

The *Francis/Pelican*: An Anglo–French Trading Venture in War, 1690

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En 1690, pendant la guerre de la ligue d'Augsbourg, les négociants anglais et français se sont entendus pour échapper à la prohibition des deux nations sur le commerce avec l'ennemi. Par une vente falsifiée, le navire anglais Francis est devenu le Pelican français, pour transporter une cargaison française jusqu'en Terre-Neuve. L'arrangement a échoué, et le bateau a été saisi deux fois, par un bâtiment de guerre français et ensuite par un anglais. Cette double saisie a eu comme conséquence la survie d'une histoire exceptionnellement bien fournie sur les relations étroites, cimentées en partie par une foi religieuse protestante commune, entre les communautés marchandes française et anglaise.

"War may be said to have been as much a normal state of European affairs as peace."¹

Much of European maritime history in the second half of the seventeenth century is a story of war and of trade. During interludes of peace, despite navigational hazards, trade could thrive. In wartime it was more arduous because valuable merchant ships and their cargoes, vulnerable to interception by hostile vessels, were more likely to be lost. Such was the case after 1688, for although the Dutch no longer dominated Atlantic trade, France now faced an alliance that attended the "Glorious Revolution" in England. A grand coalition confronted Louis XIV on the Continent; an Anglo-Dutch naval force challenged him at sea.

I refer frequently to works of eminent historians on that Nine Years' War (or War of the League of Augsburg), 1688–97: on the conflict in general, naval warfare, and privateering; on the struggles in Ireland, North America, and the West Indies; and on a Protestant International, attempts at trade between belligerents, and contrivances for circumventing state restrictions. Indeed, this essay addresses a shortage of case studies on clandestine Anglo-French trade during that conflict.

During the wars of 1688–97 and 1703–13, European merchants, in their persistent quest for profit – or at the very least for survival – ran great risks in pursuit of international trade. Such an enterprise, involving prominent merchants, has emerged in the High Court of Admiralty records at the British National Archives. The court's responsibilities included disposition of merchant ships and cargoes that English naval vessels or privateers took as wartime prizes. Admiralty officials examined evidence in particular ports. Most prizes

¹ Sir George Clark, *The Seventeenth Century*, 2nd ed., 1947 (reprinted New York, 1961), 98.

during the two wars were enemy ships (usually French); other vessels, including British and (friendly) Dutch, either may have been carrying enemy cargo or had been recaptured from the enemy. Papers recovered from prizes might include embarkation licences that specified the voyage's destination, cargo, and purpose; privateering commissions; nominal rolls; notarial records; business letters from ships' owners or from shippers; personal letters, and even printed matter and manuscripts on non-trade subjects. Languages might include Basque, Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Latin, Portuguese, Spanish, and Swedish.²

In 1690, most of central and western Europe was at war. On the Continent, a multi-state, not very cohesive coalition faced the French, who were holding their own.³ William III, who presided over the Dutch Republic and had executive power as king of England and Scotland,⁴ aimed to defeat Louis XIV on land. Louis deflected him, however, with aggressive naval action and military support in Ireland for William's uncle and father-in-law, the deposed and exiled King James II. James thought of Ireland as a springboard for a triumphal return to England, whereas his Irish followers hoped for an independent Irish Catholic kingdom. Careful naval planning by the French to achieve their decisive victory at Beachy Head limited them elsewhere. By returning to France after his defeat at the Boyne (although the Franco-Irish force still held Limerick), James dashed Irish aspirations.

The war had other theatres. During 1690, muddled hostilities in the Antilles reached a stalemate.⁵ In North America, the French repulsed Sir William Phips's attempt on Québec, the capital of New France. English freebooters overran Plaisance, the tiny capital of the French colony in southern Newfoundland and humiliated the governor, and New Englanders captured, plundered, and sacked Port Royal, the capital of Acadia.

² Prize-court papers appear in the repositories of various countries and states. In France, they are in the *Archives Nationales*, *archives anciennes*, G⁵; and in Great Britain, in the National Archives, High Court of Admiralty (HCA). Most of my primary sources are in HCA 32/25, Part 2 (hereinafter HCA 32/25/2). Also, a research note – Julian Gwyn, "Untapped Source for the Study of French West Indies in the Eighteenth Century," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 1, 112–13 – draws attention to papers from the years 1742–82 in HCA 30, "Miscellanea." For that same period, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) acquired on microfilm a selection of HCA documents pertaining to Canada.

³ *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. VI (Cambridge, 1970), chapter 7, Sir George Clark, "The Nine Years War," 241: "This year, the first in which the two sides had exerted their full strength, had proved that the coalition could not succeed either easily or soon."

⁴ He was joint sovereign with his wife, Mary II, who acted in his place on the advice of the cabinet Council during his absences from England.

⁵ James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670–1730* (Cambridge, 2004), 306. In his introduction to a chapter entitled "The Nine Years' War in America, 1688–1697," Pritchard remarks, "The empire that emerged [during that war] was characterised by uncertainty, disproportion, and incoherence," and he quotes Jean Meyer to the effect that "nothing acted to concentrate human effort or physical resources." *Ibid.*, 304.

Despite vigorous French privateering, England's overseas trade prospered in 1690. France's slumped,⁶ but, as Sir George Clark has written, "France did not depend as much as the maritime powers did on seaborne commerce." Like them, however, "she needed to import timber and naval stores. The English persuaded the Dutch to abandon their traditional indulgence to neutral commerce and to join in giving notice to their allies and to neutrals that they would make prize of all vessels of whatever flag sailing to French ports or carrying goods to French subjects."⁷

Therefore, if English vessels took cargoes to French ports or loaded cargoes there for shipment abroad, English or Dutch naval vessels or privateers might take them.⁸ Some shippers risked losing their cargoes, and shipowners, their ships.

The first part of this paper considers the 1690 venture itself, which involved the ship named variously the *Francis* and the *Pelican*. The account focuses on her detention at Brest by French authorities from early June to mid-August 1690 and the efforts of interested parties to secure her release. The second part looks at *dramatis personae* – the six principal merchant partners; and the third, at the principals in action: the pecking order among them, their loyalty and faith, and their communications. A brief conclusion follows.

THE VENTURE: THE *FRANCIS/PELICAN*

In 1689, four London merchants – Samuel Shephard, a rising forty-two-year-old wine and brandy importer,⁹ John and John Dade [father and son?], and Élias (Hélie) Dupuy, a fifty-two-year-old former merchant of Bordeaux¹⁰ – decided, in co-operation with merchants in France, to risk a well-planned expedition.¹¹ They may also have received assurances that French authorities

6 Declining Bordeaux wine exports, for example, were "catastrophic" – at their most disastrous during the war of 1688–97. At one *chai* alone, four unsold annual harvests worth about 40,000 *écus* signified pure loss, for wines then *ne savaient pas vieillir*. Charles Higounet, [ed.], *Histoire de Bordeaux*, 8 vols. (Bordeaux, 1962–74) IV, 457–9.

7 *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VI, 234–5.

8 The records of the admiralty at La Rochelle contain several examples of illicit wartime trade in 1690 and 1691. See below.

9 See below: *Dramatis Personae*.

10 See *ibid.* "Bordeaux fut un des principaux points d'évasion des émigrés huguenots. Les foires, qui attiraient de nombreux navires étrangers, fournissaient des occasions favorables." *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, 405.

11 John & John Dade to R. Bower (at Brest), 10 July 1690, with copy of an earlier letter (date in July illegible) from them to him. See also Stuckey (La Rochelle) to "Robinson" (Bower, at Brest), 2, 6, 9, 13, and 20 July 1690; Samuel Shephard and John & John Dade to "Robinson" (Bower, at Brest), 22 July 1690 (old style, or OS); Shephard and Elias Dupuy to Bower (at Brest), 1 Aug. 1690 (OS). References to documents in HCA 32/25/2 provide only sender, receiver, date, and places, since neither the case nor the folios have numbers. Archival references, other than from HCA 32/25/2, are complete.

would consider it politically expedient.¹² The ship to serve them was the *Francis* (English-built, "square and stern," two decks,¹³ about 120 tons,¹⁴ Captain Richard Bower), and they had registered her in France as the *Pelican* of London (140 *tonneaux*, Captain John Robinson).¹⁵ Thus she could enter French ports "avec telles marchandises que bon lui semblera," take cargoes of wine, brandy, "et autres marchandises et denrées de notre Royaume" to Lisbon,¹⁶ and return to London. She could pass freely if she registered with the *greffe de l'amirauté* of each French port she might frequent.¹⁷

Meanwhile, in England, the delegates of the lord high admiral had ruled that the *Francis*, "appearing unto us by good testimony to belong to the subjects of our sovereign lord the King and to no foreigner," could pass "with her company, passengers, goods and merchandizes without any lett, hindrance, seizure, or molestation."

That document mentioned no destination.¹⁸ Accordingly, the *Francis* sailed from Plymouth on 19 February 1689/90 (old style, or OS) with a cargo of butter, herring, and hides and arrived about four days later at La Rochelle as the *Pelican*, under the command of "Robinson."¹⁹ She evidently lay there²⁰ until the

12 For other examples of such expediency, see instances emanating from the port of Bordeaux. *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, 459–60. See below under *Illicit trade*.

13 That permitted her to enter French ports "with such goods as shall seem to her suitable and appropriate," take cargoes of wine, brandy, "and other goods and commodities of our kingdom" to Lisbon, and return to London. She was to be allowed to pass freely, provided she registered "with the office of the clerk of the admiralty" of each French port she might frequent. "An Account of all the Goods and merchandises on board the *Francis* prize ship burden 200 ts [?] taken by Capt Richd Boasant Comander of the ship Sarah a privateer & brought into this port of Ilfordcombe [sic] the 24th of this Inst. January [1690/91 O.S.] together with all her Takling apparell & furniture." The figure 200 tons burden was probably a guess.

14 Order "To all persons whom these may concerne" by the Commissioners for executing the office of Lord High Admiral of England, 10 December 1689 (OS).

15 Whether Bower became subject to French procedures for ships' captains when he assumed the name "Robinson" is outside the purview of this study. For the role of the ship's captain, see Jean Cavignac, *Jean Pellet, commerçant de gros, 1694–1772* (Paris, 1967), 57–60; for that of the crew, 60–2.

16 Was there a demand in Portugal for French wine and brandy?

17 11 Nov. 1689: "De par le Roy," 2 pp., one in draft, the other in official script. On the back of a page is a statement that the document had been registered at the headquarters of the admiralty of France.

18 Order, 10 December 1689 (OS).

19 Deposition of members of the crew of the *Francis* dated 26 January 1690/91 (OS).

20 Testimony dated 22 April 1690 by the Reverend Father Vinet, of the parish of St. Ananias, near La Rochelle, that he had conducted a burial service for one Samuel Janis of London, who had come to the port on board the *Pelican* and died on land (of old age in the opinion of Father Vinet). The priest was unaware of the deceased's religion. Jesuit form, in Latin, completed and signed by Father Geraldus, S.J., rector of the Jesuit College of La Rochelle and dated 3 May 1690, affirming that the presence of the ship was no menace to public health. 23 May 1690: "Reçu de John Robinson, maitre

merchants furnished her with Rochelais owners. Thus, on 31 May 1690, Merlin Gastebois, a merchant and bourgeois of La Rochelle,²¹ "sold" her for 6,000 *livres* to André (Andrew) Stuckey of the same port.²² Head of the firm André Stuckey, Son and Company, the Cornishman by birth was one of the Stuckeys who had married into Huguenot families.²³

He also participated in the venture. The notarized "sale" of 31 May subsumed the terms of an undertaking to Stuckey that "Robinson" had signed the previous day. The *Pelican* was to sail as soon as possible to Newfoundland²⁴ with a cargo from St-Martin-de-Ré²⁵ (near La Rochelle on France's Biscay coast) of brandy, salt, and wine,²⁶ "pour compte et risque de Mr. Pierre De Kater marchand demeurant à Bordeaux" (on account of and at the risk of Mr. Pierre De Kater, a merchant living in Bordeaux).²⁷ Originally of Amsterdam, the *négociant* Pierre (Peter) De Kater had become a bourgeois of Bordeaux in 1687.²⁸

Although the notarized agreement named the destination as Newfoundland, the passport that the representative of the French admiralty at St-Martin-de-Ré issued on 2 June 1690 specified Lisbon.²⁹ The French naval

du navire le Pélican pour les droits de balissage: 10 sols." Signed Fr. Gaillard.

21 Gastebois had invested, for example, in overseas commerce, including New France, in 1683, 1684, 1685, and 1686. See below, *Dramatis Personae*.

22 Such fictitious *pro forma* sales were evidently not unusual. *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, 460.

23 See below: *Dramatis Personae*. The genealogical information on the Stuckey family comes from John F. Boshier, "Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International in the Seventeenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 52, no. 1 (Jan. 1995), 81, and preceding genealogical table, along with copies of his research notes that the author has kindly let me have.

24 "... la ville de Terre Meuve" [!]

25 Deposition of crew of *Francis*.

26 325 *muids*, 2 *boisseaux* (585,026 litres) of salt, 60 *quartes* (111.72 litres) of brandy, 30 (55.86 litres) of Rhine wine, 16 (29.79 litres) of claret, and 30 of white wine.

27 A separate agreement would determine the cost to De Kater of the freight. Supposedly, Stuckey was to receive the ship on her return from Newfoundland. The undertaking appeared on two forms, both dated 30 May 1690: one on a standard printed form obtainable from the La Rochelle bookshop of P. Savouret; the other, entirely in longhand on plain paper. The wording of the two is identical. The document of sale of 31 May was prepared by two clerks, Pierre Gasognet and Jacques Réal, under the direction of the royal notary, Rivière, on his stationery; and one Guillaume Flamen acted as interpreter. There was no mention of marine insurance in the documents. If the ship and cargo had insurance, under French regulations the insurer was liable if they became a prize. Cavignac, *Jean Pellet*, 79.

28 On De Kater, see below: *Dramatis Personae*.

29 Document numbered 21727 in the name of the Admiral of France (the Comte de Toulouse) signed by F. Gaillard. As we saw above, the official admission of the *Pelican* into France included the Lisbon destination. According to a standard form dated 2 June 1690 on the île de Ré, Robinson paid the required duty on the salt: 35 *sols* per *muid*, totalling 206 *livres*, 6 *sols*, 6 *deniers*, but the customary duty of 50 *sols* on foreign ships had been waived on 10 May 1690. Of passports, the *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, remarks, "les passeports, libéralement distribués, parfois délivrés en blanc, ou prolongés

frigate *La Nouvelle Gaillarde*, commanded by the Sieur de la Motte Couvart, took her as a prize and escorted her into Brest.³⁰ There authorities detained her, her captain, and her crew, pending a hearing before an admiralty court, and sequestered her cargo.³¹

The merchants in France learned of the capture in a letter of 25 June from the captain and for eight weeks, with backing from the owners in England, sought the freedom of the detainees.³² As Bower became increasingly impatient and faced a restless crew, Stuckey at La Rochelle, De Kater at Bordeaux, the four London merchants, and the eminent Paris banker Samuel Bernard all tried to reassure him.

Although in France Stuckey nominally owned the *Pelican* and was therefore superior to "Robinson," he informed "our friends at London" – the real owners – of events at Brest.³³ He chided "Robinson" for lingering too long at La Rochelle, for his "frequentage of the Irish,"³⁴ and for his failure to follow Stuckey's order to keep the Newfoundland destination "so secret that no French man of war might have knowledge thereof." Vis-à-vis the last point, Stuckey remarked that although "the fault" was "Robinson's" "we conceive that the blame will be cast upon us."³⁵ Indeed, when De Kater learned that the passport had read "Lisbon" and the bill of lading and cargo invoice "Newfoundland," he remarked that Stuckey should have told him so before they asked the admiralty at Bordeaux to register those documents.³⁶ As time passed, De Kater increasingly believed that this inconsistency was the chief obstacle to French authorities' freeing the ship. When the captain feared loss of his ship, De Kater admitted that possibility but promised to do all he could.³⁷

au delà de leur validité, transformaient une tolérance honteuse en pratique officielle."

30 Affidavit dated 1 Aug. 1690 by Jean-Joseph Bérard, counsel of the admiralty at Brest. Alain Boulaire's thesis, "Brest et la marine royale de 1660 à 1790," Université de Lille, 1988 (available on microfiche) has extensive lists of ships and personnel but does not mention *La Nouvelle Gaillarde*, De la Motte Couvart, or Bérard.

According to the deposition by the *Francis's* crew, taken on oath, the *Francis/Pelican* was taken by a Dutch privateer (which they called a "Flushineer") shortly after leaving St Martin, and the French capture occurred a day later. They failed to mention whether she took their ship as the *Pelican* or the *Francis*. Moreover, there was absolutely no mention of such an encounter in correspondence between the merchants and Bower, nor in any of the French documents found on board the *Francis*.

31 Stuckey to Robinson, 6 July 1690.

32 Merchant recipients acknowledged letters of Richard Bower *alias* John Robinson in those he received from them at Brest – some twenty-two in all. The merchants' letters to him constitute the main source for the endeavour to free him, his ship, and his crew; all appear in HCA 32/25/2.

33 Stuckey to Bower/Robinson, 2 and 6 July 1690. In a letter of 13 July 1690, Stuckey actually called them "your owners."

34 "You see what your long stay in this road & your frequentage of the Irish hath brought you to" Stuckey to "Robinson," 2 July 1690. In his remarks on relations between merchants of the two faiths, John Bosher implies that Huguenots would not have entrusted Roman Catholic Irish merchants in France with confidential information. "Huguenot Merchants and the Protestant International," 99. Bower may also have met other Irishmen at Brest: several thousand of them were brought to France in March 1690 for military training. André Corvisier, *Louvois* (Paris, 1983), 465.

35 Stuckey to Robinson, 6 July 1690.

36 De Kater to Robinson, 8 July 1690.

It was De Kater, not Stuckey, who moved in the circle of Samuel Bernard, a sympathetic and influential Paris-based merchant, and could ask him for help. Stuckey knew this and relied on De Kater, who on his own initiative asked Bernard to reclaim the sequestered goods,³⁸ sending him the attested bill of lading and invoice which showed the cargo as being on De Kater's account. He requested him also to try to clear "Robinson" and the *Pelican*. Meanwhile, although De Kater encouraged "Robinson" to write to Bernard, he told him also to petition the intendant at Brest, explaining that he had brought many goods to France with the King's passport, on the strength of which De Kater had engaged him to take on a cargo of brandy, salt, and wine for Newfoundland, in contravention of English law. He was to stress that mention of Lisbon as destination was to forestall capture by the Dutch or English, who, if they learned that he was heading for Newfoundland, would take his ship as a prize. If the intendant did not soon free the vessel and restore the cargo, the voyage would not take place and merchants would be loath ever to trust the King's passports again, which would harm the little trade remaining.³⁹ De Kater had asked a merchant of Brest, Pierre Lamotte le Jeune, to appeal also to the intendant and to help "Robinson" in every way he could.⁴⁰ Stuckey enlisted the aid of another merchant of Brest named Souisse and advised "Robinson" to give an account to De Kater or himself of his "declaration at Brest," to inform the London owners regularly about progress, and to send Bernard copies of his letters to London.⁴¹

Bower's first letter to London was to Dupuy. After that, the merchants kept in touch with him, addressing him sometimes as Richard Bower, sometimes as John Robinson. They regretted his misfortune and promised to work with their colleagues in France to obtain early release. As they were "ordering all possible" to that end, they appealed to him to "have a little patience." They had ordered money to cover his current expenses. They asked him to keep them informed, particularly about judgements by the admiralty court at Brest.⁴² Until Mrs Bower, who was away from London, returned to town, "out of consideration for her feelings" they would not tell her of her husband's difficulties.

By the end of July the London owners were expecting De Kater to go to Brest as they had asked him early in the month to do. Their language reflected their authority and their tact; their belief that the captain needed reassurance, encouragement, and stimulus; and their confidence in the outcome of De Kater's endeavours. "[His] presence will much assist you and facilitate your clearing and being got in readiness to proceed again for

37 De Kater to Robinson, 29 July 1690. For a succinct elucidation of bills of lading, see Cavignac, *Jean Pellet*, 66.

38 Stuckey to Robinson, 6 July 1690.

39 In another missive, De Kater rephrased the argument: "It was a great oversight not to make bills of lading, invoice & pass all for one place. If it comes to the push you must declare the truth & that you made everyone believe for Lisbon for fear of the English & Dutch who know it's not permitted to carry French goods in the English plantations."

40 De Kater to Robinson, 8 July 1690, with note by Stuckey of 9 July appended; De Kater to Robinson, 29 July 1690.

41 Stuckey to Robinson, 9 July 1690.

42 John & John Dade to Richard Bower at Brest, covering letter of 10 July 1690 (OS) enclosing copy of their earlier letter in July (date illegible).

Newfoundland with the first opportunity of a fair wind, for we have ordered him to supply whatever your captor hath taken away or destroyed, so we pray you to hasten away with all possible expedition." Although they assured Bower that "Messrs Stuckey at La Rochelle will supply the money it comes to," they remarked that "Mr de Kater will fix you much better then did Mr Stuckey, for we take him for the more ingenious merchant."

It is not clear when the merchants first learned of a royal order to officials at Brest of 26 July 1690,⁴³ which the Marquis de Seignelay countersigned. Although it directed the restitution to "Robinson" of the *Pelican*, equipment, and cargo, it did not authorize her departure from Brest. On 1 August, Jean-Joseph Bérard, counsellor, recorded the order, and a document of 2 August outlined the chronology of the vessel's seizure as a prize. If Bower did not tell them himself, the Brest merchants must have informed De Kater and Stuckey about the royal order early in August.

In any event, release of the vessel remained an issue. According to De Kater, if the delay forced the *Pelican* to skip Newfoundland and go directly to Portugal, she would need a cargo, for she could not leave France empty. "Doubtless," he wrote, "our friends in England will give the needful orders about it." The "friends" still hoped for Newfoundland and asked De Kater to furnish papers that would convince the Dutch or English that the ship was an English prize that they had bought in France. That seemed to them the most plausible way of "going unquestioned," but they would accept any other method that the French group preferred. As for Newfoundland, they told Bower he had nothing to fear, for English ships were not going there.⁴⁴ There was time enough to reach that island, "although high time," but he was sure to sell his cargo quickly "by reason of the great want there and of the commodities you carry." If he did "come by a good market" in Newfoundland, he was to proceed with a consignment of fish to Oporto, Portugal and call there on Messrs Gill, Maine, and Young, "where you shall meet with our orders."⁴⁵

De Kater and Bernard agreed on an appeal to a secretary of state at Paris if Brest would not release the *Pelican*. On 2 August, De Kater resolved to go from Bordeaux to Paris if "by the next post" he had not heard of that release, and he was quite confident of success: he intended "to use such means to get you soon clear." He was "glad to see" that Bower had spoken to the exiled James II on the king's arrival at Brest from Ireland⁴⁶ and hoped that James would be "mindful of what he promised you."⁴⁷ Bernard, reporting that the case had reached the *conseil des prises*, instructed "Robinson" to send him copies of his interrogation at Brest "et aussi de tout ce que vous avez fait dans cette procédure, car cela m'est extrêmement nécessaire." The captain was to act quickly so that he, Bernard, could be of use.⁴⁸

43 Affidavit of Bérard.

44 The London merchants were misinformed: the naval squadron that escorted Phips to Québec was in the region.

45 Shephard and the two John Dades to Robinson, 22 July 1690 (OS).

46 James, back in France following the Boyne, presumably favoured wartime trade between England and France.

47 What promise did James make? To intervene at the court of France?

48 Bernard, reporting that the case had reached the prize court, instructed "Robinson" to send him copies of his interrogation at Brest "and also of everything you have done in those proceedings,

Until his release from Brest, therefore, Bower received advice and direction from the merchants in England and France. Although everyone was confident that a favourable decision was forthcoming, he had to allow the wheels of the French state to revolve at their usually slow pace. He was to provide, for the hearings at Paris, the documentation that he used at Brest, on which he had been counselled. He was to manage his crew tactfully but firmly, assuring the men that they would receive their wages in full, that they would soon set sail, and that they had nothing to fear from naval warfare. The merchants assured Bower that once the release had been authorized, their colleagues at Brest – Lamotte and Souisse – would do everything they could to ensure the vessel's earliest possible departure. In communication with Bower, the owners in England and their agents in France supported each other. The latter sought to meet the owners' general objectives, but by methods effective in France, and the owners relied on their success, particularly on De Kater's. Bernard seems to have appeared to them somewhat remote: as long as they had no reports on his intercession, they hoped he had not "neglected" Bower nor "dealt unkindly with our interest."⁴⁹ Evidently they did not fully appreciate Bernard's willingness to convince the court of their venture's contribution to the rallying of French trade.

Bernard was not merely willing. He must have paved the way for De Kater's brief audience with Seignelay, sometime between 12 and 16 August, for, according to De Kater, the minister wasted no time in dictating an order to the intendant at Brest to allow the vessel to set sail.⁵⁰ The authorization at Brest appeared in the name of the lieutenant-general of Brittany on 23 August, once Bower had paid the charges with funds from the merchants.

The ship was on the high seas within days, for on 17 August (OS) two armed members of his crew forced Bower to give them bonds;⁵¹ the *Francis* arrived at Ferryland, Newfoundland, in October.⁵² There, Bower sold his French cargo, purchased fish for the same amount (£563/15/- sterling), and in November prepared for his owners a statement of account and an explanation of it.⁵³

Perhaps Bower thought fortune was at last on his side.

Although he had heard that New England privateers and French men-of-war had been lurking in the vicinity, having finished his business at Ferryland he made ready to sail. Without warning, a privateer from England confronted him: the *Sarah*, Captain Richard

for that is extremely necessary to me." Bernard to Robinson, 9 Aug. 1690.

49 Shepherd and Dupuy to Bower, 18 Aug. 1690.

50 De Kater to Robinson, 16 Aug. 1690.

51 Bower's report on the incident, which he called a mutiny, 17 Aug. 1690 (OS). He retreated to his cabin, where he agreed to their demand.

52 In a letter, ostensibly to Dade, dated November, Bower stated that he had arrived on 4 October (OS). The deposition of Richard Boasant, captain of the privateer *Sarah*, 26 January 1690/91 (OS), confirmed this.

53 Both documents were intended for John Dade but never reached him. (1) Account prepared by Bower: "Ferriland in Newfoundland/ The owners of the ffrancis Cr November the 20th 1690" (OS). Bower was able to make the sale price of the salt, wine, and brandy equal the cost of fish (£559/10/-) by adding £4/5/- for "disbursements upon the ship in this port." (2) Letter by Bower dated November the [blank] 1690. In addition to the main load of fish (1,016 quintals), he took the liberty of purchasing 70 additional quintals from a Mr Lyde with a bill of exchange (£31/10/-) drawn on John Dade and 80 quintals of refuse fish at five shillings a quintal.

Boasant. Whatever the source of his suspicion (had crewmen of the *Francis* talked with his men?), Boasant believed that the *Francis* was carrying her fish to France, not Portugal. When he boarded her, he found telling French official documents, and he took her as a prize.

He took his prize to the fishing port of Ilfracombe, Devonshire, on the Bristol Channel, where she arrived on 24 January 1690/91 (OS) and where George Coldham, an agent of the High Court of Admiralty, prepared an inventory of her goods and merchandise, "together with all her Takling apparell & furniture." Of the cargo, he made no distinction between merchantable and non-merchantable fish; he estimated the total at 1,600 quintals "or thereabouts" – some 400 quintals more than Bower would have reported to his owners. He sent the inventory to London along with depositions by the crew of the *Francis* and by Boasant. The depositions confirmed, by and large, the foregoing account.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

This part looks at what we now know about six principal merchant partners in the *Francis/Pelican* in 1690: Samuel Bernard, Samuel Shephard, Pierre (Peter) De Kater, Élias Dupuy, André (Andrew) Stucky, and Merlin Gastebois.

The voyage of the *Francis*, despite distinctive features, was not unique. The circumvention of state laws during the war of 1688–97 arose from such economic interests as revival of wine exports, particularly from Bordeaux:⁵⁴ that factor, which loomed larger than official policy, led to expedients. Enemy goods travelled under friendly flags, or enemy ships received friendly names. Neutral vessels carried cargoes; French ships sailed under foreign colours, Dutch ships under neutral colours. Duplicate bills of lading appeared, such as a true one for Amsterdam and a false one for Hamburg. Fictitious sales of cargoes or of ships⁵⁵ took place.

Unsurprisingly, in France the success or failure of these measures depended on politics: "Il est douteux que ces artifices, qui figuraient depuis longtemps au répertoire du parfait négociant, aient trompé l'adversaire. Leur efficacité dépendait pour une large part de la complicité ou de la tolérance des autorités sacrifiant aux exigences du négoce les principes de la grande politique. Les intendants, le ministre lui-même fermaient les yeux sur les expédients douteux ou les encourageaient."⁵⁶ (It is doubtful that those contrivances, which had long been part of the repertoire of the "complete businessman," would ever have deceived the [merchants'] adversaries. Their effectiveness depended in large part on the complicity or the tolerance of authorities who were ready to sacrifice the principles of high policy on the altar of the demands of the business world. The provincial intendants and the ministers themselves closed their eyes to such dubious expedients or even encouraged them.)

At La Rochelle in 1690, authorities used several types of subterfuge, in addition to what they did for the *Francis*. In February a ship returned home from Holland with false

⁵⁴ See above, note 6.

⁵⁵ For French regulations and usages, see Cavignac, *Jean Pellet: le navire marchand*, 45–7; le fret, 63–4.

⁵⁶ *Histoire de Bordeaux*, Vol. IV, 459–60.

bills of lading and a Portuguese captain. In April, two Swedish ships arrived from England with a cargo of coal and the *François* came from Amsterdam with supplies, both shipments for the naval stores of the arsenal at Rochefort. In June the "simulated sale" of a Danzig ship took place at La Rochelle. In October a Swedish ship left London for the same destination with bills of lading for Lisbon, and an English owner sent other ships from Stockholm to the French port. In November the *Cygne Rouge* left London for La Rochelle, and sometime during the year the *Diligente* had taken on salted salmon in Ireland for consignees there.⁵⁷

In 1691 La Rochelle had similar incidents. A ship left Perth, Scotland, for the French town with bills of lading for Spain. A ship returning to the port from Bilbao had an English crew and false dispatches for Amsterdam: those papers led to a privateer from Bayonne taking her as a prize. The *Barbara* of Glasgow sailed under a passport of King James II to La Rochelle with a cargo of coal and copper. The *Marie* of Boston was to sail from the port to New England with a cargo of brandy, mustard, paper, vinegar, and wine. French authorities permitted the *Thomas* of London to sail from England's West Indian islands to London.⁵⁸

The same types of activities occurred during the war of 1703–13. In 1703–4 some papers carried by neutral vessels were "undoubtedly forged to conceal the property of Allied subjects forbidden to trade with the enemy. Such 'colouring' of cargoes was widely practised by all belligerents, so that the movements of neutral shipping were restricted ... Disputes arose over visitation and search at sea, the definition of contraband, and the very competency of belligerent prize courts to adjudicate in cases involving neutrals."⁵⁹ Near war's end, French interests adopted methods to obtain Dutch tobacco in response to clients' demand.⁶⁰

The merchants who collaborated in the voyage of the *Francis/Pelican* shared characteristics reminiscent of Savary's *parfait négociant*.⁶¹ They usually stemmed from and married into merchant families, had experience, knew one another well, and had agents whom they could trust implicitly.⁶² In addition, they shared a common Protestant heritage.

Several secondary sources, including one full-length biography of Samuel Bernard, as well as primary sources in French *archives départementales*, have provided information on individuals among the group, although nothing has surfaced on John and John Dade.

Samuel Bernard

Samuel Bernard (1651–1739), son of a Parisian painter, was in 1676 "membre de la corporation des drapiers-jouailliers," selling cloth and lace at his shop in Paris. He was already quite well off by 1681 when he married Madeleine Clergeau, daughter of a well-to-

⁵⁷ AD Charente-Maritime, B 5686, f. 12, 11 Feb. 1690; f. 23, 8 April; f. 28, 24 April; ff. 37–8, 21 June; ff. 78–9, 16 Oct.; f. 81, 31 Oct.; f. 92, 27 Nov.; f. 130 bis, n.d.

⁵⁸ Ibid., B 5687, f. 4, 5 Jan. 1691; f. 43, May; ff. 68–9, 7 June–4 July; ff. 77–9, 80, 23 July.

⁵⁹ *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VI (Cambridge, 1970), chap. 22.3, Navies, 804.

⁶⁰ Jacob M. Price, *France and the Chesapeake*, 2 vols. (Ann Arbor, 1973), I, 185–6.

⁶¹ Jacques Savary, *Le Parfait Négociant, ou instruction générale pour tout ce qui regarde le commerce ...* (Paris, 1675).

⁶² Cavignac, *Jean Pellet*, 37–8.

do tailor and of "une faiseuse de mouches" (a maker of a small type of ornament [literally, of "flies"]). By 1685 he was an important merchant and banker who possessed, in addition to property in Paris, a country house at Chennevières that suffered much damage and outrage from *dragonades*.

Nevertheless, he was one of sixty-three notable Protestant *négociants* of Paris who acquiesced to espousing Catholicism on 14 December 1685 at the residence of the Marquis de Seignelay.⁶³ By 1687 Bernard had assumed so much responsibility for managing the extensive funds of Protestant fugitives from France that he abandoned his shop. Thereafter, by exploiting the dichotomy of his ties with the Protestant International and his Catholicism as an ostensibly ardent convert, he gained the confidence of such senior ministers at Versailles as Seignelay and Pontchartrain.⁶⁴ Indeed, even before Seignelay's death in November 1690 Bernard became the confidant of Pontchartrain; he was always ready on short notice to produce funds that the crown needed.

As for business, he invested widely and often in fitting out vessels heading for the colonies, and his banking activities became increasingly profitable. By 1695 he was, in the opinion of contemporaries, "le plus grand banquier de l'Europe qui faisait le plus gros et le plus assuré commerce" (the greatest banker of Europe, who carried on the widest and steadiest trade).⁶⁵

Samuel Shephard

Born about 1648 and married in 1673, Shephard by 1689 had become a successful merchant, particularly through the importation of wine, but his subsequent activities are more widely known. He was spokesman for the wine trade in negotiations of 1700 to consummate the transfer of English wine imports from France to Portugal, Spain, and Italian states. He was elected MP in 1701 for Newport and by 1705 for the City of London, where he served until 1708. He was described in 1710 as "by far the best" merchant for shipping and foreign trade in England. He died in 1719, leaving an estate worth £800,000.⁶⁶

63 Whereas he and other *négociants* waited almost to the last minute to abjure, he had persuaded his parents to do so as soon as the Revocation was proclaimed.

64 Louis Phélypeaux, Comte de Pontchartrain, contrôleur des finances (1689), ministre de la marine (1691).

65 *Dictionnaire biographique français*, tome 6 (1954), 74–5; Herbert Lüthy, *La Banque Protestante en France de la Révocation de l'Édit de Nantes à la Révolution*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1951–61), I, 74–5; Jacob Price, *France and the Chesapeake*, I, 56; II, 869, n. 22. Maya de Loën, *L'homme qui prêtait aux rois* (Paris, 2003), particularly 52–132.

66 *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, vol. 50 (Oxford, 2004), 237. Price, *France and the Chesapeake*, I, 518–19. Price hinted at a later, indirect link between Shephard and Bernard (during the War of the Spanish Succession), through Shephard's association with the magnate John Lambert and Lambert's role as the London agent for Antoine Crozat and "probably" Samuel Bernard.

Pierre (Peter) De Kater

De Kater, born at Amsterdam the son of a merchant,⁶⁷ married in Bordeaux on 30 September 1679 Catherine Lavie of that city.⁶⁸ De Kater had been active in the wine trade at Bordeaux at least as early as 1676 and was also a banker.⁶⁹ In January 1678 he was working with a Bordelais bourgeois, Antoine Roque, in the export of wine;⁷⁰ in September of that year there was a financial transaction with Jean Baudet, another merchant and bourgeois.⁷¹ In 1679 De Kater ceded to a *chevalier et conseiller du roy* two notes of the Bordeaux bourse dated June and August 1676 to the value of 679 livres.⁷² In May 1682 he acknowledged that he owed a vintner "unspecified" sums for wine and took part in a transaction amounting to 600 livres concerning the vessel *Pierre de Medez* (55 tonneaux).⁷³ In 1683 a merchant who had purchased from vintners, on account with De Kater, wine valued at slightly less than 100 livres, asserted that De Kater had not yet released the funds.⁷⁴

In 1688, De Kater recorded several transactions: in May and June, the sale of barriques, and in September, financial advances to a widow and her children and consignment of goods involving himself and two other merchants. During that year he participated in other financial transactions, one to the amount of 4,090 livres.⁷⁵ In April 1689 a Dutch merchant called Van Haemstede asserted that he had purchased wine and paid for accommodation on account with De Kater, who had not yet released the funds.⁷⁶ De Kater and another merchant, Antoine Mercié, took oaths as bourgeois on 7 May 1687, although references to De Kater as such appeared earlier.⁷⁷

67 Jan De Kater and Siberigh Pieters. Source: an unpublished note by John F. Bosher, which he provided to me in 2004.

68 Catherine was the daughter of François and of Catherine Bamore. Her dowry was 6,000 livres, and the witnesses included Thomas Lewis, an English merchant, and Henry Lavie, a cousin of the bride's. Source: *ibid.*

69 Notarial records, 1678–89: AD Gironde, série 3E in *Les négociants bordelais, l'Europe et les îles au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris, 1974), 156. Paul Butel erroneously asserted that the De Katers were among several Dutch merchant families that arrived in Bordeaux only after 1695.

70 AD Gironde, 3E 12998, étude du notaire Parran, ff. 6v–7, 5 Jan. 1678.

71 *Ibid.*, 3E 4098, étude du notaire Ferrand, f. 1021, 1 Sept. 1678.

72 *Ibid.*, 3E 14875, f. 354, notaire Canille, 1679.

73 *Ibid.*, 3E 4102, notaire Ferrand, ff. 60–1, 2 May 1682, and ff. 560–560v, 1 May 1682.

74 *Ibid.*, 3E 4103, notaire Ferrand, f. 399, 1 April 1683.

75 *Ibid.*, 3E 13005, notaire Parran, ff. 78v–79, 10 May 1688; ff. 72v–73, 3 June 1688; ff. 178v–179, n.d. [1688]; f. 902, 24 Sept. 1688; f. 1006, 29 Dec. 1688.

76 *Ibid.*, 3E 4109, notaire Ferrand, f. 363v, 28 April 1689.

77 The statement of Jules Mathorez, in *Les Étrangers en France sous l'ancien régime*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1921), II, 250–1, that Pierre De Kater became a bourgeois of Bordeaux in 1687, is verified in Archives municipales de Bordeaux, 1520–1783: Inventaire des Registres de la Jurade (1901 B^x), f. 157. That act was officially reconfirmed on 5 November 1768, when François De Kater, Pierre's grandson, was recognized as having all the privileges of the bourgeoisie that his grandfather acquired on 7 May 1687. AD Gironde, Archives historiques, vol. 33 (1898), p. 506, citing série K, ff. 142–3. Influential eighteenth-century *négociants* included another Pierre De Kater, who was ennobled. Butel, *Les négociants bordelais*; Théophile Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux depuis les origines*

Élias Dupuy

Élie (Hélie) Dupuy, as he was known in Bordeaux, was born about 1637. He became a bourgeois and merchant of the city, married for the first time in 1666, and in 1670 became an elder of the Protestant church there. As a widower he married on 13 November 1678 Élisabeth Oyen, daughter of another Bordelais bourgeois and merchant. He abjured Calvinism on 10 November 1685 but in February or March 1686 fled to England with his wife, five sons, and three daughters. Having renounced Roman Catholicism, they were denized⁷⁸ in London on 9 April 1687 (OS) and naturalized by royal letters patent on 15 April. Dupuy was an elder of the French Protestant church on Threadneedle Street from 1690–93 and 1698–1701. The census of London included him and his wife in 1695.⁷⁹

André (Andrew) Stuckey

The Rochelais merchant appears to have been the person baptized Andrew Stuckey in Truro, Cornwall, on 14 August 1648, the son of John Stuckey, a local merchant. He may have been a relative (for example, a nephew) of another Andrew Stuckey baptized at Peranzabuloe, Cornwall, on 21 June 1633 and who became a merchant of La Rochelle on 21 October 1668.⁸⁰ If we assume that he was baptized as an infant, the younger Stuckey was about twenty-eight when he was officially accepted as a merchant of La Rochelle on 15 April 1676. He married Françoise Clintrier, born in the port about 1656, the daughter of Jacques Clintrier and Marie.⁸¹

In January 1690 Stuckey announced that two Swedish ships had left Newcastle for La Rochelle with coal for the arsenal at Rochefort. As for the *Pelican*, Stuckey affirmed before a notary on 5 September that the ship had come from Plymouth to La Rochelle (which was true, but she had arrived there months earlier) and was heading for Lisbon (with

jusqu'à nos jours, 4 vols. (Bordeaux, 1892), II, 17.

⁷⁸ As foreigners, admitted to residence and to certain rights. *Concise Oxford Dictionary*.

⁷⁹ P.L. Coÿne, "Dictionnaire des familles protestantes de Bordeaux au XVIIe siècle", unpublished mimeographed monograph, n.d.: Fascicule 2: C and D, Archives départementales de la Gironde, Salle des inventaires. *The Publications of the Huguenot Society of London*, No. 1: Rev. David C.A. Agnew, *Protestant Exiles from France in the Reign of Louis XIV*, 3 vols., 2nd ed. (London and Edinburgh, 1871), I, 37, 44, 45; No. 18: William A. Shaw, *Letters of Denization and Acts of Naturalization for Aliens in England and Ireland, 1603–1700* (Lymington, 1911; Kraus Reprint, Nendeln, Liechtenstein, 1969), 184, 217, 252. Dupuy is omitted from a list of 136 Bordeaux bourgeois in Malvezin, *Histoire du commerce de Bordeaux depuis les origines jusqu'à nos jours*, 4 vols. (Bordeaux, 1892), II, 305.

⁸⁰ It was probably the elder Andrew Stuckey who, in May 1675, acting for a London merchant, Richard Alie, hired, at the rate of 100 livres a month, a Liverpool vessel to ship a cargo for Henry Brunet of La Rochelle and Jacques Godeffroy to Boston, where another cargo was to be loaded for Bilbao. Unpublished note by Boshier, 2004.

⁸¹ Boshier, "Huguenot Merchants," particularly 80–1 and genealogical table on the Stuckey family. The son of André and Françoise, André (who was always included in the closure of the letters from his father to Captain Bower, alias Robinson) married Marie Brossard and subsequently migrated to New York.

no mention of "via Newfoundland"). Stuckey was nominal agent at La Rochelle of the vessel's London owners. After the fictional "sale" he was supposed to appear to be the owner, although French officialdom must have been aware that he was not.⁸² He may well have invested in the enterprise, but there is no documentary evidence of that. The London owners did not mistrust him but were justifiably less confident in his business acumen and political savoir-faire than in De Kater's. And De Kater blamed him for the two contradictory entries as to destination that had served to invite capture of the ship by the French navy. Nevertheless, Stuckey followed the instructions of the London merchants and of De Kater, enlisted the help at Brest of his colleague Souisse, and maintained frequent communication with Captain Bower at that port.

Merlin Gastebois⁸³

Gastebois's only role in the case was in the fictitious sale of the *Pelican* at La Rochelle. Although the official French documents found on board the *Francis* after her capture at Ferryland revealed nothing of his antecedents, he had been and was quite active in maritime commerce.

On 3 March 1683 Gastebois and a fellow-owner of the *Plume d'Or* (about 150 *tonneaux* burden) appointed a master and crew for a fishery voyage to Newfoundland.⁸⁴ On 24 May 1683 Gastebois received 200 livres from another merchant with respect to a bottomry bond (in effect a mortgage) for goods loaded aboard a ship for Quebec.⁸⁵ Gastebois's ship *La Palme* undertook voyages in 1684 and 1685,⁸⁶ and on 11 December 1685 he was one of four persons entering into a contract to create a marine insurance company.⁸⁷ In 1686 Gastebois associated with the merchants Pagez and Assailly in a shipment to Lisbon and the Antilles.⁸⁸

After 1690 Gastebois and his associates did not cease to take wartime risks. For example, in July 1691 he was one of several people on whose behalf their agent Herman Wilikens purchased a ship manned by Danish mariners and carrying a cargo for the Rochelais merchants while bearing the initials of Herman Wilikens.⁸⁹

82 As the sale had been fictitious, Stuckey was therefore not responsible under the rules and customs set out for the "propriétaire du navire." See Cavignac, *Pellet*, 61.

83 I am grateful to Pauline Arseneault, senior archivist in the AD Charente-Maritime, for providing me with references to notarial records concerning the commercial activities of Gastebois prior to 1688 from *l'Inventaire des documents relatifs à la Nouvelle-France dans le fonds Rivière et Soullard* (1993).

84 AD Charente-Maritime 3E 1808, ff. 36v–37, 3 March 1683.

85 Ibid., 3E 1801, ff. 41–50, 25 Oct. 1685.

86 Ibid., B 5682, ff. 144–51, 7 April 1684, and B 5683, ff. 156–62, 23 March 1685.

87 Ibid., 3E 1808, f. 159v, 11 Dec. 1685.

88 Ibid., B 5684, f. 193, 19 March 1686.

89 Ibid., B 5687, f. 66.

The copy of the record of "sale" of the *Pelican* (31 May 1690) in the Archives départementales of the Charente-Maritime bears a marginal note signed separately from the main document by Gastebois, Stuckey, and the notary, Rivière, to the effect that the sale had not actually taken place but had been put on record "pour faciliter la navigation dudit vaisseau et empêcher qu'il ne soit pris par les ennemis de l'estat" (in order to facilitate the said ship's course and prevent her from being taken by enemies of the state).⁹⁰ That marginal note does not appear on the copy found on board the *Francis* after her capture at Ferryland.

THE PRINCIPALS IN ACTION

This part outlines the pecking order among the merchants, issues of loyalty and faith, and communication among the various parties.

Pecking Order

Although for good reason the *Francis* did not enter the ports of London and Bordeaux, Samuel Shephard of London was her principal owner and Pierre De Kater of Bordeaux the shipper of her cargo. As a leading *négociant* of Bordeaux,⁹¹ De Kater could request Samuel Bernard's aid in the summer of 1690. Stuckey at La Rochelle recognized quite early that an overture to the Parisian banker was the province of the Bordeaux *négociant* and that his own role was subordinate. De Kater's colleague Élias Dupuy, by fleeing to England, strengthened De Kater's link with Shephard. Dupuy may have transferred credits to England, for in 1689, when the *Francis* was registered in France as the *Pelican*, he had the wherewithal to invest in her escapade.

Shephard, already a successful trader, had undoubtedly learned from experience that wealth from international and intercontinental trade could not grow without risk taking. He was therefore in a position to join with fellow-merchants on both sides of the English Channel in a project that risked more than the usual peacetime loss of a ship and cargo. He and his London colleagues were aware that they had to weigh the potential profit from selling scarce French luxury goods in Newfoundland against the consequences of contravening laws on trade with the enemy. He must have believed that the precautions they took – in both countries, but especially in France – together with "peace and quiet" in the Newfoundland area, lessened the risk. As the senior of the London merchants, he may have convinced the others to participate.

Loyalty and Faith

By and large, the merchants, French and English, were or had been Protestants. Dupuy, a prominent Huguenot of Bordeaux, quickly renounced in England a brief, nominal

⁹⁰ Ibid., 3E 1810, ff. 159–159v, 31 May 1690.

⁹¹ He was one of the dominant Dutch merchants of Bordeaux. Portuguese Jews, along with Frenchmen of various origins, were also prominent. *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, 470.

conversion to Catholicism. Stuckey, a Rochelais of English birth, was a Huguenot by marriage. Bernard, of out-and-out Protestant roots, became Catholic in 1685. As for Dutch-born De Kater of Bordeaux, it is not clear that he was as yet a Catholic in 1690.

Huguenots had played a large part in French trade throughout much of the seventeenth century.⁹² Politically, during the minority of Louis XIV, the crown had recognized them as loyal supporters, and between 1650 and 1680 those of Paris included several key financial officials.⁹³ Louis XIV lost Huguenot loyalty when, after reaching his majority, he decreed that allegiance to him required adherence to the established church.⁹⁴ The persecution of recalcitrant Calvinists followed and reached its climax in 1685 with the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. Persecution led to the loss not only of craftsmen and sailors, but also of merchants, to England, the Netherlands, German states with Protestant rulers, and other countries.⁹⁵

There is no doubt that religion deeply influenced middle-class western Europeans, including merchants, in the late seventeenth century. However, although merchants holding different religious beliefs sometimes competed with each other, the degree of inter-faith rivalry is a complex and controversial subject. In French ports where merchants of Protestant origin were in a majority, they were able to use the Protestant International to monopolize foreign trade. Catholic merchants, without a comparable international organization, were in no position to respond by monopolizing trade between France and the Catholic countries to the south.⁹⁶ Whenever the authorities were hunting down and persecuting Huguenots, some Catholic merchants chose to denounce their rivals, but this did not happen everywhere. In Bordeaux, for example, "les marchands catholiques sont particulièrement dynamiques et les deux communautés sont constamment associées dans le grand négoce" (Catholic merchants

92 Protestant bourgeois, like their Jewish counterparts, had to resort to careers in business, because only Roman Catholics could become part of the judicial and administrative establishment of the French monarchy. Officials were well aware of the economic power of the Protestants. The intendant of the *généralité* of Guyenne, for example, hesitated in 1685 to suppress worship at the Huguenot church of Bordeaux. He had been advised that the decline in the wine and brandy trade would certainly greatly worsen if he did so, for not only were the best French *négociants* Huguenots, but also "a large number" of their English and Dutch co-religionists practised that very trade in Bordeaux. *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, 405.

93 Laurent Dingli, Colbert, *Marquis de Seignelay: le fils flamboyant* (Paris, 1997), 249–50.

94 Herbert Luthy, *La Banque protestante en France*, I, 16–17. The King, not the Pope, named the bishops of the Church of France. Ironically, Louis XIV's demand for uniformity was in accord with Martin Luther's doctrine in the Holy Roman Empire that the subject must be of the same faith as the monarch.

95 Jon Butler's *The Huguenots in America* (Cambridge, Mass., and London, 1983), chap. 1, "French Protestantism and the Revocation of 1685," 13–40. For details, see the volumes of the *Proceedings* and of the *Publications* of the Huguenot Historical Society of London. On Huguenot mariners, see the recent Mickaël Augeron, "Se convertir, partir ou résister? Les marins huguenots face à la révocation de l'Édit de Nantes," in Mickaël Augeron, Didier Poton, and Bertrand van Ruymbeke, dirs., *Les Huguenots et l'Atlantique* (Paris: PUPS, 2007).

96 Boshier, "Huguenot Merchants," 100.

were particularly dynamic, and the two communities were constantly associated in large-scale business endeavours).⁹⁷

Merchants of the same sect or similar ones associated more for mutual commercial benefit than for devotional affinity. In seventeenth-century England, membership of a church was in itself evidence of neither faith nor piety.⁹⁸ Yet the solidarity inherent in the Huguenots' international mercantile network facilitated co-operation across boundaries.⁹⁹ Close social relations – including intermarriage – had developed among members of the network.¹⁰⁰ And even those who formally abjured their faith in order to avoid persecution and who remained in France retained working relationships with Protestant colleagues. "Convertis ou pas, les liens de parenté et les solidarités demeurent. On ne se brouille pas systématiquement ni irrémédiablement avec ses amis, ses cousins ou ses parents, sous prétexte qu'ils sont devenus idolâtres et papistes."¹⁰¹ (Whether persons were converts or not, family ties and close friendships remained firm. One did not systematically or irrevocably fall out with one's friends, cousins, or parents on the pretext that they had become idolaters and papists.)

Of those who did not emigrate, the most prominent was probably Samuel Bernard. After abjuring Protestantism in 1685, the thirty-eight-year-old merchant quickly became an ostensibly ardent and generous supporter of his Catholic parish, reaffirming all the while his close liaison with Protestant merchants. Through transactions with them he acquired control over considerable sums that he converted into profitable loans and investments within France. His influence at Versailles having begun no later than 1689, "from the 1690s the part he played in public business was one of capital importance."¹⁰² Of Bernard and others, Jean Meuvret has written, "recourse was had to them because of their Huguenot origin rather than in spite of it. The services expected of them were what they could perform precisely because of their connections with their former co-religionists."¹⁰³ In other words, such connections

97 Dingli, *Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay*, 248–9.

98 Richard B. Grassby, *The Business Community of Seventeenth Century England* (Cambridge, 1995). "Because it was mainly the devout who committed themselves to paper, it is extremely difficult to assess the level of spiritual concern within the whole business community." 275. "Religious enthusiasm and big business did not mix and as preachers frequently complained, business crowded out devotion and spiritual reflection. Church attendance declined during the century and the success of those forced into business by their non-conformity depended on channelling all their energy and fervour into business." 279.

99 Boshier, "Huguenot Merchants," 77–102.

100 *Ibid.*, genealogical tables between pages 80 and 81.

101 Dingli, *Colbert, Marquis de Seignelay*, 248. For the reaction to repression before and after the Revocation and for a discussion of abjuration and conversion, see Bertrand Van Ruymbeke and Randy J. Sparks, eds., *Memory and Identity: The Huguenots in France and the Atlantic Diaspora* (Columbia, SC, 2003), particularly Van Ruymbeke's introduction (5) and the essay by Lafleur and Abénon (267ff.) that he cites.

102 *The New Cambridge Modern History*, Vol. VI (Cambridge, 1970), chap. 10, "The Condition of France, 1688–1717," 336.

103 *Ibid.*, 337.

were sought more than "overlooked."¹⁰⁴ Once the war was under way, the persecution of Huguenots slackened temporarily, as did their emigration.¹⁰⁵ Although Huguenots fought for the Protestant cause and helped it in various ways,¹⁰⁶ to merchants the continuity of international trade was an even greater necessity.¹⁰⁷ And because it was a vital part of his portfolio, Jean-Baptiste Colbert *fits*, Marquis de Seignelay, minister of marine from 1684 until his death in November 1690,¹⁰⁸ tended to emphasize trade over enforcement of the Revocation. Of course that did not detract from his support for the war, least of all his private investment in privateering.¹⁰⁹

"Protestant" financing of anti-French privateering brought profit to merchants and to the Dutch and English states. In the long term, Protestant loans contributed to France's indebtedness, whereas in the short term they facilitated the funding in France of the struggle against Protestant powers.¹¹⁰ For the voyage of the *Francis*, it was therefore unexceptional that profit had priority over national and sectarian loyalty. The ties that bound the men of London, La Rochelle, Bordeaux, and Paris enabled them to co-operate in a scheme that would make a modest contribution to the Anglo-Dutch *political* cause only if it failed! Its success, while benefiting the merchants themselves, would sow a seed of relief for a French Catholic state in maritime commercial difficulty.

One can understand why De Kater would risk in 1690 the shipment of wine and brandy to an English colony on an English vessel. In peacetime, exporters such as he had customarily realized considerable returns through the shipment of large cargoes of Bordeaux ("claret") to the Netherlands and the British Isles. After 1688, the war at sea with those powers, by blocking exports, forced the closure of sales outlets: the backlog in wine producers' inventories was "catastrophic."¹¹¹ Moreover, in England a prohibitive duty on French wines was already in effect, whereas demand in all of England's North American colonies for such luxury goods, regardless of country of origin, was even higher in the sparsely populated settlements of Newfoundland. De Kater's cargo would have been interpreted to the court as a contribution to the relief of vintners¹¹² (as well as to

104 "The Bourbon authorities needed rich bankers enough to overlook their Huguenot background and their foreign connections." John Bosher, *Business and Religion in the Age of New France, 1600–1760* (Toronto, 1994), "Identifying Huguenots in the Canada Trade, 1663–1763," 212.

105 Persecution by no means ceased completely during the war, although even Louvois urged moderation in certain areas in order to discourage emigration. Persecution resumed in earnest in 1698, the year following the Treaty of Rijswijk.

106 Bosher, "Huguenot Merchants," 98.

107 In privateering commissions, Louis XIV declared himself to be at war in 1689 with "the usurpers of the English crown," not with the "rightful" king, James II, his guest. Examples of such commissions appear in HCA 32/23–32, as well as in French archives. Could this mean sometimes that an English merchantman was not an "enemy" vessel?

108 His official title was *secrétaire d'état ayant le département de la marine*.

109 Early in 1689 Seignelay was already fitting out four frigates, one of them in partnership with Louvois. *The New Cambridge Modern History*, VI, 803.

110 Meuvret, "Condition of France," 336–7.

111 *Histoire de Bordeaux*, IV, 457, 461, 466, and 470. See above, note 6.

112 Most probably those of the Charente region.

the benefit of the salt producers of places such as Brouage), and hence in France's national interest.

The merchants in the *Francis* case had little or nothing to say in their private letters to Captain Bower about national or international politics. In announcing, however, that he had obtained a favourable decision from the minister of marine on release of the vessel at Brest, De Kater alluded to the Marquis de Seignelay by name, and it was evident that Samuel Bernard's influence at court had made the decision possible. De Kater had also approved of Bower's encounter with the exiled James II,¹¹³ believing perhaps that James would intercede with Louis XIV. Stuckey noted the meeting without commenting on it, but, as we saw above, he criticized Bower for associating with Irishmen in La Rochelle,¹¹⁴ and in a marginal note, he expressed scorn at the performance of the English admiral (Arthur Herbert, Lord Torrington) at the Battle of Beachy Head in July.¹¹⁵

Communication

The letters that Bower received at Brest, and their references to the ones that the merchants in France and England exchanged, demonstrate the relative ease of communication among businessmen, irrespective of international boundaries and belligerency between states. The fact that merchants could communicate within a sphere of their own made it possible for them to circumvent their governments' wartime trading restrictions, or at least to try to do so with reasonable hope of success. Kenneth J. Banks has written about the eighteenth century in peacetime: "Through ships and the correspondence carried by ships, the great merchants (*négociants*) of the French ports enjoyed access to a very large and diverse matrix of resources, talents, and contacts. For those in France with the right connections, any amount of credit, any personnel, and all types of goods or produce could be summoned from nearly any point in Europe north of the Danube and west of the Oder, and sent to any location frequented by European merchant ships."¹¹⁶ The same may apply to our wartime merchant network in 1690.

CONCLUSION

The wartime circumvention of mercantilist legislation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries has certainly received mention in historical literature but

113 De Kater to Robinson, 2 Aug. 1690. "I am glad to see you had spoke to King James & hope he will be mindfull of what he promised you."

114 Above, note 34.

115 Stuckey to Robinson, 3 Aug. 1690.

116 Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713–1763* (Montreal and Kingston, London, Ithaca, 2002), 155.

deserves its own full-length study. As for primary sources, prize-court papers in various archives, complemented by merchant-marine, naval, legal, and other records, would be an obvious choice.

The twenty-two private letters addressed to Richard Bower alias John Robinson resulted from the arrest of the *Francis/Pelican* by the French, and they survived because the English took the *Francis* as a prize. Besides not being the usual sort of record to survive in private archives or public archives, they may have contained things the captain and the merchants preferred to conceal. For those very reasons, they are particularly interesting to historians. They offer unofficial glimpses of the writer's character and, to a lesser extent, of the recipient's. Those of Bernard and De Kater demonstrate mature decisiveness, confirming what we already know of the former and elucidating our view of the latter.

Risk was paramount: the merchants were well aware that their ship might become a prize, and there is no evidence that they had insured ship and cargo.¹¹⁷ Avoidance of risk was therefore essential and involved registration in both countries under different names to create the impression that there were two English vessels and avoiding mention to the admiralty in France that en route to Lisbon the ship would call at a port in Newfoundland! It is likely that if De Kater had overseen the loading of his cargo, the destination on all documents would have been identical, giving the French navy no reason to intercept the vessel. As a result of the formal instructions to the captain, in which Stuckey became the fictitious owner of the ship, "Terre Neuve" appeared on the bill of lading as the cargo's destination, whereas to the admiralty only "Lisbon" was legal. Stuckey said the captain should have hidden those papers that revealed Newfoundland as the goal; but that might have succeeded only if there had been two bills of lading, one for French interception, the other that, with luck, would satisfy the English or the Dutch. That device should have been quite familiar to Stuckey, for, as we saw above, it was common at La Rochelle and elsewhere. This may have been one of Stuckey's shortcomings that led the London shipowners to have less confidence in him than in De Kater.

After the release of the ship from Brest, the London merchants may have persuaded De Kater, who had thought Anglo-Dutch capture the chief risk, that the Newfoundland region was no threat to the *Francis*. Shepherd's remarks reveal that he knew less about official English strategy and the news in the western Atlantic than he thought. Unknowingly, the merchants sent the ship to Newfoundland at a time when the St Lawrence – Gulf and River – and adjacent seas had many English and colonial vessels involved in operations in Acadia and Canada. Although after the abortive siege of Quebec, naval vessels could have called at Newfoundland ports, they did not; it was a privateer that took the *Francis*.

The merchants had taken a risk and had lost. Some Newfoundland consumers were able to enjoy French luxury goods and some Newfoundlanders

117 In wartime, marine insurance was very rare in France. Cavignac, *Jean Pellet*, 79.

active in the fishery could use French salt. In England, the crown shared with privateers the value of the ship and the cargo that she took on at Ferryland. The cargo had left France; those people who had supplied it had presumably gained a little; and officialdom had exacted fees from the merchants. Although there were merchants who supported the Protestant maritime powers politically and militarily,¹¹⁸ the *Francis/Pelican* group, despite their Protestant origins, was not among them. Obviously, that was not its reason for launching the venture (indeed, circumstances even led its members to persuade the French crown that it was beneficial to France). They kept religion strictly separate from business: their interest was profit. Did they even consider that the venture's failure, which resulted in the English crown's acquiring part of the value of the ship and cargo, was a satisfactory alternative outcome? There is no evidence of such a thought.

118 Boshier, "Huguenot Merchants," 98.