

Nelson's Remarks

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An Interesting Find
At
The Gibraltar National Archives.

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Anthony Pitaluga MBE

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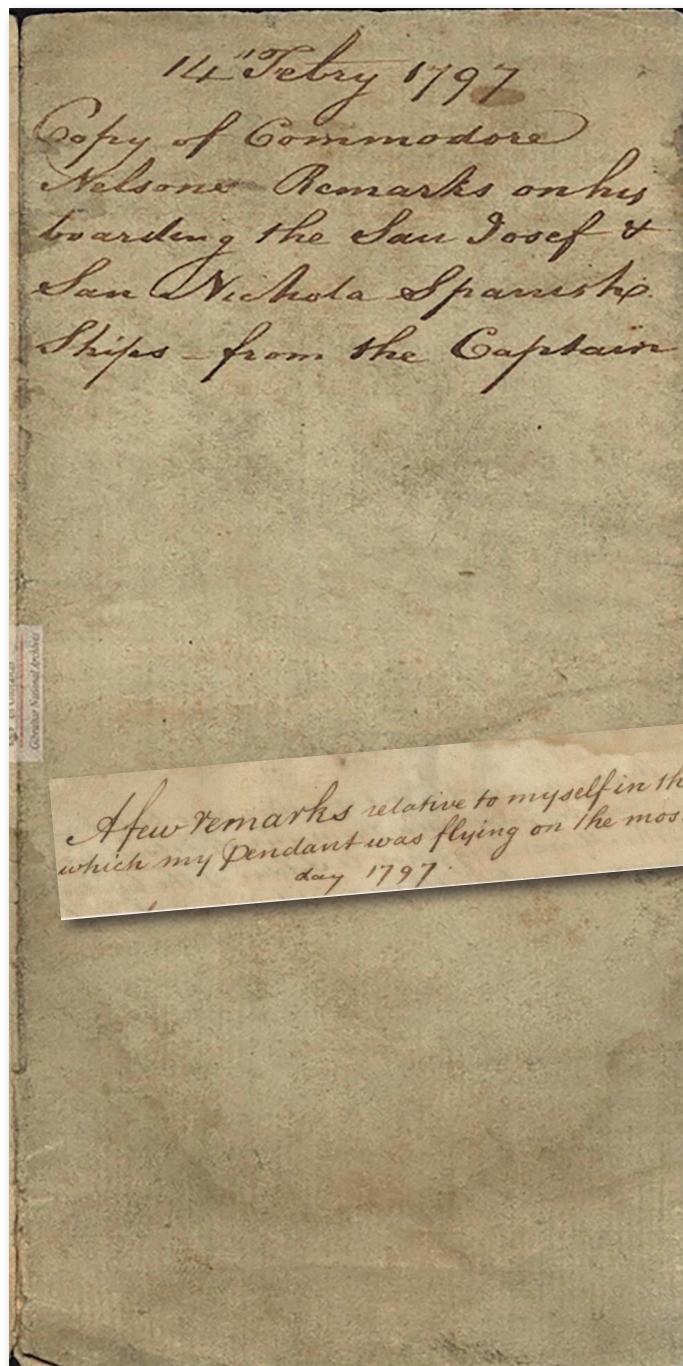


Figure 1: Folded Parchment with handwritten script dated 14th February 1797.

Figure 2:
Document Summary top of page 1⁵.

The Gibraltar National Archives (GNA) is full of documents and materials relating to the past five hundred years of our rich history. To gain a better understanding of the relative extent of our archival collections, linear metres are used as the metric of convention. Using linear metres an approximate size of the GNA holdings has been derived¹.

Currently, the GNA holds over 1500 metres (1.5 Kilometers) of physical linear storage and growing every day. This is a significant amount taking into consideration the small size and population of Gibraltar. The chance of new discoveries never ceases from such abundant, rich, and varied holdings. The following account is an example.

On a cold February morning in 2015, I made a chance discovery whilst acquainting myself with the GNA's 18th Century Miscellaneous Papers Collection².

I came across a piece of folded parchment inscribed with a few lines of handwritten script. The script (Figure 1) reads as follows:

14th Febry 1797, Copy of Commodore Nelson's Remarks on his boarding the San Josef & San Nicholas Spanish Ships – from the Captain (H. M. S. Captain the Royal Navy ship)³.

Immediately the words 'Commodore Nelson'⁴ which can clearly be read, jumped out at me, grabbing my attention. I summoned the conservator, who very carefully unfolded the parchment and exposed the full extent of the document. This consists of two full pages of handwritten script and a blank page. On the topmost area of the first page, there is an explanation or summary, the "Remarks". (Figure 2) reads:

"A few remarks relative to myself in the Captain in which my pendant was flying on the most glorious Valentine day 1797".

We had discovered what at first glance seemed an authentic period copy of Commodore Horatio Nelson's remarks regarding his boarding the Spanish ships San Josef & San Nicholas, at the battle of Cape St Vincent in 1797, presumably written by Nelson himself⁶.

Cape St. Vincent is a headland in the Algarve, Southern Portugal. It is the South-western most point of Portugal and of mainland Europe⁷.

It was now a matter of trying to authenticate the document we had discovered.

¹A measurement in metres is taken of all standard sizes of archival boxes, flat folders, vertical files etc., held at the GNA, including "custom container" dimensions. All these measurements are then added up and from the total an approximate size in linear metres of the Archive is derived.

²(GNA/MPC/18).

³GNA/MPC/18/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks' 1797. Front.

⁴2nd and 3rd line Figure 1.

⁵GNA/MP/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks' 1797.

⁶In 1797 Nelson was a Royal Navy Commodore.

⁷Portuguese: Cabo de São Vicente, five hours drive from Gibraltar.

Figure 3: Cape St. Vincent, Southern Portugal. Photo A W Pitaluga 2016.



Provenance

To start authenticating a historical document a few basic questions must be asked. The investigation starts by simply asking, where did the document come from? What is its provenance?⁸

The history of ownership regarding this document is not extensive considering it is two hundred and twenty-four years old. It is first referenced, within the first half of the 20th Century, belonging to the Colonial Government, which subsequently became the City and Legislative Councils, and later the Government of Gibraltar.⁹

Before transfer to the GNA in the 1970s, the document was kept at the Gibraltar Government Secretariat, Governor's Lane. There is no record as to when, why, how, from where or from whom, the document was first acquired or purchased. And if bought by who? The seller if any is also important, who sold it? For what reason was it sold and for how much? Knowledge of price, if any, is an important consideration, however, caution is advised when relating a high price value to authenticity. Unfortunately, there are no records regarding price, purchase, sale, or anything else regarding this document.

Identities

After looking at the provenance, we considered the identity of the author(s), recipient(s) and signatory(s). In this case, the author, presumably is Commodore Horatio Nelson.



The three signatories on the document are (Figure 4):

Horatio Nelson [Commodore, Royal Navy]
Ralph Willett Miller [Captain, Royal Navy]
Edward Berry [Commander, Royal Navy]

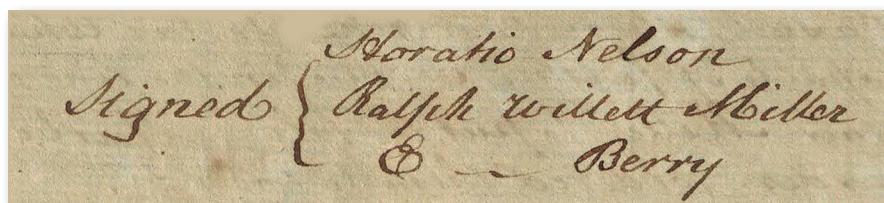


Figure 4: Document Signatories¹⁰.

⁸ The place of origin or earliest known history or the history of ownership.

⁹ GNA/MP/956d/.

¹⁰ GNA/MP/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks' 1797-

Verification of the identities was the next step, we needed to substantiate the three signatories. We did this by comparing the names above with authentic period documents. Would the same people appear in the same roles? At the same time? We sought verification by consulting the London Gazette, one of the official journals of record or Government gazettes of the British government. The most important among such official journals in the United Kingdom, in which certain statutory notices are required to be published.

The London Gazette, No. 20939, published on the 25th of January 1849, specifies a list of ships and the battles for which, according to Her Majesty's gracious command, and in compliance with the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, medals were awarded to the surviving officers, seamen and marines who were present in any successful action. On page 238 of this publication, Her Majesty's ship '*Captain*', commanded by Commodore Horatio Nelson and Captain R. W. Miller & Commander E. Berry¹¹, is recorded as part of a list of names of ships for which claims had been proved and action for which a medal was granted. The action in this instance was recorded by the London Gazette as the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, 14th February 1797¹².

The information on the London Gazette substantiates the existence of the ship, the identity of the signatories, their roles, and corresponding ranks. Further proof obtained from this section of the London Gazette is that the Battle of Cape St. Vincent is recorded there, as having taken place on the 14th of February 1797. This corresponds with the data on the copy we hold.

Regarding the recipient, none can be found on the document, our copy is not addressed to anyone. It seems to be, what might be considered, a personal account of action undertaken (*A few Remarks* see Figure 2). A detailed, descriptive report of a victorious sea battle, with reference almost entirely to his (Nelson's) own proceedings in the Captain, and those who took part with him. With the subsequent boarding of the San Josef and San Nicolas, Spanish ships at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, on the 14th of February 1797.

Transcription

Having identified and verified the signatories, lack of recipient, the ship, the date, and location, we proceeded to read and transcribe the document¹³.

Context

We went on to try to set, or contextualize the events described in the document. We did this to try to establish whether the occurrences described fit within the historical context they are set.

¹¹ Commander E. Berry was a passenger on-board the Ship Captain, after having been promoted to the rank of Commander.

¹² <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/20939/page/238>. Accessed 29th December 2020.

¹³ See full transcription without corrections or omission Appendix 1.

Reading and transcribing old documents is at the best of times fraught with difficulties, because of a variety of issues, such as deterioration of the paper, fading of the ink, missing, broken, flaked or torn pieces, difficult to read handwriting, foreign languages etc. However, our document is relatively clear and reasonably easy to read and transcribe. Nevertheless, we encountered some difficulty understanding out of use words or phrases, not common in the English language we speak today, but which prevailed at the time. This document added the extra difficulty of understanding out of use 18th Century naval terms that abound within the script.

To ascertain whether the incidents in the account relate and fit within the historical context the document is set, we turned again to the faithful London Gazette. On the 20th of February 1798, the London Gazette published a notice under issue No.14093, from Mr. Christopher Cooke, on behalf of Mr. George Purvis, King's Agent for Prize Money, to the officers and companies composing the fleet [at Cape St. Vincent] under the command of Admiral Sir John Jervis, on the 14th day of February 1797¹⁴.

At this point it is worth noting that Nelson in his "Remarks" refers to "the Admiral" (Admiral Jervis), his superior, only once at the beginning of his "Remarks" account, and not by name. More on this later¹⁵.

Coming back to the London Gazette, Notice No.14093, relates to the distribution of respective portions of prize monies arising from the sale of the Spanish ships that were captured on Valentine day 1797. The notice lists the twenty-two British ships that took part in the battle of Cape St. Vincent, and the dates when the payments would be made. Among the ships listed by the London Gazette are the *Captain*, *Culloden*, *Diadem* and *Excellent*. Further proof of the authenticity of the document is that these are the same ships Nelson mentions on the copy of the "Remarks" we hold. The Gazette then goes on, to make the following proclamation:

A Medal is granted [to the ships company of the] Captain Commanded by Commodore Horatio Nelson and Captain R.W. Miller¹⁶.

Here we have further evidence of the authenticity of the account.

To substantiate the veracity of the evidence to a greater degree, we sought the help of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, who very kindly and swiftly directed us to letters published in a book called *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson*, with notes by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas (former Naval Officer RN), originally published in London by Henry Colburn in 1844.

There is a digitized copy of the second edition of this publication available on the Hathi Trust's website¹⁷. It is a work in seven volumes, with annotations by Sir Ni-

¹⁴ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/14093/page/165>. Accessed 30th December 2020.

¹⁵ *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, Vol II, Analysis of the life of Nelson 1795-1797*, p. xxvii.

¹⁶ <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/14093/page/165>. Accessed 30th December 2020.

¹⁷ The Hathi Trust's website: <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=iu.32000007393806&view=1up&seq=1&q1=Battle%20of%20Cape%20St.%20Vincent%201797>. Accessed 30th December 2020

cholas Harris Nicolas. Volume two covers the period 1795 to 1797. On the contents list for the year 1797, we found two entries referring to pages 340-347 of the original book (pages 378-385 of the digital file) with the following text:

*"A Few Remarks relative to myself, in the Captain, in which my Pendant was flying on the most glorious Valentine's Day, 1797"*¹⁸.



Figure 5: National Maritime Museum, Greenwich.

The text above are the same words, in the same order, an exact copy, of the first paragraph on the copy held by us (see figure 2).

Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, in his notes accompanying the book mentioned above, states that the first entry on page 340, is taken...

*"From a copy in the Nelson's Papers, corrected by Nelson, and with the autograph signatures of Commodore Nelson, Captain Miller, and Captain Berry..."*¹⁹.

Sir Nicholas then goes on to say that...

"...Clarke and M'Arthur state that Commodore Nelson sent a Copy of this Narrative to H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, with the following Note: - "The praises and honours of my Admiral tell me I may relate my tale: I therefore send your Royal Highness a few Remarks

¹⁸ *h The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, Vol II* p.340.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* p.340.

*relative to myself in the Captain, in which my Pendant was flying on the most glorious Valentine's Day*²⁰.

In a foot note on the preceding page, Sir Nicholas notes that Clarke and M'Arthur, reporters of the Naval Chronicle, published a version of the "Remarks" soon after they were written, later reprinted in 1799. Sir Nicholas emphasizes that the copy published by Clarke and M'Arthur, in places, differs verbally, with some additions, from the original found in the Nelson's Dispatches. Be that as it may, the Nelson's Dispatches continue with the second entry on page 344, described by Sir Nicholas as an...

*"Autograph draught, in the Nelson Papers. Though this Paper is in many places in the same words as the preceding, [the first entry mentioned above], yet as it is a document of a different character, the former being merely signed by Nelson, while this is wholly in his own hand, and as, moreover, it contains some interesting additions..."*²¹.

We compared the text under both entries and found the account scripted on our copy to be verbatim the account given under the first entry on page 340. According to Sir Nicholas, the first version of the "Remarks", is itself, a direct copy made from the original. This is proof that an original exists, preserved within the so called "Nelson Papers or Dispatches". Furthermore, the account on our copy corresponds word for word with the account copied from the version Sir Nicholas describes as the original.

Further proof emerged when we looked at the names of the Spanish ships Nelson claimed to have boarded in his "Remarks", i.e., the San Josef and San Nicolas (See Fig.1). These correspond to the ships boarded as stated on the *Nelson's Papers*.

On the 15th of February 1797, Admiral Jervis sent his official account of the battle of Cape St. Vincent, from the Victory anchored at Lagos Bay, to Evan Nepean secretary to the Admiralty. This account was then made the official public report of the battle and published on an extraordinary edition of the London Gazette on the 3rd March 1797²².

A textual copy of Admiral Jervis's report is reproduced within *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson*. A footnote on page 3, of this report shows a list of four Spanish ships taken by the British fleet. This list includes the *San Josef* and *San Nicolas*, together with the *Salvador del Mundo* and *San Ysidro*. The next page of the Admiral's report shows a list titled '*The British Fleet opposed to the Spanish, the 14th of February 1797*'. Fifteen British ships, their commanding officers, and the numbers killed (24), and wounded (56) are listed here. Including the Captain with Commodore Nelson and Captain Miller recorded at the helm²³.

²⁰ *Ibid.p.340.*

²¹ *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson p.344.*

²² <https://www.thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/13987/page/211-213>. Accessed 30th December 2020.

²³ *The London Gazette 3 March 1797 Issue:13987 Page:211-213.*

Typography

Having established the authenticity of the account and the historical context in which it is set, we continued our investigation by looking at the typography of the document (style, arrangement, and appearance of the script). Is the typography proper to the date of the document? Does the hand correspond to the handwritten style of the age?

Consider the excerpt below taken from Nelson's "Remarks": (Figure 6).

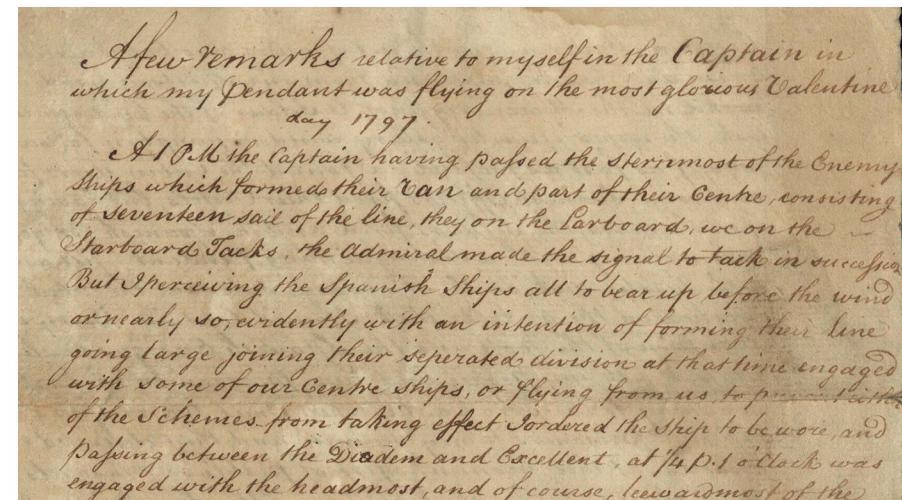


Figure 6: Excerpt taken from Nelson's "Remarks": The Battle of Cape St. Vincent 14th February 1797²⁴.

Compare a document, from the Registers of Commissions, Instructions & Descriptions of Privateers 1796-1799 (Figure 7). This is an authenticated document taken from the GNA 18th Century collection:

It is clear, that the style, arrangement, and appearance of the handwritten script on the excerpt above, is remarkably like the script found on our copy. Both conform, without doubt, with the prevalent, fashionable writing manner of the era. Both examples show script orientation tending right, together with adornment, and decoration of some of the characters. Adornment and decoration of characters in handwritten script was common in the 18th and 19th centuries. At this point, I think it is safe to say that the typography on our copy adheres to and is in keeping with, the typography of the age.

²⁴ GNA/MPC/18/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks' 1797.

P.S. War Kingfisher Galicho Capt'n Lewis Alejandro
square Stern no head Two masts, mounted with eight
Carriage Guns, carrying Shot of four & one pounds weight
and three Swivel Guns. besides other small arms, and
manned with forty five Men, Burthen fifty Tons. Date of
the French, Dutch, and Spanish Commissions 27th February
1797.—
Owner Judah & Abram Benoliel.—

P.S. War Game Cock/Boat, Captain John
Fernandes. square Stern, no head & one Mast mounted
with four Swivels, four Blunderbuses, and other small arms
and manned with fifteen men. Burthen ten Tons.—
French, Spanish, and Dutch Commissions. Dated the
27th February 1797.—
Owner John Giro.

P.S. War Diligence Captain Dennis James Spencer
Lugger, square Stern, no head & three masts mounted
with five Carriage Guns, carrying Shot four & one pounds weight.
and eight Swivel Guns besides other small arms
and manned with thirty men. Burthen forty Tons.
Date of the French, Dutch, & Spanish Commissions.
17th day of March 1797.—
Owner, Joseph de Isaac Faurel.—

Figure 7: Excerpt from the Register of Commissions, Instructions & Descriptions of Privateers 1796-1799²⁵.

Historical Linguistics

Following our examination of the handwriting, we turned to the historical linguistics, the syntax, lexicon, and the drafting of the document. The syntax refers to the arrangement of words and phrases to create well-formed sentences in a language. Examination of the document's syntax will help establish whether the actual use of the language is analogous to that used in the 18th Century.

Consider Captain Collingwood's conduct, described by Nelson:

“...Captain Collingwood disdaining the parade of taking possession of broken enemies, most gallantly pushed up with every sail...”²⁶.

Regarding the use of the standard English language in writing, and skills in letter-writing practices, the 18th century uniquely differs from earlier times in that it witnessed a rapid rise of normative grammar and an increased awareness of the language²⁷.

It is worth noting that the role of English as a global language gained momentum in the 18th century²⁸.

Nelson uses Standard English, exemplifying 18th-century letter-writing politeness and extravagance in the way he makes use of the language. True to the period. The syntax corresponds with typical 18th Century English language syntax. There are many other examples like the one above within the script.

The lexicon refers to the dictionary, vocabulary, or glossary used, to include the spelling. Comparing lexicon is tricky because 18th Century spelling was notoriously changeable. There are other more complex issues relating to grammar that also tended to change often.

Consider the following phrase by Nelson:

“...A soldier of the 69th Regiment having broke the upper gallery window, jumped in followed by myself as fast as possible...”²⁹.

Note the use of the word *broke*, writers at the time would say *having broke*... whereas we would say *having broken*. Another morsel of evidence, Nelson's grammar is true to the era.

18th Century naval terms also presented a problem. Consider the following two phrases:

“...wind on the larboard tack...”³⁰.

²⁵ GNA/MPC/18th Century/Privateers/1796-1799.

²⁶ GNA/MPC/18/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks'/1797.

²⁷ Terri Tuvalainen, Minna Polander-Collins and Tanja Säily, *Patterns of change in 18th-century English – Patterns of change in 18th-century English, advances in historical sociolinguistics (AH) ISSA 2214-1057 Volume 8, Chapter 1, Approaching Change in the 18th-century English*, p.10.

²⁸ Terri Tuvalainen, Minna Polander-Collins and Tanja Säily, *Patterns of change in 18th-century English – Patterns of change in 18th-century English, advances in historical sociolinguistics (AH) ISSA 2214-1057 Volume 8, Chapter 2, Society & Culture in the long 18th-century*, p.14.

²⁹ GNA/MPC/18/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks'/1797.

³⁰ Ibid.

Formerly, larboard was often used instead of today's port.

And:

“...our spritsail yard which hooked in the mizen rigging...”³¹.

The *spritsail* would be referred today as the square-rigged sail. The *mizen rigging* refers to the arrangements of ropes and cordages that form part of and secure the mizzenmast: the aft-most mast. Typically, shorter than the fore mast. Spritsail and mizen rigging are naval terms that were used by sailors of the past which provides further proof, this time detailed and relating to a particular domain i.e., the Sea and the Royal Navy. Some sailors still use these nautical terms today³².

Two other old Naval terms found on Nelson's Remarks are worth mentioning, both are contained within the following phrase,

“...The San Nicolas luffing up fell on board...”.

To ‘luff’ is to keep close to the wind. To ‘fall on board’ is to range close alongside³³.

Next, we examined the drafting or arrangement and divisions of the document. To highlight here, is the absence of paragraphs, there are no divisions in the script. This is coupled with exceptionally long sentences and little punctuation which hinders reading. Nevertheless, this is further proof of authenticity because paragraphs and punctuation were often omitted by writers at the time³⁴.

Graphics

Another important consideration is the presence of any seals, stamps, graphics, abbreviations, strange squiggles, and dashes above or in between letters, embossing or watermarks on the document. Our document contains abbreviations common to the 18th Century, as well as a very faint, seemingly branded, watermark embossed on the blank page across the first (Figure 8).

The next logical step would be to identify and try to date this watermark. Notwithstanding the “*Remarks*” is dated, it is also important to consider the date of the watermark itself. Many times, the date of the document is different to that of the watermark.

The study of watermark features offers exciting research potentials. They can be used as investigation tools and direction-finders. Watermark study or Filigranology, operates admirably as a means of testing and sometimes even confirming evidence as well as furnishing research shortcuts. Watermarks are sometimes used to help date the paper of undated documents, this helps narrow the search ranges, as well as helping establish provenance, authenticity, and legitimacy. It is a well-known fact that watermarks are one of the oldest and most reliable paper protection methods.

Watermarks are mainly used on official or on documents in which authenticity

³¹ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spritsail_\(square-rigged\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spritsail_(square-rigged)). Accessed 2nd January 2021.

³² Robert Southey, *Life of Nelson*, New York, London & Bombay, 1896. P.99.

³³ British Literature Wiki, 18th-century grammars. <https://sites.udel.edu/britlitwiki/eighteen-th-century-grammars/>. Accessed 2nd January 2021.

³⁴ *Filigranology* is an auxiliary science of history which studies watermarks.



Figure 8: Simple view of the watermark on Nelson's “Remarks” held by the GNA.

is important e.g., legal. In the past, paper mills used watermarks to establish their own seal, and to trace paper origin and quality, the same way we use logos today. Watermarks also serve decorative functions.

There are numerous techniques and devices that may be employed to enhance and improve a faint, unreadable watermark like the one we found embossed on our document (Figure 8). The most common is simply to hold the paper up towards a source of light. This proved a useful exercise!

We moved the paper towards the light. The tracing, the outline of a seated female figure holding a flower, with helmet, shield and trident came into view. (Figure 9). It was a magical moment, Arvo Pärt's hauntingly beautiful *Spiegel im Spiegel* was softly playing in the background. The space between our gaze and Britannia's trace



Figure 9: The Britannia Watermark on Nelson's "Remarks" exposed to the light.

became an imaginary conduit, an illusory to the past. With the sense of a relation of resemblance between the human eye and Britannia's almost divine eye, we perceived British correspondence simply by gazing at her. It must be said that to contemplate Britannia in this way, the gaze must be British. In Britain people have been raised to appreciate the symbolic condition of the Britannia image and its embodiment of Britishness, of being British... of British Britishness, which, stirs up passions of nation, identity, family and glory. To see in this condition, is only possible given a particular British disposition.

"*Britannia Rules the Waves...*", my next utterance, broke the continuity of this timeless moment.

The trace depicts a familiar figure, Britannia. The Britannia watermark is one of the commonest watermarks for paper and parchment used in the 18th and well into 19th century Britain and occurs with the countermarks of many different maker³⁵.

The Britannia watermark is also used as a distinguishing mark to identify English Foolscap size of paper³⁶.

³⁵ Antique: Britannia 1794. Vintage Paper Co. <https://vintagepaper.co/products/britannia-1794>. Accessed 29th January.

³⁶ W. A. Churchill Watermarks In Paper In Holland, England, France etc., In The XVII and XVIII Centuries And Their Interconnection. Menno Hertzberger & Co. Amsterdam 1935. (Foolscap meant a certain size paper in England, it did not have the same meaning on the continent).

On the bottom left hand of the paper, below the Britannia image we found a second watermark, i.e., a sequence of four numbers embossed on the paper which represents or corresponds to the year the paper was manufactured, i.e., 1794.

This date watermark is important. Pre-mid-18th-Century, English manuscript paper and parchment originated mainly in the French and Dutch mills. However, as from about 1740, English paper production rose sharply, particularly with the production of Foolscap paper, widely used in Britain and the British Commonwealth before the adoption of the international standard A4 paper³⁷.

It is likely, and indeed most probably the case, that post mid-18th-Century, the English Navy would have received issue of standard Foolscap paper with the figure of a seated Britannia and the year date of manufacture of the paper embossed as watermarks³⁸.

Paper was usually watermark dated, mainly for tax purposes. Date watermarks are considered a reliable indication of the exact year of manufacture of the paper. The



Figure 10: Date Watermark on Nelson's "Remarks".

³⁷ Jan Larve, *The Journal of the International Musicology Society*, Vol.33 fasc. 2/4. Special issue on the occasion of the 8th Congress of the International Musicology Society, New York 1961, pp.120.

³⁸ Foolscap was also known as Britannia Paper.

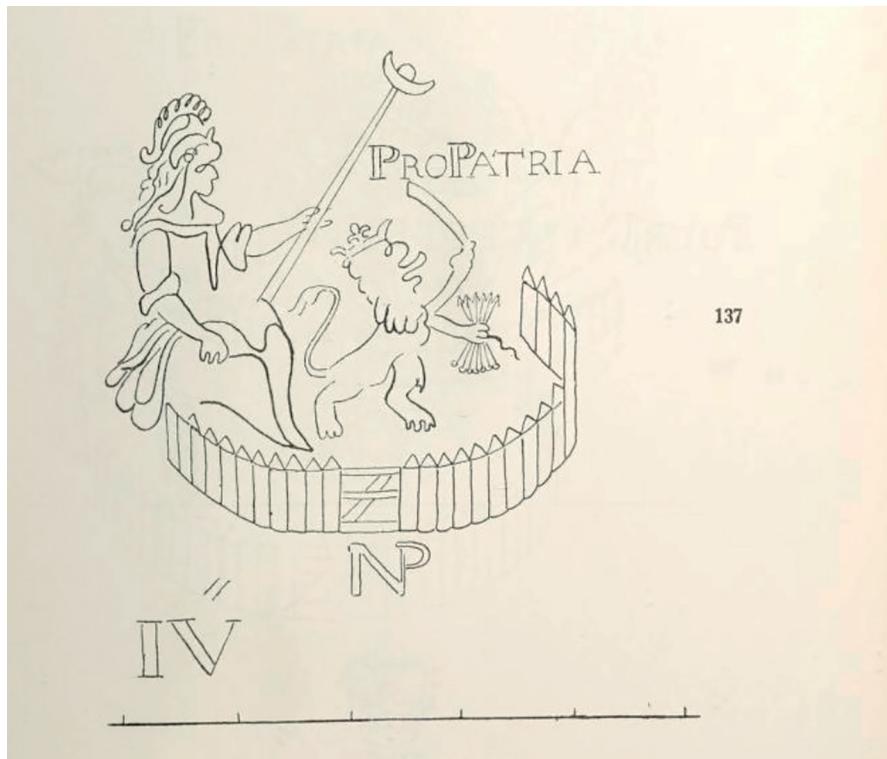


Figure 11: Dutch Pro Patria Watermark, 17th Century.

Britannia and date watermarks used in Britain during the 18th and 19th century may occur together with the countermarks of many different paper makers.

This proves our previous thesis regarding the date differences that may exist between the manufacture of the paper and the creation of the script. Our document's paper is marked as having been manufactured in 1794, whereas Nelson's Remarks written on this same paper is dated 1797.

Opinions vary regarding the origins of the design of the Britannia watermark. Some say the design appears to have evolved from one of the Dutch Pro Patria watermarks representing the maid of Holland seated with a palisade, holding a hat on the point of a spear³⁹ (Figure 11).

Others believe it originated from Queen Anne's Great Seals. The reverse of Queen Anne's Second Great Seal, commissioned in 1707, to mark the formal union of England and Scotland features a seated figure of Britannia. The figure in Queen Anne's Second Seal is itself derived from a mythical woman of power who had appeared on English coinage since the 17th-Century.

³⁹ Churchill, W.A. (William Algernon), *Watermarks in paper in Holland, England, France, etc. in the XVII and XVIII centuries and their interconnection. Chapter 2, Britannia pp.43-44.*

Dressed in Classical attire, Britannia sits against a rocky backdrop. In her right hand she holds a spear while her left rests upon an oval-shaped shield depicting the arms of England and Scotland. To the left of Britannia are a rose and a thistle growing from one stem, topped with a crown⁴⁰.

Whether Britannia originates in Holland or in Britain is open to debate. Considering the imagery above, I would be more inclined to select the Britannia figure on Queen Anne's Great Seal rather than the Dutch Pro Patria image as the original template. Be that as it may the Britannia image and especially so the date watermarks, we found on our document provides substantial period evidence.

Paper

Following the investigation of the watermarks, we turned to the physical support of the document i.e., the material or the paper, in our case the parchment. Parchment was a popular writing medium prepared from treated animal skins. Parchment has been used since the middle ages, popular in the 18th Century, usually reserved for high status documents⁴¹.

Nelson's "Remarks" is written on parchment which conforms with the official writing medium of the period. The support used suggests prominence and repute of the author and contents. True of a high-ranking Royal Navy Officer like Nelson.

The next considerations are the writing utensils and the ink used. Feathers provided quills for writing until the invention of the steel pen point in the 19th century. Quills were the principal ink-writing implements of the 18th Century. Likely used to write-up our document⁴².

Iron gall ink is a purple-black or brown-black ink, made from iron salts and tannic acids, derived from vegetation. It was the standard ink used in Europe for the 1400-year period between the 5th and 19th centuries. This type of ink remained common well into the 20th century and can still be acquired today⁴³.

⁴⁰ Paul Dryburgh, *The National Archives: Images Of Power And Majesty, Royal Seals. Great Britain 2020. Chapter 1, Royal Seals pp.99-102.*

⁴¹ Stuart Henderson, *A Study of the English Parchment Industry between 1650 and 1850, Chapter 3 Overview of the Parchment industry, Section 3.1 Uses for Parchment p.24. <http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/22810/1/A%20Study%20of%20the%20English%20Parchment%20Industry%20between%201650%20and%201850.pdf>*. Accessed 3rd January 2021. .

⁴² HistoryOfPencils.com, Amazon Services LLC Associates Program, *History of Pencils, History of Quill Pens. <http://www.historyofpencils.com/writing-instruments-history/history-of-quill-pens/>*. Accessed 5th January 2021.

⁴³ H Iron gall ink is also known as common ink, standard ink, oak gall ink or iron gall nut ink.



Figure 12: Second Great Seal of Queen Anne, 1711. The National Archives, London.

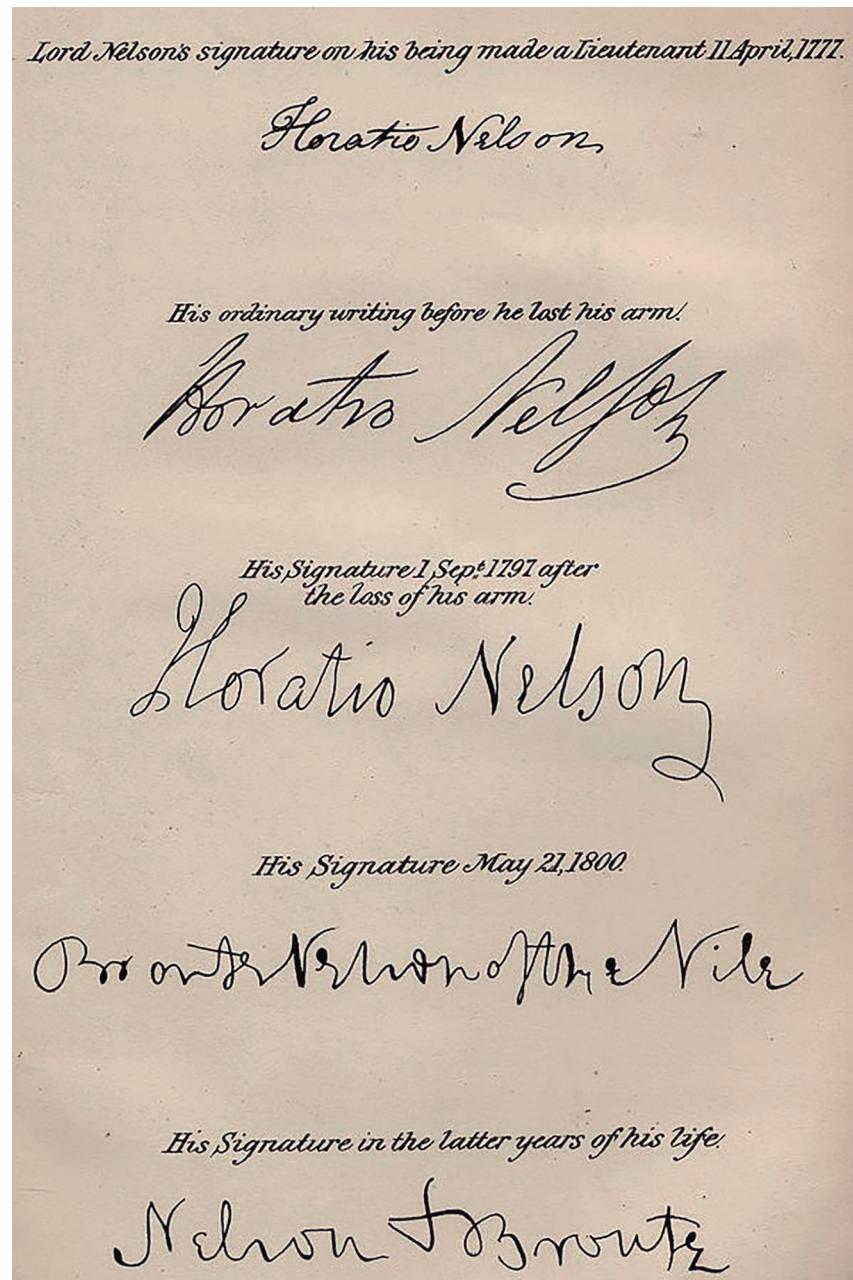


Figure 13: Samples of Lord Nelson's handwriting before and after losing his dominant right arm⁴⁵.

Just like anything else in the universe, which is subject to entropy, ink changes and deteriorates over time. This deterioration is referred to as ink corrosion, observed as a brownish discolouration of the original black ink. The ink on our document can be seen to have deteriorated, originally black, it now exhibits a brownish colour. This corresponds to the way the colour of this type of ink should have changed over a few hundred years, and thus we have here proof of age.

Not only does the ink itself change and deteriorate over time, but it also affects the support, i.e., the parchment or paper. The acidic nature of the ink, promotes the deterioration process of the support, encouraging brown discolouration that can spread, often causing offsetting to neighbouring pages. Finally, the degradation of paper is sometimes so severe, that whole areas, especially along the written or drawn lines, fall apart and the information is lost. Further deterioration to the support - paper and parchment - makes it brittle and friable, the results of ageing complicated by the influence of 'destructive' inks⁴⁴.

See Figures 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, & 8, the deterioration described above is clearly visible. Our document shows signs consistent with the way the ink corrosion effect, coupled with the ageing process, would have affected a two-hundred-year-old piece of parchment. Further proof of age.

Hand

Finally, to try and ascertain whether Horatio Nelson performed the act of writing our copy, we compared the handwriting on our copy with authenticated script proven to have been written by Lord Nelson himself. Examine the handwritings on Figure 13 below.

Compare Nelson's authenticated handwritings in Figure 13 above, with the hand taken from our document on the excerpt below. See Figure 14.

Both handwritings are clearly not the same! Especially so the first two examples shown on Figure 13, which are of particular interest to us because they were written before Lord Nelson lost his dominant right arm, shortly after the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, at the Battle of Santa Cruz de Tenerife, where the attack failed. He was wounded, losing his right arm, and was forced to return to England to recuperate. During his recuperation, he taught himself to write with his left hand⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Rafael Javier Díaz Hidalgo, Ricardo Córdoba, Paula Nabais, Valéria Silva, Maria J. Melo, Fernando Pina, Natércia Teixeira & Victor Freitas, *New insights into iron-gall inks through the use of historically accurate reconstructions*, *Heritage Science* volume 6, Article number: 63 (2018)..

⁴⁵ Lord Nelson's signatures before and after the loss of his right arm. Taken from Robert Southey's "The Life of Nelson" published in 1813. Primary source edition from the reproduction book published in 1923. ISBN:3337891934. The National Archives, London..

⁴⁶ GNA/MPC/Copy of Nelson's 'Remarks'/1797.

⁴⁷ The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, Vol II, letter to Admiral Sir John Jervis p.422. Taken from a copy in the Nelson's Papers printed in the London Gazette 2nd September 1797.

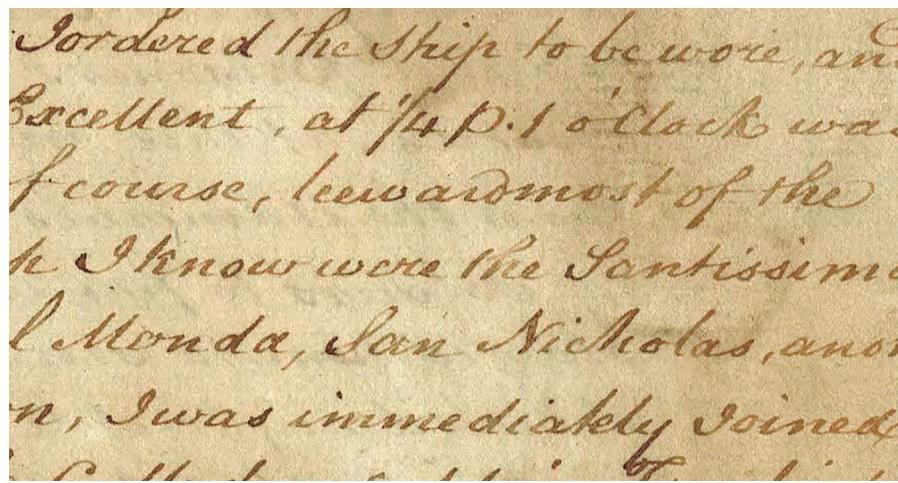


Figure 14: Handwritten script on Nelson's "Remarks" held at GNA⁴⁶.

Local Connection

There is no indication, record, or reference, regarding why a period copy of Nelson's "Remarks" was held by the Colonial Secretary's Office, the last known owner prior to transfer to the GNA.

The only association with Gibraltar, is prior to the Battle of Cape St. Vincent. Nelson had arrived here on the 9th of February 1797, to join the British ships, that days before had anchored at the head of the bay of Gibraltar. Colonel Drinkwater, author of '*A history of the siege of Gibraltar*', in his '*Narrative of the Battle of St. Vincent with Anecdotes of Nelson Before & After that Battle*', first published in 1797, states that on Nelson's arrival in Gibraltar,

*"Governor O'Hara, then commanding the garrison, earnestly pressed the Commodore to remain some days at Gibraltar, but so anxious was Nelson to re-join Admiral Sir John Jervis, that he would not hear of any longer period than was necessary to obtain the exchange of the British Officers and seamen from the Spanish ships in the bay..."*⁴⁸

Nelson was eager to leave Gibraltar for no other reason than the intelligence he had obtained regarding the movements of the Spanish fleet, that had sailed from Cartagena, and had been spotted passing West of the Rock.

Nelson left Gibraltar on the 11th of February 1797⁴⁹.

Prior to his departure, Nelson sent a letter to Edward Hardman Esquire, private secretary to His Excellency Sir Gilbert Elliot, Viceroy of Corsica, dated Gibraltar,

⁴⁸ Colonel Drinkwater Bethune F.S.A. *A Narrative of the Battle of St. Vincent with Anecdotes of Nelson Before & After that Battle Second Edition 1840* p.11.

⁴⁹ C *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, Vol II, letter to Admiral Sir John Jervis. Notes by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas. Letter to Edward Hardman, Private Secretary to His Excellency Sir Gilbert Elliot, p.330.*

11th February 1797, found on The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, on page 369 of volume two. In this letter Nelson's urges Sir Gilbert, who was to sail with him, to proceed on-board as soon as possible, as it was a certainty that he would put to sea as soon as the tide permitted. This letter written by Nelson prior to the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, has obviously no connection with his "Remarks"⁵⁰.

Summary

This concluded our inquiry. A summary of the main points follows.

The investigation started by looking at the provenance of the document. We discovered it was originally held at the Colonial Secretary's Office, in Governor's Lane. The document, among many others, including a corpus of documents regarding the battle of Cape St. Vincent (see Appendix 3) were later transferred to the GNA in the 1970s. There is no other record prior.

Following this, we looked at the identity of the author(s), recipient(s) and signatory(s). By consulting the London Gazette, we provided proof of the existence of the ship Captain, the identity of the signatories and their corresponding ranks. It was noted that the document was not addressed to anyone, it had no recipient. However, it later came to light that Nelson had sent a copy to H.R.H. The Duke of Clarence, the original he kept within his corpus of personal documentation now known as The Nelson Papers or Dispatches.

Transcription followed the examination of the signatories and recipients. See Appendix 1.

We continued by trying to establish whether the events described in the Remarks fit the historical context. Confirmation of this was gained by references found in the London Gazette. To substantiate the veracity of the evidence to a greater degree we consulted Nelson's letters published in a book called *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson*, with notes by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas, originally published in London by Henry Colburn in 1844. Here we found a verbatim textual copy of the document held at the GNA.

We followed our investigation by looking at the typography of the document. We concluded saying that the typography on our copy adheres to and is in keeping with, the age, the late 18th Century.

Next, we looked at the historical linguistics, the syntax, lexicon, and the drafting of the document. Like the typography described above, these attributes conform with the way standard English was used in the late 18th Century.

We then focused on seals, stamps, graphics, abbreviations, embossing or watermarks on the document. We found abbreviations and squiggles together with a faint unidentified watermark on the blank page across the first. We confirmed the Britannia and Paper Manufacture Date watermarks. Proving period.

⁵⁰ *Che dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, Vol II, letter to Admiral Sir John Jervis. Notes by Sir Nicholas Harris Nicolas. Letter to Edward Hardman, Private Secretary to His Excellency Sir Gilbert Elliot, p.331.*

Next, we looked at the physical support of the document, i.e., the parchment. The script on our document is hand-written on parchment typically used in the 18th Century.

Following this, we looked at the writing utensils and the ink used, together with the extent of deterioration which both the parchment and the ink presented. We found deterioration on our copy consistent with the age of a two-hundred-year-old document written in gall ink.

Finally, we considered whether Nelson had written our copy himself. We concluded that this was not the case.

Conclusion

In the light of the above, I am inclined to think that the GNA holds an authentic 18th Century period copy of Commodore Nelson's *"Remarks"* 1797, not written by Nelson himself. A final point against Nelson writing our copy himself, is that at the time, copies of letters and documents, were often created in duplicate and triplicate and above, mostly because of very unreliable mail services. Commonly, once the original was completed by the author, copies were created by secretaries and scribes, by transcribing the contents in their own hands or in copies printed in text.

Epilogue

A relevant point worthy of note in this story, is that as stated above, Nelson does little justice to Admiral Jervis in his *"Remarks"*. In his account he alludes to the Admiral only once, and not by name. Why would this have been the case given Admiral Jervis was in overall command of the British fleet at Cape St. Vincent? Furthermore, it was customary to mention all the high-ranking Officers that took part in battles by name, in the honourable and polite letter-writing style of the era, especially so superiors. Why was Nelson reluctant to name his Admiral in his *"Remarks"*?

A possible answer to these questions may be elicited from another of Sir Nicholas's annotations on the Nelson's Dispatches regarding Admiral Jervis's report of the Battle of Cape St. Vincent. Sir Nicholas, notes that although there were two Vice, and one Rear-Admiral, and a Commodore in the Fleet, no other Officer was mentioned by Admiral Jervis other than Captain Calder, the First Captain (Captain of the Fleet), of the *Victory*. Sir Nicholas notes the omission of the Flag Officers, was as unusual, as the total disregard shown to the brilliant services of Nelson, Troubridge, Collingwood, and Frederick, was unjust. Sir Nicholas continues saying that the injustice was partially remedied when Admiral Jervis wrote a private letter to Earl Spencer, the First Lord of the Admiralty. However, this was considered by the unnamed Officers involved as very inadequate compensation to their wounded feelings.

It must be noted that Admiral Jervis's public report published by the London

Gazette, was not the original report the Admiral had composed. The original was the letter mentioned above, a private letter Jervis sent to Earl Spencer, First Lord of the Admiralty, dated Lagos, 16th February 1797⁵¹.

It is difficult to read Admiral Jervis's letter to Earl Spencer without surprise. The paragraphs at its commencement regarding Commodore Nelson's and other Officers of the fleet gallant conduct did not find their way or proper place in the Jervis's Public Dispatch. Even though the original report fleetingly alludes to Nelson's positive interventions in the victory gained at Cape St. Vincent, only one Officer [Captain Calder] is praised for his conduct in the action. Merely for having made his signals in a very officer-like manner. This withholding of praise is remarkable given Admiral Jervis, on other occasions had expressed his admiration of gallantry and good conduct in the strongest and sometimes most extravagant terms.

Additionally, Sir John Barrow, one of the Admiralty secretaries, in his publications regarding the life of Richard Earl Howe, K.G., Admiral of the Fleet, and General of Marines— published on the January 1, 1838, writes as follows:

*"...It is known that in Jervis's original letter, he had given Nelson all due praise, but was persuaded on by Sir Robert Calder, Captain of the Fleet, to substitute this letter with another in which it was left out, on the grounds that as Nelson had disobeyed the signal of recall, [signal to tack], any eulogy on his conduct would encourage other officers to do the same, while the exclusive praise of one individual would act as a discouragement of the rest"*⁵².

Sir John then adds:

*"...The surprise is, that a man of Admiral Jervis's sagacity, should not have detected the lurking jealousy that gave rise to such a recommendation"*⁵³.

Edward Pelham Brenton, another of Admiral Jervis's biographers, in his Life and Correspondence of John, Earl of St. Vincent, Volume 2, relates a piquant and important anecdote of Admiral Jervis and his First Captain:

*"In the evening, while talking over the events of the day, Captain Calder hinted that the spontaneous manoeuvre which carried those 'duo fulmina belli', Nelson and Collingwood into the brunt of the battle, was an unauthorised departure by the Commodore from the prescribed mode of attack!"*⁵⁴

Admiral Jervis replied thus: *"It certainly was so. If ever you commit such a breach of your orders, I will forgive you also"*⁵⁵.

Colonel Drinkwater, secretary to Gilbert Elliott, Viceroy of Corsica, a spectator

⁵¹ *The dispatches and letters of Vice Admiral Lord Viscount Nelson, Vol II, letter to Earl Spencer First Lord of the Admiralty dated Lagos 16th February 1797, pp.335-337.*

⁵² *Sir John Barrow, Bart, F.R.S. Life of Admiral Earl Howe, p.240, London 1838.*

⁵³ *Ibid. p.241.*

⁵⁴ *Edward Pelham Brenton, Brenton's Life and Correspondences of the Earl of St. Vincent, Vol.I p.313.*

⁵⁵ *Robert Southey's Life of Nelson, 1896, Jedediah Ste Tucker, Memoirs Of Admiral, The Right Honorable, The Earl Of St. Vincent.*

at the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, on board the Frigate Lively, in his account of the Battle, notes that he had heard comments regarding Nelson's conduct at the battle⁵⁶. Drinkwater says that some felt that according to strict rules of discipline, Nelson in the *Captain*, should not have quitted the British line-of-battle without orders. Others have remarked that when Nelson saw the necessity of some immediate and bold measure to disconcert the enemy, he should not have gone alone. Drinkwater concludes by saying,

*“...Nelson, no doubt, saw the conduct of the Spanish Admiral in its true light: his decision and boldness astonished and confounded the enemy, who were thus taken by surprise, and unprepared for such singular resolution. The measure succeeded, and to this movement, hazardous as it was, may chiefly be attributed the success of the day”*⁵⁷.

It is easy to judge the actions of a bullfighter in front of a raging bull from the safety of the stand. Nelson saw it fit to strike while the iron was hot...doing so secured victory. Should Calder have swallowed humble pie?

Even though Admiral Jervis praises were cold and private, his reward, as well as Nelson's and the other Officers that took part, and were victorious, in the Battle of Cape St. Vincent, were great. The British Parliament voted its thanks in the most cordial manner. Sir Jervis, Admiral of the Blue, was made Baron Jervis of Medford, in the county of Stafford, and Earl St. Vincent by patent, on the 27th of May 1797. Granted to him and the male heirs of his body, with a pension of £3,000 per year. On the 20th of February 1797, Nelson was appointed Rear-Admiral and later invested with the Ensigns of the Order of the Bath, at St. James Palace on the 27th of March 1797⁵⁸.

The Battle of Cape St. Vincent was one of the most important naval battles of the early Napoleonic Wars, one which led to Admiral Sir John Jervis being incorporated Earl St. Vincent. The British victory at the battle had a great effect on the overall balance of naval power at the end of the 18th century.

Had Nelson kept to the Admiral's original plan, the possibility could have arisen, that in doing so, the battle's outcome could have swung in a different direction, depriving Britain victory. However, this was not the case, Nelson strategically positioned, seized the moment, and taking matters into his own hands secured a victory that otherwise seemed dubious. Nelson's instinct paid off ensuring a glorious British victory. Had they not, would an alternate history have landed him in a Court Martial?



Figure 15: Portrait of Nelson, Steedr Van HJ Backer 1803.

⁵⁶ *Ibid. p.103.*

⁵⁷ Colonel Drinkwater Bethune F.S.A. *A Narrative of the Battle of St. Vincent with Anecdotes of Nelson Before & After that Battle Second Edition 1840 p.85’.*

⁵⁸ Clarke & M'Arthur, *Naval Chronicles 1797, Vol.II p.46, London 18th September 1797.*

Appendix 1: - Transcription

Transcript of Commodore Nelson's Remarks on his boarding the San Josef & San Nicholas Spanish Ships – from the Captain.

"A few Remarks relative to myself in the Captain in which my Pendant was flying on the most glorious Valentine Day.

At one p.m., the Captain having passed stern-most of the enemy ships which formed their van and part of their centre, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, they on the larboard, we on the starboard tacks. The Admiral made the signal to tack in succession. But I perceiving the Spanish ships all to bear up before the wind, or nearly so, evidently with an intention of forming their line going large joining their separated division at that time engaged with some of our centre ships, or flying from us to prevent any of the schemes from taking effect, I ordered the ships to be wore, and passing between the Diadem and Excellent, at quarter past 1 o'clock was engaged with the headmost, and of course, lee-ward-most of the Spanish division, the ships which I know were the Santissima Trinidad, San Josef, Salvador del Mundo, San Nicholas, another first rate and 74 names unknown.



Figure 16: Battle of Cape St. Vincent 1797 William Adolphus Knell 1846.
Parliamentary Art Collection.

I was immediately joined and most nobly supported by the Culloden Captain Troubridge, the Spanish fleet from not wishing I suppose, to have a decisive battle hauled to the wind on the larboard tack which brought the ships aforementioned to be lee-ward-most

and stern-most ships in their fleet, for near an hour I believe, but do not pretend to be correct as to time, did the Culloden and Captain support this apparently but not really unequal contest, when the Blenheim, passing between us and the enemy gave us a respite and sickened the Dons. At this time the Salvador del Mundo, and San Ysidro dropt astern and were fired into in a most masterly style by the Excellent. Captain Collingwood who compelled the San Ysidro to hoist English Colours, and I thought the large ship Salvador del Mundo had also struck but Captain Collingwood disdaining the parade of taking possession of broken enemies, most gallantly pushed up with every sail set to save his old friend and messmate, who was to appearance in a critical state, the Blenheim being ahead and the Culloden crippled and astern, the Excellent ranged up within 10 feet of the San Nicholas giving a most tremendous fire. The San Nicholas luffing up the San Josef fell on-board her and the Excellent passing on for the Santissima Trinidad, the Captain resumed her situation abreast of them and closed alongside, at this time the Captain having lost her foretopmast, not a sail, shroud, or rope left, her wheel, shot away and incapable of farther service in the line or in the chase. I directed Captain Miller to put the helm a-starboard, and calling for the Boarders, ordered them to board. The Soldiers of the 69th Regiment with an alacrity which will ever do them credit, and Lieutenant Pearson of the same regiment were almost the foremost on this service. The first man who jumped into the enemy's mizen chains was Captain Berry, late my first Lieutenant.

Captain Miller was in the act of going also but I directed him to remain. He was supported from our sprit sail yard which hooked in the mizen rigging. A soldier of the 69th Regiment having broke the upper gallery window, jumped in followed by myself as fast as possible. I found the cabin doors fastened and some Spanish Officers fired their pistols but having broke open the doors the soldiers fired and the Spanish Brigadier Commodore with a distinguished pendant, fell as retreat into the quarter deck on the starboard side near the wheel having pushed on the quarter deck, I found Captain Berry in possession of the poop and the Spanish ensign hauling down. I passed with my people and Lieutenant Pearson on the larboard gangway to the fore castle where I met two or three Spanish swords. At this moment, a fire of pistols or muskets opened from the Admiral's stern gallery of the San Josef. I directed the soldiers to fire into her stern and calling to Captain Miller ordered him to send more men into the San Nicholas and directed my people to board the first-rate which was done in an instant. Captain Berry assisting me into the main chains. At this moment, a Spanish Officer with a bow presented me his sword and said the Admiral was dying of his wounds below. I asked him on his honour, if the ship was surrendered, he declared she was, on which I gave him my hand and desired him to call his officers and ships company and tell them of it, which he did, and on the quarter deck of a Spanish first-rate, extravagant as the story may seem, did I receive the swords of vanquished Spaniards, which as I received, I gave to William Fearney one of my bargemen who put them with the greatest sang-froid, under his arm. I was surrounded by Captain Berry, Lieutenant Pearson of the 69th, John Sykes, John Thompson, Francis Cook all old Agamemnons, and several other brave men, seamen and soldiers. Thus, fell these ships.

NB: In boarding the San Nicholas, I believe we lost, 7 killed and 10 wounded, about 20 Spaniards lost their lives by a foolish resistance, none I believe lost in boarding the San Josef.

Signed: Horatio Nelson

Ralph Willet Miller & Berry

Don Fransico Xavier Winthuysen, Spanish Rear Admiral, died of his wounds on board the San Josef. Don Tomas Geraldino killed on board the San Nicholas when boarded by the Captain.

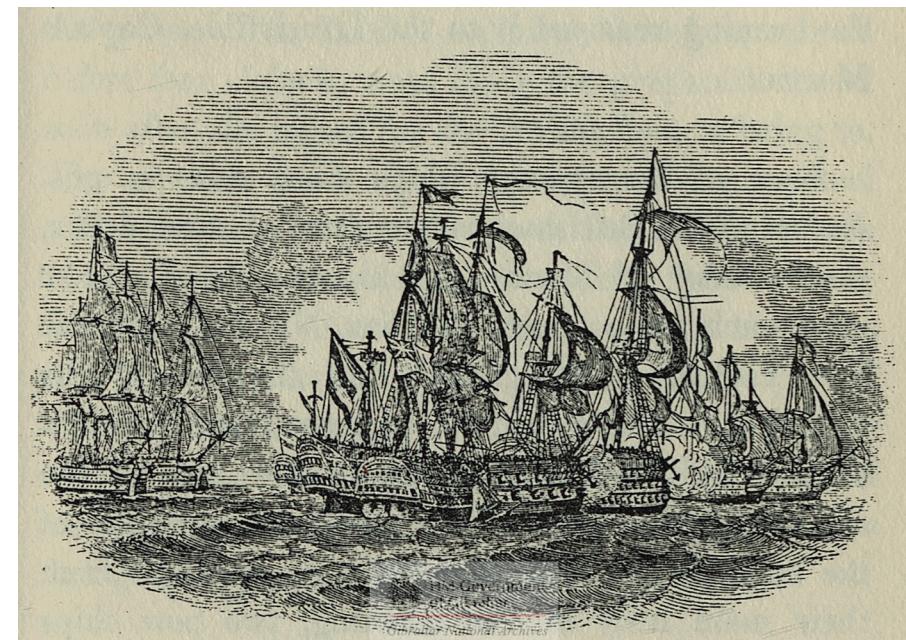


Figure 17: The Captain boarding the San Nicolas. From Col. Drinkwater's Account of the Battle of St. Vincent.



Figure 18: Nelson receives the surrender of the San Nicholas, Richard Westall 1808.
National Maritime Museum.

A few Remarks relative to myself in the Captain in which my Pendant was flying on the most glorious Valentine day 1797.

At 1 P.M. the Captain having passed the sternmost of the Enemy Ships which formed their van and part of their centre, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, they on the larboard, we on the Starboard Tacks. The Admiral made the signal to tack in succession. But perceiving the Spanish Ships all to bear up before the wind at nearly so, evidently with an intention of forming their line going large joining their separated division at that time engaged with some of our centre ships, or flying from us to prevent ~~with~~ of the schemes from taking effect. Ordered the ship to be worn, and passing between the ~~Diamond~~ and Excellent, at 1 P.M. o'clock was engaged with the headmost, and of course, leewardmost of the Spanish division. The ships which I knew were the Santissima Trinidad, San Jose, Salvador del Munda, San Nicholas, another first rate and 74 names unknown, I was immediately joined and most nobly supported by the Culloden Captain Troubridge. The Spanish Fleet from not wishing (I suppose) to have a decisive battle hauled to the wind on the larboard tack which brought the ships aforementioned to be the leeward and sternmost ships in their fleet, for near an hour I believe (but do not pretend to be correct as to time) did the Culloden and Captain support this apparently but not really unequal contest, when the Blenheim passing between us and the Enemy gave us a respite and silence to the Dons. At this time the Salvador del Munda, and San Jose drove astern and were fired into in most masterly style by the Excellent Captain Collingwood, who compelled the San Jose to hoist English Colours, and I thought the large ship Salvador del Munda had also struck but Captain Collingwood disdaining the parade of taking possession of beaten enemies, most gallantly pushed up with every sail set, to save his old friend and messmate, who was to appearance in a critical state, the Blenheim being a broad and the Culloden crippled and astern, the Excellent ranged up within 10 f. of the San Nicholas giving a most tremendous fire. The San Nicholas lifting up the San Jose fell on board her, and the Excellent passing on for the Santissima Trinidad. The Captain resumed her situation abreast of them and closed alongside, at this time the Captain having lost her port oars not astir, shroud, or rope left, her wheel shot away, and incapable of further service in the line or in chase. Ordered Captain Miller to put the helm a starboard, and calling for the Boarders, ordered them to do so. The soldiers of the 69th with an alacrity which will ever do them credit, and Lieut. Pearson of the same regiment were amongst the foremost on this occasion. The first man who jumped into the Mexican chains was Captain Berry, late my first Lieutenant.

Captain
His Government
of Gibraltar

Figure 19: Nelson's "Remarks" Page I.

(Captain Miller was in the act of going also but I directed him to remain, he was supported from our spiritual yards which hook'd in the Mizzen rigging. A Soldier of the 69th Regiment having broke the upper Quarter gallery window jump'd in followed'd by myself as fast as possible. I found the Cabin doors fastened and some Spanish Officers fired their Pistols, but having broke open the doors the Soldiers fired and the Spanish Brigadier commanding with a distinguishing Pendant, fell as retreat'd to the Quarter deck on the Starboard side near the Wheel - having pushed on the quarter deck I found Captain Berry in possession of the Poop and the Spanish Ensigns hauling down I passed with my People and Lieut. Pearson on the Larboards Gangway to the Fore Castle where I met two or three Spanish Officers prisoners to my seamen, and they delivered me their swords, at this moment a fire of pistols or Musquets open'd from the Admirals Stern gallery of the San Jose. I directed the Soldiers to fire into her Stern and calling to Captain Miller ordered him to send more men into the San Nicholas, and directed my people to board the first rate which was done in an instant, Captain Berry assisting me into the Main Chains, at this moment a Spanish Officer look'd over the quarter deck rail and said they surrendered, from this most welcome intelligence it was not long before I was on the quarter deck when the Spanish Captain with a Bow Presented me his sword and said the Admiral was dying of his wounds below, I asked him on his honor, if the ship was surrendered, he declared she was, on which I gave him my hand, and desired him to call to his Officers and Ships Company and tell them of it, which he did, and on the quarter deck of a Spanish First rate extravagant as the story may seem, did receive the swords of vanquished Spaniards, which as I received I gave to William Kearny one of my bargemen who put them with the greatest Sang froid under his arms. I was surrounded by Captain Berry, Lieut. Pearson of the 69th John Sykes, John Thompson, Francis Cook all old Agamemmons, and several other brave men - Seaman and Soldiers - Thus fell these Ships
 N.B. In boarding the San Nicholas I believe we lost 17 killed and 10 wounded, about 20 Spaniards lost their lives by a foolish resistance, none were I believe lost in boarding the San Jose.

Horatio Nelson

Signed { Ralph Willett Miller
 & Berry

Don Francisco Xavier Winthayson, Rear Admiral, died of his wounds on board the San Jose
 Don Tomas Geraldino killed on board the San Nicholas when boarded by the Captain.

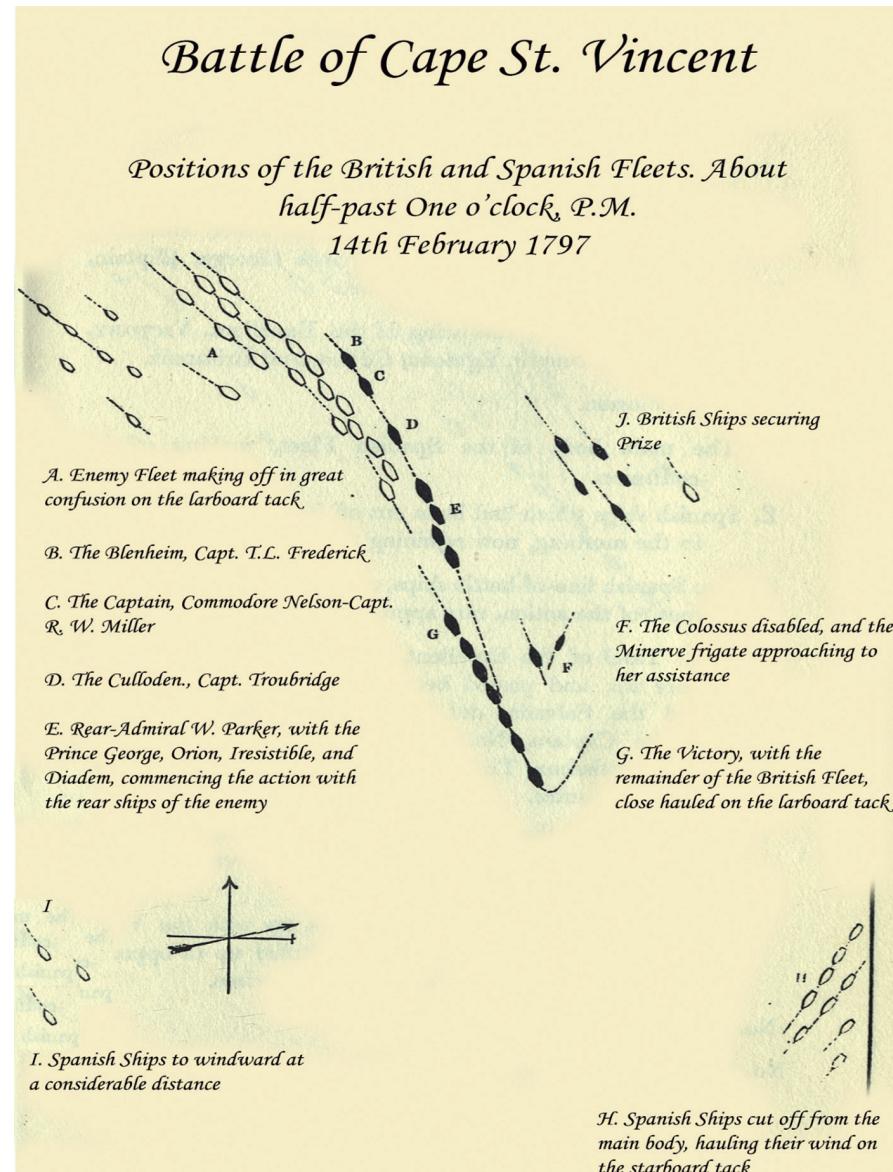


Figure 21: Plan of the Battle of Cape St Vincent 1797. Adapted from Col. Drinkwater Bethune's "A Narrative of the battle of St. Vincent 1797", Conway Maritime Press 1840

Figure 20: Nelson's "Remarks" Page II

Appendix 3: List of documents regarding the Battle of Cape St. Vincent 1797, held at the Gibraltar National Archives.

1. Copy of Nelson's Remarks 14th February 1797.
2. Copy of letter from Admiral Jervis to General O'Hara, Governor of Gibraltar, dated H.M.S. Victory (off Cape St. Vincent) 12th February 1797.
3. Copy of letter from Admiral Jervis to General O'Hara, Governor of Gibraltar, dated H.M.S. Victory (off Cape St. Vincent) 13th February 1797.
4. List of ships of the Spanish Fleet that opposed the British Fleet, at the battle of Cape St. Vincent. The list is dated 14th February 1797.
5. List of Spanish Ships captured by the British at the battle of Cape St. Vincent, dated 14th February 1797.
6. List of British and Spanish ships at the battle of Cape St. Vincent, dated 14th February 1797.
7. List of British casualties under the command of Admiral Jervis, after the battle of Cape St. Vincent, dated 14th February 1797.
8. Letter from Admiral Jervis on the Victory, to General O'Hara, Governor of Gibraltar, dated 16th February 1797.
9. Letter from Admiral Jervis to Evan Nepean Esquire dated 6th March 1797.
10. Translation of a report from Cadiz Spain, regarding the battle of Cape St. Vincent. Unknown author(s), sender(s), recipient(s). Dated April 1797.

Appendix 4

Presentation of issue No.1 of the Nelson's Remarks 1st Edition, to His Excellency Vice Admiral Sir David George Steel, KBE, DL, Governor of Gibraltar. Convent Gardens 2nd July 2021.



