

ANNEX 13

RODNEY CARLISLE, PH. D.

Trafalgar

y el conflicto naval Anglo-Español del Siglo XVIII

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Por supuesto que los calibres británicos de a 42 y de a 32 eran de carronadas, y que las españolas llevarían algunos pedreros. Del análisis de las cifras aportadas cabe deducir que el peso de andanada por banda de cada fragata inglesa era más del doble que el de la correspondiente española, entre 672 y 444 libras contra las 296 y 198 de sus contrarios, aunque debemos insistir en que las libras inglesas eran algo menores, en la proporción de 8 a 9. Pero, así y todo, las cartas estaban marcadas.

Pero es que además, los datos del artillado de las fragatas españolas son teóricos y corresponden a su porte, pues no hemos podido hallar sus Estados de Fuerza y Vida de esta travesía. Las cosas fueron, casi con toda seguridad, mucho peores, pues nuestras fragatas, al ir de transporte y en tiempo de paz, solían desembarcar las piezas de su batería principal en todo o en parte para dejar espacio a la carga y pasaje, por lo que sólo iban armadas con las piezas ligeras de cubierta. Esta práctica, conocida como «armada como urca», era habitual y la hemos podido comprobar documentalmente con frecuencia en otros casos y en la misma travesía y con análoga carga. Tampoco nos parece posible que llevaran algún obús Rovira emplazado, pues venían de América y allí no se fabricaron dichas piezas.

Tomadas por sorpresa, con los movimientos a bordo obstaculizados por las mercancías y el personal civil y siendo tan inferiores en poder artillero, cabe deducir que el famoso combate no tuvo historia. Y nada decimos de la tremenda diferencia entre un buque de guerra preparado, alistado y pertrechado para el combate y otro que sólo lo está para el servicio normal en tiempos de paz, porque tal cosa resulta evidente.

A los pocos minutos de fuego voló por los aires la «Mercedes», con lo que su contraria británica, libre de oponente, se abalanzó sobre la «Medea», que abrumada ya por su contraria, al cabo tuvo que rendirse. La «Clara» se batió por un cuarto de hora más, antes de arriar bandera, y la «Fama» forzó la vela intentando escapar, hasta que tuvo que rendirse a sus dos perseguidoras.

Las bajas fueron sensibles, especialmente en la volada «Mercedes», donde perecieron 249 personas, entre ellas ocho mujeres y varios niños, salvándose otras 50 entre dotación y pasaje. En las otras tres la cuenta subió en total a 20 muertos y 80 heridos. Prueba de la casi absoluta indefensión de las fragatas españolas es que las bajas británicas se redujeron a dos muertos y siete heridos.

La Habana becomes a distribution center of sealed letters sent in *balandras* and *paquebotes* to Veracruz, Tierra Firme and Peru. In the course of the *paquebote* to La Habana the mail will be dropped off, without stops, in Puerto Rico and Dominican Republic.

Direct communication is soon established between Buenos Aires and the Galician Port with departures every two months.

The birth of the maritime mail will affect the Administrative Treasury Department in Indies and the peninsula.

Between 1765 and 1769 it is incorporated to the Crown the higher Postal Service in America and matters of competition arise from matters of trade and navigation. To elude jurisdictional matters and to liberate the Council of Treasury from the many administrations that pestered them, a Supreme Court or Royal Postal Committee of Spain and the Indies is created in December 20, 1776, presided over the General Supervisor of Postal Mail and composed by four ministers (one from the Council of Castilla, another one from the Guerra, another one from Indies and the fourth one from the Treasury); the general Directors, ministros de capa y espada from the Treasury Council, the accounting General as Secretary and the Treasury General. First of all the sub-delegates of the General Supervisor of Spain and the Indies will be know.

In 1777 the Royal Bylaws of the Maritime Mail is published and it is established in Madrid the Postal General Management. According to the text of such bylaws there will be a main Administration in La Habana, where the tax treasury, being subordinates Santa Fe, Veracruz, Mexico, Guatemala, Cartagena, Puerto Rico y Santo Domingo. Buenos Aires remains aside.

A milestone in the history of the Maritime Mail will be the incorporation of such to the Royal Navy by disposition of the prince of peace in April 6, 1802, maintaining the State Department the management of the dispatch of the journeys (quantity, time of departure, etc.) and being the crafts in charge part of the Ministerio Marina Merchant Navy. They should request the ships, the quantity and the class one year in advance.

Another result of this new situation will be that all of the arsenals bound to the rental will be dependant of the Royal Navy gathering in the Department of Ferrol everything bound to this service.

The maritime mail was not limited to the delivery of the mail, but it also served as means of transportation for those that could send goods and money after the payment of freight.

Since the establishment of the Maritime Mail it was useful that the freights of goods that the individuals would send to La Coruña in the mail frigates would be charge and paid in the currency of the country or (macuquina) until 1790 when it is established that it must be paid in *pesos fuertes or reales de plata*. On the other hand, the transport of the passengers would be paid in *pesos dobles* being billed at the departure port.

The Maritime Mail will play an important part during the transport of the troops at the end of XVIII.

For informational purpose I will provide with some examples of mail cargo. In 1783 the frigate (Lanzorete) on its route from Montevideo to La Coruña shipped: two passengers, 1618 pieces of leather, 100.974 *pesos* coins from individuals and 274 in taxes; in 1784 the frigate (Infanta) in its same voyage carried: 7.957 pieces of leather, 30 arrobas (750 lbs) of fat, and 52.554 *pesos fuertes*. In 1789 the quantities were increasing with high sensitivity in the frigate (Princesa) which came from Montevideo; there were registered 6.261.982 *reales de vellón* and in 1791 the same frigate carried 8.919.802 *reales de vellón*. And as global date for the thirteen years coming from La Habana and Buenos Aires were registered 410.988.451 *reales*.

Also as indicative, the volume of the shipped mail. In 1785 (La Cantabria) transported 978 single letters, 150 *double*, 27 *triples*, 57 *of peso*, 130 *francs* and 9 certificates and in 1784, the *Rey* carried 707 *singles*, 66 *doubles*, 9 *triples*, 17 *pesos*, 97 *francs* and 1 certificate.

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Beforehand it is necessary to leave certain that the leading articles in this Section are not limited to the formalities of the maritime mail, but also to the ground mail that from their incorporation and reorganization by the Crown are intimately involved and coordinated with those. Along the mail kept with main administrators we will confirm the desire to settle the arrivals and departures of the maritime and ground mail.

By creating a classification chart of the series in this section we have been able to distinguish the following that are repetitive and specific of the first group of the oversea

Administrations:

Mail from the Treasury Administrator

Files

Accounts

Statements of Mail and Cargo Guides

But there are more like those of Journals, Passports or Orders that we find in the third group as in the Administrative Documents.

The series are totally interrelated, to the point that in many cases there are bundles of papers that contain specific documentation of all the series. At the time of reorganization of the Mail Section the differentiation was complex. Often, the accounts, the mail statements or the personal articles are found along with the series of mail jointed (attached) to the letters. On the other hand, the series of files is initially similar to that of the mail, but given the Episcopal insistence and its volume about a theme it has been reunited a package with its own entity. At the beginning a difference between one series and the other did not exist, but it seems fair to make the separation to be able to make summary comparisons between the content of the files of which the information can be incorporated to the contents that complete the inventory that we are about to finalize. Surely what we can continue to do is an analysis of the different documentary typologies in the Mail Section.

Mail

The series of mail gathers the original letters sent by the main Administrators to the General Directors of Taxes in Madrid or to the Administrator in La Coruña, along with the answers in rough drafts, like the mail between the main Administrators with the secondary or regional. There are letters from several governors and other authorities addressed to the General Management in Madrid, regarding matters of mail.

The information available regarding these series is very broad, including the small details of the founding and the organization of the ground mail which was under the command of an Administrator who also controlled the issues that came from the journey and from the cargo merchandise that was transported by the *paquebotes* in addition to the letters. News regarding the departures and regularity of the mails, about the coordination of the maritime with the ground mail, about the amounts and the modification of the ports, about the building of post offices, about the situation of personnel: appointments, salaries, incentives, uniforms, etc., about the creation of post offices, routes; about the consequence of the international events during the course of the taxes, like the declaration of war to England in 1779 that does not become public until September 8 and that stopped the admission of the wealth and cargo in the *paquebotes* and as a result of this war the appearance of problems of altruism by allowing that the letters and messages could travel aboard warships and merchant ships and the jurisdiction problems and competition between captains and frigates with the navy captains, since they were not subject to taxation and their officials to the navy's jurisdiction.

The history of the administration, its operations, its tariff and the merchant aspects related to the mail can be followed step by step through the mail which at the same time provides

us with interesting current events and from the involvement in them from the administrative personnel, such as the rebellion and imprisonment of Tupac Amaru.

Frequently they would come with the letters –certificates to get out of the mail- issued to the name of the main administrator once the statutory installment had passed: the maritime mail as well as the belated ground mail would be opened in presence of the officials of the dependence and proceeded to count and opening, after the separation the ones that contained documents these would be burned in the backyard of the Administration.

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Files

There is very little to be added to what was said earlier. The majority regarding their main information and translated in the general contents has been identified.

The visitor's files are particularly interesting due to the details that each one of the post offices offers; from the distances between one and the others and whom and how many serve them.

Accounts

This series is composed, for the most part, by the Accounts Administration, the difficulty and the objections imposed by the Accounting General and other documents about the tax accounting.

Every account corresponding to a chronological period (quarterly, bi-annual and most commonly annual) is incorporated by the relationship under formal oath made by the Administration General and directed to the Postal General Accounting of Madrid, along with the written proof and receipts of those.

Every account gathers the biased of the added administrations and subordinate mail.

In specific administrations such as Buenos Aires, the relationships under oath are three, corresponding to three different branches: the mail, the trade and the boats, and also subdivided in two, maritime mails and ground mail. In the relationship under oath under the first branch the responsibilities are as follows: the values of the letters and messages and the certificate's rights, and to date: payments, salaries to employees, and the rent of the house and material cost. In the relationship of the second branch (boats) it is broken down the importance of the responsibility of the private charters and passengers, and to date: the repairs of the *paquebotes* and the import of the *carenas*. In the third relationship

under oath (trade) it is detailed in the responsibilities of the transactions of the goods sold for tax benefits, detailed *paquebotes*, and to date the charges of the transportation by motorboat, and the maritime taxes, etc.

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The majority of the time, however, there is only one concept for the taxes broken down in responsibilities and date in which are represented all the specifications that were mentioned earlier.

The Administrative accounts of Bilbao are limited to those of construction and boat equipment for the mail.

The Values of the Mail Statements

Wealth Relationships and private items

Settlement of the wealth close to the Crown

The first, called the same way or simply the statements of mail, are a description of the letters sent to America or to the peninsula in each *paquebote*, from Coruña to Buenos Aires. It is listed in them the amount of the postage, according to their class (single, double, triple) and its destination. The names of the passengers, if any, are listed as well.