

Manuscripts relating to the January 1830 samurai repulse of
the piratically seized Van Diemen's Land colonial brig
Cyprus from Mugi, Awa Province (Tokushima), Japan.

Volume 1

Introduction



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1. Introduction

Eight manuscripts relating to the January 1830 samurai repulse of the piratically-seized Van Diemen's Land colonial brig *Cyprus* from Mugi, Awa Province (Tokushima), Japan.

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2. Supplementary Notes

3. The Hayami Manuscript

4. The Yamauchi and Mima Manuscript

5. The Hirota Manuscript

6. The Hamaguchi One Manuscript

7. The Hamaguchi Two Manuscript

8. The Fishery Tax Office Manuscript

9. The Musketeer's Manuscript

10. The Complete Map of the Earth Text

1. Introduction

Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are advised that this Introduction contains a range of material which may be considered culturally sensitive including the images and names of people who have passed away.

Author: Nicholas Russell.

Publisher: Nicholas Russell, Ashiya, Japan.

Publication date: 1 June 2022.

Acknowledgements: Tokushima Prefectural Archive, especially Former Chief Archivist Tokuno Takashi and Assistant Archivist Kinbara Hiroki; Tokushima Old Manuscript Reading Group especially Tani Keiko; Mugi Board of Education; the Tasmanian Libraries Reading Room staff; numerous people who advised and encouraged, especially Tony Thorne, Dr Stephen Gapps of the Australian National Maritime Museum. Prevail English, especially Proofreaders Tobe Fumiko, Shimoda Shigeyuki, Wendy Tsune, Patrick Jones, Shasta Calvo; and Tim Stone and Aya Hatano of Gatherer Media.

Funded by: Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, through Australia-Japan Foundation, Australia.

Grantees: Gatherer Media and Nicholas Russell

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1 Overview

1.1 Preamble

This introduction to the Edo period manuscripts describing the repulse of the piratically seized colonial brig *Cyprus* contains not one but three narratives across three cultures.

Firstly, there is the primary focus, the 16 January 1830 repulse of the Van Diemen's Land colonial brig *Cyprus* from Japanese waters as documented in the eight accompanying translated accounts. Whether or not this encounter meets the criteria for first contact is still a topic of discussion for laypeople and academics in Australia and Japan.

Secondly, there is the story of the stepmother of the most well known Tasmanian Aboriginal person, Truganini. Considering Truganini's age and what was recorded of the family's living arrangements at the time, it is possibly more appropriate to describe the step mother as the second wife to Truganini's father, Mangana. Her name is unknown. Two Englishmen who talked to the husband and a fellow clansman uniquely asserted that at Recherche Bay, where she and her family had paddled by catamaran, soldiers had detained her and taken her on board the *Cyprus*, and that the pirates had abducted her from custody with their seizure of the brig on 14 August 1829. However, these entries are secondary information. None of the *Cyprus's* 63 passengers and crew are known to have reported her abduction, therefore her being on board has remained an open question. Now a newly discovered samurai illustration of a memorial portrait tattoo of a woman apparently sporting pirate attire and a Tasmanian Aboriginal

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woman's hairstyle has provided indirect evidence supporting the argument for her presence.

Thirdly, if she was on board, her narrative must have been suppressed for none of the 63 people on board to have reported it. Answering who might have done this, and why and how they did it, is the greater part of this introduction. The conclusion is that Van Diemen's Land Lieutenant Governor George Arthur probably concealed her presence. In three other identified cases Arthur concealed or obfuscated murders or deaths in custody of Tasmanian Aboriginal women. Such deaths would have been politically inconvenient for Arthur because William Wilberforce had been instrumental in Arthur's posting to Van Diemen's Land (hereinafter VDL) after Arthur had assisted him in championing the cause of physically abused women in slavery. The deaths were part of a wider lethal reality of a sanctioned and orchestrated diminution that Arthur concealed behind his officially stated humanitarian policies. To see through Arthur's façade, this investigation looks at his religious ideology, experience of debacle, knowledge of espionage, and character.

Arthur's orchestrated diminution started in 1828, when he first referred to Aboriginal people as 'savages', and continued to his recall in 1836, when he ordered the preparation of a self-vindicating swansong statement. To fully situate what happened to Mangana's second wife, this introduction investigates this insidious period in its entirety, before and after her 1829 abduction. The centre piece of Arthur's humanitarian-washed facade was the Aboriginal Establishment. At its first location on Bruny Island Arthur directly requested worn blankets be distributed, appointed the only documented brothel-visiting 'depraved' syphilitic in VDL to be in charge in the absence of the usual supervisor,

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denied medical supplies, and failed to provide medical care. Arthur then distanced himself administratively by establishing a committee to assess Bruny Island for internment. When mortality on Bruny Island increased sharply, Arthur had the committee investigate and then effectively conceal damning testimony. As the committee and supervisors relocated the Establishment, the diminution slowed but became insidious and multifaceted. Some academics have argued that incarcerated Aboriginal populations were unviable anyway. However, this is irrelevant. Arthur's sum total effect equates to a concealed genocide.

The convict pirate's tattoo was not one of those recorded prior to the seizure. The timing of the tattoo's reveal, its wearer's expression and the accompanying toast and salute suggest that she was a beloved and revered member of the crew who had died recently. Was the tattoo of Mangana's wife? Separated by thousands of miles, had she and her husband simultaneously succumbed to the slowest acting of Arthur's weapons of diminution, syphilis?

1.2 General Overview

'Next, one of them opened the front of his top to show us the front-view half-body of a beautiful woman tattooed above his left breast.'

- **Hamaguchi Makita, 1830**

On 14 August 1829, convict prisoners piratically seized the colonial brig *Cyprus* at Recherche Bay, VDL.¹ They were being conveyed from Hobart to Macquarie Harbour

¹ Recherche Bay also known as Laylatiya.; Van Diemen's Land also known as Lutruwita.

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Penal Station for having reoffended after transportation to VDL.² Eighteen convicts sailed away the next day. The escaping brig stopped in the South Island of New Zealand, the Chatham Islands and then, after failing to make landfall in Tahiti, at a Tongan island thought to be Niuatoputapu.³ After six weeks there, ten of the convict pirates sailed on to Japan, stopping en route at another small island for water.

Descriptions of the ten that sailed on to Japan were published in the *Hue and Cry and Police Gazette* as follows:

1. Beveridge, John (alias John Anderson) - Age 33; slater; height 5' 7.5"; dark brown hair; dark grey eyes; 14-year sentence on escape; transported for housebreaking; 'Pock-pitted'.

2. Davis, George James (alias Huntley) - Age 29; engraver; height 5' 7.75"; brown hair; brown eyes; 7-year sentence on escape; transported for felony; 'Slightly pock pitted.'

3. Denner, John - Age 22; blacksmith; height 5'4.25"; light brown hair; dark grey eyes; life sentence on escape; transported for burglary; 'Marks of a red mole on the right collar bone; two others near left shoulder; scar inside right wrist; mermaid, woman and anchor inside right arm; crucifix back of left arm.'

4. Herring, Michael - Age 23; tailor; height 5'2.5"; dark brown hair; dark grey eyes; 7-year sentence on escape; transported for 'stealing a handkerchief from a person'; 'Marks

² An area of Hobart also known as Nipalupa.

³ The South Islands of New Zealand also known as Te Wai Pounamu.; Chatham Islands also known as Rēkohu.

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of mermaid inside left arm; M. H. and S., two hearts, J. H. inside right arm.'

5. Pennell, Matthew (alias Sanders) - Age 23; labourer; height 5' 4.5"; dark brown hair; brown eyes; 7-year sentence on escape; transported for 'stealing two coats'; 'Pock-pitted; left middle finger crippled.'

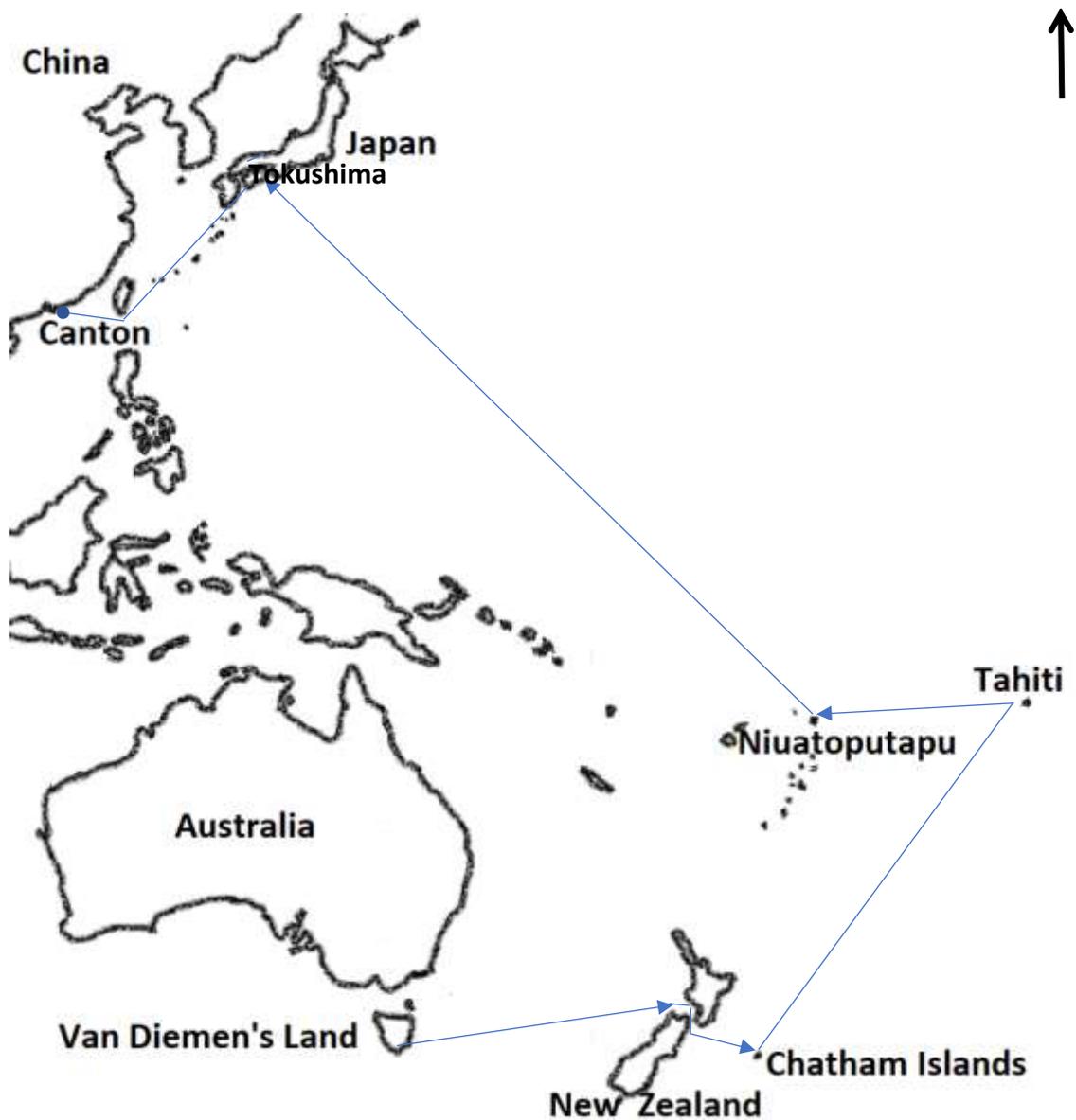


Figure 1. Map of the over 2000km Flight of the *Cyprus*.

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6. Pooley, James (alias Jones) - Age 29; mariner; height 5'5.25"; brown hair; hazel eyes; 7-year sentence on escape; transported for 'being at large before the expiration of his sentence of transportation'; 'Marks of P O U M P, R + O R, B Q D +, part of a fish, mermaid, B P, religious cross of stars on right arm; S W 82, I 82, B 82, J S, crucifix, sun, moon, and stars on left arm; star, letter B and a + on back of left hand; long scar down back of left hand; large scar on right side of chin, and ears pierced.'

7. Stevenson, Alexander (alias Telford) - Age 23; weaver; height 5'4"; light brown hair; grey eyes; 14-year sentence on escape; transported for theft; 'Mark of scar on back of wrist joint left hand; brown mole just above the wrist right arm.'

8. Thacker, Samuel - Age 25; weaver; height 5'5"; brown hair; blue eyes; 7-year sentence on escape; transported for 'stealing from the person'; 'Marks of a woman and E D above elbow joint, left arm; M x B S, and figure of a flower pot and stand, T, man's head, T M, and other blue marks below the elbow joint same arm; very large scar close to elbow joint same arm; Adam, Eve, and tree above elbow joint right arm; a variety of blue marks and star below elbow joint same arm; ring pricked on middle finger left hand.'

9. Walker, William (aliases: William Brown, William Swallow, Capt. William Waldon) - Age 39; mariner; height 5'9"; brown hair; blue eyes; life sentence on escape; transported for housebreaking; 'Scar on the outer side of right arm; small scar on the nose and chin.'

10. Watts, William (alias Charley Williams) - Age 38; horse-breaker; height 5'3"; brown hair; grey eyes; 7-year sentence on escape; crime unknown; 'Marks of a scar on

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right corner of the upper lip; W on right arm.⁴

On 5 January 1830, a brig appeared off Tosa Province (now Kochi Prefecture), Edo Japan. It moored for one night off Tosa on 7 January and then off Awa Province (now Tokushima Prefecture) on 14 January. On 16 January, Awa Domain samurai, district musketeer reservists, local hunters and fishers effected a bloodless repulse.⁵

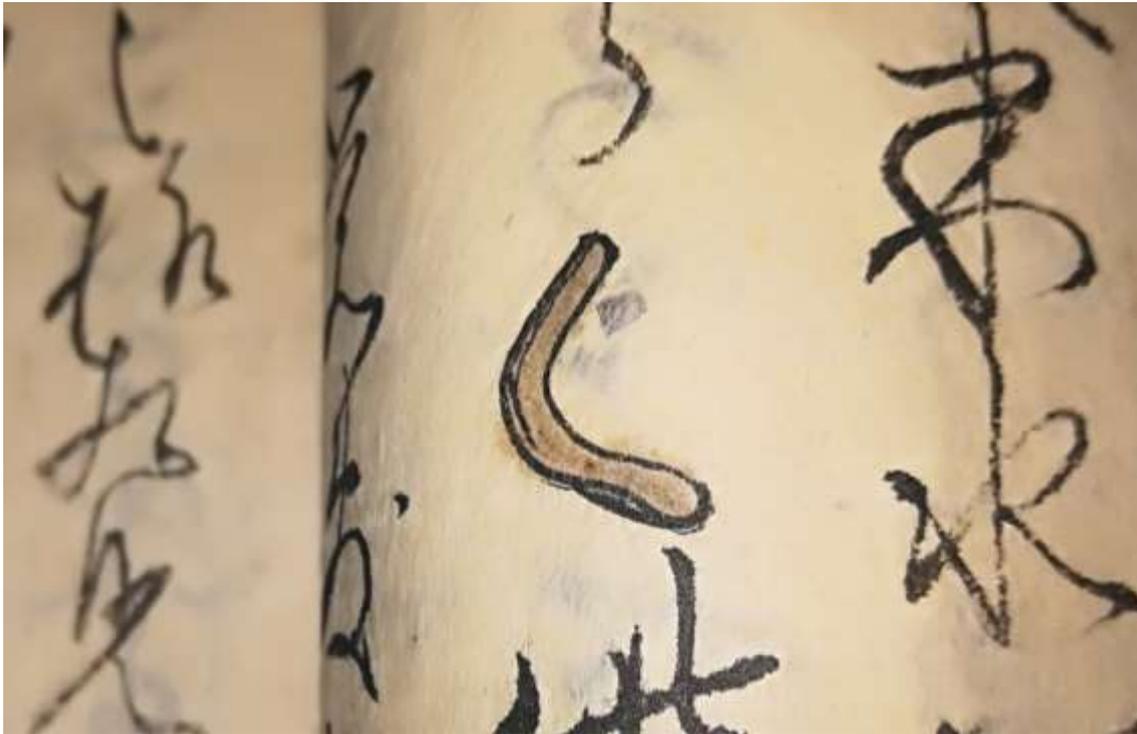


Figure 2. Boomerang pictograph from the Hirota Manuscript. (Courtesy of private collection.)

Six of the Japanese participants are known to have documented the incident. Hamaguchi Makita (c. 1793–1839) recorded details of a parley in which a samurai delegation

⁴ ‘Colonial Brig “Cyprus”’, *Police Gazette: or Hue and Cry* (London), 14 April 1830, 840.

⁵ The ‘Domain’ is the feudal samurai government of a ‘Province’ which is a geographical area.

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demanded the brig's immediate departure by gesticulating with a 'big [cannon] ball'.⁶ Hamaguchi was a secretary and spy for Yamauchi Chūdayū (title inherited 1810–60), one of the two Awa Domain county samurai field commanders. The 'big ball' and other details matched those with which the pirate skipper, William Walker (c. 1785–1834), alias William Swallow, regaled his trial in London in October 1830.⁷ A pictograph in a manuscript by Hirota Kanzaemon, a local samurai deputy magistrate (proxy title 1819–44), which resembles a boomerang adds further credence to the brig being the *Cyprus*.⁸

The pirates later scuttled the vessel off China. They left and abandoned the brig in small groups. Each eventually coming to the attention of the British authorities in Canton. Some appeared before the Select Committee of Supercargoes of the East India Company. There was no report of a woman amongst them. Davis and Watts were recaptured and executed in London on 16 December 1830.⁹ Swallow was recaptured and re-transported to VDL, as were Beveridge, Denner and Stevenson.¹⁰ Herring eluded recapture, as did

⁶ Hamaguchi Makita 浜口巻太.; Yamauchi Chūdayū 山内忠大夫.; Hamaguchi Makita, Account, 'Ikokusen Hakurai Banashi Narabini Zu' 異国船舶来話并図 [Illustrated Account of the Arrival of a Foreign Ship], [1830] Tokushima Prefectural Archive, Japan, シノハ 0 0 0 0 3, 12 裏, 12 back.

⁷ *Times* (London), 18 October 1830, 3

⁸ Hirota Kanzaemon 広田勘左衛門.

⁹ Convict number 198.; Convict records: CON23-1-1-0105; CON31-1-9_00074_L.; Convict number 151.; Convict records: CON23-1-3-0061L; CON31-1-45_00051_L.

¹⁰ Convict number 323 and 999.; Convict records: CON31-1-38_00339_L; CON18-1-8_00090_L; CON13-1-5_00070_L; CON31-1-45_00108_L.; 'Colonial Brig "Cyprus"', *Police Gazette: or Hue and Cry* (London), 14 April 1830, 840.; Convict number 452.; Convict records: CON23-1-1-0024; CON31-1-1_00211_L; CON32-1-1_00215_L.; Convict number 419.; Convict records: CON23-1-1-0112; CON31-1-9_00147_L; CON32-1-2_00209_L.; Convict number 672.; Convict records: CON31-1-38_00229_L.

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Pennell, Pooley, and Thacker.¹¹

The following volumes are translations of eight Japanese accounts:

- 1) The Hayami Manuscript, co-bound with and sharing illustrations, including the tattoo, with the Yamauchi and Mima Manuscript.
- 2) The Yamauchi and Mima Manuscript, co-bound with and sharing illustrations, including the tattoo, with the Hayami Manuscript.
- 3) The Hirota Manuscript, illustrated with boomerang pictograph and referring to another lost illustrated manuscript of unknown title.
- 4) The Hamaguchi One Manuscript, illustrated.
- 5) The Hamaguchi Two Manuscript, a slightly amended and illustrated period transcription by Hamaguchi of the Hamaguchi One Manuscript.
- 6) The Fishery Tax Office Manuscript, an early photocopy of a modern transcription, illustrated.
- 7) The Musketeer's Manuscript, a letter.
- 8) The Complete Map of the Earth Text, a short caption account with many errors

¹¹ Convict number 670.; Convict records: CON31-1-19_00060_L; SC41_1_3_Z733; SC41_1_SC_TRIED_1824–1831.; Convict number 305.; Convict records: CON23-1-3-0005R; CON31-1-34_00110_L.; Convict number 400.; Convict records: CON18-1-8_00075_L; CON31-1-23_00158_L.; Convict number 207.; Convict records: CON23-1-3-0048R; CON27-1-3_00004_L; CON27-1-3_00005_L; CON31-1-42_00072_L.

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that accompanies an illustration adorning an 1833 world map.

A 100cm x 110cm painting of the repulse by Hamaguchi and the original Hase Shōbē manuscript, which is quoted in the Hamaguchi manuscripts, are thought to exist in private collections in Tokushima Prefecture.¹² No manuscripts have been recovered from southeast Kochi Prefecture where coastal communities lost most of their written records from the period in the Nankai Trough megathrust earthquakes and tsunami of 1854 and 1946.

The pirates overthrew the *Cyprus* guards. They then forcibly disembarked the crew and other passengers, including convicts, military guards, and their families to beaches near the Recherche Bay mooring which maps from the period show as being in the inner bay now known as Pigsties Bay. They remained stranded with limited food and supplies until they were rescued after about two weeks.

The Hobart pilot who was captaining one of the rescue vessels picked up an Aboriginal man drifting out at sea and returned him to Bruny Island. The man was Mangana (birth date unknown – 1830), a clan elder of the Lyluequonny of Recherche Bay. He had paddled the 20km from Bruny Island to Recherche Bay by catamaran with his second wife and son probably on 13 or 14 August, the day the convicts overthrew the guards.¹³

¹² Miyoshi and Takahashi, *Zusetu Tokushima no Rekishi*, 181.; Hase Shōbē 長谷庄兵衛.

¹³ George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829, Journal 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830', ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 54.; George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829, contemporaneous transcription in Charles Sterling's hand, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 29(–30) March–19 September 1829', ML, A 7023, CY Reel 858, 53.

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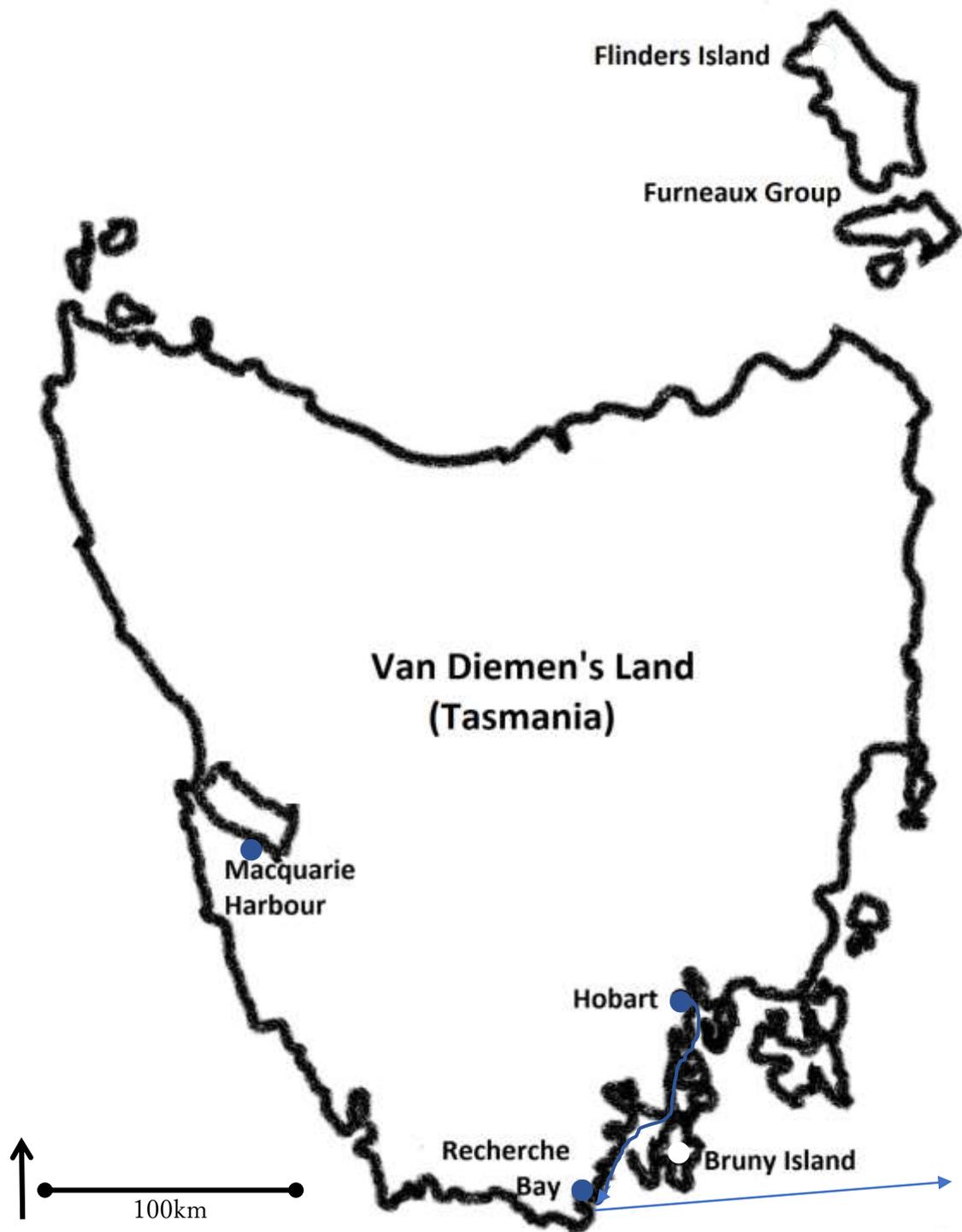


Figure 3. Map of Van Diemen's Land showing Cyprus's passage and flight.

On 21 September 1829, George Augustus Robinson (1791–1866) and Charles Sterling (c. 1806–40) recorded that Mangana had stated that soldiers had detained his wife, an

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Aboriginal woman whose name is unknown, and that they had taken her aboard a ship and that she had gone to England. Robinson and Sterling asserted that the ship was the *Cyprus*. Since the end of March 1829, Robinson had been employed as ‘the storekeeper, and supervisor’ in charge of setting up ‘the Establishment at Bruné [sic] Island for Improving the Condition of the Aborigines’. Sterling was his appointed convict writer.¹⁴

On the morning of 16 January 1830, the longest and best-documented of the first-contact interactions between the pirates and a samurai delegation occurred in the waters off southern Awa Province, Edo Japan. An unknown illustrator on a samurai intelligence-gathering mission drew an unidentified pirate appearing to suppress grief as he revealed a memorial portraiture tattoo of a woman with a hairstyle resembling those unique to Tasmanian Aboriginal women among the *Cyprus*’s known ports of call.

This illustration was included with the jointly bound manuscripts of the ranking samurai, Domain Overseer Hayami Zenzaemon (title inherited 1798–1854), and the two field commanders, County Samurai Yamauchi and County Samurai Mima Katsuzō (title inherited 1820–56).¹⁵ It depicts Swallow and three other pirates whose identities are unknown. They might have been Beveridge, 33 years old; Davis, 29 years old; and Watts, 38 years old.¹⁶ The samurai artist probably chose to depict the men he perceived to be of higher rank which, apart from the captain, would have been three of the four pirates in their late 20s and 30s. Supporting this theory, the depicted men have wrinkles, balding

¹⁴ Bruny Island also known as Lunawanna-alonnah.; Some sources list Mangana, also written Mangerner, as from the Nuenonne of Bruny Island.; Ryan, L, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 268.

¹⁵ Hayami Zenzaemon 速水善左衛門.; Mima Katsuzō 三間勝藏.

¹⁶ ‘Colonial Brig “Cyprus”’, *Police Gazette: or Hue and Cry* (London), 14 April 1830, 840.

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heads and crow's feet. None of the depicted men have earrings which seems to rule out Pooley who did, and at 29 was the only other older man.

The caption accompanying the tattoo identifies the subject as a woman. It appears to be written in the same hand as that of the Yamauchi and Mima manuscript.¹⁷ Although some samurai were skilled artists, neither of the two field commanders were on the intelligence-gathering mission during which it was drawn. However, one of them may have written the caption and the accompanying account. Hamaguchi, Yamauchi's secretary and spy, was on the mission and drew his own separate illustrations of the brig, objects and Swallow, but not the other three crew members. He recorded the incident in his written account.

Next, one of them opened the front of his top to show us the front-view half-body of a beautiful woman tattooed above his left breast. Then, another brought out a glass container filled with what appeared to be an alcoholic drink. He held a 'gyaman koppu' [German glass] in his hand and encouraged us to drink. When we all waved our hands [in refusal], each of them took a drink, tapped their head,

¹⁷ Hayami Zenzaemon, Account, 'Kaifu Gun Mugi Ura e ikokusen hyōchaku ni tsuki sokuji shūchō uchiharai sōrō ikkan hikki' 海部郡牟岐浦江異国船漂着ニ付即時出張打払候一卷筆記 [Notes on the Immediate Deployment to Repulse the Foreign Ship that drifted to Mugi Ura, Kaifu Gun, in One Volume], [1830] (illustrator unknown), Private Collection, Kobe.; Yamauchi Chūdayū and Mima Katsuzō, Account, 'Bunsei 12 nen ushidoshi 12 gatsu 22 nichi Mugi Ura ni oite ikokusen uchiharai tetsudzuki tsuketari uchiharai gosonae kubari domo' 文政十二丑年十二月廿二日於牟岐浦ニ異国船打払手續付り打払御備配とも [The proceedings in the repulse of the foreign ship at Mugi Ura on the 22nd day of the 12th month of the 12th year of Bunsei, year of the Ox, including the repulse's defensive deployments], [1830] (illustrator unknown), Private Collection, Kobe.

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appeared to feel good, and passed it to the next, until they had drunk it all.¹⁸

Later, on the same day, the samurai repulsed the brig. The six accounts describe the brig's arrival, interactions, samurai preparations and repulse from perspectives of participants and observers of different social rank.



Figure 4. The reveal of the memorial portraiture tattoo of a woman. (Courtesy of private collection.)

Considering Robinson's and Sterling's earlier reports of Mangana's and Worrady's

¹⁸ Hamaguchi, Account, 11 表, 11 front.

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statements, the hairstyle and attire of the woman portrayed, and the timing and circumstance of the tattoo's reveal, it was reasonable to investigate whether she might be the second wife of Mangana. This investigation found no new evidence to directly support or contradict Mangana's wife being on board.

However, it has been reported that VDL Lieutenant Governor and Colonel Commanding George Arthur (1784–1854) obfuscated the in-custody death of another Tasmanian Aboriginal woman.¹⁹ Might Arthur have suppressed this narrative of from-custody abduction too? Beyond the search for evidence immediate to Arthur's actions, it was also necessary to establish why Arthur might do it, how his clearly devout religious beliefs could accommodate it, and how he might achieve it.

Evidence, both direct and indirect, and previously published research examined in this investigation support the following:

Arthur was a fundamentalist with experience and knowledge of espionage and the deadly effect of split command, poor accommodation, and lack of supplies and prophylactic measures on fighting forces when faced with contagion. He had learnt earlier in his career that his promotion prospects could be jeopardised if he reported reality on the ground that ran counter to the moral agendas of his superiors and patrons in the home government.

The British government had no treaty that might legitimise Britain's invasion, subjugation and settlement of VDL. Arthur thought that the asymmetric resistance of

¹⁹ Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen's Land, An Aboriginal History*, 183–88.; Brodie, *The Vandemonian War*, 100-03.

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the Tasmanian Aboriginal Nations threatened to dislodge the invading British settlers from their land grants. When Arthur's military response proved ineffective, he manipulated perception through the written record to appear humanitarian and Christian while he orchestrated diminution. He was derelict in his duty to monitor, report, correct, and punish subordinates who killed non-combatants and prisoners in the field, and who were derelict in their custodial care of Aboriginal prisoners of war and interned non-combatants. Arthur had a fundamentalist ideology that he appears to have kept secret from his patrons. His worldview as a High Calvinist accommodated acts beyond the moral law in his role as governor. He concealed, obfuscated, ignored and excused war crimes in the field as well as unacceptable rates of custodial mortality. Behind his humanitarian façade, Arthur's actions and his nomenclature showed that he had placed Aboriginal combatants and non-combatants outside the conventions of European warfare, despite having received standing orders to the contrary.

While Arthur's claims that he had been deceived, and that mortality due to disease at the Aboriginal Establishment was beyond his control, may have been true to a limited extent in some situations, his administration's fatally negligent mismanagement resulted in more tragic outcomes for a longer period than could be reasonably expected due to incompetence and coincidence.²⁰ Settler testimony and statistics showed Arthur's all-seeing effectiveness and efficiency in all other areas of his administration.²¹ An editorial

²⁰ George Augustus Robinson quoting George Arthur, 12 May 1836, journal, in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 353.

²¹ John Montagu's Minute, 18 August 1837 to Executive Council of Van Diemen's Land in 'Communications relating to the Convict Discipline in Van Diemen's Land', *Parliamentary Papers*, Volume 42, 104.

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on Arthur's recall stated that relative to New South Wales (hereinafter NSW), in VDL 'The chain gangs, the female factory, the gaols, and the watch house,' were 'all specimens of order, decency, cleanliness, health and reform, coupled with economy.'²² Arthur's management of the repeatedly relocated Aboriginal Establishment stands in stark and deadly contrast to that report.

Why did Arthur do this? Contemporaries and historians described him as a Machiavel. Was his motivation purely ambition and vengeance? Or was his sense of duty such that he tasked himself with locally implementing a realpolitik final solution to what he described as Britain's 'fatal error': its failure to secure a treaty with the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples that would have provided a legal foundation for settlement?²³

The excuse offered by Norman Plomley, the historian and prolific transcriber of journals of the period, that the Aboriginal people would have died anyway due to lack of known curative treatments, is morally questionable and simply incorrect. It is questionable because any murderer could use it regarding any victim. It is incorrect because prison and convict transport reforms around the turn of the century had established the efficacy of measures and treatments. Indeed, the efficacy could even be seen in the data from Port Arthur, the penal station that Arthur had built and named after himself. Arthur concealed and obfuscated what was happening because he knew that it would not, as the Aborigine's Committee he established later wrote, be 'in Unison with the known

²² *Sydney Monitor*, 'Colonel Arthur', 28 November 1836.

²³ George Arthur to Robert Hay, 24 September 1832, 'Despatches 1832 Aug', CO280, File 35, AJCP Reel 251, 230.

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Sentiments of Government and of the British people’ for ‘Humanity and justice’.²⁴ Reporting the situation would have adversely affected his promotion prospects and probably led to his recall before the end of his exceptionally long twelve-year posting in VDL.

If Mangana’s wife was on the brig, some of the pirates may have wanted to abduct her for purely sexual reasons. However, the experienced mariners may have opposed this as traditionally many pirates banned women on board or provided guardians or threatened the ultimate penalty, death, to protect them from rape.

It seems likely that the four experienced mariners on board understood how desperately shorthanded they were and, from local maritime lore, knew of the essential skill set of climbing and knot tying that a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman could bring. Robinson remarked to the first incarnation of the Aborigines’ Committee on how rapidly Aboriginal people ‘acquire knowledge of every kind of handy craft’.²⁵ Perhaps they decided to take her in spite of her presence being a potential source of dispute among the novice crew and probably regardless of any desire she had to return to her family.

The *Colonial Times* reported that the pirates ‘purposed making regulations’, piratical articles, rules to govern the crew.²⁶ The origin of this report is unknown and while it

²⁴ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, 18 October 1831, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830 – 16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744, 136.

²⁵ George Augustus Robinson to Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 12 November 1829, minutes, ‘7578 (Vol.12)’ TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 95.

²⁶ *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 4 September 1829.

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might have been speculation, it seems likely as Swallow and the other experienced mariners might have felt a need for such rules to keep the violent men among them in line. Traditionally, in a rejection of the hierarchy of the navy, articles stipulated the democratic process by which decisions were to be made and the ships officers elected, as well as rules for dispute resolution, punishments, the division of plunder, etc.

Ten sets of articles remain from the golden age of piracy spanning from c. 1660 to c. 1730. Some of these appeared in popular books and news reports. Of these ten, five ships' companies banned rape. All of these five were members of the Flying Gang, the biggest grouping of ships' companies that worked together and probably had more than 20 member companies, comprising of around 1000 people in total. Howell Davis's articles banned both rape and women on board. His company sits atop the chart of Flying Gang's descendancy and consort and therefore potentially influenced two thirds of known Flying Gang captains. However, there were Flying Gang captains who were women, and as Edward Fox points out in 'Piratical Schemes and Contracts', 'rape was not uncommon among pirates, even those who legislated against it'.²⁷

Unlike Sterling, the convict writer that Arthur appointed to the Establishment to take care of Aboriginal people there including women and girls in Robinson's absence, none of the pirates were documented as having syphilis, being 'depraved' or caught in brothels. Swallow and William Brown (born c 1792), as the two most experienced mariners among them, would have had a knowledge of maritime lore and therefore may have led, or contributed significantly, to the conversation about establishing articles.

²⁷ Fox. 'Piratical Schemes and Contracts', 220.

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Swallow was making his second escape from the other side of the world to be with his wife and family. Brown, a shipwright who appears to have been assigned to the Bruny Island Aboriginal Establishment after delivering a finished vessel to Birchs Bay, may have previously met Mangana and his wife. If he were that same William Brown, he was not one of the men Robinson had had removed for sexually abusing the Aboriginal women.²⁸

Even if some of the pirates' initial intentions were sexual, the mostly novice crew may have become indebted to Mangana's wife in short order in the dangerous winter storms of the Tasman Sea and Southern Oceans. They reported one such storm as having taken the life of Brown. The crossing to New Zealand took about a week, and current meteorological data indicates that for August this would usually involve sailing through one and sometimes two storm systems. The weather on 14 August appears to have been calm, but the wind was picking up by the following dawn when the pirates set sail from Recherche Bay.

Master Harrison, the captain of the *Cyprus* on this passage, had requested to have the chains of three convicts with nautical experience removed to supplement his crew during the storm that forced them to shelter at Recherche. The new total of 14 in all provided two watches of seven.²⁹ According to Swallow, who tended to embellish his

²⁸ George Augustus Robinson to Peter Munro, 31 May 1829, 'File 01: George Augustus Robinson, letter book, 1829–1832', ML, A 7042, CY Reel 547, 6–7.; Colonial Secretary to Principal Superintendent of Convicts, 23 July 1829, 'Letterbook of Memoranda addressed to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts, (CSO84) 25 Apr 1828–21 Sep 1829', TA, CSO84/1/1, 442.

²⁹ William Marcus Carew, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, '9354–9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 249.

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accounts but had no need to in this instance, the final job of the last two crewmen to disembark at Recherche was to reef the topsails: climb the mast, gather up a sail and tie knots.³⁰ To reef a sail in a storm would have required four crew aloft. After the brig set sail, there were just four men with nautical experience on board.³¹ Usually crews trained boys in their early teens and younger to ascend masts. It was not a skill that adults picked up easily and could freeze a person with fear.³² Indeed, according to Swallow, of the final three men left with him on the brig before it sank, even after six months at sea, two of them could still not reef or steer.³³

As a South West Nation Aboriginal woman who had married into the South East Nation, it was likely that Mangana's wife would have had the ability to climb tall trees to catch opossum and to tie knots from basket weaving.³⁴ Aboriginal people were not generally interested in things European, however European maritime technology may have caught the attention of particularly the womenfolk as it did not require them pushing vessels by swimming which at times the indigenous craft did. Brown, if he was on Bruny Island, probably noticed this curiosity when he was ferrying Aboriginal people around. An Aboriginal woman of a different nationality, who was known to Robinson as Fanny, had

³⁰ William Swallow to Home Secretary, 10 November 1830, Petition, 'Home Office: Criminal Petitions, Series I', National Archives, HO17/59/18, 4.

³¹ William Swallow and James Pooley (alias Jones) were listed as mariners, William Brown as a seaman and William Templeman was described as a waterman in 'Colonial Brig "*Cyprus*"', *Police Gazette: or Hue and Cry* (London), 14 April 1830, 840.

³² Newby, *The Last Grain Race*, 32.

³³ William Swallow to Home Secretary, 10 November 1830, Petition, 'Home Office: Criminal Petitions, Series I', National Archives, HO17/59/18, 6.

³⁴ Ryan, L, *Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 129.; Labillardière, *Voyage in Search of La Perouse, Vol. II London: Stockdale 1800*, 39.; Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 419.; Ryan, L, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 41.

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lived with sealers and told him that she could ‘navigate a schooner, could hand reef and steer.’³⁵

Suggesting that the woman of the tattoo had become a crew member, her attire is the same right-buttoned tunic as the pirates. The tattoo’s location implies that its wearer loved her and the black frame that she had died. This investigation found that around the time of first contact with Edo Japan, some of the pirates’ actions and her husband’s death in VDL correlate with the hypothesis that she died of syphilis off Tosa Province. Perhaps the pirates were not only repairing the brig but preparing it aesthetically for her funeral. There was only one weapon ever fired from the brig. A single report was heard as they sailed away after the repulse. A musketeer stated that it was that of a large calibre musketoon blank. At that stage it had no defensive significance. Was this a gun salute for her sea burial in the water south of Kozushima Islet, Mugi Ura, Awa Province?³⁶

1.3 Awa Province, 1830

‘All Southern Barbarians and Westerners, not only the English, worship Christianity, that wicked cult prohibited in our land.’

- **Shogunate Expulsion Edict, 1825.**

The *Cyprus* repulse happened when the Tokugawa Shogunate’s maritime restrictions

³⁵ George Augustus Robinson, 11 October 1829, Journal, ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830’, ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 90.

³⁶ Hamaguchi, Account, 15 表, 15 front.

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were at their strictest due to fears of European colonial power incursions being a precursor to, or a poorly handled repulse being a pretext for, invasion and subjugation of the type that the British were enacting elsewhere. The Edo Period 1603 to 1867 came after the anarchy of the Warring States period and was followed by the Meiji Restoration which finally unified Japan into a single state.

Edo Japan can be thought of as a compound state over which the Tokugawa Shogunate military government ruled for peace.³⁷ Pax Tokugawa was achieved and maintained by:

- 1) Roughly dividing the lands close to Edo, the seat of the Shogunate, into small economically interdependent fiefdoms and those further away into larger economically independent domains. Organizing land grants so that the lands of Tokugawa allies strategically surrounded those of feudal lords who had formerly opposed the Tokugawa at the Battle of Sekigahara in 1600.
- 2) Holding every feudal lord's family hostage in Edo while he attended to business in his fief or domain.
- 3) Insisting lords spent alternate years in attendance in



Figure 5. An Awa Domain scrip, a form of locally issued money. (Author's collection.)

³⁷ Mizubayashi Takeshi 水林 彪, in Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 27.

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Edo, by a system known as *sankinkōtai*, under which the Shogunate expected the expenditure on the lord's entourage, houses in Edo, *sankinkōtai* procession, tributes and behaviour in Edo to be commensurate with his lands' assessed income.

- 4) Educating and refocussing the samurai warrior class to become administrators and tax collectors.

The Shogunate maintained these constraints and commitments to leave the lord, his house, and his samurai unable to wage war. Still, each domain had its own military force, made its own edicts, ran its own judiciary, sometimes printed its own money, and was referred to as a *kuni*, or 'country', in Japanese and, in the case of Tokushima, had its own navy.



Figure 6. The Awa Domain Navy on *sankinkōtai*. (Courtesy of Tokushima Castle Museum.)

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At the battle of Sekigahara the Awa Domain and its ruling house of Hachisuka had been loyal to the victorious Tokugawa, while the Tosa Domain had been an opponent.

Although there were differences in response to the moored brig in Tosa and Awa Provinces, these were most probably due to the time required to organise a repulse and level of preparedness rather than any anti-Tokugawa sentiment. Indeed, Tosa Domain was generally reviewing its maritime defences during this period and reviewed and planned to improve its preparedness after the brig incident.³⁸

Economically, unfair initial income assessment, poor economic management or natural disasters left some unfortunate feudal lords struggling to live up to the Shogunate's expectations. Tosa Province skirted bankruptcy, and then through sound economic management returned to financial wellbeing during the Edo Period.³⁹ Awa Province, however, thanks in part to its good access to the commercial centres of Osaka and Edo, as well as commercial production of salt and indigo, was one of the more successful and stable domains.⁴⁰

In Awa Province, the ratio of samurai to the ordinary population was relatively low which meant sufficient funds were available to pay reasonable samurai stipends while not overburdening the people with taxes.⁴¹ The samurai ran the Nishi Mugi fishery tax

³⁸ 'Oboe Ikokusen Toraibushi Muramura Defu Tō Shintatsu Shitagaki' 覚 異国船渡来節村々出夫等申達下書 [Memo, Draft Report Pertaining to The Deployment of Men From the Villages on The Arrival of Foreign Ships], 19 January 1830, Gotōke Bunsho 五藤文書 [Gotō Collection], Aki City Museum of History and Folklore, Kochi Prefecture, Japan, 8098.

³⁹ Roberts, *Mercantilism in a Japanese Domain*, 85–102.

⁴⁰ Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 155, 183–87.

⁴¹ Ravina, *Land and Lordship in Early Modern Japan*, 155.

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office that became their tactical command post during the repulse. The fisheries tax office prepared its own account of events but only a photocopy of a modern transcription remains, and it is unclear whether the map that accompanies it is a transcription or the original; however, it is the most topographically accurate. The office's name in Japanese used to be written as 'the one fifth share office' indicating the tax rate, but by 1830 the Chinese character for five had been replaced by a homophone meaning 'honourable', euphemistically changing the meaning to 'the honourable one share office'.

Despite the relatively favourable conditions in Awa Province, the lives of ordinary farmers and fisherfolk were far from easy due to conflicts with merchants in Edo and Osaka, who from time to time succeeded in driving down the price of indigo, as well as famines, epidemics, and natural disasters all affecting the general economic wellbeing of the Province. There were droughts in 1813, 1822, 1823 and devastating fires in Mugi Ura in 1813 and 1822.⁴²

Awa Province's first Hachisuka Lord established samurai garrisons at strategic locations and, unusually, incorporated and continued a local system of non-samurai *gō teppō*, district musketeers, as a militia.⁴³ Membership was bought and could be sold or bequeathed, involved regular drilling, and brought permission to carry a sword, an important status symbol. Having neither their own garrisons nor easy access from neighbouring garrisons, Awa Province's strategic frontier counties of Kaifu Gun and

⁴² 'Shikoku Saigai Ākaibusu' 市国災害アーカイブス [Shikoku Disaster Information Archives], accessed 7 February 2021, www.shikoku-saigai.com/.

⁴³ Hirota Kanzaemon, Account, 'Ikokusen Mugi Ura hyōchaku ikkan' 異国船牟岐浦漂着一巻 [A foreign ship drifts to Mugi Cove in one volume], [1830], Private Collection, Tokushima, 9 表, 9 front.

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Miyoshi Gun each had two teams of twenty-one musketeers while the other eight counties had just one team each.⁴⁴

Foreign policy was the preserve of the Shogunate. The Expulsion Edict of 1825 was the strictest.

We have issued instructions on how to deal with foreign ships on numerous occasions up to the present. In the Bunka era [1804–17], we issued new edicts to deal with Russian ships. But a few years ago, a British ship wreaked havoc in Nagasaki [the Phaeton Incident of 1808], and more recently their rowboats have been landing to procure firewood, water, and provisions. Two years ago they forced their way ashore [in Satsuma Domain], stole livestock and extorted rice. Thus they have become steadily more unruly, and moreover, seem to be propagating their wicked religion among our people. This situation plainly cannot be left to itself.

All Southern Barbarians and Westerners, not only the English, worship Christianity, that wicked cult prohibited in our land. Henceforth, whenever a foreign ship is sighted approaching any point on our coast, all persons on hand should fire on and drive it off. If the vessel heads for the open sea, you need not pursue it; allow it to escape. If the foreigners force their way ashore, you may capture and incarcerate them, and if their mother ship approaches, you may destroy it as circumstances dictate.

⁴⁴ Takata, *Awa Kinsei Yōgo Jiten*, 125–26, 193–94.

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Note that Chinese, Koreans, and Ryukyans can be differentiated [from Westerners] by physiognomy and ship design, but Dutch ships are indistinguishable [from those of other Westerners]. Even so, have no compunctions about firing on [the Dutch] by mistake; when in doubt, drive the ship away without hesitation. Never be caught off guard. ⁴⁵

Isolationism, or *Sakoku*, was not unique to Japan; the Ming Dynasty had used it. The rationale was that if your country was self-sufficient, why expose it to the potentially disruptive outside influences of evangelising religions, colonial powers, weapon technology, etc. In Edo Japan, there was not only suspicion regarding European influences; the Shogunate and Meiji government called Buddhism, another foreign religion, into question at the beginning and end of the Period.

However, there has been a shift away from the blanket use of the term *Sakoku*, or ‘closed country’, toward, *kaikin*, or ‘maritime restrictions’ because of the permitted trade contact with the non-evangelizing Dutch, Chinese, Korean and Ryukyans through open ports. *Kaikin* also restricted the building of ocean-going ships to coastal traders, thereby limiting local maritime technological development. There were Shogunate restrictions on the size of vessel that the domains were allowed to build, with which Awa Domain complied.

Like the samurai Lords, foreign trading nations’ representatives also had to perform the *sankinkōtai* procession to pay tribute in Edo. The Shogunate was not solely interested

⁴⁵ ‘*Tokugawa Kinreikō*’ 徳川禁令考 [Prohibitions of the Tokugawa] 609–610, in Wakabayashi, *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan*, 60.

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in the benefit of trade. Intelligence from the Dutch provided a window on Europe and the New World. *'Kōmō Zatsuwa'* [*Red-Haired Chitchat*] is cited in the Hamaguchi manuscript as a source on the origins of European tobacco smoking. Published in 1787 it contained drawings and descriptions of a static electricity machine and a Montgolfier balloon; their first flight having taken place just four years earlier.⁴⁶



Figure 7. An illustration of a static electricity machine imported during the isolationist Edo Period in 'Kōmō Zatsuwa'. (Author's collection.)

The Shogunate regarded the medical officers on Dutch ships as educated and an important source of intelligence. The brother of the author of *'Kōmō Zatsuwa'* was a Shogunate doctor. This intelligence flow was two-way. The 1793 3rd edition of the

⁴⁶ Morishima, *Kōmō Zatsuwa* Kawachiya, Vol. V, 105, Vol. I, 29.

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Encyclopaedia Britannica contained 27 detailed and accurate pages on Japan; its Australia listing was a mere 10 lines. By 1829 there appear to have been roughly 19 books published in English about Japan and things Japanese, and a similar number published in Japan about Europe and things European.⁴⁷

A new school of internationally curious scholars of ‘Rangaku’, or European studies, had emerged which was seen as being in opposition to the traditional Confucian nationalist elites of the ‘Mito’ School. However, by 1825, anxiety about foreign threats had grown to include scholars from both the Mito and Rangaku Schools. After an incident in Mito involving a British whaler, Aizawa Seishisai articulated the Mito School’s doctrine in 1825 in ‘*Shinron Kōwa*’ [*New Theses*]. Its preface cites Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* in a call for preparedness.

But recently the loathsome Western barbarians, unmindful of their base position as the lower extremities of the world, have been scurrying impudently across the Four Seas, trampling other nations underfoot. Now they are audacious enough to challenge our exalted position in the world. What manner of insolence is this?...

...These barbarians court ultimate ruin by ignoring the moral laws of nature and refusing to accept the lowliness of their status...

...Unless a Great Hero bestirs himself to assist Heaven's normative processes,

⁴⁷ Rogala, A Collector’s Guide to Books on Japan in English. ‘Edo Jidai Nichiran Kōryū’ 江戸時代の日蘭交流 [Japanese European Exchange from the Edo Period], Tokyo: National Diet Library, 2009, accessed 18 January 2018, www.ndl.go.jp/nichiran/index.html .

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all creation will fall prey to the wily, meat-eating barbarians.⁴⁸

Indeed, even Hamaguchi's attitude towards the foreigners he encountered on the brig can be seen to change in his portrayal of Swallow between his first manuscript, which was illustrated real-time, and his transcription which he produced after the repulse that holed the ship and for all he knew sent it to a watery grave.



Figure 8. From left to right: a real-time illustration of Swallow from the Hamaguchi One Manuscript; a post-repulse transcribed illustration of Swallow from the Hamaguchi Two Manuscript; a temple guardian at Ganjōji, Tera Machi, just off Hamaguchi's route to work. This modern natural wood-finish version is a copy of its predecessor. The defining lines on the nose, cheek, and under the eye; and larger eyes, a fuller ear, a more open mouth and individual teeth depicted are similar to Hamaguchi's second transcribed and stylised ink sketch. Furthermore, the eyes on painted versions of guardians often had the white showing below or around the iris. (Ink sketches courtesy of Tokushima Prefectural Archive, and Tokushima Castle Museum. Author's photograph of temple guardian.)

Perhaps Hamaguchi demonised his Swallow with elements of the wrathful archetype of a Buddhist temple guardian. The dharmapala manifestations of the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi, in Figure 6, would have probably been the most fearsome figure in

⁴⁸ Aizawa Seishisai 会沢 正志齋, 'Shinron Kōwa' 新論講話 [New Theses], in *Anti-Foreignism and Western Learning in Early-Modern Japan*, 149–50.

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Hamaguchi's neighbourhood. It was just off his walk to work from South Sako to Tokushima Castle.

1.4 The *Cyprus* off Mugi Ura Cove, January 1830

'and as their battle standards fluttered in the wind, they looked like an army.'

- **Hamaguchi Makita, 1830**

With this increase in concern, it was important that domain samurai did not make mistakes that might be a pretext for a foreign power's colonial designs when dealing with unwanted visits from foreign ships. Domains distributed guides to foreign ships' ensigns so that their samurai could identify ships of favoured trading nations and assist them to open ports if they were in trouble, or swiftly repulse those of other nations without serious incident. In the guide used at Mugi Ura to identify the *Cyprus* the French pronunciation transcription of country names, and the preponderance of Union Jacks used by British colonies initially confused the Awa Domain samurai field commanders when they tried to identify the brig.⁴⁹

Their repulse was, however, textbook as their objective was achieved in short order with no loss of life: show that you are preparing to attack, do not let them land; continue to show that you are preparing to attack, advise them to leave; continue to show that you are preparing to attack, give them an ultimatum to leave (here with the large ball); fire around them; target their sails; target their ship; take control of their ship; see them off.

⁴⁹ Hamaguchi, Account, 11 表, 11 front.

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As soon as word arrived of a foreign ship appearing off the nearby Pacific coast of neighbouring Tosa Province, the Awa Domain samurai would send an agent to gather information.⁵⁰ Whether it was the repulse of an unwanted visitor or the assistance of a storm-damaged ship of a favoured trading nation, the Awa Domain samurai would have to be ready to call on and organise the fisherfolk of coastal villages like Mugi Ura for corvée work assisting.

At the time of the repulse the Tokushima Domain feudal Lord was in Edo on *sankinkōtai*. The strategic command was the council of house elders that convened at the castle. They issued the order to deploy.⁵¹ Deputy House Elder Yamazaki Shōgen-Dono and his samurai accompanied the force.⁵² The duty domain overseers led by Hayami checked that Domain and local samurai followed Shogunate strategy and edicts while avoiding repercussions.⁵³ On duty, there were two county samurai appointed to Kaifu Gun: Mima stationed locally at Hiwasa Garrison, and Yamauchi stationed at Tokushima Castle. They became the field commanders.

The force consisted of samurai and vassals from Tokushima Castle, samurai from the Hiwasa Garrison, and local officials who would have been samurai or appointed by them, local landowners, district musketeers, and local hunters that the samurai mobilised from the communities inland, and up and down the coast. The elements from Tokushima

⁵⁰ Hase Shōbē, Account, in Hamaguchi, Account, 1 表, 1 front.

⁵¹ Hayami, Account, 1 裏, 1 back.

⁵² Shōgen-Dono 山崎将監.; Hamaguchi, Account, 15 裏, 15 back.

⁵³ Hayami, Account, 1 裏 – 2 表, 1 back – 2 front.

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Castle, Hiwasa Garrison and the neighbouring communities billeted in Mugi Ura.⁵⁴

The Nishi Mugi Fishery Tax Office became the overseers' and field commanders' tactical command post. Gunners included samurai, musketeers and hunters with mostly small bore and a few large bore pieces ranging from 13mm to 57mm in calibre. The samurai considered gunnery, like swordsmanship, an art. For transportation on horseback the cannons were smaller than European pieces, although they were powerful and accurate. However, when some of their direct hits failed to penetrate the *Cyprus's* hull, the samurai were surprised at the sturdiness of the British brig.

Gunners with smaller bore weapons defended the shoreline while teams with larger bores concentrated at Shima no Hira, the long flat headland to the southwest of Mugi Ura Cove and on Teba Jima. The samurai thought that the brig could sail directly into the wind and when their ultimatum to depart was not initially complied with due to unfavourable winds, Yamauchi launched from Shima-no-Hira accompanied by four Domain patrol boats carrying gunnery teams, and Mima launched from Teba Jima with a team in his boat, to pursue, subdue and repulse the brig. In turn, the patrol boats sculled toward the brig, fired, broke off and circled back while reloading. Without returning fire the pirates communicated submission and unfavourable winds after the samurai gunners had holed the brig at the waterline. They then led the brig, which the pirates probably towed using the longboat, back to south of Mugi Ura Cove where an offshore evening breeze carried it out to sea.⁵⁵

⁵⁴ See map in Supplementary Notes.

⁵⁵ Hamaguchi, Account, 4 表 – 15 表, 4 front – 15 front.

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Locally after the repulse, people were not happy at the expenses they incurred participating, transporting and accommodating participants. Some locals sent a letter requesting compensation for their expenses to the Awa Domain, but it appears to have been ignored.⁵⁶ Via local samurai officials, the Domain made formal presentations of rice and letters of acknowledgement to participants, who were instructed to dress smartly when receiving their awards.⁵⁷

1.5 The Aboriginal South East Nation, 1829

‘Nelson and several other Natives left the Establishment on account of ill treatment from the Wood Cutters’

- **Charles Arthur 1829**

Pre-invasion the territory of the clans of the South East Nation stretched from the south bank of what is now called the River Derwent to around the east bank of the New River. These member clans had a common language, intermarried, and seasonally exchanged access to resources. The Recherche Bay area was home to the Lyluequonny clan. The Nuenonne of Bruny Island visited, and transited Recherche Bay to access resources, as did a foreign clan from the neighbouring South West Nation, the Ninene from the Port Davey area with whom relations were good.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Unknown author, Letter, ‘Kaifu okie ikokusen hyōchaku ni ukimeshi ukaware sōrō kako shoninbu okuni jō yūzū ikkan’ 海部沖江異国船漂着二付被召使仕候船加子諸人夫御國中融通一卷 [The sculler masters who humbly worked for our country regarding the Foreign Ship that drifted off Kaifu, in One Volume] [July 1830] Tokushima Prefectural Archive, Japan, ヤマ200665000.

⁵⁷ Hirota, Account, 12 裏 – 13 表, 12 back – 13 front.

⁵⁸ Ryan, L, *Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 39–44.

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The colonists had not yet settled the Recherche Bay area. However, since first contact, due to the South East Nation's east coast being in the lee of VDL relative to Southern Ocean storms and dotted with bays and inlets, there had been ten visits to the Nation's territory by European vessels prior to establishment of the first British outposts in VDL in 1803. Captain Abel Tasman was first in 1642. Then between 1772 and 1802 there were four French and five British visits including Captain James Cook and Captain William Bligh. There were also two visits, one French and one British, to neighbouring nations' territories.⁵⁹

In 1829 relations in the southern half of the South East Nation were thought to be good as there had been relatively few attacks on settlers. This was probably due to the national character of the clan's people of the South East Nation, the collapse of the population due to disease, and the relatively gradual displacement due to colonial exploitation of the timber resources. In other areas the settlers' sudden conversion of tracts of Aboriginal land to pasturage had brought more immediate resource conflict. This British perception of good relations led Arthur to choose Bruny Island for the first Aboriginal Establishment.⁶⁰

However, on and around Bruny Island in the years leading up to 1829, Mangana's elder daughter Truganini reported witnessing her mother, Mangana's first wife, murdered by passing seamen; her own rape by men from Birchs Bay Sawing Establishment after they chopped off the hands of her betrothed and his friend with a hatchet and left them to

⁵⁹ Brown, *Aboriginal Archaeological Resources in South East Tasmania*, 19.

⁶⁰ Ryan, L, *Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 47–65.

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drown; her birth sister Moorina and a clan sister being abducted by a sealer boat; her uncle, known to the Bruny Island Establishment storekeeper and supervisor, George Augustus Robinson, as Boomer Jack, being shot by a soldier who raped his wife, Nelson, a Nuenonne clan elder. These accounts come via Alexander McKay, an assigned convict who travelled with Truganini on Robinson's eight-month Port Davey 'Friendly Mission' to befriend the South West Nation. There would have been other incidents whose victims either did not or could not report them or were killed.⁶¹ However, it should also be noted that McKay was a brutal man who according to Robinson appears to have committed a war crime himself later in 1830 when he and the men with him shot sleeping Big River Nation Aboriginal people including a woman at night.⁶² Analysis of the situation on Bruny Island that Charles Arthur, Arthur's nephew, prepared in June 1829 recorded that Nelson and several others had recently had to leave the Establishment 'on account of ill treatment from the wood cutters' from Birchs Bay.⁶³ According to Robinson this happened on 3 April.⁶⁴

For those who had experienced pre-invasion times, the societal collapse on Bruny Island

⁶¹ Truganini also written Trukanini, Trugernanner, Trugernena, Truganina, Trugannini, Trucanini, Trucaminni, Trucaminnia and Trucaninny, and known as Lalla Rookh also written Lallah Rookh.; Trukanini quoted by Alexander McKay in Calder, J.E. *Some account of the wars, extirpation, habits, etc., of the native tribes of Tasmania*, 104-06.

⁶² George Augustus Robinson to Colonial Secretary, 2 March 1832, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, 513-19, Reel Z1826 in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 720.

⁶³ Charles Arthur, date unknown, read by George Arthur on 26 June 1829, Analysis, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 121.

⁶⁴ George Augustus Robinson, 3 April 1829, Journal, 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826-1830', ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 3.

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would not have been easy to witness. One of Robinson's assigned convicts, the wood cutters, local settlers' assigned convicts or whalers on Bruny Island may have raped and infected Mangana's wife with syphilis. Some of the Aboriginal women visited the local settlers' assigned convicts and whalers to supplement their government rations which Robinson's assigned convicts described as lacking.⁶⁵ Mangana and his wife, like many Aboriginal families infected with European pathogens, appear to have had near-synchronous symptom presentation and Mangana died from it on 30 January 1830.⁶⁶

The written record reveals little about Mangana's second wife. Lyndall Ryan reports that she and her son had arrived on Bruny with the Port Davey visitors. As probably only a member of the South West Nation would stay there, away from her South East Nation partner, their union appears to have been international: between the South West and South East Nations.⁶⁷

1.6 Colonial Van Diemen's Land, 1829

'A fatal error in the first settlement of Van Diemen's Land...'

- George Arthur to Robert Hay regarding the lack of a treaty, 1832

⁶⁵ George Augustus Robinson circular, 13 May 1829, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 39.; George Augustus Robinson to George Arthur, 12 June 1829, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 20.; Charles Sterling, 26 November 1829, testimony at Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, '7578 (Vol.12)', TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

⁶⁶ For mortality clustering see 1829–39 in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 938–42.; Charles Sterling, 15 July 1829, Journal, 'File 7: George Augustus Robinson, Van Diemen's Land, miscellaneous papers, 1829–1833', ML, A 7059, CY Reel 784, 2–3.; George Augustus Robinson, Journal in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 115.

⁶⁷ Ryan, L, *Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 129.

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There were eight French and British landings in VDL in the 15 years leading up to 1803. Concerned that the French might claim the islands, the British sent a governor from NSW to establish outposts in 1803. With this came the first convict labour.⁶⁸

VDL's invading colonial population is thought to have exceeded the indigenous population by 1820 when free settlers, the people to whom the British Colonial Government sold or granted ownership of Aboriginal land, began arriving in large numbers at the promise of land grants and free convict labour. Being one of the most distant of all Britain's colonies, the return of post took nine months to a year. Previous to Arthur, lieutenant governors were answerable to the governor of NSW.

Arthur became lieutenant governor of VDL on 14 May 1824 on the condition that he would be directly answerable to London. The colony separated from NSW and established its own judiciary and Legislative Council on 3 December 1825. His governorship was autocratic and authoritarian, but it brought peace by dealing with the worst of the bushrangers, improved infrastructure, and increased government revenue.⁶⁹ This was good for Arthur's advancement.

Regarding the Tasmanian Aboriginal peoples, Arthur had initially signalled what he probably perceived to be fairmindedness in his dispatches, despite what the British were doing being inherently unfair. Arthur commissioned the production of approximately one hundred illustrated sign boards, like the one in Figure 7, to communicate that the

⁶⁸ New South Wales is also known as part of the Koori region.

⁶⁹ Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 1824–36, Revenue and Expenditure in, 'Van Diemen's Land Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', National Library of Australia (hereinafter NLA), CO284, File 46–59, Reel No: 1194–95.

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benefits of friendliness and penalties for murder applied equally to both Aborigines, and colonisers and convicts. However, the reality has been reported as different, and Arthur's dispatches may have been, to some degree, false virtue-signalling for the benefit of his superiors and patrons, Wilberforce, the Abolitionists, and their allies back home.⁷⁰ With Arthur's accelerated land grab there was an uptick in invader and Aboriginal violence. In 1832 Arthur described the lack of any treaty between the British government and Aboriginal peoples as a 'fatal error'.⁷¹

The *Cyprus* seizure and escape happened when VDL penal-colony law and order was at its most harsh and the conflict between Aboriginal resistance and British invaders was peaking.⁷² Soon after his arrival, Arthur established a system of classification of convicts with commensurate punishments.⁷³ The penultimate of these was imprisonment at the Macquarie Harbour Penal Station, which was regarded as one of the worst prisons in the British Empire.⁷⁴

London recalled Arthur in January 1836. As with his previous posting to Honduras, by the time he left, he had fallen out with some of the colony's landowners. After his return to Britain, he received a knighthood and new posting as lieutenant governor of Upper Canada.

⁷⁰ Calder, *Some account of the wars, extirpation, habits, etc., of the native tribes of Tasmania*, 106.

⁷¹ George Arthur to Robert Hay, 24 September 1832, 'Despatches 1832 Aug', CO280, File 35, AJCP Reel 251, 230.

⁷² Plomley, *Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land 1803–1831*, 60–100.

⁷³ George Arthur to William Wilberforce, 9 October 1828, 'Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855', ML, Vol.5, A 2165; MAV/FM4/ 3669–70.

⁷⁴ Maxwell-Stewart, *Closing Hell's Gates*, 1.

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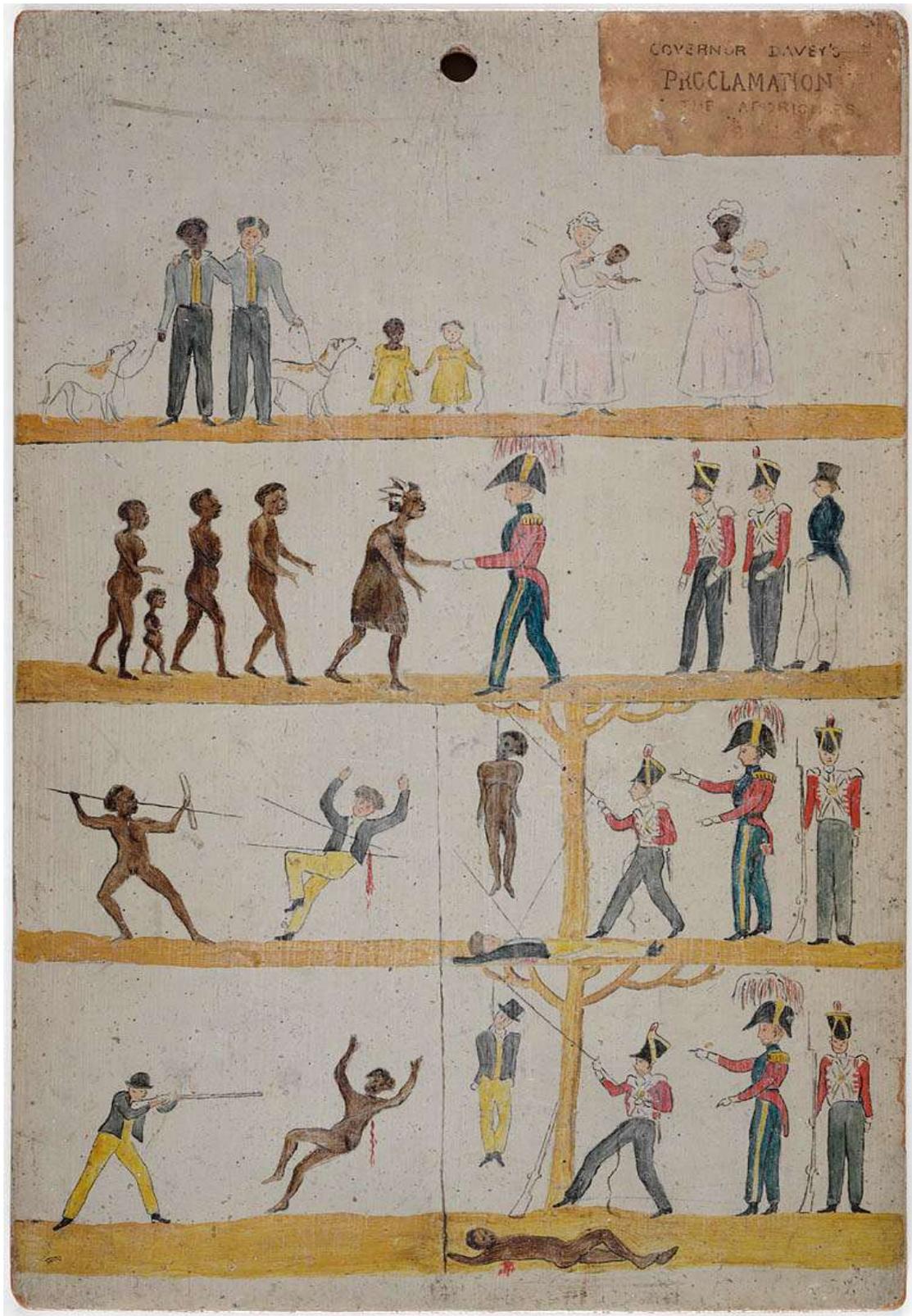


Figure 9. One of Arthur's illustrated signboards that communicated the benefits of friendliness and penalties for murder applied equally. (Public domain. Attribution: State Library of New South Wales.)

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1.7 The *Cyprus* at Recherche Bay, August 1829

The *Cyprus* left Hobart on 5 August 1829 in a second attempt to convey the convict prisoners and supplies to Macquarie Harbour Penal Station. Again, the brig fought storms and sheltered at Recherche Bay from 11 August where the crew retrieved kedging anchors abandoned on their previous attempt.⁷⁵ The brig remained moored there waiting for fair winds.⁷⁶ On the evening of 14 August, seventeen of the prisoners overthrew the guards and took control of the brig.

They forcibly disembarked 45 passengers and crew, including soldiers, convict prisoners, and assigned convict crew who refused to escape with them, to at least three separate locations where they were stranded without shelter for about two weeks: not everyone was rescued at once.⁷⁷

William Brown was an assigned convict shipwright who was returning to the shipyard at Macquarie Harbour after having delivered a finished ship, the *Tamar*, to Birchs Bay.⁷⁸ Due to his nautical skills, the pirates apparently pressed him into sailing with them, making 18 men in total. The pirates may have plied him with drink as some of the last

⁷⁵ William Marcus Carew and Robert Harrison, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, '9354–9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 252, 268.

⁷⁶ William Marcus Carew, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, '9354–9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 252.

⁷⁷ Walter Williams, 4 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, '9354–9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 302.

⁷⁸ Colonial Secretary to Principal Superintendent of Convicts, 23 July 1829, 'Letterbook of Memoranda addressed to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts (CSO84), 25 Apr 1828 – 21 Sep 1829', TA, CSO84/1/1, 442.

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crew to leave the vessel after the seizure were reported to be drunk.⁷⁹ However, his pressing may have been faked so that he could avoid the risk of a death sentence. This was common on pirate ships in the case of high-value crew members, especially doctors and carpenters. Due to the lack of experienced crew on the piratically-seized *Cyprus*, any mariner would have been of high-value. Later the *Cyprus* pirate skipper, William Swallow, after having been sentenced to death in London, successfully dodged hanging by claiming that he too had been ‘a pressed man’.⁸⁰

The pirates later reported that Brown had been lost in a storm off New Zealand. However, Chatham Island history also tells of men from the *Cyprus*, which anchored off Owenga in 1829, drowning when two longboats capsized in standing waves on trying to enter Te Whanga Lagoon. They had raided two Moriori settlements and a sealing base.⁸¹ Perhaps due to fear of incriminating themselves, none of the pirates ever mentioned this attack.

After being stranded at Recherche Bay, Lieutenant William Marcus Carew, the commanding officer of the *Cyprus's* guard, initially sent John Pobjoy and Henry Meakins, two of the convicts, overland to raise the alarm and bring help to the passengers and crew.⁸² On crossing the Huon River into Mellukerdee clan territory, they were ‘attacked by a number of natives’ and had to abandon their clothes and swim back

⁷⁹ William Marcus Carew, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, ‘9354–9361 (except 9356)’, TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 256.

⁸⁰ William Swallow to Home Secretary, 10 November 1830, Petition, ‘Home Office: Criminal Petitions, Series I’, National Archives, HO17/59/18, 3.

⁸¹ King and Robin. *A Land Apart*. 26.

⁸² Pobjoy also written Popjoy.

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to escape.⁸³ The Birchs Bay Sawing Establishment was in the clan's territory and the hostility may have been in part due to the clan's contact with the men from there. Possibly the clansmen were there by chance hunting. However, the perfect timing of the attack, after the men had exited the water and before they could get dressed, suggests a planned ambush. If word of Mangana's wife's illegal detention and abduction preceded Pobjoy and Meakins via local Aboriginal people, the Mellukerdee may have targeted them. Pobjoy was on the 'fishing excursion' with Carew that was the most likely of the known away parties to have detained Mangana's wife, if she was taken aboard the brig.⁸⁴ This would have given the Mellukerdee good reason for a planned ambush.

⁸³ John Pobjoy, 7 September 1829, Petition, '9354–9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416 Reel Z1849, 94.

⁸⁴ Robert Harrison, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, '9354–9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 268.

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2 Genocide In Van Diemen's Land

Arthur has been accused of committing genocide against the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. Archaeologist, artist and curator Julie Gough regards everything in the Australian colonial archive as evidence from the crime scenes of Aboriginal history.⁸⁵ Historians Lloyd Robson, Peter Chapman, John Docker and Nick Brodie see Arthur's action and effect as proof of intent, and effectively regard Arthur as a genocidal Machiavel.⁸⁶ Jared Diamond, who has written extensively on how Eurasian peoples displaced indigenous peoples including the effect of contagions, suggests that the diminution of the Aboriginal population in VDL was orchestrated without wanton killing by government.⁸⁷ Tom Lawson sees genocide but still sees Arthur as coming from 'an evangelical, humanitarian community'.⁸⁸ Tony Barta reads British intent from action but writes that Arthur 'was no doubt sincere in his desire to protect the Aborigines'.⁸⁹ Murray Johnson and Ian McFarlane regard Arthur's policies as confused attempts at ending hostilities, while MacFarlane does see genocide as VDL Company policy.⁹⁰ Plomley concludes that there was incongruity between what the settlers reported they did and what they are known to have done in the 'Roving Party' militia

⁸⁵ Julie Gough, 'In the Making: Julie Gough', Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery, 8 May 2017. Video, 1:56–2:15, accessed 3 March 2018, www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHwHMQ4Nico.

⁸⁶ Robson, *A History of Tasmania*, Volume 1, 211–19; Chapman, *Historical Records of Australia*, (Hereinafter *HRoA*) Series 3, Volume 8, xliii.; Brodie, *The Vandemonian War*, 100.

⁸⁷ Diamond, 'In black and white', 9–11.

⁸⁸ Lawson, *The Last Man*, location 1514 (eBook).

⁸⁹ Barta, 'Relations of Genocide', 241–242; Reynolds, *An Indelible Stain?* 49–85.,

⁹⁰ Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen's Land*, 382–3.; McFarlane, *Beyond Awakening*, 89–128

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squads but that ‘Arthur was the only one whose attitude was truly humanitarian.’⁹¹ Lyndall Ryan, and Henry Reynolds see no evidence of intent and accept the narrative that Arthur promoted of his being in religious ideological unity with his Evangelical patrons and superiors as an Evangelical abolitionist humanitarian authoritarian whose hand was forced in the diminution of the Tasmanian Aboriginal population.⁹² Arthur was also accused of using spies and Chapman described his VDL as an ‘Island Panopticon’, a design of prison in which the interned were under constant surveillance.⁹³

Initially, before governing in extremis, Arthur’s intentions may have appeared as those of an Evangelical abolitionist humanitarian authoritarian. At first Arthur’s accelerated landgrab had gone mostly unchallenged, but unsurprisingly it eventually brought the invaders into conflict with the original landowners, and this led to an uptick in Aboriginal resistance. With this the nomenclature that accompanied Arthur’s initial overtures changed.

In October 1827 Arthur boasted to General George Don, to whom he was aide-de-camp in Jersey, that the island was ‘in the most perfect state of tranquillity & thriving in every way.’⁹⁴ Six months later Arthur started referring to the Aboriginal people as ‘savages’ in an official despatch to Secretary of State for War and the Colonies William

⁹¹ Plomley, Jorgen Jorgenson and the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land, 29.

⁹² Ryan, L, Tasmanian Aborigines, 153.; Reynolds, An Indelible Stain? 49–66, 85.

⁹³ True Colonist (Hobart), 1 July 1836, 205.; Chapman, ‘The Island Panopticon’, 6–10.

⁹⁴ George Arthur to General Don, 29 October 1827, ‘Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855’, ML, Vol.13, A 2173, CY Reel 3672.

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Huskisson.⁹⁵ This nomenclature effectively placed them outside the conventions of European warfare that they had been afforded under Arthur's initial brief which stated, 'when such disturbances cannot be prevented or allayed by less vigorous measures, to oppose force by force, and to repel such Aggressions in the same manner, as if they proceeded from subjects of any accredited State.'⁹⁶

Despite Arthur's use of 'savage', he ramped up his humanitarian rhetoric. Then in 1829 as non-combatant Aboriginal women and children fell victim to his policies and forces, he concealed and obfuscated the incidents. If Secretary of State for War and the Colonies Sir George Murray, Arthur's line-superior in London, had fully understood any of these incidents, he may have scrutinised the situation more carefully and discovered the others. Beyond his political embarrassment, Arthur knew the incidents were potentially a touchstone for London's assessment of his administration that could have resulted in the direct appointment of officials to oversee his effectiveness in implementing London's policies, a proclamation fettering of his accelerated land grab, or even his recall in 1830, at the end of the normal colonial gubernatorial period of six years.

The conflict continued and had de-escalated by early 1832. However, the failings and unacceptably high mortality continued at the Aboriginal Establishment where Arthur's

⁹⁵ George Arthur to William Huskisson, 17 April 1828, in Parliamentary Paper, House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, Session 1831, vol. 19, 178–79.; Arthur to Twiss, 18 August 1829 in Chapman, *HRoA*, Series 3 Volume 8, 575; Government Order No.2, 25 February 1830, in Parliamentary Paper, House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, Session 1831, vol. 19, 209.

⁹⁶ George Arthur to George Murray, 4 November 1828, and Executive Council, 30 November 1828, minute acknowledging 3rd Earl Bathurst, 14 July 1825, 'accredited State' dispatch in Chapman, *HRoA*, Series 2, Volume 9, 1049–52.

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administration had voluntarily and forcibly relocated and interned the remaining people of the Tasmanian Aboriginal nations. Any few incidents of failing Arthur could have denied as unfortunate turns of circumstance. However, when one considers them in their entirety and the length of the period for which they persisted compared to the exemplary care at other custodial institutions in Arthur's VDL and factors in his background, beliefs and all-knowing style of governorship; Arthur's orchestrated diminution of the Aboriginal population, i.e. genocide, is the only reasonable conclusion.

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3 George Arthur

An understanding of Arthur, his character, background and beliefs, is essential to an understanding of what he did.

3.1 Ambition Beyond Confidence

‘I am confident I can no more of myself wisely direct the offices of this island than I can fly’.

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to Reverend Samuel Marsden, 1825.**

Arthur was not born into the aristocracy; he was an ambitious son of a wine merchant. Perhaps his ambition was spurred higher when his father-in-law and brother-in-law received knighthoods before and while he was in VDL.

As Arthur biographer AGL Shaw notes, in 1805 Arthur ‘was older than most of his rank, and so was anxious to make the most of the opportunities which the expanding army was offering.’ AGL Shaw observes that Arthur’s 1814 marriage to Elizabeth Orde Usher Smith, the daughter of one of the commanding officers in Jamaica, ‘added to his existing eagerness for promotion’.⁹⁷ Indeed, regarding his promotion to become superintendent of British Honduras, Arthur wrote that having ‘the prospect of obtaining the Brevet Rank [of lieutenant colonel] by the Appointment’ and ‘promotion being my idol, off I marched’. This was an opportunity his superiors appear to have declined.⁹⁸ (Brevet meant an officer rank in name, but not paygrade.) However, although Arthur was

⁹⁷ Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 18.

⁹⁸ George Arthur to Benjamin Bloomfield, 1 August 1814, ‘No 3 Eliza Arthur, Honduras, from July-Dec 1814’, BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/22, quoted in Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 19.

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ambitious, privately he was not always confident regarding his VDL posting. He expressed this in a letter to the Anglican minister of Paramatta, NSW, Reverend Samuel Marsden. Marsden was both a missionary and magistrate who corresponded with Wilberforce. Marsden later gained the nickname the ‘Flogging Parson’ although Matthew Allen argues the epithet was unwarranted.⁹⁹ When Arthur corresponded in 1825, Marsden was embroiled in a scandal involving another magistrate in NSW. Regarding this Arthur expressed empathy and perhaps that is why he was unusually frank. Twelve months after taking up his VDL post, Arthur wrote, ‘I am confident I can no more of myself wisely direct the offices of this island than I can fly’. (The ‘of myself’ was an amendment that may have been mislocated.)¹⁰⁰

3.2 Counterespionage to Intrigue and Perception Manipulation

‘Subtle and shrewd, he offers to the world An artificial image of himself,’

- A Honduran settler describing Superintendent George Arthur, 1824.

Arthur served during the Napoleonic Wars, a conflict that was won on intelligence. He was trained in civil administration by the master spy, General George Don, the Lieutenant Governor of Jersey. As the security situation in VDL deteriorated in 1829, Arthur appointed people he could rely on to newly created posts at the top of his administration’s security apparatus. Arthur’s live-in nephew, Charles Arthur, became his aide-de-camp; Peter Archer Mulgrave, an officer who had worked under Don in

⁹⁹ Allen, ‘The Myth of the Flogging Parson: Samuel Marsden and Severity of Punishment in the Age of Reform’.

¹⁰⁰ George Arthur to Samuel Marsden, 24 May 1825, ‘Volume 1: Samuel Marsden papers, letters to Reverend and Mrs Marsden, 1794-1837’, ML, A 1992, CY Reel 228, 458.

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Jersey became his chief police magistrate; and Jorge Jorgenson, a Dane who was a former British spy Dane, became the main ‘insane’ field commander to Arthur’s militia squads. Arthur went on to use intrigue and perception manipulation through the written record to avoid censure from London when Aboriginal women and children became the unintended victims of his VDL security initiatives. Their deaths exceeded the bounds of what was, to use an expression of the Aborigines’ Committee, ‘consonant to Humanity and justice, and therefore most in Unison with the known Sentiments of the Government, and the British people’ including his superiors and patrons.¹⁰¹

In 1818 Arthur had referred to the importance of intelligence in the Napoleonic Wars when writing to his sister, Betsy, regarding his nephew’s career choice of the Church. From his dual religious and military worldview Arthur wrote, ‘he certainly ought to get large portions of the Bible by heart’ and continued with a Napoleonic War intelligence metaphor:

The Duke of Wellington had always a perfect knowledge of all his resources in the field and could bring forward at the instant such arms as the nature of the fight required. He carefully estimated the strength and the shifts of his opponent, and was as well prepared for him in ambush as in the open field,

Arthur finished by stating, ‘so should it be with him who arrays himself against

¹⁰¹ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, 18 October 1831, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830 – 16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744, 136.

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Satan'.¹⁰²

Arthur first met his colonial-administration mentor, the intelligence expert General George Don, during the disastrous 1809 Walcheren Campaign, which ended in mass casualties due to contagion and was the worst debacle in British military history at the time. Commanders had sent Don in to oversee the evacuation of the stricken force.¹⁰³ They became lifelong friends and Arthur named his firstborn after him. Both Don and Arthur were ambitious, valiant, Anglican, non-firstborn sons of wine merchants that grew up in Calvinist milieu. Don made Arthur his military secretary and aide-de-camp from 1810 to 1812. The post was defined as 'the confidential aide-de-camp of a Commander in Chief'.¹⁰⁴ Don had been aide-de-camp to George III, so it was not a title that he would have taken, or given, lightly. His relationship with Arthur was close and mentoring.¹⁰⁵ It served as Arthur's induction into the colonial service and apprenticeship as a civil administrator.

Don was an espionage specialist who had reconnoitred the landing beaches at Walcheren with the intention of assessing the local population's receptiveness to British intervention.¹⁰⁶ He had been imprisoned from 1799 to 1800 for covert action 'intended

¹⁰² George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818, 'Private Letter Book No. 7.' BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

¹⁰³ Benady, 'Don, Sir George'; Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 15.

¹⁰⁴ Levy, *Governor George Arthur*, 17.; James, *An Universal Military Dictionary, in English and French*, 796.

¹⁰⁵ George Arthur to General Don, 29 October 1827, 'Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855', ML, Vol.13, A 2173, CY Reel 3672.

¹⁰⁶ Davies, *Spying for Wellington*, 29.

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to subvert the Batavians' against the French.¹⁰⁷ The Napoleonic Wars continued until 1815 and as governor of Jersey, which had been described as a 'centre d'espionnage', Don was collecting intelligence from agents in Spain and France, and organizing counterespionage.¹⁰⁸ Don received reports daily on the favourability of the tides at potential landing beaches, and among his subordinates he engendered a constant state of readiness for French agents or invasion forces.¹⁰⁹ Arthur penned some of Don's longer intelligence reports.¹¹⁰

Before attaining his position in VDL, Arthur's first post was as superintendent, ranking officer and administrator, in British Honduras. He fell out with some of the local landowners and magistrates when he tried to take control of appointing magistrates that the settlers traditionally elected. To highlight the failings of their system to his Abolitionist leaning superiors, Arthur reported and criticised the lack of recourse for brutalised women in slavery. In response the settlers wrote and published *The Defence of the Settlers of Honduras Against the Unjust and Unfounded Representations of Colonel George Arthur*. The first page began with a description of Arthur by a local man, Douglas. It read, "Subtle and shrewd, he offers to the world An artificial image

¹⁰⁷ Benady, 'Don, Sir George'.

¹⁰⁸ George Don to Sir John Doyle, 28 September 1811, 1 and 18 June 1812, Jersey Archive L/F/95/B/18, L/F/95/B/7, L/F/95/B/17.; King, 'Jersey, centre d'espionnage', 423.; Davies, *Spying for Wellington*, 171; Villalard, 'A Re-Assessment of the Strategic Role of the Channel Islands during the Great French War (1792–1815)', 304–305; Machin, 'General Don as Defender of Jersey 1806–1814', 408-09, 413.

¹⁰⁹ Machin, 'General Don as Defender of Jersey 1806–1814', 409.

¹¹⁰ George Don to Sir John Doyle, in George Arthur's hand, 28 September 1811, 1 and 18 June 1812, Jersey Archive L/F/95/B/18, L/F/95/B/7, L/F/95/B/17.; For exemplars see George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, 'Private Letter Book No. 7.' BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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of himself, And he with ease can vary to the mind Of different men its features.” It stated that he seemed to ‘have imagined Honduras his kingdom and carried on its affairs by a petty course of state intrigue’ and established a ‘system of espionage’ that broke into ‘the most private recesses of family confidence’.¹¹¹ In VDL Arthur also appears to have used spies in the removal from office of an attorney general, J.T. Gellibrand.¹¹²

Testimony from a Honduran police officer revealed Arthur’s manipulation of perception through the written record,

Q. Would you have written such a Letter, so reflecting on the Magistrates, if you had not been directed so to do, and it being dictated to you?

A. I certainly should not have written such a letter, but I was ordered to do it.¹¹³

In another example of perception manipulation in VDL in April 1830, Arthur asked Reverend Benjamin Carvosso to lobby him in writing to cancel the King’s Birthday Ball as it was ‘sinful in the sight of God’. This was an issue that Carvosso, as a down-to-earth Methodist, would probably not have felt strongly enough about to attempt to stop.¹¹⁴ No record of Arthur receiving such a letter has been found and he did not cancel the ball. However, Arthur felt very strongly about such events. He had written to his

¹¹¹ The Settlers of Honduras, *Defence of the Settlers of Honduras Against the Unjust and Unfounded Representations of Colonel George Arthur*, 1,6, and 7.

¹¹² Melville, *The History of the Island of Van Diemen’s Land*, 41–42.; *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 11 January 1832, 2.; Brodie, *The Vandemonian War*, 100-01.

¹¹³ The Settlers of Honduras, *Defence of the Settlers of Honduras Against the Unjust and Unfounded Representations of Colonel George Arthur*, 20.

¹¹⁴ Benjamin Carvosso, journal entry, in Blencowe, *A Faithful Pastor*, 170–71.

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sister that if there were no danger in public dances, concerts, and cards, ‘the Devil I think has but a poor chance. They are too much after mammon’s course of this World’. He continued ‘Repent ye for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand!’¹¹⁵

Levy, in his biography of Arthur, points out that by the end of his tenure three out of seven VDL newspapers supported and mildly criticised Arthur while the remaining four would become ‘rabid at the mention of “King Arthur and his Court”’.¹¹⁶ The *Sydney Monitor* published a more balanced, but unavoidably extreme editorial assessing him and his governorship on his recall. The *Monitor*’s chief editor, Edward Smith Hall, had been a critic of Governor Ralph Darling (1772–1858), Arthur’s opposite number in NSW. The editorial was anonymous but hinted at being influenced or possibly written by ‘a Colonist’, a nom-de-plume of Robert Lathrop Murray, a letter writer and journalist who was initially critical of Arthur but tended to favour him in the later years of his governorship. The editor had ‘listened with candour to the representations of the Colonel’s friends, as well as to those of his enemies;’ but had ‘at times been puzzled beyond measure.’ Citing many virtues, the writer described Arthur as ‘a *Machiaval* in his politics; treacherous, vindictive, remorseless’, who secured obedience ‘by the terror of his espionage.’ When accused of using spies, Arthur ‘gave plausible replies, while he smiled in secret, knowing that those smiles would be communicated to his satraps and underlings, and that they would increase rather than mitigate this undercurrent of tyranny against the opposers of his government.’ When pursuing vengeance, Arthur

¹¹⁵ George Arthur to Betsy, 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

¹¹⁶ Levy, *Governor George Arthur*, 333.

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glossed all over ‘with devotion to his God.’¹¹⁷ Arthur was using plausible deniability and whitewash long before the terms appeared in modern parlance.

3.3 Contagion Experience and Knowledge

‘it proved invariably more fatal to blacks than whites.’

- **George Henderson on the 1807–08 Honduran influenza epidemic, 1809.**

Arthur first came to General George Don’s attention as one of the few officers who saw action and led bravely and effectively during the 1809 Walcheren Debacle. It was a debacle because the two commanders were indecisive, each waiting for the other to take the lead which led to the expeditionary force becoming figuratively and literally bogged down, after which they were struck down with Walcheren fever. Arthur too became sick and was incapacitated.

This was the second time he had been debilitated on active duty: previously he had been struck down by fever while camping out close to a marsh on the 1806 Italian expedition. However, Walcheren fever’s effect was unprecedented in British military history. Of the 37,481-man Napoleonic expeditionary force, which departed in July and Don extricated by December, over two thirds were hospitalised, over 10% died and 30% were still incapacitated the following February.¹¹⁸

Don having chosen the landing beaches and been brought in to organise the emergency

¹¹⁷ *Sydney Monitor*, ‘Colonel Arthur’, 28 November 1836.

¹¹⁸ Parliamentary Paper, *Collection of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the Scheldt*, 710.; Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 9, 14–15.

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evacuation, and Arthur having seen action and been incapacitated, it seems likely that they would have held strong opinions and discussed the findings of the government enquiry that was published while Arthur was working for Don on Jersey. Don would have shared insight and opinion with his apprentice as around 50 of the dispatches cited in the report were to or from him. According to the report the main cause of Walcheren fever transmission was the failure to equip the force with sufficient medical supplies and bedding which led to huddling in confined billets when they became bogged down and winter set in.¹¹⁹



Figure 10. Illness-stricken British troops evacuating the island of Walcheren on 30 August, by Henri Félix Emmanuel Philippoteaux. (Public domain. Attribution: Marine Imperiale.)

Arthur would have also seen how the enquiry and its conclusions were based on the

¹¹⁹ Parliamentary Paper, *Collection of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the Scheldt*, 136, 537–745.

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official correspondence and tabularised data. Perhaps Don would have also mentioned to Arthur the 1808 ophthalmia, now known as conjunctivitis, outbreak on two troop ships that arrived in Jersey. Don had had to ‘purify’ the vessels and burn all bedding as per an 1807 regulation stipulating the necessity of destroying bedding infected with contagious disorders.¹²⁰

As an ambitious up-and-coming officer in the War and Colonies Office who witnessed and experienced the effects of fevers, and who was later described by a VDL observer as seeming ‘astonishingly well informed, even to minutiae’; it is probable that Arthur would have noticed references in the most recent published accounts, or from anecdotes, about racially selective contagions at his next two postings: Jamaica (1812–14) and British Honduras (1814–22).¹²¹

In Jamaica the account referred to disorders that were ‘generally most fatal among the negroes’ including ‘violent fevers’ that proceeded from colds and were ‘the cause of much mortality’; and influenza that swept, ‘in the course of a few months, the tenth part of the population of many of the estates’ despite the whites not being ‘at all liable to the influenza during its prevalence among the negroes.’¹²² The account of British Honduras referred to described racially selective diminution of ‘the negroes’ due to diseases that were ‘invariably more fatal to blacks than to whites’.¹²³ Indeed, the very edition of the

¹²⁰ Machin, ‘General Don as Defender of Jersey 1806–1814’, 410.; Master General, *Instruction for Conducting the Barrack Service, on Foreign Stations*, 69.

¹²¹ Savery, *The Hermit in Van Diemen’s Land*, 14.

¹²² Stewart, *An Account of Jamaica, and Its Inhabitants*, 270–76.

¹²³ Henderson, *An Account of the British Settlement of Honduras*, 69.

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Colonial Journal in which a summary of Honduras by Arthur was published described the diminution of the Honduran Musquito Indians due to contagion in terms of their fighting numbers.¹²⁴

In the penal colony of VDL, keeping mortality among convicts, prisoners and troops at an acceptable level, was a responsibility of Arthur's administration. This was achieved by checking that the standard duty of care protocols, emergency prophylactic measures and non-curative symptom alleviating treatments were implemented to prevent and contain outbreaks in barracks, on convict transports and in prisons. The military still managed barracks under the 1807 General Order that Don had implemented, on the necessity to 'destroy Bedding, which had been used by Men affected with Ophthalmia, and other malignant and contagious disorders'.¹²⁵

The British government regulated convict transports more strictly after the loss of 18% of the convicts to typhus on the *Surrey* in 1814 by appointing surgeon-superintendents. Parliament published instructions for them in 1819.¹²⁶ Even if Arthur had not read these, receiving reports from the surgeon-superintendents, assessing the efficacy of the instructions and reporting any failures, was his and his administration's responsibility with the arrival of each convict transport.¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Edwards, 'Musquito Settlements', 386.; George Arthur to Earl Bathurst, 7 November 1816, in 'Colonial Summary,' 446.

¹²⁵ Master General, *Instruction for Conducting the Barrack Service, on Foreign Stations*, 69.

¹²⁶ Select Committee, 'Instructions to Surgeons-Superintendent on Board the Male Convict Ships' in *Report to the Select Committee on the State of the Gaols*.

¹²⁷ George Arthur, 27 June 1837, Select Committee, 'Minutes of Evidence' in *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation*, 281.

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Visual testimony of their implementation went beyond prisoner health: the convicts disembarked transports carrying the bedding that their guards had assigned them fresh on embarkation.¹²⁸ Even non-convict passengers on transports saw the instructions in action. As Doctor Peter Cunningham described in 1825, the ‘sick are in like manner provided with all requisite medicines and comforts, as well as with warm dresses, spare bedding, sheets, and every description of hospital furniture.’¹²⁹ Indeed, changing bedding was even cited in caring for patients with fevers in the medical reference work used at the Aboriginal Establishment on Flinders Island.¹³⁰

In short, Arthur understood the incapacitating effect of contagion on fighting forces, pathogens’ racially selective diminution, transmission drivers, established standard prophylactic measures, and morally and officially acceptable mortality rates in civil custodial and military settings.

Arthur absolvers often cite him as ideologically being an Evangelical Abolitionist Humanitarian; however Arthur was not when faced with Aboriginal mortality caused by contagion that the interned Aboriginal people were vulnerable to due to the litany of failures of his administration. There were, however, some genuine humanitarians in the colonies. Confronted with an influenza outbreak in May 1842, Captain William Oldrey, a magistrate in NSW, immediately requested extra blankets and a surgeon. Then when NSW Governor George Gipps refused, Oldrey complained and paid out of his own

¹²⁸ Bigge, ‘The Governor’s Inspection’, 15.

¹²⁹ Cunningham, *Two Years in New South Wales*, Vol. II, 213–14.

¹³⁰ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 696.; Cullen, *First lines in the Practice of Physic*, Vol I, 81, 84.

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pocket.¹³¹ Oldrey does not appear to have been especially religious and his act further puts Arthur to shame as the people he tried to help were not in his custody and therefore owed no duty of care beyond that of humanitarianism.¹³²

3.4 Fundamentalism and Ideology

Arthur was ‘fully persuaded that biblical doctrines must be practiced constantly if his Administration were to reach the success he contemplated’

- **George Arthur’s biographer, MC Levy.**

Ideology in genocide is much debated, but as Jonathan Leader Maynard observes ‘when individuals and groups engage in organised violence, there is almost always an ideological dimension in play.’¹³³ As Arthur’s biographer MC Levy notes, Arthur was ‘fully persuaded that biblical doctrines must be practiced constantly if his Administration were to reach the success he contemplated’.¹³⁴ How might Arthur, who was clearly a very religious man, have arrived at an ideology that accommodated tacitly condoning war crimes?

The *Sydney Monitor* editorial on his recall could not fathom Arthur’s religious beliefs

¹³¹ Smithson, ‘A Misunderstood Gift: The Annual Issue of Blankets To Aborigines In New South Wales, 1826–48’, 97–98.

¹³² William Oldrey to Thompson, 7 and 15 May 1842, ‘Aborigines: Distribution of blankets, 1837–44 for the following districts: Berrima, Brisbane Water, Broulee, Dungog, Hartley, Liverpool, Parramatta, Paterson, Patrick’s Plains (including Singleton, Glendon, Wollombi and Dulwich), Picton, Scone, Ulladulla & Wollongong’ State Archive of New South Wales, NRS-906-1-[4/1133]-4/1133.3, 171–172, 175–180.

¹³³ Leader Maynard, ‘Ideology and Armed Conflict’, 646.

¹³⁴ Levy, *Governor George Arthur*, 8

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and described him as ‘a moral phenomenon – an unnatural being – an intellectual paradox - a religious monstrosity.’ This inability to understand religious details around Arthur has been a recurring problem in written histories.

3.4.1 Evangelicalism and Calvinism

‘There are no men who so strenuously insist on the necessity of a Godly life, & it is their acquiring this as evidence of Faith that renders their Doctrine so highly objectionable’

- **George Arthur to Betsy on Evangelicals, March 1819.**

Stuart Piggin and Robert Linder suggest reasons as to why the study of Evangelical Christian history has been neglected in Australia: the history profession has been too secular, Evangelical Christians have neglected to tell their own histories, and it is hard to conceptualise and identify Evangelical Christians.¹³⁵ Is it not, therefore, equally difficult to identify non-Evangelical Christians?

Arthur’s other biographer, AGL Shaw, wrongly described Arthur as ‘a most devout Calvinist Evangelical’. This assertion was from a reading of letters Arthur wrote to his sister Betsy in 1818–19. Arthur’s beliefs could have changed over the following ten years, however, at 34 years old Arthur was not a Calvinist Evangelical; he was a High Calvinist. Descriptions of Arthur’s ideology that academics used to question his culpability appear to come from AGL Shaw’s misreading.

The full implication of Arthur’s beliefs only became apparent when the security situation in VDL forced him to make choices in extremis without effective oversight. Even so, if Wilberforce had known, in advance, details of Arthur’s religious beliefs, he

¹³⁵ Piggin, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity*, Introduction.

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may never have recommended him for the VDL governorship.

There were three main types of Calvinism with shades in between:

As Ian Shaw quotes Andrew Fuller in *High Calvinists in Action*, moderate Calvinists were almost Arminian.¹³⁶ Salvation was achieved through believing, following the moral law and doing good works: a ticket to heaven could be earned. Missionaries could convert people who, with guidance, could then save themselves. Arminians and Arminian-leaning moderate Calvinists made good missionaries and were suitable for morally underwriting colonialism. The coloniser took control of the indigenous people's country and resources, but as good Christians they gave them the word of God. The new converts believed, followed the moral law, did good works and earned a place in heaven. The colonisers got the earthly reward; the colonised got the heavenly reward: a morally acceptable quid pro quo from the perspective of many colonisers. Jorgenson, the Danish 'Roving Party' field commander, while referring to providence, alluded to a quid pro quo argument in the introduction to an unpublished book. Exhibiting his esprit de corps with Arthur, Jorgenson planned to publish in support of Arthur's policies and the settlement of Aboriginal lands months after Arthur's recall in 1837. He wrote of the British that they 'also introduce that religion which of all is the most comfortable to human nature'.¹³⁷

Strict Calvinists, those closest to what everyone believed Calvin had taught, believed in

¹³⁶ Shaw, Ian, quoting Andrew Fuller in, *High Calvinists in Action*, 10.

¹³⁷ Jorgenson, 'A Narrative of the Habits, Manners, and Customs of the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land', 48.

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God's election and the perseverance of the saints: God chose who would be saved at the beginning of time, but they had to persevere by following the moral law and doing good works to ensure their place in heaven.¹³⁸ God gave the ticket but might revoke it if the recipient did not persevere. Not as inclusive as the Arminian perspective but still workable in a coloniser's self-narrative of benevolent exchange of the indigenous peoples' earthly bounties for a Christian Heavenly reward.

High Calvinists like Arthur, however, believed in the singular criterion of the 'free grace of God'. This had been described as 'more Calvinistic than Calvin himself'.¹³⁹ They believed in unconditional election or predestination: election without the perseverance of the saints. Everyone was born in total depravity, in so much sin that no amount of perseverance at good works or following the moral law could outweigh it. God had given out a limited number of tickets to Heaven at the beginning of time. In providing the ticket, God had been good enough to forgive a fortune's worth of sin. Subsequent sins or good works during one's lifetime were inconsequential small change. Furthermore, the ticket was God's will and was therefore final: human action could not change it. High Calvinism was unworkable for earthly/heavenly reward quid pro quo colonialism.

Believing in the singular condition of the free grace of God for salvation, while reducing following the moral law and good works to desirable but non-essential secondary elements, was called theoretical antinomianism. Antinomianism, or belief in exemption

¹³⁸ Shaw, Ian, quoting Andrew Fuller in, *High Calvinists in Action*, 10.

¹³⁹ Fuller, 'Memoirs of Mr. Fuller', 71.

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from the moral law, was the crux of a theological debate that raged in the early 19th century.

Arminians and Arminian-leaning Moderate Calvinists could be termed evangelical as they believed their converts could earn a ticket to heaven. Some strict Calvinists could also be termed evangelical as they believed the gospel was preached for a response from which election could be worked out. However, as Grayson Carter notes hyper-Calvinist ‘theology militated against mass proselytism’.¹⁴⁰ High Calvinists did not believe election could be worked out; God chose who was to go to heaven and that was final regardless of following the moral law and good works.¹⁴¹

Of Evangelicals Arthur wrote, ‘strange, it is used as a term of Reproach but I am perfectly convinced they deliver the Gospel truly.’ However, he continued, ‘There are no men who so strenuously insist on the necessity of a Godly life, & it is their acquiring this as evidence of Faith that renders their Doctrine so highly objectionable’.¹⁴²

If one’s evangelical objective were getting more people into Heaven, which was probably the hope of most Evangelical ministers and their flocks, Arthur’s High Calvinism could not accommodate this. In this sense and in his own mind, Arthur was not an Evangelical. However, if one’s mission were to simply change behaviour and lives by promoting Christian values, Arthur’s intention could have been described as

¹⁴⁰ Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 53.

¹⁴¹ Shaw, Ian, quoting Andrew Fuller in, *High Calvinists in Action*, 10.

¹⁴² George Arthur to Betsy, 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RC SL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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evangelical.

Although Arthur promoted Christian values via the evangelical Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, it was a Church of England missionary society that had been incorporated under Royal Charter and as such London would have expected the cooperation of colonial governors with its mission.¹⁴³ The Society's mission was also aligned with Arthur's political objective of achieving a tranquil society.

Arguably further evidence of Arthur's High Calvinist tenet that even among churchgoing Christians only the elect few would get the final reward can be seen in his pragmatic promotion of Christian values in VDL. Despite being a strictly religious and pious Anglican himself, Arthur had no denominational loyalty. Ignoring doctrinal niceties, he recommended nonconformists, who the Anglican church did not recognise and therefore were civically disabled, to teach Christian values to VDL convicts.¹⁴⁴ Privately he would have considered impossible the teaching or learning of belief and behaviour that earned places in heaven: for Arthur none of the tickets to heaven that preachers touted in exchange for a Godly life were valid. His cynicism would have applied equally to Anglican Evangelicals. Therefore, for Arthur the denomination of the teachers was moot. His only concern would have been the effective transmission of Christian values that contributed to VDL having a tranquil society.

¹⁴³ 'Correspondence of Colonel George Arthur, Lieutenant-Governor of Van Diemen's Land', 1824–1836 Records of the United Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, ML, M1221.

¹⁴⁴ George Arthur to Earl Bathurst, 27 April 1826, 'Colonial statistical returns, 1826–1830', CO 325, File 28, AJCP Reel 996, 9.

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3.4.2 Arthur's Religious Background and Reawakening

It 'was not until I had diligently read the scripture and compared passages with passage'.

- **George Arthur to Betsy, 1818.**

Arthur grew up next door to Charles Parish church, Plymouth. His Parish Priest from childhood was the charismatic High Calvinist, Doctor Robert Hawker, 'the Star of the West'. Hawker was a self-confessed theoretical antinomian who once wrote that he would be happy to have had it 'written on his forehead'.¹⁴⁵

Perhaps due to the more Calvinist than Calvin position, neither Hawker nor Arthur appears to ever self-identify as Calvinist or even mention Calvin. So, Arthur may never have read Calvin's seminal work, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*. However, Arthur's religious reawakening around 1817 was a textbook Reformation path to theology in the fundamentalist method of *Institutes* that Calvin would have approved. It 'was not until I had diligently read the scripture and compared passages with passage' Arthur wrote in letters to his sister, Betsy, detailing his religious beliefs in 1818 and 1819.

Explaining the tenets of his newly reawakened religious faith Arthur reassured Betsy that their close relationship was strong enough to survive any 'Religious controversy' of which he believed she had an 'apprehension'. The implication being that ideologically his rediscovered faith was controversial and that less strong relationships with people who became privy to it might not have survived. This concern seems to

¹⁴⁵ Robert Hawker to John Bidlake, in Cottle, *Strictures of the Plymouth Antinomians*, 92.; Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 53.

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have prevented Arthur from detailing his beliefs in written form to anyone else.

To Betsy, Arthur rejected a concern expressed by his brother, John, that he was about to be drummed out of the army for being a ‘singing Methodist’. In doing so he effectively reassured her that his religious reawakening had not led him beyond the bounds of the Via Media, the broad middle path of Anglicanism, in which one had to reside to avoid being civically disabled and barred from posts of rank in the British military and government.¹⁴⁶

3.4.3 Abolitionism

‘I have in no part of the world seen the labouring class of people possess anything like the comforts and advantages of the Slave population of Honduras’.

- George Arthur to Lord Bathurst, 1816.

In 1823 Arthur was to find Betsy’s concerns about his shared beliefs leading to controversy, both corroborated and contradicted. As superintendent of British Honduras, Arthur had previously reported the effect of the local reality he had witnessed on his moral agenda. After his return to Britain, this was to both promote and jeopardise his career when it ran parallel and counter to the agendas of the powerful people back home who were to become his patrons.

On 21 October 1816, he wrote to the secretary of state for war and the colonies, Earl Bathurst describing the maltreatment of women in slavery in British Honduras. These reports appear to have been heartfelt but served his political agenda by providing the moral high ground in his attempt to undermine and take control of the local system of

¹⁴⁶ George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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democratically elected magistrates. However, a few weeks after his initial 1816 activist letters, on 7 November, Arthur wrote that apart from those few cases he had reported, slaves in Honduras were so well treated that they were beyond amelioration.

although I came to the West Indies three years ago a perfect Wilberforce as to slavery, I must now confess, that I have in no part of the world seen the labouring class of people possess anything like the comforts and advantages of the Slave population of Honduras.¹⁴⁷

The Colonial Journal published this. Perhaps Arthur had not wanted to appear to be a threat to local slave ownership per se. This equivocation was not one shared by his parish priest, Hawker, who despite doctrinal differences with Wilberforce had written a letter to the *Times* and an open letter tract in support of him that stated slavery was a system against which ‘the law of God hath fixed his artillery!’¹⁴⁸

Given that now Arthur’s position on slavery was ambiguous and public, he may have been surprised when Wilberforce, on hearing of his accounts of maltreatment, contacted him wanting to use them in his Abolitionist struggle. In May 1823, Arthur’s accounts took centre stage in an Abolitionist debate in the Commons.¹⁴⁹ Unsurprisingly opposition questioned and mocked Arthur’s contradictory position, but despite this,

¹⁴⁷ George Arthur to Earl Bathurst, 7 November 1816, in Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, *Substance*, 76.

¹⁴⁸ George Arthur to Earl Bathurst, 7 November 1816, in ‘Colonial Summary,’ 446.; Williams, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, Vol. X, p 486–504.

¹⁴⁹ Society for the Mitigation and Gradual Abolition of Slavery Throughout the British Dominions, *Substance*, 75–6, 80–81, 109–14, 126, 205–13, 239–40.

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public feeling was strong, and the Abolitionists prevailed, Wilberforce's resolution passed, and local assemblies were told to adopt legislation forbidding the flogging of women in slavery.¹⁵⁰ This success brought Wilberforce's patronage and was key to Arthur's VDL promotion, but, as will be discussed later, the path to his VDL governorship was neither smooth nor assured due in no small part to other letters he had written while in Honduras. Arthur experienced both the benefits and the risks of reporting local colonial reality as he saw it and adopting an ideological position contrary to that of his superiors and new patrons back home.¹⁵¹

3.4.4 Arthur's and Hawker's High Calvinism

'I look to the free Grace of God as my only certain hope of salvation'

- **George Arthur to Betsy, 1818.**

Although AGL Shaw uses Arthur's criticism of Doctor Hawker to imply doctrinal difference, analysis shows their tenets are almost identical. Arthur's criticism of Hawker may have been due to differences in interpretation, especially regarding traits of election.

Arthur and Hawker described their High Calvinist tenets in different ways. Arthur looked 'to the free Grace of God' as his 'only certain hope of salvation', while for Hawker to be spoken ill of 'by the advocates of free will for proclaiming the doctrines of free grace,' was 'an ancient, an honourable badge'.¹⁵²

Similarly Arthur and Hawker both believed in unconditional election and

¹⁵⁰ Thompson, *Earl Bathurst*, 172.

¹⁵¹ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, Volume 27, 245.; William Wilberforce to Robert Wilmot-Horton, 17 March 1830, 'Statement regarding Colonel Arthur attributed to Horton in Blackwood's Magazine', WH2741-2903, D3155, M791-3, Derby Central Library, 242-3.; Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 60.

¹⁵² Williams, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, Vol. I, 220.

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predestination: Arthur wrote of ‘salvation, through the preference of God’, while Hawker states ‘if the salvation of a sinner is not in every respect unconditional, it cannot be in every respect of grace’.¹⁵³

Arthur believed in ‘all-sufficient atonement’ which Hawker referred to as ‘adequate atonement’ and ‘ample atonement’.¹⁵⁴ All three were euphemisms for the orthodox Calvinist tenet of limited atonement: tickets to heaven were limited. Referencing the Calvinist tenet of total depravity, Arthur had come to know that ‘the heart of every man’ was ‘desperately wicked’ and his own bad works were ‘ten thousand times more numerous’ than his good.

For Arthur being saved by faith that a Godly life and good works had proved, was not only impossible but ‘highly objectionable’: salvation was ‘on the only terms his [God’s] wisdom has thought proper to bestow’.

Arthur hinted at this disdain when he, not mockingly but not entirely respectfully, referred to Wilberforce, a man who had effectively built his reputation on a public display of good works, to describe his ideological shift in Honduras. Arthur could have simply been an Abolitionist before arriving in British Honduras, but no, he had been ‘a perfect Wilberforce as to slavery’.

Arthur further showed his firm anti-Arminian position and implied his antinomian

¹⁵³ George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.; Williams, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, Vol. I, 154.

¹⁵⁴ George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.; Williams, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, Vol. II, 519.; Vol. IV, 401.

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Calvinist beliefs when he corrected Betsy for ‘semi-pelagian notions’ in suggesting that his championing of maltreated women in slavery was a good work that would follow him to heaven.

Arthur commented to Betsy that they had ‘suffered from the farrago of nonsense which Doctor Hawker always doctored’ them with. However, the commonality between his and Hawker’s tenets suggests Arthur was not referring to doctrine itself, rather the differences in interpretation and resulting implications. In the raging antinomian controversy, Hawker had been fiercely defending his theological position against Evangelical Arminians and Arminian leaning Calvinists with whom Arthur, for the sake of his career, had to have good relations. Arthur appears to have become disenchanted with Hawker’s position and wrote that perhaps it excited ‘a predisposition to judge unfavourably of all others termed Evangelical’.¹⁵⁵

Furthermore, Arthur appears to have been at variance with Hawker regarding those whom he considered elect and worthy of charitable good works. This was a quandary for High Calvinists: should their secondary, unconditional, good works inclusively target anyone in-need, or exclusively target those in-need that they considered to be elect. Even if Arthur and Hawker had agreed that High Calvinists should limit their unconditional good works to the elect, they may have disagreed as to who they regarded as exhibiting traits of election.

Generally, High Calvinists considered those exhibiting traits of election as a very small

¹⁵⁵ Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 53.; George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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minority and tended to focus their charitable works exclusively on those they considered to be the needy elect rather than inclusively on the needy non-elect.¹⁵⁶ However, Hawker appears to have simply believed that poverty and hardship were traits of election. This resulted in an anyone-in-need approach that was echoed in the focus of four titles authored by him: *The history of the Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb: to which is added a sermon*, 1805; *The poor man's commentary on the Bible*, 1805; *The Poor Man's Concordance, and dictionary to the sacred scriptures both of the Old and New Testament Designed for that class who read the 'Poor Man's commentary on the Bible'*, 1828; and posthumously, *The poor man's morning and evening portion, being a selection of a verse of scripture, with short observations, for every day in the year; intended for the use of the poor in spirit, who are rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom*, 1842.

Hawker clearly had a strong inclusive social conscience and was involved in charitable activism. As chaplain to the Plymouth garrison, Hawker even visited during typhus outbreaks. Arthur was not a chaplain, but he was responsible for the interred Aboriginal peoples and despite high and at times extremely high mortality rates, Arthur never once visited, nor sent any member of the Aborigines' Committee, to inspect the Aboriginal Establishment on Bruny Island or in the Furneaux Group. On his recall the *Sydney Monitor* editorial suggested Arthur did not share the anyone-in-need approach or view poverty and hardship as traits of election. It read, Arthur had 'Great indifference to the welfare of the LOWER free classes of VDL, save that small portion who attended

¹⁵⁶ Shaw, Ian, *High Calvinists in Action*, 25, 29.

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churches' 'with a shew of religious fervour.'¹⁵⁷

Indeed, Arthur's charitable activism seems to have always been driven by duty and political pragmatism. In British Honduras he helped the maltreated women in slavery because it helped his attack on the democratic magistracy, and he wavered on his Abolitionist position probably to avoid upsetting the local slave owners. In VDL his political objectives were a prison colony with a tranquil and prosperous society and his actions reflected this aim.

Arguably Arthur's promotion of Arminian leaning missionaries for his objective of a tranquil society was a cynical exploitation of what he would have regarded as the mistaken tenets of Evangelism. This is an important window on the core of Arthur's moral character: for his political ends, cynical exploitation of people's mistaken doctrinal beliefs was everyday. Perhaps as his mentor, the dormant master spy General George Don, may have taught him with anecdotes of subverting the Batavians: the most effective operative is the one that you successfully manipulate to complete your mission objective without them even knowing they were part of it.

3.4.5 Total Professional Practical Antinomianism

'Having (as I imagined) obtained by Christ a liberty of sinning, I was resolved to make use of it, and thought the more I could sin without remorse, the greater hero I was in faith.'

- **Joseph Hart on being a practical antinomian, mid 18th century.**

Alluding to antinomianism, Arthur wrote of there being 'no combination of faith and works whereby we must hope to be saved', but of the 'free grace of God by which we

¹⁵⁷ *Sydney Monitor*, 'Colonel Arthur', 28 November 1836.

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may enter into eternal Life'.¹⁵⁸ This is the High Calvinist tenet of the singular condition of election. As Ian Shaw notes in *High Calvinists in Action*, for theoretical-antinomian High Calvinists, salvation was 'pushed back into the eternal'. It was beyond any prerequisite of good works or following of the moral law.¹⁵⁹

Although Arthur and Hawker were theoretical antinomians, they were unequivocal in their rejection of general practical antinomianism. General practical antinomians were extreme by any religious metric. They believed that the will of God predestined them to heaven or hell, and that nothing they did would change that. Therefore, abiding by the moral law of the ten commandments was not necessary. As Joseph Hart, a Calvinist minister in London who flirted with general practical antinomianism in the mid-18th century, wrote, 'Having (as I imagined) obtained by Christ a liberty of sinning, I was resolved to make use of it, and thought the more I could sin without remorse, the greater hero I was in faith.'¹⁶⁰

Rejecting general practical antinomianism, Hawker referred to 'The awful consequences of the doctrine of predestination to curious and carnal persons'.¹⁶¹ Arthur wrote of 'the hypocrisy of those who, whilst their lives were shaped in the constant violation of the Laws of God, pretended their Salvation was secured through the free

¹⁵⁸ George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, 'Private Letter Book No. 7.' BHP, CUL: RC SL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

¹⁵⁹ Shaw, Ian, *High Calvinism in Action*, 11

¹⁶⁰ Hart, *The Life of Joseph Hart*, 12.

¹⁶¹ Williams, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, Vol. IX, 308, and Vol. X, 49.

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grace of God'.¹⁶²

Theoretical antinomians like Hawker and Arthur were on the edge but within the Via Media of Anglicanism. Arminian-leaning Moderate Calvinist like Wilberforce were at or closer to the centreline of the Anglican middle path and hated both theoretical and practical antinomianism. They distanced themselves from theoretical antinomianism because they believed it was on a slippery slope to the unfettered sinning of practical antinomianism. Moderate Calvinist were also concerned that others might lump them with theoretical antinomian High Calvinists.¹⁶³

The 1810 'Western Schism' in the West Country, the home of Hawker's parish, confirmed their concerns. The cause of the Schism was the great number of people seceding from the Church of England to become practical antinomians.¹⁶⁴ In the same year, when Hawker, preaching to packed churches in London, went to one that Wilberforce attended, the Abolitionist took his children to a different church to shield them 'from the poison of Antinomian teaching'.¹⁶⁵ Arthur, however, had his son baptised and named Charles at Hawker's Charles Parish church in 1824.¹⁶⁶ It therefore seems likely that, although Wilberforce was criticised for not clearly stating his doctrinal position, he and Arthur appear to have resided in very different doctrinal lanes within

¹⁶² George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, 'Private Letter Book No. 7.' BHP, CUL: RC SL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

¹⁶³ Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 52–53.

¹⁶⁴ Carter, *Anglican Evangelicals*, 105.

¹⁶⁵ Isaac, *The Life of William Wilberforce*, Vol. III, 473.

¹⁶⁶ James Ross to George Arthur, 7 January 1826, 'Sir George Arthur papers 1821–1855', ML, Vol.49, A 2209, MAV/FM4 3686–7, CY Reel 3674, in Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 122.

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the broad Via Media of Anglicanism, and that for the sake of his career and prospects of promotion, Arthur would not have rushed to share details of his religious views or ideology with Wilberforce.¹⁶⁷

Despite her exposure to Hawker, Betsy does not appear to have been reawakened as a High Calvinist. Perhaps this was due to their different life experience: she was an upper middleclass housewife with health problems caring for and educating a son, while Arthur travelled overseas and was involved in the legally sanctioned taking of life in the military and in colonial administration.

Article 37 of the 39 Articles of Religion of the Church of England sanctioned the taking of life by civil magistrates, executioners, and soldiers in war.¹⁶⁸ However, this went against the moral law of the ten commandments, 'Thou shall not kill.' For Arthur to reconcile taking life in the military and civil government he would have had to accept Article 37.¹⁶⁹ (Article 17 also covered the foundation of the antinomian argument, predestination to heaven, but not hell.)¹⁷⁰ As an exemption from the moral law, Article 37 was effectively limited-professional practical antinomianism. However, there was a precedent and scriptural foundation for Arthur, as a governor, to rationalise total-professional practical antinomianism.

Beyond shared Reformed faith tenets, except of course for the perseverance of the saints,

¹⁶⁷ Belsham, 'A Review of Mr. Wilberforce's Treatise', 5-6.

¹⁶⁸ Cranmer, *Book of Common Prayer*, Articles of Religion.

¹⁶⁹ George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818 and 8 March 1819, 'Private Letter Book No. 7.' BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

¹⁷⁰ Cranmer, *Book of Common Prayer*, Articles of Religion.

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Arthur had much in common with Calvin. In Geneva, Calvin, like Arthur, became a civil administrator. Both had experience and track records that allowed them to negotiate increased autonomy: Arthur after Honduras, and Calvin after having once left and been invited back to Geneva. Both were outsiders coming into similar-sized communities.¹⁷¹ Calvin's Geneva has even been used as a metaphor for Arthur's VDL.¹⁷²

Like Arthur's reawakening, Calvin's, as reflected in *Institutes*, was one of scriptural comparison and interpretation. The last chapter was entitled 'On Civil Government'. Calvin believed that governors were God's hands enacting God's will on earth and as such, like the sovereign who God chose, were exempt from the moral law: total-professional practical antinomianism.¹⁷³

This status was echoed by another of Arthur's confidants, the Parramatta magistrate, Reverend Marsden who stated in an undated sermon on Samuel 2:25 that God appointed judges and magistrates.¹⁷⁴ Arminian Methodists had opposed Marsden as a Calvinist.¹⁷⁵ By Calvinist the Arminian Methodists probably meant a strict or high Calvinist rather than an almost Arminian moderate. Like Arthur, he avoided the controversial doctrine of predestination in favour of the promotion of Christian values.¹⁷⁶ While Linder and

¹⁷¹ Foster, 'Calvin's Programme for a Puritan State in Geneva, 1536–1541', 401.

¹⁷² Piggin and Lineham, 'Australasia and the Pacific Islands', 241.

¹⁷³ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book IV, Allen trans., 528, 542–53.

¹⁷⁴ Samuel Marsden, 1 Samuel 2:25 Sermon, 'Marsden Sermons 01 to 98', Moore Theological College Archive.

¹⁷⁵ Sharp, *The World, the Flesh and the Devil: the Life and Opinions of Samuel Marsden in England and the Antipodes, 1765-1838*, 43.

¹⁷⁶ Sharp, *The World, the Flesh and the Devil: the Life and Opinions of Samuel Marsden in England and the Antipodes, 1765-1838*, 44–45.

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Piggin assert that Marsden separated his ministry and magistracy, perhaps a more pertinent question for Marsden and Arthur is, how did they view their authority through the lens of their beliefs?¹⁷⁷ To what degree did their belief that they were being appointed by God exempt Marsden and Arthur from the moral law? In other words, in extremis was their professional practical antinomianism limited, like that of a soldier within the Anglican Articles of Faith or total as Calvin describes and Marsden implies? Arthur's actions behind his humanitarian façade suggest that, like Calvin, he believed that God had chosen him and that thereby in extremis he was exempt from the moral law.

Perhaps Arthur's biographer, AGL Shaw's, greatest error was to describe Arthur as having 'an undoubted humanitarianism based on his deeply felt devotion to his Calvinist brand of Christianity'.¹⁷⁸ While this can be said of Robert Hawker, whose charitable activity was for whatever reason inclusive enough to include all the needy, it cannot be said of Arthur whose charitable activity was bound by duty, aligned with his political agenda and expedience, or limited to the very few he appears to have considered elect. The reality was that, in extremis, Arthur's beliefs coming from scripture, i.e. Old and New Testament, had the potential to accommodate inhumanity.

To his sister, Arthur had implied the equal importance he placed in both Old and New Testament when he clarified his use of the ambiguous term 'gospel', by overwriting it

¹⁷⁷ Piggin, *The Fountain of Public Prosperity*, Kindle edition location 2244.

¹⁷⁸ Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 11, 22, 60.

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with the unambiguous term ‘scripture’.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, if one regarded oneself as God’s hand enacting God’s will and was guided by the Old Testament, then when faced with opposition there was great potential for inhumanity. Leviticus 26:21 ‘And if ye walk contrary unto me, and will not hearken unto me; I will bring seven times more plagues upon you according to your sins.’ Or, as the *Sydney Monitor* editorial described the fate of colonists who opposed him, he ‘hunted them, he trampled on them, he ground them to dust.’ He then placed, ‘his feet on the necks of all his enemies, and thus triumphant, he looked up to Heaven with devout gratitude – and down on his prostrate foes, with a leer of placid contempt.’

3.4.6 Providence

‘All happens under the direction of providence of the Almighty who works by human agency’

- **George Arthur to Edward Arthur, 1840.**

Although Arthur appears never to have written in detail about his religious beliefs again after his disagreement with Betsy, he did repeatedly use the word ‘Providence’ in both official and private correspondence. High Calvinists rejected free will and believed in free grace. Providence was God’s plan not just for election, God choosing who was to be saved, but for everything. Human free will was a delusion.

There were two types of Providence. General Providence was God’s fundamental rules that had immediately obvious outcomes and governed how the world worked, e.g. gravity’s effect making an apple fall from a tree. Particular Providence was God’s all-

¹⁷⁹ George Arthur to Betsy, 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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encompassing plan for events that did not have an obvious outcome, e.g. getting or not getting a job, surviving or dying in a shipwreck, etc. When Arthur used it in private and even official letters, he was referring to Particular Providence.

While Governor Ralph Darling in Sydney and Arthur's superiors do not appear to ever have mentioned Providence, Wilberforce referred to God's plan affecting him. For Wilberforce in 1827, Providence was 'ordained', and in 1830, Providence 'placed' him in a situation.¹⁸⁰ God decided what happened. Arthur used Providence while in British Honduras, VDL and his later gubernatorial appointments to Upper Canada and Bombay. His biographer AGL Shaw sees Arthur as believing that he had the 'support of Providence'.¹⁸¹

Unfortunately, invaders also used Providence 'ordained' to explain their entitlement to indigenous land.¹⁸² A roughly concurrent North American example of this interpretation was when John L. O'Sullivan wrote of American exceptionalism; 'our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us'.¹⁸³

However, there was a second Calvinist scriptural interpretation of Providence that Arthur implied in his letter to Rev. Marsden in 1825 and another to Wilberforce in 1828 as the VDL security situation was deteriorating. After expressing his self-doubt to Rev.

¹⁸⁰ Isaac, *The Life of William Wilberforce*, Vol. V, ,275, 313.

¹⁸¹ Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 22.

¹⁸² Hart, *Calvinism*, 116.; Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny*, 3–5, 174, 273.; Dubow, 'Afrikaner Nationalism, Apartheid and the Conceptualization of 'Race'' 217–218.

¹⁸³ New York Morning News, 27 December 1845,

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Marsden, Arthur wrote of his busy workload and being in want of ‘divine wisdom and direction’, but that he trusted he had ‘followed the leading of Providence’ in going to VDL and that in time all would ‘in the end be well.’ To Wilberforce Arthur wrote, ‘I now know it is a truism that we should be very careful how we presumptuously thrust ourselves into situations without the decided leading of Divine Providence’.¹⁸⁴ Hawker also referred to knowable providence when the honest farmer in his tract, ‘Harvest Home; or, Sequel to the History of Farmer John’ said ‘He that watcheth God’s providence, will never want a God of providence to watch him.’¹⁸⁵ For Farmer John and Arthur, God’s plan was knowable, and one should follow it. However, the leading of providence could also be a very short-range plan: talking of his retirement Wilberforce looked forward to forming ‘no positive determination for the future, but to follow the leading of Providence, and do on the day the duties of the day.’¹⁸⁶

In *Institutes*, Calvin explained how one could find Providence in Scripture and it could guide, or ‘lead’, one’s actions. In the same way that many modern English speakers refer to the parable of the good Samaritan to guide their actions in a given situation, Calvin believed that any part of Scripture, Old or New Testament, could guide one’s course of action when the situation was parallel. According to Calvin providence was ‘asserted in such plain and clear testimonies of Scripture, that it is surprising how anyone could entertain a doubt concerning it’. One could match Scripture, like parable, to real world events as a narrative guidebook to direct one’s course of action. According to Calvin,

¹⁸⁴ George Arthur to William Wilberforce, 9 October 1828, ‘Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855’, ML, Vol.5, A 2165; MAV/FM4/ 3669–70.

¹⁸⁵ Williams, *The Works of the Rev. Robert Hawker, D.D.*, Vol. X, 422.

¹⁸⁶ William Wilberforce to John Jay, 10 July 1810, in *The Correspondence of William Wilberforce*, 70.

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the Godly were to be ‘directed to the end appointed by’ Providence.¹⁸⁷

In 1840, Arthur revealed his High Calvinist views regarding providence and outcomes in a letter to his son. ‘As to chance and good luck I know of nothing more absurd’. ‘All happens under the direction of providence of the Almighty who works by human agency’.¹⁸⁸

Beyond ‘providence’ Arthur cited the Bible twice, both Old Testament references, in correspondence. In his letter to Rev. Marsden, Arthur referred to David as an analogy for Marsden’s struggle. In a letter to Betsy he referred to God’s earthly reward of the Promised Land, the Land of Milk and Honey, to the Israelites as an analogy for Betsy’s struggle and reward.

How mysterious are the ways of God! your afflictions by enabling you to devote yourself with undivided care to the instruction of your son, has certainly been a blessing to him, and although your journey has been through the wilderness, has it not brought you to the Land of Canaan?¹⁸⁹

Arthur’s choice of the Land of Canaan is perhaps unsurprising for a man who diligently read the scripture and compared passages because there are seventy-six Old and two New Testament references to the Land of Canaan and the Canaanites in the King James Version. The Good Samaritan, however, is only mentioned once. ‘Driving out’ can be

¹⁸⁷ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Allen trans., 216, 220.

¹⁸⁸ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Allan trans., 216, 220–23.; George Arthur to Edward Arthur 18 October 1840 AP Tor. LB 6 in Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 214.

¹⁸⁹ George Arthur to Betsy, 8 March 1819, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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found 23 times, all exclusively referring to the peoples of the Land of Canaan.

Exodus mentions God driving out the Canaanites with hornets, but Deuteronomy describes genocide carried out by God's chosen people under Divine direction:

Deuteronomy 20:16–17

But of the cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth:

But thou shalt utterly destroy them; namely, the Hittites, and the Amorites, the Canaanites, and the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee:

James Bonwick was a historian who moved to VDL in 1841 and associated with Henry Melville, a newspaper man from the Arthur period. In *Last of the Tasmanians*, Bonwick wrote under the heading 'Decline, a Decree of Providence' that it was not just Puritans, who believed the Tasmanian Aborigines 'were a sort of Canaanitish people who were doomed to be exterminated by the *peculiar people*'. 'Peculiar' meant elect. He quoted contemporaneous Australian writers who saw this as Divine Providence.¹⁹⁰

Joshua, who led the Israelites to the Promised Land, provides geographical detail in Joshua 24:11

And ye went over Jordan, and came unto Jericho: and the men of Jericho fought against you, the Amorites, and the Perizzites, and the Canaanites, and the Hittites,

¹⁹⁰ Bonwick, *The Last of the Tasmanians*, 374–75.

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and the Girgashites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites; and I delivered them into your hand.¹⁹¹

Jericho was also the name of one of VDL's first townships which was reached from Hobart after crossing Jordan River. It was founded in 1816 after the 48th Northamptonshire Foot, in a reprisal for the killing of 300 sheep, committed the second documented massacre in VDL history the year before in November 1815, when they killed twenty-two of the Oyster Bay Nation in the area.¹⁹² However, this investigation found references to Jericho in testimony regarding bush rangers as early as 15 January 1815, therefore the name predated the massacre.¹⁹³ It was an unfortunate coincidence that may have only served as a confirmation in the minds of fundamentalists who, like Arthur, rejected chance as absurd and believed in 'the providence of the Almighty'.

Edward Markham, a former military officer who dined twice with the Arthurs on a visit to VDL, called Arthur a 'canting Puritan' who knew which side his bread was buttered.¹⁹⁴ The views Arthur described to his sister were most definitely puritanical. However, he was not a Puritan and, as Bonwick rightly noted, Arthur did not need to be one to consider himself 'peculiar' and VDL a promised land.

Arthur suggested providential application of scripture again when on 20 November 1830

¹⁹¹ Bible, King James Version.

¹⁹² Ryan, L, et al., 'Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788–1930', accessed 3 May 2021, c21ch.newcastle.edu.au/colonialmassacres/map.php; Oyster Bay also known as Paredarerme.; The 48th did not arrive until 1817 and it was probably the 46th South Devonshire Foot.

¹⁹³ Francis Austin testimony in, Watson, *HROA*, Series 3 Volume 2, 86.

¹⁹⁴ Edward Markham, February 1834, Journal, 'Edward Markham Papers 1833–1834', ML, A 578, CY Reel 1684, 60.

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he referred to the ‘blessing of the Providence of God’ on announcing ‘the General Movement’, an operation to ethnically cleanse VDL’s remaining Aboriginal population by capture or kill that cost almost half the Colony’s annual revenue.¹⁹⁵ There are no biblical narratives other than the Land of Canaan that would suit such an association.

Jorgenson, the ‘Roving Party’ field commander, used Christian Providence to explain the case for settlement in his unpublished book supporting Arthur’s policies. He wrote ‘it cannot be supposed that providence would decree any country to the occupancy of a few savages who make no further use of it than wandering from place to place’.¹⁹⁶ Jorgenson was highly intelligent and, as a field commander in charge of four ‘Roving Party’ squads, Arthur appears to have trusted him more than any other man in his militia. It therefore seems likely that they would have understood each other: Arthur, Jorgenson’s nature and suitability as a field commander; and Jorgenson, the political niceties of the underlying motivations that shaped the strategy and tactics that Arthur entrusted him with implementing in the field.¹⁹⁷

By 1833, Arthur had relocated the remaining Aboriginal population to the Flinders Island Aboriginal Establishment, resistance had all but ended in early 1832, and the colony was once again ‘in the most perfect state of tranquillity & thriving in every way’

¹⁹⁵ George Arthur to George Murray in Parliamentary Paper, Van Diemen’s Land, 250.; Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 149.

¹⁹⁶ Jorgenson, ‘A Narrative of the Habits, Manners, and Customs of the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land’, 48.

¹⁹⁷ *Hobart Town Courier*, 12 September 1829, 3.

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as he had boasted to Don in October 1827.¹⁹⁸ In 1833 at government expense Arthur rewarded his ‘special friends’ with beehives.¹⁹⁹ Was this Arthur’s nod to having attained the ‘end appointed’? Together they had driven out ‘the Canaanites’, he had shared out the land, by all accounts the milk was flowing. Did Arthur then provide the final providential element, the honey?

3.5 Vindictiveness

‘his friends could not vindicate certain acts of treachery and vengeance, because they were too openly committed, and had become too notorious.’

- **The Sydney Monitor, 1836.**

Arthur made examples of people who crossed him or his administration. As the Sydney Monitor editorial put it, ‘his friends could not vindicate certain acts of treachery and vengeance, because they were too openly committed, and had become too notorious.’²⁰⁰ After the *Cyprus* seizure and escape, Arthur destroyed the VDL career of the young newly appointed Macquarie Harbour assistant surgeon, Doctor Walter Williams. Williams was just twenty. Arthur’s treatment of him seems extremely harsh for any naive fraternization with the convict prisoners on the *Cyprus* that might have occurred and in any case would have been the responsibility of Lieutenant Carew, the commanding officer of the guard, to put a stop to. Perhaps Williams, being young and

¹⁹⁸ George Arthur to George Don, 29 October 1827, ‘Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855’, ML, Vol.13, A 2173, CY Reel 3672.

¹⁹⁹ Markham, Journal, 19.; Colonial Secretary to Thomas Anstey, 28 September 1829, ‘Letterbook of Correspondence addressed to District Police Magistrates 03 March 1828 - 06 July 1831’, TA, CSO41/1/1, 327.; *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 3 February 1835, 6.

²⁰⁰ *Sydney Monitor*, ‘Colonel Arthur’, 28 November 1836.

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idealistic, recorded the presence of Mangana's wife in one of the now lost anonymous accounts that were sent to the *Hobart Town Courier* but never published, or at the Court of Enquiry in testimony that Arthur's nephew, Charles Arthur, might then have omitted.²⁰¹ New to VDL, Williams may not have realised Arthur's pervasive omnipotence and vindictiveness when crossed. Any 'anonymous' accounts sent to newspapers would have probably found their way back to Arthur and authors may have been identified by handwriting comparison. Arthur reported using such a technique in an earlier case.²⁰² All the anonymous accounts appear to have been lost. In the wake of the *Cyprus* seizure, did Arthur treat Williams as harshly as he did because he naively tried to expose politically inconvenient details of what happened that would have threatened Arthur's ambitions?

3.6 Decision Making

'His habit of ferreting out the least scrap of information, provided him with the fullest possible material on which to base his decisions.'

- **George Arthur's biographer, Levy.**

Arthur was in control and sought information so that he was well informed when making decisions. This was especially so regarding convict assignments which he regarded as an important component of the penal process that he, as the Lieutenant Governor,

²⁰¹ *Hobart Town Courier*, 19 September 1829, 2.

²⁰² George Arthur to Earl Bathurst, 17 January 1826, 'Despatches, January 1826 - May 1826', CO280, File 5, AJCP Reel 231, 64.

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oversaw.²⁰³ Henry Savery, a contemporaneous author and critic, described Arthur as being ‘astonishingly well informed, even to minutiae’.²⁰⁴ He worked long hours and read reports from government departments, establishments and stations.²⁰⁵ His biographer Levi writes ‘Arthur’s actions, great or small, were never ill-considered: to each went much preliminary thought and research.’²⁰⁶ His other main biographer AGL Shaw writes, ‘Arthur examined all the [penal] reports personally’.²⁰⁷ Arthur stated that ‘the final assignment [of a convict] is with the Lieutenant Governor’.²⁰⁸ The Sydney Monitor editorial observed of his public office appointments that all ‘were filled with men, on whom Colonel Arthur knew, *from his selection*, he could rely’.²⁰⁹

In Arthur’s 1818 letter to his sister Betsy, he clearly admired Wellington’s ‘perfect knowledge’ of his own forces and careful estimation of his opponent’s. He wrote, ‘The great art in my profession, after general good arrangements for the Battle, consists in bringing with ability a hot fire upon any particular point.’²¹⁰ Twenty-two years later in 1840 when, to Edward, he rejected ‘chance and good luck’, Arthur wrote, ‘Of all

²⁰³ George Arthur to George Murray, 2 January 1831, ‘Dispatches 1831 Jan-April’, CO280, File 28, AJCP Reel 247, 44–46.

²⁰⁴ Savery, *The Hermit in Van Diemen’s Land*, 14.

²⁰⁵ George Arthur to George Murray, 2 January 1831, ‘Dispatches 1831 Jan-April’, CO280, File 28, AJCP Reel 247, 33.

²⁰⁶ Levy, *Governor George Arthur*, 7.

²⁰⁷ Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 72.

²⁰⁸ George Arthur to George Murray, 2 January 1831, ‘Dispatches 1831 Jan-April’, CO280, File 28, AJCP Reel 247, 46.

²⁰⁹ *Sydney Monitor*, ‘Colonel Arthur’, 28 November 1836.

²¹⁰ George Arthur to Betsy, late 1818, ‘Private Letter Book No. 7.’ BHP, CUL: RCSL, GBR/0115/RCMS 270/41.

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situations, none perhaps demands a more perfect and extensive knowledge than what is necessary to constitute a skilful general.²¹¹

In VDL to overcome his administration's biggest challenges Arthur innovated, established and systemised.²¹² He was an agent under the direction of the 'providence of the Almighty'.²¹³ As Lieutenant Governor and Colonel Commanding his decisions were made, thanks in part to his intelligence network, with a 'perfect and extensive knowledge'.

²¹¹ George Arthur to Edward Arthur 18 October 1840 AP Tor. LB 6 in Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 214.

²¹² George Arthur to William Wilberforce, 9 October 1828, 'Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855', ML, Vol.5, A 2165; MAV/FM4/ 3669–70.

²¹³ Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Book I, Allan trans., 216, 220–23.

4 Arthur Goes Off Script

‘the adoption of any line of conduct, having for its avowed, or for its secret object, the extinction of the Native race, could not fail to leave an indelible stain upon the character of the British Government.’

- **Secretary of State for War and the Colonies Sir George Murray to Lieutenant Governor George Arthur, 1830.**

With the rapid development of VDL that Arthur was implementing there were questions from and tensions with his superiors regarding how he proceeded.²¹⁴ However, Arthur had more latitude and less oversight than the administrators of colonial possessions closer to London. The nine months or more that the return of post took inevitably meant that in rapidly changing situations Arthur made decisions and informed London as a fait accompli: effectively any response was often little more than an acknowledgement because by the time it arrived the situation had moved on. Perhaps this with his acculturation to VDL invader culture and the Aboriginal challenges that his land grab brought to colonial VDL security, engendered in Arthur a hidden agenda of diminution of the Aboriginal population that was not ‘in Unison with the known Sentiments of Government and of the British people’, including his superiors and patrons, for ‘Humanity and justice’.²¹⁵

However, in 1829 Arthur’s line superior was the Secretary of State for War and the

²¹⁴ George Arthur to George Murray, 2 January 1831, ‘Dispatches 1831 Jan-April’, CO280, File 28, AJCP Reel 247, 31–56.

²¹⁵ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, 18 October 1831, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830 – 16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744, 136.

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Colonies George Murray, a former acting colonial governor of Upper Canada with intelligence analysis experience. During the Peninsular War, Murray had been Quartermaster General to the Plans Branch of the Depot of Military Knowledge. The civilian intelligence General Don collected from agents in France and Spain was sent to the Depot for analysis. If any of Arthur's superiors in the War and Colonies Office knew how to join the dots and spot a colonial governor covertly going off message, it was Murray. However, in November 1830 Murray was replaced by Viscount Goderich who ceased questioning Arthur's actions.

4.1 The Lead-up and Backdrop

'Savages'.

- **George Arthur to William Huskisson, 17 April 1828.**

By October 1827, Arthur had overcome the initial difficulties of his governorship, including those with bushrangers, and was 'rejoicing' to his former mentor, General George Don, that for 12 months the colony had been 'in the most perfect state of tranquillity & thriving in every way.'²¹⁶ Arthur appears to have assumed that he had done everything to create as equitable a society as possible and that 'the Aboriginal people would welcome civilizing influences'.²¹⁷ However, in late 1827, violent reaction to Arthur's accelerated landgrab increased with one third of the year's deaths of settlers and servants in clashes with Aborigines happening in the last two months of the year.²¹⁸

²¹⁶ George Arthur to General Don, 29 October 1827, 'Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855', ML, Vol.13, A 2173, CY Reel 3672.

²¹⁷ Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen's Land*, 130.

²¹⁸ Plomley, *Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land 1803–31*, 62–66.

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According to a locally issued government notice Aboriginal people had been open enemies if they attacked or robbed white inhabitants since November 1826, but in December 1827 Arthur informed Viscount Goderich, ‘the Aboriginal Natives have lately presented themselves as open enemies.’²¹⁹

In an official despatch on 17 April 1828, Arthur started describing the Aboriginal people as ‘savages’.²²⁰ This nomenclature placed their treatment outside that conventionally afforded to combatants of an ‘accredited State’ that Arthur’s initial brief had stated.²²¹ Had they known of this change, Abolitionist patrons back home would probably have been concerned.

The British had regarded the Native Americans as ‘savages’ during Pontiac’s Rebellion in 1763. This had placed them outside the rules of European warfare. In extremis the British military had ‘sanctioned and paid for’ blankets and handkerchiefs from a smallpox hospital to be given to them.²²² The situation then resembled the one that Arthur was facing: civilians were targeted, prisoners were killed, and atrocities were

²¹⁹ Colonial Secretary’s Office, 29 November 1826, Government Notice, in Parliamentary Paper, House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, Session 1831, vol. 19, 194.; George Arthur to Viscount Goderich, 31 December 1827, ‘Despatches 1827 Oct-Dec’, CO280, File 13, AJCP Reel 237, 505.

²²⁰ George Arthur to William Huskisson, 17 April 1828, ‘Despatches, January 1828 - June 1828’, CO280, File 16, AJCP Reel 238, 337.; George Arthur to Horace Twiss, 18 August 1829 in Chapman, *HRoA*, Series 3 Volume 8, 575; Government Order No.2, 25 Feb 1830, in Parliamentary Paper, House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, Session 1831, vol. 19, 209.

²²¹ George Arthur to George Murray, 4 November 1828, ‘Despatches, July 1828 - December 1828’, CO280, File 17, AJCP Reel 239-240), 376 referencing Earl Bathurst to Ralph Darling, 14 July 1825, in Chapman, *HRoA*, Series 1, Volume 12, 21.

²²² Fenn, ‘Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst’, 1554–58, 1567–70, 1574.

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committed along racial lines. When King George III issued a Royal Proclamation to end hostilities in 1763, he sought to restrict the settler's displacement of American Aboriginal occupants.²²³ Therefore, Arthur might have been concerned that reports of incidents or a situation that London found to be unacceptable could result in a Royal Proclamation limiting his accelerated grab of Aboriginal land and restricting economic growth: one of the metrics by which Arthur would have known that his governorship would be assessed.

Rebels, like 'savages', fell outside the rules of European warfare. During the American Revolutionary War at the 1775–76 Siege of Boston, George Washington had taken reports of British forces laying traps to spread smallpox so seriously that he restricted movement of his forces into the city. At the 1775–76 Battle of Quebec there were rumours that the British had introduced the smallpox which was to be a major factor in the American force's debacle. For the Americans these were battles in a war of independence; for the British they were rebellions.²²⁴ At the Siege of Boston the British Governor issued a proclamation on 12 June 1775 characterising it as a rebellion.²²⁵ At the Battle of Quebec the British commander was less eloquent: breaking with just war protocol, he opened hostilities by having two approaching American envoys shot to

²²³ King George III of England , 'Royal Proclamation, 1763,' Exhibits, accessed November 19, 2021, <https://exhibits.library.utoronto.ca/items/show/2470> .

²²⁴ Fenn, 'Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst', 1567–70, 1574.

²²⁵ Massachusetts Governor Thomas Gage, *A Proclamation Whereas the Infatuated Multitudes, Who Have Long Suffered Themselves to Be Conducted by Certain Well Known Incendiaries and Traitors, in a Fatal Progression of Crimes, Against the Constitutional Authority of the State, Have at Length Proceeded to Avowed Rebellion.*

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pieces with cannon fire.²²⁶

It is not known if these incidents became part of military lore. However, earlier in his career Arthur would have served under older officers who had fought in the American theatres. Although Don did not serve there, working in intelligence it is possible that he had heard of in extremis use of such tactics and may have shared them with his apprentice. Which ever way Arthur arrived at the ‘ameliorating’ tactics he used on Bruny in 1829, the resulting mortality was so great that he had to conceal it.

On 18 October 1828, the murders of Anne Geary, Mrs Gough and her two infants were reported in the local press.²²⁷ Brodie sees Arthur manipulating perception via the press to provide a public-pressure backdrop as a pretext for his policies. Brodie regards the detail and style of this news report as laying the political groundwork for Arthur’s declaration of martial law on 1 November 1828 because the report was the husband’s official testimony verbatim and referred to an organised plan to exterminate the whites.²²⁸ On 4 November Arthur reported to Murray that the Natives ‘showed their intention to destroy, without distinction of sex, or age, all the white inhabitants who should fall within their power’.²²⁹

By late 1828 Arthur’s army was proving impotent as atrocities continued into 1829.²³⁰

²²⁶ Wood, *Battles of the Revolutionary War: 1775–1781*, 40.

²²⁷ *Hobart Town Courier*, 18 October 1828, 1–2.

²²⁸ Brodie, *The Vandemonian War*, 21, 25–27.

²²⁹ George Arthur to George Murray, 4 November 1828, ‘Despatches, July 1828 - December 1828’, CO280, File 17, AJCP Reel 239-240), 375.

²³⁰ Chapman, *Historical Record of Australia*, Series 3 Volume 9, 762–64.

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Some settlers abandoned their farms.²³¹ From late 1828 to early 1829, Arthur prepared to set up the Establishment on Bruny Island and the system of ‘Roving Party’ militia squads on hunt and capture, repulse, or kill missions.

By late 1829, the realization that his ‘Roving Party’ militia squads were having a negligible effect was setting in.²³² Incidents that increasingly resulted in the killings of not just male stock keepers and wood cutters but settlers including their wives and female servants, reached new autumn and spring highs and were reported in the press and dispatches through 1829 into 1830.²³³ Arthur finally requested more troops in April 1830.²³⁴ His reaction to the situation reached a crescendo in October, when he organised ‘the General Movement’, a 2200-man sweep to clear the island of Aboriginal people.²³⁵ By late 1831 the number of violent clashes was returning to the level that Arthur had described as ‘tranquillity’ in October 1827.²³⁶

On his recall Arthur ordered the then colonial secretary, John Montagu, to submit a ‘statement explanatory of the measures adopted by this Government, for the Comfort and civilization of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of this Colony’. Regarding the Aboriginal resistance it read ‘the whole energies of the Government were called in requisition for

²³¹ *Hobart Town Courier*, 25 October 1828, 1.

²³² Clements, ‘Frontier Conflict in Van Diemen’s Land’, 96–100.

²³³ Colonial Secretary to George Arthur, 23 September 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 92.; Reports from newspapers and ‘CSO1/1/316 7578 (Vol.1)’ - ‘CSO1/1/332 7578 (Vol.17)’ in ‘Black War ~ Van Diemen’s Land CSO 7578’ accessed 25 June 2021, <https://blackwarvandiemensland.wordpress.com/vol-316/>.

²³⁴ Arthur to Murray, 15 April 1830, in Chapman, *Historical Record of Australia*, Series 3 Volume 9, 167.

²³⁵ Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 143–49.

²³⁶ Plomley, *Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen’s Land 1803–31*, 62–66.

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the purpose of putting a stop to what must ultimately have proved the utter destruction of this Territory as a British Colony'.²³⁷

4.2 Arthur's 'General Good Arrangements for the Battle'

'putting a stop to what must ultimately have proved the utter destruction of this Territory as a British Colony'

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur referring to the security situation 1829–30 in his swansong statement prepared by Colonial Secretary Montagu, 1836.**

In and around 1829 Arthur's 'good arrangements for the Battle', were root and branch. He set up the militia 'Roving Parties' and overhauled the magistrature under which they operated, and he sent Robinson to set up the Establishment. Beyond his replacement of magistrates and chief constables that affected most districts, Arthur created four new posts: Robinson became Supervisor of the Establishment; a former colleague from Jersey became Chief Police Magistrate; an 'insane' former spy became his 'Roving Party' field commander; and his live-in nephew became his main line of communication out of the Colonial Secretary's Office regarding the Establishment, he then became his Arthur's Aide-de-Camp, and shortly thereafter secretary to the Aborigines' Committee. Arthur's Chief Police Magistrate and his nephew also recorded the testimonies regarding the *Cyprus* seizure.

On 1 July 1829, Arthur promoted Peter Archer Mulgrave from district magistrate to the

²³⁷ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

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newly created and generously rewarded post of Chief Police Magistrate.²³⁸ At the end of September under the instruction of suspiciously unlogged memoranda out of the Colonial Secretary's Office, Mulgrave took testimony regarding the seizure of the *Cyprus* from non-escapee convicts. He had previously served in Jersey while Arthur was there. If he had not already, he would have come to Arthur's attention in 1810 when he received praise for his ingenuity in establishing and reorganizing signal stations for a rapid response to any French attempt at espionage or invasion.²³⁹ The letter that promoted him to Superintendent of Telegraphs for the Channel Islands appears to have been penned by Arthur under Don.²⁴⁰ Mulgrave further distinguished himself by assisting 'with the greatest firmness' and losing an eye in 'very hot action' when a French privateer attacked the British cutter on which he was conveying dispatches on 29 August of the same year.²⁴¹ As chief police magistrate in VDL, Mulgrave was later accused of running the 'secret Police Office' due to his extra-judicial investigations, closed-door hearings, and obstruction of the press.²⁴²

While Arthur could deploy his military officers and men where he saw fit, he could not easily replace them in response to VDL's changing security requirements. This was because they were dispatched to VDL under orders issued back in England. However, short of appointments from London, Arthur had free rein over his civil administration.

²³⁸ Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1829, NLA, CO284, File 52, Reel No: 1194, 78, 96.

²³⁹ E.A.W. Martin quoted in Coysh, 'The Ingenious Mr. Mulgrave' 806–807.

²⁴⁰ George Don to Sir John Doyle, in George Arthur's hand, 25 August 1810, Jersey Archive L/F/95/B/1.

²⁴¹ *Jersey Magazine*, No.8 Vol. II, August 1810, 381.

²⁴² *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 11 January 1832, 2.; *Tasmanian* (Hobart), 21 January 1832.; *Tasmanian* (Hobart), 14 January 1832, 4.

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He could replace his police and magistrates as he saw fit. As the 1836 *Sydney Monitor* editorial noted, ‘All the public offices, from the Council down to the lowest constable, were filled with men, on whom Colonel Arthur knew, *from his selection*, he could rely’.²⁴³

In 1829, the VDL Police Magistrature and Constabulary did not just grow a new head; it also acquired a new body and claws. The district magistrates under Mulgrave were coordinating, and reporting the mixed military, militia and civil implementation of Arthur’s November 1828 proclamation of martial law to repulse, capture or kill Aboriginal people in settled areas. In part due to the expansion of the civil administration, but perhaps also to remind his civil-administration subordinates of his absolute authority, Arthur often appointed, fired, promoted, demoted and transferred them. However, in 1829 Arthur replaced magistrates in six districts, and the chief constables in four.²⁴⁴ This left just two out of ten districts unaffected. Arthur also created the repulse, capture or kill militia squads he euphemistically called ‘Roving Parties’. The district magistrates that Arthur appointed, rather than military officers, coordinated the ‘Roving Parties’.

Jorgen Jorgenson (1780–1841), was a Danish adventurer, former British intelligence operative, polyglot and VDL ‘Roving Party’ field commander who corresponded with Arthur. This research could not establish whether Arthur heard of Jorgenson during his time in Jersey; perhaps they had common acquaintances in the intelligence community or military. As with Mulgrave there appears to have been an esprit de corps. By

²⁴³ *Sydney Monitor*, ‘Colonel Arthur’, 28 November 1836.

²⁴⁴ Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, 1828–29, Establishment in, ‘Van Diemen’s Land Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, NLA, CO284, File 46–59, Reel No: 1194–95.

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September 1829 Jorgenson was running four ‘Roving Party’ squads. He was the only militia commander in the field with more than one squad under him.²⁴⁵ In November, Oatlands District Police Magistrate Thomas Anstey sent a letter to Colonial Secretary Burnett containing a field report intended for Arthur’s eyes. In it, Anstey wrote that ‘Jorgenson was really insane many days last week – Mr Robertson too, is evidently mad, but with this difference, that there is method’.²⁴⁶ This observation was from the line superior of field commanders that Arthur had appointed, and from a command-and-control perspective this was worryingly incongruous with Arthur’s repeatedly expressed humanitarian intentions.

In early September 1829, Arthur’s nephew, Charles Arthur, who was working out of the Colonial Secretary’s Office, took testimony on the seizure of the *Cyprus* from the vessel’s non-convict passengers and crew. On 8 October, as the *Cyprus* pirates sojourned on the Tongan Island of Niuatoputapu, Arthur appointed Charles Arthur to the newly created post of his Aide-de-Camp. Not all colonial governors had an aide-de-camp. Governor Ralph Darling in NSW did not have one, and Charles Arthur was Arthur’s first and only in VDL. Indicating the importance of the role, the Aide-de-Camp came immediately after the Lieutenant Governor in official VDL lists.²⁴⁷ Perhaps echoing what Don had impressed on Arthur and Arthur was now impressing on him, Charles jested to his friend, John Clark, that, ‘State secrets should never be divulged’

²⁴⁵ Plomley, *Jorgen Jorgenson and the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land*, 83.

²⁴⁶ Thomas Anstey to Colonial Secretary, 14 November 1829, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025, letter 14.

²⁴⁷ *Van Diemen’s Land and New South Wales Colonial Governments, Establishment in ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’*, 1824–36, NLA, CO284, File 46–59, Reel No: 1194–95.

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when excusing his tardiness in informing Clark of his promotion.²⁴⁸

In early 1829, Charles Arthur was living with his uncle at the lieutenant governor's residence and working out of the Colonial Secretary's Office. He was penning communications regarding the Aboriginal Establishment from its inception. He wrote the letter hiring George Augustus Robinson as 'the storekeeper, and supervisor in charge of the Establishment at Bruné Island for Improving the Condition of the Aborigines'.²⁴⁹ Through 1829, Charles Arthur wrote and received most of the communication with Robinson and he prepared an 'Analysis' brief of Robinson's Bruny Island Aboriginal Establishment reports for his uncle.²⁵⁰

In late 1829, Charles Arthur organised an investigation into the 'great mortality' among Aboriginal people on Bruny Island at and around the Establishment.²⁵¹ The testimony the investigating committee took from Robinson's convict servants regarding deaths in custody was damning in light of Arthur's earlier instructions. The testimony was then concealed by repeatedly changing the Committee's name and Charles Arthur starting a

²⁴⁸ Charles Arthur to John Clark, 16 October 1829, 'William & John Clark Family Papers', Royal Society of Tasmania Collection, University of Tasmania, RS8-B12, letter 6.

²⁴⁹ Charles Arthur to John Clark, 2 October 1829, 'William & John Clark Family Papers', letter 9.; Colonial secretary Burnett to George Augustus Robinson, 21 March 1829, in Charles Arthur's hand, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen's Land, in-letters, 1829–1839', ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 10.

²⁵⁰ Charles Arthur, date unknown, read by George Arthur on 26 June 1829, Analysis, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 120–23.

²⁵¹ Colonial Secretary's Office to Aborigines' Committee members, 23 November 1829, in Charles Arthur's hand, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 117.; Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 26–27 November 1829, minutes, '7578 (Vol.12)' TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

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new minute book. Although records do not reveal who orchestrated this, it would not have happened without Arthur's order, or at very least his sanction. On his recall in 1836, Arthur's swansong statement stated that those on Bruny Island receiving rations and blankets in 1829 were under the Government's protection but omitted reporting the 'great mortality'.

As Plomley points out there was a dissonance between what is known to have happened in the field which was led and overseen by the police magistrature and the settler testimony like that which Charles Arthur was to record for the official record at the Aborigines' Committee.²⁵²

4.3 Plain Sight Steganography

'an end will be put to the lawless and cruel warfare which is now carrying on, and which must terminate in the total annihilation of the Natives'

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur, 1828.**

Arthur declared martial law with a confusingly humanitarian-caveat replete Proclamation on 1 November 1828. Issued on the same day and tow days later was a circular to police magistrates and an order to military officers including a phrase which stands out, that while not 'ever seeking the destruction of the Aborigines' 'an end will be put to the lawless and cruel warfare which is now carrying on, and which must terminate in the total annihilation of the Natives'.²⁵³ This did not directly order Arthur's

²⁵² Plomley, *Jorgen Jorgenson and the Aborigines of Van Diemen's Land*, 29.

²⁵³ George Arthur in Circular to Magistrates, 1 November 1828 and J. Montague in Brigade Major to Officers on Detachment, 3 November 1828, in Parliamentary Paper, Van Diemen's Land , 202-03.

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military, militia, and judiciary to annihilate the Tasmanian Aboriginal people. However, the wording was unnecessarily strong and implied that would be the outcome if the violence did not stop. Arthur could have written ‘terminate in the total annihilation of the combatants’ or ‘risk the total annihilation’ or words to that effect. While expressing this view as a concern in a private despatch to superiors in London might have been acceptable, expressing to his subordinates overseeing military operations in VDL was not. Effectively Arthur was saying that unless the violence stopped, all of them would be killed. His emphatic sentence left the impression that he acknowledged as unavoidable the settlers’ and his military’s ‘total annihilation’ of both combatants and non-combatants when, in line with ‘the known Sentiments of Government and of the British people’, including his superiors and patrons, for ‘Humanity and justice’, it was his duty under the conventions of European warfare to prevent the death of non-combatant women and children.²⁵⁴ Sparing them was mentioned in the Proclamation but in a way that implied that the killing of men was acceptable.

As it was law, Arthur had had to transmit the Proclamation to London, but as there was no general rule to send local circulars or orders, he did not. However, Arthur’s line superior, the former intelligence analysis overseer George Murray, became suspicious of Arthur’s intentions and on reading the Proclamation of Martial Law, he requested the accompanying orders and circulars, as well as details of any extra-judicial killings one of which, the Emu Bay murder in custody, he had heard about. Murray stressed the

²⁵⁴ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, 18 October 1831, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830 – 16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744, 136.

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importance of ‘benefit to the Natives themselves’ as well as settler security.²⁵⁵ Arthur, who tended to bury details when his actions were questioned, responded three months later on 15 April with a 28,000-word dispatch that took up 112 pages of the War and Colonies Office letterbook. It included orders, memoranda and despatches of settler testimony that also described atrocities committed by and against the Aboriginal people.²⁵⁶

Murray would have already seen Arthur’s new appointments in the 1829 Blue Book.²⁵⁷ He received Arthur’s 28,000-word dispatch on 5 November 1830. He responded, ‘the adoption of any line of conduct, having for its avowed, or for its secret object, the extinction of the Native race, could not fail to leave an indelible stain upon the character of the British Government.’²⁵⁸

4.4 The ‘General Movement’

‘Executive Government in resorting to measure after measure for conciliating the Natives rather than destroying them - it was this feeling which originated the

²⁵⁵ George Murray to George Arthur, 25 August 1829, Dispatch No.72, in Chapman, *HRoA*, Series 3, Volume 8, 587–88.

²⁵⁶ George Arthur to George Murray, 15 April 1830, ‘Dispatches 1830 Jan-May’, CO280, File 24, AJCP Reel 244–245, 396–508.

²⁵⁷ Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1829, NLA, CO284, File 52, Reel No: 1194.

²⁵⁸ George Murray to George Arthur, 5 November 1830 in Parliamentary Paper, Van Diemen’s Land , 230.

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general assembly of the Troops and Inhabitants for capturing the Savages,’²⁵⁹

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to Landholders, Merchants, and Colonists of VDL, 1831.**

In October 1830 as the captured *Cyprus* pirates appeared in court in London, without prior authorization or providing prior notice to London beyond general references to a need for action and his 15 April 28,000-word dispatch, Arthur organised the ‘General Movement’.²⁶⁰ This mass mobilization to sweep the island of Aboriginal people cost half a year’s worth of VDL’s revenue captured two Aboriginal people and killed two others.²⁶¹

In September 1830, in a move that accommodated Arthur’s ‘General Movement’, and in a further example of what Brodie describes as a public pressure backdrop, 300 inhabitants of Hobart voted to enrol themselves in the town’s defence. In so doing they placed the town’s garrisoned troops at Arthur’s disposal. Then, to Arthur’s political convenience ex post facto in acts of public confirmation, groups of ‘Landed Proprietors and others’ provided declarations of support and praise: Campbell Town District, 70 signatories, December 1830; Great Swan Port District, 24 signatories, January 1831; New Norfolk District, 45 signatories January 1831; and Richmond District, 164 signatories, January 1831.²⁶² While general wording from each of the four districts was

²⁵⁹ George Arthur to Landholders, Merchants, and Colonists of VDL ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

²⁶⁰ *Times* (London), 14 September 1830, 1.

²⁶¹ Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen’s Land*, 143–49.

²⁶² Hobart Town Meeting, 22 September 1830, minutes, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.; Land proprietors and others of the police

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unique, the common form of self-address, the timing, format, tenor, and framing and alignment of objectives of the letters and Arthur's response to each were closer to political theatre than spontaneous correspondence.

Despite the ineffectiveness of the 'General Movement', Aboriginal resistance was starting to decline. By early 1832, Arthur's military had forcibly, and Robinson's conciliation had voluntarily, relocated the majority of remaining Aboriginal population to the Establishment, which was now at its first Flinders Island site. Meanwhile, for Arthur and the invading settlers 'tranquillity and prosperity' had returned to VDL.

4.5 The First 'Great Mortality'

'I am willing to make almost any prudent sacrifice that may tend to compensate for the injuries that the government is unwillingly and unavoidably made the instrument of inflicting.'²⁶³

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to Viscount Goderich, 1833.**

On Bruny Island Arthur appears to have experimented with sending dirty blankets and infected humans to promote disease transmission. He then provided limited rations,

district of Campbell Town to George Arthur, 22 December 1830, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.; Land proprietors and others of the police district of New Norfolk to George Arthur, 1 January 1831, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.; Land proprietors and others of the police district of Richmond to George Arthur, ? January 1831, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.; Land proprietors and others of the police district of Great Swan Port to George Arthur, ? January 1831, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

²⁶³ Select Committee and British and Foreign Aborigines' Protection Society, *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes, (British Settlements.)*, 14.

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denied medical supplies and failed to provide treatment. These deprivations made the Aboriginal population there more vulnerable to disease and thereby promoted their diminution. However, the resulting mortality seems to have surprised and worried Arthur. It was so high that if reported, it would have concerned London too.

Arthur knew of the effect of such deprivations from his experience of and the report on the Walcheren expedition. There were precedents for weaponization of blankets and humans in other colonial conflicts that Arthur may have heard of anecdotally from senior officers, like General Don, that he served under or the military lore of the regiments that he served in. If he had not, facing what his 1836 swansong statement described as the ‘utter destruction of this Territory as a British Colony’, regarding his opponents as having a similar savage status to those in American precedents, and being influenced by scriptural Providence and his experience of contagion; Arthur seems to have arrived at similar tactics.²⁶⁴

On 23 November, under Colonial Secretary John Burnett’s signature and on Arthur’s instruction, Charles Arthur penned the memorandum that reconvened the earliest incarnation of the Aborigines’ Committee to investigate Robinson’s explanation as to the reason for ‘a great mortality amongst the Aborigines’ on Bruny Island.²⁶⁵ Robinson had kept Arthur informed of the mortality in written reports in June and August, and

²⁶⁴ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

²⁶⁵ Colonial Secretary’s Office to Aborigines’ Committee members, 23 November 1829, in Charles Arthur’s hand, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 117.; Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 26–27 November 1829, minutes, ‘7578 (Vol.12)’ TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

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then three times in September by letter as the death toll doubled from 11 to 22 in one month.²⁶⁶ Over six months 22 out of 37 people had died, an annualised crude death rate of almost 120%.²⁶⁷

That December Robinson was preparing for the Port Davey ‘Friendly Mission’. Alexander McKay was assigned to the mission. Robinson appears to have been involved in the selection of McKay, who brought bush experience and skills to the team that included Aboriginal people and assigned convicts from the Bruny Island Establishment. From them, McKay heard that in six months the population had diminished eight to tenfold from 48-60 to six people, an annualised crude mortality of 178–182%.²⁶⁸

Wilberforce had cited ‘a mortality of about 50 per cent’ as a reason to abolish the slave trade in 1789, and there had been an enquiry when the convict transport *Surrey* reported 18% mortality in 1814.²⁶⁹ Therefore, the mortality at and around the Bruny Island Establishment was high enough to be red flagged and lead to scrutiny by the British government.

Arthur could have argued that his administration was only technically accountable for

²⁶⁶ George Augustus Robinson to George Arthur, 12 June 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 19.; George Augustus Robinson to George Arthur, 11 August, 9, 21, 23 September 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 36, 46, 79, 83.

²⁶⁷ Ryan, L, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 156.

²⁶⁸ Alexander McKay a convict assigned to Robinson quoting Trukanini in Calder, J.E. *Some account of the wars, extirpation, habits, etc., of the native tribes of Tasmania*, Hobart, 1875, 105.

²⁶⁹ Wilberforce, ‘Debate on Mr. Wilberforce’s Resolutions respecting the Slave Trade’, 1789 in Cobbett, *The Parliamentary History of England. From the Norman Conquest in 1066 to the year 1803*, Vol. 28, columns 42–68.; Select Committee, ‘Instructions to Surgeons-Superintendent on Board the Male Convict Ships’ in *Report to the Select Committee on the State of the Gaols*.

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the two in-custody deaths at the Establishment in November with the loss of a woman and child, known to the convicts as ‘Mary’ and ‘Joe’, who had been relocated there after being detained.²⁷⁰ However, on his recall in 1836, the swansong statement that Arthur was to order Colonial Secretary Montagu to submit omitted any reference to the mortality on Bruny Island. Instead it read,

In the year 1828 an Establishment was formed on Bruny Island for the purpose of domesticating those Aborigines who had placed themselves under the protection of the Government or who might afterwards do so – here they were made as comfortable as circumstances admitted and were supplied with full rations Blankets and other necessaries.²⁷¹

Therefore, those who were receiving rations and died, did so ‘under the protection of the Government’.

From May 1828 to March 1829 Arthur increased the Government’s conciliation efforts on Bruny Island from one man to George Augustus Robinson’s team and the Establishment. Don Ranson writes that it is unclear what made Arthur do this.²⁷² Brodie points out that by setting up the Establishment ‘for Improving the Condition of the Aborigines’ at its first location on Bruny Island Arthur could exhibit humanitarian and civilizing intentions to London as a counter point to the militia ‘Roving Parties’ which

²⁷⁰ John Freak and Robert Simpson, 26–27 November 1829, testimony at Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, ‘7578 (Vol.12)’ TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 101, 103.

²⁷¹ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

²⁷² Ranson, *The search for George Augustus Robinson's Aboriginal mission*, 15.

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were established around the same time.

In 1833 Arthur stated that he would have made any prudent sacrifice to compensate for the injuries his government unwillingly and unavoidably inflicted.²⁷³ However, the Aboriginal Establishment's fatal realities tell a different story. When the Establishment was located on Bruny Island, via the colonial secretary Arthur gave direct orders regarding its management, and at the time acknowledged the resulting deaths. However, by the time the Establishment had been relocated to its first Furneaux Group location he had administratively distanced himself, ceased acknowledging the Bruny Island mortality and did not monitor mortality at the new locations.

4.5.1 Distributing Inferior Half-worn Blankets

‘Inform the Brigade Major that I consider it highly important that a discreet man be selected for this service,’

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to the Colonial Secretary regarding the distribution of rations on Bruny Island, May 1828.**

In a precursor to the opening of the Aboriginal Establishment, Arthur instructed the Colonial Secretary that it was ‘highly important that a discreet man,’ a veteran soldier, be selected to distribute biscuits to the natives on Bruny Island on 5 May 1828.²⁷⁴ Although he later changed his tack, at the outset, Arthur's greatest concern was secrecy.

On 23 August 1828, Arthur enquired if there were any ‘inferior or half-worn blankets’ that could be distributed from the Prisoner Barracks. The enquiry was effectively an

²⁷³ Select Committee and British and Foreign Aborigines' Protection Society, *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes, (British Settlements.)*, 14.

²⁷⁴ George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 5 May 1828, ‘7578 (Vol.12).’, TA, CSO1/1/327, 7578.

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order to send them. While providing an explaining as to why such blankets were preferable – passing sailors would not steal them – it did not include an instruction to ensure the blankets were laundered. No reference to the frequency of washing blankets at the Prisoner Barracks has been found, but blankets at Launceston Penitentiary were laundered once a year.²⁷⁵ The signature, probably Arthur’s as it is written from his perspective in the first person, was cut out of the original memorandum. This is the only example of a redaction found in a VDL manuscript during this investigation.²⁷⁶ It is not known who did it or when. A similar example has been reported in a book about British tactics in the American War of Independence. A short passage describing dipping arrow tips in smallpox scabs to spread the pathogen was cut out of all but three copies shortly after publication. This redaction was due to the tactic being deemed ungentlemanly.²⁷⁷ However, the redaction of Arthur’s signature may have been due to an autograph collector or souvenir hunter removing it.

4.5.2 VDL’s Only ‘Depraved’ Brothel-frequenting Syphilitic Convict Writer

‘Let three steady well-conducted convicts, who are expecting indulgences in 12 months, be selected’.

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to Colonial Secretary Burnett, 1828.**

On 29 November 1828, via the Colonial Secretary, Arthur asked his district magistrates for ‘three steady well-conducted convicts, who’ were ‘expecting indulgences in 12

²⁷⁵ Ronald Gunn recorded by James Backhouse and George Walker, interview, 10 July 1833, ‘Letterbook no. 1, December 1831 - January 1835’, Papers of James Backhouse, Society of Friends, AJCP M693-M707, File MS Vol. S48, 138

²⁷⁶ George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 23 August 1828, ‘7578 (Vol.1).’, TA, CSO1/1/316, 7578, 149.

²⁷⁷ Donkin, *Military collections and remarks*, 190, in Fenn, ‘Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst’, 1577.

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months,' to 'be selected and sent to Brune Island, for the purpose of issuing blankets and rations' and cultivating potatoes, including one who could write to keep accounts.²⁷⁸

Blankets were still top of Arthur's list at the beginning of summer in a warm year and, as Arthur had not rescinded his concerns regarding passing sailor's stealing new blankets, his preference for half-worn ones stood.²⁷⁹

Almost a week later, Magistrate Thomas Anstey, a beehive recipient, wrote back that there was no one in his district willing to go.²⁸⁰ This left a paper trail that suggested circumstances beyond Arthur's control, when in fact if he chose to, he effectively had the power to reassign any convict in VDL to Bruny Island. Although it might have been difficult to do that with convicts assigned to settlers, it would not be with the pick of the better-behaved convicts set to work for the government.

On 7 March 1829, 'to ameliorate the condition of the aboriginal inhabitants' of the territory, Arthur advertised in the *Hobart Town Gazette* for 'a steady person of good character' to 'take an interest in effecting an intercourse', to reside upon Bruny Island and to take 'charge of the provisions' for 'the natives of that place.' Here Arthur shifted from a covert to a plain sight strategy perhaps because he saw the advantages of

²⁷⁸ George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 29 November 1828, 'Letterbooks of Lieutenant-Governor's Memoranda (GO54) 26 Jun 1826 – 24 Jan 1837', TA, GO54/1/4, 130.

²⁷⁹ Ortlieb, 'The documented historical record of El Nino events in Peru : an update of the Quinn record (sixteenth through nineteenth centuries)' 207–295.; *Sydney Monitor*, 29 November 1828, 28 November 1829, 30 November 1831, 28 November 1832, 27 November 1833, 2 December 1835, 30 November 1836, 29 November 1837.; Hobart temperatures for El Nino years 2009, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2018, accessed 5 May 2021, www.timeanddate.com/weather/australia/hobart/historic .

²⁸⁰ Thomas Anstey to Colonial Secretary, 4 December 1829, in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 50.

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humanitarian wash playing to the moral agendas of superiors and patrons in London. However, with the appointment of Robinson, Arthur's initially stated mission objective immediately started to shift: ameliorating their condition changed to 'the amelioration of the Aborigines' themselves.'²⁸¹

Arthur had recorded his humane intentions in both the official and public record, but he had found no convict volunteers for the new Bruny Island Establishment. Via Colonial Secretary Burnett, Arthur ordered Birchs Bay Government Sawing Station supervisor, Peter Monro, to reassign convicts from there. The Station was just across the D'Entrecasteaux Channel from Bruny Island. The men who, according to Alexander McKay, raped Truganini and left her betrothed and his friend to drown came from there, but news of that incident may not have reached Arthur. However, Arthur did have current information about the Station because in February 1829 he had sent Port Officer Samuel Hill to report on work practices there.²⁸² Hill was a member of what was to become known as the Aborigines' Committee from its first incarnation and therefore seems to have been a man 'on whom Colonel Arthur knew, *from his selection*, he could rely.'²⁸³

In his instruction to Monro, Arthur did not use the modifier of 'steady well

²⁸¹ *Hobart Town Gazette*, 7 March 1829.; George Augustus Robinson, 15 April 1829, 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Van Diemen's Land, 1829–1830', ML, A 7054, CY Reel 1469, 3.

²⁸² Samuel Hill to Colonial Secretary, 15 February 1829, '5175-5188 (except 5180-2, 5184, 5186)', TA, CSO1/1/215, 1525.

²⁸³ *Sydney Monitor*, 'Colonel Arthur', 28 November 1836.

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conducted'.²⁸⁴ Predictably Monro, who on 8 April complained that with '44 prisoners' at the Station they were shorthanded, did not send his best men.²⁸⁵ After just two weeks Robinson was reporting 'improper communication' with the Aboriginal women. On 15 April Arthur, via the Colonial Secretary, ordered the Principal Superintendent of Convicts to withdraw the convicts concerned.²⁸⁶

It was usual practice in VDL to send the best of freshly arrived convicts to government offices, stations, and establishments like the new one on Bruny Island. Contrary to this, on 20 April the pick of men from the *Georgiana*, the first transport to arrive since the Establishment was set up, were earmarked for the Launceston field police and the Government Garden.²⁸⁷

On 25 April Robinson 'Obtained 4 convicts from Prisoners Barracks.'²⁸⁸ He referred to the names of the nine men he had been assigned around this time. Five out of five with

²⁸⁴ *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 3 February 1835, 6.; George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 20 March 1829, 'Letterbooks of Lieutenant-Governor's Memoranda (GO54) 26 Jun 1826 – 24 Jan 1837', TA, GO54/1/4, 244.

²⁸⁵ Monro to Colonial Secretary, 8 April 1829, '5211-5241 (except 5214, 5217-9, 5221-2, 5226, 5228-9, 5238)', TA, CSO1/1/217, 5215.

²⁸⁶ George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 15 April 1829, 'Letterbooks of Lieutenant-Governor's Memoranda (GO54) 26 Jun 1826 – 24 Jan 1837', TA, GO54/1/4, 262.; John Burnett to Roger H. Woods, 18 April 1829, 'Letterbook of Memoranda addressed to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts (CSO84), 25 Apr 1828 – 21 Sep 1829', TA, CSO84/1/1, 334.

²⁸⁷ Eldershaw, *Guide to the Public Records of Tasmania Section Three Convict Department*, 5.; John Burnett to Roger H. Woods, 'Letterbook of Memoranda addressed to the Principal Superintendent of Convicts (CSO84), 25 Apr 1828 – 21 Sep 1829', TA, CSO84/1/1, 335.

²⁸⁸ George Augustus Robinson, 25 April 1829, Journal, 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830', ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 5.

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references to Bruny in their police conduct records had or were in the process of acquiring many entries for disciplinary action against them, some of which Robinson initiated, as were two more men identified by their unique names but with no reference to Bruny Island. William Brown, who appears to have been the man of the same name who was 'pressed' on board the *Cyprus*, had such a long conduct record that it required a second page for 1829 onwards.²⁸⁹ This second page has since been lost. This investigation could not identify William Thompson's police conduct record because none found under that commonly occurring name had an entry referring to Bruny Island.

The police conduct records of 'steady well conducted' convicts were often blank or had just one or two disciplinary entries from their initial acculturation to the VDL penal colony. Before being sent to Bruny at least five out of nine of Robinson's men had six or more disciplinary entries and clearly did not reach Arthur's initially stated criterion of 'steady well-conducted'.

On 12 June 1829, Robinson asked Arthur for 'a steady intelligent prisoner' to 'oversee the improvements and to attend to the Children' at the Establishment during his

²⁸⁹ Stephen Ashton, No. 295, 'Convict surnames beginning with (hereinafter CSBW) A and B,' TA, CON31/1/1.; John Freek No. 101, 'CSBW F (1807 - Jan 1830) - G (1807 - Feb 1819)' TA, CON31/1/13, Image 41.; Thomas Macklow, No.416, 'CSBW M (1803 - Jan 1830) N (1809 - Jan 1830) and O (1804 - Jan 1830),' TA, CON31/1/29, Image 127.; Robert Simpson, No. 579, 'CSBW S,' TA, CON31/1/38, Image 198.; John Chadwick, No. 479, 'CSBW C,' TA, CON31/1/6, Image 165.; John Rayner, No. 474, 'CSBW P (1804 - Jan 1830) Q (1810 - Jan 1830) and R (1804 - Jan 1830),' TA, CON31/1/34, Image 385.; Robert Rhodes, No.150, 'CSBW P (1804 - Jan 1830) Q (1810 - Jan 1830) and R (1804 - Jan 1830),' TA, CON31/1/34, Image 276.; William Brown No.91, 'CSBW A and B,' TA, CON31/1/1, Image121. Thomas Williams unidentified.

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absences.²⁹⁰ Arthur agreed but instructed Robinson not to look for a candidate.²⁹¹ Arthur appointed Charles Sterling a young convict writer.²⁹² On 4 July in Hobart Robinson received Sterling.²⁹³ Sterling was infected with syphilis.²⁹⁴ He had a UK gaol report in the first line of his VDL police conduct record that described him as being of a ‘depraved character’. The conduct record also listed him as having been caught in a brothel two months earlier.²⁹⁵ Arthur had access to Sterling’s conduct record and, as Arthur later described to the Molesworth Committee, he would have received a detailed report on arrival from the *Governor Ready*’s surgeon-superintendent, Thomas Braidwood Wilson, who diagnosed Sterling’s syphilis during his transportation to VDL.²⁹⁶

Surgeon-superintendents recorded syphilis which was contagious but not common on

²⁹⁰ George Augustus Robinson to George Arthur, 12 June 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 22.

²⁹¹ Colonial Secretary to George Augustus Robinson, 27 June 1892, ‘File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen’s Land, in-letters, 1829–1839’, ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 10.

²⁹² Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1830, NLA, CO 284, File 53, AJCP Reel 1194–1195, 80.

²⁹³ George Augustus Robinson, 4 July 1829, ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830’, ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 25.

²⁹⁴ Transcription stating Sterling was ‘put on the sick list’, ‘Medical journal of the Governor Ready, convict ship, for 6 March to 6 September 1827’, Admiralty, UK National Archive, ADM 101/30/2, accessed 5 October 2021, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4106620> .

²⁹⁵ Charles Sterling, No.813, ‘CSBW S,’ TA, CON31/1/38, Image 277.

²⁹⁶ Charles Sterling, No.813, ‘CSBW S,’ TA, CON31/1/38, Image 277.; George Arthur, 27 June 1837, Select Committee, ‘Minutes of Evidence’ in *Report from the Select Committee on Transportation*, 281.; Transcription stating Sterling was ‘put on the sick list’, ‘Medical journal of the Governor Ready, convict ship, for 6 March to 6 September 1827’, Admiralty, UK National Archive, ADM 101/30/2, accessed 5 October 2021, <https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C4106620> .

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transports. Between Arthur becoming lieutenant governor and Sterling being appointed writer to the Establishment, 33 ships delivered more than 4500 convicts to Hobart of whom the surgeon-superintendents who cared for them on their voyage of transportation recorded nine as having syphilis.²⁹⁷ Of those nine, that included men and women, although one other had been caught in a brothel, Sterling's 'depraved character' was unique.²⁹⁸ In December 1829 Robinson received 'grains 5 calomel pills'.²⁹⁹ It is not known who they were for, but they were the standard treatment for syphilis. By Arthur's instruction, they would have been too much of a luxury to dispense to the Aboriginal people.³⁰⁰ Lending credence to the UK gaol report characterization, Sterling went on to abuse Robinson's wife and to be twice more reported in incidents with prostitutes.³⁰¹

In Hobart on 28 November 1829, Sterling was giving evidence to the earliest incarnation of what was to become known as the Aborigines' Committee. At the end of the first day oddly Sterling suddenly gave unsolicited supplementary testimony assuring the Committee that there were neither improper connections between the convicts and

²⁹⁷ 'Convict Ships List', AUS-Tasmanian Genealogy, accessed 4 October 2021, <http://sites.rootsweb.com>; 'Search results for syphilis, 1824–1829, ADM 101', Convict Ships etc., Records of the Admiralty, Naval Forces, Royal Marines, Coastguard, and related bodies, UK National Archive, ADM 101, accessed 4 October 2021, https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/results/r?_srt=3&_q=syphilis&_dss=range&_sd=1824&_ed=1829&_ser=ADM+101&id=C1810.

²⁹⁸ Charles Sterling, No.813, 'CSBW S,' TA, CON31/1/38, Image 277

²⁹⁹ George Augustus Robinson, 31 December 1829, journal in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 108.

³⁰⁰ Colonial Secretary to George Augustus Robinson, 27 June 1829, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen's Land, in-letters, 1829–1839', ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 10.

³⁰¹ *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 28 January 1834.; 7 October 1830, entry, Charles Sterling, No.813, 'CSBW S,' TA, CON31/1/38, Image 277.; George Augustus Robinson, 14 April 1831, journal in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 374.

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women, nor cases of venereal disease amongst the natives.³⁰² However, he had previously recorded reports of what he believed to be venereal disease on 21 and 28 September.³⁰³

Even if Arthur did not believe in human agency under the direction of providence of the Almighty, it is difficult to dismiss as chance his appointment of the one man in the colony who had syphilis and was of a 'depraved character' to effectively be in a position of an unsupervised overseer of women and girls in Robinson's absences which Arthur knew, from Robinson's reports and visits to Hobart, often lasted for days.

4.5.3 The Deprivation of Food, Medicine and Medical Care

'In the case of sickness, a small quantity of Tea and Sugar may be used, but otherwise, there can be no necessity for giving these people a taste for luxuries'.

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to George Augustus Robinson via Colonial Secretary Burnett in Charles Arthur's hand, 1829.**

Despite Arthur's claims, rations were not full. In 1829 Arthur had authorised one pound of biscuits 'to each or half a pound with a portion of potatoes daily' for the Aboriginal people on Bruny Island in 1828 while in the same year full prison rations were '1/4lb of flour, 1lb of bread, 4oz of Meat, 1/2lb Vegetables and 7 drs of salt'.³⁰⁴ According to a July 1836 claim by Robinson, that appears to have been a citable source that Arthur

³⁰² Charles Sterling, 26 November 1829, testimony at Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, '7578 (Vol.12)', TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 97–101.

³⁰³ Charles Sterling, 21, 28 September 1829, journal, in Item 1, 'File 7: George Augustus Robinson, Van Diemen's Land, miscellaneous papers, 1829–1833', ML, A 7059, CY Reel 784, 30, 32.

³⁰⁴ George Arthur to Colonial Secretary John Burnett, 16 April 1829, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 13.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1829, NLA, CO284, File 52, Reel No: 1194, 192.

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arranged for his swansong statement, full daily rations at the Establishment were:

‘Meat - one pound

Flour - one pound, eight ounces

Sugar - Two ounces

Tea - one fourth of an ounce

Soap - one fourth of an ounce

Salt - one fourth of an ounce’

Three days a week there was no salted meat, which the internees only ate because there was no alternative, so the flour ration was increased by one pound in lieu, as well as the tea and sugar.³⁰⁵

Arthur’s swansong statement omits the ‘great mortality’ on Bruny Island and the testimony of the subsequent investigation that Arthur ordered, while it claims ‘protection’ and in so doing acknowledges his administration’s duty of care.³⁰⁶ This further suggests Arthur recognised that if his superiors knew of the circumstances of the mortality, they might view him as being derelict in his duty to those who had died.

More specifically, testimony that Robinson’s assigned convict servants gave to the committee meeting suggested that Arthur’s refusal of Robinson’s request for medicine and failure to provide a ‘Medical Gentleman’ resulted in the in-custody deaths of ‘Mary’

³⁰⁵ George Augustus Robinson to John Montagu, 4 July 1836, statement, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

³⁰⁶ Colonial Secretary John Burnett to Aborigines’ Committee members, 25 November 1829, in Charles Arthur’s hand, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 118.

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and 'Joe'.³⁰⁷

On 15 April Robinson had requested a medicine chest and instructions citing a need for sulphur, and sugar and tea in times of sickness.³⁰⁸ Over two months later, on 27 June, Arthur replied that 'In the case of sickness, a small quantity of Tea and Sugar may be used, but otherwise, there can be no necessity for giving these people a taste for luxuries'.³⁰⁹ Despite the extreme mortality that Arthur was aware of in November, and apparently still in compliance with his instruction to avoid medicinal luxuries, Robinson received a requisition: '4 lb Epsom salts, oz 4 lint, grains 5 calomel pills, adhesive plaster, bandages' on 31 December.³¹⁰ In November Charles Sterling, Robinson's assigned convict writer, had testified that Epsom salts were the only treatment provided to the first two relocated Aboriginal people who died in custody, so the requisition appears to have been to both replenish spent supplies and prepare for Robinson's upcoming mission to befriend and negotiate the peaceful relocation of the people of the South West Nation.³¹¹

Robinson had requested 'surgical assistance' by letter on 20 May and had been promised

³⁰⁷ Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 26–27 November 1829, '7578 (Vol.12)' TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

³⁰⁸ George Augustus Robinson, 15 April 1829, 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Van Diemen's Land, 1829–1830', ML, A 7054, CY Reel 1469, 6.

³⁰⁹ Colonial Secretary to George Augustus Robinson, 27 June 1829, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen's Land, in-letters, 1829–1839', ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 10.

³¹⁰ Colonial Secretary John Burnett to Aborigines' Committee members, 25 November 1829, in Charles Arthur's hand, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 118.; George Augustus Robinson, 31 December 1829, journal in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 108.

³¹¹ Charles Sterling, 26 November 1829, testimony at Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, '7578 (Vol.12)', TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

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a ‘Medical Gentleman’ by Arthur on 10 October.³¹² On 25 November, the Colonial Surgeon sent a request for a prisoner with medical knowledge for the Establishment.³¹³ While it does not appear to have been answered, it again left proof of Arthur’s effort in the written record. However, if Arthur’s concern were genuine, he could have used his gubernatorial prerogative and simply ordered someone with medical training to Bruny Island as a temporary measure. At the time Doctor Walter Williams, who before the seizure of the *Cyprus* had been the newly appointed assistant surgeon to Macquarie Harbour Penal Station, was available in Hobart without appointment, income, or possessions. However, the number of Aboriginal survivors on Bruny Island was now so small that by the end of the year Robinson relocated them to premises next to his house in Hobart.³¹⁴

4.5.4 Arthur’s Mistake?

‘...medical practice at the time was unable to cure them, or even relieve their symptoms.’³¹⁵

- Plomley describing European infections fatal to the Aboriginal people.

By initiating the investigation into Robinson’s explanation of the ‘great mortality’ on 23 November, Arthur demonstrated that he knew the mortality was unacceptable and

³¹² George Augustus Robinson, 20 May 1829, ‘File 1: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 29(–30) March – 19 September 1829’, ML, A 7023, CY Reel 858, 11.; George Augustus Robinson, 10 October 1829, ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830’, ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 88.

³¹³ James Scott to Colonial Secretary John Burnett, 25 November 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 118.

³¹⁴ Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1829, NLA, CO284, File 52, Reel No: 1194, 60–61.; Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 111.

³¹⁵ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 204.

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that he should hold somebody accountable.³¹⁶ To Arthur's political convenience, the investigating committee as it evolved into the Aborigines' Committee went on to bury Robinson's convict servants' unfettered testimony, that identified the poor diet and lack of medicine, that Arthur had ordered, as issues.

Some of the Aboriginal survivors from Bruny joined Robinson on his Friendly Mission, a plan which he had suggested on 1 June.³¹⁷ Arthur had approved this via the colonial secretary in his nephew's, Charles Arthur's, hand on 27 June 1829. By 18 August Arthur was expressing surprise that Robinson had not left, presumably with the men he had and leaving Sterling in charge on Bruny Island.³¹⁸ Wisely, Robinson waited, leaving on 27 January 1830 with his own careful planning and a team he had selected with the assistance of a clergyman newly appointed to the Committee.³¹⁹

For some academics, the expressed intention of Arthur, the Humanitarian Evangelical Abolitionist, was 'amelioration' and, the 'great mortality' on Bruny was an unavoidable misfortune. With or without malice aforethought Arthur's minimal support experiment – that initially prioritised a discreet individual, requested distributing inferior and half-

³¹⁶ Colonial Secretary to Aborigines' Committee Members, 23 November 1829, '7578 (Vol.2)', TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 117.

³¹⁷ George Augustus Robinson to George Arthur, 1 June 1829, 'File 01: George Augustus Robinson, letter book, 1829–1832', ML, A 7042, CY Reel 547, 10.

³¹⁸ Colonial Secretary to George Augustus Robinson, 27 June 1829, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen's Land, in-letters, 1829–1839', ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 9.; George Augustus Robinson, 18 August 1829 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 29(–30) March – 19 September 1829', ML, A 7023, CY Reel 858, 59.

³¹⁹ Colonial Secretary to George Augustus Robinson, 19, 22 December 1829, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen's Land, in-letters, 1829–1839', ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 27–29.

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worn blankets without reference to laundering, listed blanket distribution above food in early summer in a warm year, broke with the system of sending the pick of freshly arrived convicts to a new government establishment, delegated the assignment of convict servants to the superintendent who would be losing them, assigned a ‘depraved’ brothel-frequenting syphilitic convict writer to be left in charge of women and girls, issued rations that were insufficient, withheld medicine, failed to assign a medical gentleman, and expected Robinson to depart on his mission without appropriate assignments or preparation – was at a level of dereliction and detriment unconscionable in any other organ of Arthur’s administration. As documented below, the fact that with no personal culpability Mulgrave, Charles Arthur, and the Colonial Secretary Montagu went on to obfuscate, conceal and whitewash what happened points to Arthur instructing them to do so to avoid London holding him to account.

By the end of 1829 Arthur, his nephew, and the other initial members of the Committee knew that without proper food, medicine and medical care, the fragility of the Aboriginal population to European pathogens resulted in mortality rates that were unacceptable by any custodial metric of the day. Also, Arthur and his nephew, Charles Arthur, who was to become secretary to the Committee, understood the importance of sending ‘steady well conducted men’ to the Establishment.

5 Arthur's Obfuscation and Concealment, Spring 1829

'All genocides undergo this enterprise of euphemization,'

- **Régine Waintrater, 2003.**

Arthur's use of euphemism was an integral part of his perception manipulation and is arguably a symptom of genocide. As Régine Waintrater writes, 'All genocides undergo this enterprise of euphemization, against which testimony has to stand up and be built.' Still many years later, it has a 'harmful effect that aligns itself with denial.'³²⁰ Indeed, while Arthur's term 'General Movement' sounds benign and boring, the uninformed could be forgiven for thinking that Arthur's 'Roving Parties' were social events for hikers, when in fact they were militia squads on search and capture, repulse, or kill missions that committed war crimes outside Arthur's own rules of engagement. These crimes Arthur tacitly condoned by failing to punish or report them to London.

Spring 1829, when the *Cyprus* was seized, was a busy time for Arthur. There were at least three cases involving murder or death in custody of non-combatant Aboriginal women and children for which London would have wanted him, his policies, or his subordinates held to account. However, to obfuscate or conceal them Arthur appears to have manipulated his superiors', the judiciary's and the public's perception.

The details of the *Cyprus* escape were also manipulated, but no new direct evidence of the presence of Mangana's wife has been found. There was also a convict appeal against double punishment, knowledge of which London cautioned Arthur for falsely

³²⁰ Waintrater, *Sortir du génocide*, 203.

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denying.³²¹ Although this is unrelated to genocide, it and similar cases showed he was not averse to obfuscated extra-judicial acts when he believed himself to be in the right.

5.1 Concealment of The First ‘Great Mortality’

‘Committee of Inquiry on the state of the Aborigines of this Island’.

‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of the Captured Aborigines’.

‘Committee for the Affairs of the Aborigines’.

‘The Aborigines’ Committee’.

- **The renaming of the Committee, November 1829 – March 1830.**

In September 1829, as the fleeing *Cyprus* pirates headed for Tahiti and then Tonga, back in VDL the Aboriginal mortality on Bruny Island doubled. George Augustus Robinson ‘the storekeeper, and supervisor in charge of the Establishment at Bruné Island for Improving the Condition of the Aborigines’, had informed Arthur in written reports in June and August and then in three letters in September, when the death toll shot from 11 to 22 in one month.³²² Possibly due to Robinson’s verbosity, rather than reading these reports Arthur appears to have had his nephew, Charles Arthur, read them and summarise them for him.³²³ According to Robinson, he also reported to Arthur orally during their face-to-face meetings. However, Robinson did not visit Hobart between late August and early November and his September reports may have been eclipsed by the

³²¹ Chapman, HRoA, Series 3, Volume 8, Note 683.

³²² George Augustus Robinson, 1829, reports, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 19–29, 33–38, 46–64, 79–82, 83–91.; Ryan, L, *Tasmanian Aborigines*, 156.

³²³ Charles Arthur, date unknown, read by George Arthur on 26 June 1829, Analysis, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, Reel Z1826, 120–23.

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Cyprus seizure and Carew's court martial, which kept Arthur and his nephew busy.³²⁴

The dire situation caught Arthur's attention after the death of one of the first Aboriginal people sent there in custody, a woman known to the convicts as 'Mary'. Charles Arthur penned the memorandum under Burnett's signature conveying Arthur's order to reconvene the first incarnation of the Aborigines' Committee, 'the Committee of Inquiry on the state of the Aborigines of this Island', which had first met on 12 November to discuss the suitability of the Bruny Island Establishment for internment. The initial members were chairperson, Colonial Treasurer Jocelyn Thomas; Arthur's old comrade from Jersey, Chief Police Magistrate Mulgrave; Colonial Surgeon James Scott; and Port Officer Samuel Hill whom Arthur had sent to inspect Birchs Bay Sawing Station and on whom Robinson relied for the nautical components of his conciliatory missions.

Arthur tasked the Committee with investigating Robinson's explanation as to the 'great mortality' on Bruny. They interviewed Robinson's assigned convict writer Sterling, and servants Robert Simpson, and John Freak on 26-27 November.³²⁵ Confirming the necessity of Robinson's earlier requests to Arthur, Sterling cited the lack of medical attention and medicine regarding the in-custody death of 'Mary': he had had to treat her with Epsom salts. All three men thought the diet, especially the lack of meat in the rations, was a factor in the mortality.³²⁶

³²⁴ Charles Arthur to John Clark, 4 September 1829, 'William & John Clark Family Papers', Letter 5.

³²⁵ Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 26–27 November 1829, '7578 (Vol.12)' TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

³²⁶ Charles Sterling, 26 November 1829, testimony at Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, '7578 (Vol.12)', TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

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On December 24, Arthur added two clergymen, and the ‘Committee of Inquiry on the state of the Aborigines of this Island’ became ‘The Committee for the Care and Treatment of the Captured Aborigines’.³²⁷ On 17 February 1830, Charles Arthur became the Committee secretary and started a new minute book without including Robinson’s assigned convicts’ testimony which under the new committee title was now most pertinent.³²⁸ The committee’s renaming as ‘The Committee for the Affairs of the Aborigines’ on 23 February and then ‘The Aborigines’ Committee’ on 19 March further obfuscated the earlier meetings and testimony. Despite the precedent established by starting a new minute book without including the earlier minutes and testimony on the renaming of 17 February, the renaming on 23 February and then 19 March did not warrant the starting of new minute books.³²⁹

With the earlier minutes omitted and the Committee renamed four times in as many months, even the suspicious and astute Murray, without knowing the exact names of the Committee’s earlier incarnations, would have struggled to frame a request to access those testimonies had he known of their existence.

³²⁷ Colonial Treasurer Jocelyn Thomas to members of The Committee of Enquiry on the State of the Aborigines of this Island, 27 November 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.12)’ TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91.; Colonial Secretary Burnett to members of The Committee for the Care and Treatment of the Captured Aborigines, 24 December 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.12)’ TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 110–12.

³²⁸ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, 17 February 1830, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830–16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744, 1.

³²⁹ Committee for the Affairs of the Aborigines, 23 February 1830, Minutes, ‘Dispatches 1830 Jan-May’, CO280, File 24, AJCP Reel 244–245, 408.; Aborigines’ Committee, 19 March 1830, Report, ‘Dispatches 1830 Jan-May’, CO280, File 24, AJCP Reel 244–245, 435.

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On his recall in 1836, Arthur arranged a swansong statement that appeared humanitarian by whitewashing out the first ‘great mortality’. However, in so doing it clarified his administrations responsibility. In October of 1836, Arthur ordered Colonial Secretary Montagu to prepare a ‘statement explanatory of the measures adopted by this Government, for the Comfort and civilization of the Aboriginal Inhabitants of this Colony’. While omitting the evidential convict-servant testimony regarding the ‘great mortality’, Arthur’s refusal to provide medical supplies, and his failure to provide the ‘Medical Gentleman’; the swansong statement claimed that from the first distribution of rations and blankets in 1828, there had been an Establishment on Bruny Island. It stated that ‘those Aborigines who had placed themselves under the protection of the Government’ ‘were supplied with full rations Blankets and other necessaries’, i.e. those receiving rations etc. were under the Colonial Government’s protection.³³⁰

Arguably the effect of Arthur’s concealment ripples on today. Arthur’s preferred narrative, that starts from the second almost correction-free minute book, that Charles Arthur and another writer appear to have transcribed from notes, is available online; while the first one, with its real-time crossing-outs and amendments, describing the mortality and its causes, is a visit-to-view or buy-a-copy manuscript.³³¹ Even Plomley uses two different abridged names in his seminal works: in *Friendly Mission*, the

³³⁰ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

³³¹ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830 – 16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744.; Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 26–27 November 1829, minutes, ‘7578 (Vol.12)’ TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 91, 97–106.

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‘Aboriginal Committee’ and in *Weep in Silence*, the ‘Aborigines Committee’.

5.2 Limited Hangout of the Oatlands Murders

‘and, if the Parties fire the possibility is that Women and even Children are the victims’

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur to Secretary of State for War and Colonies George Murray, 1829.**

In early September 1829, as the fleeing *Cyprus* headed for Tahiti, back in VDL John Batman’s ‘Roving Party’ militia squad on capture, kill or repulse missions in settled areas, shot fleeing Aboriginal families with buckshot at night killing two women.³³² Arthur omitted reporting this to the home government in London. Batman had initially presented himself for active service in the same humanitarian vain as Arthur, pledging to bring ‘in alive some of those much injured, and unfortunate of all of beings.’³³³ On his way back from the indiscriminate shooting, two male prisoners could not keep up and Batman ‘was obliged therefore to shoot them.’³³⁴

Perhaps to cover himself in case a local newspaper report found its way back to London, Arthur wrote to the Secretary of State for War and Colonies George Murray on 12 September stating that ‘it seems impossible to’ capture Aboriginal people, ‘and, if the

³³² *Launceston Advertiser*, 7 September 1829, 2; *Hobart Town Courier*, 12 September 1829, 2.

³³³ Unsigned and undated internal memo quoting Batman to Major Gray, 15 June 1829, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025, letter 8.

³³⁴ John Batman to Thomas Anstey, Report, 7 September 1829, ‘7578 (Vol.5),’ General Correspondence, Colonial Secretary’s Office, TA, CSO1/1/320, Reel Z1827, 143.

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Parties fire the possibility is that Women and even Children are the victims'.³³⁵ Since Watergate this has been referred to as 'limited hangout'. Six months later, having obfuscated Batman's war crimes, Arthur presented him to Murray as a potential conciliator while lamenting that the 'miserable beings' 'would gladly be reconciled if they knew our real intentions towards them were those of kindness'.³³⁶

5.3 Obfuscation of the Emu Bay Murder in Custody

'immediately acquaint him with the particulars'

- **Secretary of State for War and Colonies George Murray to Lieutenant Governor George Arthur via Under-Secretary for the Colonies Robert Hay, 1830.**

Earlier on 21 August, as the fleeing *Cyprus* sailed north up the coast of the Southern Island of New Zealand, back in VDL a fleeing Aboriginal Woman was shot and chopped in the neck with a hatchet by an employee of the Van Diemen's Land Company working at Cooee Point, near Emu Bay. Murray heard of the incident and, via Under-Secretary for the Colonies Robert William Hay, ordered Arthur to 'immediately acquaint him with the particulars' about the murder of an Aboriginal 'man' by VDL Company employees. Disobeying the order, Arthur deferred reporting and knowingly failed to correct the gender error.³³⁷ He finally reported details, with the correct gender, over a year after the

³³⁵ George Arthur to George Murray, 12 September 1829, 'Despatches 1829 Jul-Dec', CO280, File 21, AJCP Reel 242–243, 335.

³³⁶ George Arthur to George Murray, 15 April 1830 in Parliamentary Paper, Van Diemen's Land, 191.

³³⁷ Robert Hay to George Arthur 12 March 1830 in Chapman, *HRoA*, Series 3, Volume 9, 134.; George Arthur to Robert Hay, 19 August 1830, 'Despatches 1830 Jun- Dec', CO280, File 100, AJCP Reel 245, 314.

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initial reference to the incident.³³⁸

Legal opinion from Alfred Stephen, the solicitor general, characterised the Emu Bay incident as murder in custody and then transcended the law into political consequence as he provided Arthur grounds for non-disclosure: if it were public and Arthur prosecuted, no one would want to risk capturing Aboriginal people; if it were public and Arthur did not prosecute, others might copy the killer.³³⁹ This investigation has found no reference to the murder in press reports from the period.

5.4 Testimony Coaching and Reporting Restrictions around the *Cyprus* Escape

They ‘would swear any man's life away in order to keep themselves from being sent back to Macquarie Harbour.’

- ***Cyprus* pirate James Cam of the convict prosecution witnesses at his trial in Hobart.**

Arthur had control of the *Cyprus* narrative. The officers for the court martial of Lieutenant Carew, the commanding officer of the *Cyprus*'s guard, were under Arthur's order and he nominated the judge advocate.³⁴⁰ Arthur also held sway over all the

³³⁸ George Arthur to Robert Hay, 20 November 1830, ‘Despatches 1830 Jun-Dec’, CO280, File 25, AJCP Reel 245, 426.; Edward Curr to Colonial Secretary, 30 September 1829, ‘Despatches 1830 Jun-Dec’, CO280, File 25, AJCP Reel 245, 430.

³³⁹ Alfred Stephen to George Arthur, 3 February 1830, ‘Despatches 1830 Jun-Dec’, CO280, File 100, AJCP Reel 245, 461.

³⁴⁰ *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 16 October 1829, 2.; *Tasmanian and Austral Asiatic Review* (Hobart) 16 October 1829, 318.; *Australian* (Sydney) 2 October 1829, 3.

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Cyprus's passengers and crew. He read the court-martial proceedings daily and approved the final transcripts.³⁴¹

The risk of prejudicing the court martial required a restriction on reporting.³⁴² Reimplementation of press licencing, censorship that Arthur had repealed just nine months earlier, would have been easy.³⁴³ No directive has been found, but what appears to be its effect was seen in the *Hobart Town Courier* which reported receiving but not publishing anonymous accounts of events on the *Cyprus*.³⁴⁴ Arthur could have enforced restrictions around the case until the arrival of 'the decision of the King' on the verdict a year later by which time interest would have waned.³⁴⁵

At the end of September in preparation for the court martial, Arthur appears to have had Peter Archer Mulgrave, his old acquaintance from Jersey and newly appointed chief police magistrate, limit testimony from the *Cyprus's* non-escapee convict prisoners. He may have also coached them to falsify testimony which conflicted with testimony they gave later at another trial.

In the memorandum Mulgrave sent to the Colonial Secretary's Office accompanying the non-escapee convict's statements, he inadvertently referred to memoranda that oddly he had been instructed to return. This investigation has found no transcript of the

³⁴¹ *Colonial Times* (Hobart) 11 December 1829, 3.

³⁴² Simmons, 1843, in Hughs, *The Duties of Judge Advocates*, 38.

³⁴³ Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 108-09; Chapman, *HROA*, Series 3, Volume 8, Note 4.

³⁴⁴ *Hobart Town Courier*, 19 September 1829, 2.

³⁴⁵ 'General Court Martial', *Tasmanian and Austral Asiatic Review* (Hobart), Additional Sheet, 30 October 1829.; *Tasmanian* (Hobart), 21 January 1831, 7.

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returned memoranda in either office's letterbook, therefore the order Mulgrave complied with to return the instruction-containing memoranda effectively deleted them from the record. In his inadvertent reference, Mulgrave records that he had been instructed to limit the scope of witness testimonies to avoid 'prolixity', tedious length.³⁴⁶ The deletion from the written record of instructions to simply avoid prolixity would have been unnecessary. It therefore seems likely that Arthur via the Colonial Secretary's Office instructed Mulgrave to leave out specific details that he did not want recorded, i.e. regarding something that was politically inconvenient.

Arthur's nephew, Charles Arthur, was working in the Colonial Secretary's Office and probably penned the secret instructions. At the beginning of September Charles Arthur, who oversaw communications regarding the Aboriginal Establishment, had also recorded statements from the military guard, captain, crew and Dr Williams regarding the seizure of the brig.³⁴⁷

Charles Arthur's involvement may have been significant. In appointing Charles as secretary to what was to become the Aborigines' Committee in February 1830, Arthur appears to have used him as a fixer in the concealment of the politically inconvenient 'great mortality'. On recording the *Cyprus* seizure testimonies, had Charles Arthur already proved himself to Arthur in the concealment of another political inconvenience, the abduction of Mangana's wife from custody?

³⁴⁶ Peter Mulgrave to Colonial Secretary, 28 September 1829 '9354-9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 18.

³⁴⁷ Testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, 2 September 1829, in Charles Arthur's hand '9354-9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 231-313.

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Later in April 1832, the press and a judge effectively called the testimonies Mulgrave had recorded into question. The *Tasmanian* reported many peculiarities around the VDL trial of two recaptured *Cyprus* escapees, Denner and James Cam, who stayed on Niutoputapu in Tonga without travelling on to Japan. Rather than the VDL government, Mulgrave pursued their prosecution. By then he was no longer chief police magistrate. To prosecute them, Mulgrave had to return to Hobart from a new posting in Launceston. None of the *Cyprus*'s military guards gave witness testimony, despite the jury consisting entirely of soldiers. The judge expressed concern about the preparation time and the council provided for the accused and pointed out discrepancies in witness testimony. The *Tasmanian* reported contradictions with the testimonies that Mulgrave had previously taken for Carew's court martial from Edward Green, John Curry, Charles (William) Smith and Richard Drury, who implying special treatment, introduced himself as the 'Commissariat clerk, appointed by His Excellency Lieutenant-Governor Arthur'.

Cam received a death sentence. He pointed out that the convict prisoner witnesses, all who had received remissions from their Penal Station sentences for not escaping on the *Cyprus*, 'would swear any man's life away in order to keep themselves from being sent back to Macquarie Harbour.' Despite the newspaper report that distanced the Colonial Government from the prosecution, Mulgrave could not have acted without Arthur's approval.³⁴⁸ The Colonial Government may have distanced itself due to questions about the legitimacy of prosecuting Denner after authorities in London decided not to.

³⁴⁸ *Tasmanian* (Hobart), 7 April 1832, 5.

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However, this does not seem a significant enough reason for Mulgrave to travel 200km from his new post in Launceston.

After the *Cyprus* seizure, the initial assumption in the press had been that the pirates would fight among themselves and lose the ship. As chief police magistrate at the time, Mulgrave's only documented link with the *Cyprus* case was the recording of limited convict witness testimony as per the secret memoranda from the Colonial Secretary's Office. At the unexpected return of two convict pirates, and to avoid disclosing to the new chief police magistrate what they had concealed, was Mulgrave brought back on abduction-narrative containment detail?

6 Arthur's Continued Diminution

'There have been frequent famines on the settlement; their rations not sufficient for them.'

- **George Augustus Robinson, 1835.**

From the testimony describing the 'great mortality' on Bruny Island in 1829, Arthur, and the core majority of what was to become the Aborigines' Committee, knew the vulnerability of the Aboriginal population to contagions while suffering deprivations of food and medical supplies. Arthur would have understood the effects of such deprivations from his experience and knowledge of Walcheren. He and the committee would have also known that the resulting mortality was unacceptable by any UK custodial metric. They would have also been aware that the last 30 years of British prison, convict transport and barrack reforms had reduced contagion and resulting mortality.

6.1 Deprivation of Medical and Food Supplies

'malicious and unfounded reports had been spread abroad to the prejudice of the Aboriginal Establishment to the effect that the Natives had been short of provisions but he [Robinson] positively denied that such an occurrence had ever taken place and affirmed that they had always had an ample supply of every necessary.'³⁴⁹

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur in his swansong statement prepared by Colonial Secretary Montagu, 1836.**

Only Arthur could have initiated the concealment of the convict testimony that linked the insufficient rations and his deprivation of medicine with the 'great mortality' on Bruny Island. Arthur also knew of the ongoing issues with supplies at the relocated

³⁴⁹ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825-1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

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Establishment but did not effectively resolve them. After Bruny Island, Arthur heard of issues with supplies from Robinson and then the young Commandant William James Darling, as well as the puritan missionaries James Backhouse and George Walker, and later a Major Thomas Ryan.

Arthur heard directly from Robinson during a conference in Launceston on 6 and 7 October 1831 that he was not receiving ‘cordial support and encouragement’. Arthur notified the relevant people that he was ‘extremely desirous that Mr. Robinson’s mission should receive the utmost encouragement and support’ and supplies when he required them.³⁵⁰ The lack of support and Arthur expressing a preference rather than issuing an order lends credence to Calder’s assessment of the situation:

The Government, too, while it affected to applaud him [Robinson] in print, and even to reward his services, was not a sincere encourager of his, and petty subordinates, with many of whom he had necessary transactions, taking their cue from above, seemed to vie with each other to impede, distress, and annoy him.³⁵¹

Might Arthur’s being extremely desirous have been one of his ‘plausible replies’ to ‘increase rather than mitigate this undercurrent of tyranny against’ those who had been ‘opposers of his government’ to which the *Sydney Monitor* editorial referred?³⁵²

In 1832 at Arthur’s request, the quaker missionaries Backhouse and Walker visited and

³⁵⁰ George Arthur, 12 October 1831, memorandum in Parliamentary Paper, *Papers Relative to the Aboriginal Tribes in British Possessions*, 163.

³⁵¹ Calder, *Some account of the wars, extirpation, habits, etc., of the native tribes of Tasmania*, 73.

³⁵² *Sydney Monitor*, ‘Colonel Arthur’, 28 November 1836.

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reported on the Establishment on Flinders Island. They were on a tour of inspection of the British colonies and had arrived with a letter of introduction from Secretary of State for War and the Colonies Viscount Goderich who was an Abolitionist. Backhouse was also corresponding with the Abolitionist Buxton and prison reformer Elizabeth Fry.³⁵³ Their 13 November 1832 report opened with a confirmation that the Establishment was so low on rations that the White People were living off oatmeal and potatoes and the Aborigines off potatoes and rice which had almost run out. The Establishment surgeon, McLachlan, also stated that there had been a near starvation incident on Gun Carriage Island that had only been avoided when passing sealers provided potatoes.³⁵⁴

Darling complained of delays and irregularities of supplies leading to the settlement running dangerously low on food again in 1833. Arthur became directly involved on 1 March. He required the storekeeper on Flinders Island to provide inventory returns to the Commissariat.³⁵⁵ Darling complained again in July 1834 stating that the meat 'is frequently unfit to be eaten', and that 'the want of bread has not been owing to the want of Requisitions on the Commissariat, for there are requisitions now of some months standing' 'uncomplished'. He acknowledged having a few sheep but needed them for

³⁵³ James Backhouse to Elizabeth Fry and to Thomas Fowell Buxton, 17 February 1832, 'Letterbook no. 1, December 1831 - January 1835', Papers of James Backhouse, Society of Friends, AJCP M693-M707, File MS Vol. S48, 15, 19.

³⁵⁴ James Backhouse and George Walker to George Arthur, 13 November 1832, 'Portfolio: Volume 18, 13 November 1832', Papers of James Backhouse, Society of Friends, AJCP M693-M707, File Volume 18, Item ff.14.

³⁵⁵ William James Darling to Colonial Secretary, 20 February 1833, 'CSO1/381/1 - Volume 5 File 7578', TA, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 66.

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breeding.³⁵⁶

On 11 May 1836 Major Ryan also reported to the Colonial Secretary that there had been three semi starvation incidents. Unfortunately, Plomley is unable to locate Ryan's report in the Colonial Secretary Office's archive, but he manages to find a copy Robinson kept.³⁵⁷ Arthur responded to the report by sending Robinson back to take charge of the Establishment. Robinson recorded that Arthur told him to write directly if he had difficulty procuring supplies.³⁵⁸ i.e. Arthur acknowledged that there was an issue that he knew about.

In July 1836 Robinson wrote to the Colonial Secretary stating that the flour usually arrived damaged, and that the diet was a factor in the mortality.³⁵⁹

In an 1837 letter to Robinson, the Establishment surgeon, James Allen, referred to previous hunger. He stated that the detrimental effect of a diet of salted meat, which according to him they had been offered every day for the past six or seven years, were

³⁵⁶ William James Darling to Colonial Secretary, 24 June 1834, 'CSO1/381/1 - Volume 5 File 7578', TA, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 1002.

³⁵⁷ Thomas Ryan to George Arthur, 11 May 1836, report, 'File 02: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, January-June 1836' ML, A7063, 213–61 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 634–35.

³⁵⁸ George Augustus Robinson, 12 May 1836, journal 'Sub-series 2: George Augustus Robinson, journals, Flinders Island, 1835-1838', ML, A 7027 (Vol. 6), in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 353.

³⁵⁹ George Augustus Robinson to Colonial Secretary, July 1836, '17816', TA, CSO1/1/842, in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 644.

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so well known that he felt no need to go into detail.³⁶⁰

The issue of supplies went beyond that of food. Despite there being a ‘medical gentleman’ on Flinders Island, there were difficulties obtaining that other essential which Arthur had restricted on Bruny Island, medical supplies. Robinson recorded that according to the former acting commandant and surgeon, James Allen, in four years the Establishment on Flinders Island had only received one and a half years’ worth of medical supplies.³⁶¹ This was a situation that Robinson recorded and apparently attempted to report after another supply ship arrived without any medicine. However, Plomley finds no record of the letter among the Colonial Secretary’s papers and reports a margin note in Robinson’s letterbook in his hand, ‘I am of the opinion this letter was not sent.’³⁶² Did someone in the communication chain, much of which overlapped with the supply chain, lose the letter?

The Commissariat returns of food supplies suggest that the reality may have been worse than the reports. Therefore, the situation was nothing like Arthur’s swansong statement which implied that, apart from occasional logistical issues, the Aboriginal people at the

³⁶⁰ James Allen to George Augustus Robinson, 10 September 1837, ‘File 06: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, July-September 1837’, ML, A 7067, 201–211 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 922.

³⁶¹ George Augustus Robinson, 14 December 1836, journal ‘Sub-series 2: George Augustus Robinson, journals, Flinders Island, 1835-1838’, ML, A 7027 (Vol. 6), in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 401.

³⁶² George Augustus Robinson to Colonial Secretary, 8 December 1836, ‘File 03: George Augustus Robinson, letter book, Flinders Island, 1836-1838’, ML, A 7044, 119 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 670.; and George Augustus Robinson to Colonial Secretary, 14 December 1836, ‘File 03: George Augustus Robinson, letter book, Flinders Island, 1836-1838’, ML, A 7044, 136, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 670.; Robinson mistakenly records the time Allen had been at Flinders Island as three years, but it was four years from December 1832 to December 1836.

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Establishment had been on full rations since Bruny Island.³⁶³ Arthur's statement also directly contradicted Robinson who wrote of frequent famines in his journal in 1835.³⁶⁴

On 20 October 1829, Colonial Secretary Burnett wrote instructing Robinson that Arthur had directed the first incarnation of the Aborigines' Committee's recommended ration scale of 'one pound of wheat meal, half a pound of Potatoes or Vegetables, one pound of fresh meat,' and smaller amounts of sugar, tea, soap, and salt, with half rations for children under five.³⁶⁵ Homegrown potatoes and vegetables and fresh meat from game supplemented the diet, therefore it is difficult to know how sufficient the supplemented rations were. However, the main calorific content of the diet came from the wheat meal which by weight has very roughly twice the calorific content of fresh meat, and six times that of potatoes and that or more of most other vegetables.³⁶⁶

This investigation compared the authorised wheat meal ration to the actual supply and, lending credence to the reports of near starvation incidents, found an over one-third shortfall without accounting for spoilage which Plomley reports as an issue.³⁶⁷ The Establishment supplemented the diet with locally grown Barley, which had a similar

³⁶³ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

³⁶⁴ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.; George Augustus Robinson, 21 December 1835, journal 'Sub-series 2: George Augustus Robinson, journals, Flinders Island, 1835–1838', ML, A 7027 (Vol. 6), in Plomley *Weep In Silence*, 326.

³⁶⁵ Colonial Secretary to George Augustus Robinson, 20 October 1829, 'File 1: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence, Van Diemen's Land, in-letters, 1829–1839', ML, A 7053, CY Reel 784, 17–18.

³⁶⁶ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *Food balance sheets A handbook*, 60.

³⁶⁷ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 49.

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calorific value by weight to wheat. The number of acres of cultivated barley necessary to make up the shortfall were calculated.

Between 1831 and 1836 inclusive the Commissariat listed the calorific equivalent of 181,256 lb of wheat delivered as mixed cereals, pulses and vegetables.³⁶⁸ According to Arthur's authorised rations 280,386 lb of wheat meal should have been consumed.³⁶⁹

³⁶⁸ Account of Provisions etc. issued by the Commissariat Department in Van Diemen's Land to the Aborigines Establishment during the Years 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835 & 1836: in 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

Carbohydrates 1831–1836

Wheat	1,440 lb
Flour	119,041 lb
Oatmeal	3,246 lb
Pease	1,160 lb
Bread	2,272 lb
Biscuit	47,443 lb
Rice	513 lb
Barley	527 lb
Oats	550 lb
Vegetables	5,065 lb (rough calorific equivalent to wheat corrected from 30,383 lb)

Total of supplied rations = 181,256 lb over six years.

³⁶⁹ For this calculation it was assumed that:

1) The flour and biscuit and meat rations of the Aboriginal people, military, appointed civilians and assigned convicts were the same, however it is probable that they had better rations.

2) Every year all the people at the Establishment were adults apart from four children on half rations. This is an estimate as the numbers are unclear although children are mentioned.

3) The meat ration is difficult to assess in real terms as it was supplemented with local game and livestock. However, the game ran out and most of the time the livestock was not properly managed. It arrived diseased or was not easily accessible as it was wild on other islands. Indeed, despite sheep inhabiting other islands, the full rations Robinson reported being issued July 1836 had no meat for four days a week and was replaced with an equal weight of flour.

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There was a shortfall of 99,130 lb or 35.4%: two and half days a week, or four months a year, without wheat meal or a calorific equivalent.

To make up this deficit the establishment would have had to have grown 22.47 acres of barley at the VDL average yields for the period.³⁷⁰ An 1838 map shows the Establishment as having just 2.64 acres of cultivated land the majority of which was

4)When wheat rations ran out they were replaced with other carbohydrates of equivalent calorific value.

5)Visitors to the island brought their own rations. It is possible visitors on government business did not received food from the Establishment supplies.

6)The government employees were not recorded in 1831. The number was estimated at 20 people.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 144.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1832, NLA, CO 284, File 55, AJCP Reel 1195, 135.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1833, NLA, CO 284, File 56, AJCP Reel 1195, 163.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1834, NLA, CO 284, File 57, AJCP Reel 1195, 225.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1835, NLA, CO 284, File 58, AJCP Reel 1195, 227.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1836, NLA, CO 284, File 59, AJCP Reel 1195–1196, 225.;

Year	Population	Govt. Employees	Children	Full Ration Days
1831	60	20	4	28,470
1832	106	34	4	50,370
1833	122	30	4	54,750
1834	111	41	4	54,750
1835	111	41	4	54,750
1836	106	44	4	37,296 (to 9 September)
Total full ration mouth days=				280,386

³⁷⁰ Vamplew, 'A Grain of Truth: The Nineteenth-Century Corn Averages', 8. Citing Fay, one bushel of barley was 49 lb; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, *Statistical Returns of Van Diemen's Land, from 1824 to 1839*, tables No.10, 13. VDL figures for 1831–1836 inclusive used to calculate 760.5 lb/acre as the average annual yield for the period.

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used for growing vegetables with some barley production.³⁷¹ There was probably less than 2.64 acres of cultivated land from 1831 to 1836. However, if there was and providing that they managed to achieve VDL's average yield, the establishment needed almost 20 more acres, or about seven and a half times what they had in 1838, to make up the shortfall in arable production.

Of course, the Aboriginal internees at the Establishments supplemented their diets with locally caught game. However, as Backhouse notes after relocation to Flinders Island the initially abundant supply of kangaroo and wallaby there and on nearby islands soon became extremely scarce, although there were shellfish and seasonally mutton bird on Green Island.³⁷²

Perhaps assisting in the preparation of Arthur's swansong statement, in July 1836 Robinson described a more generous diet 'approved of by Colonial Secretary's letter 18th Dec 1834'. If the Establishment had implemented this, the promised total and therefore the shortfall would have been greater than calculated here.³⁷³

These figures show the deprivation was greater than the few logistical hiccups that

³⁷¹ 'Map of the Aboriginal settlement at Flinders Island [cartographic material] / surveyed by the Commandant G.A. Robinson, 1838 ; copied in the Survey Office, Hobart town by F.S. Edgar.', accessed 1 September 2021, <https://collection.sl.nsw.gov.au/record/74VM5pkq2ZEb> .

³⁷² Walker, 'Notes on the aborigines of Tasmania, extracted from the manuscript journals of George Washington Walker, with an introduction by James B. Walker, F.R.G.S.', 152.; James Backhouse and George Walker to George Arthur, 13 November 1832, 'Portfolio: Volume 18, 13 November 1832', Papers of James Backhouse, Society of Friends, AJCP M693-M707, File Volume 18, Item ff.14.

³⁷³ Gorge Augustus Robinson to colonial secretary, 4 July 1836, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825-1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

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Arthur's swansong statement describes. While Plomley places the blame for failures in supply with the commissariat and the weather delaying supply ships, both explanations are questionable.³⁷⁴

Supply was the task of the Commissariat, there was the Aborigines' Committee's oversight and Arthur could interpose directly when he saw fit. However, organizationally three separate commissariat depots sending supplies to the Establishments on Flinders Island may have led to communication delays and confusion over who was supplying what in the same way that a lack of unified command led to the Walcheren debacle.³⁷⁵

As sailing around VDL went, the passage to the Furneaux Group from Launceston and George Town, on the outward journeys at least, were a downwind run. From Hobart until the final approach, it was across the prevailing wind on a windward shore. Despite the settlement being on the windward shore of the island, there was a sheltered offshore mooring in the lee of Green Island, 3 miles from the Establishment's first Flinders Island location, the Lagoons, and 15 from the second, Wybalenna.³⁷⁶ By contrast, the journey to Macquarie Harbour was one quarter sailing along the Channel between VDL and the leeward shore of Bruny Island, one quarter directly into the prevailing wind, two quarters working up wind along a leeward shore and then finally having to cross a tricky

³⁷⁴ Plomley, *Weep In Silence* 72, 79.

³⁷⁵ Statement of Provisions, & co, forwarded by the Commissariat from Hobart Town, Launceston and George Town to Flinders Island during the Years 1831, 1832, 1833, 1834, 1835, & 1836., 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

³⁷⁶ G. Woodward to George Arthur, 21 November 1832, in Parliamentary Paper, *Papers Relative to the Aboriginal Tribes in British Possessions*, 169.

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bar.

When on his recall, Arthur felt the need to demonstrate his good stewardship by having the Colonial Secretary prepare his swansong statement he demonstrated his concern and commitment by sending a flock of sheep to supplement the food supply. According to Robinson the flock arrived already infected with disease.³⁷⁷

6.2 Poor Location and Aspect of Accommodation

‘rejoined with a Climate (the Harbour being quite open to the violent Gales of wind from the Westward) which operates to exclude even the occasional aspect of comfort.’

- **Lieutenant Governor George Arthur describing Macquarie Harbour Penal Station to William Wilberforce, 1828.**

Over three sites, Gun Carriage Island, the Lagoons, and Wybalenna, the Establishment was ‘quite open to the violent Gales of wind from the Westward’ and had poor proximity to reasonable quality water supplies. This negated comfort and promoted bad health.³⁷⁸

For the Wybalenna Establishment, the near fifteen-mile row by tender over open water from the moored supply vessel would have been extremely inconvenient.³⁷⁹ Robinson, Allen and Major Ryan cited quality and location of housing and the prevailing windward aspect of front doors as a factor in mortality in their reports on Wybalenna. Allen even

³⁷⁷ George Augustus Robinson to colonial secretary for George Arthur, 8 September 1836, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

³⁷⁸ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 18, 37, 58, 92, 632, 635, 643, 644.; James Allen to George Augustus Robinson, 10 September 1827, ‘File 06: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, July-September 1837’, ML, A 7067, CY Reel 551, 201–21, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 922.

³⁷⁹ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 49.

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described the wind being so strong for nine months of the year that on some doors being opened fires were swept off their hearths.³⁸⁰ In 1835 Robinson described the ‘cruel injustice’ of treating the Aboriginal people like ‘bondmen’, slaves, and forcing them to live in a ‘bleak situation exposed to the prevailing winds.’ He continued, Free men ‘would have selected a warmer and sheltered situation’.³⁸¹

Arthur was fully aware of the effects of prevailing westerly gales, and the location and aspect of accommodation on the comfort of internees. Explaining his system of convict classification and punishment to Wilberforce in 1828, Arthur differentiated not just penal regimes but climates: internees at Maria Island Penal Settlement enjoyed ‘a good climate’ while the severest regime at Macquarie Harbour was ‘rejoined with a Climate (the Harbour being quite open to the violent Gales of wind from the Westward) which operates to exclude even the occasional aspect of comfort.’³⁸² Indeed, the punitive effect of prevailing gales was such common knowledge that it appears as a metaphor in a probably fictional account of a discussion at one of the governor’s dinner parties.³⁸³

In 1831, the Aborigines’ Committee provided many good reasons when all but one of

³⁸⁰ Gorge Augustus Robinson to colonial secretary, 4 July 1836, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.; Thomas Ryan, 11 May 1836, Report, ‘File 02: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, January-June 1836’, ML, A 7063, CY Reel 549, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 635.; James Allen to George Augustus Robinson, 10 September 1827, ‘File 06: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, July-September 1837’, ML, A 7067, CY Reel 551, 201–21, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 922.

³⁸¹ George Augustus Robinson, 21 December 1835, journal in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 327.

³⁸² George Arthur to William Wilberforce, 9 October 1828, ‘Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855’, ML, Vol.5, A 2165; MAV/FM4/ 3669–70.

³⁸³ Savery, *The Hermit in Van Diemen’s Land*, 17.

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them recommended relocation of the Establishment to the west of Flinders Island instead of the alternative, Maria Island. However, Arthur and any Committee member with a knowledge of the local climate were aware of which location had a climate less conducive to wellbeing for a group of people that they knew to be suffering from health issues and high mortality. With the move up the coast to Wybalenna for a third time, the accommodation for the Aboriginal people was located on the most exposed ground of the Establishment. Allen expressed his surprise to Robinson that those in charge had not learnt from their previous poor choices on Gun Carriage Island and at the Lagoons.³⁸⁴

6.3 Poor and Hobbled Appointments and Assignments

‘All the public offices, from the Council down to the lowest constable, were filled with men, on whom Colonel Arthur knew, from his selection, he could rely’.

- *Sydney Monitor*, 1836.

By the end of 1829, apart from a small number appointed by previous governors or sent directly from London, Arthur had hired just under 90% of the colonial government employees. Governor Ralph Darling in NSW, who was appointed a year and a half after Arthur, had hired 76%.³⁸⁵ Arthur’s appointments included remunerated assigned convicts like Robinson’s writer Sterling and later the Establishment’s first medical attendant, Archibald McLachlan. As the Colonel Commanding, Arthur could send any

³⁸⁴ James Allen to George Augustus Robinson, 10 September 1827, ‘File 06: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, July-September 1837’, ML, A 7067, CY Reel 551, 201–21, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 922.

³⁸⁵ Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1829, NLA, CO 284, File 52, AJCP Reel 1195, 78–110.; New South Wales Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1829, NLA, CO 206, File 70, AJCP Reel 1170, 70–143.

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member of the military, and as the Lieutenant Governor of a penal colony any prisoner, anywhere.

The resources at Arthur's disposal meant that within reason he could pay people as he saw fit to get them to do what he required. Robinson was an example of this. Arthur accommodated Robinson's request for double the advertised salary on hiring, and then backdated and increased it again by a further 250% in 1831 after Robinson's efforts started to achieve Arthur's desired effect.³⁸⁶

Despite Arthur's initially stated intentions of sending 'steady well conducted men' to the Establishment, except for Robinson, and Commandant William Darling (1810–47) all assignments and appointments appear to have been of men who at best were near useless and at worst were of the basest calibre.³⁸⁷ Major Ryan thought that even Darling due to his youth and inexperience had not led the men under him properly.³⁸⁸ Between the commandants, superintendents, catechists, medical attendants and storekeepers, there were usually ongoing quarrels and accusations of sexual misconduct, with which superiors on the mainland concurred.³⁸⁹ Indeed, Backhouse and Walker's second visit

³⁸⁶ Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 106.

³⁸⁷ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 67, 93, 207, 208, 209

³⁸⁸ Thomas Ryan, 11 May 1836, report, 'File 02: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, January-June 1836', ML, A 7063, CY Reel 549, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 635.

³⁸⁹ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 68, 69.; Colonial surgeon to colonial secretary, 27 July 1833 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 71.

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to the Establishment was primarily concerned with resolving such a dispute.³⁹⁰

Sergeant Alexander Wight, who was effectively the first superintendent but never Blue Book listed, was in no way humanitarian according to Robinson who was surprised that the Aborigines did not rebel. In 1832 Robinson reported sexual abuse under Wight, ‘Where Segt Wight appears most to blame is in his not keeping the Europeans in proper subjection’ or removing them. Echoing Arthur’s initially expressed intention, Robinson reminded the Colonial Secretary that if, as he had always thought, ‘married men, of good moral character’, were not employed, ‘unpleasant and fatal consequences’ might result.³⁹¹

Wight was not an officer. His replacement, William Darling was, but was barely of age and an ensign, the lowest rank of commissioned officer. In comparison Macquarie Harbour Penal Station had older higher-ranking commandants. Arthur appointed Brevet Major Pery Baylee to Macquarie in February 1831. Baylee was in his mid-40s.³⁹²

The next Establishment commandant, Henry Nickolls, was an older civilian with farming experience, but Arthur rejected his suggestions for a farm at the Establishment that would have supplemented the diet beyond the limited amount of potato and barley

³⁹⁰ James Backhouse to George Walker to Colonial Secretary, 20 November 1833, ‘Letterbook no. 1, December 1831 - January 1835’, Papers of James Backhouse, Society of Friends, AJCP M693-M707, File MS Vol. S48, 161.

³⁹¹ George Augustus Robinson to Colonial Secretary, 2 March 1832, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/317, 513–19, Reel Z1826 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 40, 41.

³⁹² Pretyman, ‘Pery Baylee’.

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that was planted.³⁹³ However, Major Ryan found that Nickolls had not stopped the prostitution of the Aboriginal women. On finding two convicts cohabiting with two Aboriginal women each, one in Robinson's house where he had been left in charge, Ryan was concerned enough to remove them for trial in Launceston. However, Arthur countermanded Ryan and sent the men back to the Establishment for trial under Robinson on his return.³⁹⁴ Even the Arthur-absolving Plomley, who reports the incident, is surprised at Arthur's 'ambivalent attitude'.³⁹⁵ Ryan wrote to Robinson surprised that Arthur condoned the behaviour.³⁹⁶ Arthur interviewed Nickolls, and then both Ryan and Nickolls, and decided that Major Ryan had been 'misled'.³⁹⁷

As with the quality of the superintendents and commandants that Arthur sent to the Establishment, Arthur never provided the same pay grade for medical care that he did at Macquarie Harbour Penal Station. This was despite his knowledge of the Aboriginal people's susceptibility to disease and, as the mortality data below shows, despite the Establishment having a death toll that usually exceeded that of Macquarie Harbour

³⁹³ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 966.; William James Darling to George Arthur, 24 September 1833, 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025, letter 16.

³⁹⁴ Thomas Ryan, 11 May 1836, report, 'File 02: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, January-June 1836', ML, A 7063, CY Reel 549, 213–61, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 635.

³⁹⁵ Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 636.

³⁹⁶ Thomas Ryan to George Robinson, 23 April 1836, 'File 02: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Flinders Island, January-June 1836' ML, A7063 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 634–35.

³⁹⁷ George Arthur, April 1836, '18359-18378 (except 18361, 18363-4, 18368, 18375)' CSO1/1/868, File 18365 in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 636.

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which had almost double the population. J. Dorman, who was professionally trained, and whom Arthur appointed to Macquarie Harbour as assistant surgeon in 1831, cost VDL £136 per annum.³⁹⁸ In comparison, McLachlan, the convict whose qualification was having worked as a dispenser and whom Arthur assigned to the Establishment as medical attendant in the same year, cost VDL just £25 per annum.³⁹⁹ Even the salary of McLachlan's young replacement, Allen, at £91 a year was still substantially less than Dr Dorman's at Macquarie Harbour.⁴⁰⁰

6.4 Walcheren Like Accommodation

'well guarded from cold and damp, with boarded Floors; Stoves and Flues suitability directed to convey an equal Temperature to the remotest Corners, to be placed in each Room. On no account should Ground Floors be used as sleeping Apartments.'⁴⁰¹

- **J. Borland, M.D. Inspector of Hospitals and W. Lempriere, M.D. on Walcheren fever, 'Prospective Arrangements for preventing future Sickness', Parliamentary Paper, 1811.**

Walker's son James Backhouse Walker wrote a book about his father. He quoted him describing the fatal effect of Flinders Island accommodation:

³⁹⁸ Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 130.

³⁹⁹ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 964.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1832, NLA, CO 284, File 55, AJCP Reel 1195, 82.

⁴⁰⁰ Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1833, NLA, CO 284, File 56, AJCP Reel 1195, 108.

⁴⁰¹ Parliamentary Paper, *Collection of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the Scheldt*, 713.

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They were twenty feet long by ten feet wide. In each of these from twenty to thirty blacks were lodged. The fires were made along the centre of the breakwind, and the people squatted or lay on the ground around them. Blankets were provided for them to sleep in. To savages accustomed to sleep naked in the open air beneath the rudest shelter, the change to close and heated dwellings tended to make them susceptible, as they had never been in their wild state, to chills from atmospheric changes, and was only too well calculated to induce those severe pulmonary diseases which were destined to prove so fatal to them.⁴⁰²

However, Backhouse and Walker did not include this in their written report to Arthur; perhaps they mentioned it to him in person after they returned to Hobart.⁴⁰³ They were of the opinion that ‘the arrangements for the Aborigines, well meant as they undoubtedly were, seem to have been singularly injudicious.’ Apart from the presence of blankets, that Robinson reported Aboriginal internees to be frequently destitute of, Walker’s description of the A-frame dwellings and life style listed all the contagion drivers that the Select Committee had identified as present in Walcheren expeditionary billets and had targeted for improvement to prevent ‘future Sickness.’⁴⁰⁴ Arthur experienced the conditions at Walcheren and being Aide-de-Camp to Don, the expedition’s architect and debacle’s saviour, it seems likely he would have had access to and read the 1811 Select

⁴⁰² Walker, ‘Notes on the aborigines of Tasmania, extracted from the manuscript journals of George Washington Walker, with an introduction by James B. Walker, F.R.G.S.’ 148.

⁴⁰³ James Backhouse and George Walker to George Arthur, 13 November 1832, ‘Portfolio: Volume 18, 13 November 1832’, Papers of James Backhouse, Society of Friends, AJCP M693-M707, File Volume 18, Item ff.14.

⁴⁰⁴ George Augustus Robinson, 21 December 1835, journal in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 326.; Parliamentary Paper, *Collection of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the Scheldt*, 713.

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Committee report. The section on the causes of Walcheren fever cited the cold, damp and crowded accommodation and problems with supplies of bedding, medicine and diet.⁴⁰⁵

Although none of them were at Walcheren, most of the commandants, superintendents and medical assistants at the Establishment, as well as most of the members of the overseeing Aborigines' Committee had experience of the military and penal systems. Therefore, they would have taken part in, seen or heard of everyday prophylactic protocols implemented on transports, in prisons and barracks. Prison reform had successfully reduced mortality by promoting such protocols. References to 'prison' and 'reform' in British publications had reached their zenith in 1820, within the adulthood of all but Darling and Allen.⁴⁰⁶ The medical reference work that Plomley cites as used at the Establishment referred to the need for changing bedding in the case of fevers.⁴⁰⁷

Yet there are no reports of the Establishment implementing such protocols even when ophthalmia, which Don had remedied with incineration of bedding as per regulations, infected many of the Aboriginal women.⁴⁰⁸ Allen, who saw himself as responsible for prevention as well as cure, observed that everyone seemed ignorant to the causes of

⁴⁰⁵ Parliamentary Paper, *Collection of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the Scheldt*, 708-12.; George Augustus Robinson, 21 December 1835, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 326.; George Augustus Robinson, 10 March 1836, Journal in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 632.; James Allen to Robert Clark, 29 August 1836, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 647.

⁴⁰⁶ Google Books Ngram Viewer, 'prison+reform' search, accessed 20 December 2021, https://books.google.com/ngrams/graph?content=prison%2Breform&year_start=1800&year_end=2019&corpus=29&smoothing=3

⁴⁰⁷ Cullen, *Cullen, First lines in the Practice of Physic*, Vol I, 167.

⁴⁰⁸ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 1-1018, 630.

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mortality.⁴⁰⁹

6.5 Contagion

‘even Mrs Fry, I think, would be highly pleased with the cleanliness, and order’

- Lieutenant Governor George Arthur describing female convict accommodation to William Wilberforce, 1828.

British penal and transportation system custodians operated within a general duty-of-care culture designed to minimise mortality. Through their experience of convict transports, VDL’s penal system and the military which had similar rules, Arthur and members of the Aborigines’ Committee would have had a knowledge of the effectiveness of standard duty of care protocols, emergency prophylactic measures and non-curative symptom alleviating treatments. Lieutenant Carew, the commanding officer of the guard on the *Cyprus*, referred to this culture in a passing comment to the Garrison Court of Enquiry into the seizure of the brig, ‘during which time the Sergeant examined the Prisoners to see that they were as clean as circumstances would permit’.⁴¹⁰

Indeed, the effects of the exemplary duty-of-care culture Arthur had promoted in other organs of his administration were listed, relative to NSW, among his achievements in the *Sydney Monitor* editorial on his recall, ‘The chain gangs, the female factory, the gaols, and the watch house,’ were ‘all specimens of order, decency, cleanliness, health

⁴⁰⁹ James Allen to George Augustus Robinson, 10 September 1837, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 922.; James Allen to Robert Clark, 29 August 1836, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 647.

⁴¹⁰ William Marcus Carew, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, ‘9354–9361 (except 9356)’, TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 251.

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and reform, couple with economy.’ Furthermore, when explaining his system of convict classification and punishment to Wilberforce in 1828, Arthur thought that ‘even Mrs. Fry,’ who had championed the 1823 Gaol Act reforming prisons while Arthur was in London collaborating with her brother-in-law Thomas Fowell Buxton and Wilberforce on abolition legislation, ‘would be highly pleased with the cleanliness, and order’.⁴¹¹

Reflecting the efficacy of this culture under Arthur, the VDL custodial crude mortality rate for prisons and gaols from 1830 to 1836 inclusive was 0.73%.⁴¹² At Port Arthur Penal Settlement for the same period it was 1.75%.⁴¹³ At Macquarie Harbour Penal

⁴¹¹ George Arthur to William Wilberforce, 9 October 1828, ‘Sir George Arthur papers, 1821–1855’, ML, Vol.5, A 2165; MAV/FM4/ 3669–70.

⁴¹² Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1830, NLA, CO 284, File 53, AJCP Reel 1194–1195, 113.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 116.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1832, NLA, CO 284, File 55, AJCP Reel 1195, 158.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1833, NLA, CO 284, File 56, AJCP Reel 1195, 145.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1834, NLA, CO 284, File 57, AJCP Reel 1195, 113.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1835, NLA, CO 284, File 58, AJCP Reel 1195, 112.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1836, NLA, CO 284, File 59, AJCP Reel 1195–1196, 146.; It is not known if the numbers were the mean average or snapshot total of a given day of census. Judging from listed accommodation, they do not represent the total number of people imprisoned in the year. Mean averages or snapshot totals were usually used in prison mortality rate calculations.

⁴¹³ Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, Statistical Returns of Van Diemen’s Land, from 1824 to 1839, table No.39.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 144.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1832, NLA, CO 284, File 55, AJCP Reel 1195, 135.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1833, NLA, CO 284, File 56, AJCP Reel 1195, 163.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1834, NLA, CO 284, File 57, AJCP Reel 1195, 225.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’,

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Station from 1822 to 1833 inclusive, crude mortality was 3.3%, but this was high due to incidents of misadventure and violence. Hamish Maxwell-Stuart's research shows that without these it was just 1.3%.⁴¹⁴

The prison hulks of England had an average annual mortality of 3.9% in the 15 years to 1841. The 36 largest County Gaols and Houses of Correction in England had an average annual crude mortality of 1.9% in the five years to 1841.⁴¹⁵ The worst-documented prison in Europe around the time appears to have been the Eysses in France with an average annual crude mortality of 8.9% in the sixteen years from 1822.⁴¹⁶

From the Blue Book population totals and the mortality lists and references Plomley compiles from Robinson and Allen the mortality rates for the Aboriginal Establishment were as follows:⁴¹⁷

Year	Population	Deaths	Crude Mortality
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1835, NLA, CO 284 File 58. AJCP Reel 1195, 227.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1836, NLA, CO 284, File 59, AJCP Reel 1195–1196, 225.; No Port Arthur Penal Station population figure was listed in Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1830, NLA, CO 284, File 53, AJCP Reel 1194–1195, therefore for 1830 the subsequent population growth was back projected giving a rough estimate of 100 ± 50 inmates or an error of less than $\pm 1.17\%$ on the resulting 1830–36, 7-year total of 4281 inmates against which death total was calculated to provided mortality rate in the same way that Baly did.

⁴¹⁴ Maxwell-Stewart, *Closing Hells Gates*, 266.

⁴¹⁵ Baly, William, 'On the Mortality in Prisons and the Diseases most frequently fatal to prisoners', *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions* XXVIII (1845), 113–272, 126

⁴¹⁶ Baly, William, 'On the Mortality in Prisons and the Diseases most frequently fatal to prisoners', *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions* XXVIII (1845), 113–272, 126

⁴¹⁷ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 938–42.

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1831	60	11	18.3% ⁴¹⁸
1832	106	3	2.8%
1833	122	20 ⁴¹⁹	16.4%
1834	109	14	12.8%
1835	111	14	12.6%
1836	106	4	3.8%
Totals	614	66	Average Crude mortality Rate 10.7%

(The Aboriginal deaths listed here do not include those en route and in custodial settings on the mainland, like the King's Orphan School.)

Due to repeated relocations the figures for 1830 are unclear. However, if the figures for 1829 are included the average increases to 15.2%.

In July 1836 Robinson put deaths at 120 out of 250 people since the move to Flinders Island in November 1831. That comes to an annual mortality of 18% if, as the above population totals suggest, the 250 people arrived at the Establishment gradually.⁴²⁰

Arthur's administration did not record or report deaths at the Aboriginal Establishments. Perhaps as a counterpoint, or due to concern about potentially politically inconvenient high mortality, Macquarie Harbour mortality was not recorded or reported either. Surgeons did not record individual causes of death from 1829 to 1834. However, from 1835 to 1840 more than 90% of the deaths recorded at the Flinders Island Aboriginal

⁴¹⁸ George Augustus Robinson to Rev. Bedford, 16 April 1831, in Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 17.; Plomley, *Weep In Silence*, 938.

⁴¹⁹ Not including the 11 people who died before arriving at the Establishment.

⁴²⁰ George Augustus Robinson to Colonial Secretary, July 1836, '17816', TA, CSO1/1/842, in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 644.

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Establishment were due to disease. From 1834 to 1835 pneumonia was the main cause.⁴²¹ Previous to 1834 surgeons and commandants mentioned fevers, pneumonia, and catarrhal fever, another name for influenza.⁴²² Mortality clustering, probably implying contagion, or possibly a common external trigger, can be clearly seen throughout the record, e.g. 11 people died over 17 days from 27 July 1833.⁴²³ On Bruny Island Robinson and assigned convicts had referred to catarrh, fever and syphilis.

Writing in 1875, James Erskine Calder, a London appointed assistant surveyor, estimated that of an initial VDL Aboriginal population of 7,000 in 1803, 6,000 had died due to ‘the prevalence of epidemics’ that although ‘not introduced by the Europeans, were possibly increased by them.’ Then in the next sentence he suggests the diminution was due to the ‘comforts of covering’ such as the blankets and clothing that ‘were often given them by the settlers, or were distributed amongst them by the Government in large quantities’. For his book Calder had conducted friendly interviews with McKay, the convict whom Robinson chose to join his Port Davey ‘Friendly Mission’ due to his bush experience and skills.⁴²⁴

Plomley argues that medical treatment of patients everywhere at the time was not curative and the course of contagion could not be influenced by medical practices of the

⁴²¹ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 940–42.

⁴²² Archibald McLachlan in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 938.; James Allen to George Augustus Robinson, 10 September 1837, in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 921.; James Allen in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 940–41.; Henry Nickolls in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 941.

⁴²³ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 937–41.

⁴²⁴ Calder, *Some account of the wars, extirpation, habits, etc., of the native tribes of Tasmania*, 25.

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period.⁴²⁵ In doing so he infers that they would have died anyway regardless of the lack of custodial care: an attempt at absolving Arthur's administration that Arthur's line superior Secretary of State for War and the Colonies Sir George Murray would not have accepted, had Arthur reported the situation.

Arthur's former mentor General George Don discovered that Murray did not shy away from giving direct orders to colonial governors regarding emergency prophylactic measures when provided with epidemic mortality data. After Jersey, Don had been posted to Gibraltar which was facing recurring yellow fever epidemics. Even Don himself had fallen ill in an 1828 outbreak. Dissatisfied with Don's handling of immigration and the epidemics, Murray created a new post of civil police magistrate which he sent a Major James Rowan to fill in 1829. This new post relieved some of Don's appointees of their responsibilities. In 1830 Murray extended Rowan's remit to public health including duties enforcing cleanliness and isolating cases of contagion and required Don to report to Rowan on the 'origins of the late fever'.⁴²⁶

Plomley's attempted absolution of Arthur is further contradicted by the efficacy of standard duty of care protocols, emergency prophylactic measures and non-curative symptom alleviating treatments that were introduced with penal reform around the turn of the 19th century that had reduced mortality rates.⁴²⁷ Indeed, so confident was Arthur

⁴²⁵ Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 53.

⁴²⁶ Constantine, 'The Pirate, the Governor and the Secretary of State: Aliens, Police and Surveillance in Early Nineteenth-Century Gibraltar', 1182–3.

⁴²⁷ Sturgess and Rahman, 'Convict Transportation to New South Wales 1787–1849: Mortality Rates Reconsidered.' *Australian Economic History Review*, Vol. 58, No. 1, 62–86, 81–82.; Ward, 'Death in Prison', Digital Panopticon, accessed 11 July 2021, www.digitalpanopticon.org/Death_in_Prison.

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of, as the *Sydney Monitor* editorial put it, the specimen ‘of order, decency, cleanliness, health and reform, coupled with economy’ that bore his name, he had Port Arthur Penal Settlement’s case numbers and mortality reported for each disease in some of the finest detail that exists from the period.⁴²⁸ The only other penal institution that appears to have been as nearly well documented was London’s Millbank Penitentiary, which was the National Penitentiary used both for prisoners prior to penal transportation and as an alternative for those regarded most likely to be reformed. When compared, their data sets from 1830 to 1836 inclusive confirm the *Sydney Monitor* editorial’s description.

	Port Arthur	Millbank
Sum of Annual Populations	4281	3845
Deaths	75	82
Crude Mortality	1.75%	2.13%
Fever Deaths	7	17
Fevers Mortality	0.16%	0.44%
Influenza Deaths	0	1
Influenza Mortality	0.00%	0.03%
Pneumonia Deaths	3	1
Pneumonia Mortality	0.07%	0.03%

Figures for the years 1830 to 1836 inclusive.

(Although Port Arthur had higher Pneumonia mortality, only 3 out of 68 cases died.⁴²⁹)

⁴²⁸ *Sydney Monitor*, ‘Colonel Arthur’, 28 November 1836.

⁴²⁹ Baly, William, ‘On the Mortality in Prisons and the Diseases most frequently fatal to prisoners’, *Medico-Chirurgical Transactions* XXVIII (1845), 113–272, 252–253.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, *Statistical Returns of Van Diemen’s Land, from 1824 to 1839*, table No.39.; Van

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If Arthur had reported the high annual mortality rates and continual failures to London, they would not have been ‘the most consonant to Humanity and justice, and therefore most in Unison with the known Sentiments of the Government, and the British people’ as the Aborigines’ Committee described one of their decisions to relocate the Establishment.⁴³⁰ Instead, the rates would probably have led to difficult probing questions, direct instructions, and possibly, like Gibraltar, direct appointments from London to mitigate the mortality. Arthur, who had already been censured by the War and Colonial Office under the previous secretary of state, Earl Bathurst, to the point that his suitability as Governor of VDL was called into question, was aware of Murray’s tenor.⁴³¹ Arthur would have known of the War and Colonial Office’s sometimes-public

Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 144.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1832, NLA, CO 284, File 55, AJCP Reel 1195, 135.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1833, NLA, CO 284, File 56, AJCP Reel 1195, 163.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1834, NLA, CO 284, File 57, AJCP Reel 1195, 225.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1835, NLA, CO 284, File 58, AJCP Reel 1195, 227.; Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1836, NLA, CO 284, File 59, AJCP Reel 1195–1196, 225.; No Port Arthur Penal Settlement population figure was listed in Van Diemen’s Land Colonial Government, ‘Blue Book of Statistics, etc.’, 1830, NLA, CO 284, File 53, AJCP Reel 1194–1195, therefore for 1830 the subsequent population growth was back projected giving a rough estimate of 100 ± 50 inmates or an error of less than $\pm 1.17\%$ on the resulting 1830–36, 7-year total of 4281 inmates against which death totals were calculated to provided mortality rates in the same way that Baly did.

⁴³⁰ Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines, 18 October 1831, minutes, ‘Committee for the Care and Treatment of Captured Aborigines (TA261) 17 February 1830 – 16 September 1833’, TA, CBE1/1/1, Reel Z2744, 136.

⁴³¹ Robert William Hay, 7 July 1827, minutes, ‘Private letters to Mr Hay: Mauritius, New South Wales, Tasmania, 1825–1826’, CO 323, File 146, AJCP Reel 983, 379, in Shaw, AGL, *Sir George Arthur*, 112.

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rebukes of governors who failed to meet Government expectations, like Murray's of Don that appeared in the *Australian* in December 1829.⁴³²

Any legal ambiguity that Arthur might have argued to deny his administration's custodial duty of care was lost when his whitewashing swansong statement clarified the Aboriginal people who received rations on Bruny Island were under his administration's protection. Furthermore, the Aboriginal Establishment had been removed from the 1831 Blue Book listing for schools and, as with the colony's penal settlements and stations, was listed with an appointed commandant in 1832.⁴³³

While comparing mortality rates calculated from the Aboriginal Establishment population's snapshot totals to those calculated from normal prisons, penal station and settlement populations' annual mean averages and snapshot totals, it is important to note that the Aboriginal Establishment was different. Arthur's government owed the Aboriginal peoples a greater duty of care for two reasons. Firstly, many of the internees were innocent non-combatants. Secondly, although there were late additions, Arthur and the Aborigines' Committee intended the Aboriginal Establishment to accommodate almost the entire Aboriginal population. Although the internees of normal penal institutions came from and returned to wider national populations, this was not the case with the Aboriginal Establishment internees. They were the national population. At a 10.7% annual mortality rate over 10 years, 106 people would diminish to 34.

⁴³² *Australian*, 9 December 1829, 2.

⁴³³ Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1831, NLA, CO 284, File 54, AJCP Reel 1195, 106.; Van Diemen's Land Colonial Government, 'Blue Book of Statistics, etc.', 1832, NLA, CO 284, File 55, AJCP Reel 1195, 82.

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With these facts in mind, the known ‘great mortality’ on Bruny Island should have engendered a greater sense of urgency in Arthur’s administration’s custodial duty of care. However, the situation clearly did not engender any major concern until the final months of Arthur’s governorship when the prospect of ‘the extinction of the Native race’ leaving ‘an indelible stain’ on Arthur’s governorship appears to have preyed on his mind.

In a panicked attempt at demonstrating his concern for the wellbeing of the Aboriginal peoples he sent Robinson to the settlement to try and save those who remained.⁴³⁴ Arthur also ordered the colonial secretary to prepare his swansong whitewash statement describing ‘the measures adopted by this Government, for the Comfort and civilization of the Aboriginal Inhabitants’.⁴³⁵

6.6 Arthur’s Swansong Whitewash

‘Much as the numbers of the Aborigines were diminished, by their own mutual wars – by the custom, of destroying their children, when pressed by enemies, and by the too often more wanton attacks of distant Stock-keepers, it is gratifying to one that, in its collective capacity, this Community is guiltless of their blood’.

- George Arthur to Sir John Franklin on his handover, October 1836.

Facing his recall in 1836 Arthur commissioned a report that was a swansong whitewash of the conditions and the resulting mortality.⁴³⁶ In the almost 4,000-word report, the

⁴³⁴ George Augustus Robinson quoting George Arthur, 12 May 1836, journal, in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 353.

⁴³⁵ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

⁴³⁶ John Montagu, 15 October 1836, statement, ‘Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837’, ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

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Aboriginal peoples 'good health' was mentioned six times and improvements relating to health twice. 'Unwholesome' water was referred to once. 'Comfort' was mentioned 16 times. There are five references to 'happiness' and seven to 'protection'.

Omitting the extreme mortality at and around the Bruny Island Establishment, the statement obliquely mentions poor housing as a cause of mortality but in concrete terms only 'several deaths' when Darling took charge in March 1832, 'some few deaths' during his tenure and one death when Robinson took charge in November 1835. The statement dodged government responsibility for the second 'great mortality' among new arrivals Robinson had brought in:

a great mortality to the amount of twenty four amongst those that had recently arrived in consequence of the diseased state they were in before they joined the Establishment, which was clearly proved by the death of thirteen immediately after they had joined Mr. Robinson and before they were placed under the protection of the Government - Those however who had been for some time domesticated at Flinders Island with a few exceptions remained in good health.⁴³⁷

However, earlier the same statement describes Robinson as an officer and the tribes putting themselves under his protection. To Arthur's convenience when people died, Robinson's 'protection' was different from 'Government protection'. This was not only a technicality played on to protect Arthur's reputation, but the statement juxtaposed the deaths to demonstrate the health of the Establishment internees.

⁴³⁷ 'Volume 28: Sir George Arthur papers regarding Aborigines, 1825–1837', ML, A 2188, CY Reel 1025.

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The effect on the Aboriginal peoples of his policies and administration appears to have been preying on Arthur's mind as it was section three of 25 describing the state of the colony in his official handover letter welcoming Sir John Franklin the new Lieutenant Governor. Regarding the diminution of the population, Arthur wrote,

Much as the numbers of the Aborigines were diminished, by their own mutual wars – by the custom, of destroying their children, when pressed by enemies, and by the too often more wanton attacks of distant Stock-keepers, it is gratifying to one that, in its collective capacity, this Community is guiltless of their blood,⁴³⁸

Back in December 1829, Robinson had written of his amelioration efforts, 'Let us employ the means and leave the result to the will and ordinance of a divine Redeemer.'⁴³⁹ Was this a covert policy of Arthur's that Robinson, still at his obsequious stage of their relationship, had paraphrased? It could have easily been Arthur's private diminution motto: the 'means' were Arthur's hidden policies and culture; its bloodless 'result' was deniable as an act of God.

7 Mangana's Wife

'Mangana stated that his wife had been taken away by soldiers in a ship and gone to England. The vessel alluded to was the *Cyprus*.'

- **Charles Sterling, 1829.**

Over three incidents there are eight VDL source references to Mangana's second wife:

⁴³⁸ George Arthur to Sir John Franklin, 29 October 1836, 'Despatches 1836 October', CO280, File 68, AJCP Reel 270, 173.

⁴³⁹ George Augustus Robinson, 6 December 1829, journal, in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 104.

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(1) On 15 July 1829 Charles Sterling, the convict writer assigned to ‘the Establishment at Bruné Island for Improving the Condition of the Aborigines’, recorded George Augustus Robinson, ‘the storekeeper, and supervisor in charge’ of that Establishment, talking with Woorrady’s wife and the widow Pagerly as they prepared to depart on a hunting trip ‘I asked ... whether Mangana and his wife, who had been ill for some time past, would accompany them. They replied in the affirmative and mimicked the plan they meant to adopt, viz. hobbling with a stick’.⁴⁴⁰

(2) In a transcription in Sterling’s hand, Robinson recorded seeing the ‘Native Woorrade and her children’ at the western corner of Adventure Bay on 12 August, ‘She informed me that the Port Davey Tribe ... were still on Brune Island, as were also Mangana and his wife and son’.⁴⁴¹ This appears in another journal in Sterling’s hand on the same date with a variant spelling of ‘Mangerner’.⁴⁴²

(3) On 21 September Robinson wrote in his field journal.

He [Mangana] stated that his wife had been taken away by Soldiers whilst he was sojourning at Recherche Bay and conducted on board a vessel which was bound for England meaning the *Cyprus* that was captured by the Prisoners whilst

⁴⁴⁰ Charles Sterling, 15 July 1829, Journal, ‘File 7: George Augustus Robinson, Van Diemen's Land, miscellaneous papers, 1829–1833’, ML, A 7059, CY Reel 784, 2–3.

⁴⁴¹ George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829, ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830’, ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 54.

⁴⁴² George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829, contemporaneous transcription in Charles Sterling’s hand, ‘File 1: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 29(–30) March – 19 September 1829’, ML, A 7023, CY Reel 858, 53.

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on the passage out this port.⁴⁴³

On the same date Sterling recorded,

Mangana stated that his wife had been taken away by soldiers in a ship and gone to England. The vessel alluded to was the *Cyprus*. Mangana was visiting Recherche Bay at the time. This was confirmed [by] Woorrady in a statement regarding the death of the PD [Port Davey] Aborigines.⁴⁴⁴

The entry in Robinson's journal for the same date mentions Mangana's son's death due to illness.

Mangana and his family would have recognised the *Cyprus* because it was a government vessel that had loaded and unloaded on Bruny and apparently had not posed a threat before.⁴⁴⁵ They would have paddled into Recherche Bay without caution and possibly with Mangana's wife swimming to push the craft as Robinson reported South East Nation women doing.⁴⁴⁶ On landing Mangana would have probably lit two fires to warm his wife back and front. Then, he and his son may have gone to hunt for supper, leaving his wife by herself.

⁴⁴³ George Augustus Robinson, 21 September 1829 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Van Diemen's Land, 1829–1830', ML, A 7054, CY Reel 1469, 30.

⁴⁴⁴ Charles Sterling, 21 September 1829, Journal, 'File 7: George Augustus Robinson, Van Diemen's Land, miscellaneous papers, 1829–1833', ML, A 7059, CY Reel 784, 29.

⁴⁴⁵ George Augustus Robinson, 8 July 1829, Journal, 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830', ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 25.

⁴⁴⁶ George Augustus Robinson, 10 June 1830, Journal in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 203.

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On 23 September Robinson drafted a report in his Field Journal.⁴⁴⁷ On the same date he prepared the report to Arthur with extra punctuation and changed ‘capture’ to ‘seize’.

Referring to Mangana, Robinson wrote,

He stated, that, his wife had been taken away by Soldiers, and had gone to England in a Ship, (meaning the “*Cyprus*” which was outrageously seized by the Prisoners at Recherche Bay whilst on the passage to Macquarie Harbour) and that his son, a youth about sixteen years old, had died, (an account of which is annexed in this report)

Robinson had written the ‘annexed account’ about the son previously on 21 September with no reference to the *Cyprus* as if he had not initially planned to report Mangana’s wife’s abduction. He supplemented the report to Arthur with a margin note ‘Other information has reached this Estab. implying that this unfortunate female was “logernulee” (dead in the sea) i.e. thrown overboard’.⁴⁴⁸ This margin note lacked conviction and a cited source. Neither Robinson nor Sterling amended any of the other known accounts. The source of the ‘other information’ may have mistaken the body of Mangana’s son, or of a Port Davey Ninene clanswoman who died at Recherche around this time for that of his wife.⁴⁴⁹ Alternatively, on hearing later that Arthur did not want the incident reported, Robinson may have attempted to tie off the narrative in this way.

⁴⁴⁷ George Augustus Robinson, 23 September 1829, Journal, ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, correspondence and other papers, Van Diemen’s Land, 1829–1830’, ML, A 7054, CY Reel 1469, 26.

⁴⁴⁸ George Augustus Robinson to George Arthur, 23 September 1829, Report, ‘7578 (Vol.2)’, TA, CSO1/1/318, Reel Z1826, 86.

⁴⁴⁹ Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 143.

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On Bruny Island in 1829 Aboriginal people thought that England was the afterlife where the dead resided.⁴⁵⁰ Although going to England may have been a euphemism for dying, it is not used in the case of Mangana's son so here this interpretation seems unlikely. England may have also been a generic term for overseas.⁴⁵¹

In the same entry Robinson refers to 'one female taken away' when listing fatalities which appears to refer to Mangana's wife, but he did not amend this. The total number of fatalities that Sterling provides to the earliest incarnation of the Aborigines' Committee on 27 November also appears to include her.⁴⁵²

Regardless of where she died, Robinson's and Sterling's assertion put her there and the question as to why none of the *Cyprus's* 63 passengers and crew reported her or her family's presence remains unanswered. Even Robinson appears to hesitate to report the incident to Arthur. He does not mention the wife's abduction in his 21 September report, but he is obviously aware of it as he eulogises Mangana's son. Then when he refers to her abduction on 23 September, he downplays his previous reference to the son as 'annexed' when it is the body of the earlier report. Aware that Arthur would not have been happy that soldiers directly under his command had frustrated his official policy, as Robinson understood it, to befriend the Aborigines in the area, Robinson may have hesitated.⁴⁵³ He would probably not have fully understood the political implications for

⁴⁵⁰ George Augustus Robinson, 27 May 1829, Journal, 'File 3: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 25 March – 3 June 1829', ML, A 7025, CY Reel 784.

⁴⁵¹ Plomley, *Word-list of the Tasmanian Aboriginal Languages*, 249.

⁴⁵² Committee of Inquiry On the State of the Aborigines of the Island, 27 November 1829, Minutes, '7578 (Vol.12)', TA, CSO1/1/327, Reel Z1829, 100.

⁴⁵³ *Hobart Town Gazette* in *Hobart Town Courier*, 7 March 1829, 2.

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Arthur back home. Even if he had, being focused on his mission, he may not have considered them.

Arthur was responsible for both civil and military matters. He was the only person capable of orchestrating a concealment of her narrative. However, he may have had it painted out of the background of the seizure without much effort. If found out, short of Colonial Secretary's Office's vanishing memoranda to Mulgrave being discovered, Arthur could have argued it was not related to the more significant loss of prisoners and a government vessel and therefore out of the ambit of court martial investigation. The passengers and crew would have proved to be tacit willing accomplices in concealment: many may simply not have cared; those that did may have struggled to reconcile their Christian values with the fact that they had not saved the woman from the pirates; and the pirates would not have mentioned the abduction for fear of self-incrimination.

8 A Different Location, Time, or Vessel?

‘This was confirmed [by] Woorrady in a statement regarding the death of the PD [Port Davey] Aborigines.’

- **Charles Sterling, 1829.**

Another location seems unlikely as, according to Henry Hurburgh, the second mate of the *Cyprus*, the Aborigines made the most direct crossing from South Bruny to Recherche Bay.⁴⁵⁴ On 12 August Mangana and his family were reported as still being on South Bruny but this news may have been a day old as its bearer was incapacitated and a half-day’s walk from South Bruny.⁴⁵⁵ Robinson described Mangana as possessing ‘a first rate characteristic skill in nautical affairs and’ as being ‘esteemed a superior Navigator.’ He closes the paragraph by explaining ‘the pilot’ dispatched for the *Cyprus*’s abandoned passengers and crew had picked up Mangana off Recherche ‘whilst the party who had left the vessel were awaiting succour’ still at Recherche. Mangana was ‘almost in a dying state’ due to having been blown far out to sea.⁴⁵⁶

Woorrade’s statement accommodates Mangana and his family crossing to Recherche on

⁴⁵⁴ George Augustus Robinson, 25 March 1833, ‘File 9: George Augustus Robinson, journals, Van Diemen’s Land, 19 June 1833 – 2 August 1834’, ML, Item 5, A 7031, CY Reel 1441.

⁴⁵⁵ George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829, ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830’, ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 54.; Sterling, George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829, contemporaneous transcription in Charles Sterling’s hand, ‘File 1: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 29(–30) March – 19 September 1829’, ML, A 7023, CY Reel 858, 53.

⁴⁵⁶ George Augustus Robinson, 21 September 1829 ‘File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830’, ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 69–70.; ‘General Court Martial’, *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review*, Additional Sheet (Hobart), 30 October 1829.

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12, 13 or 14 August while the *Cyprus* was at Recherche. The weather would have been the deciding factor. Robinson referred to foaming seas on 12 August. On 14 August as the wind lulled, Master Harrison decided to depart the shelter of Recherche Bay on 15 August. He despatched an away party of sailors to collect wood and water in the afternoon prior to Carew's 'fishing excursion'.⁴⁵⁷ If the lull in the wind had occurred on 13 August, the captain would have probably planned to depart on 14 August. On the morning of 15 August Swallow had the sails reefed so the wind was picking up again by then. The timing of the decision, planned departure date, and known details of the meteorological context suggest that 14 August would have been favourable for Mangana and his family to paddle to Recherche Bay from Bruny Island. If Mangana's family arrived on 14 August and Robinson's report of Carew's away party hunting fowl was correct, the only party including soldiers that could have detained Mangana's wife was Carew's.

It is plausible that Carew's away party hunted fowl. The *Cyprus* crew and passengers knew that the passage to Macquarie Harbour usually took weeks.⁴⁵⁸ While there would be opportunities to fish from the brig, hunting fowl at sea would be near impossible. Supplementing their supplies with fresh fowl would have added variety to their diet.

Because Magana's family departed South Bruny after the *Cyprus* had moored and the

⁴⁵⁷ George Augustus Robinson, 12 August 1829 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830', ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 56.

⁴⁵⁸ Master Robert Harrison in 'General Court Martial', *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review*, Additional Sheet (Hobart), 30 October 1829, Third Day.

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Hobart pilot rescued Mangana while the *Cyprus* passengers and crew were still being succoured at Recherche, the *Cyprus's* disembarked passengers and crew would have witnessed the ship that took his wife. Any ship other than the *Cyprus* would have been a rescue vessel and therefore, like the Hobart pilot with Mangana and due to the witnesses, they would have had to take her to the authorities in Hobart or the Establishment.

While Robinson and Sterling's reports of Mangana's wife's illegal detention and subsequent abduction with the seizure of the *Cyprus* seem likely, and Arthur's total concealment of any such incident seems probable; Robinson and Mangana, and Sterling and Woorryady were communicating in a limited pidgin language that had much scope for misunderstanding. Furthermore, 1829 in VDL was an unpredictable time of conflict with unreported violent encounters and retaliations happening weekly, and at times daily.⁴⁵⁹

⁴⁵⁹ Johnson and McFarlane, *Van Diemen's Land*, 133–200.; Brodie, *The Vandemonian War*, 22–119.; Plomley, *Aboriginal/Settler Clash in Van Diemen's Land 1803–31*, 60–83.

9 Did Carew's Away Party Detain Mangana's Wife?

'the Colonel Commanding is desirous of impressing upon the minds of officers on duty in the interior the importance and necessity of exerting every energy to repel from or capture the aboriginal Natives'

- **Garrison Order issued days before Lieutenant Carew arrived, 1828.**

The entry in Robinson's journal for 21 September 1829 gives an account of the seizure of the *Cyprus* which, contrary to the testimonies given to the Garrison Court of Enquiry and at Carew's court martial, stated that Lieutenant William Marcus Carew, the commanding officer of the guard, had been 'induced to go ashore for the purpose of shooting some wild fowl leaving three soldiers on the brig.'⁴⁶⁰ There were three soldiers on deck when the brig was seized; the others were trapped below. After Swallow's capture in London, the *Times* reported that in court he also stated that Carew's away party had gone ashore.⁴⁶¹ At Carew's court martial, Dr Williams's turn of phrase suggests that he and the others were ashore or were closer to it than the brig when he stated that the shot that they heard seemed to come from the 'opposite shore'.⁴⁶² This is contrary to other testimonies that described the jolly boat as being close to the brig which was moored in the middle of the bay.

Carew, Dr Williams and Pobjoy stated that the 'fishing excursion' was for Pobjoy to safely provide Carew with intelligence about the other prisoners. This may have

⁴⁶⁰ George Augustus Robinson, 21 September 1829 'File 2: George Augustus Robinson, journal, Bruny Island Mission, 30 March 1829 – 31 January 1830, with other documents, 1826–1830', ML, A 7024, CY Reel 858, 68.

⁴⁶¹ *Times* (London), 18 October 1830, 3.

⁴⁶² 'General Court Martial', *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review*, Additional Sheet (Hobart), 30 October 1829, Fifth Day.

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happened. However, the claim that Carew regarded the information to be so critical to security that it warranted him leaving the brig without alerting, checking or increasing the guard detail before his departure seems odd: he effectively removed four able-bodied men – himself, the mate, a soldier and the doctor – all of whom he could rely on if there was any trouble. It also seems excessive for the court to go to the trouble of confirming that there was fishing tackle on board the boat given that the judge, three witnesses and even the charge itself had already referred to the ‘fishing excursion’.⁴⁶³

Five men – Carew; Dr Williams; the mate, John Burns; the prisoner, Pobjoy; and a soldier –going fishing in a small jolly boat on the pretext of an interview after having been cooped up on the crowded brig for almost 10 days also seems out of step with what others did in the same situation. Dr Williams and Burns would have been on the jolly boat by choice, not by Carew’s order. As Robinson’s daily perambulations on a windbound passage at Recherche in Autumn 1833 attest, most people who had the opportunity went ashore to stretch their legs and supplement supplies.⁴⁶⁴

The *Cyprus*’s captain, Harrison, testified that at 2pm on 14 August 1829 some of the sailors were sent ashore for wood and water. Weather permitting there would have been similar away parties on previous days. However, had Mangana’s family been there earlier, it seems unlikely that sailors would have initiated a capture due to the risks and trouble involved. Harrison stated that the 2pm away party returned before 5pm when

⁴⁶³ ‘General Court Martial’, *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review*, Additional Sheet (Hobart), 30 October 1829, Third Day.

⁴⁶⁴ George Augustus Robinson, 23–29 March, 8–19 April 1833, ‘File 9: George Augustus Robinson, journals, Van Diemen’s Land, 19 June 1833 – 2 August 1834’, ML, Item 5, A 7031, CY Reel 1441.

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the fishing excursion departed. This was the only time Carew left the brig.⁴⁶⁵

According to the *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review*, the mouth piece of the colonial government for the court martial, a Garrison Order on 6 October 1829 filed two charges against Carew regarding the seizure of the *Cyprus*: negligence, and disobedience.⁴⁶⁶

However, at the opening of the court martial, only the charge of negligence remained. To what the dropped charge of disobedience referred is unknown, but it could have been a breach of the 1 November 1828 Proclamation of Martial Law.⁴⁶⁷ If Carew's or another away party detained Mangana's wife, they would have been in breach of the exemption of unsettled areas: 'excepting always the places and portions of this Island, next mentioned, (that is to say) -- 1st. -- All the country extending southward of Mount Wellington to the Ocean, including Brune Island'.⁴⁶⁸

However, under the normal military practice of the pre-eminence of the most recent order, Arthur may have effectively countermanded his 1 November 1828 Proclamation with a 12 December Garrison Order which was devoid of the caveats. The later Order read, 'the Colonel Commanding is desirous of impressing upon the minds of officers on duty in the interior the importance and necessity of exerting every energy to repel from

⁴⁶⁵ Robert Harrison, 2 September 1829, testimony at Garrison Court of Enquiry, '9354-9361 (except 9356)', TA, CSO1/1/416, Reel Z1849, 264, 266.

⁴⁶⁶ *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review* (Hobart), 16 October 1829, 318.

⁴⁶⁷ 'General Court Martial', *Tasmanian and Austral-Asiatic Review*, Additional Sheet (Hobart), 30 October 1829.

⁴⁶⁸ Van Diemen's Land, Copies of all Correspondence between Lieutenant-Governor Arthur and His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the Subject of the Military Operations lately carried on against the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land' House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, Session 1831, v. 19, Bodleian Library, HC Paper 259, 201.

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or capture the aboriginal Natives'.⁴⁶⁹ This conveyed Arthur's enthusiasm for capture, without the explicit demarcations of the Proclamation. It did not refer to sparing women and children. It used the nebulous term 'interior' meaning a place beyond the frontier which from Carew's perspective would include Recherche Bay despite its exemption under the Proclamation.⁴⁷⁰ Carew arrived on 16 December when the Garrison Order, being the latest standing order to the military, may have been posted more prominently than the Proclamation that was to the military, magistracy, police, militia, civilians and convicts.

For Carew, any misunderstanding of Arthur's intended pre-eminence of the Proclamation's caveats may have been reinforced as he waited in Hobart with the *Cyprus* loaded and ready for its first abortive 21 July passage to Macquarie: on 18 July, the *Hobart Town Courier* published an article referring to the capture of Aboriginal people and their reformation at the Establishment on Bruny Island.⁴⁷¹

Previously, the brig had visited Bruny Island and had never been a threat to Aboriginal people before. Therefore, Mangana and his family would not have shied from the view of those on board.

⁴⁶⁹ Garrison Order, 12 December 1828, Van Diemen's Land, Copies of all Correspondence between Lieutenant-Governor Arthur and His Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the Subject of the Military Operations lately carried on against the Aboriginal Inhabitants of Van Diemen's Land' House of Commons Parliamentary Paper, Session 1831, v. 19, Bodleian Library, HC Paper 259, 200.

⁴⁷⁰ *Hobart Town Almanack for the Year 1829*, 129.; George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 30 March 1829, 'Letterbooks of Lieutenant-Governor's Memoranda (GO54) 26 Jun 1826 – 24 Jan 1837', TA, GO54/1/4, 162.; Williams, *Contrary Winds*, 54.

⁴⁷¹ *Hobart Town Courier*, 18 July 1829, 2.

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After the seizure, Arthur appears to have been concerned that his near year-old Proclamation of Martial Law was no longer pre-eminent over more recent orders. On 11, 15 and 16 September 1829, he sent a circular, a garrison order and a copy reminding his military and the district police magistrates, who were overseeing the ‘Roving Parties’, of the ‘injunctions contained in the Proclamation’.⁴⁷² However, perhaps reflecting his level of accountability, Arthur gave his magistrates, and the ‘Roving Parties’ and police under them, more leeway than his military officers and soldiers. The latter were reminded of the ‘strict injunctions’; the former ambiguously of ‘the necessity of acting up to the spirit of the injunctions’. Did the Oatlands and Emu Bay deaths result in these orders or was the detention and abduction of Mangana’s wife also a factor? Promptly reminding his subordinates of the ‘injunctions’ would have helped cover Arthur had any of those incidents become known to London. Did Arthur initially plan a full disclosure strategy in which he charged Carew with disobeying orders for breaching an injunction; but having put the charge on legally shaky ground when he acknowledge his ambiguity by issuing the reminders, and on seeing that he was successfully concealing Mangana’s wife’s presence, did Arthur drop the charge of disobedience?

Carew had recently suffered a dent to his reputation in the military. The details of the incident are unclear, but he may have been posted with his young family to Macquarie Harbour Penal Station, the least comfortable and most inaccessible location in Van Diemen’s Land, to punish him, or to remove him from a situation that was awkward for

⁴⁷² George Arthur to District Magistrates, 11 September 1829 ‘7578 (Vol.3)’, TA, CSO 1/1/318, Reel Z1826, 65.; Francis Aubin, 15 September 1829 ‘7578 (Vol.3)’, TA, CSO 1/1/318, Reel Z1826, 68–69.; George Arthur to Colonial Secretary, 16 September 1829 ‘7578 (Vol.3)’, TA, CSO 1/1/318, Reel Z1826, 77.

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his superiors, or both. On 3 July 1829 the *Colonial Times* reported the sudden death of a Dr Coleman, Assistant Surgeon to the 40th Regiment.⁴⁷³ About the incident, Charles Arthur wrote,

The transaction was one of the most disgraceful I ever remember to have heard, & it would have served Lieutenant Carew perfectly right had he been brought to a court martial, the result of which would have led to his being cashiered.⁴⁷⁴

Carew's exact role is unclear, but he suffered reputational damage in the eyes of Charles Arthur who was the governor's nephew and who would have reflected and influenced others' opinions. Might a desire to restore his reputation have been a further spur to Carew's actions on observing Mangana's family paddle in and land at Recherche? If that was Carew's intention, it went awry with the loss of the brig, 18 prisoners and the Aboriginal woman from custody.

About three weeks after the seizure of the brig, the Hobart pilot simply relocated Mangana to Bruny Island when he found him drifting off Recherche Bay.

⁴⁷³ *Colonial Times*, 3 July 1829, 4.

⁴⁷⁴ Charles Arthur to John Clark, 10 July 1829, 'William & John Clark Family Papers', letter 4.

10 Preparing for a Funeral Off Edo Japan?

‘Then, another brought out a glass container filled with what appeared to be an alcoholic drink.... each of them took a drink, tapped their head, appeared to feel good, and passed it to the next, until they had drunk it all.’

- **Hamaguchi Makita, 1830.**

The pirates moored at two locations, first on 7–8 January 1830 off Tosa Province (now Kochi Prefecture) and then on 14–16 January off Awa Province (Tokushima). The Awa Domain samurai sent an agent, Hase Shōbē, to Tosa Province to gather information about the brig.

Hamaguchi Makita was secretary and spy to the higher ranking of the two county samurai field commanders, Yamauchi Chudayu. Hamaguchi’s manuscript is the most detailed of the four accounts describing the contact and repulse at the mooring off Mugi Ura Cove, Awa Province. His manuscript starts with sections of Hase’s report describing the earlier contact and repulse at the mooring off Murotsu Harbour, Tosa Province. All Tosa accounts of the incident appear to have been lost in subsequent tsunami.

The *Cyprus* first appeared 50km off None Ura Village, Tosa Province on 5 January 1829. The pirates would have seen the islands of Teba Jima, Tsushima and Oshima away to the north in Awa Province as they continue to approach to within 15 km of the coast over the next day. They then headed south around the cape of Muroto Misaki 60km to the southwest. At around 10 o’clock on 7 January, as they dropped anchor roughly 600m off Murotsu Harbour, Tosa Province, the locals moved other vessels away and discharged muskets from the seafront. Six of the pirates dressed formally, hoisted the

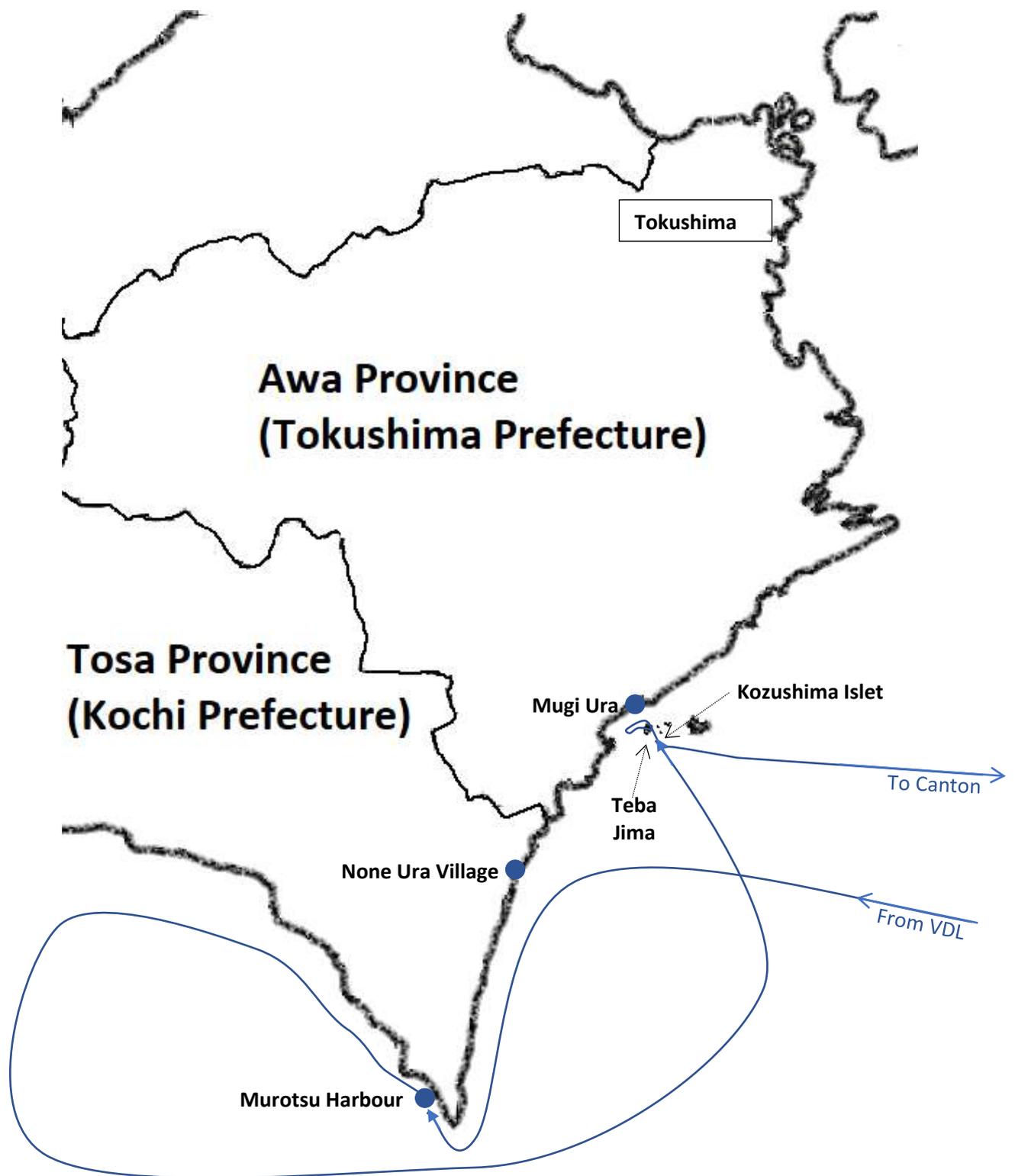


Figure 11. The approximate course of the Cyprus off Edo Japan.

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Red Ensign on the brig, lowered the longboat, loaded it with water jugs and the dog, and attempted to land, but the locals drove them back with relentless musket fire from the seafront. They return to the brig, raised a Union Jack on the longboat and repeated their approach but again relentless fire from the seafront halted them.

Hase described a man putting his hands together and shedding tears. Japanese does not always mark the singular or plural, and it is unclear in this case; however, there are later references to one individual becoming emotional. The jugs were a clear indication that they needed water. However, it seems odd that one of these hardened seafaring convicts would start crying and praying in a situation where they still had enough strength to dress up, raise ensigns, ready the longboat and row in twice under fire. They could have simply tried elsewhere along the coast. If it were a simple feign, it was effective, as locals took pity and provided them with water and rice. Another possible explanation is that the woman who was to be pricked on the pirate's chest lay dying below deck urgently requiring fresh water and food to relieve her suffering. Had her plight spurred the crew on and led to their show of determination and emotion? Was it the man who was to be tattooed that broke down when their quest seemed futile? Having received rice and water, the brig sailed silently away the next morning.

On 9 January, a fishing boat observed them heading west still true to their general direction of travel. On 10 January, the wind and waves picked up, and the coastal overseer lost track of the brig. The weather pattern in winter in this area of Japan is aphoristically referred to as, 'three cold, four warm.' The three cold days are a winter storm system before four milder clear days with little or no wind.

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On 14 January, the brig reappeared off Hiwasa 20 km north of Teba Jima, over 150 km from their last reported position and contrary to their general direction of travel.⁴⁷⁵ Prevailing winds being from the north and west, it seems unlikely that the storm would have blown them directly there.⁴⁷⁶ This time the pirates made no attempt to land. They attempted to barter with fishers and officials who sculled out and offered them wood and water to leave immediately. The pirates refused and requested time to do repair work on the brig. From their previous observations of the islands, they may have surmised that it was the only shallow offshore mooring along the stretch of coast that they had traversed, and they appear to have returned there intentionally.

On the night of 15 January, Hamaguchi arrived in Mugi Ura from Tokushima Castle with Yamauchi. He recorded that the other county samurai field commander, Mima Katsuzō thought that the crew were pirates, and was suspicious of the pity that locals who had visited the brig expressed for its crew. Mima appears to have thought it was Christian trickery. Might the crew's sad mood at the loss of a crewmate have transcended the language barrier and induced such compassion among the local visitors?

On the morning of 16 January, Yamauchi ordered Hamaguchi and a few other men to disguise themselves as fisherfolk, approach the brig and document armaments to assess

⁴⁷⁵ Hase Shōbē, Account, in Hamaguchi, Account, 1 表 – 3 表, 1 front – 3 front.

⁴⁷⁶ The last thirty years of data from the nearest coastal weather station Shiomisaki 150km east of Murotomisaki for 9am on the 11–13 January shows high winds only from northern directions, west north west to north east but never southern directions. 'Kaze Kansoku Dēta', Kishōchō, 気象庁風の観測データ, Observed Wind Data, Japan Meteorological Agency. www.data.jma.go.jp/obd/stats/etrn/upper/view/daily_uwd.php?year=1989&month=01&day=12&hour=9&point=47778&atm=&view=

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if it was a threat. Hamaguchi carefully recorded what he saw in text and ink sketches.⁴⁷⁷

Commonality with slight differences between the depictions suggest that the Hayami artist accompanied Hamaguchi but sketched independently.⁴⁷⁸



Figure 12. The slightly differing commonality of the depicted objects suggest that the Hayami artist accompanied Hamaguchi but sketched independently. (Courtesy of private collection and Tokushima Prefectural Archive.)

Hamaguchi describes their interaction with the pirates. Although he does not mention boarding, the detail and perspective of both artist's drawings suggest they may have. He recorded that the area around the *Cyprus* had a terrible odour and that the crew were all involved in some form of activity, painting or repairing the vessel. After the crew greeted them with the words 'Pace, pace', probably 'Peace, peace' in Swallow's South Shield's accent, the crew appears to have attempted to trade, showing a piglet and red tailcoat. Hamaguchi next recorded that one man opened his jacket to show them 'the

⁴⁷⁷ Hamaguchi, Account, 5 裏 – 11 表, 5 back – 11 front.

⁴⁷⁸ Hayami, Account.

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tattoo of a half body of a beautiful woman on the front of his upper left breast'.⁴⁷⁹



Figure 13. Contrary to the written account, perspective suggests the artists may have boarded the brig rather than sketched from their fishing skiff. (Courtesy of private collection.)

The Hayami artist captured this moment, including the fine detail of the crude tattoo, and what appears to be an expression of suppressed grief on the face of the pirate whose chest it adorned.⁴⁸⁰ In their youth both artists would have seen similar fleeting expressions on the faces of in-character Kabuki actors depicted in Sharaku woodblock prints and practiced with Katsushika Hokusai's learn-to-draw books.⁴⁸¹

⁴⁷⁹ Hamaguchi, Account, 11 表, 11 front.

⁴⁸⁰ Hayami, Account.

⁴⁸¹ Examples of grief in Sharaku Ukiyo-e, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston collection, accessed 7 June 2020: Actor Ichikawa Monnosuke II as Date no Yosaku 二代目市川門之助の伊達

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Figure 14. Facial expressions. From left to right: unidentified pirate with bucket, unidentified pirate with pipe, unidentified pirate with tattoo who appears to be suppressing grief, and Swallow. (Courtesy of private collection.)

These were ubiquitous. Unlike the European materials that could be smudged, erased, or redone with a new layer, ink drawn lines were final and therefore production, although it could be iterative, was rapid and unequivocal. As Hokusai's production epitomised, art was not just the finished work; the process of creation was also assessed, and the ability to produce work quickly, on demand, under any circumstance and to capture fleeting defining emotions was highly regarded.

As with the Shijō School that was popular among samurai and of which Hamaguchi's brother was a pupil, Hokusai focused on realism. Despite this Hamaguchi does use artistic license in his work whereas the Hayami artist appears more factually accurate, apart from his inability to portray Occidental eyes. Possibly this was due to the Hayami

collections.mfa.org/objects/206797, Actor Ichikawa Yazoō III as Tanabe Bunzō 三代目市川八百蔵の田辺文蔵 collections.mfa.org/objects/426901/, Actor Ichikawa Komazō III as Shiga Daishichi 三代目市川高麗蔵の志賀大七 collections.mfa.org/objects/234880/, Actor Sakata Hangorō III as Fujikawa Mizuemon 三代目坂田半五郎の藤川水右衛門 collections.mfa.org/objects/234883/, Actor Ôtani Oniji III as the Footman (Yakko) Edohei 三代目大谷鬼次の奴江戸兵衛 collections.mfa.org/objects/234871/, Actor Segawa Kikunojō III as Oshizu, Wife of Tanabe Bunzō 三代目瀬川菊之丞の田辺文蔵妻おしず collections.mfa.org/objects/234877/, Actor Iwai Hanshirō IV as the Wet Nurse Shigenoi 四代目岩井半四郎の乳人重の井 collections.mfa.org/objects/234872/; Hokusai, *Rakuga Haya Oshie*, Vol.1–3.; Hokusai, *Manga*, Vol. 1–12.

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artist's task of supplying illustrations for the feudal overseer's manuscript which, combined with the report by the two field commanders Yamauchi and Mima, would have been the official account or a draft thereof.



Figure 15. Enlarged map details. The Hayami artist's 1mm-high four-line topsail and Hamaguchi's 2mm-high figures. (Courtesy of private collection and Tokushima Prefectural Archive.)



Figure 16. Left, Hamaguchi's inconceivable illustration with the brig's sails full of air, anchor chain down, and caboose smoke billowing straight up. Right, the Hayami artist's conceivable illustration, without lowered anchor or smoke. (Courtesy of Tokushima Prefectural Archive and private collection.)

The Hayami artist's map was accurate and concise. Although Hamaguchi stylised and

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relocated topographic features, he lists deployments. The Hayami artist resolved a topsail of the brig with four lines at just over a millimetre high and Hamaguchi resolved figures at two millimetres high. Hamaguchi's brig was a physical impossibility with its sails full of air, while the ensign flutters in the opposite direction and smoke from the caboose billows straight up, all with the anchor chain straight down. The brig of Hayami's artist, without lowered anchor or smoke, was conceivable.

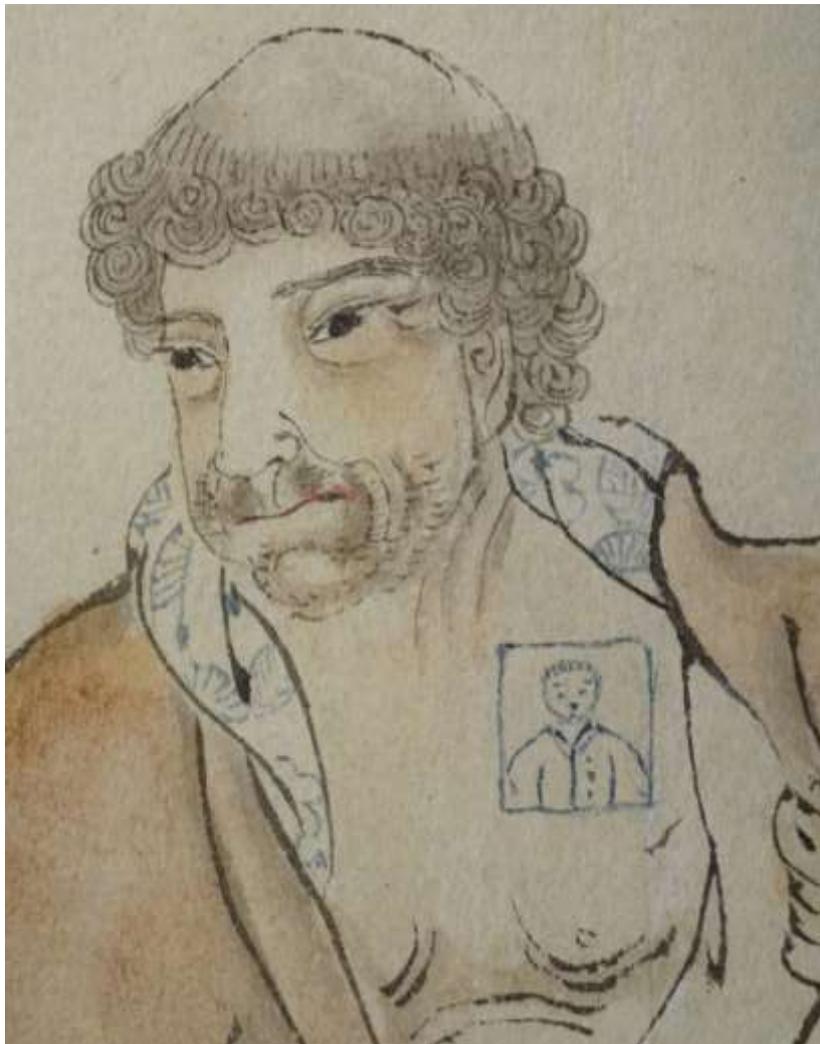


Figure 17. Hayami's artist's caption read 'showing the tattooed image of a woman above the breast'. Hamaguchi described seeing 'the front-view half-body of a beautiful woman tattooed above his left breast' (Courtesy of private collection.)

Hamaguchi recorded the pirate revealing his tattoo and the Hayami artist's caption read

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‘showing the tattooed image of a woman above the breast’. The crew then offered a shared circling-glass drink to the visitors who declined.⁴⁸² The pirates passed it around, and then tapped their heads in what was probably a Napoleonic period salute, but which Hamaguchi took to be an indication of the drink’s intoxicating effect.

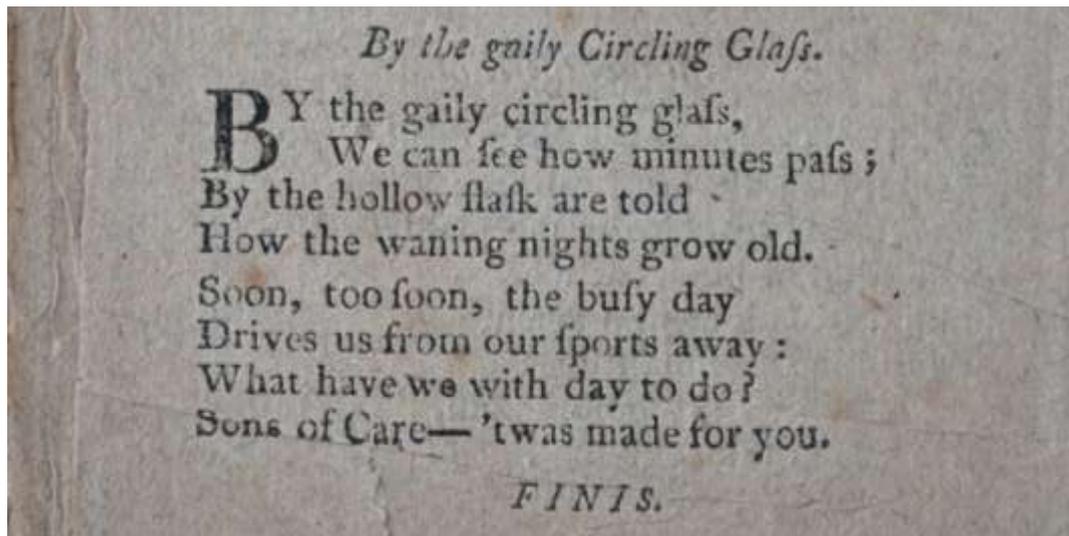


Figure 18. 'By the gaily Circling Glass' published 1795 in Newcastle upon Tyne close to Swallow's hometown of South Shields. (Author's collection.)

Around noon the 'fisherfolk' returned to the samurai headquarters at the West Mugi Fish Exchange to report. While they were away, Hayami, the Shogunate's Feudal Overseer had arrived. He told the two Field Commanders, Yamauchi and Mima, that the fraternisation had to stop, and the brig had to be repulsed in line with the Shogunate's 1825 decree. Two sword-carrying members of the local landed gentry conveyed the leave-immediately-or-be-fired-upon ultimatum to the pirates by showing them a large cannonball to indicate the seriousness of the samurai's intent. During the final round of diminishing requests for time to finish working on the brig, one of the pirates 'repairing

⁴⁸² Hamaguchi, Account, 11 表, 11 front.

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a sail became abusive with a very angry voice and was held back by the skipper.’ Swallow defused the situation by telling the envoys to leave and handed them a letter. It was immediately returned unopened after which the samurai started to fire warning shots over the brig.

The brig raised its anchor and set sail, but contrary to the samurai's expectations of its capabilities, it moved downwind between their positions resulting in a more vigorous response. The samurai launched patrol boats, and their cannon fire eventually holed the brig at the waterline. The pirates raised their hands in surrender and gestured the lack of favourable wind. Again, Hamaguchi reported an awful odour around the ship and that some of the men put their heads in their hands and cried out in what he took to be fear as a samurai gunner raised his weapon.

The brig was towed back toward Mugi Ura and as they waited for the offshore evening breeze, Hamaguchi reported hearing an eerie pennywhistle. He wrote,

As the barbarian ship dodged the ends of Teba and Tsushima, towards the stern a light was seen. The report of a cannon discharging was heard from the ship. (Rizaemon said it was a blank round that sounded like a 30-monme).

There were two types of muskets on board: the bore of the Brown Bess was three-quarter inch, and although that of the other weapon is unknown, the 30 monme was just over a millimetre less than the calibre of a standard one-inch naval musketoon. The pirates had discharged no firearms during the encounter and now well out of range of any weapon at more than a kilometre and a half away, they discharged a blank. Some Japanese hunters returned fire, but the barbarian ship did not fire again, and the sail disappeared

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into the moonless gloom.⁴⁸³

Preparing and holding a sea burial in the storm after having left Murotsu Harbour, while not impossible, would not have been ideal. If the whole crew participating in due ceremony was their intention, preparing while moored would have been easier, especially if the brig had just been damaged in a storm. This could account for the return to the safer, sheltered, offshore mooring that they had previously seen in the distance. Her body being on board and a few days old would also account for the twice-reported odour, although that might have been due to livestock and tar.⁴⁸⁴ Preparing the brig for her funeral could have been the pirates' motive for wanting to stay longer without making any attempt to land, as well as their all-to-a-man cleaning of the hull above the waterline, painting and repairing. The display of the memorial portraiture tattoo followed by a toast at first contact could have been a tribute to the recently deceased woman and an attempt to explain their wanting to stay a few days, which was lost on the samurai spies.⁴⁸⁵ If this was the case, might the head in hands crying out at the end of the repulse be as much an outpouring of frustrated grief as fear? Had the eerie penny whistle been a lament to their deceased crewmate? Was the single blank round a salute to her from the largest calibre weapon on board as they committed her to the deep

⁴⁸³ Hamaguchi, Account, 11 表 – 15 表, 11 front – 15 front.

⁴⁸⁴ Verheggen et al., 'The Odor of Death', 600–613.

⁴⁸⁵ Four of the five death and funeral notices found 1825–29 that reported both dates or the period were four days or longer from death to funeral: Four days, *Tasmanian and Port Dalrymple Advertiser*, 2 March 1825, 4.; One week, *Hobart Town Gazette and Van Diemen's Land Advertiser*, 17 Jun 1825, 4.; Seven days, *Hobart Town Gazette*, 27 May 1826, 3.; The next day, *Colonial Advocate*, and *Tasmanian Monthly Review and Register* (Hobart), 1 October 1828, 47.; Five days, *Colonial Times* (Hobart), 13 February 1829, 4.

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shrouded in sailcloth just off Tsushima Island? ⁴⁸⁶

⁴⁸⁶ ‘Salutes’, *Austral-Asiatic Review, Tasmanian and Australian Advertiser* (Hobart), 31 December 1839.; Reid, ‘Ocean Funerals: The Sea and Victorian Cultures of Death’, 38.

11 Who was the Woman in the Tattoo?

‘Mangana had died at the Isthmus of Brune from the effects of a loathsome disease.’

- George August Robinson, January 1830.

There was no ‘front-view half-body of a beautiful woman tattooed above’ a convict’s left breast recorded in police records or testimony about the tattooing that occurred at Recherche Bay.⁴⁸⁷ The pirate’s willingness to reveal the tattoo suggest it was new. There were other men with visible tattoos present and generally, people do not suddenly reveal old tattoos to new acquaintances. The pirate’s expression of grief suggests a still strong emotion, possibly due to a recent rather than old bereavement. Its location, directly above the heart implies a strong emotional attachment. The reveal immediately followed by a toast and salute appears to imply great and current significance that little else in the reported exchange could account for. The spies were dressed informally as fisherfolk and although not impossible, it seems unlikely that they would have warranted, or even if they had, that the convict pirates would have offered, a salute.

Her attire resembles that of the convict pirate crew, not that of best-dress or objectified nudity of other known examples of convict pricked female portraiture.⁴⁸⁸ Convicted women who misbehaved in VDL’s ‘Female Factories’ regarded hair cropping as a ‘great

⁴⁸⁷ ‘Colonial Brig “Cyprus”’, *Police Gazette: or Hue and Cry* (London), 14 April 1830, 840.; *Hobart Town Courier*, 5 February 1831, 4.

⁴⁸⁸ Kent, ‘Decorative bodies: The significance of convicts’ tattoos’, 78–88. I have been unable to find any illustrated academic sources on 19th century convict tattoos. These sources contain photographs of early tattoos. Barnard, *Convict Tattoos*. 2016; Armand, *L’Argot des prisons*, cover; ‘Special Signs’ 2010 Photographed [turn-of-the-20th-century] tattoos collected from the Department of Forensic Medicine at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow and from the Medical University in Wroclaw. Katarzyna Mirczak, accessed 6 October 2019, www.katarzynamirczak.com/Works.html/ .

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punishment'. As such, it seems unlikely to be a look that any convict woman would have wanted portrayed.⁴⁸⁹



Figure 19. Enlargement of 7.5mm x 8mm illustration of tattoo. (Courtesy of private collection)

From early-October to mid-November 1829 the *Cyprus* moored at Niuatoputapu, Tonga where the earliest visitors reported a wide variety of hairstyles, so the woman in the tattoo could have joined the brig there.⁴⁹⁰ However, if she joined the brig of her own will, the pirates would have no reason not to report her presence as they did in the case

⁴⁸⁹ Backhouse, *Narrative of a visit to the Australian colonies*, 21.

⁴⁹⁰ Hirst, *The Man Who Stole the Cyprus*, 103–104; Kerr, *A general history and collection of voyages and travels*, 177.

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of John Wright who joined the crew in New Zealand.⁴⁹¹ There are no records of such an incident, and indeed after the *Cyprus* departed relations between the crewmen that stayed and the locals were reported as good. An article written from a lost account by Robert McGuire, one of the pirates who remained on Niuatoputapu for three years, reported, 'Every morning at day break, after bathing, they repair to the King's house, each man carrying a bundle of cava roots for the purpose of making them into their favourite drink called Cava, which is of an intoxicating quality.' 'They then betake themselves to their gardens, in which they work with great diligence from 9 o'clock till about one,' 'They seem to be most regular in their habits, living in great cordiality and social enjoyment, every evening being spent at one or others houses alternately in dancing and music.' Indeed, McGuire 'had acquired of speaking the native language.'⁴⁹² This cordiality, acceptance and resulting language skill suggest the departing brig had not offended the locals by abducting a woman from the island.⁴⁹³

Among the indigenous peoples of the West Pacific, close-cropped hair for women appears to have been unique to the Aboriginal peoples of Van Diemen's Land.⁴⁹⁴ She

⁴⁹¹ William Swallow to Home Secretary, 10 November 1830, Petition, 'Home Office: Criminal Petitions, Series I', National Archives, HO17/59/18, 5.

⁴⁹² *Hobart Town Courier*, 30 November 1832.

⁴⁹³ The population of Niuatoputapu is less than 1000 and it is still recovering from the devastating 2009 tsunami after which it seems to have been a focus of disaster research. Possibly due to this increased attention none of my inquiries were answered. It seemed inappropriate to continue without visiting which is beyond the means of this paper. Both of the following researchers have investigated but neither report a woman being taken from Niuatoputapu. Van Der Grijp, 'Early economic encounters in the Pacific or, proto-globalization in Tonga', 298–301.; Hirst, *The Man Who Stole the Cyprus*, 103.

⁴⁹⁴ Backhouse, *Narrative of a visit to the Australian colonies*, 172.; Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 15.; Ryan, L., *Aboriginal Tasmanians*, 128.

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could have been a Van Diemen's Land Aboriginal woman that they abducted en route to Japan from a community that did not record her being taken. If they abducted or maltreated her, the pirates would have had reason not to report her presence as it would have incriminated them. They raided a sealer camp on the Chatham Islands, but never admitted to going there. The incident appeared in the Australian papers and the Islanders' history, in which there was a mention of drownings, possibly William Brown who the pirates claimed was lost in a storm. However, there was no mention of the pirates taking a woman from the Chatham Islands.⁴⁹⁵ En route they stopped at unnamed islands to collect wood and water. The pirates may have captured and taken her from one of these. However, this investigation has found no evidence of that. The only known references to a woman being on the brig are Robinson's and Sterling's assertions from Mangana's and Woorrady's statements.

If she were Mangana's wife, she would have had the skillset the shorthanded brig required and would have sported short hair. The crew may have encouraged their Aboriginal shipmate to dress in their own practical attire as the tattoo appears to portray. The level of affection and respect that the location of the tattoo and the toast immediately following the reveal imply seem to equate with an established relationship that they had forged in shared trials, like those they would have encountered in the Tasman Sea and Southern Ocean and that claimed the life of William Brown.

Near-synchronous infection and mortality clustering due to Old World diseases

⁴⁹⁵ The Australian (Sydney), 12 February 1830, 3.; Richards, *Whaling and Sealing at the Chatham Islands*, 38.

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happened at the Bruny Island Establishment and was common at the locations on Flinders Island.⁴⁹⁶ Mangana and his wife had both presented symptoms that required sticks to walk on 15 July 1829.⁴⁹⁷ Mangana died of syphilis, a slower acting pathogen that in European populations had a survival time of years with periods of latency rather than of days. However, the historian Jared Diamond describes how when introduced to previously uninfected indigenous populations survival time shrank to months rather than years; therefore it is reasonable to assume that near-synchronous mortality, if it occurred, would be weeks rather than hours apart.⁴⁹⁸ If Mangana's wife had been infected after suffering 'ill treatment from the Wood Cutters', i.e. being raped, and unwittingly infected her husband after the incubation period of about three weeks, their inguinal lymphadenopathy presentation may have overlapped, making it temporarily difficult for them both to walk unaided.⁴⁹⁹ Then they would seem to recover as the disease became latent only to return again and claim their lives. Mangana died on 30 January 1830 of a 'loathsome disease'.⁵⁰⁰

Pirate behaviour that fits the hypothesis that she was cared for and died on the *Cyprus*, put Mangana's wife's death about three weeks previous to his around 8 January. The pirate's memorial portrait of her was a simple line tattoo which, short of infection, would

⁴⁹⁶ Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*, 201.

⁴⁹⁷ Charles Sterling, 15 July 1829, Journal, 'File 7: George Augustus Robinson, Van Diemen's Land, miscellaneous papers, 1829–1833', ML, A 7059, CY Reel 784, 2–3.

⁴⁹⁸ For mortality clustering see 1829–39 in Plomley, *Weep in Silence*, 938–42.

⁴⁹⁹ Syphilis Staging Chart (revised October 2015), Oregon Health Authority, accessed 25 June 2018, www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/DISEASES/CONDITIONS/HIVSTDVIRALHEPATITIS/SEXUALLYTRANSMITTEDDISEASE/Documents/trainings/Syphilis_Staging_Chart.pdf

⁵⁰⁰ George Augustus Robinson, Journal in Plomley, *Friendly Mission*, 115.

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heal quickly. Any scabbing in the first few days would have been almost invisible and easily accommodated the 16 January reveal.⁵⁰¹

⁵⁰¹ Emma Victoria Beauty, ‘Tattoo Healing Process | day by day’, accessed 19 May 2021, www.youtube.com/watch?v=mL2JFYHY_24.

12 Conclusion

This investigation has found no new direct evidence that the second wife of Mangana was on board the *Cyprus*. If the pirates abducted her with the seizure, Arthur had the power to and would have concealed her presence if he thought he could get away with it. London's knowledge of any incident could have led to scrutiny and findings of other in-custody deaths and murders that London found unacceptable resulting in one or all of the following:

- 1) As with Don in Gibraltar, oversight by officers appointed directly from London.
- 2) As with the British grab of Native North American land, a Royal Proclamation limiting it.
- 3) As with Darling, his recall and replacement at the end of the usual term of six years, in 1830.

There is diffuse indirect evidence that suggests that Arthur perhaps orchestrated a concealment. Taken alone this evidence is inconclusive and could equally have been due to other politically inconvenient details Arthur was attempting to hide. However, when considered with Arthur's behaviour; Mangana's and Woorryady's statements, Robinson's and Sterling's assertion, the circumstance, and the tattoo; the case for Mangana's wife being on board is fair to strong.

If the pirates abducted her with the seizure, she suffered an illegal detention and then abduction from custody: arguably two failures by Arthur's administration and therefore double the risk of scrutiny and her narrative leading back to the deaths of Tasmanian

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Aboriginal women on Bruny Island, at Emu Bay and Oatlands that Arthur obfuscated and concealed.

Reports of Mangana and his family being at the embarkation point on South Bruny, his subsequent rescue and his and Worrady's statements put him and his family at Recherche at the right time. The differences that Robinson and Sterling recorded in Mangana's description of the fates of his son and wife as well as Worrady's confirmation suggest that their communication was sufficiently lucid.

The pirate crews' shorthandedness and the known abilities of Tasmanian Aboriginal women would have given the experienced mariners good reason to take an able-bodied Aboriginal woman with them if one were present. The pragmatism of this would have outweighed any concerns they may have had about piratical tradition or regarding any perceived disruptive effect of a woman on board.

If Mangana's wife was on the brig, Arthur had the ability, opportunity and reason to hide it. Owing to the sway Arthur held over the passengers, crew, military, magistracy and press any concealment could have been total. Some of the passengers and crew would not have cared about what happened to Mangana's wife. Those that did may have felt fear of what Arthur would do if they reported the incident tinged with shame that they had failed her. Perhaps idealism, and possibly ignorance of Arthur's power, motivated two of them to send their own accounts to the papers, but they were never published.

Arthur understood perception management and was a tactician who, from his military experience and chess playing, would have modified his approach when a preferable

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alternative became apparent. Examples of this were Arthur's change of tack from a discreet man distributing blankets on Bruny Island to the public 'humanitarian' appointment of Robinson, the assignment of poorly behaved convicts including Sterling who had syphilis and a depraved character after having left on record his search for well-behaved ones, and Arthur's swansong statement on his recall. Lieutenant William Marcus Carew, the commanding officer of the guard, initially faced a disobedience charge. If that were due to detention contrary to the Proclamation of Martial Law, on realizing that he could conceal Mangana's wife's presence, Arthur may well have dropped the charge as they went to trial to avoid open-court proceedings referring to the abduction and thereby word of it getting back to London.

The tattoo and the circumstance of the reveal suggest a Tasmanian Aboriginal woman had been on board as a crew member and that she had died recently enough to cause its wearer to go to the unusual trouble of showing it at first contact, despite it being a winter's day and other pirates having visible tattoos. The pirate's grief and his shipmates' camaraderie in their toast and salute suggests their friendships with the depicted woman were well established.

The significance of the image, the reveal, the crew's subsequent circling-glass toast and salutes, transcended the language barrier and led the samurai to record the details. The timing of his reveal and the pirate's expression of suppressed grief, suggest that the bereavement was fresh and of import to their current situation. Perhaps he was explaining the reason for their mooring there: their loss and the preparations for her funeral.

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Mangana's and his wife's synchronous symptom presentation suggests that they may have had near-synchronous deaths. If the depicted woman died shortly before the reveal, it would accommodate this.

Although this investigation explored it, the hypothetical timeline for her demise and sea burial off Edo Japan is, short of new evidence, impossible to corroborate. Each of the questions posed have alternative answers. The smell may have been of the livestock and freshly tarred vessel. The emotional outbursts could have been a highly strung crew member triggered by something else. Mooring off Mugi Ura Cove could have just been for repairs. The final blank shot by the pirates could have been a warning to discourage samurai elements that were still firing from Teba and attempting to pursue them on the water.

Before the discovery of the *Cyprus* in Japan, some academics expressed doubt as to the veracity of Swallow's claim of visiting Japan. This seems to have been due to Swallow being a convict and of low social rank. Perhaps for similar reasons a question mark has remained over the second wife of Mangana. If Arthur, despite his clear obfuscations and concealments, had recorded that the *Cyprus* had gone to Japan or that Mangana's wife was on board, there would have been no question marks.

13 End Notes

Since the general acceptance of the brig in the manuscripts as being the *Cyprus*, lay people and specialists have debated whether the pirates were Australian, and the incident was first contact for Australia and Japan. While Australia did not have independence in 1829 and the men were trying to escape the VDL colony, there is strong opinion among many Australians that they shared their nationality. In Japan, the narrative is often couched within the suggestion that it was first contact.

If, as with the *Cyprus* identification, an academic consensus forms regarding the theory that Mangana's wife was on board, and, as with the nationality of the pirates, there is strong opinion among some Australians in favour of the hypothesis that she received a sea burial off Japan; what implications might there be?

If she survived being raped by the assigned convicts, settlers or whalers on Bruny Island, being taken ill during the great mortality there, being illegally detained, being abducted, possibly being sexually abused a second time, being pressed as a novice crew member to sail through Southern Ocean storms on a brig with less than a quarter of its normal complement, and in doing so she became respected and beloved by her crew mates as the circling glass toast, knuckle salutes and inked immortalizations suggest; she was undoubtedly an indomitable survivor. Whatever the initial intentions of some of the pirates might have been, the ten that remained had come to revere and love her. One of them pricked her memorial portrait in ink over the heart of another, and then across the barriers of language and culture they communicated that she was beautiful and important. This led to the samurai spies' immortalizing her in text and image. The only

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other things the pirates successfully communicated was that they wanted to trade and stay a few more days for repairs.

If Mangana's wife was on board and finally fell victim to the slowest acting of Arthur's contagions off Edo Japan, did the pirates also risk musket fire to bring her fresh water and food, out of respect smarten up the ship for her funeral, and finally court musket and cannon fire for her burial rite?



Figure 20. A rarely seen natural phenomenon south of Kozushima Islet at the location where samurai chroniclers reported a blank discharged from the brig. (Author)

Indomitability in the face of manifest evil and the forces of nature, reverence across culture and gender, immortalization over the heart and beyond first contact into a third culture: arguably these meet the first condition for deification as a local Shinto Kami or divine being. Old, local, folk Shinto of the Edo Period predates the State Shinto that was promoted for the Meiji restoration for Japanese nationalism, militarism and imperialism. Shinto adherents believe that since the dawn of time Kami have resided in local natural geographic features and phenomenon and have both benevolent and malevolent aspects.

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Local practices show reverence and gratitude to these Kami for their benevolence. However, exceptional people who are remembered with reverence may also become Kami.

As with some modern Australians embracing the *Cyprus* pirates as compatriots, Kami deification is a folk construct that can grow out of ordinary people's interpretation of lives and events to which they attach significance. Unlike Catholic beatification, old, local Shinto deification requires no permission of a religious authority, just the reverence and homage of folk.

However, while there is strong indirect evidence that supports Swallow's claim of having visited Japan, if Mangana's wife was on the *Cyprus*, not only the typical paucity of evidence regarding indigenous women's histories but also Arthur's obfuscation besets placing her there. Even if she was on board, whether she was the woman in the tattoo, or how and when she died, may never be known.

If Mangana's wife was on the brig, she would have been abducted twice by men with guns: first the soldiers and then the pirates. Modern readers may tend to associate such a situation with the term 'Stockholm syndrome'. Recently, Kristin Enmark, the victim whose behaviour experts used to define the term, but whom they never took the trouble to interview, shared her opinion about the quasi-psychological term, 'It's bullshit,' 'I did what I could to survive.'⁵⁰²

⁵⁰² Kristin Enmark, Interview in 'Siding with the Enemy', Sideways, BBC podcast first uploaded 10 February 2021, Accessed 20 February 2021.

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