

The Pirate and the Privateer: A Comparative Study of Sir Francis Drake and Henry Morgan

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There has been much discussion about pirates in folklore, literature, and on the big screen. The history of piracy, although well documented, is extremely complex ranging from being legally sanctioned naval fleets sent to destroy and loot the opposition, to individual captains pillaging the empires they once served. These buccaneers have fascinated historians and writers for centuries. Sir Francis Drake and Sir Henry Morgan are certainly no exceptions. Piracy was not new to either of these men; both grew up in a world where illegal looting occurred daily. Therefore, it is important to put these men into context as members of a budding English empire hell bent on destroying their competition, chiefly Spain, whatever the cost. While Drake served England at the height of the Spanish Empire, Morgan served England during Spain's rapid decline; yet both managed to lay the foundation for the future British Empire. Historians have said that Sir Henry Morgan was England's "Second Drake." This essay examines the early lives of Drake and Morgan and chronicles their individual rise to prominence. The purpose of this paper is to provide a comparative study of Sir Francis Drake and Sir Henry Morgan who ultimately served the same goal of expanding the English sphere of influence while endeavoring to achieve their individual ambitions. It also argues that Morgan is not England's "Second Drake."

Sir Francis Drake and Sir Henry Morgan were first and foremost pirates in nature. Their respective rulers ultimately hired each of them due to their success as pirates. As privateers, simply a more genteel name for a pirate, those monarchs commissioned them to raid Spanish ships and ports for the benefit of the Crown. While Drake served the desires of Queen Elizabeth I, Governor Modyford of Jamaica, rather than King Charles II first commissioned Morgan. However, each man had his own personal desire as well. For Drake, it was movement from a commoner to a man of nobility and acceptance by the upper class, yet it was also a way of

life. For Morgan, it was simply greed; merely a role he played in order to further his gains, not who he was. Despite their individual goals, both men served their nation's need for wealth, expansion, and the destruction of the Spanish Empire. Drake was hired to bring Spain down, while Morgan was hired to keep it down.

Given that the lives of these men were not documented prior to their infamy, there is little in the way of sources regarding their early lives. Most of material written about pirates is either conjecture by modern historians, or the embellished accounts of witnesses, victims, or the men themselves. As part of the Kraus Collection housed by the Library of Congress, the earliest primary source available for Sir Francis Drake is a letter written on May 4, 1587, from King Philip II of Spain to the Duke of Medina Sedonia warning him of a possible attack given Drake's recent assault on Cadiz. In 1588, the partial journal of Walter Briggs, one of Drake's crew members, was printed in Latin. He told of their voyage to the West Indies and the successful attack on Cadiz. The English version was printed in 1589. Drake and his uncle, John Hawkins, suffered a humiliating defeat in 1595 in their attack against Puerto Rico. Rodrigo de Cabrera chronicled and printed this in 1596. Drake's preacher, Master Francis Fletcher, later discussed these raids in his notes, compiled for printing by Drake's nephew Francis Drake, in 1628.

Analysis with regards to Drake's notorious climb to the top is necessary, but consideration must be given to his early life and his introduction to piracy. Harry Kelsey's *Sir Francis Drake: The Queen's Pirate* chronicles Drake's entire life, from his little known birth to his infamous death. Another account is found in a brief section of Jesse Peabody Frothingham's *Sea Fighters: From Drake to Farragut*, in which he analyzes why Drake found the life of a buccaneer so natural. Both of these works also highlight Drake's raids and the factors that made him the ideal pirate for Queen Elizabeth I. Susan Ronald examines Drake by looking specifically at Queen Elizabeth I, her reign, and the reasons that made Drake and piracy seem so attractive in *The Pirate Queen*, while Samuel Bawlf focuses his work, *The Secret Voyage of Sir Francis Drake: 1577-1580*, on a particular expedition led by Drake.

As for Morgan's raids and prestige, *The Sack of Panama: Captain Morgan and the Battle for the Caribbean*, by Peter Earle offers an investigation of Morgan's attack on Panama and the reasons that it made Morgan a prime candidate for privateering. The raid on Panama has also been examined by Sandra Marie Pet in, *Henry Morgan's Raid on Panama: Geopolitics and Colonial Ramifications*, and by C.L.G. Anderson in *Old Panama and Castilla del Oro: A Narrative History*, while Niall Ferguson presents a brief discussion of Morgan's raids in chapter one of *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*. Knowing the details of this raid is the key to understanding Morgan's rise to favor with King Charles II and the way he was utilized against the Spanish Empire.

The Library of Congress also possesses an online copy of John Exquemeling's firsthand account of various buccaneers, most notably Sir Henry Morgan. It is entitled *The Buccaneers of America* and was printed in 1678. Unfortunately, there are very few primary sources related to Captain Morgan. However, there are a variety of secondary sources available. Albert Marrin's *Terror of the Spanish Main: Sir Henry Morgan and His Buccaneers* provides a brief history of Morgan's early life and his entrance into the profession of piracy as well as a chronological account of his raids, his rise to favor, and the end of his life. A similar discussion is found in chapter three of David Cordingly's *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and the Reality of Life Among the Pirates*. Morgan's life is further expounded upon in *The Buccaneer King: The Biography of Sir Henry Morgan 1635-1688*, by Dudley Pope, and *The Republic of Pirates: Being the True and Surprising Story of the Caribbean Pirates and the Man Who Brought Them Down*, by Colin Woodard, which argues against the idea that Morgan (nor Drake) were pirates.

Each of these works, either in whole or in part, provides a solid framework for this paper. By investigating the lives of both Drake and Morgan, their ascension to prominence, their employment against Spain, and the end of their service, this essay demonstrates that each man, whether pirate or privateer, served

not only their individual goals, but the goals of their respective leaders, including territorial expansion and the desire to amass great wealth.

In order to understand the rise of these men as pirates, it is imperative to understand their early lives. Francis Drake's exact date of birth is a matter of some debate. Most historians often believe that he was born in 1544.¹ But with the discovery of a report written on May 6, 1586, by Diego Hidalgo Montemayor, in which an interview with Drake puts him at age 46, the best estimates have placed his date of birth in the year 1540.² In any case, he grew up amid the intense struggle between Protestants and Catholics. Just prior to his birth, King Henry the VIII was officially recognized as the head of the English church, throwing the country into turmoil. Drake's father, Edmund, became a priest after several failed career attempts, but faced difficulty and disputes due to his recent marriage.³ Unable to find a living as a priest, Edmund eventually left the family; although no official records of his wife exist. As a result, Drake began living with his kinsman, Sir John Hawkins. Hawkins made his life in trading and seafaring, often bringing along his own sons and including his nephew, Francis, on the voyages. On these expeditions, the boys learned the profitability of seizing the cargo of foreign ships and the lack of consequences for their piracy if they acquired enough influential friends.⁴ John Hawkins was well rewarded as Queen Elizabeth's slave trader and was well known among the Privy Council. Therefore, his actions were often ignored by the legal system as he enhanced the wealth of the crown.

Having spent his early life navigating the seas, Drake proved to be a natural behind the wheel of a ship. Records indicate that he served on one of Hawkins' vessels, most likely the *Tiger*, which prowled the French coast. During his service with the Hawkins fleet, he became involved with the slave trade, seizing the goods of Portuguese and Spanish ships. Since English passage into the Indies was unauthorized, the ambassadors of Portugal and Spain complained about the obvious piracy.⁵ Their grievances were to no avail. In 1567, Hawkins' fleet, partially furnished by the Queen herself, prepared to open the Spanish Indies to English traders.⁶ Drake learned quickly from this experience that, if the profits were lucrative enough, he could receive royal funding under the table. England was not openly at war with Spain, so Queen Elizabeth I had to feign innocence in order to maintain peace, since the English navy was not well established.⁷ However, the Spanish were unwilling to sit idly by while their precious cargo was looted.

When Drake, having been sent by Hawkins, arrived at the port of Rio de la Hacha in 1568, he was met with fire from the Spanish and was forced to withdraw to await the arrival of his uncle. A message, requesting permission to trade, was sent to the shore and subsequently denied, as the Spanish were restricted from free trade. Hawkins used force to extract the desired response and the authorities at the port acquiesced. Drake learned the familiar trade pattern of requesting permission to trade: being denied, inciting a short battle, and forcing reluctant compliance.⁸ But Hawkins' luck ran short on September 23, 1568, when the fleet entered the harbor of San Juan de Ulua. Although the Spanish had given Hawkins and Drake authorization to enter the port, they turned on the fleet in a surprise attack.⁹ Drake took the available men and abandoned the rest of the fleet. He rushed to report the failure to the Queen, but was confronted by Hawkins, who also survived the action. Elizabeth even jailed Drake for a short time.¹⁰ There was a clear rift between the men from that point on, but Drake had proven himself to Queen Elizabeth and was beginning to win favor as her preferred pirate.

¹ Jesse Peabody Frothingham, *Sea Fighters From Drake to Farragut*, (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1902), 4.

² Harry Kelsey, *Sir Francis Drake: The Queen's Pirate*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 7.

³ Kelsey, 7.

⁴ Kelsey, 9-10.

⁵ Kelsey, 11, 17.

⁶ Frothingham, 9.

⁷ Frothingham, 9-10.

⁸ Kelsey, 35.

⁹ Frothingham, 13.

¹⁰ Kelsey, 43.

Francis Drake was not the only man with ambiguous origins. No detailed records exist to reveal the exact date of birth for Henry Morgan. However, Morgan's sworn testimony, dated November 21, 1671, disclosed his age to be 36, putting the year of his birth around 1635.¹¹ Very little is known about Morgan's early life, but speculation suggests that he simply did not participate in any form of valor or mischief, and thus escaped notice. Most historians agree that he, much like Drake, was born to a common family. His father was likely a modest farmer, Robert Morgan, who lived in Monmouth County in Wales.¹² Although little is known of his parents, evidence indicates that he was the nephew of two famous soldiers: Major General Sir Thomas Morgan and Colonel Edward Morgan.¹³ He grew up during the civil war which erupted in 1642. During those long years, he witnessed his uncles fighting on opposite sides of the civil war, becoming enclosed in a primarily land bound military world, not a naval one.¹⁴ Having left school early, Morgan decided to follow the footsteps of his brethren and joined the ranks, ending up in the Navy. He was placed under the command of General Venables and Admiral Penn. Henry Morgan's first experience on the sea was an expedition to the West Indies. The objective of the voyage was to capture Hispaniola; but due to Spanish resistance, poor leadership, and Yellow Fever, the mission was a failure.¹⁵ Despite this failure, this particular raid served as a standard against which Morgan's future forays against Portobelo and Panama can be judged.¹⁶

Both Drake and Morgan were groomed from childhood for lives on the sea. Although Drake started earlier in life, both proved to be naturals on the ocean. Their skills later served to please their respective monarchs and brought each of them honors and favor.

Francis Drake certainly was not the first to be used by his ruler to further a nation's riches, but he became one of the most famous due to the success of his raids and the favor given to him by Queen Elizabeth I. England had long envied Spain's achievements, especially its discovery of the New World and colonization of the West Indies. By the time Drake came along, the Queen had already used her "Sea Dogs" to sabotage Spain and Portugal's slave trade, but she desired to further her imperial claims and supported Drake's piracy against Spain. When Queen Elizabeth I inherited the kingdom in 1558, the country was in near ruins, having been torn apart by religious quarrels and war.¹⁷ The role of Drake and the Queen's other merchant adventurers was to destroy the opposition, chiefly Spain, in order to gain wealth and territory, enough to save England.¹⁸

Drake's primary concern at first, however, was not aimed at service to the Queen, but to himself, even though he was working for the Crown. He had previously been unsuccessful in his early raids without John Hawkins, although he continued to work for the Hawkins family, as Drake was unable to finance his own crew. But having seen the accomplishments of pirates in their raids against Spanish merchant ships, he was determined to return to the water and take his share of precious booty. His robberies of Spanish cargo in 1571 earned him enough to finance his own fleet, although his exact share is unknown.¹⁹ He was again faced with a lack of success, for one reason or another, and was forced to wait for the Spanish to drop their guard in order to profitably attack the Panamanian treasure house of the king. Early in 1573, Drake and his men attempted a

¹¹ Dudley Pope, *The Buccaneer King: The Biography of Sir Henry Morgan 1635-1688*, (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1977), 62.

¹² Albert Marrin, *Terror of the Spanish Main: Sir Henry Morgan and His Buccaneers*, (New York: Dutton Children's Books, 1999), 22.

¹³ David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates*, (New York: Random House Trade Paperback Edition, 2006), 44.

¹⁴ Pope, 62-65.

¹⁵ Cordingly, 44.

¹⁶ Pope, 69.

¹⁷ Susan Ronald, *The Pirate Queen: Queen Elizabeth I, Her Pirate Adventurers, and the Dawn of Empire*, (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2007), 3-7.

¹⁸ Ronald, 17.

¹⁹ Kelsey, 45, 50.

surprise attack on the Isthmus of Panama, but a Spanish guard caught sight of one of Drake's men.²⁰ Drake was able to seize the less valuable silver, but the Spanish had separated out the gold shipment and sent it with a different envoy.²¹ He was not willing to give up, though. He continued to lay low until the opportunity to strike presented itself again, which it did in the spring of 1573. Drake joined a French captain, Le Testu, and arranged an attack on the mule trains traveling from Nombre de Dios and Panama.²² Able to stun the Spanish guards, the assault was well executed and heavily rewarded. The men recovered 200,000 pesos de oro which equated to 12.56 million British pounds, of which 18,363 pesos de oro belonged directly to King of Spain himself (the equivalent of 1.15 million British pounds).²³

When he returned in August of 1574, he was met with spectacle and rumor. At the time, Queen Elizabeth was trying to appease King Phillip II of Spain in an effort to avoid an official war. He had vowed that if the Queen did not prosecute those who engaged in the attacks against him, he would be forced to take action.²⁴ To occupy and distract her favored pirate, the Queen enlisted Drake's help in the Irish campaign. The Queen's major objective was to "extend English control in Ireland beyond the Pale."²⁵ His role in the campaign was brief, lasting only a few months. It is said, however, that he paid for the entire cost of the fleet, which provides insight into Drake's ambition: to buy approval from the social elite and the Queen herself.²⁶ Although the operation in Ireland had proven successful at first, the land was eventually abandoned due to harsh conditions for which the English were not suited. Upon his return from Ireland, Drake was confronted with the "gold fever" that had struck the English court.²⁷ He was charged by the Queen, in secrecy, to raid the possessions of the Spanish king while avoiding the inland settlements.²⁸ His voyage was masked as a trade venture. The expense of the trip was footed by Drake and the Queen in hope of steep rewards. Through these ventures, England was slowly emerging as a powerful political leader. With the help of Francis Drake, the Queen was securing a legacy for her country, and opening the way to a future British Empire.

The buccaneer again showed his desire to gain the admiration of his Queen by investing in a new ship, which he christened *Pelican*. The Queen was fascinated by the pelican. She considered it a religious symbol; the pelican was thought to tug at its own breast to feed its young, just as Queen Elizabeth saw herself "pouring out her life's blood for the good of the English people."²⁹ The name also hints at the Queen's involvement in the voyages of the ship. In 1577, she sent Drake on a mission to raid Spanish ports, disguising it as a trip to Alexandria to purchase currants.³⁰ This particular voyage became his most famous trip as Drake circumnavigated the globe, the second person to do so.³¹ His trip proved extremely profitable, but the Queen was facing scrutiny by the Spanish crown, which was receiving word from Ambassador Mendoza. Drake returned to Plymouth Sound on September 26, 1580, nearly three years after he left, completing his circumnavigation.³² Upon his return, he learned that the Queen had been "embarrassed" by his actions and that she was under harsh questioning by the ambassador. However, this was merely for show, as she sent word that he had nothing to worry about. He often appeared at court and showered the Queen with gifts purchased with

²⁰ Kelsey, 62.

²¹ Ronald, 172-173, 175.

²² Kelsey, 63.

²³ Ronald, 177.

²⁴ Walter Bigges, *A Summarie and True Discourse of Sir Francis Drake's West Indian Voyage*, (London: Roger Ward, 1589), 20.

²⁵ Kelsey, 70.

²⁶ Kelsey, 70-71.

²⁷ Ronald, 198.

²⁸ Kelsey, 77-78.

²⁹ Kelsey, 82.

³⁰ Kelsey, 207-208.

³¹ Ferdinand Magellan had done so 1519-1522 in order to open the "spice route" without damaging political relations for King Charles I.

³² Ronald, 236.

his take from the plunder. He also attempted to buy the respect of the upper echelon as well, even though he was stingy with the crews that had helped him obtain the booty. Although he won the admiration of the Queen, those wealthy lords whose esteem he sought most thought him nothing more than a wretched criminal.³³ In any case, the Queen was all that mattered. She held a public banquet in his honor and bestowed upon him the distinction of knighthood: Sir Francis Drake.³⁴ In turn, he presented her with more presents, never missing an opportunity to buy affection.³⁵

Drake was not the only common pirate to rise to the title of "Sir." Henry Morgan began his career by enlisting in the Navy and was involved in the failed attempt to capture Hispaniola. Rather than return to England in defeat, the senior Navy and Army officers convened and developed a plan to attack one of the alternative targets.³⁶ Although Jamaica had not been mentioned as a substitute and was much smaller than Hispaniola, it was larger than the other option, Puerto Rico. Because of its enormous natural harbor, it could shelter a large fleet, such as the Spanish treasure fleet, and by proxy, provide great wealth for the English if successfully invaded. Spain and England were still at peace until the English captured Jamaica. By August of 1655, war was upon them as England refused to return Jamaica.³⁷ Since war had been declared, commissions for privateering were issued by Parliament, legalizing piracy against the enemy so long as a portion of the profits were given to the crown. The war lasted only a few years, and in 1660, with the end of the Cromwellian Interregnum, Charles II was reinstated as King of England, leaving the privateers and residents of Jamaica to fear for their existence. But King Charles II granted pardons and determined that he had no cause to relinquish Jamaica to the Spanish Crown. With the loss of Jamaica, the war, and the inability to pay its ever increasing debts, the Spanish Empire had been reduced to a mere shell of its former self.

Having secured Jamaica among their possessions, the English charged the governor with the defense of the island. Without an army or navy with which to protect it, the island relied on its buccaneers for security. By providing them with commissions, the governor could ensure an able and ready crew in wartime without spending any money on his private navy.³⁸ Henry Morgan, having served his time in the Royal Navy, employed himself in the service of pirates he found on the island of Jamaica.³⁹ After a short time and a few successful raids, he was hailed as captain of a joint ship. He was commissioned by Governor Modyford, along with nine other captains, to take the port of Santiago in Cuba so as to force free trade with Spain and remove any threat of attack from that direction. They were to set sail on September 21, 1661 under the authority of Commodore Mings. During this mission, Captain Morgan quickly learned to perform a successful raid on a large scale. Under the command of Commodore Mings, the ship embarked their men without wasting any time, put the men on shore with dry powder, and marched through the night, attacking just after daylight.⁴⁰ The battle ended quickly, and Morgan witnessed the swiftness with which soldiers looted and destroyed the city, setting the pattern of privateering for the next couple of decades. With Spain in rapid decline, a growing English empire was desperate to take hold where Spain had let go.

Captain Morgan seized the opportunity to strike against Spain. In 1663, he led raids which sacked Villahermosa and plundered Gran Grenada, then returned to Jamaica in 1665. He returned to the oceans as the Admiral of the Brethren of the Coast, a loose organization of privateers and merchants sailing the Caribbean, upon the death of Captain Edward Mansfield at the hands of the Spanish.⁴¹ Morgan and his crew sought to

³³ Kelsey, 211, 216-217.

³⁴ Frothingham, 30.

³⁵ Kelsey, 218.

³⁶ Pope, 71.

³⁷ Pope, 74-75.

³⁸ Pope, 85, 88.

³⁹ John Esquemeling, *The Buccaneers of America*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, reprint ed. 1951), 120.

⁴⁰ Pope, 91-92, 95.

⁴¹ Cordingly, 44.

pillage a city of great wealth. He gathered a fleet and called a meeting to determine a location in 1668. His lieutenants first proposed Havana, Cuba, but it would take a fleet far greater than they could muster. Instead they chose El Puerto de Principe at the suggestion of Morgan himself. It had never been subject to robbery by pirates, and the inhabitants remained extremely wealthy.⁴² They successfully secured the city and, in that same year, raided Portobelo in Panama, the island of Curacao, and Maracaibo.⁴³

The raids of 1668 made Morgan an extremely wealthy man. The sack of Panama was one of the most successful operations of the seventeenth century. The officers had been given commissions by the governor to take Spanish prisoners in order to discover their plans to retake Jamaica.⁴⁴ Morgan assembled a fleet of nine ships and made haste.⁴⁵ No one was told of his intentions until they made land, when it was revealed that they were to take Portobelo. In order to maintain the element of surprise, Morgan left his fleet in the deserted bay of Boca del Toro and took twenty-three canoes along the shore toward the coast of Portobelo.⁴⁶ Portobelo was easily taken. The President of Panama had sent reinforcements, but retreated upon seeing that he did not have the strength to attack.⁴⁷ It was then that Morgan, having corresponded briefly with the President, decided to make Panama a target. In the meantime, Maracaibo was taken by Morgan, although Cartagena had been the objective, and the Spanish were infuriated.⁴⁸ The governor knew that King Charles would be angered by the unwarranted sack of Maracaibo. Peace had been declared with Spain, and the governor of Jamaica decided to recall all commissions.⁴⁹ However, Spain was preparing to retaliate, and the Queen of Spain issued a declaration of war on the Indies through her son, King Charles II. When the Spaniards landed in Jamaica and began burning houses, killing inhabitants, and taking prisoners, the governor was again charged by the Privy Council with protecting Jamaica. Morgan was given free rein to attack wherever he pleased in order to ensure the safety of Jamaica. But as negotiations with Spain continued, the King sent word that the privateers were to end hostilities on land.⁵⁰

Unwilling to leave their land undefended, the Council of Jamaica decided to reinstate Morgan's commission against the will of the King.⁵¹ Captain Morgan held a war council to determine an appropriate location to attack. Since Panama was the principal treasure port on the Pacific coast of Central America, his officers chose it as their destination. They also wanted to strike Panama because their president had commissioned several assaults upon the English.⁵² The buccaneers, unfamiliar with the routes to Panama, chose to retake the island of St. Catharine, hoping to find a guide.⁵³ They tortured anyone who feigned ignorance of the routes until someone consented to direct them. They decided to enter Panama by way of the Chagres River. Upon reaching Panama, the men had to fight their way through the jungle. Morgan and his men were able to destroy the president's forces, but he had already moved much of the gold and silver while the buccaneers had been traipsing through the forest.⁵⁴ The president had given orders that the ammunition store and many of the houses were to be destroyed if the city was overtaken. Even though much of the city burned, Morgan and his men were able to acquire a pretty plunder. However, the news was ill received in London. The King ordered

⁴² Esquemeling, 133-134.

⁴³ Niall Ferguson, *Empire: The Rise and Demise of the British World Order and the Lessons for Global Power*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004), 9.

⁴⁴ Peter Earle, *The Sack of Panama: Captain Morgan and the Battle for the Caribbean*, (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 1981), 47.

⁴⁵ Esquemeling, 140.

⁴⁶ Earle, 52.

⁴⁷ Esquemeling, 147.

⁴⁸ Pope, 188.

⁴⁹ Earle, 116.

⁵⁰ Pope, 201, 204.

⁵¹ Cordingly, 50.

⁵² C.L.G. Anderson, *Old Panama and Castilla del Oro*, (Boston: The Page Company, 1911), 408.

⁵³ Anderson, 408.

⁵⁴ Cordingly, 52.

Governor Modyford and Morgan returned to England and imprisoned.⁵⁵ Yet Modyford served only a light two year sentence while Morgan was not imprisoned at all. As England began to face enemies from all sides, King Charles II realized that he was about to lose Jamaica to the Dutch and in turn sent Morgan to its defense. Before Morgan left England, however, King Charles II made him Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica and knighted him in 1675, an act which many did not expect, given the King's desire to keep peace with Spain and his disapproval of piracy.⁵⁶

Morgan had risen, unlike Drake, to knighthood by serving the orders of his governor rather than his king. Ultimately, the approval he had received from the majority of the English population forced King Charles II to recognize Sir Henry Morgan's significant contributions, albeit through violence, to the Empire. Although these undertakings enhanced the Empire's gains, Captain Morgan embarked on these voyages not for King Charles II, not even for Governor Modyford, but for himself, unconcerned with whether or not he was considered a pirate.

While Morgan was indifferent to public opinion, Drake was just the opposite. Having received his knighthood, Drake did anything in his power to maintain favor with the Queen. By 1586, his raids began to be seen as direct blows ordered by the Queen of England against the King of Spain.⁵⁷ The Queen girded for war and sent for the aid of her favorite pirate. As he prepared his fleet, however, the Queen waxed indecisive about whether or not to dispatch it. Despite her hesitation, Drake received sailing orders and planned to rally the crew at Plymouth. Unfortunately, many of his sailors deserted due to a disagreement about duties and pay. Drake feared this would be a blemish on his reputation and wrote the Queen immediately, suggesting that the deserters be punished, but sailed before he received her reply. Then the Queen issued new orders due to a perceived reduction in threats from the Spanish. These stated that Drake could seize any ships he encountered, but he must bring the cargo intact to the royal ports, and he was not to enter forcibly into any Spanish port or town. Somehow, this dispatch did not reach Drake before he departed. Some historians suspect that the message was never actually sent, but merely a cover up for English greed. Drake entered the port of Cadiz, looting and burning any vessel that stood in his way. He attacked and pillaged Cadiz for nearly thirty hours, then sailed for Lagos.⁵⁸ King Philip II wrote a letter to the Duke of Medina Sidonia, relaying accounts of Cadiz and warning him of probable disaster.⁵⁹ When Drake returned to England, he found himself officially out of favor with Queen Elizabeth I, yet he was still free to remain in London and visit with the Queen despite his disgrace.⁶⁰

He was determined to earn the Queen's favor again and continued to shower her with gift. There is little record to indicate that the Queen called for his services until 1589, when she ordered him and Sir John Norris, another commander, to torment the vessels belonging to King Philip II and to capture the Azores in order to intercept the convoys of treasure which passed that way. But Drake and Norris made plans of their own when they heard that a large fleet would be gathering at the ports of Galicia and Portugal, most importantly in La Coruna. The entire operation was a complete disaster with dozens of English ships lost or damaged and many men ill, wounded, or dead. The Queen was more than irate.⁶¹

Although Drake wanted desperately to remain in the Queen's favor, he was still, first and foremost, a pirate. He spent the next few years under the radar while war with Spain continued to rage. The Queen needed her beloved buccaneer, whether she cared to admit it or not. He sailed his final voyage, once again hoping to receive her esteem, in 1596, as part of another attempt to capture Panama. The voyage itself was a complete catastrophe and Drake died victim of a morbid case of dysentery which had ravaged his crew. It was a far less

⁵⁵ Pope, 264.

⁵⁶ Marrin, 206

⁵⁷ Kelsey, 284.

⁵⁸ Kelsey, 286-288, 294.

⁵⁹ King Philip II, *Letter to the Duke of Medina Sidonia*, 4 May 1587.

⁶⁰ Kelsey, 304.

⁶¹ Kelsey, 347, 359.

glorious way for the life and service of the Queen's Rogue to end than in the midst of a vicious battle against her enemies.

Disease wrought havoc on Sir Henry Morgan as well. Having made himself a wealthy man, he retired from pirating in 1676 and lived the rest of days as lieutenant governor of Jamaica, obtaining the titles of Vice Admiral, Colonel Commandant of the Port Royal Regiment, judge of the Admiralty Court, and Justice of the Peace. He had protected Jamaica from the French threat and followed the orders given to him, even if that meant condemning the buccaneers with whom he once worked. Morgan simply moved on to whatever provided him with the most profit and left his privateering days behind him. Although he had abandoned sailing the seas, he remained a heavy drinker. This ultimately led to severe illness, from which he never recovered.⁶² Morgan died in the summer of 1688.

Though there are many similarities in the lives of Sir Francis Drake and Sir Henry Morgan, there are a multitude of noticeable differences. Sir Francis Drake spent his life consumed with the desire to be accepted. Through his various raids, his single determination was to remain in favor with his queen. He showered her with gifts, praise, and affection, proving his loyalty to her even in death. His relationship with his monarch separates him from Sir Henry Morgan. Morgan plundered the seas with the focus of pure greed, protected by his governor in Jamaica. He had no personal connection to Governor Modyford; rather, he served the governor's demands only because it served his own desires. Morgan was disconnected from the monarchy he was ultimately serving, both in distance and in principle. It was against King Charles II's personal beliefs to accept piracy or privateering as a way to fund his empire, yet he conceded to the demands of his country and accepted the rewards of piracy, knighting Sir Henry Morgan against the King's own principles.

This essay serves not only as a narrative of the lives of these men, but as an analysis of their varying roles within the maritime history of England. Having served England at the birth of its empire, Sir Francis Drake went from a pirate to an admiral in the service of Queen Elizabeth I. She charged him to exploit the vulnerable trade lanes of the dominant Spanish Empire. Sir Henry Morgan, on the other hand, operated first as a soldier for an infant, but ever expanding, English empire. Later Governor Modyford, of Jamaica, employed Morgan as a buccaneer and privateer to keep the Spanish Empire from rising again and to protect the English interests in the West Indies. While both men ultimately aided in the ambitious goals of a newborn empire, each also worked to further their own objectives. It was Sir Francis Drake's aspiration to obtain a place in the upper echelon of society as well as the favor of Queen Elizabeth I. He remained a pirate until his dying day. Sir Henry Morgan only sought to further his own monetary gains, whether it was as a privateer or as lieutenant governor. Morgan is often referred to as England's "Second Drake," but the men and their roles were far too complex to label them as the same being. In any case, their legends remain an enthralling addition to history.

⁶² Pope, 311, 346-347

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