dominion of Turkey or Persia. The Turkish suzerainty is acknowledged on the southern shore from the Shat-el-Arab to a point nearly opposite Demam, a small portion nearest the Shat-el-Arab being directly under the Pasha of Baghdad, and the rest being occupied by Arabs Chiefs, who acknowledge dependence on the Turkish Government. The northern shore nearest the Shat-el-Arab is held by **Arab Chiefs owing allegiance to Persia, and the coast eastward to a point nearly opposite to the western extremity of the Island of Kishm is governed directly by officers of the Shah of Persia...**

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<sup>145</sup>Pierre Schneider, “Before the Somali Threat: Piracy in the Ancient Indian Ocean”, *The Journal of the Hakluyt Society*, July, 2014, pp. 1-28.



In the beginning of this chapter, we have discussed about “renaissance piracy” and “golden age of piracy” from the side of the westerners who as privateers, *buccaneers* recurred in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea because of its location and trade opportunity. Red Sea attracted several actors who indulged in ‘piratical’ aggressions. Mark G. Hanna<sup>146</sup> in *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*; documents sea pillaging before the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> century where he argues that piracy thrived during this period because of the support and protection received by illicit sea marauders from the merchant elite on the margins of the British Empire. The important role played by deep-sea pirates—through their goods and services—in the political and social development of the colonial maritime communities in the areas where they carried out their adventurous activities is also considered. While highlighting the situation, he argues on the economic, legal, military, political, religious, and even literary factors that led Englishmen to turn to piracy in the Red Sea during the period 1688–1696. Piracy and privateering in the Mediterranean shifted to the Red Sea. Hanna provides the reason for shift from the South to the Red Sea that coincided with King William's War during the first half of the 1690s. Hundreds of Englishmen preyed upon Muslim pilgrims sailing in the Indian

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<sup>146</sup>Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*, 2015. Visit <https://northcarolina.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469617947.001.0001/upso-9781469617947-chapter-001>  
<https://northcarolina.universitypressscholarship.com/view/10.5149/northcarolina/9781469617947.001.0001/upso-9781469617947-chapter-006>

Ocean bound for Jeddah, the largest port in the Red Sea and the gateway to Mecca. The Red Sea pirates initially embarked on sea marauding in North American maritime communities. Hanna considers adaptation of the port towns in the Red Sea to the influx of transient seamen and discusses the aristocratization of ballad criminals such as Robin Hood and Henry Every (discussed earlier). The impact of Red Sea piracy on colonial merchants in New York City and the private colonies is explored. For instance:

...by the 1690s, English pirates began to leave the Atlantic for the Indian Ocean where they preyed upon Muslim pilgrimage vessels heading to the Red Sea. Most of these captains and crews were based in the North American colonies ... **The English crown feared these depredations would seriously harm the prosperity of the wealthy East India Company that held a monopoly over English trade in the Indian Ocean.** Although pirates remained staunchly protected in many of the American colonies, London imperial administrators initiated a series of legal and political reforms that gave the crown greater control over her ports.

Discussion on piracy in the Red Sea will be carried in chapter III of this monograph. Further, the Gulf of Aden being the transit point between East Africa (Swahili coast) and Persian Gulf continued to be affected by piratical aggressions like Red Sea because of intense mercantile activity in the 18<sup>th</sup> century and the presence of European companies in pre-c.1750 on the Swahili coast and safe havens of Madagascar.<sup>147</sup> Pirates and privateers targeted *hajj* pilgrims and merchandise of the Arab merchants or Indian merchants sailing in the Arabian Sea through Gulf of Aden.

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<sup>147</sup>Om Prakash (ed.), Ghulam A. Nadri, Lakshmi Subrahmanian in “The Western India Seaboard and the Indian Ocean System in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century”, *Trading World of the Indian Ocean, 1500-1800*, Vol. III, Part 7, *History of Science and Philosophy and Culture*, 2012, pp. 215-310; Rila Mukherji (ed.), Ruby Maloni, “A Profitable and Advantages European Private Trade” in *Oceans Connect: Reflection on Water World*, 2013.

## **Pirates and Piracy in East Africa (Swahili Coast) and Madagascar in pre-c.1750:**

The phenomenon of the maritime piracy along Africa's coastal areas is of great strategic and politico-economic interest, specifically since the 'first global age' and 'maritime trade' showed a close interface.<sup>148</sup> The Horn of Africa, the Gulf of Aden and the Gulf of Guinea had been of the utmost importance due to the flow of maritime traffic along the African coast that travelled through these hectic mercantile routes.<sup>149</sup> For instance: Madagascar islands had close links with piracy during the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries and it served as the 'safe haven' for pirates because the geomorphology provided it a sheltered harbour where sea vessels easily rested (it was *enroute* to the Red Sea). There was availability of fresh water along with food supplies. The islands of the Indian Ocean were seen as fair game for ambitious pirates (refer maps in figure 1, 2 & 3 in Chapter I) whether it was Madagascar or

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<sup>148</sup> Fahad Ahmad Bishra, "Mapping the Indian Ocean World of Gulf Merchants, c.1870-1960", pp. 69-92 and Mohamed Bakari, "The State of Swahili Civilisation: Swahili Language and Society, Indian Ocean Antecedents and Anthropological Research" pp. 185-204 in Abdul Sheriff, & Engseng Ho (ed.), *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies*, 2014 and Rila Mukherjee, "Introduction: The Many Faces of the First Global Age, c.1400-1800", pp. xv-10; Srijan Sandip Mandal, "A 'World System' Stretched? The Case of the 'Eurasian and African World Systems'", pp. 305-12 & Alex M. Thomas, "Networks of Production and Circulation in South Asia, 1500-1700: An Indian Ocean Perspective", pp. 313-31 in *Networks in the First Global Age 1400-1800*, Rila Mukherjee (ed.), 2011. And see Roland Oliver & J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 1962.

<sup>149</sup> Fahad Ahmad Bishra, "Mapping the Indian Ocean World of Gulf Merchants, c.1870-1960", pp.69-92 and Mohamed Bakari, "The State of Swahili Civilisation: Swahili Language and Society, Indian Ocean Antecedents and Anthropological Research" pp. 185-204 in Abdul Sheriff, & Engseng Ho, (ed.), *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies*, 2014.

Zanzibar / Pemba along the East African coast.<sup>150</sup> It is reported that the pirates flocked to Madagascar since the late 17<sup>th</sup> century and they were mostly heading from the Caribbean waters as discussed earlier as a result of industrial revolution and beginnings of mercantilist phase. The chief point was at island 'Ile Saint Marie' because the channel provided an easy sail up to the Red Sea where the *hajj* pilgrims frequented. The pirates of the Caribbean headed towards the Malabar and the Coromandel coasts of the Indian subcontinent. According to Captain Charles Johnson, author of *A General History of the Pyrates*, a colony named Libertalia<sup>151</sup> was setup in Madagascar. A peep into the history of voyages towards Madagascar-the eastern trade winds brought several Indonesians; Africans through the Mozambique Channel; Arabians in 9<sup>th</sup> century, and the Portuguese, accidentally in 16<sup>th</sup> century, who named it as Saint Laurence.<sup>152</sup> The history of colonization of Madagascar reveals the presence of Portuguese, Dutch, French and English in the nearby islands.<sup>153</sup> Bialuschewski inform us about the nature of slave trade which presumably provided opportunity for it being populated from nationals of different origin.<sup>154</sup> Due to political-economic circumstances (no central native authority) in

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<sup>150</sup>Roland Oliver and J.D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 1962, pp. 93-102 & William Foster, "An English Settlement in Madagascar, 1645-1646," *English Historical Review* 27, 1912, pp. 239-50.

<sup>151</sup>Daniel DeFoe, *General History of the Pyrates*, 1972, p. 417.

<sup>152</sup>*ibid.*, p. 417.

<sup>153</sup>Roland Oliver and J. D. Fage, *A Short History of Africa*, 1962, pp. 93-102 & 143-52.

<sup>154</sup>Arne Bialuschewski, "Pirates, Slavers, and the Indigenous Population in Madagascar, c.1690-1715", *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, Vol. 38, 3, 2005, pp. 401-25.

Madagascar, European colonizers could not continue for long. For instance: Dutch continued till 1712; English till 1644 and French survived relatively for a longer period. The society at Madagascar indulged in slave trade, and internal strife among them created the restrictive economy. It was the pirates/*buccaneers* from Caribbean who traversed and ruled Madagascar through Indian Ocean trade. The long journey of pirates from Americas and Caribbean via Good Hope is referred as “Pirate Round”<sup>155</sup> who targeted Moorish ships travelling between Mocha and India. The Isle of Perim (also known as Bab’s Key), situated at the mouth of the Red Sea remained a significant choke point for preying due to its many fine harbours and anchorages. As it did not have any central native authority, the pirates settled among the natives, the local chieftains courted them to join their tribe in the never-ending war with their neighbours. The relationship between the natives and pirate settler often was full of strife.<sup>156</sup>

More can be comprehended on the basis of biographies of the pirates traversing between Caribbean and the Indian Ocean. The narrations based on correspondences between the company officials are provided by Charles Jonson in form of biographies. I place here three narrations which reflect upon the following:-

- Letter from Captain Mackra, dated Bombay, November 16, 1720<sup>157</sup> reveals the attack of pirates and the consequences,

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<sup>155</sup>David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life among the Pirates*, 1996, p. 89.

<sup>156</sup>Charles Johnson, *A General History of the Pirates*, 1724, p. 117-18.

<sup>157</sup>*ibid.*, pp. 119-126.

nature of journey and showdown enroute on board, vessels, strategies for combat, about individuals and groups, routes etc. This narration, in fact, depicts the processes of curbing the piracy by English East India Company as well particularly along the *Kathiawad* coast near Goa, in south India:

...We arrived the 25<sup>th</sup> of July last, in Company of the Greenwich, at Juanna, (an Island not far from Madagascar) putting in there to refresh our Men, we found **fourteen Pirates that came in their Canoes from the Mayotta**, where the **Pirates Ship** to which they belong, viz. the **Indian Queen, two hundred and fifty Tons, twenty eight Guns, and ninety Men, commanded by Capt. Olive de la Bouche, bound from the Guinea Coast to the East-Indies**, had been bulged and lost. They said they left the Captain and 40 of their Men building a new Vessel to proceed on their wicked Design. Capt. Kirby and I **concluding it might be of great Service to the East-India Company to destroy such a Nest of Rogues, were ready to sail for that Purpose the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, about Eight o' Clock in the Morning, when we discovered two Pirates Ships, standing into the Bay of Juanna**, one of thirty four, and the other of thirty Guns. I immediately went on Board the Greenwich, where they seemed very diligent in Preparations for an Engagement, and I left **Capt. Kirby** with mutual Promises of standing by each other. **I then unmoored, got under Sail, and brought two Boats a-head to row me close to the Greenwich**; ... About half an Hour after Twelve, I called several times to the Greenwich to bear down to our Assistance, and fir'd Shot at him, but to no Purpose. For tho' we did not doubt but he would join us, because when he got about a League from us, he brought his Ship to, and looked on, yet both he and the oftender basely deferred us, and left us engaged with barbarous and inhuman Enemies, **with their black and bloody Flags hanging over us**, without the least Appearance of escaping being cut to Pieces. But ... **we engaged them both about three Hours, during which, the biggest received some Shot betwixt Wind and Water, which made her keep off a little to stop her Leaks...**

...About Four o' Clock, most of the Officers and men pasted on the Quarter-Deck being killed and wounded, ... we endeavoured to rust ashoar; and tho' we drew four Foot Water more than the Pirate, it pleased God that he stuck fast on a higher Ground than we happily fell in with; so was disappointed a second time from boarding us. All my Officers, and most of my Men, behaved with unexpected Courage; and as we had a considerable advantage **by having a Broadside to his Bow, we did him great Damage**, ... but the other Pirate (who was still firing at us) seeing the Greenwich did not offer to assist us, he supplied his Consort with three Boats full of fresh Men. **...leaving us struggling hard for Life in the very Jaws of Death**; ... I ordered all that could, to get into the Long-Boat under the Cover of the Smoak of our Guns; ... most of us that were able got a shoar, by Seven o'clock. **When the Pirates came aboard, they cut three of our wounded Men to Pieces**. I, with a few of



my People, made what haste I could to the King's Town...**the Pirates had offered ten thousand Dollars to the Country People to bring me in**, which many of them would have accepted, only they knew the King and all his chief People were in my Interest. Meantime, I caused a Report to be spread, that I was dead of my Wounds, which much abated their Fury. About ten Days after, ...Having obtained Leave to go **on Board the Pirates, and a Promise of Safety**, several of the Chief of them knew me, and some of them had sailed with me, which I found of great Advantage; because, notwithstanding their Promise, some of them would have cut me, and all that would not enter with them, to Pieces, had it not been for the chief Captain, Edward England, and some others I knew. **They talked of burning one of their Ships, which we had so entirely disabled, as to be no farther useful to them, and to fit the Cassandra in her room; but in the End I managed my Tack so well, that they made me a Present of the said shattered Ship, which was Dutch built, called the Fancy, about three hundred Tons, and also a hundred and twenty nine Bales of the Company's Cloth, tho' they would not give me a Rag of my Cloathes...**They failed the 3d of September; and with Fury-Masts, and such old Sails as they left me, ... almost naked and starved, having been reduced to a Print of Water a Day, and almost in despair of ever seeing Land, by Reason of the Calms we met with **between the Coast of Arabia and Malabar**. We had in **all thirteen Men killed and twenty four wounded; and we were told, that we had destroyed about ninety or a hundred of the Pirates.** ...

... it may be supposed, that nothing but the desperate Circumstances Captain Mackra imagined himself to be in, could have prevailed upon him to fling himself and Company into their Hands, perhaps not knowing how firmly the Natives of that Island were attached to the English Nation; ... insomuch that it became a Proverb, **That an Englishman, and Juanna Man were all one.**

Captain England was inclined to favour Captain Mackra; ...he therefore advised him to sooth up and manage the Temper of Captain Taylor, a Fellow of a most barbarous Nature, who was become a great Favourite amongst them for no other Reason than because he was a greater Brute than the rest. Mackra did what he could to soften this Beast, and ply'd him with warm Punch; notwithstanding which, they were in a Tumult whether they should make an End of him, ... he took him by the Hand, swearing, Damn him he was glad to see him; and show me the Man, says he, that offers to hurt Captain Mackra, for I'll stand by him; and so with many Oaths told him, he was an honest Fellow, and that he had formerly sailed with him...**Captain England having sided so much to Captain Mackra's Interest, was a Means of making him many Enemies among the Crew; they thinking such good Usage inconsistent with their Polity**, because it looked like procuring Favour at the Aggravation of their Crimes; therefore upon Imagination of Report, that **Captain Mackra** was sitting out against them, with the Company's Force, he was soon abdicated or pulled out of his Government...**Sir Thomas Herbert says, the Shores with Coral and Ambergrease; but I believe the Dutch had not deserted it, had there been much of these Commodities to have been found.** It was in 1722, resettled by the French, who have a Fort at another neighbouring Island, called Don Mascarine, and are touched at for Water, Wood and Refreshments, by French Ships bound to, or for India; as St. Helena and Cape Bon Esperance, are by us and the Dutch. From this Place, Captain

**England and his Companions having made a little Boat of Staves and old Pieces of Deal left there, went over to Madagascar, where they subsist at present on the Charity of some of their Brethren, who had made better Provision for themselves, than they had done...The Pirates detained some Officers and Men belonging to Captain Mackra, and having repaired the Damages received in their Rigging, they sailed for India. ...found they were two Moor Ships from Muscat, with Horses; they brought the Captain of them, and Merchants, on Board, torturing them, and rising the Ships, in order to discover Riches, as believing they came from Mocha and at the same Time a Fleet in Shore plying to Windward, they were puzzled how to dispose of them; ... they brought them to an Anchor, threw all their Sails over-board, and cut one of the Ships Masts half through. While they lay at an Anchor, and were all the next Day employed in taking out Water, one of the aforementioned Fleet bore towards them with English Colours, answered with a red Ensign from the Pirates, but did not speak with one another...At Night they left the Muscat Ships, weighed with the Sea Wind, and stood to the Northward after this Fleet: About four next Morning, just as they were getting under sail, with the Land Wind, the Pirates came amongst them, made no stop, but fired their great and small Guns very briskly till they got through: and as Day-Light cleared, were in a great Consternation in their Minds, having all along taken them for Angria's Fleet; what to do was the Point, whether run or pursue? They were sensible of their inferiority of Strength, having no more than 500 Men in both Ships, and 40 of them Negroes; besides the Victory had then four Pumps at Work ...; but observing the Indifference of the Fleet, chose rather to chase than run; and thought the best Way of save themselves, was to play at Bullbeggar with the Enemy: So they came up with the Sea Wind, about Gun-Shot to Leeward, the great Ships of the Fleet a-head, ...they could do nothing more than continue their Course all Night, which they did, and found them next Morning out of Sight, excepting a Ketch and some few Gallivats...they bore down, which the Ketch perceiving, transported her People on Board a Gallivat, and set fire to her; the other proved too nimble and made off. The same Day they chased another Gallivat and took her, being come from Goge, bound for Callicut with Cotton. Of these Men they enquired concerning the Fleet, ... yet they threw all their Cargo over-board, and squeezed their Joints in a Vice, ...but next Day a fresh easterly Wind having split the Gallivats Sails, they put her Company into the Boat, with nothing but a Trysail, no Provisions, and only four Gallons of Water, (half of it Salt) and then out of Sight of Land, to shift for themselves.**

➤ **Similarly:**

...In the Year 1720, the Bombay Fleet consisting of four Grabbs, (Ships built in India by the Company, and have three Masts, a Prow like a Row-Galley, instead of a Boltsprit, about 150 Tons; are officered and armed like a Man of War, for Defence and protection of the Trade,) ...Captain Upton, Commadore of that Fleet, prudently objecting to Mr. Brown (who went General) That the Ships were not to be hazarded, since they sailed without their Governor Boon's Orders to engage; and besides, that they did not come out with such a Design. **This favourable Opportunity of destroying the Pirates, angered the Governor, and he transferred the Command of the Fleet to Captain**

Mackra, who had Orders immediately to pursue and engage, where ever he met them. The Viceroy of Goa, assisted by the English Company's Fleet from Bombay, did attempt the Reduction of Callaba, his principal Place, landed 8 or 10000 Men the next Year, the English Squadron of Men of War being then in those Seas; but having viewed the Fortification well, and expended some of their Army by Sickness and the Fatigues of a 2 Camp, carefully withdrew again. I return to the Pirates, who, after they had sent away the Gallivats People, resolved to cruise to the Southward; and the next Day, between Goa and Carwar, heard several Guns, which brought them to an Anchor...They weighed and ran towards the Bay, till Day-Light gave the Grabs Sight of them, and was but just Time enough to get under India Diva Castle, out of their reach; **this displeased the Pirates the more, in that they wanted Water; and some were for making a Descent that Night and taking the Island, but it not being approved of by the Majority, they proceeded to the Southward, and took next in their Way, a small Ship out of Onnore Road, with only a Dutch Man and two Portuguese on Board.**

...the Captain, to acquaint him, if he would supply them with some Water, and fresh Provisions, he should have his Ship again; and the Master returned for answer, by his Mate Frank Harmlefs...Where being informed by a Menchew ... Melinda being the next convenient Island, they sent their Boats on Shore to see if there was any Water, and whether it was inhabited or not; who returned with an Answer to their Satisfaction, viz. that...**there was abundance of good Water, and many Houses, but deserted by the Men, who had fled to the neighbouring Islands on the Approach of Ships, and left only the Women and Children to guard one another. The Women they forced in a Barbarous Manner to their Lusts, and to requite them, destroyed their Cocoa Trees, and fired several of their Houses and Churches.** ...Provisions were very scarce, and they now resolved to visit their good Friends the Dutch, at Cochin, who, if you will believe these Rogues, never sail of supplying Gentlemen of their Profession...

## I

### ➤ Captain Edward England & His Crew:

...they proceeded to **Calicut**, where they endeavoured to take a large Moor Ship out of the Road, but was prevented by **some Guns mounted on Shore, and discharged at them: Mr. Lasinby, who was one of Captain Mackra's Officers**, and detained, was under the Deck at this Time, and commanded both by the **Captain and Quarter Master of the Pirates**, to tend the Braces on the Booms, ...and claim their Promise of putting him ashore, got an unmerciful beating from the Quarter-Master. Captain Taylor, who was now Successor to England, and whole Priviledge it was to do so, being lame of his Hands...**The next Day in their Passage down, came up with a Dutch Galliot, bound for Calicut with Lime Stone, and aboard of her they put Captain Tawke, and sent him away, and several of the People interceded for Lasinby in vain, for, says Taylor and his Party, if we let this Dog go, who has heard out Designs and Resolutions, we upset all our well advised Projections, and particularly this Supply we are now seeking for, as the Hands of the Dutch...**it was but one Day more before they arrived off Cochin, where by a Fishing-Canoe, they sent a Letter on Shore... saluting the Fort with 11 Guns each Ship, and received the Return in an equal Number; a good Omen of the welcome Reception they found; for **at Night there came on Board a large Boat, deeply laden with fresh Provisions and Liquors, and with it a Servant**

(of a favourite Inhabitant) called John Trumpet: He told them they must immediately weigh, and run farther to the Southward, where they should be supplied with all Things they wanted, naval Stores or Provisions...they had not been long at Anchor again, before they had several **Canoes on Board with both black and white Inhabitants, who continued, without Interruption, all good Officers, during their Stay; particularly John Trumpet brought a large Boat of Arrack, than which, nothing could be more pleasing (about 90 Legers), as also 60 Bales of Sugar; an Offering, its presumed, from the Governor and his Daughter, who, in Return, had a fine Table-Clock sent him, (the Plunder of Captain Mackra's Ship) and she a large Gold Watch, Earnests of the Pay they designed to make...When they had all on Board, they paid Mr. Trumpet to his Satisfaction it was computed 6 or 7000 l gave him three Cheers, 11 Guns each Ship, and throw'd Ducatoons into his Boat by handfuls, for the Boat-Men to scramble for that Night being little Wind, did not weigh, and Trumpet, in the Morning, waked them to the Sight to more Arrack, Chests of Piece-Goods, and readymade Clothes, bringing the Fiscal of the Place also with him. At Noon, while chose were on Board saw a Sail to the Southward,...and anchored a small Distance from Cochin Fort;**

... when they came within a Cable's length or two of the Chace, now near Shore, the Fort fired two small Guns, whose Shot falling nigh their Muzzels, they instantly bore out of the Road, made an easy Sail to the Southward, and anchored at Night in their former Birth, where John Trumpet, to engage their Stay a little longer, informed them, that in a few Days a very rich Ship was to pass by, commanded by the General of Bombay's Brother...This Governor is an Emblem of foreign Power. What Inconvenience and injury must the **Master's Subjects sustain under one who can truckle to such treacherous and base Means, as corresponding and trading with Pirates to enrich himself?** Certainly such a Man will stickle at no Injustice to repair or make a Fortune. ...Fraud and Oppression is Law. That he employs lofruments in such dirty Work, expresses the Guilt and Shame, but no way mitigates the Crime. John Trumpet was the Tool; but, as the Dog said in the Fable, on another Occasion, What is done by the Master's Orders, is the Master's Actions...I cannot but reflect, on this Occasion, what a vile Government Sancho Pancho had of it; ... was really almost starved; the Victuals taken from him almost every Day, and only under a Pretence of preserving his Excellency's Health:

**But Government differ...From Cochin some were for proceeding to Madagascar directly; others thought it proper to cruise till they got a Store-Ship, and these being the Majority, they ply'd to the Southward, and after some Days saw a Ship in Shore, which being to Windward of them, they could not get nigh, till the Sea Wind, and Night, favouring they separated, one to the Northward, the other to the Southward, thinking to enclose her between: But to their Astonishment, and contrary to Expectation, when Day broke, instead of the Chace, found themselves very near five Sail of tall Ships, who immediately making a Signal for the Pirates to bear down, put them in the utmost Confusion, particularly Taylor's Ship, because their Consort was at a Distance from them, (at least three Leagues to the Southward) they stood to one another, and joined, and then together made the best of their Way from the Fleet, whom they**

**judged to be commanded by Captain Mackra; of whose Courage having Experience, they were glad to shun after farther Taste of.**

... in the Night, with the Land Wind, they ran directly off Shore, and found next Day, to their great Consolation, that they had lost Sight of all the Fleet.

This Danger escaped, they proposed to spend Christmas (the Christmas of 1720) in Carousing and Forgetfulness, ... wasting their fresh Provisions in so wretched and inconsiderable a Manner, that when they had agreed after this to proceed to Mauritius, they were in that Passage at an Allowance of a Bottle of Water per Diem, ... they must most of them have perished.

In this Condition they arrived at the Island of Mauritius, about the Middle of February, sheathed and refitted the Victory, and on the 5<sup>th</sup> of April sailed again, leaving this terrible inscription on one of the Walls. ...However, they did not sail directly for Madagascar, but the Island Mascarine, ...they found at their Arrival on the 8<sup>th</sup>, a Portuguese Ship at Anchor, of 70 Guns, but most of them thrown overboard her Masts lost...became a Prize to the Pirates, with very little or no Resistance, and a glorious one indeed, having the **Conde de Ericeira, Viceroy of Goa, who made the fruitless Expedition against Angria**, the Indian, and several other Passengers on Board; who, as they could not be ignorant of the Treasure she had in, did after, that in the single Article of Diamonds, there was to the Value of between three and four Millions of Dollars.

The Viceroy, who came on Board that Morning, ...agreed after some Demurring, to accept of 2000 Dollars, and set him and the other Prisoners ashore, with Promises to leave a Ship that they might Transport themselves, because the Island was not thought in a Condition to maintain so great a Number; ...they sent the Ostender with some of their People to Madagascar, with News of their Success, and to prepare Masts for the Prize; and followed themselves soon after, without regard to the Sufferers, carrying 200 Mozambique Negroes with them in the Portuguese Ship.

➤ **On Madagascar:**

Madagascar is an Island larger than Great-Britain, most of it within the Tropick of Capricorn, and lays East from the Eastern Side of Africa: It abounds with Provisions of all Sorts, Oxen, Goats, Sheep, Poultry, Fish, Citrons, Oranges, Tamarinds, Dates, Coconuts, Bananas, Wax, Honey, Rice; or in short, Cotton, Indigo, ... They have likewise Ebony...of which they make their Lances; and Gum of Several Sorts, Benzin, Dragon's Blood, Aloes, &c. ...numerous Swarms of Locusts on the Land, and Crocodiles or Alligators in their Rivers. Hither, in St. Augustin's Bay, the Ships sometimes touch for Water, ...that this inner Passage or Channel, has its Northern and Southern Currents strongest where the Channel is narrowest, and is less, and varies on different Points of the Compass, as the Sea comes to spread again, in the Passage cross the Line...

Since the Discovery of this Island by the Portuguese, A.D. 1506, the Europeans, and particularly Pirates, have increased a dark Mulatto Race there...any single Man of them, command a Guard of 2 or 300 at a Minute's warning: This is farther the Native's Interest, ...because the Island being divided into petty Governments and Commands, the Pirates, settled here who are now a considerable Number, and have little Castles of their own...



**Here the Pirates came, cleaned the Cassandra, and divided their Plunder, sharing 42 small Diamonds a Man, or in less Proportion according to their Magnitude. An ignorant, or a merry Fellow, who had only one in this Division, as being judged equal in Value to 42 small, muttered very much at the Lot, and went and broke it in a Morter, swearing afterwards, he had a better S hare than any of them, for he had beat it, he said into 43 Sparks.**

Those who were not for running the Hazard of their Necks with 42 Diamonds, besides other Treasure, in their Pockets, knocked off...the Men... under the Command of Taylor...arrived in India, early in the Year 1721.

**At Cape Good Hope, in June, the Commodore met with a Letter, which was left for him by the Governor of Madras, to whom it was wrote by the Governor of Pondicherry, a French Factory, on the Coromandel Coast, signifying, the Pirates at the Writing of it, were then strong in the Indian Sea, having 11 Sail and 1500 Men, but that many of them went away about that Time, for the Coast of Brazil and Guinea; others settled and fortified themselves at Madagascar, Mauritius, Johanna and Mohilla: And that others under Conden, in a Ship called the Dragon, took a large Moor's Vessel, coming from Iudda and Mocho, with thirteen Lackies of Rupees on Board (i.e. 1300000 half Crowns), who having divided the Plunder, burnt their Ship and Prize, and sat down quickly with their other Friends at Madagascar.**

...Commodore Mathews, upon receiving this Intelligence, and being fond of the Service he came out for, ...at St. Mary's would have engaged England with Promises of Favour, ...and assist in the Pilotage; but England was wary, and thought this was to surrender at Discretion, so they took up the Judda Ship's Guns that was burnt, and the Men of War dispersed themselves on several Voyages and Cruises afterwards, ...the Squadron went down to Bombay, were saluted by the Fort, and came home.

**The Pirates, I mean those of the Cassandra, now Captain Taylor, fitted the Portuguese Man of War, and resolved upon another Voyage to the Indies, notwithstanding the Riches they had heaped up; ...four Men of War coming after them to those Seas, therefore they altered their Minds, sailed for the Main of Africa, and put in at a little Place called Delagoa, near the River de Spiritu Sancto, on the Coast of Monomotapa, in 26° South Latitude. ...The Pirates came to in the Evening, and were surprised with a few Shot from the Shore, not knowing of any Fortification or European Settlement in that Part of the World; so they anchored at a Distance that Night, and perceiving, in the Morning, a small Fort of Six Guns, they run up to it, and battered it down.**

This Fort was built and settled by the Dutch East-Indies Company, a few Months before, ...having left 150 Men upon the Place, they were then dwindled to a third Part by Sickness and Casualties...Sixteen of those that were left, upon their humble Petition, were admitted on Board the Pirates...I mention this, as an Instance of their Ingratitude, who had been so much obliged to their Countrymen for Support.



Here they stayed above four Months...leaving considerable Quantities of Muslins, Chintzes, and such Goods behind, to the half-starved Dutch Men, which enabled them to make good Pennyworths to the next that came, to whom they bartered for Provisions, at the Rate of three Farthings an English Yard.

They left Delagoa the latter End of December 1722...steered for Madagascar to their Friends, ...and the rest took **the Cassandra and sailed for the Spanish West-Indies. The Mermaid Man of War happening then to be down on the Main with a Convoy, about 30 leagues from these Pirates, would have gone and attacked them; ...surrendered with all their Riches, to the Governor of Porto Bello.**

Here they fate down to spend the Fruits of their dishonest Industry, dividing the Spoil and Plunder of Nations among themselves, without the least ...That whatever Robberies they had committed, they might be pretty sure they were not the greatest Villains then living in the World.

It is a difficult Matter to make a Computation of the Mischief that was done by this Crew, in about five Years' Time, which is much more than the Plunder they gained,...it was but to give the Word, and down went Ships and Cargoes to the Bottom of the Sea.

## II

**Since their Surrender to the Spaniards, ...eight of them were shipped about November last, in one of the South-Sea Company's Assiento Sloops, and passed for Ship-wrecked Men, came to Jamaica and there sailed in other Vessels; and I know one of them that came to England this Spring from that Island. 'Tis said that Captain Taylor has taken a Commission in the Spanish Service, and commanded the Man of War that lately attacked the English Long-Wood Cutters, in the Bay of Honduras.**

### ➤ **CAPTAIN EDWARD ENGLAND AND HIS CREW:**

**Edward England went Mate of a Sloop that failed out of Jamaica, and was taken by Captain Winter, a Pirate, just before their Settlement at Providence; ...It is surprising that Men of good Understanding should engage in a Course of Life, that so much debates human Nature...Murder, Rapine, Theft, Ingratitude, &c. and tho' they make these Vices familiar to them by their daily Practice, yet these Men are so inconsistent with themselves that a Reflection made upon their Honour, their Justice, or their Courage, is looked upon as an Offence that ought to be punished with the Life of him that commits it: England was one of these Men, who seemed to have such a Share of Reason...He had a great deal of good Nature, and did not want for Courage; range; he was not avaricious, and always averse to the ill Usage ...Actions...Captain England sailed to the Coast of Africa, after the Island of Providence was settled by the English Government, and the Pirates surrendered to his majesty's Proclamation; and took several Ships and Vessels, particularly the Cadogan Snow belonging to Bristol, at Sierra leone, one Skinner Master, who was inhumanly murdered by some of the Crew, that had lately been his own Men, and served in the said Vessel. It seems some Quarrel had happened between them, so that Skinner thought fit to remove these Fellows on Board of a Man of War, ...shipping themselves**

aboard a Sloop in the West-Indies, was taken by a Pirate, and brought to Providence, and sailed upon the same Account along with Captain England.

...As soon as Skinner had struck to the Pirate, he was ordered to come on Board in his Boat...proved to be his old Boatswain, who stared him in the Face like his evil Genius, and accosted him in this Manner. – Ah, Captain Skinner! Is it you? The only Man I wished to see; I am much in your Debt, and now I shall pay you all in your own Coin...The poor Man trembled every Joint...Boatswain immediately called to his Consorts, laid hold of the Captain, and made him fast to the Windless, and there pelted him with Glass Bottles, which cut him a sad Manner; after which they whipped him about the Deck, ...because he had been a good Master to his Men, they said, he should have an easy Death, and so shot him thro' the Head....

Captain England took a Ship called the Pearl, Captain Tyzard Commander, for which he exchanged his own Sloop, fitted her up for the piratical Account, and new chriften'd her, the Royal James, with which he took several Ships and Vessels of different Nations at the Azores and Cape de Verd Islands.

In the Spring, 1719, the Rovers returned to Africa, and beginning at the River Gambia, failed all down the Coast; and between that and Cape Corfo; took the following Ships and Vessels.

- **The Eagle Pink, Captain Rickets Commander belonging to Cork, taken the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, having 6 Guns and 17 Men on Board, seven of which turned Pirates.**
- **The Charlotte, Captain Oldfon, of Londin, taken May the 26<sup>th</sup>, having 8 Guns and 18 Men on Board, 13 of which turned Pirates.**
- **The Sarah, Captain Stunt, of London, taken the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, having 4 Guns and 18 Men on Board, 3 of which turned Pirates.**
- **The Bentworth, Captain Gardener, of Bristol, having the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, having 12 Guns and 30 men on Board, 12 of which turned Pirates.**
- **The Buck Sloop, Captain Sylverfter, of Gambia, taken the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, having 2 Guns and 2 Men on Board and both turned Pirates.**
- **The Carteret, Captain Snow, of London, taken the 28<sup>th</sup> of May, having 4 Guns and 18 Men on Board, 5 of which turned Pirates...**
- **The Mercury, Captain Maggott, of London, taken the 29<sup>th</sup> of May, having 4 Guns and 18 Men on Board, 5 of which turned Pirates.**
- **The Coward Galley, Captain Creed, of London, taken the 17<sup>th</sup> of June, having 2 Guns and 13 Men on Board, 4 of which turned Pirates.**
- **The Elizabeth and Katherine, Captain Bridge of Barbodoes, taken June the 27<sup>th</sup>, having 6 Guns and 14 Men on Board, 4 of which turned Pirates.**

...the Charlotte, the Bentworth, the Carteret, and the Coward Galley, they burnt; and the Mercury, and the Elizabeth and Katherine were fitted up for Pirate Ships, the former was new named Queen Ann's Revenge, and ...the other was called the Flying King... These two left England upon the Coast, sailed to the West-Indies, where they took some Prizes, cleaned, ...did a great deal of Mischief, but in the height of their Undertakings, a Portuguese Man of War, ...and gave them Chace; the Queen Ann's Revenge got off, but was lost a little while after upon the Coast; and the Flying King, giving herself over the lost, ran ashore: **They were then 70 Men on Board, 12 of which were killed**

**and the rest taken Prisoners, of whom the Portuguese hanged 38, of which 32 were English, three Dutch, two French, and one of their own Nation.**

...England, in going down the Coast, ...in Cape Corfo Road, they saw two Sail at Anchor, but before they could reach them, they flipped their Cables and got close under Cape Corfo Castle, there were the Whydah, Captain Prince, and the John, Captain Rider: The Pirates upon this made a fire Ship of a Vessel ...but the Castle firing warmly upon them, they withdrew, and failed down to Whydah Road, where they found another Pirate, one Captain la Bouche, who getting thither before England arrived, had forestalled the Market, and greatly disappointed their Brethren.

...When the Pirates came out to Sea,...they shaped their Course accordingly, and arrived at Madagascar, the Beginning of the Year 1720. They staid not long there, but after taking in Water and Provisions, sailed for the Coast of Malabar, ...in a Province to the Northward lies Goa, Surat, Bombay, where the English, Dutch, and Portuguese have Settlements.

**Hither our Pirates came, having made a Tour of half the Globe, as the Palmist says of the Devils, Going about like roaring Lions, seeking whom they might devour. They took several Country Ships that is, Indian Vessels, and one European, a Dutch Ship, which they exchanged for one of their own, and then came back to Madagascar.**

...They sent several of their Hands on Shore with Tents, Powder, and Shot, to kill Hogs, Venison, and ...seek out for the Remains of Avery's Crew, whom they knew to be settled somewhere in the island...

...They stayed not long here, after they had cleaned their Ships, but sailing to Juanna; they met two English, and one Ostend India Men...the Particulars of which Action is at length related in the following Letter, wrote by the Captain from Bombay.

...Madagascar continued to be, as it had been for a century, a stronghold of pirates. In 1720, two of their vessels boldly attacked three ships as they were lying at anchor; two called the 'Greenwich' and 'Cassandra,' " being English, the third belonging to the Ostend Company, who were "interlopers." ...the 'Cassandra' ran by accident on some rocks. **The only piratical vessel which attacked her was of Dutch build...In this predicament her decks were swept by the 'Cassandra's' guns, and her crew compelled to seek shelter in the hold, but on her companion coming to her assistance, the English Captain found it necessary to save the lives of himself and crew by taking to the boats.** ...he afterwards had the address and courage to visit the pirates, and so gained upon their better feelings by his judicious appeals, that they presented to him their own vessel ...reached Bombay in September, when their bravery was rewarded by the thanks and liberality of the Governor. Commodore Matthews sailed with his grabs to revenge this and other injuries in 1722, but, says Hamilton, **"found they had deserted the island of St. Mary's, leaving behind them some marks of their robberies...the pirates had carried their ships into rivers and creeks, out of danger of the men-of-war, and to offer to burn them with their boats would be impracticable, since they could have easily distressed the boat's crews out of the woods. The Commodore had some discourse with some of them, but they stood on**

**their guard ready to defend themselves if any violence had been offered them."**

**Hamilton writes** :—"There had been several squadrons of British men-of-war sent to cruise on the pirates, but have had very ill success in finding them out ; but one Scot's ship, commanded by one Millar, did the publick more service in destroying them, than all the chargeable squadrons ...in anno 1704, he killed about five hundred of them by carousing...and because they found difficulty in cleaning the bottoms of their large ships, he generously assisted them with large blocks and jack-falls for careening them. Whether those reports were true or false, I will not undertake to determine, but I saw a pirate at Bengal, in the French Company's service, that affirmed it. Madagascar is environed with islands and dangerous shoals, both of rocks and sand. St. Mary's on the east side, is the place where the pirates first chose for their asylum...they removed to the mainland for more security, and there they made themselves free denizens by marriage. And I am of opinion that it will be no easy matter to dispossess them."

- **Captain Hamilton** describes the defence, by a handful of Company's seamen, of the British factory at Gombroon in the year 1721. 'He says :- We heard of their design about ten days before they came, and so we and the Dutch fortified our factories... Meanwhile the Persian Governor fired guns every night, to let the enemy know he was a brave fellow: ...on the 15<sup>th</sup> of December they appeared near the town, on a swift march towards it, which scared the Governor ...he got on horseback and fled to a fort on the seashore... The Ballowches came first to the west quarters of the town, ... hewed down all that came in their way...but we gave them a warm welcome with our great guns and small shot. ...Our firing lasted about three hours.... The agent being gone to Ispaham some weeks before we had any advice of the Ballowches coming, had carried twenty soldiers along with him for a guard, and left but six in the factory, besides cooks, and a few servants. I saw the factory in danger if they should be attacked, so I reinforced it with thirty-six of my best men...so that when the enemy came, we were about fifty strong. ...they went to attack the Dutch, who were three times stronger than we, they had a warehouse...with goods to the amount of £20,000 sterling, in it, which the Ballowches broke into and plundered...and carried away in money and goods, above £200,000, besides fourteen thousand captives, and as many beasts of carriage..."

The failures to coerce Angria tended generally to increase his power. No trading vessels dared to pass down the coast without an escort of ships of war, and the name of this pirate chief was as much dreaded as was ever that of the Algerines in the Mediterranean. Emboldened by his success, Angria now openly attacked English vessels, and, in 1627, captured a richly-laden ship, belonging to the Company, which, together with other prizes, was taken to his fortified harbours. "These," says Grant Duff, "were considered impregnable," and offered from their number and position, peculiar facilities for piratical operations.

Although Kanhojee Angria had, in 1728, made a proposition for a peaceful settlement of disputes, he captured the Company's galley, 'King William'...In 1730 a hope was indulged that, by an alliance with the Bhonslays of Sawunt Waree, the common enemy, Angria, might be effectually punished; but this

proved visionary, although a treaty was actually made and ratified. Soon after this event, the death of Kanhojee Angria must have occurred.<sup>158</sup>

**Kanhojee left two legitimate sons, between whom his territories were divided. Sukhojee the elder, obtaining Colaba as his share, and the southern coast falling to Sambhajee, the Younger, who resided at Severndroog.** The former made friendly advances to the English Government...but death frustrated his good intentions. Mannajee, one of the three illegitimate sons of the late Kanhojee, having quarreled with his family, took Colaba by escalade, with the assistance of the Portuguese...successfully resisted all Sambhajee's efforts to displace him, and, forming an alliance with Shao, the Mahratta Rajah, or rather with Rajee Rao, the Peishwa, ...endeavoured to gain the fort of Aujenwil, under the guns of which lay the fleet of the Seedee of Jinjeera\*... Mannajee Angria, having gained possession of his galivats, was permitted to retain them, on paying 70,000 rupees to Bajee Rao, who also acquired for himself several of the Seedee's forts. Another of Mannajee's conquests ...Rewaree, on the River Penn, which flows into the harbor of Bombay, became his, and thus he held in his hand a key to the communication of the island with the continent. A passage boat plied regularly between the places, for the convenience of the Brinjaries, who brought merchandise from the interior, and who, it was feared, might, on their return, convey to the pirate chief intelligence of all that was occurring at Bombay.

...The growing importance of the English Government was manifested by the flattering letters and proposals which they received in the course of these affairs from Bajee Rao: one of the most sagacious and powerful statesmen of the Mahratta Empire. When besieging Rajapore, he wrote in the name of 'The First Wars and Treaties of the Western Presidency' in the "Bombay Quarterly Review," ...

**...The Rajah of Sattara to the President and Council of Bombay...he invited them to mediate between himself and the Seedee, sending an envoy of distinction to them, and another to Rajapore, who was met there by Messrs. Lowther and Dickenson. However, much as the English were disposed to be on friendly terms with the powerful Peishwa, they could take no part with him then, because he was in alliance with Angria...**As it was never the policy of Mahratta sailors to risk a naval engagement an exciting chase was the sole result, when the whole of Angria's fleet escaped... In the meanwhile, Messrs. Lowther and Dickenson had arranged with the rival Seedees of Jinjeera a treaty of alliance, afterwards ratified by their Government, according to which both parties bound themselves to act in concert against Angria, and not to treat with him except by mutual consent. They agreed that all prizes taken at sea should be allotted to the English, and to the Seedee all conquests made on land...

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<sup>158</sup>Consultation Book of the Bombay Government, the 10th of February, 1728, 1729, and April, 1735. The Treaty is dated the 12th of January, 1730. Grant Duff surmised that Kanhojee Angria died in 1728, but added in a note, "I am not certain of this date, as I have not observed it in the English Records." Kanhojee is mentioned in the treaty with the Bhonslay, as still alive, and therefore this surmise must be incorrect. Grote also says, in his "Travels in the Indies," "Angria died about 1731, being about sixty".



But the Seede's prosperous days had passed; their power was on the wane, and of little assistance to the English in combating the more formidable Angrias...the Company were prevented from making their usual investments, and, in their alarm, even began to anticipate an extinction of their commerce in Western India. Emboldened by success, and looking for support from Mahratta Rajah of Sattara, the Angrias aspired to bring all the Seede's territories under their subjection, and possess themselves of every port on the coast between Bombay and Goa. Nor in all probability would their efforts have been fruitless if family dissensions, which so often thwart the best matured designs of Native powers, had not intervened. Mannajee and Sambhajee were still at open feud with each other...they sent to Colaba Captain Inchbird ...the favourite diplomatist of the day. His instructions were simple; he was directed to assist Mannajee with money and military stores, and "to take all opportunities of spiriting him up to carry on the resentments against his brother"...**At the same time naval operations were undertaken, and Commodore Bagwell, with four cruisers, having cruised for a length of time in search of Sambhajee's fleet, of which he only caught occasional glimpses, was rewarded on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of December 1738, by the sight of nine of his grabs and thirteen gallivants issuing from the port of Gheriah and creeping timidly along the shore. Disproportioned as his force was in numbers, he at once bore down upon them; but, anxious only to avoid a conflict, they stood into the river of Rajapore, where the gallant and Impetuous Commodore beheld them lying at anchor, and in bravado displaying all their flags and pendants. At a loss to account for what he called such "Consummate Impudence" he conjectured that they must be relying for safety upon a fort...But the enemy's defiance had been only vain show, and, on seeing the English really bearing down upon him, his first aim was to run up the river. The eager Commodore used his utmost efforts to prevent him carrying this into effect. "Before some of them could slip or cut," he wrote "I was within musquett shott, and did really think I should have been on board one of them". As it was, luck did not declare in his favour; they made off under his heavy broadsides, until he found himself with only four fathoms of water and locked in by the rocks... he had inflicted much damage upon the enemy's fleet and killed his Chief Admiral.**

Thus avoiding all encounters with the Company's ships of war, Sambhajee still continued to prey upon their shipping. On the 26<sup>th</sup> of December, 1735, he inflicted a most severe blow on their trade by attacking, with five of his grabs, the 'Derby', a large East Indiaman. After a severe engagement, in which all her masts were shot away, he succeeded in making her his prize, and thus procured such a large supply of naval stores that he was enabled to equip his ships as well as any on the coast...As though satisfied with his success, he pretended to wish for peace, and, in 1739, made overtures to the English Government but, as he demanded that they should provide all their trading vessels with his passes, and pay him 2,000,000 rupees annually for the free navigation of the seas, his proposals were at once rejected as absurdly extravagant.

**The following January Sambhajee flew at higher game than he had ever before ventured to attack. On the 9<sup>th</sup> of that month, as the 'Harrington,' 'Pulteney,' 'Ceres,' and 'Halifax,' four Indiamen which had just arrived on the coast from England, were waiting for a convoy, they descried, at sunset, fifteen sail, which they soon made out to be Angria's fleet. Singling**



out the 'Harrington,' as she was some distance from the rest, the enemy formed their line abreast, according to custom, and firing their bow-guns, bore down upon the Indiaman, which at first, only replied with her stern chasers; then, finding her weight of metal superior, tacked and delivered three broadsides. After a distant contest of five hours, the pirates sailed away; but, unwilling to lose such a rich prize, appeared again at five the next morning rending the air as they drew near with discordant music. This time the 'Harrington' accepted their invitation at once, and they were proportionately reluctant to engage at close quarters; but at last she came up with three large grabs, including their admiral's and shortly after, no fewer than six were within a few yards of her. At noon their admiral's vessel was crippled, and they sheared off, the galivats, which were impelled by oars, taking him in tow, and thus getting to windward where the large English ship could not follow them. Their repulse at that time was most fortunate, as the ammunition on board the 'Harrington' was expended, and her commander could not have continued the fight longer. Knowing that it was his best policy to look his enemy in the face, he lay to for three hours, but they did not venture to renew the engagement.

As for Mannajee Angria, he was a fast and loose friend, or an actual enemy, just as it suited him. Even his friendship was dangerous, and to use a comparison of the Indian moralist, he was "like coal, which when hot burns the hand, and when cold blackens it;" while he professed to be a close ally of the English, his covetous nature could not resist the temptation if one of their unarmed ships happened to be sailing near his quarters. At the very time his envoy was making protestations of friendly sentiments at Bombay, he seized two vessels laden with grain for the island, and, before remonstrance could reach him, two other vessels belonging to the factory of Surat. All complaints and threats he met with excuses and evasions. When, however, he had gone so far as to make English prisoners labour at his public works, such insolence could no longer be tolerated, and, **in March 1739, Captain Inchbird, sailing with his little fleet to Caranja, which had just fallen into Mannajee's hands, captured eight of his fighting galivats and thirteen fishing boats. In November, Mannajee took the Island of Elephanta, hoisting his flag there in defiance of the little English garrison stationed in close proximity at Butcher's Island ; and, although he had begun a friendly correspondence, in April, with the English, and showed a disposition to make restitution for past injuries,** he detained, in July, four boats which they had sent across the harbour to open communications with the General of the Mahratta Peishwa. As this last insult was offered at a time when a rupture would have been inconvenient, it was overlooked, and a hollow peace was made between him and the English Government. Sometime afterwards misfortune changed his disposition, and brought him as a suppliant to Bombay, where he represented that his brother, Sambhajee, having taken Choul, Alibagh, Thull, and Sagurgurh, had laid siege to Colaba, and cut off all the fresh water of the garrison. At his earnest request, Mr. Stephen Law, the Governor, or President, of Bombay, sent a squadron of cruisers, which conveyed a supply of water, forced Sambhajee's fleet to run down to Severndroog, and opened such a heavy cannonade upon his camp as compelled him to remove it from the seaside and throw up entrenchments for its protection. Sambhajee then requested permission of the Commadore to retire to Severndroog, and, on that being refused, he made a disorderly retreat, thoroughly humbled by the English

squadron and a co-operating Mahratta force, under the Peishwa's son, Ballajee Bajee Rao, also known at that time under the name, rendered infamous for all time, of Nana Sahib. Mannajee, dismayed at the prospect of the occupation of Colaba by the Mahrattas, hastily patched up a truce with Sambhajee, and the two Angrias, having received a wholesome warning, lived for a time in fraternal concord.\*

As there was no hope that Sambhajee would ever cease to be a robber, or that he would honestly observe any treaties he might make with the English, the latter conceived it necessary to their interests to form an alliance with his opponents. The power which, of all others, was every day becoming more formidable, was that of the Mahratta Rajah of Sattara, or rather, of his ambitious minister, the Peishwa. The active and marauding "Sevajees," as the Mahrattas were then called, after their first great leader, now mustered regular armies, with well-equipped trains of artillery'...they had been engaged in hostilities with the Portuguese, whose possessions near Bombay they coveted...

**In 1731 Tanna was threatened by the Mahrattas, and the Government of Bombay...the factory of Surat, when forwarding a dispatch, under date April 20, 1737, to their friends at Bengal, deemed it necessary to explain who the Mahrattas were. "The Portuguese territories adjacent to Bombay," they wrote, "have been suddenly invaded by the Mahrattas, a people subject to the Sow Rajah, who have prosecuted their attempts so successfully as to render even our Honourable Master's island in danger."** In 1737 the Mahratta army sat down before Tanna...At the same time they declared their intention of remaining neutral in other respects, and were so inconsistent as not only to apprise the Mahrattas when the Portuguese were making great preparations for the recovery of Tanna, but even to supply the garrison with powder and shot...the English Governor made the ungenerous excuse that they were but retaliating on the Portuguese for the information which they had communicated, and the supplies they had furnished, to the Seedee when he invaded Bombay.

Soon after Tanna had fallen, Tarrapoor shared its fate. The Mahrattas sealed its walls, and entered sword in hand; but it is recorded that the commandant of the victorious army informed his superior that the garrison "fought with the bravery of Europeans," until they were overwhelmed by numbers. **Early in 1739, Chimnajee Appa, the Mahratta general, and brother of the Peishwa, invested Bassein, and having, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, taken possession of Versova...**the Mahrattas sprang twelve or thirteen mines, and made a practicable breach in one of the bastions. Even then the brave Portuguese disputed every inch of ground, until, after a contest of two days held out a white flag and offered to capitulate. Chimnajee Appa rejoiced to possess a city...offered most favourable terms to his vanquished foe, and, on the 5th of May, the articles of capitulation were signed, and the brave garrison marched out with the honours of war. De Souza Pereira and the remains of his force proceeded to Bombay...but then a fresh series of misfortunes commenced. For some reason unexplained they were led by a toilsome march overland, instead of being landed at Goa. Khem Sawunt, ruler of the state, now known as Sawant Waree...attacked with fury their enfeebled and disorganised ranks, utterly

routed them after a contest of two hours, and slew two hundred men. The English Commodore, being with his fleet at Goa, beheld the broken band of fugitives enter their own territory, and the deep commiseration "he felt for them found expression in his official dispatches.

**He wrote :-** "The Portuguese are really in a miserable, condition; I can see care and grief in all their faces." As to the brave Pereira, he fell into disgrace at Goa and took up his residence at the French settlement of Mahe...conducting negotiations between Angria and his new protectors.

Ceasing to struggle with their adverse destiny, the Portuguese prepared to yield their northern possessions...a way was already paved for a mediation...**The Mahrattas, on being invited to propose their terms...and induced their scornful enemies to show some forbearance. On the 14<sup>th</sup> of October 1740, articles of peace were signed on behalf of Bajee Rao...the Viceroy of Goa...The Portuguese engaged to deliver up to the Mahrattas the forts of Choul and Mhar...until the Mahrattas should have fulfilled their part of the conditions by withdrawing their forces from Salsette...**in November, Choul was delivered by the English to the Mahrattas, and all parties expressed themselves satisfied with the honourable manner in which the conditions of the treaty were fulfilled.

...the Government of Bombay sent Captain William Gordon in May, 1739 to the Rajah of Sattara, with a complimentary letter, giving him secret instructions to concert measures with the enemies of Bajee Rao, the Peishwa, and to use all possible means of undermining that minister's influence. At the same time they agreed it was "expedient to try what effect a cautions and well-managed compliance" might have upon the Peishwa...

Gordon returned to Bombay by Poonah, and traversed the Mahratta territories...**The Rajah, Peishwa, and principal chiefs coincided in the opinion that the English ought to be respected. All this information...was furnished by Captain Gordon at a cost which, in these days of expensive missions, will raise a smile of contempt on the face of a professional diplomatist; the bill of his expenses amounted to 296 rupees, and he was permitted to retain the presents he had received, which was valued at 240 rupees.**<sup>159</sup>

Of more immediate importance was the mission of Captain Inchbird, of the Bombay Marine, ...celebrity on the diplomacy of the English and Mahrattas, the <sup>\*</sup>Rajahpore, or Rajhpuri, is the capital of the small state of Seedee... His object was to negotiate a treaty, in the name of President Law, with the victorious Mahratta General, **Chimnaje Appa, who acted on behalf of the Peishwa, and, for this purpose, he proceeded to Bassein. ...succeeded in arranging the terms of a treaty, dated the 12<sup>th</sup> of July, 1739, which was ratified at Bombay. According to this treaty, the Peishwa conceded to the English free trade in his dominions.**

...the Government became painfully sensible how exposed they were to the designs of their unscrupulous allies, particularly if Mannajee Angria should once more prove treacherous and convert his vessels into transports for the

<sup>159</sup>Manuscript Copy of Captain Gordon's Journal, Vol. I.

Peishwa's plunderers. On the subversion of the Portuguese, only the British remained to cope, single handed, with the Angria; but the Bombay Marine, when the hour for action had struck, proved that it was equal to the task of driving his ships from the sea, and of attacking him in his strongholds on shore. ...Timid counsels now prevailed at Bombay, and alarming rumours were rife. It was said, upon good authority, that a large force was being mustered at Tanna, and the tone of Mannajee's letters became more insolent. Mischief, it was thought, must

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November the southern coast was devastated by a frightful storm...Instantly Sambhajee Angria seized the opportunity, and sallying out, carried away fourteen fishing boats with eighty-four men, from the mouth of the harbor...

At this time **the coasts of India swarmed with native pirates, and, in 1733, a Dutch ship turned rover and captured two merchant vessels. The native pirates were called by the English Sevajeos, Kempsaunts, Malwans, and Coolies. Under the name of Sevajeos were included Mahrattas of all description, but chiefly the subjects of the two Angrias. With the Malwans the Government had a Memoir of the Sawunt, Waree State, by Mr. Courtney and Major J. W. Auld. Of the piratical tribes inhabiting the coast to the northward of Bombay, Hamilton says :—All the country between Diu and Dand point, which is about thirty leagues along shore, admits of no traffick, being inhabited by freebooters, called Warrels and often associate with the Sanganians in exercising piracies and depredations. ... earthen pots, as big as a six-pound Granadoc shell, full of unquenched lime, well sifted, which they throw in also, and the pots breaking, there arises so great a dust, that the defendants can neither see or breathe well. They also use wick of cotton, dipt in a combustible oyl, and firing the wick, and throwing it into the opposer's ship, it burns violently, and sets fire to the parts that it is thrown on. ...In anno 1716, the English went to burn that village and their pirating vessels, but were unsuccessful in their undertaking. The Warrels occupy all the sea coast as high as Goga...**

The Rev. G.P. Badger, in his notes to his translation of the Arabic **"History of the Imaums or Seyyids of Muscat,"** has hazarded an hypothesis regarding these pirates which is incorrect. Quoting Niebuhr's reference to them in 1764, as "petty people inhabiting the coast," he queries "Malvanes" as Malays, and "Sangerians" as Angrians.(See Note to page 171 of his work.) The Coolie rovers infested the coast of Guzerat. Their stronghold was Sultanpore on the small river Curla... **The Government of Bombay having for some time employed paid spies in their country, and ascertained the most favourable time for an expedition, sent against them. In 1734, a small fleet composed of the sloop 'London,' a bombketch and five galivats, under Captain Radford Nunn, who after a sharp fight, returned in triumph with five of the Coolies' guns and fourteen of their vessels...All the prizes were then sold for the small sum of 3,650 rupees, which the Government of Bombay resolved should be divided amongst the captors, but the Court of Directors meanly reversed this order, and claimed a moiety for themselves.**

Within six months the pirates took their revenge by employing the same spy system which had been so efficacious against themselves. Acting in collusion with them, the pilot of the 'Antelope,' a Bombay Marine galivat, ...steered his charges through a wrong channel...The 'Antelope' was speedily assailed by a strong force of pirates, and, although gallantly defended for a time, further resistance was rendered hopeless by the explosion of her magazine.

**Tellicherry was at this time the most important settlement of the English under the Presidency of Bombay...When war broke out between the Malabarese and Canarese, the English at Tellicherry ranged themselves on the side of the former...succeeded in intercepting the communications of the Canarese army with their fort of Madday.**

...The Chief of Tellicherry afterwards wrote to Ragonath, declaring that if the English forces had not shown singular moderation and forbearance, his whole army would have been destroyed; and, the following April, the Canarese, sensible of their inferiority, made proposals of peace. Thus the first war in which the English of Western India showed any military skill, or contended with field-artillery and what was called a regular army, was brought to a favourable termination, and the officers and seamen of the Bombay Marine added to the laurels they had gained ashore at Surat, Gombroon, Carwar, and other places.

As 1742 was a year of peace, reductions, of which the Government had almost immediate cause to repent, were made both in the marine and military establishments...

**According to the Bombay Diary of 1742-43, the principal ships were the 'Restoration' and the 'Neptune's Prize...On each of the "prahims" there had usually been thirty Europeans and twenty Lascars; but these numbers were not slightly diminished...As frequent complaints of favouritism were made by the officers, it was resolved that promotion should be regulated according to dates of commissions, and thus the seniority system was introduced into the Service.**

An immediate consequence of these reductions was, that the mercantile marine...suffered serious losses from pirates, and the Company quickly found the error of the policy of misplaced economy...Near the port of Surat, Coolie rovers swarmed, and waited for their prey as the ships lying at the bar attempted to discharge their cargoes. The treaty which had been made with Khem Sawunt was...treated as waste paper;...chief made prizes of seven vessels valued at eighteen or nineteen thousand rupees. The Malwans seized others valued at ten or eleven thousand rupees. The subjects of the Peishwa showed themselves equally rapacious...Even Mannajee Angria...countenanced his subjects in attacking their vessels, and never hesitated to pick up a stray boat if he could hope to escape detection; yet, on one occasion, he rendered a valuable service in rescuing the 'Salamander,' an English ketch, which had been captured off Colaba by the fleet of Sambhajee Angria. The merchants of Bombay, driven to despair by the losses they had sustained, held meetings, and unanimously represented to Government that, since the reduction of the Marine, Khem Sawunt and the Malwans, ...not a ship had been equipped for the transport of merchandize; and that, unless more cruisers were provided, the



trade of the port would be entirely suppressed. These representations led to a small but permanent increase of the Company's Marine.

**On the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 1744, war was declared between Great Britain and France...The French now aspired to territorial aggrandizement...French influence was progressing rapidly even before the advent in 1711 of the ambitious Dupleix, who is ordinarily supposed to have given it the first impulse. The only protective measure which the Government of Bombay could adopt was to equip for sea three of their ships-of-war, of greatly inferior force, and they also dispatched six fishing boats, to give the alarm to any English vessels approaching the shores of India.**

**In 1748 a mutiny took place on board the 'Bombay,'...As the ship lay at anchor at Rajapore, on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March, 1748, Samuel Hough, the commander, ...Captain Hough made a dash at his assailants, and endeavoured to seize the ringleaders...He warned them that the consequences would be fatal to them if they persevered in their mutiny; but promised that if they would lay down their arms, they should be sent to England as soon as possible...In a quarter of an hour, after all the officers had signed an agreement not to take any further notice of the mutiny, the men laid down their arms and returned to their duty.**

...The Government, without determining whether the promises made by their officers under restraint were binding, felt that it would be inconvenient to punish a whole crew, and, as some captains of men-of-war were anxious to ship men for England, they fulfilled Captain Hough's engagements and permitted the mutineers to escape unhurt<sup>160</sup> ...

**One of the consequence of the war with France, and the representations of the Bombay merchants as to the defenceless state of the trade, was a small increase of the Marine. The enlarged Service, however, only consisted of three ships carrying twenty-eight guns, a grab of twenty guns (from six to twelve pounders) five ketches, carrying from eight to fourteen guns (from four to six-pounders), eight galivats, and one prahim. Two other ships were alternately employed as guard ships to protect the factory at Gombroon. Each ship or grab had a crew of seventy or fifty Europeans, the ketches thirty or a lesser number, and the galivats a few to work the guns only. To the list of officers were added two commanders, one first-lieutenant, six second-lieutenants, and three third-lieutenants. At the same time, the first attempts were made to improve the religious and moral character of both officers and men, orders being sent from the Court of Directors for the regular performance of Divine service on board all the vessels and a strict prohibition of all gambling, profane swearing, and indecent conversation.**

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<sup>160</sup>In 1741, according to a writer on the "Rise of the Navy and Army in Bombay," the military establishment was considered as one regiment, consisting of a captain, nine lieutenants, fifteen ensigns, a surgeon, two sergeants-majors, eighty-two sergeants, eighty-two corporals, twenty-six drummers, and three hundred and nineteen European privates, also thirty-one masters – by which term we conceive Indo-Europeans are meant – and nine hundred to passes. They were distributed into seven companies, and their monthly pay amounted to 10,314 rupees.



“Bombay Diary”. Letter to the Court, the 23<sup>rd</sup> of November, 1748.

Order Book of the Government, August, 1751 :-

“General instructions to the commanders of the Honourable Company’s vessels.

**“In the first place you are to take care to keep up the service of God on board the vessel you command, according to the Liturgy of the Church of England, that the same may be devoutly and decently performed every Lord’s day, and on all other appointed seasons as often as can be done with convenience, and be very strict in observing a good decorum and discipline among your ship’s company, severely punishing all profaneness or blasphemies of God’s holy on no account permit gaming of any sort.”**

“Bombay Diary,” the 18<sup>th</sup> of May, 1756, the 21<sup>st</sup> of August, 1759, and the 9<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 1761.

...however, it was thought that these reforms would be incomplete until the Bombay Marine should have an official uniform...in 1741, by the officers to the Governor in Council, they were ordered to wear blue frock-coats turned up with yellow, dress-coats and waistcoats of the same colour, and according to a regulated pattern...With increased numbers, improved discipline, and a regular uniform, the Bombay Marine became a little Navy... the English-fleets, with their line-of-battle ships and frigates, floating in the harbor, no curious occasions during the next quarter of a century, ... threw the Marine into the shade, but, taught it emulation and efficiency. On the 25<sup>th</sup> of March, 1751, the Mutiny Act, as applied to the Company’s military\* and naval force in India, received the royal assent after a division in the Lords.

Orme describes the mode of warfare assumed by the pirate-chief, Angria, and the success he had achieved even against European ships of war. He says:- “Eight or ten grabs, and forty or fifty galivats, crowded with men, generally composed Angria’s principal fleet destined to attack ships of war, of large merchantmen. The vessel no sooner came in sight of the port or bay...they slipped their cables and put out to sea; if the wind blew, their construction enabled them to sail almost as fast as the wind, and, if it was calm, the galivats, rowing, towed the grabs; when within cannon-shot of the chase, they generally assembled round her stern, and the grabs attacked her at a distance with their bow-guns, firing first only at their masts...

**“There was also a sort of Native Militia composed of seven hundred Sepoy’s including Native officers. They were not armed or dressed in any uniform manner...swords and targets, bows and arrows, pikes, lances, or matchlocks. They were maintained at a cost of 3,123 rupees per mensem, and were discharged at the pleasure of Government...These forces were considerably increased after the declaration of war with France...in 1753, the artillery numbered one hundred and seventeen officers and men, and the infantry eight hundred and forty-one...came nearer and battered her on all sides until she struck; and if the defence was obstinate, they sent a number of galivats with two or three hundred men in each, who boarded, sword in hand, from all quarters at the same instant. It was now fifty years that this piratical state had rendered itself formidable to the trading ships of all the European nations in India, and the English East India Company had kept me a marine force at the annual expense of £50,000 to protect their own ships, as**

well as those belonging to the merchants established in their colonies; for as no vessel could, with prudence, venture to singly pass by Angria's dominions, the trade was convoyed at particular times up and down the sea coasts by the Company's armed vessels. Angria's ships sailed much better than the Bombay fleet...Angria's seldom failed to take such ships as ventured to sail without company along the coast." Besides the 'Derby,' (Indian man) and 'Ann' (grab), they took a forty-guns ship belonging to the French Company, and, in February, 1754 captured, after a severe action, three Dutch ships of fifty, thirty-six and eighteen guns, which were sailing together, burning the two largest, and taking the third.\*

**We have now arrived at a period in the history of the Bombay Marine, when the Service entered upon an extended career of usefulness, and, by the discipline, valour, and skill evinced by its officers and men, vindicated its claim to be regarded as the Navy of India,** an honourable title conceded to it many years later by the Sailor King, who felt a sympathy for the small Service whose officers had fairly earned the distinctive appellation by more than two centuries of arduous service.<sup>161</sup>

With respect to table II and above instances distinctively depict the picture of relations of European Companies and Native Indian states (Marathas) with each other and with the pirates; role of company officials and their dealings with the pirates; the people on board, and how the Bombay Marine developed itself into the Navy through a series of alterations in its composition. Native pirates proved to be a great menace to the East India Companies and this can be equated to the "renaissance piracy" and "golden age of piracy" in Indian Ocean owing to the magnitude of loot and plunder and the ships destroyed by them. The highlighted portions in the narrations help us understand the other side of navigation and traffic oriented, it can be said that the action there designed the diplomacy on land.

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<sup>161</sup>Orme's *"History of the Military Transactions of the British Nation in Hindustan for the year 1745"* Vol. I., p. 409.