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**Noël Danycan “Across the World”: Saint-Malo Trading Companies and the Illusion of French Commercial Monopoly in the South Pacific (1701-1705)**

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# Noël Danycan “a través del mundo”: las empresas comerciales de Saint-Malo y la ilusión del monopolio comercial francés en el Pacífico Sur (1701-1705)

Noël Danycan “Across the World”: Saint-Malo Trading Companies and the Illusion of French Commercial Monopoly in the South Pacific (1701-1705)

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*Resumen:* Durante los primeros años del comercio directo francés en el Pacífico sur, la seductora riqueza del comercio del Pacífico causó constantes alianzas y disputas entre los propios mercaderes franceses. Su entusiasmo a la hora de obtener ganancias de las abundantes riquezas provenientes de Perú y China llevó a mercaderes, inversionistas, banqueros, e, incluso, a autoridades reales francesas a entrar en constante conflicto. Por un lado se encontraban los ricos y experimentados mercaderes de Saint-Malo. Por el otro, banqueros e inversionistas parisinos apoyados por las autoridades reales francesas. Entre esta mezcla emergió la figura de Noël Danycan. Danycan fue un hábil y ambicioso comerciante y hombre de mar de Saint-Malo, quien logró obtener tender puentes y establecer alianzas con inversionistas parisinos. Estos banqueros de la capital le ayudaron a Danycan en

asegurar el tan deseado monopolio comercial en la costa de Perú. Sin embargo, la ambición de Danycan lo llevó a ir más lejos. Danycan usó sus influencias parisinas para obtener privilegios reales y comerciar en China, potencialmente permitiéndole formar un monopolio privado a través del Pacífico. No obstante, el conflicto con otros mercaderes de Saint-Malo y autoridades parisinas eventualmente acabaron con su plan. Este artículo analiza los cinco años iniciales de desarrollo del comercio directo francés en el Perú. Especialmente, me centro en el estudio de las compañías comerciales de Danycan y su incompetencia de mantener su monopolio sobre el comercio en el Pacífico sur. Argumento que su plan de establecer una red comercial a través del Pacífico sufrió resistencia por parte de sus propios rivales franceses, quienes últimamente fueron el causal de la paralización del proyecto de Danycan.

*Palabras clave:* comercio francés, comercio del Pacífico, Perú colonial, Imperio francés, comercio global, siglo XVIII

*Abstract:* During the first years of France's direct trade to the South Pacific, the enticement of the riches that the Pacific trade offered caused constant alliances and disputes between French merchants. Their eagerness to profit from the abundant riches of Peru and China drove French merchants, financiers, bankers, and even royal authorities into constant conflict. On one side, there were the wealthy and seasoned merchants of Saint-Malo. On the other hand, Parisian bankers and financiers were backed by royal support. Into this mix emerged the figure of Noël Danycan. Danycan, a skilled and ambitious Saint-Malo sailor and businessman, acquired alliances with Parisian investors. These bankers from the capital helped him secure the desired trading monopoly off the coast of Peru. However, Danycan's ambition went even further. He pushed his Parisian contacts to obtain royal privileges to trade in China, that could allow Danycan to monopolize the Pacific trade into his private system. However, the conflict between other Saint-Malo merchants and Parisian royal authorities ultimately shattered his project. This article analyzes the initial five years of French direct trade in Peru with a particular focus on the trading companies owned by Noël Danycan and his inability to preserve his monopoly of the South Pacific

trade. I argue that his plans to establish commercial network across the Pacific met constant disputes from his French rivals, ultimately hampering his project.

*Keywords:* French Commerce, Pacific Trade, Colonial Peru, French Empire, Global Trade, Eighteenth Century

## **Introduction**

In 1708, a meeting held in Paris between the directors of two rival French chartered companies - the state-funded Compagnie des Indes Orientales based in Paris and the Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo. The conflict arose because the Saint-Malo company engaged in trade with China, violating the Parisian company's commercial privileges. Additionally, the Saint-Malo company disobeyed the royal decree that granted the Compagnie des Indes the monopoly of the Chinese trade. The responsible for taking this action was the Malouin businessman Noël Danycan. Danycan, a wealthy and prominent merchant from Brittany known for his ambition and daring business ventures, belonged to the more ambitious merchant groups of Saint-Malo, always looking for opportunities to expand their trading activities and maximize profits, even if it meant using illegal means. Danycan's Parisian rivals felt the threat and reported to France's Prime Minister, Louis Phelypeaux, Chancellor of France, that Danycan not "played fair". And if he was not stopped, he could expand his business "across the world", in detriment to Parisian interests. With his vast resources and workforce, Danycan could dispatch trading fleets to the Pacific and beyond. Danycan directed the Compagnie de la Mer Pacifique and the Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo as an attempt to link up the Chinese and Peruvian trade under his wing.

However, Danycan's plans for control of the Pacific trade were short-lived. Despite his initial success in securing the French king's approval to monopolize the South Pacific trade, disputes,

and divisions with his former Parisian and Malouin commercial allies, they have condemned Danycan to be excluded from this trade. This article examines the first five years of French direct trade in Peru, centering in the case of Noël Danycan's trading companies and his failure to control the South Pacific trade. I argue that although Danycan demonstrated his skills at negotiating and navigating the political and commercial landscape to monopolize the South Pacific trade, disputes and conflicts among the French undermined his monopoly. Malouin and Parisian interests came at Danycan from the Chinese and Peruvian commercial angles, leaving his enterprise needing support. Furthermore, far from being financially harmed by the conflict among its subjects, the French crown grew financially strong since sailing to Peru increased considerably, bringing in more Peruvian silver.

When discussing the period of French direct trade in Peru (1698-1714), it is overlooked that France was far from a united front regarding commercial interests. When the "Lure of Peru," as Peter Bradley termed it,<sup>1</sup> came to the knowledge of French *négociants* (businessmen), factions were established. The merchants of Saint-Malo displayed enthusiasm when mercantile opportunities arose but tended to isolate themselves to keep their businesses within their clans. Meanwhile, Parisian financiers enjoyed the royal family's support and achieved commercial success through the *Compagnie des Indes Orientales*.

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<sup>1</sup> Peter T. Bradley, *The Lure of Peru: Maritime Intrusion into the South Sea, 1598-1701* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1990).

Mercantilism appeared as France's overseas trading dogma, where chartered and state-supported companies represented their model. However, the Compagnie des Indes fell short of the achievements of neighboring companies like the Dutch East India Company and, thus, depended on partnerships and alliances with *négociants* from Marseille, Nantes, and Saint-Malo to expand their trading operations. In this scenario, Noël Danycan seemed a fitting associate until he was not.

The scientific literature on the Breton trade, specifically from Saint-Malo in the Pacific and the activities of the Compagnie de la Mer du Sud, can be traced from the beginning of the twentieth century. In the late seventeenth century, Malouin merchants saw an opportunity to sell their goods to Peruvian merchants eager to buy them. Spain's Bourbon transition in 1701 made this trading practice easier, which considered the arriving Malouin merchants to Peru as allies. Erik Wilhelm Dahlgren's work on Malouin navigation in the South Pacific was fundamental in this field. By tracing the accounts of French vessels that sailed to the South Pacific, Dahlgren discovered the brief but consistent development of French maritime expansion to Peru in the early eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Dahlgren's work served as the starting point for further Breton's presence in the Pacific, which continued with the contributions of Léon Vignols and Henri Sée, who focused

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<sup>2</sup> Erik Wilhelm Dahlgren, *Les relations commerciales et maritimes entre la France et les côtes de l'océan Pacifique (commencement du XVIIIe siècle)* (Paris: H. Champion, 1909).



on the aftermath of the prohibitions to French direct trade after 1713.<sup>3</sup> The contributions of Dahlgren, Vignols, and Sée proved vital to set the stage for further studies of French direct presence in the South Pacific.

After a gap of sixty years, Jean Delumeau centered his analysis in understanding the epicenter of French trade in Spanish America: Saint-Malo. Delumeau got specific interest in understanding the management of Malouin traders' operations before their maritime expansion stage, which occurred in the last decades of the seventeenth century.<sup>4</sup> Complementing Delumeau's narrative of French direct trade, Sergio Villalobos told the story from the Peruvian and Chilean sides, where local merchants had to engage in those businesses.<sup>5</sup> However, the two most influential works came shortly after. Carlos Malamud's "Cádiz y Saint-Malo" closes the gap of methodological research that Villalobos opened while analyzing the repercussions of French contraband on Peruvian merchants.<sup>6</sup> Malamud went beyond, merging archival material from Spain and France to create an anatomy

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<sup>3</sup> Léon Vignols y Henri Sée, «La fin du commerce interlope: dans l'Amérique Espagnole», *Revue d'histoire économique et sociale* 13, n.º 3 (1925): 300-313.

<sup>4</sup> Jean Delumeau, *Le mouvement du port de Saint-Malo à la fin du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle, 1681-1700*. (Rennes: Institut de recherches historiques, économiques et humaines de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines de l'Université de Rennes, 1963).

<sup>5</sup> Sergio Villalobos, *Comercio y contrabando en el Río de la Plata y Chile, 1700-1811* (Buenos Aires: Universitaria, 1986).

<sup>6</sup> Carlos Malamud, *Cádiz y Saint Malo en el comercio colonial peruano (1698-1725)* (Cádiz: Diputación Provincial de Cádiz, 1986).

of how French direct trade in Peru developed, highlighting that its impact reached almost every level of Peru's colonial society. Finally, André Lespagnol wrote a thorough analysis of the merchants of Saint-Malo ranging from social, political, and economic perspectives.<sup>7</sup> Lespagnol's *oeuvre* represents the most complete work on understanding Brittany's main merchant force.

On Danycan's companies, the historiography of the *Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo* is scarce. It is only mentioned in passing studies concerning Malouin trade in the Pacific. Claudius Madrolle's work on French presence in China and the history of the *Compagnie Royale de la Chine* revealed the controversies surrounding Danycan by examining judicial processes and company statements.<sup>8</sup> However, the book only consists of descriptions and literal translations of archival material, without situating the company in the context of French Asian trade. The second work on this company is by Paul Pelliot, who focused on the legal proceedings between the *Compagnie Royale de la Chine* and the *Compagnie de la Mer du Sud*.<sup>9</sup> This

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<sup>7</sup> André Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: une élite négociante au temps de Louis XIV* (Rennes: Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2011).

<sup>8</sup> Claudius Madrolle, *Les premiers voyages français à la Chine; la Compagnie de la Chine, 1698-1719* (France: A. Challamel, 1901).

<sup>9</sup> Paul Pelliot, «L'origine des relations de la France avec la Chine. Le premier voyage de l'«Amphitrite» en Chine, premier article», *Journal des Savants* 10, n.º 1 (1928): 433-51; Pelliot; Paul Pelliot, «L'origine des relations de la France avec la Chine. Le premier voyage de «l'Amphitrite» en Chine (troisième article)», *Journal des Savants* 6, n.º 1 (1929): 252-67; Paul Pelliot, «L'origine des relations de la France avec la Chine. Le premier voyage

article provides a fresh perspective on the initial years of French direct trade in Peru. The existing literature on the organization of French commercial operations in the South Pacific has focused on the tension France experienced in negotiations with Spanish ministers, Peruvian colonial authorities, and the Lima merchant guild. However, this article highlights that the commercial landscape of the South Pacific ever changed, and conflicts and confrontations were not only caused by the Spanish and Peruvian authorities but also by the French themselves. The availability of profit and the risk of the pursued endeavors dictated the creation and dissolution of partnerships and alliances.

### **Messieurs de Saint-Malo**

From the wide range of port cities that benefitted from the Colbertian reforms, Saint-Malo stood out as the most essential French port of the North Atlantic during the seventeenth century.<sup>10</sup> Saint-Malo is situated on the Breton coast, next to the opening of the La Rance River. Surrounded by fortified islands, Saint-Malo was a fortress itself. Located within a peninsula, Saint-

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de l'Amphitrite en Chine. (deuxième article)», *Journal des Savants* 3, n.º 1 (1929): 110-25.

<sup>10</sup> Jean-Baptiste Colbert, as appointed First Minister of State and Secretary of State of the Navy, conducted several maritime reforms that drastically transformed France into one of the strongest maritime powers in Europe. After 1669, France destined financial support to increase their royal navy, as well as granting concessions to port cities and merchant communities. State support was vital to allow coastal merchant guilds to develop further and expand their commercial networks.

Malo composes a fortress, an exterior port, an inner port, and the city itself. Moreover, the geography that enclosed the city integrated its defensive structure. Navigation to and from Saint-Malo presented several difficulties for inexperienced sailors. Strong wind currents, rocks, and islets could mean disaster for the integrity of a vessel under bad weather conditions and lack of visibility. Colbert's successor as Secretary of the State of the Navy, Jérôme de Pontchartrain, recognized in 1694 that Saint-Malo's first line of defense was "natural" which basically "impeded our enemies ever to have success when attacking by sea."<sup>11</sup> Further, to prevent bombardments, Pontchartrain financed the construction of fortresses in the islets enclosing Saint-Malo to delay the enemy and grant citizens enough time to prepare for an attack. Due to the city's imposing defensive structure, Saint-Malo became one the bastions of French defense in the North Atlantic throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Crown support enabled Saint-Malo to defend itself and to expand overseas trade. After 1650, maritime business proliferated. Malouin trade covered the Baltic Sea, the Anglo-Norman and British Isles, the Iberian Peninsula, and distant destinations in the Mediterranean Sea, Canada, and Newfoundland. Malouin mercantile expansion is even more remarkable knowing that the city *sans manufacture* (*without manufacture*). In contrast with Nantes and its sugar refineries and Marseille and its famous

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<sup>11</sup> Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: une élite négociante au temps de Louis XIV*, 22.

soap factories, Saint-Malo did not produce local products. The absence of local industrial production led the Malouins to become intermediaries, acquiring merchandise and reexporting it elsewhere. Channelizing French manufactures to needy markets transformed the city, increasing its population at the end of the seventeenth century to 30,000, a far cry from Amsterdam but not unlike booming Marseille.<sup>12</sup>

Despite lacking domestic industry, the Malouin diversified their income sources by exploiting and exporting resources. Transatlantic fishing emerged as one of their primary activities from the mid-sixteenth century, persisting through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Focusing primarily on the coasts of Canada and Newfoundland, known as the Petit Nord (“the little North”) by the French, the abundance of cod allowed the Malouins to exploit resources and assert their dominance and military power in Newfoundland. However, this assertion faced challenges. For instance, the Inuits from Labrador waged war against the Malouin throughout the first half of the century. Brittany staunchly supported the Malouin incursion in response, seeking French royal authorization to deploy armed escorts and soldiers to secure Breton fisheries.<sup>13</sup>

Malouin traders displayed proved resourceful, persistent, and adaptable. A case that exemplifies these tendencies is the

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<sup>12</sup> Lespagnol, 39.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Pope, «Le Petit Nord de Saint-Malo», Saint-Malo. Construction d’un pôle marchand (1500-1660), n.º 3 (2018): 195-222.

continuous Malouin trade with the British Isles through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Despite a long-lasting French and English rivalry, Saint-Malo maintained friendly relations, especially with Dorset, Wilshire, and Hampshire counties. This connection demonstrated to be strong and reliable that merchants from the interior of France looked for Malouins to send their merchandise to England in times of war.<sup>14</sup> The Malouins maintained a so-called *abstinence de guerre* (war abstinence).<sup>15</sup>

Malouin traders also reached Spain by the end of the sixteenth century. The growth of the demand for manufacturing from the Americas and the arrival of abundant Peruvian silver to Seville motivated the Malouin to strike deals with Andalusian merchants. The Castillian merchants, and brothers, Andrés and Simón Ruiz resided in Nantes and Medina del Campo, respectively, coordinating with their French partners to ship textiles to Seville. Breton and Rouen fabrics possessed high demand in Spain and the Americas, which ensured an intertwined relationship between Castillians and Malouins. Most importantly, the flow of Peruvian silver to Saint-Malo and Brittany strengthened the position of the

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<sup>14</sup> Baptiste Etienne, «Deux Frondes, un commerce: Rouen et Saint-Malo au milieu du XVII<sup>e</sup> siècle», *Annales de Bretagne et des Pays de l'Ouest. Anjou. Maine. Poitou-Charente. Touraine*, Saint-Malo. Construction d'un pôle marchand (1500-1660), n.º 3 (2018): 79-106.

<sup>15</sup> Jean-Philippe Priotti, «En temps de paix comme en temps de guerre. Le commerce de Saint-Malo avec les îles anglo-normandes et britanniques (vers 1500-vers 1650)», *Saint-Malo. Construction d'un pôle marchand (1500-1660)*, n.º 3 (2018): 117.

Malouins in the trading sphere of northern France through the late sixteenth century to the mid-seventeenth century. The high number of silver bars that arrived at Saint-Malo also forced the main mint of the capital of Brittany, Rennes, to function at levels never experienced, for example, coining in 1591 the equivalent of 1,000,000 pesos in silver, or 100,000 *livres*.<sup>16</sup>

Moreover, this commercial impulse also motivated an initial Malouin migration to Seville and Cádiz. Two notable Saint-Malo families, the Magon and Eon, had relatives settled in Andalusia since the 1630s and 1640s, and they became crucial intermediaries in sending French merchandise to the Americas in the early eighteenth century. Seville and Cádiz offered prosperous commercial activities that the Malouin trading groups settled in Spain devoted themselves to Andalusian and Spanish American businesses, leaving aside French entrepreneurship and creating their own commercial houses separated from those in Saint-Malo.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps unsurprisingly, by the beginning of the eighteenth century when Malouin interest turned to Peruvian silver and to direct trade in Spanish America, traditional Saint-Malo families involved in overseas trade, like the Magons and the Eons spearheaded the Saint-Malo initiative towards the South Sea. However, contestants emerged. One group of Malouin families

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<sup>16</sup> Jean-Philippe Priotti, «Au cœur des échanges européens: argent américain et circuits économiques entre la Bretagne et l'Espagne (1570-1635)», *Saint-Malo. Construction d'un pôle marchand (1500-1660)*, n.º 3 (2018): 140-41.

<sup>17</sup> Priotti, 144.

quickly accumulated wealth and sought to establish partnerships beyond the limited Breton commercial circles. They were not only interested in obtaining a portion of Peruvian riches, but also in monopolizing them. Among the latest Malouin commerce-driven houses, the Danycan clan stepped up.

### **Noël Danycan “Across the World”**

The Compagnie des Indes played an enormous role in developing French trade in the South Pacific. The knowledge and expertise in navigation derived from accounts of expeditions commissioned by financiers and bankers in Paris. However, regional merchants contested the privileges of their Parisian counterparts, seeking to negotiate directly with the king for permission to venture into the Pacific. French merchants, Malouin and Parisians alike, exploited the Bourbon alliance between Spain and France. Both groups sought concessions and trading privileges to limit the participation of other French merchants into the desired Peruvian trade. Furthermore, the trajectory of negotiations and conflicts between Paris and regional merchants revealed that their interests extended beyond Peru, encompassing China and broader Asian territories. Trading in the South Pacific could bolster a comprehensive trading network across the Pacific Ocean. At the forefront of this narrative stood Noël Danycan, the head of one of Saint-Malo’s most prominent merchant families. Danycan financed numerous enterprises ranging from timber trading in the Baltic Sea to spice trading via the Levant. Leveraging his extensive experience as



a sailor and entrepreneur, Danycan perceived trading in Peru as a lucrative opportunity to access coveted silver reserves while simultaneously monopolizing Spanish South American trade activities.

The French crown, Parisian financiers, and merchant elites shared a common agenda in the search for profitable trading opportunities. Since the times of Colbert, the French state aimed to empowered both the royal navy and coastal merchants to bolster France's maritime power. However, the introduction of monopolies and the constant rivalry between Parisian investors and regional merchants thwarted France's attempts to consolidate its overseas commercial power. The case of Noël Danycan and his attempts to the access the markets of Peru and China, plus his constant clashes with the state-founded, chartered companies that held exclusive privileges to maritime trade, exemplifies this larger trend. In the end, Danycan could not hang onto hard-won privileges to trade in the South Pacific. Instead, the lack of regulation of French trade in Peru eventually created a heavily competitive atmosphere among French traders that divided regional interests from French coastal cities like Saint-Malo, Nantes, Bordeaux, and Marseille against their king.<sup>18</sup>

By 1695, Pontchartrain envisioned it the necessity to continue to support trading monopolies and chartered companies.

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<sup>18</sup> *Danycan and le Compagnie de la Chine, 10 janvier 1708*. Accounting and reports. From the Archives Départementales de Ile-et-Vilaine, Rennes. Danycan family papiers, Série 9-B, Saint-Malo.

Nonetheless, Pontchartrain knew that to achieve better results, the urgency to decentralize both oversight and investments towards trade affairs needed to be done. Thus, he assembled a team that could grant advise and management on French commercial policies. From Paris, Pontchartrain sought the wealthy financiers Antoine Crozat and Jean-Baptiste Le Gendre, who had close friendship with Louis XIV. He also tapped the talents of the director of Commerce and Manufactures, Henri d'Aguesseau, and the president of the conseil of Commerce, Michel Amelot. Finally, some prominent merchants also participated. Among them the prosperous Nicolas Mesnager from Rouen and Noël Danycan from Saint-Malo. Along with decentralization, with the aid of his regional advisors, Pontchartrain aimed to energize trade in the main commercial cities of France: Paris, Rouen, Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, La Rochelle, Nantes, Lille, Bayonne, Dunkerque, and Saint-Malo.<sup>19</sup>

The necessity to rearrange how trade functioned came as a direct response to the start of the War of the Spanish Succession. The conflict made France and Spain sudden allies since the new king of Spain, Philip V, was the grandson of Louis XIV, king of France. From the perspective of the French crown, the alliance provided a perfect opportunity to penetrate Spanish affairs, especially to win uninterrupted access to Spanish American silver. By 1701, this purpose seemed to be materializing, as Spain

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<sup>19</sup> Paul Butel, *L'économie Française au XVIIIe Siecle* (Paris: SEDES, 1993), 21.

granted a French chartered company, the *Compagnie de Guinée*, the monopoly over the slave trade. Pontchartrain was convinced that granting exclusive privileges to trading companies meant the optimal route to maximizing profits. And although members of his private council like Henri d'Aguesseau and Nicolas Mesnager manifested their opposition against monopolistic measures, Pontchartrain decided that the exploitation of the riches of the Spanish empire had to be done through private initiatives, which directly benefited the rich merchants.<sup>20</sup>

Through the end of the seventeenth century, France's exports to Spain grew to be vast. By 1686, France sent to Cádiz approximately 17 million piastres worth of products, representing 39% of European traffic to Spain. Among the ports that actively engaged in overseas commerce with Spain, Saint-Malo held first position. The high frequency of ships that sailed to Spain and the number of products retailed evidenced the strong commercial ties between Cádiz and Saint-Malo. In contrast with other port cities that also maintained trade with Spain like Le Havre or Dunkerque, Saint-Malo had the advantage of having the cloth industry of Brittany in close proximity. Spain demanded Brittany's textiles due to Spain's breakdown of the domestic cloth-making industry.<sup>21</sup> For Saint-Malo, trading with Cádiz was

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<sup>20</sup> Butel, 22.

<sup>21</sup> Saint-Malo maintained a steady number of vessels sailing to Cadiz from 10 to 20 per year between 1697 and 1702, and obtaining yearly profit of 4 millions of piastres. Butel, 25.

extremely profitable due to the abundance of Spanish American silver, but also because it allowed Malouin merchants to extend their trading activities towards destinations off Africa's Atlantic coast (Canary Islands and Madeira), and throughout markets in the Mediterranean Sea.<sup>22</sup>

The strength of the merchants of Saint-Malo came from their robust mercantile community and social unity. The key to their intergenerational success came from social dynamics that allowed amassed local commercial strength to remain in Saint-Malo. Endogamy among Malouin merchants was common since they envisioned trading practices and commercial traits as part of a larger family company.<sup>23</sup> Further, the creation of commercial alliances between families via marriage also became an essential tool to perpetuate local power in Saint-Malo as a response to outside competition coming from other neighboring cities in Brittany or financiers from Paris. The sons of these families became officers of the ships that sailed to Spain and the Americas to gain experience. Noël Danycan, for example, became a captain of the *Grénedan* at the tender age of seventeen. From 1671 to

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<sup>22</sup> Philippe Jarnoux, Pierrick Pourchasse, and Gauthier Aubert, *La Bretagne de Louis XIV. Mémoires de Colbert de Croissy (1665) et de Béchameil de Nointel (1698)* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016), 37.

<sup>23</sup> Between the ages of 15 and 17, the sons of the great merchants of Saint-Malo were assigned in vessels. For example, Luc Magon (17), Pierre Jolif (15) were sent to Peru in the early eighteenth century to gain maritime and trading experience. Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: une élite négociante au temps de Louis XIV*, 92.

1688, he sailed to all destinations under his father's command from Saint-Malo to Newfoundland to the Mediterranean Sea. By the age of thirty-two, and after fifteen years of seafaring and acquiring a vast experience in overseas trade, he became co-owner of the family business. For the merchants of Saint-Malo, the only way to maintain their businesses via transmitting *fidélité au commerce* (fidelity to commerce) to the next generation. Further, a sentiment to exalter commerce as a symbol of national pride and defense of French interests arose. This is perfectly encapsulated by the words of the prominent Malouin merchant Locquet de Grandville: "letting the command of merchant vessels to children of rich families became usual and necessary to shape commerce as a noble matter, to counter to the people that look on France with disgust".<sup>24</sup>

In 1697, an opportunity arose to materialize the desires of the merchants of Saint-Malo. The signing of the Treaty of Ryswick put an end to the hostilities between the French and the Spanish deriving from the War of League of Augsburg. In the aftermath of this conflict, Spain came out weakened, stretched for resources and money to defend its large empire. Moreover, it was no secret that the condition of the Spanish ruler, Charles II, worsened rapidly to the point that, across Europe, his death was considered imminent. As the wealthy Malouin merchant Nicolas Magon de la Chipaudière put it: with the impending "death of

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<sup>24</sup> Lespagnol, 113.

the king of Spain, the peace [between France and Spain] will not last.” He also stated that the merchant class needed to seize the opportunity to profit from Spanish America, and specially the South Pacific as soon as they saw the right moment.<sup>25</sup>

However, the merchant groups of Saint-Malo had contradictory intentions on how to proceed the infiltrate the Spanish Pacific and who would be allowed to participate in this trade. The division came from the old merchant dynasties (like the Magon, Grout, Le Fer, and Vivien families) versus the new generation of wealthy merchants like Noël Danycan and Locquet de Grandville. The old families believed that they deserved the privilege to lead the initiative to Spanish American markets since they already had a liaison with Cádiz and, overall, a handle on the Spanish transatlantic trade. Nonetheless, by the end of the seventeenth century, monopoly contracts resurged, as well as French chartered companies. These enterprises took responsibility for the revival of commercial destinations like India and China, but now possessing the combination of seafaring experience and abundant capital. Noël Danycan became the successful director of the *Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo* and he intended to recreate a similar style company to trade in the Spanish Pacific. Despite their differences, both sides managed to secure contracts with the French state to legitimize their claim to access directly access to Spanish America. On one side, Nicolas Magon assured

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<sup>25</sup> “La mort arrivant du Roy d’Espagne, la paix ne peut estre de longue durée.” In Lespagnol, 518-520.

the participation of most of the old Malouin dynasties in the recently founded Compagnie de Saint-Domingue, which centered its operations in the Caribbean. Meanwhile, Danycan and his Parisian associate Jean Jourdan obtained a royal permit to trade in the South Pacific via the recently established Compagnie de la Mer du Sud, of which Danycan and Jourdan were the directors.<sup>26</sup>

*“Je suis le premier moteur de ce commerce qui a fait tant de bien à l’Etat”* (I am the main engine of trade serving the well-being of the [French] state)<sup>27</sup>, affirmed Danycan when questioned about the overall role of the Malouin merchants in trading with the Spanish colonies. His deep experience as merchant and seafarer gave him self-confidence in the success of this new venture, so much so that he intended to establish a French colony in the South Pacific coast to facilitate both access to American silver and to guarantee a place for rest and resupply to other French vessels. For Danycan, it was necessary to act with determination and with the expectation of belligerence since the English and the Dutch had proceeded in the same way in the Caribbean and Newfoundland, and ultimately succeeded. In 1698, the company was founded, and a small expedition sent under the captaincy of Beauchêsne shortly came after. In 1701, the expedition returned with disappointing news. Coastal settlements across the South Pacific viewed the French penetration as hostile, attacking

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<sup>26</sup> Lespagnol, 521-522.

<sup>27</sup> Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: une élite négociante au temps de Louis XIV*, 522.

interloping merchants on several occasions. However, when they arrived in Lima, Beauchêsne managed to convince the local authorities to trade.<sup>28</sup> For Danycan, despite the economic losses that the expedition suffered, investing in trading in Peru was worth it. Nonetheless, the company's remaining financiers did not agree with him, ultimately forcing the company's dissolution. To make things worse, Louis XIV arranged an alliance with Spain for the upcoming war against the Dutch and the English, and thus forbade trading directly to Peru as it could upset their new ally.

The idea of a unified French commercial front that could cooperate to undermine the Spanish authority over its colonies was an illusion. Despite the aspirations of Louis XIV and Jerome de Pontchartrain to strengthen commercial companies to be the spearhead of French overseas expansions, the merchants and financiers that ultimately sponsored these enterprises were driven by interests that did not always coincide. Indeed, they sometimes caused serious clashes. After Danycan's failed attempt to seize the Spanish Pacific trade for himself, Louis XIV granted him the monopoly on trade to China; thus, the *Compagnie de la Mer Pacifique* became the *Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo*. Further, Pontchartrain was mindful about the high profit nature of trading with China, and, thus, allowed the formation of another company, this one centered Paris and financed mostly by Parisian

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<sup>28</sup> Beauchesne, Gouin. *Journal de vaisseaux Le Phelippeaux, 1698*. Journal. From Archives Nationales de Paris. Service hydrographique de la Marine. Journaux de bord, MAR 4JJ/97, 5.



capital. The Secretary of Marine, aware the inevitable competition going to ensue between the Saint-Malo and Paris enterprises, helped broker a partnership between the two. Both companies maintained their autonomy, but they ultimately cooperated in taking turns to trade and to establish base prices of the products that they aimed to sell.<sup>29</sup>

Strife first arose in 1699, when the directors of first *Compagnie des Indes Orientales* (1664-1704) protested about the violation of their rights when they received news that the vessel *Amphitrite*, sent by the recently founded *Royal Compagnie de la Chine*, docked in Canton. Despite the successes of initially establishing colonies in Pondicherry (India), Madagascar, and Ile Bourbon (Réunion), the *Compagnie des Indes* was unable to protect them from foreign incursions throughout the second half of the seventeenth century. The Dutch and the English applied constant military pressure and restrained French trading operations. With the Peace of Ryswick, company investors believed that finally Anglo-Dutch aggressions would cease, or at least they would have enough time to prepare for the next conflict. The directors did not wait. Five years later, France was engulfed in another global engagement. War in the Indian Ocean

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<sup>29</sup> *Mémoires des vaisseaux Le Chancelier*. Reports of navigation. From the Archives Départementales de Ile-et-Vilaine, Rennes. Danycan family papiers, Série 9-B, Saint-Malo; *Procés avec les directeurs de la compagnie de la Mer de Sud et Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo*. Accounting from the Archives Départementales de Ile-et-Vilaine, Rennes. Danycan family papiers, Série 9-B, Saint-Malo.

strained the resources and military capacity of the already worn-out company.<sup>30</sup>

In 1698, the Parisian financier Jean Jourdan obtained permission to send the *Amphitrite* to China, despite the monopoly claims of the Compagnie des Indes (exclusive rights to sail and trade in the Indian and Pacific Oceans). Lack of communication generated further discomfort since the Company's vessels *Fatemourade* and *Elisabeth* anchored in Surat waiting for further instructions to trade in China. All was disrupted by the surprising arrival of the *Amphitrite*. When Jourdan's vessel returned to Nantes in August of 1700, it brought 400,000 *livres* worth of merchandise, from which the Compagnie des Indes received 20,000 as compensation for their incursion. The success of Jourdan's voyage sealed the fate of the official French East India Company since the king and Pontchartrain saw more advantageous in granting licenses to more promising enterprises. Competition might be good, and thus both China companies ultimately granted permits.<sup>31</sup>

Saint-Malo and the Parisian investors signed an agreement and both mercantile groups prepared their vessels to sail to China. The companies designated two ships each to depart. The *Amphitrite*, funded by the Parisians, came first. The directors manifested

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<sup>30</sup> Marie Ménard-Jacob, *La Première Compagnie des Indes. Apprentissages, échecs et héritage, 1664-1704* (Rennes: Presses Universitaires de Rennes, 2016), 277-80.

<sup>31</sup> *Procès avec les directeurs de la compagnie de la Mer de Sud et Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo*. Accounting. From the Archives Départementales de Ile-et-Vilaine, Rennes. Danycan famille papiers, Série 9-B, Saint-Malo.

optimism and estimated that this ship could bring merchandises valued between 250,000 and 300,000 *livres*. However, a year and a half later, when the *Amphitrite* returned to Port Louis, the officers from Saint-Malo declared that the vessel only won 12,000 *livres*. They also accused the captain and the notary of the ship of falsifying the total amount of profit obtained in the voyage to China in order to cover up the losses of the Parisian company.<sup>32</sup> Although the evidence that might clarify this incident is incomplete, it is certain that despite the agreement between the merchants of Saint-Malo and the Paris financiers, there existed an ongoing campaign between them to undermine each other.

The source of this dispute came from Danycan's desire to trade with Peru despite the existing royal decree that forbade direct trade in the South Pacific. Initially, the vessels from Saint-Malo followed the route of the *Amphitrite*. However, Danycan and his trading partner, the Italian merchant Natal Stefanini, planned to switch course and head to Peru instead. The ships *Phelippeaux*, *Charles*, and *Royal Saint-Jacques* reached the South Pacific in early 1704. The expedition was a resounding success, bringing back to Saint-Malo 1,3 million *livres*' worth of silver bars. When the news reached the capital, the directors of the Parisian company manifested their outrage to French authorities and protested to Pontchartrain. They demanded that the merchants of Saint-

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<sup>32</sup> *Danycan and le Compagnie de la Chine, 10 janvier 1708*. Accounting and reports. From the Archives Départementales de Ile-et-Vilaine, Rennes. Danycan famille papiers, Série 9-B, Saint-Malo.

Malo compensate the king and themselves for violating their agreement. Initially, the Saint-Malo merchants formed a coalition and denied these accusations. Even the old dynasties supported Danycan since they, too, were invested in his company. One of the representatives of the powerful old Magon family, Magon de la Chipaudière, even called the Parisian accusations the “darkest slanders that could ever be imagined”.<sup>33</sup>

However, the Malouin merchants found out that the Parisian company faced critical economic problems and Peruvian silver became the remedy to stabilize the finances of the company. Martineau, the treasurer of the company in Canton, noted that the situation of the finances was alarming. In the meantime, the Parisian financiers accused Danycan of bribing two of the Parisian directors, Démonts and De Montois, convincing them to advocate in favor of the Saint-Malo Company. But Danycan argued that this was a set-up created by the same Parisian directors themselves, intended to make a strong case to Pontchartrain with the goal of cancelling the Saint-Malo company. The financiers from Paris referred to Danycan’s expanding ambition as going “across the world”, since he aimed to link China and Peru in his trading network. It is plausible that the Paris financiers knew Danycan’s gamble in trading with Peru was a success from which they could benefit from. Further, some of the directors of the

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<sup>33</sup> *Danycan and le Compagnie de la Chine, 10 janvier 1708*. Danycan famille papiers.

Parisian company like Danjean and Saint-Maurice were keen to advocate in favor of the merchants of Saint-Malo if they would receive half of the profit from their ventures in Peru.<sup>34</sup>

The intrigues and competition between French merchants and investors also occurred within the company's operations. During the first expedition of the Company of Saint-Malo to the South Pacific, Fouquet, captain of the *Phelippeaux* and the supervisor of the squadron, behaved strangely when engaging in trade with Peruvian peers and acted suspiciously when loading silver cargo into ships. According to witnesses, it seems that Fouquet had made previous arrangements with some Peruvian merchants, and he tried to hide the actual number of silver bars laded for his own benefit. During the interrogation in the admiralty of Brittany, Alexis Moriz, an officer of the *Phelippeaux*, claimed that Fouquet's actions caught the attention of Mr. Fouesson, another officer close to Danycan who had threatened to denounce Fouquet. The situation escalated to the point that both men draw their pistols, but immediately stand down to avoid startling the ship's crew. According to Moriz, previous orders expedited by Danycan were simply not followed. Instead, Fouquet took executive decisions without consulting any of the officers except Charles Riviere, who seemed to be his accomplice.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> “*Le tour du globe*”. *Procès avec les directeurs de la compagnie de la Mer de Sud et Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo*. Danycan famille papiers.

<sup>35</sup> *Procès avec les directeurs de la compagnie de la Mer de Sud et Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo*. Danycan famille papiers [n/p].

While the order of the *Phelippeaux*, *Charles*, and *Royal Saint-Jacques* was to head for Lima after a brief stop in Concepción, Fouquet decided to anchor instead in Pisco, a city located some 400 kilometers south of the capital. Moriz added that the captain decided to transport a considerable amount of merchandise to a storage house. The ships remained in Pisco for four months, trading the offloaded products while Fouquet made arrangements with local merchants. According to Moriz, Fouquet tried to cover up this operation by claiming that the merchandises sold in Pisco was going to the wealthy merchant of Lima Bernardo Solís Bango. Fouquet aimed to strengthen his ruse by buying merchandises from the *Charles* and *Royal Saint-Jacques* to compensate the cargo sold in Pisco, then reselling the products and the remaining initial cargo to Solís Bango and his associates. Finally, Moriz declared that when they returned to France and arrived at Port Louis, Fouquet and Riviere unloaded a large chest supposedly full of gold and silver coins.<sup>36</sup> The exposition of this ruse exhibited divisions within the command of the Compagnie de Saint-Malo, which added up to the existing issues with the Parisian financiers.

Fouquet recommended Rivière to his former employer, the Malouin captain Villien Bourdas. According to witnesses, Riviere was very competent as an accountant and reliable. Riviere declared that he did not ask Fouquet to be compensated for his services, instead he served the captain “*gratuitement*” (for

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<sup>36</sup> *Procès avec les directeurs de la compagnie de la Mer de Sud et Compagnie de la Chine de Saint-Malo.*

free). While being interrogated by the officers of the admiralty of Brittany, Riviere's testimony revealed several contradictions with other testimonies from witnesses on board the *Phelippeaux*. When asked about the four months overstay in Pisco, Riviere answered that Moriz needed medical treatment for an injury that he got while resupplying in Brazil. Since his injury required rest, the captains of the expedition decided all together to unload their cargo and sell it in Pisco. There is no testimony besides Rivière's of the existence of this injury, nor did Moriz address it in his testimony. Finally, when asked about the chest that Fouquet unloaded in France and that he helped disembark, Rivière acknowledged that it contained an unknown number of silver bars, retrieved from the eastern Caribbean Island of Saint-Lucie before returning to France. He declared that he did not know many details about how Fouquet managed to amass by himself that amount of silver.<sup>37</sup>

The case of Danycan's "global" enterprise illustrates to layers and complexities found within French trading operations in early eighteenth-century Peru. There was a notorious division between regionally capitalized businesses and those centered in Paris. Danycan perceived that the amount of silver that could be won in Peru outweighed the risk of contravening the king's orders and failing to comply with the agreements of the financiers from Paris. All shared the ambition to connect Asian trade and Peruvian trade, as both were vitally important. This incentivized

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<sup>37</sup> Idem.

both cooperation and competition, and overall, the wealth of Peru suffice enough to create internal disputes and constant negotiations amid French partners in trade.<sup>38</sup>

### **Breaking the “Exploration” Monopoly**

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the alliance between France and Spain in the context of the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-1713), plus the accession of Philip V to the Spanish throne convinced France’s Prime Minister, Louis de Pontchartrain, that the moment for the French to directly access the richness of Spanish America had finally arrived. However, Pontchartrain wanted to find a way that allowed French direct trade without upsetting their Spanish allies. The Compagnie de Guinée (Guinea Company) and the Compagnie de la Mer Pacifique had to the support of the French Crown and the Guinea Company had the endorsement of the Spanish king to arrive to the Indies. The grand families of Saint Malo expressed their discomfort with this decision. They felt that they had been cast aside by Parisian interests, excluded from a reward they felt deserved. These families created networks with Seville and Cadiz trading houses and in diverting Spanish American riches to France, and, as such, looked pivotal in this system. However, the policy of the *asiento* or slave trade monopoly harmed Malouin commercial interests just as it benefitted Parisian investors and the financial allies of the French crown.

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<sup>38</sup> Bradley, *The Lure of Peru*.



Despite this fact, the Malouins pushed their luck and outfitted vessels for the South Pacific run. Several had to be cunning in order to bypass local authorities. For example, Jean Vivien, captain of the *Deux Couronnes Catholiques*, managed to sell his cargo and bring returns valued at half a million *livres* despite open confrontation with the merchant guild of Lima.<sup>39</sup> Nonetheless, not all voyages were successful. Some vessels had to endure obstacles that, in some cases, crippled their endeavors. The *Cig-ne*'s passage to the South Pacific in 1701 which was disaster due to logistical problems and lack of provisioning. Risks continued to be high. Desperation forced the *Cig-ne*'s captain to use violence against coastal settlements to obtain food and water, and shortly after he and his crew returned with heavy economic losses back to Saint-Malo.<sup>40</sup> In other situations, plans changed at the last minute. The vessel *Saint-Francois* initially prepared to sail to Peru in 1700, but the ship's *armateur*, Jean Gaubert, backed out at the last moment, fearing potential reprisal from the French crown. Gaubert was worried by Danycan's monopoly, and thus he ordered the ship's course switched to Cádiz.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Manuel Moreyra Paz Soldán, *Estudios históricos. Tráfico marítimo colonial y el Tribunal del consulado de Lima*, vol. 1 (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, Instituto Riva-Agüero, 1994), 379-81.

<sup>40</sup> Paul Firbas y José A. Rodríguez Garrido, eds., *Diario de noticias sobresa-lientes en Lima y noticias de Europa (1700-1711)*, vol. 1 (New York: Instituto de Estudios Auriseculares (IDEA), 2017), 57.

<sup>41</sup> Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: une élite négociante au temps de Louis XIV*, 525.

The French crown's enthusiasm over its alliance with Spain and long-desired participation in the Carrera de Indias did not come for free. Spain relied heavily on France for the war effort and for the aid in the safe return of the silver fleets back from the Indies. However, the disaster of Vigo Bay (1702) that brought the destruction of half the forces of the French Marine and caused bitterness in Versailles, but the Malouins understood that they could exploit this situation. La Lande Magon sent a letter to the *Controller Général* Michel Chamillart in March of 1705 suggesting that the crown, to gain compensation for the losses at Vigo, could end Danycan's South Pacific monopoly and open trade for the rest of the Malouin families and, thus, benefit from taxation of French trade into the coasts of Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, and the South Pacific. Furthermore, La Lande Magon convinced Chamillart that the Malouins could send a constant flow of vessels to the Peruvian coast cities to ensure this project.<sup>42</sup> The great families of Saint-Malo already possessed contacts in Cadiz that functioned as intermediaries between them and the merchant groups of the South Pacific. The connection Cádiz – Saint-Malo had benefited the old Malouin clans like the Magons, Eons, Le Fer, Grout, Picot, among other families, and this cooperation will continue to be decisive in the French incursion into Spanish South America.

The merchants of Saint-Malo demonstrated eagerness to transgress existing directives against foreign trade using the excuse

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<sup>42</sup> Lespagnol, 521.

of *buena correspondencia* that the king of Spain issued in 1703. In this mandate, Philip V communicated to the viceroy, count de la Monclova, that Spain and France had an “friendly” alliance, and thus, when French ships arrived in Spanish America, local authorities needed to ensure their provisioning and safety.<sup>43</sup> French captains were aware of these conditions and offered their services to obtain permits to trade. Some French captains ask colonial authorities to patrol the coasts, and some of them, claimed that they had fought against the English or Dutch privateers on their way to the South Pacific. In 1701, Beauchesne arrived at Callao and asked permission to sell his merchandise, which initially was rejected. However, after “persuading” local authorities with a banquet and generous gifts, the viceroy allowed the French to trade.<sup>44</sup> In 1702, the French captain of the *Saint-Joseph*, Nermont Trublet, was allowed to sell merchandise since he claimed that he managed to drive off three English ships along the coast of Chile. A year later, a members of a great Malouin merchant family, Carman Julian Eon, arrived in Arica bringing an English flag that he claimed to have taken from an English vessel that he sank on his way to Peru. It convinced the local authorities to allow him to trade.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Antonio Muro Orejón, ed., *Cedulario americano del siglo XVIII; coleccion de disposiciones legales indianas desde 1680 a 1800, contenidas en los cedulares del Archivo General de Indias.*, [1. ed.], Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos de Sevilla, 99 (Sevilla, 1956), 180.

<sup>44</sup> Firbas y Rodríguez Garrido, *Diario de noticias sobresaleintes en Lima y noticias de Europa (1700-1711)*, 1:50.

<sup>45</sup> Firbas y Rodríguez Garrido, 1:350.

Despite the royal decrees that forbade foreign trade, viceroys varied in terms of their will to enforcement. They did this while also extending the expected *buena correspondencia* towards the subjects of Louis XIV. The viceroy count de la Monclova (1698-1705) operated according to the law, giving the arriving French the possibility to reprovision but without consenting to trade. Even so, when Beauchesne arrived at Lima in 1701 with a small squadron of ships, reaffirming that he had the mission to protect the coasts against English and Dutch privateers, also asked for a permission to trade. As we know, Beauchesne's request were initially refused, but later was approved giving generous gifts to the local authorities.<sup>46</sup> The subsequent viceroy, the marquis of Castellosorius, had an opposite approach to the French concern. His deep personal involvement in French affairs due to his previous office as the Spanish ambassador in Paris and his close friendship with Louis XIV shaped his administration to be tolerant and even supportive of French trade. For example, when the French vessel *Aimable* arrived at Lima, the Peruvian viceroy kindly received the captain Michel Chabert, granting him a horse-drawn carriage to explore the city. The captain of the *Assomption*, Alain Poreé claimed that he was surprised when he met the viceroy because he behaved more like a Frenchman than a Spaniard and did not hide his admiration for the French and their king.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Firbas y Rodríguez Garrido, 1:50.

<sup>47</sup> Malamud, *Cádiz y Saint Malo en el comercio colonial peruano (1698-1725)*, 256.

Pontchartrain realized that Danycan's monopoly needed to end. The positive reception that Saint-Malo merchants received upon their arrival to Peru and the increasing numbers of *négociants* eager to invest in this trade signified an excellent opportunity for France to profit from this commerce. Pontchartrain's concerns about the "legality" of French direct trade in the Spanish Pacific dissipated. In Madrid, constant debates between Spanish and French representatives about allowing French direct trade to Spanish America led nowhere. However, in practice, these debates and negotiations did not matter. The constraints that war caused, such as the lack of communications between the Peninsula and the Americas and the stagnation of the fleet system, forced Peruvian authorities to be more tolerant and cooperative with the French, despite the ongoing prohibitions against foreign direct trade. Still, Pontchartrain believed that a company that oversaw the "exploration" of the Pacific was more manageable to control than a constant flow of independent merchants.

However, the traditional Malouin houses pressed forward. La Lande Magon took the role of intermediary of the Saint-Malo families. Magon had several meetings with Controller-General of Finances Michel Chamillart to present the case that the Saint-Malo trade in Peru was very profitable. Nevertheless, it could go even better if they had the king's authorization. Opening the route for French merchants meant avoiding conflict with Danycan and signified having more tools to validate their arrival at the

South Sea. Louis XIV's endorsement meant that French sailors represented their king, giving the Malouins more tools to negotiate with Peruvian authorities and local merchants. Thus, on August 25, 1705, Louis XIV authorized French merchants to dispatch ships "for discovering and exploration" purposes in the South Pacific, putting to an end the short-lived Noël Danycan's monopoly.<sup>48</sup>

## Conclusion

During the French commercial penetration into Peru (1698-1714), divisions and disputes arose within the French side. Disagreements and conflict characterized France's attempt to access Peru directly. The French crown, Parisian bankers, and Malouin merchants floundered to find common ground within this struggle. Danycan's business model aligned with the standard commercial model supported by the French crown: the chartered company. The introduction and proliferation of French commercial companies facilitated overseas exploration and trade. However, Danycan encountered two problems. First, Saint-Malo's contraband trading activities in Peru posed a significant challenge to Danycan's authority. The increasing number of ships defying Danycan's prerogative to sail in the South Sea was a clear threat. Yet, despite these challenges, Danycan, with his proficiency and skill as a sailor and businessman, continued to navigate the treacherous waters of French commercial interests in Peru.

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<sup>48</sup> Lespagnol, *Messieurs de Saint-Malo: une élite négociante au temps de Louis XIV*, 511.

Secondly, conflicting interests emerged between Danycan and the Compagnie des Indes Orientales. Danycan represented a “modern” approach to the traditional structure of Saint-Malo’s commercial families. He saw the benefits of involving Parisian financiers in his enterprise, given the outstanding privileges granted by the French crown. However, when the Compagnie des Indes and the Royale Compagnie de la Chine perceived Danycan as a threat to their interests, they ultimately blocked his attempts to pursue his “global” enterprise. Their conflict revealed Parisian financiers’ and merchants’ fear that regional merchant elites would control the potential profits of the new markets in Asia and South America. The case of Danycan’s failed attempt to monopolize South Pacific trade illustrates that in commercial networks “across the world,” trading interests intertwine and reconfigure the rules of commercial arrangements. Profit efficiency dictates courses of action, and commercial models bend in favor of monetary and credit rewards. In the end, Danycan, despite his proven sailor skills, found himself relegated to the changing tides of South Pacific trade.

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