

# A 'Project Was Contrived and Carried On With Great Secrecy'<sup>1</sup>: International Irish Jacobite Networks and the Madagascar Project, 1718- 1723

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## Madagascar in the 'Age of Projects'

IN 1925, a curious manuscript was deposited in the Advocates Library in Edinburgh, now the National Library of Scotland.<sup>2</sup> This undated memorandum, signed by one Johan Osthoff, details an elaborate plot through which British and Irish exiles sought to defraud the Swedish government of ships and funds intended for use in establishing a Swedish colony at Madagascar.<sup>3</sup> This colony would have been set up with the aid of the Anglo-American pirates resident on the island and was intended to serve as a base for a Swedish East India Company to trade European goods to the Mughal and Qing empires. The exiles in Europe and the pirates in Madagascar Osthoff understood to be involved in the plan were ostensibly Jacobites: members of a movement committed to restoring the Catholic Stuart dynasty to the thrones of England, Scotland and Ireland under King James III and VIII. Through a micro-historical study of this project and the figures involved across western Europe, this essay seeks to show how in the wake of the failed rising of 1715, Jacobite exiles sought to use their transnational links and the erstwhile support of governments for the Stuart cause to merge their commercial and political projects.

The period after the 'Glorious Revolution' of 1688, which saw the flight of the Catholic King James II and VII, to France, has been understood by

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1 British Library [hereafter BL] India Office Records [hereafter IOR]/E/1/13, fos.270-274, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722. The author would like to thank Dr Esther Mijers, Eliisabet Hein, Emma Forsberg, Dr Adam Grimshaw, Professor Steve Murdoch, and Professor Daniel Szechi for their help and advice with this research.

2 Steuart 1926, 119.

3 National Library of Scotland [hereafter NLS] MS 992, fo.1, Memorandum on Jacobite intrigues in Sweden.

historians as the 'Age of Projects'.<sup>4</sup> Often with links to politicians, projectors sought funding and state support for a number of ventures ranging from the establishment of new banks to colonies.<sup>5</sup> A number of these proposed projects involved the pirates settled in Madagascar. With the support of New England and New York merchants, during the 1690s European and American pirates had progressively moved into the Indian Ocean and had begun attacking the Hajj fleets of the Mughal Empire and the Indiamen of the European East India companies, eventually establishing a base on the Madagascan island of St Marie.<sup>6</sup> Here, slaves and oriental goods were transported west, undercutting European state monopolies.

In 1698 an English force was despatched to St Marie and an Act of Grace, a pardon, was announced, after which many pirates surrendered whilst others fled to neighbouring settlements.<sup>7</sup> The trade to Madagascar was suppressed as other nations' empires followed suit and European traders avoided the island.<sup>8</sup> Without means to repair their ships, by the 1700s the remaining pirates were stranded. From this time, projects seeking to pardon the remaining pirates in return for a share of their booty emerged. These initially centred on the Company of Scotland Trading to Africa and the Indies.<sup>9</sup> Since the failure of the Scottish colony at Darien and the company's ensuing bankruptcy, this company had begun granting commissions to trade to projectors and East India interlopers who ignored the legal borders delineated by the English and Dutch East India Companies.<sup>10</sup> While plans to pardon the pirates and use them to establish a new trading entrepôt at Madagascar gained the initial support of some government ministers in Edinburgh and London, they were ultimately rejected.<sup>11</sup>

The proposals gained new impetus in the wake of the revival of piracy after 1715. The presence of Malagasy princes was recorded in Vienna and Lisbon at this time and the courts of Denmark and Russia were propositioned with new iterations of the Madagascar project.<sup>12</sup> However, it is the Swedish example of which Osthoff writes that is most intriguing. In 1718, the Jacobite Captain

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4 Brewer 1989, 82.

5 Novak 2008, 6-7; Lincoln 2014, 200, 210; Yamamoto 2015, 607-608.

6 Bialuschewski 2004, 168-170.

7 *Ibid.*, 172; Bialuschewski 2007, 38; Hanna 2015, 192.

8 Bialuschewski 2004, 172-173.

9 Senate House Library MS 63, no.12, Proposals to the honourable Company of Scotland trading to affrica and the Indies for Establishing a trade to Madagascar, [1699].

10 NatWest Group Archive GB 1502 D/1/2, Journal of Directors, 5 March 1700; Platt 1969, 548-549.

11 Bialuschewski 2007, 41; Bialuschewski 2008, 106.

12 *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, 3-10 December 1720; *Daily Courant*, 14 September 1722; Grandidier 1903, 626-631; Sprinchorn 1920, 51-52; Furber 1965, 16; Ellis 2007, 448-449.

William Morgan described in a memorial to Baron Georg Görtz, finance minister of Sweden, how pirates in the Indian Ocean had gained '*Richesses immenses, tant en argent qu'en autres chases utiles & [sic] profitables*' and had failed to buy a pardon from Queen Anne.<sup>13</sup> Morgan claimed that upon the alliance of King Charles XII "*& [sic] notre Prince légitime [James III] pour lequel leur fidelity a toujours été inébran'*", the Jacobite pirates now sought a pardon from the Swedish king.<sup>14</sup> Morgan asserted that leading pirates were his '*amis intimes*' and that they were prepared to offer Sweden more than £10 million.<sup>15</sup> In 1718, Sweden was losing the Great Northern War and their perilous military and financial position demanded that this plan receive serious consideration. King Charles XII and succeeding Swedish governments supported the project to establish a Swedish East India Company with the aid of these pirates and Osthoff was involved supplying arms from Count Reenstierna, a member of the Swedish Royal Council, to Morgan's Jacobites.<sup>16</sup>

The project was not a success. Regardless, an analysis of the transnational networks used by Morgan to pursue this plan, in the context of the wider 'Golden Age of Piracy' and the 'Age of Projects', the latter of which saw various efforts to establish new companies trading to the Indies, provides an intriguing insight into how commercial projects, in this instance particularly those with Irish origins, could be exploited both by Jacobites and European states to pursue commercial and larger geopolitical goals. Approaching this project using evidence from the exiled Stuart court's papers and British Hanoverian sources, in conjunction with captured Jacobite letters and continental accounts, sheds light on the multi-layered workings of Irish networks in early-modern Europe. In seeking to fully understand Morgan's Madagascar project, it is necessary to give an account of his activities and the progression of the scheme until its abandonment in 1723. This will then be followed by a discussion of differing interpretations of events and the networks exploited by William Morgan to pursue the project.

## **The progress of the project**

Some sort of alliance between the Jacobites, pirates in Madagascar and the Swedish Empire was not as unlikely as it first appears. Following discussions

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13 Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Morgan to Görtz: 'Immense riches in treasure and other useful and profitable things'.

14 Ibid.: 'and our legitimate prince [James III], for whom their loyalty has always been unshaken'.

15 Ibid.: 'close friends'.

16 *Report Lords Committees 1723*, 4; Müller 1998, 60-61.

after 1715, a substantial loan had been raised from Jacobites in Britain to induce Swedish support for a Stuart restoration.<sup>17</sup> In supporting the Jacobites, the Swedish government sought to weaken the coalition arrayed against them in the Great Northern War, then including the Electorate of Hanover which was supported by Britain.<sup>18</sup> The Elector of Hanover had been crowned King George I of the United Kingdom in 1714 on the death of Queen Anne, a coronation that had sparked rioting across Britain.<sup>19</sup> Seeking to depose the new king and reverse the Anglo-Scottish Union of 1707, the following year Jacobites, under the Earl of Mar, rose in Scotland and Lancashire, but were defeated by government forces in early 1716.<sup>20</sup> Many Jacobites subsequently went into exile and some were able to acquire positions in the armed forces of Europe while others joined pre-existing commercial networks.<sup>21</sup> Although Sweden failed to supply the agreed upon troops to aid a new Jacobite rising in 1717, negotiations continued and Jacobites were employed in Swedish privateering fleets attacking British shipping.<sup>22</sup>

Disaffection to the Hanoverians was not confined to the British Isles. Recent work by David Parrish has shown how Jacobite rhetoric and sentiment traversed the Atlantic.<sup>23</sup> In the British Caribbean islands there was widespread sedition, with urban riots occurring in the name of James III and a number of Anglo-American pirates advertising their Jacobite sympathies.<sup>24</sup> E T Fox and Arne Bialuschewski have highlighted how pirate ships named *Royal James* and *Queen Anne's Revenge*, likely a reference to the pervasive belief that Queen Anne supported the succession of her half-brother James over her second cousin George, evince these views.<sup>25</sup> Such allusive ship naming was practiced by a Jacobite in Russia in these years too, and accounts from those who interacted with pirates such as Samuel Bellamy provide further examples of their Jacobitism.<sup>26</sup> While Colin Woodard and Fox mischaracterise the Caribbean pirates as actively coordinating with European Jacobites, Bialuschewski emphasises instead how the ideology was deployed to maintain and grow

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17 Szechi 2019, 181-182.

18 Coroban 2010, 136-141.

19 Bennet 1982, 147; Monod 1989, 225.

20 For an account of the rising and its aftermath, see Sankey 2005 and Szechi 2006.

21 Szechi 1998, 361-363.

22 Graham 2002, 162; Szechi 2019, 183.

23 Parrish 2017, 166.

24 *London Journal*, 24 February 1722; Gwynn 1932, 279-282; *Ibid.*, 19, 62-63.

25 Gregg 1972, 374-375; Fox 2010, 286; Bialuschewski 2011, 155-156.

26 National Records of Scotland GD24/1/862/3/18, Memorandum of what is to be done as to the fitting out the following ships under my command, 6 September 1720; Rediker 2004, 93; Fox 2010, 288; Bialuschewski 2011, 162.

pirate crews whilst justifying their thievery.<sup>27</sup> In 1718, these pirates expanded their global reach after a British force under Woodes Rogers retook the pirate base of New Providence in the Bahamas, announcing a new Act of Grace.<sup>28</sup> Although many accepted this pardon, others fled and went on to raid across the Caribbean, the eastern seaboard of America and to despoil West African shipping.<sup>29</sup> This latter group moved into the Indian Ocean and revived the pirate nest on St Marie.<sup>30</sup> Morgan's proposed Jacobite-pirate alliance with the Swedish government thus took advantage of these events and this perceived confluence of interests.

Using a variety of sources, it is possible to reconstruct much of the life and networks of William Morgan and how he attempted to build this project on the support of the Irish across western Europe and sought to merge their interests with those of the Swedish government and the Stuart court in exile. Such network-centred approaches, whilst noted by David Hancock as often highlighting only the successes of these connections, allow historians to explore the nuances of early modern trade and empires.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, in examples of networks' failures such as in the case of William Morgan's Irish Jacobites, this approach does much to reveal the limitations of managing early modern projects.<sup>32</sup>

After the failed rising of 1715, it appears that Morgan fled to France where he sought to raise funds for the Stuart court.<sup>33</sup> He established himself among the Irish community in Brittany and, in 1716, was involved in shipping Jacobite funds to Sweden.<sup>34</sup> Here in 1718, his Madagascar project received the support of Baron Görtz.<sup>35</sup> It was decided that a Swedish East India Company would be established, undermining the British and Dutch East India Companies' protected monopoly trade.<sup>36</sup> Morgan was commissioned as governor of the pirates of St Marie in June 1718, later accentuated with the 'ample and full Powers as were given to any Vice Roy.'<sup>37</sup> Madagascar and St Marie were to

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27 Woodard 2007, 230; Fox 2010, 286, 301; Bialuschewski 2011, 162-163; Lewis 2021, 366-368.

28 Bialuschewski 2004, 176.

29 Holyroyd 2017, 763-764.

30 *Ibid.*, 763-764.

31 Hancock 2005, 467-469; Brock 2019, 99-100.

32 Hancock 2005, 469.

33 Royal Archives [hereafter RA] Stuart Papers [hereafter SP] MAIN/13, fos.122-123, Thomas Southcott to Mary of Modena, 31 October [1716]; BL IOR E/1/13, fo.273, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

34 RA SP MAIN/32, fos.31-32, General Robert Echlin to James III, 7 June 1718; NLS MS 992, fo.1, Memorandum on Jacobite intrigues in Sweden; Lyons 2001, 122; Bergin 2015, 67-69.

35 Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Morgan to Görtz, 22 July 1718; Sprinchorn 1920, 53.

36 BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.273, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

37 *Ibid.*, fo.273; RA SP MAIN/37, fos.41-43, Lieutenant-General Dillon to Mar, 7 October 1718.

be made Swedish trading posts, with ships carrying on extensive trade with the Mughal and Qing empires.<sup>38</sup> Such plans built on the longstanding aims of projectors who sought to control the flow of goods and create trading entrepôts such as the Company of Scotland had at Darien.<sup>39</sup> Baron Görtz appointed Otto Klinckowström, his Chief Secretary to the King for Foreign Affairs who formerly led diplomatic missions to the Tatar Khanate, to aid Morgan in the project.<sup>40</sup> With Swedish backing secured, Morgan now turned to the Jacobites in France.

Morgan was able to use a number of overlapping commercial, kinship and Jacobite links to initially pursue his project. Studies have consistently shown how Irish, Scottish and often Jacobite networks on the western European seaboard were able to use such connections to flourish in long-distance and cross-imperial trade.<sup>41</sup> In Brittany, Morgan's ships were commanded by the St Malo privateer Captain and Irishman, Andrew Galwey, presumably a member of the prominent Galwey trading family on the French Atlantic coast and possibly Morgan's nephew.<sup>42</sup> These St Malo privateers had extensive links to the Jacobite cause. Many Irish 'Wild Geese' had fled there after the fall of Limerick in 1691 and were commissioned, along with the existing Irish population there, as privateers in James II's service during the Nine Years' War, 1688-1697.<sup>43</sup>

This tradition of the Irish of St Malo receiving commissions from Stuart allies had continued, and in 1718 many held Swedish commissions to pillage British shipping.<sup>44</sup> The merchants of St Malo had wider interests than privateering in aid of the Stuarts and their allies. Recent research by Giada Pizzoni and Oliver Finnegan has convincingly shown how merchants-turned-privateers used these commissions, alongside the loosening of maritime authority during times of war, to conduct clandestine trade on their own account.<sup>45</sup> Furthermore, since the late 1690s many of the merchants of St Malo had also

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38 Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Morgan to Görtz, August 1718; BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.273, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

39 Armitage 1995, 108.

40 RA SP MAIN/29 fo.91, Stiernhock to Mar, 2 April 1718, Vienna; Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Morgan to Görtz, 31 July 1718; Sprinchorn 1920, 54; Borenus, 1926, 239.

41 Parmentier 2007, 73; Murdoch 2007, 38-42; Talbott 2014b, 139.

42 The National Archives [hereafter TNA] State Papers [hereafter SP] 42/17/2, fo.458, Captain Steuart to Burchett, 1 April 1723; *Correspondence of Francis Atterbury* ii, 360; Parmentier 2005, 48-49.

43 Anderson 1960, 59-60; Bromley 1973, 17; Lyons 2001, 107-108.

44 *The Evening Post*, 18 April 1717; Graham 2002, 162.

45 Finnegan 2018, 54-58; Pizzoni 2020, 87-90.

organised interloping trading missions to the Pacific Ocean and China.<sup>46</sup> By 1718 this trade was severely threatened. Spanish colonial law enforcement had improved after 1717 and interloping Malouin ships were increasingly seized by Spanish vessels.<sup>47</sup> Still worse, the *Compagnie des Indes* increasingly acted to protect its trade monopoly with the aid of the French state.<sup>48</sup> Morgan's project thus offered a legal means for French merchants outside of the state-monopoly companies to continue their oriental trade. As such, in 1722 these merchants are recorded as aiding Morgan in fitting out ships for his expedition.<sup>49</sup> Jacobite and private trading interests were thus aligned by Morgan's project and were legitimised by the Swedish state.

Whilst relying on Irish networks in France to organise and finance his project, Morgan's connections to Britain played a significant role. In London, his family are recorded as living around Little Wild Street and Red Lyon Street.<sup>50</sup> Furthermore, in a letter to Captain Galwey, Morgan noted that his 'good Friends and acquaintances' remaining in England 'offer'd to Subscribe two or three hundred Thousand Pounds' towards the Swedish company.<sup>51</sup> This reflects the contemporary willingness of many Britons to invest in new trading schemes such as the South Sea Company. Moving between these different networks was not uncommon in these years. Pizzoni has shown how the Irish Catholic merchant family of the Aylwards, themselves former residents in St Malo, were able to move and trade between Spain, France and London with relative ease and successfully exploit their Catholic connections for both licit and illicit trade.<sup>52</sup> In 1719, and with the support of English Jacobites and some unwitting merchants, Morgan had the ship *Revolution* fitted out in London for the expedition, which was to be joined with two of his own in France and ships from Sweden.<sup>53</sup> While Morgan's ships were in part staffed by Irish Jacobite exiles, including his son James Morgan and Andrew Galwey's relations, the majority of the crew were recruited from

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46 *Daily Courant*, 22 July 1707; *The Evening Post*, 10-12 July 1718; *Daily Journal*, 31 August 1723; Dunmore 1965, 13-24; Stein, Stein 2000, 113-114; Zahedieh 2015, 71-72.

47 Dunmore 1965, 22-23; Stein, Stein 2000, 142.

48 Dunmore 1965, 22-23.

49 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.8, Deposition of W[illiam] Wilsham, master of the *William and Betty* of Loo, 2 November 1722.

50 TNA SP 42/17/2, fo.434, J. Cokbourn to Carteret, 12 March 1723 and SP 36/27/19, Lord Vere Beauclerk to Sir Charles Wager, 16 June 1732.

51 BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.273, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

52 Pizzoni 2017a, 82-84, 90; Pizzoni 2017b, 603-604.

53 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.76, Morgan to [Andrew] Gallway, 5 March 1719; RA SP MAIN/52, fos.179-180, Morgan to James III, 1 April 1721; *Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post*, 3 January 1723.

the banks of the Thames.<sup>54</sup> Jan Parmentier has demonstrated how in 1719 the Irish entrepreneur Thomas Ray successfully exploited similar international connections between exiled Irish trading families and London to send the *Wirtemberg* to trade at Canton as one of the early expeditions of the Ostend Company.<sup>55</sup> Figures such as Ray had longstanding connections to the exiled Irish Jacobites including the Walshes in St Malo, who had brought James II to France from Ireland and whose descendant landed Prince Charles Edward in Scotland in 1745.<sup>56</sup> While the post-1691 trade of Irish exiles has been seen by Nini Rogers to have become linked to Jacobite military activities, this trade was rarely at the direction of the Stuart court.<sup>57</sup> Morgan's strategy differed from the likes of Ray in that he sought the exiled king James III's support for his project.

To do this, Morgan made contact with the exiled Irishman Lieutenant-General Arthur Dillon, a leading figure among the Jacobite diaspora in France. Although commissioned in the French army, Dillon had direct contact with the Jacobite leadership and had been greatly involved in previous Jacobite negotiations with the Swedish ambassador to France from 1716.<sup>58</sup> In October 1718, Dillon forwarded Morgan's project to the Stuart court and informed the court of his intention of bringing some of the anticipated pirate booty to their aid.<sup>59</sup> By making this link, Morgan was able to merge his Jacobitism and work for the Swedish government and, after he was ennobled in Sweden, he had his new coat of arms confirmed by James III.<sup>60</sup> This practice was common at this time. Many of the Irish in Cádiz sought to secure their residency and gain the liberty to trade through royal confirmation of their noble status.<sup>61</sup> While these communities pre-dated the flight of many Irish after 1691, the Stuart court in exile was often consulted to confirm the nobility of these Jacobites.<sup>62</sup> Thus, not only did Morgan use his connections to the exiled king to increase support for his project, but it further served to cement his position in Sweden.

Many at the Stuart court knew of plans to pardon the Madagascan pirates.

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54 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.89, Morgan to [Andrew Galwey], 1718 [1721/22?] and fo.86, Morgan to Andrew Galwey, 15 August 1718 [1721] and SP 42/17/2, fo.434, J. Cokbourne to Carteret, 12 March 1723.

55 Parmentier 2006, 378.

56 Parmentier 2005, 41; Rodgers 2009, 105-108.

57 *Ibid.*, 105.

58 Geange 2015, 69-75.

59 RA SP MAIN/37, fos.41-43, Lieutenant-General Dillon to Mar, 7 October 1718.

60 BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.274, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

61 Fannin 2003, 141; Morales 2007, 197-198.

62 RA SP/M/18, fo.189, Certificates, 1 September 1700 and fos.199-201, James II, 17 August 1701; Ciosáin 2010, 137.



Although he was not informed of Morgan's project, the Duke of Leeds had supported the projector Thomas Bowrey's plans for one such project in 1709.<sup>63</sup> So too was the Earl of Mar involved with John Breholt's similar plans in conjunction with the Company of Scotland until 1707.<sup>64</sup> As such, after noting that 'I myself had the offer some years ago', the earl had agreed to forward Morgan's memorial to James III in 1718.<sup>65</sup> Notably at this stage, Mar did not seek to directly involve James III in the project, instead advising that Morgan only 'negotiate with those people for a sum on the King's account, on his promising acts of friendship'.<sup>66</sup> Mar feared that the overt involvement of James III could irk Charles XII, and, given the failures of earlier attempts he may have been wary of pursuing such plans again.

Commercial activities were not outside of the interest of the Stuart court, however. In the wake of the failed 1715 rising, the Jacobite leadership had relied on successful Scottish merchants such as Robert Gordon in Bordeaux to supply pensions to destitute exiles.<sup>67</sup> Steve Murdoch has characterised the trade of these merchants as politically ambivalent and, until this time, the Jacobite leadership did little to actively support their trade.<sup>68</sup> This changed after the failure of the Spanish-Jacobite invasion in 1719 and increasing reports of Madagascar projects afoot in Europe. In 1719, Mar and James III had been informed by Charles Wogan that he had met an alleged king of Madagascar who offered fifteen ships to various European powers and sought a perpetual grant for a company to trade at the island.<sup>69</sup> This king, then imprisoned at Vienna, was in fact the 'self-call'd Count de Linange', an associate of the Marquis de Langalerie who had advocated a number of implausible schemes across Europe in the 1710s.<sup>70</sup> This renewed interest coincided with increasing difficulties faced by Morgan after personnel changes in the Swedish government that forced him to look for support in Spain.

In November 1718, Charles XII had died besieging Fredriksten and Baron Görtz was executed by the new Swedish ministry. While Charles's successors, Queen Ulrika Eleonora and King Frederick, regranted commissions for

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63 London Metropolitan Archives CLC/427/MS03041/2, Thomas Bowrey to the Marquis of Carmarthen, 21 May 1707; TNA Privy Council 1/2, fo.169, Marquis of Carmarthen's Proposals on how to Reduce the Pirates on Madagascar, 2 June 1709.

64 National Records of Scotland GD124/15/507/19, Earl of Cromarty to Mar, 31 December 1707; *Earls of Cromartie* i, 290.

65 RA SP MAIN/38, fos.120-121, Mar to Lieutenant-General Dillon, 14 [November] 1718.

66 *Ibid.*, fos.120-121.

67 Murdoch 2007, 40-41.

68 *Ibid.*, 40-41.

69 RA SP MAIN/41 fos.46-47, Charles Wogan to [Mar], 10 January 1719.

70 *Post Boy*, 5-7 April 1720; Boislisle 1898, 274.

Morgan to pursue his Madagascar project, the instability and the eventual Swedish moves towards reconciliation with Britain unsettled him.<sup>71</sup> He thus sought further funding in Spain and solicited King Philip V of Spain to grant the Swedish East India Company a West Indian island 'to better enable them to carry on a Commerce in that part of the World'.<sup>72</sup> Such a project, while far-fetched, was proposed at the very moment when an alliance between Sweden and Spain was being negotiated by the Spanish ambassador and Irish Jacobite, Patrick Lawless, and while Spain supported a Jacobite landing in Britain.<sup>73</sup> Failing the grant of a Caribbean island, Morgan's associate Andrew Galwey was advised to use the diplomatic weight of the Jacobite Duke of Ormonde to seek Spanish trade concessions in the Pacific.<sup>74</sup> Since 1718 the French trade to Spanish America had been hobbled after an expedition dispatched from Cádiz had captured six interloping French merchantmen.<sup>75</sup> Morgan was thus seeking to use new geopolitical alliances to gain trading privileges for French and Swedish merchants.

To this end, Morgan and Klinckowström journeyed to Spain in 1719 to meet the Duke of Ormonde and Cardinal Giulio Alberoni, who then headed the Spanish government.<sup>76</sup> Klinckowström lacked adequate credentials to carry on these negotiations and thus failed to produce an agreement.<sup>77</sup> Undeterred, Morgan turned to further members of his extended network to finance his project. In Paris in April 1720 Morgan invited John Law's associate Charles Forman to invest in his project, arguing that money made could be reinvested in Law's Mississippi scheme.<sup>78</sup> It appears that Morgan assumed Forman, who was married to a Catholic and who corresponded with the Stuart court, to be a Jacobite and thus willing to aid to his plans.<sup>79</sup> However, Forman 'dexstrously retarded' and later betrayed Morgan's plans.<sup>80</sup> In letters forwarded by Christopher Adamson to the British East India Company, Forman gave a detailed account of how the 'Project was contrived and carryed on with great secrecy'.<sup>81</sup> Morgan's expedition was

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71 RA SP MAIN/47, fos.56-57, Morgan to James III, 4 June 1720 and MAIN/52, fos.179-180, Morgan to James III, 1 April 1721.

72 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.78, Edw[ard] Brown to Andrew Galwey, 13 June 1719; BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.273, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

73 *Jacobite Attempt of 1719*, 15; Morales 2010, 174.

74 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.78, Edw[ard] Brown to Andrew Galwey, 13 June 1719.

75 Dunmore 1965, 22-23.

76 Wachtmeister 1848, 18; *Jacobite Attempt of 1719*, 141-142.

77 *Ibid.*, 162.

78 BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.274, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

79 *Ibid.*, fo.270; RA SP/BOX/1, fos.11-11g, [Charles Forman] to James III, 29 September 1721.

80 BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.274, Christopher Adamson to Mathew Decker, 15 July 1722.

81 *Ibid.*, fos.270-274.

further delayed with the collapse in venture capital in France and Britain resulting from the failure of Law's Mississippi scheme and the bursting of the South Sea Bubble.<sup>82</sup> Once again however, Morgan attempted to reinforce his position by exploiting real and imagined Jacobite networks across Spain, France and Sweden.

In 1720, Morgan was no longer able to rely on the Swedish state and had failed to secure fulsome Spanish support. Morgan thus wrote to James III, requesting orders and a commission to undertake this project, asserting that the pirates were 'very Zealous for the Interest of their Lawfull prince' and sought to 'doe for his service any act they were able.'<sup>83</sup> While reservations were held over British public opinion if the Jacobites allied themselves with the Swedish-pardoned pirates, James III wrote to Morgan that 'whatever manifestly leads towards my restoration can never be against the interests of my country.'<sup>84</sup> The exiled king's financial desperation was palpable. James III's attempts to have his French pension restored led him to recommend Guillame Dubois to Pope Innocent XIII for a cardinalship at this time.<sup>85</sup> James III thus commissioned Morgan as a Colonel.<sup>86</sup> In a period where the reputation, trust and credit of a person was crucial for the financing and organisation of long-distance trade, Morgan was in effect able to trade on the credit of the king in exile to support his project, thus allowing him access to ever larger networks of support and patronage of Jacobites in France and Spain.<sup>87</sup> This would prove crucial when Morgan was confronted with further difficulties.

With plague ravaging continental Europe in 1721, Morgan's attempts to move stores necessary for the expedition from France to Cádiz in southern Spain were delayed by quarantines.<sup>88</sup> A dual strategy responding to this was thus pursued. Morgan wrote speculatively to James III asking whether he 'could be any way usefull before I leave Europe' while his confederate Andrew Galwey turned to the Irish resident in Spain, who as Catholics benefitted from many trading privileges.<sup>89</sup> Since 1702 this group had become increasingly dominant traders after replacing English and Scottish Protestants who were forced to return to Britain owing to the War of Spanish

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82 RA SP MAIN/48, fos.59-60, Morgan to James III, 23 July 1720 and MAIN/52, fos.179-180, Morgan to James III, 1 April 1721.

83 RA SP MAIN/47, fos.56-57, Morgan to James III, 4 June 1720.

84 RA SP MAIN/47, fo.120, James III to Morgan, 22 June 1720.

85 Gregg 2003, 68.

86 RA SP M/21, fo.9, Warrant to Writ to William Morgan, 23 June 1720.

87 Zahedieh 1998, 61-66; Brock 2019, 103.

88 RA SP MAIN/53, fos.181-182, Morgan to Captain O'Brien, 25 June 1721.

89 RA SP MAIN/52, fos.179-180, Morgan to James III, 1 April 1721; O'Scea 2010, 108, 123-124.

Succession.<sup>90</sup> With the *Revolution* delayed in Cádiz, Galwey sent an emissary to Madrid and sought out the Irish trading house of Browne and Butler, who were involved in the Spanish monopoly trade to Spanish America, seeking letters and possibly to sell them provisions or the ship.<sup>91</sup> This proved a mistake however, as a letter from Browne and Butler in 1716 indicates that they disapproved of the previous Jacobite rising and they proved unwilling or unable to help Galwey.<sup>92</sup> A commentator in the city described Galwey's travails at this time in that 'by what I can see they seem to be in confusion'.<sup>93</sup> In June, Morgan lamented that 'wee are not in a condition to goe on our voyage unless wee have some support from the north [Sweden] to buy provisions'.<sup>94</sup> While ostensibly still supported the Swedish government, Morgan was increasingly frustrated by their inaction. Furthermore, his project faced increased competition as unlicensed British expeditions began to trade at Madagascar.<sup>95</sup> After further delays fitting out ships in Sweden and facing a mutiny of his crews, in July Morgan wrote desperately 'for God's sake let us consider what to doe'.<sup>96</sup> As in 1719, Morgan turned directly to his Jacobite connections in Spain to shore up his position.

In this way, Morgan's Madagascar project became involved with the Atterbury Plot. This plan, led by the Bishop of Rochester, sought to capitalise on the discontent resulting from the South Sea Bubble and Hanoverian Succession in Britain to create an uprising of plebeian Jacobites that would be aided by exiles in Europe to restore the Stuarts.<sup>97</sup> After being offered further loans from Jacobites in France, Dillon wrote to Ormonde that Morgan 'offers to Sacrifice all other considerations to promote Farmers [the Kings] 416 [expedition]', supplying the Atterbury plotters with both weapons and ships that were initially intended for Madagascar.<sup>98</sup> This appeared fortuitous for the Jacobites as it coincided with an expansion in the number

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90 O'Connor 2016, 142-143.

91 Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies DE/R/B81/15, Browne and Butler to Ralph Radcliffe, 4 November 1714 and DE/R/B147/5, Browne and Butler to Ralph and Edward Radcliffe, 5 November 1717; TNA SP 94/213, fo.432, Extract of a Letter from Cadiz, 17 June 1721 and fos.432-433, Extract of a Letter from Cadiz, 24 June 1721.

92 Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies DE/R/B81/29, Browne and Butler to Ralph Radcliffe, 5 March 1716.

93 TNA SP 94/213, fo.432, Extract of a Letter from Cadiz, 17 June 1721.

94 *Ibid.*, fo.432; RA SP MAIN/53, fos.181-182, Morgan to Captain O'Brien, 25 June 1721.

95 BL IOR/E/1/13, fo.438, Walker to the Directors of the East India Company, 22 August 1722.

96 RA SP MAIN/54, fos.30-31, Morgan to Captain O'Brien, 18 July 1721; TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.86, Morgan to Andrew Galwey, 15 August 1718 [1721].

97 Cruickshanks, Erskine-Hill 2004, 119.

98 RA SP MAIN/52, fo.171, Lieutenant-General Dillon to Ormonde, 31 March 1721.

of Irish recruits leaving to join regiments in Spain and France in 1721.<sup>99</sup> For Morgan, there would be no need for an expedition to far-off Madagascar if a restoration was close at hand.

This did not prevent Morgan from continuing with his initial plans, however. Although he professed to prefer serving James III directly, captured papers from the *Revolution* reveal that Morgan remained hopeful of incoming Swedish aid in September 1721. He wrote to Galwey that ‘the China Company [of Sweden] gave us their Patents’ and that ‘we must not lose our own Project on acct. of the home Trade’.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, even after Morgan committed to aiding the Atterbury Plot he continued with his Madagascar project, writing that ‘in case our home trade should have any delay wee may depend on being well provided for our foraigne voyage’.<sup>101</sup> In Jacobite cant, the ‘home trade’ referred to operations in Britain. Deposition evidence from his captured crew further reveals that Morgan’s ships had enough provisions for a two-year voyage necessary for a journey to Madagascar.<sup>102</sup> This willingness to pursue both his commercial and Jacobite objectives had previously occurred when Morgan’s ships were briefly committed to aid the Jacobite-Spanish invasion of Britain in 1719.<sup>103</sup> Evidently, Morgan sought to exploit all his networks and used whatever arguments were most expedient to keep his project afloat.

While James III initially declined Morgan’s offer to involve himself in the Atterbury Plot, on 23 November 1721 the King wrote again, requesting that Morgan meet with the Duke of Ormonde in Spain.<sup>104</sup> James III’s personal reflections identify the twin weaknesses of attempting a restoration; that he had neither the means to reach Britain nor the soldiers to secure victory.<sup>105</sup> Morgan’s offer changed this calculation. James III advised that the Swedish officers involved in the Madagascar scheme could be induced to join a proposed Jacobite invasion of Britain.<sup>106</sup> In April, Morgan agreed that the *Revolution* would be sold to an Irish Rear-Admiral in Spanish service, Francis Fordyce, to transport Irish troops in Spain to Britain to

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99 Ó Ciardha 2001, 196-197.

100 RA SP MAIN/52, fos.179-180, Morgan to James III, 1 April 1721; TNA SP 35/71/1, fos.91-92, Morgan to Andrew Gardner [Galwey], 19 September 1718 [1721]; Schuchard 2012, 154.

101 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.82, Morgan to Don Nicholas [Wogan?], 20 June 1718 [1721].

102 TNA SP 42/17/2, fo.551, The Examination of Mathew Gibson Protestant late Boatswain of the Ship *Revolution*, 27 June 1723.

103 *Report Lords Committees* 1723, 4.

104 RA SP MAIN/55, fos.109-110, James III to Morgan, 12 November 1721 and fos.143-144, James III to Morgan, 23 November 1721.

105 RA SP MAIN/65, fos.18-19, Notes of James III, 15 October 1721.

106 RA SP MAIN/58, fos.109-110, James III to Ormonde, 28 March 1722; *Reports House of Commons* i 1776, 273.

support the Atterbury Plot.<sup>107</sup> It was feared however that the Swedes and the merchants funding the expedition would insist on pursuing 'our old project business.'<sup>108</sup> Revelations of Morgan's duplicity now became unavoidable. Upon arrival of the Swedish flotilla at Cádiz in April 1722, notably without sufficient funds for the Madagascar expedition, their captains refused to join the Jacobites and instead returned to Sweden.<sup>109</sup> The limits of Swedish support for the Jacobites were thus exposed. The involvement of Jacobites in the Madagascar project had long been criticised in Sweden as alienating Hanoverian Britain, with whom Sweden increasingly sought to align.<sup>110</sup> As such, Jacobite requests for aid, even with the invocation of the debts incurred by Baron Görtz, were now rejected.<sup>111</sup> Although bereft of Swedish support, Morgan could still employ his ships in service of the Stuarts.

Charles Wogan and his relation Nicholas, Irish officers in Spanish service holding commissions from James III and who had fought in the 1715 rising, helped redirect Morgan's resources towards aiding the Atterbury Plot.<sup>112</sup> They prepared the landing of Morgan's ships in Britain and the movement of Irish officers in Spain to join the flotilla.<sup>113</sup> Further Jacobites were called on to strengthen these plans, with the merchants Robert Arbuthnot and Robert Gordon in France being intended to provide ships and to smuggle Jacobites into Britain ahead of the invasion.<sup>114</sup> The project was delayed in May 1722 and abandoned in July after it was discovered by the Hanoverian ministry and stalled by Spanish officials.<sup>115</sup> The plans were swiftly revived however, changing once again when the Rear-Admiral Fordyce took possession of the *Revolution* in August and sailed to meet James III, then in Lucca.<sup>116</sup> Disaster struck the Jacobites when the *Revolution* and many of the papers of Morgan

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107 TNA SP 35/71/1, fos.91-92, Morgan to Andrew Gardner [Galwey], 19 September 1718 [1721] and fo.103, Morgan to [Andrew] Gallwey, 2 April 1722.

108 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.84, Morgan to [Andrew] Galwey, 11 July 1718 [1721].

109 RA SP MAIN/58, fos.149-150, Morgan to Captain O'Brien, 7 April 1722; NLS MS 992, fo.4, Memorandum on Jacobite intrigues in Sweden; Wachtmeister 1848, 28.

110 Borenus 1926, 239.

111 RA SP MAIN/65, fos.32-33, Colonel O'Brien to Frederick I, May 1722 and MAIN/60, fos.86-87, Frederick I to Lieutenant-General Dillon, 25 June 1722; NLS MS 992, fo.4, Memorandum on Jacobite intrigues in Sweden; Schuchard 2012, 155-158.

112 *Stamford Mercury*, 10 May 1716; *Weekly Packet*, 25-1 January-February 1718; RA SP MAIN/51, fos.142-143, Captain Nicholas Wogan to James III, 9 February 1721 and M/20, fo.133, Warrant or Writ to Sir Charles Wogan, 1 April 1722; *Report Lords Committees* 1723, 5; *Appendixes Referred* 1723, 157; *Reports House of Commons* i 1776, 273; Flood 1922, 113-114.

113 *Appendixes Referred* 1723, 147-148.

114 *Ibid.*, 150, 159; Talbott 2014a, 105.

115 *Report Lords Committees* 1723, 5; *Appendixes Referred* 1723, 149, 154-155; Morales 2010, 174.

116 *Appendixes Referred* 1723, 157; RA SP MAIN/78, fos.151-152, Morgan to James III, 24 December 1724; Corp 2011, 23.

and his associates were captured at Genoa by the Royal Navy ship, the *Dragon*, on 4 December<sup>117</sup> The crew was brought to London for interrogation where the *Revolution* was soon sold.<sup>118</sup>

Morgan was financially ruined by these events. His remaining ships, impounded at Cádiz by his creditors, were ‘almost quite Destroyed by the wormes’ by 1724.<sup>119</sup> In seeking to restore his fortunes, he contacted James III once again and requested recommendations to the Spanish court where he intended to seek recompense for his losses.<sup>120</sup> This was granted and after moving from France to Spain, Morgan maintained a friendship with the Duke of Ormonde and continued to send recommendations for Jacobite invasions to the King until 1727.<sup>121</sup> His international connections remained and his wife was recorded as visiting London in 1732.<sup>122</sup> The case of William Morgan’s Madagascar project thus shows how, alongside other Irish exiles using their international connections to further projects for oriental trade, Jacobite associations could be used to secure funds and international support for these projects whilst also serving the aims of the King in exile.

## The project unravelled

The evidence and interpretations of this project, and wider Jacobite-pirate links, have varied greatly among historians as they did among Morgan’s contemporaries. As noted, Woodard has suggested that pirates from the Caribbean did indeed coordinate their actions with Jacobites in Europe, while Bialuschewski asserts that the Jacobites simply hoped that the pirates would aid them.<sup>123</sup> Understanding Johan Osthoff’s interpretation of events is crucial to revealing the weaknesses of the networks exploited by William Morgan and other projectors in this period, for Morgan’s project was based on a series of lies and was even undermined by the actions of a fellow Jacobite named John Norcross.

First, it is necessary to sketch Osthoff’s involvement in the project and his interpretation of events. From Sweden, Osthoff had been commissioned

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- 117 National Maritime Museum ADM/L/D/180, Lieutenant’s logbook for HMS *Dragon* 1717-1723, 23 November 1722. This date is 4 December 1722 in the New Style Calendar.  
118 TNA SP 42/17/2, fo.551, The Examination of Mathew Gibson Protestant late Boatswain of the Ship *Revolution*, 27 June 1723; *Daily Courant*, 10 February 1724.  
119 RA SP/MAIN/78, fos.151-152, Morgan to James III, 24 December 1724.  
120 *Ibid.*, fos.151-152.  
121 RA SP/MAIN/80, fo.52, Lord Inverness to Morgan, 17 February 1725 and MAIN/108, fos.38-39, Morgan to James III, 5 July 1727; *Correspondence of Francis Atterbury* ii, 360.  
122 TNA SP 36/27/19, Lord Vere Beauclerk to Sir Charles Wager, 16 June 1732.  
123 Woodard 2007, 230; Bialuschewski 2011, 160.

to supply arms to Morgan and his confederates in France.<sup>124</sup> In 1722, after the Swedish officers refused to involve themselves in the Atterbury Plot, the Swedish commander Ulrich was imprisoned upon his return for not continuing past Cádiz and Osthoff was appointed to continue the project.<sup>125</sup> This was abandoned in 1723 after Osthoff was accused of holding some sort of 'dangerous Correspondence'.<sup>126</sup> Osthoff fled to Britain at this time, where he presumably wrote his fateful memorandum and in his 'very miserable circumstances' sought to recommend 'my Affair to your Excellency's [Charles Delafaye's] patronage and protection.'<sup>127</sup> Osthoff's attempt to secure British government support for the project appears to have failed.

In his memorandum, Osthoff asserts that Swedish aid to the Jacobites took place 'under Pretence of an Expedition to Madagascar.'<sup>128</sup> Osthoff claimed that Morgan and Klinckowström sought to deceive the Swedish government to gain both funds and arms to support James III.<sup>129</sup> This appears to derive from a combination of Osthoff misunderstanding Morgan's duplicity, his anger at the financial losses he made when he sought to continue the project in 1723, and his need to ingratiate himself with the Hanoverian government after fleeing Sweden.<sup>130</sup> That Osthoff was mistaken in his assertions is evident from the fact that firstly, only from July 1721 does Morgan refer to receiving funds from Francis Atterbury and the Jacobites. Secondly, letters referring to the provisioning of ships bound for Madagascar prove that they were clearly intended to leave Europe, and finally, Morgan's correspondence with the exiled King states as much.<sup>131</sup> Evidently, Morgan's activities were only subsumed into the Atterbury Plot in 1721-1722 after the Madagascar project faltered owing to delays and a lack of proper funding and organisation.

The truth of the expedition's failure is far more complex than previously assumed, for Morgan's links to the pirates of Madagascar are provably false. Following a visit to London in early 1720, Morgan had written to James III that the Madagascan pirates known to him were 'rich and nomerous' and had 'between 25 & [sic] 30 ships of force' called by the names of *King James* and the

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124 *Report Lords Committees* 1723, 4.

125 *Daily Post*, 17 November 1721; *Ibid.*, 4; *Daily Journal*, 29 August and 18 November 1722; *Daily Courant*, 5 October and 6 November 1722.

126 *Daily Journal*, 20 April and 21 August 1723.

127 TNA SP 35/66/1, fo.36, Osthoff to Delafaye.

128 NLS MS 992, fo.1, Memorandum on Jacobite intrigues in Sweden.

129 *Ibid.*, fo.2.

130 *Ibid.*, fos.1-6; Lenman 1980, 188.

131 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.86, Morgan to Andrew Galwey, 15 August 1718 [1721], fo.84, Morgan to [Andrew] Galwey, 11 July 1718 [1721] and SP 42/17/2, fo.551, The Examination of Mathew Gibson Protestant late Boatswain of the Ship *Revolution*, 27 June 1723; RA SP MAIN/52, fos.179-180, Morgan to James III, 1 April 1721.



*Duke of Ormond* which were then operating off the coast of Guinea.<sup>132</sup> While contemporary accounts from these pirates' captives affirm that pirates would drink to 'several other Healths, amongst which was that of the Pretender', and that one had sailed with the pirate Stede Bonnet who Fox identifies as having Jacobite inclinations, no immediate connections to Morgan are evident.<sup>133</sup> Instead, this same news describing the predations of the pirate flotilla under Howell Davis with the ships *King James*, *New King James* and *Ormond*, was carried some months prior in the *Weekly Packet*.<sup>134</sup> This would have been a readily available source to Morgan during his time in London.

In addition to overstating the number of ships in Davis's fleet, Morgan includes an enlightening error that undermines the view that he knew the pirates. Howell Davis and his Jacobite pirates did not operate from Madagascar as Morgan claimed, instead these pirates had built their careers raiding in the Caribbean.<sup>135</sup> The revival of Anglo-American piracy in West Africa occurred with the migration of those pirates in 1718-19 after the fall of New Providence, not from a resurgence of activity from those pirates resident in Madagascar since the 1690s.<sup>136</sup> Woodes Rogers in 1711 had described those pirates remaining in Madagascar as 'miserable Wretches' who were 'very poor and despicable' and stated that a mere sixty to seventy of them remained and had intermarried with the Malagasy.<sup>137</sup> Notably, they were said to possess 'no Embarkations' and were 'so inconsiderable, that they scarce deserve to be mentioned.'<sup>138</sup>

As Madagascar was largely cut off from European traders after 1698 accurate accounts of the state of these pirates are rare. One of the few slave-trading expeditions from the Dutch East India Company operating out of Table Bay in Southern Africa in 1715 offers insights.<sup>139</sup> The journals of the supercargoes of the ship *Leijdsman* reveal that the Madagascans encountered on this voyage had not met any ships of any nation since some years prior.<sup>140</sup> Additionally, significant numbers of pirates are not noted in other contemporary slaving journals and in the possibly apocryphal account

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132 RA SP MAIN/46, fos.51-52, Morgan to James III, 9 April 1720 and MAIN/47, fos.56-57, Morgan to James III, 4 June 1720.

133 *A Full and Exact Account* 1723, 10; Snelgrave 1734, 216; Fox 2010, 288, 296.

134 *Weekly Packet*, 5-12 December 1719; *Daily Post*, 22 October 1719; for a discussion of Davis's activities see Wilson 2018, 435-437.

135 Holyroyd 2017, 763-764.

136 Bialuschewski 2004, 176-177; *Ibid.*, 762.

137 Rogers 1712, 419.

138 *Ibid.*, 419.

139 Westra, Armstrong 2006, 3, 13.

140 *Ibid.*, 53.

of Robert Drury, a castaway in Madagascar since 1701.<sup>141</sup> Such supports the descriptions of Rogers and demonstrates the impossibility of Morgan communicating with the few remaining pirates of Madagascar after trade was largely cut off in 1698. Evidently, the pirates Morgan refers to in his letters of 1720 to James III could not have been those he had claimed to know in his earlier correspondence with Baron Görtz.<sup>142</sup> Instead, it appears that information gained in 1720 from London newspapers was used by Morgan to substantiate his pre-existing, yet false, claims to the Stuart court when he sought the support of the king to pursue the project after facing delays in Sweden.

Hitherto, conflicting accounts of William Morgan's identity have meant that his connections to the pirates have gone largely unquestioned. Works by Murdoch, Daniel Szechi, and Eveline Cruickshanks assert that a Captain William Morgan served in the Royal Navy.<sup>143</sup> Such would give him a plausible link to the pirates of Madagascar, many of whom were formerly sailors in the Royal Navy.<sup>144</sup> Other historians have identified Morgan as a pirate of Madagascar himself who had returned to Europe.<sup>145</sup> Numerous letters contest both these interpretations, however. Morgan refers to his 'long service in the army' in a missive sent to James III, and a letter in the Riksarkivet, from the Jacobite and Swedish-commissioned privateer John Norcross, notes that Morgan's only prior naval employment was procuring clothes for the Royal Navy.<sup>146</sup> Finally, in 1721 Morgan complained to Andrew Galwey that he had been involved in sea affairs for the past five years.<sup>147</sup> These letters convincingly show that Morgan himself was not a sea captain and would have had a limited knowledge of maritime trade. This fact does much to demystify Morgan's previously unchallenged links to the pirates in Madagascar and gives suggestions as to how he came to project this plan in Sweden.

William Morgan's original plan likely originated with the wave of proposed projects made in Britain after 1698 where a network of East

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141 BL IOR/L/MAR/C/324, Journal of the *Henry*, October-November 1717; Drury 1729, 309.

142 Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Morgan to Görtz.

143 Cruickshanks 2000, 247; Murdoch 2006a, 322; Murdoch 2006b, 359; Szechi 2019, 183.

144 Leibbrandt 1896, 394, 461.

145 Lenman 1980, 188; Dawson 1995, 211.

146 *Weekly Packet*, 21-28 December 1717 and 18-25 January 1718; Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Norcross to Görtz, 1718; *Letter-book of Bailie John Steuart*, 60; RA SP MAIN/47, fo.57, Morgan to James III, 4 June 1720.

147 TNA SP 35/71/1, fo.86, Morgan to Andrew Galwey, 15 August 1718 [1721].

India traders and former pirates existed in London.<sup>148</sup> Proposals made in 1706 to parliament by one Joseph Duckett are forwarded by one Edward Morgan.<sup>149</sup> This Edward Morgan also forwarded the documents of Samuel Burgess to support an expedition to Madagascar.<sup>150</sup> Burgess, a pirate and former crewmate of the circumnavigator William Dampier, in 1704 had first proposed to Thomas Bowrey that he seek a settlement in Madagascar.<sup>151</sup> After Bowrey failed to gain the support of the Company of Scotland for one of his projects, in 1706 Edward Morgan aided Bowrey in proposing to repatriate the pirates of Madagascar and establish a trading settlement there.<sup>152</sup> Such suggests that a social and commercial network of former pirates and projectors, now seeking to reach Madagascar, existed in London. As suggested in his initial memorandum to Baron Görtz, Morgan was clearly well aware of this historic project and simply adapted it for the conditions he found in Sweden in 1718.

The adaptation and competition of projectors of these schemes was a consistent theme in these years. Earlier iterations of plans to pardon the pirates of Madagascar had seen John Breholt in competition with Thomas Bowrey, seeking to get his benefactor, Lord Godolphin, to 'put a stop to all their proceedings.'<sup>153</sup> Similarly, Morgan was repeatedly undermined by the Jacobite John Norcross, who derided his seafaring capabilities to Baron Görtz, and later sought to pursue his own version of the project with the support of James III.<sup>154</sup> Although he failed to gain their support in this, Norcross recommended the project in Russia and, in 1724, with the aid of the exiled Dano-Swedish Admiral Wilster, Russian ships were fitted out in Tallinn to sail to Madagascar.<sup>155</sup> This expedition was aborted before leaving the Baltic and appears to have failed again in 1725.<sup>156</sup> Norcross and Morgan had been

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148 BL MSS EUR D1076, fo.10, A List of the Names of all the Adventurers in the STOCK of the Governour and Company of Merchants of London, trading to the East Indies, 13 April 1706. The name William Morgan appears on this list yet there is little to suggest that this is the same man.

149 TNA SP 34/8, fo.2, Observations offered to the house of Lords by Joseph Duckett on how to reclaim the pirates of Madagascar, [by July 3] 1706.

150 TNA SP 34/7, fo.12, Postscript to the case of Samuel Burgess, 14 November 1705.

151 Ritchie 1988, 128-129.

152 NatWest Group Archive GB 1502 D/1/3, Journal of Directors, 13-14 July 1703; TNA SP 63/366, fo.50, Edward Morgan to Hedges, 31 July 1706 and SP 34/8, fo.67, Edward Morgan to [Hedges], 10 September 1706.

153 BL Add. MS 28055, fo.418, John Breholt to Lord Godolphin, 16 August 1707.

154 Riksarkivet SE/RA/720383/E 3800, Norcross to Görtz, 1718; RA SP MAIN/65, fos.6-6b, Norcross to James III, 10 March 1721; Sprinchorn 1920, 55.

155 *Daily Courant*, 19 February and 2 April 1724; *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer*, 4-11 April 1724; Cruickshanks 2000, 251.

156 *Mist's Weekly Journal*, 14-21 August 1725; Waliszewski ii 1969, 68-69.

able to initially prosper owing to the longstanding strategy of projectors changing descriptions of the pirates and their loyalties to suit their patrons. In seeking Queen Anne's support for the Company of Scotland's version of the project, the Earl of Cromarty had highlighted the high number of Scots in Madagascar.<sup>157</sup> Similarly, a proposal seeking a French expedition emphasised the French presence on the island.<sup>158</sup> Evidently, projectors were more than willing to distort evidence and deploy whatever connections they could to pursue their plans. The Stuart court, the Swedish government, Irish merchants and Jacobites across western Europe were simply an unwitting part of this from the years 1718 to 1723.

## Conclusion

The Madagascar project of William Morgan does much to reveal the workings of the Jacobite movement and projectors in the wake of the 1715. While similar proposals had been advocated across Europe prior to Morgan's arrival in Sweden, it was his purported links to the pirates of Madagascar, combined with the convergence of Swedish and Stuart interests that allowed the project to prosper after Morgan claimed the pirates as Jacobites. Morgan was initially able to employ both his commercial and kinship networks with the Irish in Brittany and London to establish himself in exile. Jacobite networks further allowed him to ship funds to Sweden, thereby meeting Baron Görtz and pursuing his primary interest of commercial rather than military ventures. Beset with delays yet supported by James III's commission, Morgan was able to use both Swedish and Jacobite connections in Spain to pursue his plans there, later to receive loans, and finally to sell his ships to a Jacobite in Spanish service.

All of this was based on false information Morgan supplied to his benefactors, yet was allowed to continue on the basis of his trading on the high regard the Swedes and Stuarts held for one another. This essay thus revises previous interpretations of the figures involved in this project and shows how Irish commercial networks could be bolstered by their Jacobitism which, even when ostensibly for purely commercial purposes, could have military applications to help effect a Stuart restoration. Adherence to the Stuart cause thus offered individuals opportunities to engage in projects for oriental and West Indian trade alongside aiding the king in exile.

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157 NLS MS 5319, fo.1, Earl of Cromarty to Anne I, October 1705.

158 TNA Chancery 108/416, Advantages Wch may be made from ye Establishment of Colonies at Madagascar both in point of Religion and Commerce.

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