

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University · Loyola Heights, Quezon City · 1108 Philippines

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Philippine Studies vol. 41, no. 2 (1993): 167–181

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Fri June 27 13:30:20 2008

The Great Galleon: The *Santísima Trinidad* (1750–65)

David F. Marley



Of all the vessels which sailed the Pacific Ocean between Manila and Acapulco, perhaps none was more famous than the *Santísima Trinidad y Nuestra Señora del Buen Fin*, also known as *El Poderoso*. She was launched at Bagatao in the province of Albay during the late months of 1750 (Schurz 1959, 198), the largest ship ever built in the Islands. On paper she was supposed to be a sixty-gun, fourth-rate ship of the line, but because of the peculiar circumstances surrounding the trans-Pacific traffic, she had been laid down to a unique design.

The Spanish Galleons

For more than a century and a half, the mission of the galleons had been to convey large quantities of goods and passengers between Manila and New Spain. As a result the original royal warships had become transformed into something akin to East India men, rather than men of war. Their hulls grew in length and breadth, in order to accommodate more cargo. Their lower batteries were dispensed with to provide more passenger space. Their weapons remained of light caliber so as not to make the vessels top-heavy or impede the transfer of guns into the hold. For defense they relied on the remoteness of their travel routes, and the stoutness of their bulwarks.

In vain did Madrid attempt to contain this deviation. By a royal decree of 1734, the total value of merchandise shipped out aboard the galleons could not exceed P500 thousand a year, nor the proceeds brought back from Acapulco be more than a million.¹ But the Philippine merchants routinely flouted this restriction, with the connivance of customs officials on both sides of the Pacific. Another edict declared the galleons could not be of more than 560 tons burthen,² but this too was ignored, as both the contractors who laid

them down and the local officials who authorized their construction had an interest in providing for as large a bottom as possible.

Thus when Commodore George Anson encountered the *Nuestra Señora de Covadonga* off Cape Espiritu Santo in 1743, he was surprised to see his huge opponent bore no lower tier of guns. In the words of one of the British officers, "we were amazed to think what (the Spaniards) could propose against our weight of metal" (Heaps 1974, 223; Williams 1967, 198), and indeed the *Covadonga* was soon beaten into submission by the sixty-gun *Centurion* (Heaps 1974, 222-26; Schurz 1959, 334-37; Williams 1967, 194-204). Upon taking possession of their prize, the English found she only had thirty-two cannon cleared for action, with another four between decks and eight others stowed in the hold. All in all the *Covadonga* carried forty-four guns, but these mere six-, eight-, and twelve-pounders, much lighter than the *Centurion's* ordnance (Heaps 1974, 222-26; Schurz 1959, 334-37; Williams 1967, 194-204). The same British officer added the galleon was so shot through it "may serve to refute a ridiculous opinion which has been handed down amongst all seafaring people as a certain tradition, that the sides of the galleons were always built shot proof; but we found by experience that they were not strong enough to resist our grapeshot, much more our twenty-four-pounder balls" (Heaps 1974, 222-26; Schurz 1959, 334-37; Williams 1967, 194-204).

Because of her scanty armament and clumsy handling, the *Covadonga* was taken with relative ease, despite the advance warning her commander had received of English presence in the Pacific, and the 550 men she carried to Anson's 227 (Heaps 1974, 222-26; Schurz 1959, 334-37; Williams 1967, 194-204). The *Covadonga* was an older vessel, having spent at least a dozen years in the trade.³ Her treasure was removed as the British sailed towards Macao, until eventually her upper deck guns had to be stowed in the hold to act as ballast. Upon reaching China the Spanish prisoners were released, and the *Covadonga's* hulk sold to a private merchant for P6,000 (Heaps 1974, 222-26; Schurz 1959, 334-37; Williams 1967, 194-204).

In late 1745, a new galleon was launched in the Philippines to replace the lost *Covadonga*. Her name was the *Nuestra Señora del Rosario y los Santos Reyes*, and she continued the Philippine tradition of oversized vessels. Regular consultations between Manila, Mexico, and Spain had been interrupted by the war with Britain, so the local authorities enjoyed a relative autonomy in her design. There had not even been a governor in office throughout much of this period,

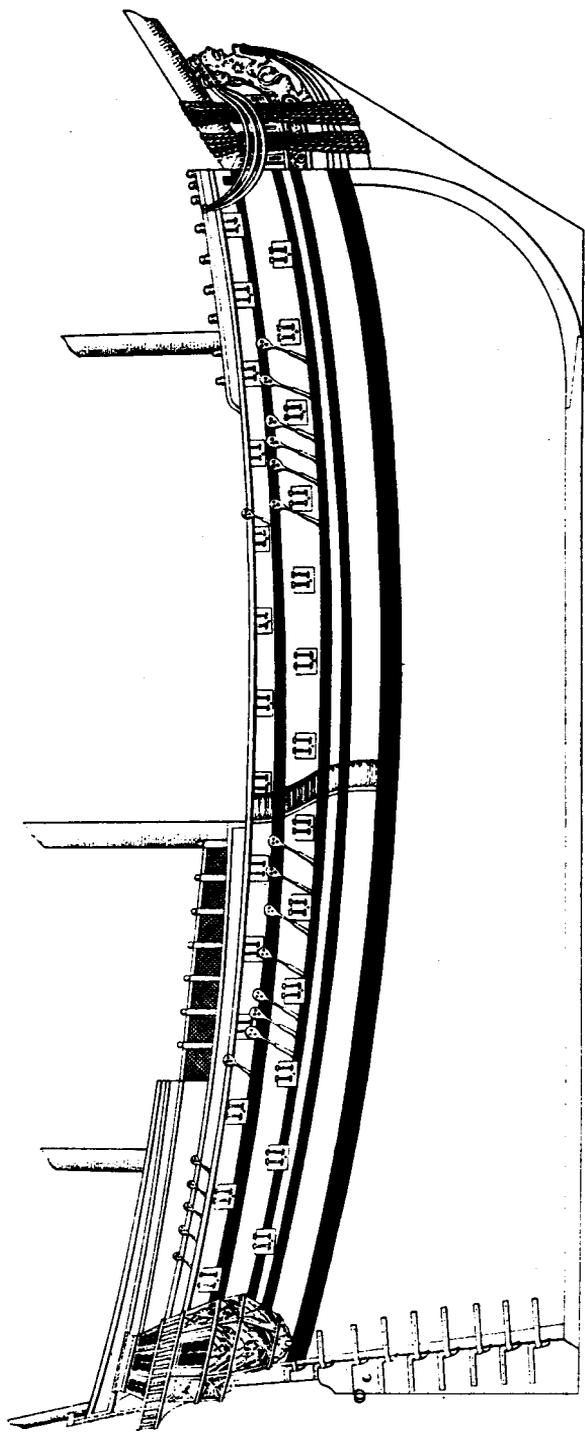
Don Gaspar de la Torre having died after a long illness, with the Bishop of Ilocos assuming his duties on an interim basis (Blair and Robertson 1907, 140–44). The result was the enormous *Rosario*, which measured 188 ft. overall, 156 along her keel. She was extremely broad at 56 ft., while her hold measured 26 ft. in depth, and her burthen was placed at 1,710 tons (Schurz 1959, 194). She was pierced for seventy guns instead of the forty-four mounted by the *Covadonga*, doubtless as a consequence of Anson's raid. The building of the new galleon cost the King's Exchequer P95,857, at the usual usurious rates (Schurz 1959, 198).

Although the *Rosario* perpetuated the previous galleons' enormity, she also retained their poor sailing qualities as well. On her maiden voyage to Acapulco in 1746, she (along with the older *Nuestra Señora del Pilar*) made an unusually slow crossing. On her second departure from the Philippines in 1748, the new galleon "was driven back by contrary winds, because it was poorly constructed and difficult to manage" (Blair and Robertson 1907, 48: 145, footnote 65). The problem lay in the outmoded and faulty design of the vessels, which not only made them sluggish, but unable "to sail to windward, and to keep clear of the land or run away from storms" (Schurz 1959, 257).

In the meantime, a second new galleon had been laid down at Bagatao to replace the aging *Pilar*. But this project was so vast she could not be completed by the time the 1750 departure date drew nigh, thus obliging the *Pilar* to attempt one final crossing to New Spain. The older galleon had begun leaking even before the Bay of Manila was cleared, and her passengers begged the captain to turn back. This he refused to do, and the *Pilar* sailed on to her doom. The only trace of her that was ever found was some wreckage washed up on the eastern shore of Luzon many months later (Schurz 1959, 260).

The Original *Santísima Trinidad*: 1750–1757

Shortly thereafter the new Governor the Marqués de Ovando arrived in Manila to assume office, and found the latest galleon virtually finished. This was the *Santísima Trinidad*, larger still than the huge *Rosario* on which the Governor had just travelled out from Acapulco. The newly-christened vessel had apparently been designed by Don Domingo Nebra, the only shipwright in the Islands judged competent to build for the Pacific trade, and who was then seventy years of age (Blair and Robertson 1959, 154).



Original configuration of the *Santísima Trinidad*, 1750-57 (Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico).

His most recent creation was truly wondrous, measuring 167 ft., 6 in. along her gun deck, and 50 ft., 6 in. in breadth. The depth of her hold from poop quarterdeck was 30 ft., 6 in., and she had cost P191,000 to build (Schurz 1959, 195, 198). Her upper works were gigantic, with a towering poop of seventeenth-Century proportions which were to make her leewardly and cranky. Her hull reached far below the waterline, in part because of its shape, in part because of the dense tropical hardwoods used in its construction. Traditionally the framing of all the galleons was made of teak, while the hard *molave* wood was employed for beams, knees, keel, other inside work, and the rudder. The outer planking and wales were usually of *lanang*, a wood of great toughness which the Spaniards believed would absorb smaller shot, while repulsing heavier rounds (Schurz 1959, 196). The massive weight of all these timbers made the *Santísima Trinidad* ride deep in the water, although they also gave her a hull of immense strength and resistance to the elements.

The distribution of her armament was scarcely as well planned, though, for in addition to the typical absence of a lower battery, the *Santísima Trinidad* had five of her gunports located in the waist. Few if any cannon could be borne at this point, as the gangways were normally too narrow and the skid beams too flimsy to support any but the lightest ordnance. It is therefore unlikely the galleon ever mounted any guns in these positions, despite being pierced for twenty-seven ports a side. As for the rest of her artillery, she only had thirteen pieces along either side of her gun deck, instead of the more usual fourteen for this length. Such ample spacing may have been prompted by the testimony of the *Covadonga's* survivors, who complained that Anson's *Centurion* benefitted from wider gunports and hence better play for his artillery (Schurz 1959, 335). This broader spacing of the *Santísima Trinidad's* ordnance would also allow more room for her passengers, and help reduce her top weight.

For, as with so many of the galleons, it was the *Santísima Trinidad's* poor sailing which most distressed the Spaniards. This must have become evident even as the vessel was being taken from Bagatao to Cavite for her arming and commissioning. Nevertheless the ship made her debut in the Pacific service in the next year, setting sail for New Spain on 22 July 1751 under the command of Don Francisco de Uztariz. She made the crossing very slowly, arriving at Acapulco on 27 February 1752,⁴ where her huge bulk immediately created a stir. Normally the Mexican officials were willing to turn a blind eye to the venality of the Philippine traffic, but the colossal

size of the new galleon was impossible to overlook.. She seemed custom-built for carrying excess cargos, and the matter was duly reported to the King's ministers in Madrid.

On 14 November 1752, an angry rebuke was issued from El Escorial, deploring the many irregularities in the Manila trade which are "caused, in the most part, by the excessive size of her ship."⁵ Ferdinand VI himself proposed to correct this situation by instructing the next Governor of the Philippines, Don Pedro Manuel de Arandia, as to "this very grave matter."⁶ Upon taking up his new posting, the Governor was to "devise a method for reducing and moderating the vessel to that which is permitted (reforming the existing galleon, and disposing the construction of another, arranged to more proper and convenient measures)."⁷ In this, His Majesty added, De Arandia was to be guided by the principle that the ships were to have sufficient burthen "for conducting the permitted cargo of the Islands, and no more."⁸ They were also to be properly armed, not just "as in time of peace, but for what might occur in war, and various encounters with pirates."⁹

While the King's reprimand was being relayed from Spain, the *Santísima Trinidad* continued with her trans-Pacific crossings. She departed Acapulco on 29 April 1752, and arrived in Manila on 6 October of this same year.¹⁰ She then remained laid up in ordinary at Cavite in late 1752 and early 1753, while the *Rosario* took her turn to cross. The *Santísima Trinidad* began outfitting for her second voyage in early 1753 and set sail from Manila on 21 July 1753 under the command of the Marqués de Villamediana. She arrived at Acapulco on 12 January 1754,¹¹ and returned to the Philippines later that same year.

The third voyage of the galleon was a decisive one. She departed Manila on 22 July 1755, again under the command of the Marqués de Villamediana, with 435 people aboard. It took a day to clear the Bay, another month to exit the San Bernardino Strait. In early October she was struck by a gale in mid-ocean, and almost sank. But what was even worse was the agonizingly slow progress which then ensued across the North Pacific wastes. One by one her passengers succumbed to scurvy. On 1 October there were 20 people sick; by 30 November, 60; by 21 December, more than 80; by 4 January, 102; by 13 January, 150 (Schurz 1959, 221, 228, 251, 255, 264, 266).

Finally, on 1 February 1756—more than a month-and-a-half overdue—the ship staggered into Cabo San Lucas at the tip of Baja California. Eighty-two of her passengers had died before land was

sighted, including the former Governor, the Marqués de Ovando, who was retiring now that his term of office had expired. More than 200 other people were set ashore sick at the Jesuit mission of San José del Cabo, to be nursed back to health while the vessel continued her voyage to Acapulco. Only twenty-seven crew members were left standing by the time the galleon anchored on 29 February.¹² The seven-month odyssey had been one of the longest and most terrible in the eighteenth-Century annals of the trade.

When the *Santísima Trinidad* departed on her return leg on 29 April 1756, she carried with her P50,000 earmarked for the construction of two new royal frigates in the Philippines. These vessels would be better suited to the service, according to the King, and not like the galleons "apt only for receiving more and more cargo."¹³ But when the ship reached Manila on 10 October of this year, the local officials decided to use the money for another purpose—making alterations in the *Santísima Trinidad* herself.

The legal basis for this decision was the King's comment of 14 November 1752, that he wished to have the huge vessel reduced in size. Naturally this was more palatable to the Philippine authorities than the alternative of having her large bottom replaced by that of a smaller frigate. Furthermore the galleon obviously needed improvements anyway, in light of her dreadful crossing to Mexico the year before. It was therefore more convenient for the Manileños to obey His Majesty's initial injunction, and ignore the subsequent one of constructing two new royal frigates.

The *Santísima Trinidad* spent the year 1757 being overhauled at the Cavite dockyard, while the tiny *Nuestra Señora de la Portería* made the crossing to New Spain in her stead.¹⁴ The galleon was razed by almost an entire deck, in order to lower her profile and make her more manageable. Her forecastle was only slightly reduced, but the bulwarks above the waist were eliminated altogether and replaced by mesh rails. The quarterdeck and poop were fully cut down as well, and the stern-cabins rearranged. However, the hull remained unaffected by these changes from the main deck on down, thus retaining her ample cargo-carrying capacity. The same could not be said about her armament. Five of the gunports vanished along either side with the reduction of her waist, and another was sealed off on each quarter of the bows. Thus the *Santísima Trinidad's* broadsides decreased from twenty-seven to twenty-one guns, although the Philippine authorities continued to rate her as a sixty in all their official correspondence.¹⁵

Officers and Crew

Perhaps this fiction allowed them to maintain her quarterbill virtually intact, and continue charging the Mexican Exchequer for a full complement despite her diminished size. According to the official returns,¹⁶ the *Santisima Trinidad* was always allotted the following commissioned officers:

	Number	Monthly wages (pesos)
<i>General</i> (overall commander)	1	—
<i>Capitán</i> (ship's captain)	1	80
<i>Primer teniente</i> ("first lieutenant," actually captain of Army detachment on board)	1	40
<i>Segundo teniente</i> ("second" or ship's lieutenant)	1	35
<i>Primer alférez</i> ("first ensign," lieutenant of the Army detachment)	1	25
<i>Segundo alférez</i> ("second ensign, subaltern of Army detachment)	1	20
<i>Cadetes</i> (midshipmen)	2	10

These in turn commanded the following warrant and petty officers:

<i>Contador escribano</i> ("accountant scribe," ship's clerk)	1	20
<i>Capellán</i> (chaplain)	1	20
<i>Cirujano</i> (surgeon)	1	20
<i>Primer piloto</i> (sailing master)	1	75
<i>Segundo piloto</i> (master's mate)	1	38
<i>Tercer piloto</i> (master's mate)	1	30
<i>Maestre de plata</i> ("silver master," to whom all bullion and merchandise was consigned)	1	25
<i>Primer condestable</i> (boatswain)	1	25
<i>Segundo condestable</i> (boatswain's mate)	1	16
<i>Contramaestre</i> (quartermaster)	1	25
<i>Segundo contramaestre</i> (quartermaster's mate)	1	16

<i>Maestre de jarcias</i> (yeoman of the sheets)	1	25
<i>Maestre de raciones</i> (purser)	1	25
<i>Despensero</i> (steward)	1	16
<i>Guardián</i> (master-at-arms)	1	20
<i>Segundo guardián</i> (ship's corporal)	1	16
<i>Maestro carpintero</i> (carpenter)	1	25
<i>Maestro calafate</i> (caulker)	1	25
<i>Maestro tonelero</i> (cooper)	1	25
<i>Maestro armero</i> (armorers)	1	16
<i>Buzo</i> (diver)	1	20
<i>Alguacil de agua</i> ("water sheriff," in charge of rationing)	1	12
<i>Cocineros</i> (cooks)	2	12

It is interesting to note how few senior positions actually had anything to do with running the ship itself. From a practical point of view, the most important man aboard was the sailing master or *piloto*, who was often a foreign specialist. On her 1755–56 crossing, for example, the *Santísima Trinidad* had been navigated by the Frenchman Antoine Lémarié Beaucourt.¹⁷ Later on her 1758–59 voyage she would be piloted by the Frenchman Pierre Freslon,¹⁸ and in 1760–61 by the Irishman Raymond Kelly.¹⁹

The ship always sailed with a detachment of regular Army troops aboard. These were:

<i>Sargentos</i> (sergeants)	2	10
<i>Tambor</i> (drummer)	1	8
<i>Cabos</i> (corporals)	5	8
<i>Soldados</i> (soldiers)	45	6

Their numbers varied over the years. In 1758–59, the sergeants and drummer were the same, but only four corporals and thirty-four soldiers served.²⁰ In 1760–61, there were two sergeants, one drummer, four corporals, and forty-nine soldiers.²¹ Probably their number fluctuated according to the accommodations left aboard the galleon.

The same sort of oscillation occurred with the crew, who were classified as *artilleros de mar* (quarter gunners), *marineros* (seamen), *grumetes españoles* (Spanish landsmen), and *grumetes sencillos* (Filipino landsmen). In different years their numbers were:

	Gunners	Seamen	Landsmen	Filipinos
1751-52	45	129	?	110
1753-54	60	129	102	110
1755-56	30	100	100	80
1758-59	40	120	100	80
1760-61	40	135	115	75

The quarter gunners received P16 2/3 a month in salaries; the seamen P12 1/2 ; the Spanish landsmen P8 1/2; and the Filipinos P3.²² The quarterbill, it can be seen, continued to increase even after the *Santísima Trinidad* was cut down in 1757.

The Rebuilt *Santísima Trinidad*: 1758-62

The reconstruction of the galleon and other sundry labors associated with this project came to P53,656.²³ The redesigned vessel made her fourth voyage to Acapulco in 1758, departing Manila on 4 August under the command of Don Agustín Pedro Aguirre. She reached Acapulco on 16 January 1759, and returned to the Philippines in June or July of the same year.²⁴ Her fifth voyage started on 26 July 1760, when she set sail from Manila under the command of Don José de Eslava. The *Santísima Trinidad* exited the San Bernardino Strait on 18 August, and sighted the California coast (at 310, 30' N latitude) on 26 November. She paused at San José del Cabo from 6-11 December to take on fresh water and supplies, and reached Acapulco on her earliest date ever, Christmas Day of 1760.²⁵

Apparently the overhauling of the ship had improved her sailing somewhat, although she continued to be clumsy and slow. The fourth and fifth crossings were aided more by favorable winds and moderate weather than any dramatic improvement in the vessel's handling. The *Santísima Trinidad* departed Acapulco on 8 April 1761, carrying out the new Governor-designate of the Philippines Don Juan Manuel Gomez de la Torre, who died during her stopover at Marianas. The ship reached Cavite in mid-July of this year, and was laid up in ordinary while the *Rosario* made her crossing.²⁶

The *Rosario* was late in returning, however, forcing the *Santísima Trinidad* to postpone her own sixth departure well past its usual date. Eventually her commander Don Francisco Vicente Meylan could wait no longer, and the galleon got under way from Cavite on 1 August

1762. However, the delay had been just a bit too long, for even as she began making for the entrance of the Bay, the winds shifted around to the southwest. These were the seasonal *vendavales*, which continued to blow so steadily the vessel could not claw her way out until 3 September, more than a month later. After traversing the Sibuyan Sea, the galleon paused at San Jacinto Bay from 7–12 September to take on water and wood, and replenish her supplies from a large sampam sent out from Manila (Blair and Robertson 1907, 49: 195–98; Cushner 1971, 158–59; Schurz 1959, 339).

Thus resupplied, the *Santísima Trinidad* resumed her voyage, exiting the San Bernardino Strait on 13 September. Eleven days later her top hamper was damaged when she was struck by a heavy gale in 190 N latitude. Then 900 miles out at sea she was struck by a second northeasterly gale the night of 2 October, nearing the Mariana Islands. By seven o'clock the next morning the storm had reached such a pitch her foremast toppled over the side, followed fifteen minutes later by the main mast. Her crew frantically cut away the debris, but not before it battered the hull and started some leaks. By the time the typhoon blew itself out on 6 October, the ship was in no condition to proceed. With the pumps going and a jury rig set up, she reversed course for the Philippines (Blair and Robertson 1907, 49: 195–98; Cushner 1971, 158–59; Schurz 1959, 339).

Cape Espiritu Santo was sighted on 28 October, and the Spaniards thought about putting into Palapag to effect repairs. However, the approaches to the harbor were judged too difficult for the galleon to attempt at night, so the *Santísima Trinidad* pressed on towards Bagatao (Blair and Robertson 1907, 49: 195–98; Cushner 1971, 158–59; Schurz 1959, 339). If she had entered, the officers and crew would have found the *Rosario* recuperating inside, and learned that war with England had broken out in Europe. Manila had already fallen to a sudden British attack, and two Royal Navy warships were preparing to exit the Sibuyan Sea in search of the Acapulco vessel.

The *Santísima Trinidad* in Captivity: 1762–1765

All unknowingly, the crippled galleon passed through the San Bernardino Strait the evening of 29 October, and spotted a strange sail off Capul Island. Her lookouts could not identify the ship in the gloom, but she was actually HMS *Panther*, 60, Captain Hyde Parker commanding. The British, too, had seen the Spaniard, and directed

their anchored consort, the frigate *Argo*, 28, Captain Richard King commanding, to make sail and intercept. The three ships lost sight of each other with nightfall, but by eight o'clock the *Argo* came up with the *Santísima Trinidad* opposite the Naranjos. The Spanish saw the frigate at the same time and belatedly realized their danger (Cushner 1971, 156-60; Schurz 1959, 196-97, 213, 339-41).

The galleon was unprepared for action, having sailed at a time when Spain was still believed to be at peace. She only had seven guns mounted, the rest being stowed in her hold. The *Santísima Trinidad* was also heavily laden with trade goods and more than 800 people, the vast majority of them non-combatants. Nevertheless the Spaniards stood to their few cannon and shortly before 1:00 A.M. hailed the advancing frigate, which had closed in on their stern quarter (Cushner 1971, 156-60; Schurz 1959, 196-97, 213, 339-41).

The *Argo's* reply came about half an hour later, when she opened fire. The Spaniards refrained until the frigate had overhauled and their own guns could bear. There then ensued a brisk cannonade, as the British flailed away against their huge opponent and received very much the worst of it. The *Argo's* nine-pounders could not penetrate the *Santísima Trinidad's* thick bulwarks, and the Spanish replied undaunted. After more than two hours of this unequal contest, the *Argo* put up her helm and broke off the action. She fell astern to carry out repairs, and tend to her dead and wounded, while the galleon sailed on unscathed (Cushner 1971, 156-60; Schurz 1959, 196-97, 213, 339-41).

The next morning, though, the *Panther* was able to rejoin her consort, having been prevented the night before by a strong counter-current. Together the two vessels closed in on the plodding galleon, one on either flank. The Spaniards had spent the night hoisting six more guns out of their crammed hold, and now mounted thirteen pieces. The engagement was renewed at nine o'clock in the morning, and lasted almost two hours. Parker, who had served as a junior officer aboard Anson's *Centurion*, brought his two-decker "within half musket shot" range of the lumbering *Santísima Trinidad* and crashed heavy broadsides into her (Cushner 1971, 156-60; Schurz 1959, 196-97, 213, 339-41). But unlike what had occurred a generation earlier with the *Covadonga*, the Spanish vessel was able to resist the British shot. The quarry, Parker said, "made but little resistance, trusting (to the) immense thickness of the sides of their ship, which the *Panther's* shot was not able to penetrate excepting her upper works" (Cushner 1971, 156-60; Schurz 1959, 196-97, 213,

339–41). However, the galleon's defense depended upon the courage of a few hardy men, principally the *segundo piloto*. When this individual was severely wounded by a British round, the heart went out of the rest of the crew and passengers. Frightened and confused in their beleaguered ship, the Spaniards decided to haul down their colors, much to the relief of the British, who could plainly see what little effect their fire had had on the enemy's hull. When they went aboard the *Santísima Trinidad* to take possession of their prize, they found she had only suffered twenty-eight total casualties (eighteen killed, ten wounded) compared to seventy-two in both Royal Navy warships (thirty-five dead, thirty-seven injured) (Cushner 1971, 156–60; Schurz 1959, 196–97, 213, 339–41). Still the galleon was theirs.

The *Panther* took the *Santísima Trinidad* in tow, and the three vessels sailed back to Manila, arriving outside the British-held port on 3 November 1762. The bulk of the Spanish prisoners were deposited on Maribeles Island, and the galleon painstakingly warped to her mooring at Cavite. There she came to anchor on 12 November, and was repaired over the next few months by local workmen (Cushner 1971, 107–9, 157, 160–67).

When most of the Royal Navy squadron departed Manila on 2 March 1763, they took the refitted galleon along with them (Blair and Robertson 1907, 49: 247; Cushner 1971, 174). The *Santísima Trinidad* represented a unique problem as a prize of war. Potentially she was very valuable, but only if her cargo of trade goods could be sold at a high profit. The *Covadonga*, of course, had been taken returning from Mexico with the proceeds of such a sale, but the *Santísima Trinidad* had been captured outward-bound, with her luxury items still intact. Obviously these could not be sold in Manila, and the only solution was to carry the goods away, still packed in the galleon's hold to be disposed of elsewhere.

When the British returned to their base at Madras, they discovered India was not much better as a market either, given that Chinese silks and ivories were relatively plentiful there. As a result, her captors decided to sail the galleon all the way back to England once the squadron was ordered home. This decision was not arrived at lightly, for they had already noticed the *Santísima Trinidad's* "heavy sailing" during the voyage from Manila to the Coromandel Coast. The galleon had been drawing an incredible thirty-three ft. of water when captured, and, even after lightening, drew twenty-eight. To convey such an ungainly vessel the thousands of miles around the Cape of Good Hope would require epic patience and endurance.

Indeed, Captain Hyde Parker, in a letter to his son, expressed the doubt whether the prize could "be got home" at all.

Nevertheless the voyage was made, albeit with great difficulty, by her prize-master Lieutenant Mainwaring Wilding. The *Santísima Trinidad* reached Plymouth on 9 June 1764, where she immediately created a sensation. People came from as far away as London to gaze upon the galleon, and wonder at her strange design. Her 2,000 tons burthen loomed impressively, and *The Scots Magazine* described her as "one of the largest (ships) ever seen in Britain." *The Annual Register* said "she lay like a mountain in the water." This was the fourth Acapulco-Manila galleon taken, but only the first to be sailed back to England.

A complication arose when the Advocate-General reported she might not constitute a legitimate capture, because of the late date in the war on which she had been taken. The High Court of the Admiralty upheld this opinion, but it was eventually overturned by the Lords of Appeal on 14 August 1765 (*The Gentlemen's Magazine*, Sept. 1765). All the while the *Santísima Trinidad* had lain at anchor in the Hamoaze, until at last she could be sold. It is believed Captains Hyde Parker and Richard King received 30,000 apiece as their share of her value, principally from the sale of her cargo. This was a great deal of money, but only a tenth as much as Anson had received from the *Covadonga's* capture (Heaps 1974, 254-55). As for the *Santísima Trinidad* herself, it is unlikely she was ever put into service. Given her vast size and poor handling, the great galleon was most probably broken up for her wood—a sad and ignominious fate.

Notes

1. Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico (the Mexican national archives, henceforth abbreviated AGNM), *Serie Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 53, Exp. 9, Fs. 19-26; Schurz (1959, 154-55 *et seq.*).

2. AGNM, *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 41, Exp. 59, Fs. 208-21; Schurz (1959, 194).

3. Schurz (1959, 193). AGNM, *Inquisición*, Vol. 832, Exp. 67, Fs. 592-94; *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 51, Exp. 92, Fs. 372-73.

4. AGNM, *Filipinas*, Vol. 3, Exps. 7-8, Fs. 156-62; *Mapoteca*, plano 3789 (*Catálogo de ilustraciones*, Vol. 8, p. 54).

5. AGNM, *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 72, Exp. 169, Fs. 465-470.

6. *Ibid.*

7. *Ibid.*

8. *Ibid.*

9. *Ibid.*

10. AGNM, *Mapoteca*, plano 3789 (*Catálogo de ilustraciones*, Vol. 8, p. 54).
11. AGNM, *Marina*, Vol. 10, Exp. 2, Fs. 15–30; *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 74, Exp. 47, F. 140.
12. Schurz (1959, 281–83). AGNM, *Correspondencia de Virreyes*, Primera Serie, Vol. 1, Exp. 17, Fs. 67–70; Segunda Serie, Vol. 1, Exps. 81 and 105, Fs. 202 and 265–69; *Filipinas*, Vol. 5, Exps. 6 and 9, Fs. 229–33, 345–46, and 357–58; *Marina*, Vol. 1, Exp. 16, Fs. 365–74; Vol. 10, Exp. 1, Fs. 1–14; Vol. 11, Exp. 46, F. 126; *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 76, Exp. 87, F. 205; Vol. 77, Exp. 15, Fs. 49–50.
13. AGNM, *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 72, Exp. 169, F. 466v.
14. AGNM, *Correspondencia de Virreyes*, Primera Serie, Vol. 1, Exp. 83, F. 149; *Filipinas*, Vol. 5, Exp. 11, Fs. 428–29 and 433.
15. AGNM, *Marina*, Vol. 18, Exp. 87, F. 158; Vol. 23, Exps. 107 and 142–43, Fs. 228 and 356–59; Schurz (1959, 213).
16. AGNM, *Filipinas*, Vol. 3, Exp. 11, Fs. 180–83; Vol. 5, Exp. 6, Fs. 229–33; Vol. 6, Exp. 3, Fs. 84–85; *Marina*, Vol. 10, Exp. 2, Fs. 16–30; Vol. 18, Exp. 87, F. 158; Schurz (1959, 210).
17. AGNM, *Filipinas*, Vol. 5, Exp. 6, F. 229v.; *Marina*, Vol. 10, Exp. 2, F. 18; Schurz (1959, 208, 266).
18. AGNM, *Filipinas*, Vol. 6, Exp. 3, F. 84; Schurz (1959, 208).
19. AGNM, *Marina*, Vol. 18, Exp. 87, F. 158; Schurz (1959, 209).
20. AGNM, *Filipinas*, Vol. 6, Exp. 3, F. 84v.
21. AGNM, *Marina*, Vol. 18, Exp. 87, F. 158v.
22. AGNM, *Filipinas*, Vol. 3, Exp. 11, F. 182.
23. AGNM, *Marina*, Vol. 23, Exp. 142, Fs. 356–57.
24. AGNM, *Correspondencia de Virreyes*, Primera Serie, Vol. 1, Exp. 141, F. 247; *Filipinas*, Vol. 5, Exp. 11, Fs. 430–32; Vol. 6, Exp. 3, Fs. 84–87; *Reales Cédulas (Originales)*, Vol. 79, Exps. 80 and 108, Fs. 193 and 264.
25. AGNM, *Correspondencia de Virreyes*, Segunda Serie, Vol. 6, Exp. 96, Fs. 130–31; *Marina*, Vol. 18 in its entirety.
26. AGNM, *Correspondencia de Virreyes*, Segunda Serie, Vol. 6, Exps. 113, 131–32 and 148, Fs. 148, 169–70 and 205; *Marina*, Vol. 18 in its entirety.

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