CHAPTER TWO

The Jamaica Garrison

By the time Apongo, Tacky, or any of their rebellion's other soldiers crossed the Atlantic, Jamaica was a fabulous commercial entrepôt and a potent military garrison. The island was Britain's most lucrative colony, its most formidable military base in America, and a pivotal place in the strategic considerations of the empire. Profitable and powerful, Jamaica was a militarized society from top to bottom, with a tense symbiosis of war and business. Military force kept the turbulent violence of Atlantic warfare at bay, while militant order allowed profit to accumulate without war's disruptions. From the garrison, the military projected force throughout the Caribbean region, directing sternly disciplined troops to treat Britain's enemies with entrepreneurial aggression. The commerce of empire accumulated amid the violence of everyday terror. Militarism operated on multiple scales, from interstate conflict that ranged across oceans and continents to quotidian assaults on the dignity of subordinates. Indeed, intimate social relations and imperial warfare were intertwined, whether in the formal military institutions of states or in the private wars necessitated by the daily reproduction of racial bondage: violent conflict in Jamaica stitched close personal contact into the operations of colonial government and imperial conquest. This violence was tremendously profitable, and it would continue as long as the world could be made safe for slavery.[1]

The riches of the West Indies presented tempting prizes to contending belligerents. Daring raids by the pirates of the Caribbean gripped the imag-

inations of contemporaries and became the stuff of legend. Imperial navies organized maneuvers and tactics to prey upon enemy trade and to protect their own maritime commerce during wartime. The smaller islands of the Antilles traded hands frequently, scrambling the affiliations and allegiances of their residents. International legal regimes that first recognized "no peace beyond the line"—the idea that the colonies existed in a marchland of unregulated violence—eventually came to carefully delineate the contours of amity and hostility in colonial territories.[2] These aspects of the history of war and trade in the West Indies are well-known. Less clear are the ways in which war shaped the contours of colonial plantation slavery itself, and the ways that slave society conditioned the operations of imperial military outposts. Few other colonies exemplified as neatly as Jamaica how the aggression of slavery, the battles the colonists fought to keep their slaves in subjection, and the conflicts to secure and extend British dominion linked the geography of war with human bondage.

From the mid-seventeenth century, the English ruled colonial Jamaica by "garrison government." Jamaica was a fortified commercial outpost, run by military veterans focused on order and security. A military governor presided over a centralized provincial administration, with an appointed council and an elected assembly made up of "men of business," most of them beneficiaries of the governor's patronage. "We shall be governed as an army," said one Jamaican colonist in the seventeenth century, acknowledging that military necessity would take precedence over the legislature and the law. Even when commercial imperatives began to overlay military considerations in the third decade of the eighteenth century, a garrison mentality prevailed, cultivating a tense but mutually sustaining relationship between armed authority and the prerogatives of private wealth. Governors rarely hesitated to invoke martial law when they felt the island was under internal or external threat.[3]

Martial sentiments were prevalent among the colonists, who viewed success in war as a paramount interest of the imperial and colonial state. But this militarism carried well beyond the state. It shaped habits of general belligerence that organized the island's society largely for the benefit of its white male population. Armed men occupied the island, and officers of the militia and regular military ranked high among the island's elite.[4] Slaveholding patriarchs applied force to bend the environment to their will, extorting profit from labor and nature. They put women's fertility to the task of reproducing their human property stocks and ensuring the continuity of racial status for successive generations. Masters generated and reinforced their sense of masculinity by sexual conquest and the humiliation of lesser men. These activities connected the broad-gauge power of armies, navies,

and militias to more narrowly targeted assaults on personhood, bodily integrity, and dignity. The cultivation and direction of masculine brutality was crucial to the projection of imperial power. Customs of male domination pervaded every aspect of the colonists' community formation, ensuring that conflict between slaveholders and slaves was intensely personal. War suffused the landscape of plantation agriculture, the work routines of plantation production, and the sexual exploits of white men, whose everyday belligerence was underwritten by the legal regime, an armed population of slaveholders, and the formal British military.[5]

Garrison society mobilized frequently for both internal and external warfare. The result was a militarized landscape that overlaid Jamaica's topography and ecology. The colony's "intestine" wars, as the colonists called them, included the battles against the enslaved, whose labor made Jamaica so profitable, even as the island's situation in the Caribbean made it Britain's preeminent imperial outpost. By the first decades of the eighteenth century Jamaica's martial landscape had distinctive contours, noted in detail by early historians like James Knight. Having lived nearly three decades on the island as a merchant, royal official, and representative in the Jamaica Assembly, Knight described Jamaica from a perspective that combined careful research with deep personal experience. In the 1740s, he authored a two-volume history of Jamaica, paying special attention to the principal forts and their numbers of cannon, the barracks and their troop capacities, and the defensibility of the harbors. He was especially attentive to the vulnerability of the windward settlements on the eastern side of the island, dangerously "exposed to an Enemy in time of war, and to the Insults & Depredations of the Spanish Guarda Costas & Pyrates, in time of peace," while continuously "liable to the Incursions of the wild Negroes."[6] As with so many others, he conceived the plantation colony as a military fortification.

Warfare from within and without had plagued Jamaica ever since its beginnings as an English colony. Following the English conquest in 1655, Spanish holdouts, accompanied in many cases by their slaves and by reinforcements from what is now Mexico, fled to the mountainous interior. From their unapproachable redoubts, they harassed the invaders, who soon began to succumb to starvation and disease. In 1657 Jamaica's governor at the time, Edward D'Oyley, invited buccaneers from nearby Tortuga to aid in the expulsion of the Spanish, and the holdouts finally surrendered on the north side of the island in 1660. By that time, an English occupation force of more than eight thousand men had diminished to some twenty-two hundred.


JAMAICA
CARIBBEAN SEA
CARIBBEAN SEA
Green Island Harbour
Orange Bay
Long Bay
Negril Harbour
Lucea
HANOVER
HANOVER MOUNTAINS
WESTMORELAND
NEGRIL HILLS
Savanna la Mar
Bluefields Bay
Black River Bay
Montego Bay
ST JAMES
Furry's Town
Trelawny Town
THE COCKPITS
Accompong Town
ST ELIZABETH
Mile Gully
Crawford Town
Lacovia
SANTA CRUZ MOUNTAINS
CARPENTER'S MOUNTAINS
CLARENDON
ST ANN
Oracabessa Bay
Port Maria Harbour
ST MARY
Annotto Bay
ST THOMAS IN THE VALE
Scott's Hall
ST JOHN
ST ANDREW
Spanish Town
ST CATHARINE
ST DOROTHY
Kingston
Port Royal
Port Royal Harbour
Kingston Harbour
BLUE MOUNTAINS
ST GEORGE
New Crawford Town
Old Crawford Town
PORT ROYAL
Nanny Town
PORTLAND
Manchioneal
Bath Town
ST DAVID
ST THOMAS IN THE EAST
Morant Bay
N
W
E
S
0
10
20
a scale of miles

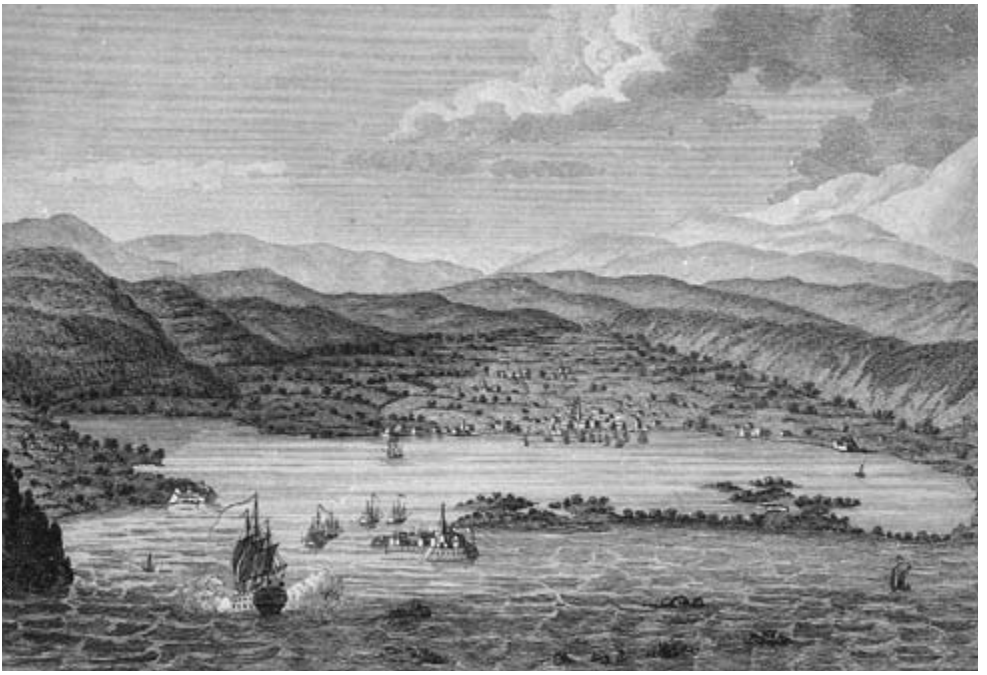

FIGURE 2.1. Port Royal Harbour. "View of Port Royal and Kingston Harbours, Jamaica," engraved by Peter Mazell, from Edward Long, *History of Jamaica,* vol. I (London, 1774).

Courtesy of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.

Swashbuckling opportunists continued to congregate at Port Royal, and the island quickly became a base for attacks on Spanish shipping. Recognizing the strategic advantage of Jamaica's position deep in the Caribbean with quick access to the Spanish mainland, the next governor, Thomas Modyford, continued to promote the attacks. When England went to war with France and the Netherlands in 1665, Modyford conducted a private war against Spain, sending the privateer Captain Henry Morgan on a series of daring raids. Between 1665 and 1671, Morgan sacked several Spanish towns around the Caribbean basin, bringing his loot back to Port Royal, which soon ranked as the most heavily fortified town in the English territories. Defended from the sea by four forts with a combined battery of ninety-four cannon, and from amphibious attack by a parapet with another sixteen guns, the garrison accommodated two companies of regular soldiers and a substantial contingent of militia, complementing the maritime mercenaries who harassed Jamaica's enemies. For the next two decades, the island hosted an impressive military base, a bustling commercial center, and

a roiling pirate nest at Port Royal, becoming infamous for its plundered riches and freewheeling debauchery.[7]

Modyford, who served as governor between 1664 and 1671, also promoted Jamaica's agricultural settlement. When he arrived from Barbados in 1664, he brought about a thousand settlers with him. With two decades of experience as a sugar planter on Barbados, Modyford recognized Jamaica's potential as a plantation society. He used his royal prerogative to issue approximately eighteen hundred land patents comprising more than three hundred thousand acres, secured major capital investments from England, and prevailed upon the earliest planters to expand their operations and add more slaves to their estates. The development of the plantations overlapped with the maintenance of the garrison. Many holders of the largest land grants were military men. Even Henry Morgan became a substantial sugar planter and slave owner, taking his place among the island's emerging planter elite.[8]

Nevertheless, the relationship between planters and buccaneers was tense. While the planters benefited from the currency that buccaneering expeditions brought to the island, the buccaneers were difficult to control and their raids couldn't be confined to approved targets. In times of official peace, they sometimes disrupted the planters' favored commerce, adding an unwelcome degree of uncertainty into the planters' efforts to amass wealth. The more prominent planters, who were often merchants as well, bristled at the lack of order. As agricultural settlements spread around the island and the influence of the planters grew, they prevailed upon the imperial governors and the Royal Navy to brand the buccaneers as pirates and chase them from Jamaica.[9]

Port Royal's role as a pirate haven ended decisively with a massive earthquake on June 7, 1692, which inaugurated a series of disasters that befell the island in the 1690s. "In the space of two Minutes," a witness recalled, "all the Churches, the dwelling houses & sugar works of the whole island were thrown down," even as much of Port Royal was "swallowed up by the sea" and "all its Forts and Fortifications demolished and a great part of its Inhabitants Miserably either knockt on the head or drowned." The subsequent paucity of housing and the disruption of food supplies led to morbid conditions. Hundreds died, and chaos ensued, leaving the island "open and exposed to the Attempts of Enemys by seas as well as land." Between the earthquake and the calamities that followed, the stronghold at Port Royal was reduced from two thousand to two hundred fighting men.[10] In the years immediately following the earthquake, malaria and yellow fever epidemics swept away thousands of settlers.[11] The situation worsened, according to a report by Jamaica's governor at the time, William Beeston, as news about

"the sickness and calamity of the place" frightened off commercial traffic and "terrified all that used to bring provisions to it," leading to famine.[12]

The Nine Years' War that followed England's Glorious Revolution (1689–1697) compounded the island's troubles. In 1694, the French invaded Jamaica with a force of three thousand men. Landing east of Port Royal at Cow's Bay in the parish of St. David, the French forces "plundered, burnt and Destroyed all before them" as they pushed through the parish of St. Thomas, killing livestock, pulling up cane, and cutting down fruit trees. They burned fifty sugar works and captured more than fifteen hundred slaves before the English could repulse them.[13] Governor Beeston complained that the French tortured and murdered settlers in cold blood, dug some corpses out of their graves, and "suffered the negroes to violate" some women. "There was never more inhumane Barbarities committed by Turks or Infidels in the world," he fulminated.[14] The two eastern parishes remained thinly populated for decades after the invasion, with colonists fearing their continued vulnerability. The French attackers were less successful on the southern coast west of Port Royal, where they lost nearly four hundred men to the English defense.[15]

Jamaica's exposure during the war exacerbated a decline in white settlement. On top of astonishingly high mortality rates in the late seventeenth century, colonial officials lamented a dearth of new arrivals. "The island hath been in a Declining condition for Seven Years last Past," read one report, "Especially the Inward parts of the Country Occasioned by the want of Importation of Servants." The number of white settlers on the island had increased from about 3,700 to 7,800 between 1662 and 1673, but by the mid-1690s the population had fallen back by several hundred, with the number of deaths greatly exceeding the number of births. This decline stood in dramatic contrast to the growth of the black population. Between 1671 and 1684, Jamaica imported 1,500 Africans a year, supplemented by small numbers of native peoples captured from North America, and though the numbers of blacks and whites were equal in 1673, by the 1690s Jamaica held more than forty thousand enslaved black people.[16]

Without white workers, Jamaica's political elite feared that it could not maintain the island's defenses or manage the burgeoning number of slaves. Though a large expeditionary force from England buttressed the garrison following the French invasion of 1694, and lawmakers banned soldiers from leaving the island during the war in the 1690s, yellow fever ravaged the troops, who generally had no immunity to the tropical disease. Between 1694 and 1700, militia lists showed an increase of some 1,400 men, from 1,774 to 3,156, but these were hardly sufficient for the security needs of the island.[17] The dearth of white immigrants was a grave concern to the

colonists, who complained that they had been "brought so low" that they were "not of force to Secure ourselves from the Insurrection of slaves."[18] Desperate to attract white settlers who could help maintain the defense of slavery, in 1703 Jamaica passed the first of many laws that required planters to keep one white man for every twenty slaves on an estate. Initially, these "deficiency acts" stipulated that plantations which failed to maintain the requisite number of white servants could be compelled to provide quarter for regular troops, but after 1720, with the ratio reduced to one white man for every thirty slaves, the laws levied substantial duties for noncompliance. Through the middle of the eighteenth century, few planters maintained their quota, and the richest plantation regions of the island were populated overwhelmingly by black slaves whom the planters mistrusted and feared.[19]

Even as the colonists contended with external threats, they faced a growing danger from enemy encampments in the island's interior. When the Spanish departed the island, they left behind many of their former slaves, who had fought rearguard actions against English occupation. Called maroons, after the Spanish *cimarrones* (wild ones), they formed communities in the mountains, their numbers swelling from the continuous trickle of runaway slaves from English settlements, and continued to harry the new settlers. From their sanctuaries in the densely forested mountains, maroons raided the plantations for provisions, weapons, and new recruits. The presence of these free communities helped to inspire captives on the plantations, who staged several serious revolts between 1673 and 1694. Most of these occurred on the north coast, where large plantations were scattered far apart, although one took place just five miles from the seat of the colonial government in Spanish Town. In the first years of the eighteenth century, small bands of slaves continued to break away from the estates to join the maroons, who soon grew numerous and powerful enough to threaten the future of the colony. Through the 1720s and 1730s, the colonists and the maroons waged a protracted war, which caused many to doubt the prospects for continued British occupation of the island.[20]

Military governance thus turned simultaneously inward to suppress the frequent slave revolts and maroon raids and outward to harass and contest with imperial rivals. Patterns of settlement reflected the exigencies of conflict as well as the prospects afforded by the island's topography. Plantations hugged the coast at the lower elevations, clustering along rivers. The earliest settlements in the southeast became the densest, with the main artery of plantation society running between Port Royal and Spanish Town and extending west through the lowlands.[21] On the northeast side, some estates were scattered in the valleys, but colonists found more room on the broader plains at the northwest end of the island. The mountainous interior

and uncleared forests remained the preserve of fugitives and maroon communities. As black slaves came to dominate plantation labor and the rural population, whites bundled together in the towns, where they felt secure in each other's presence and in the embrace of the imperial military. Here they could look to the forts, barracks, and military parade grounds for peace of mind, as these "theaters of power" offered reassurance to the colonists and warning to their slaves.[22]

The design and architecture of the plantations and their placement within the landscape reflected security concerns. Many whites' houses were fortified, especially in the remoter parts of the island. James Knight described dwellings "built with stone & made Defensible with Flankers, having loop holes for Fire Arms & Ports for small carriage Guns, the windows and Doors being made Musquet proof; so that they are capable of making a good defence with the Assistance of their white servants & Trusty Negroes against a Foreign or Intestine Enemy."[23] Throughout the island, planters placed overseers' houses with an eye to facilitating surveillance, elevating them above the slave quarters or placing them near the quarters, the fields, and the plantation's processing machinery. In mountainous regions, estates might situate the white people's houses high on the slopes, in view of each other, so they could communicate at a distance in case of any trouble.[24] Slaveholders relied upon the extent of the island itself to protect them against "any general Insurrection of the Negroes." With the estates spread out across Jamaica's dense woods and formidable mountains, they believed for a time that potential slave conspirators would find it impossible to "join to Execute Their Designs."[25]

By the mid-eighteenth century, England had claimed sovereignty over the island and was able to defend its plantations from other European powers. Still, it was in practice a highly uneven dominion, threatened by internal enemies who made deep impressions on the political landscape.

This perilous state of affairs persisted because, after the crises of the 1690s, Jamaica became the most profitable colony in British America. The most successful planters bought up large swaths of real estate, squeezing out smaller proprietors and consolidating lesser estates into ever larger landholdings. Despite the slow growth of the white population, the colony thrived by turning more and more plantations over to sugar production. Many of the less prosperous whites joined the emerging plantation society as overseers and managers, while others continued on as shopkeepers and artisans.[26] The fortunes of the island grew with its plantations. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the naturalist author Patrick Browne could justifi-

ably claim that Jamaica was "not only the richest, but the most considerable colony at this time under the government of Great Britain."[27]

Browne was not exaggerating. The island burgeoned with more than one hundred thousand slaves "by whose labours and industry almost alone, the colony flourisheth, and its productions are cultivated and manufactured."[28] Alongside sugar, planters grew coffee, ginger, and other crops, and also cultivated livestock. On top of their agricultural and pastoral pursuits, Jamaican planters speculated in a thriving land market, bought and sold slaves, and lent money to each other at advantageous rates.[29] Jamaica conducted an impressive trade from its commercial center in Kingston, shipping sugar, rum, and other tropical commodities to North America and Britain. Kingston was among the busiest slave-trading ports in the British Empire, receiving more than four hundred thousand captives from 1700 to 1760. As many as a third of these were reexported to the Spanish Americas, which maintained a lively trade with Jamaica even in times of war.[30] The ships arriving in Kingston Harbor from 1744 to 1746 averaged 342 per year. Wealthy merchants engaging in transatlantic commerce shared the city with traders of more limited scope, combining with them to distribute a variety of goods throughout the island and across the Atlantic.[31]

Browne characterized the colony as rich, but the vast majority of its population was made up of enslaved workers who were miserably poor. Beset by high rates of sickness and mortality, they spent much of their short lives hungry, ill, and exhausted. Jamaica's wealth accumulated in the tight fists of its big planters and merchants, who were among the richest men in the world. As in so many market economies, "the great wealth of the few depended on the poverty of the productive many."[32] The wealthiest of Jamaica's estate holders owned hundreds of slaves. William Beckford (1709–1770), whose grandfather and father had established the family in the first rank of Jamaica's elite, held more than 1,300 slaves at his death in 1770.[33] Zachary Bayly (1720–1769) left an estate valued at £114,743 sterling, including 2,010 slaves. In addition to being a sugar planter and fabulously successful merchant, Bayly served as a planting attorney for several absentee owners, managing thousands more slaves for other estates. Beckford and Bayly were among the ten wealthiest Jamaicans alive between 1674 and 1784, but wealth in slaves was widespread. By the mid-eighteenth century, half of all personal property in Jamaica consisted of slaves, and few of the island's leading men owned less than fifty people.[34]

The wealthiest of Jamaica's planters and merchants bought entry into elite circles in Great Britain, brokering between West Indian and metropolitan

interests. William Beckford's career offered a spectacular example. He was perhaps the most successful member of a substantial group of absentee planters and merchants who acted as agents of imperial exchange. Having entered boarding school at Westminster while still a boy in 1719, he mixed with the English upper classes and other notables with fortunes in the Americas. Traveling back and forth between 1736 and 1744, Beckford served in Jamaica's militia and assembly and used his metropolitan contacts to advocate successfully for war with Spain in 1739. Returning to England in 1744, he purchased a country estate in Wiltshire, then developed his political networks, won the post of London sheriff, and gained a parliamentary seat in 1747. In the mid-1750s, having become a member of Parliament representing London, he cultivated an alliance with William Pitt, helping to convince the new prime minister to launch a major expedition to the Caribbean during the Seven Years' War. He served in the House of Commons until his death, while also serving two terms as Lord Mayor of London.[35]

Zachary Bayly had immigrated to Jamaica with his family in the 1730s and kept up close connections with merchant houses and politicians in London. When his younger brother Nathaniel (1726–1798) moved to England in 1759, the two men managed a transatlantic family business, keeping slaves at work on the plantations, moving tropical staples to Great Britain, prudently investing their profits, and using political contacts to protect them. As a man of great fortune, Nathaniel was well connected, eventually serving in Parliament himself during the 1770s. Like the Beckfords, the Baylys worked to harmonize the transatlantic national interests in slavery and military security.[36]

Slave labor and property in persons made merchants and planters rich beyond reasonable expectations, notwithstanding the slaves' demonstrated threat to the colony. One might see the Baylys, the Beckfords, and others like them as the victors in a class war. And, given that the island's workers were overwhelmingly of African descent, this was also a race war. The violence of enslavement continued daily on the plantations, just as it did along the slaving routes that brought these workers to the Americas. As conflict between African polities produced captives for the slave trade, violence on the plantations produced commodities for export, and the everyday antagonisms inherent in plantation production connected slavery to imperial war. Even before the slaves on Bayly's Trinity and Beckford's Esher estates, on the north side of the island in St. Mary's Parish, rose up against the British Empire in 1760, they were as well trained by the militarism of Jamaican society as by the slaving wars of West Africa.

The plantation economy was an assault on the enslaved, who labored under the constant threat of attacks ranging from personal humiliation to public terror. The work regime required for sugar cultivation demanded strict control by plantation supervisors. Their management practices both drew upon and reinforced imperial violence, extending garrison government to the organization of the economy. Slavery encouraged the society's militaristic tenets: a belief that violence offered a ready solution to social problems, a propensity to resort to force often and with little provocation, and the maintenance of sharp and invidious distinctions between friends and enemies. Among themselves, the whites were renowned for convivial hospitality; beyond the circle of fellowship, they were notoriously ready to attack. Violence and domination were vital elements of daily life, and black people bore the brunt of this aggression.

As the leading sector of the economy, sugar production occupied the greatest amount of land and employed the most slaves. Roughly half of Jamaica's slaves worked on sugar plantations, which were among the world's largest private agricultural enterprises. Slaves commonly lived on plantations of more than 150 people, and a quarter of the population lived on properties with more than 250 people. Operating at a scale that allowed the integration of all important elements of production, from planting, harvesting, and processing to cultivating provisions for the labor force, the Jamaican sugar industry enjoyed remarkable productivity.[37]

For the enslaved, these powerful engines of profit were devastating, and the plantations that grew sugar were among the more life-threatening places a worker could be. The physical demands of planting, tending, and refining the cane amplified the hazards of malnutrition and tropical disease. Modern researchers have confirmed what contemporaries knew all too well: enslaved workers were consumed by the cane fields. On Mesopotamia, a large and productive estate in Westmoreland Parish, inventories of slaves taken between the mid-1730s and early 1760s show twice as many deaths as births, with children, teenagers, and young adults making up a high proportion of the dead. As overwork "decimated the field gangs," the estates depended on constant importation of new slaves from Africa.[38]

Gang labor supplied the crucial element of the work regime for large-scale sugar production. Armies of slaves working six long days a week in tightly controlled teams rotated through a series of time-sensitive, interdependent tasks. Field gangs, divided into multiple contingents, employed the largest proportion of slaves on a large plantation. A gang of children carried grass to the livestock and did light hoeing work around the cane shoots. Another gang would weed the cane pieces, clean pastures, and assist the

first gang of prime field hands at crop time. This first gang performed the hardest labor, digging deep cane holes for planting and cutting the ripe canes at harvest. There might be something of a respite during May and June, after the reaping and before the slaves began boring into the ground again for the next crop. To meet these demands, slaves were kept at their tasks in lockstep fashion on a rigid schedule. Such labor was obtained through compulsion, especially by the threat of the whip.[39]

Mid-eighteenth-century sugar estates demanded a hierarchical division of labor and maintained a brutal discipline, comparable to that of the military. Estate owners and their planting attorneys gave direction to overseers, who supervised several white managers, generally called bookkeepers, below them. Even the enslaved workers were highly stratified. Drivers, almost exclusively male, commanded the field gangs who performed the most grueling work. Presenting the front line of intimidation on behalf of the planters, drivers set the pace of fieldwork. For this they received special privileges: better clothing and food, and sometimes a house set apart from other workers. Their position gave them a tense and ambivalent relationship with overseers and their other immediate white supervisors, who depended on the drivers' ability to manage the slaves, yet feared their potential for independent leadership.[40]

A number of occupations required looser discipline and offered a modicum of social status. Boilers and distillers possessed indispensable technical skills and commanded some respect within the chain of command. There were also coopers, who constructed the hogsheads and puncheons for containing sugar and rum; carpenters, masons, and blacksmiths, who maintained buildings and machinery; keepers to tend the livestock; and carters, who conducted cargo around the island. These tradesmen and craft workers had more autonomy than the fieldworkers, and also tended to live longer, healthier lives. Domestic workers in households could seek favors and resources by virtue of their proximity to whites, but were more directly subject to their abuses, too.[41]

Gender and ethnicity helped to determine who performed particular roles on the plantations. Women worked disproportionately in the field and were largely excluded from the highly skilled and higher-status jobs. Very occasionally, they might be drivers of secondary gangs; more often, they worked as domestics. The higher-status jobs went mostly to men. Creoles, those born on the island and accustomed to the ways of plantation society, generally won the less taxing and autonomous occupations that required the trust and preference of the masters. Native Africans were overwhelmingly relegated to the fields. Yet some slaveholders were prejudiced in favor of Africans from particular regions, such as the Gold Coast. Likewise, a par-

ticular African's demonstrated ability to wield responsible authority might land him the position of driver, a potentially contradictory role as both enforcer of plantation order and leader of enslaved communities.[42]

Militarism set the customary pattern for white dominance in slave society, which encompassed a routinely brutal civil conflict. Many of the white men who staffed the plantations in the formative phases of Jamaica's development were military veterans, trained by service in the highly regimented and harshly disciplined armies and navies of the Nine Years' War and Queen Anne's War. Viewing Africans essentially as enemies, they had no compunction about terrorizing them into submission.[43]

As it applied to the enslaved, even the law itself served as a public declaration of war. The earliest slave codes described Africans as an "uncertain, dangerous, and brutish sort of people," to be governed as adversaries. Despite Jamaica's history of uprisings and war with the maroons, Beckford's friend James Knight insisted that "the Security of the White People is under providence owing to the Laws for the good Order & Government of Slaves." It was a capital crime for a slave to "compass or imagine the death of a White Person." A slave was neither permitted to keep firearms or other "dangerous Weapons" at home, "nor suffered to go out of the Plantation They belong to without a Certificate from the Master or Overseer, expressing the Time He has leave to be Absent, and upon what Occasion." Slaveholders used their discretion in applying these regulations, which were "sometimes winked at and not strictly put into Execution." Trusted slaves could even bear arms for their masters in the event of a foreign invasion or internal uprising. But slaveholders all understood the need to keep slaves "in awe."[44] When rebellions occurred, the whites' reactions were extreme. "No Country excels them in a barbarous Treatment of Slaves," wrote Charles Leslie of Jamaicans in 1739, "or in the cruel Methods they put them to Death."[45] The law treated rebel combatants simultaneously as traitors against legitimate authority and as enemies outside the protection of society. As "intestine enemies," rebels received gruesome exemplary punishments. They were beaten to pulp, suspended in cages to starve, drawn and quartered, and burned alive. Some were beheaded—and their skulls were used to adorn signposts dispersed across the landscape.[46]

Exemplary violence was not limited to sudden events like uprisings; it was woven into the everyday experience of slave society. In the late 1720s, one astute commentator noted the "Barbarity daily exercised on the Bodies of the miserable Negros; The piercing Cryes and dolefull Lamentations that every Day enters one's Ears both in Town and Country, being enough to terrify a meek natur'd Person just landed in those parts of the World." After some time on the island, however, most managed to become inured to "those

Barbarous Treatments, and at last become as cruel and hard hearted" as the native-born whites. The explanation for the "unmerciful Temper" of the locals was simple: "It is no wonder that Children born in the Country and brought up and educated among a perpetual Scourging, and by Degrees delighted with the clamour of those miserable Creatures, as well as with the Sight of their Bodies cover'd with Blood and the Flesh thereof perfectly dissected after Correction, should as they grow up not only be hardened to it, but make it one of their Diversions." Whites trained themselves to discipline slaves at a young age—and learned to enjoy it. "They are pleas'd in the West Indies with Scourging, and the first Play-Thing put into their hands is commonly a Whip with which they exercise themselves upon a Post, in Imitation of what they daily see perform'd on the naked Bodies of those miserable Creatures, till they are come to an Age that will allow them Strength enough to do it themselves."[47] This deliberate introduction to brutality trained whites in the practice of mastery, which required continuous assaults on the slaves' capacity for independent volition. Migrants to the island who wished to work in the sugar industry quickly learned to be pitiless soldiers in a war against the dignity of the enslaved.

The Englishman Thomas Thistlewood arrived in Jamaica in 1750 and kept a diary of his thirty-six years on the island until his death in 1786. He began his career as an overseer of a livestock pen in the parish of St. Elizabeth. Supervising forty-two slaves on an isolated tract of land, Thistlewood sometimes went weeks without seeing another white person. He secured his mastery through a liberal resort to violence and sexual dominance. In his one-year employment at the pen, he found occasions to whip three-quarters of the men and more than a third of the women under his charge. Thistlewood had sexual intercourse with ten of these seventeen women, taking one as a regular concubine. The next year he moved to neighboring Westmoreland Parish, where William Beckford and Arthur Forrest owned plantations, and took a job on the Egypt sugar estate owned by John Cope Jr., son of the former chief agent of Cape Coast Castle. There, as overseer of more than ninety slaves, Thistlewood turned decidedly more monstrous. He frequently threatened dismemberment and death as punishment for recalcitrance. He penetrated the women of his choice, copulating as frequently as two hundred times a year. He devised degrading tortures, several times forcing slaves to defecate in each other's mouths for small infractions. And Thistlewood was hardly unique in his rough treatment of black people. Indeed, his diary's descriptions of many other white men's methods make his own seem relatively disciplined and restrained.[48]

The personal domination required to manage a slave society facilitated a bellicose demeanor on the part of men looking to justify and direct their

aggression. Soon after arriving on the island, Thistlewood was given advice: "In this Country it is highly necessary for a Man to fight once or twice, to keep Cowards from putting upon him." Jamaican white men were known to be haughty and "liable to sudden transports of anger."[49] Martial masculinity valorized violent self-assertion, absolute control over black subordinates, and sexual dominance of women. These were the prerogatives of mastery, akin to rights of conquest, and were apt expressions of a man's capacity to act forcefully upon his environment. The coercive power of slaveholders was seldom questioned, and slaves had little formal protection from punishment, rape, torture, or even murder. Lording over vast numbers of vulnerable people whom they could oppress without repercussion, whites turned belligerence toward blacks into a common custom. Blacks endured showers of insults and epithets, personal violations, physical assaults, and assorted humiliations while they dreamed of self defense.[50]

In their own company, one white judged another by his capacity to exert his will in the world, to possess people and things, and to acquire useful knowledge. Admired for their hospitality to those within the circle of amity, they were also intensely competitive in their pursuits—whether in business, in courtship, or in matters of social rank. Masculine rivalry even stirred their scientific curiosities. Thistlewood maintained interests in botany, physics, and astronomy, and collected a range of scientific instruments over his lifetime. As a capable amateur astronomer, he could not help being impressed by the "6 feet Acromatic Telescope" possessed by a friend: "Better than Mine, tho' not in proportion" to the difference in the amounts each had each paid for his. He later consoled himself that at least his telescope was bigger than Captain Arthur Forrest's.[51]

As with most white men of fighting age, Thomas Thistlewood served in the local militia, mustering some forty times through the 1750s.[52] The militia could protect against invasion, as it had during the French incursion of 1694, but its primary purpose was to defend against slave revolt. James Knight described Jamaica's public vigilance in this way: "Guards are constantly kept on Sundays & Holidays and the Troops of Horse in several Parishes or Precincts are obliged to Patrol in Their Respective Divisions, to prevent Conspiracies or disorders amongst the Negroes." Knight was confident in the militia's ability to intimidate slaves, especially when they exercised in combination with regular army troops. "When [the slaves] see the White People Muster or Exercise," he claimed, "it strikes an awe and terrour into Them." Slaves generally avoided anyone wearing a red coat, like those worn by grenadiers, he noted, and as a result, "some Gentlemen put on a Coat of that Colour when they Travell" to deter trouble on the roads.[53]

This was partly wishful thinking on Knight's part. He thought that Africans were more afraid of militiamen than black people born on the island were, the latter being more familiar with the sight of a muster and able to "make use of Fire Arms as well as the Militia." Certainly, despite not being trusted by whites to possess guns, many Africans were as able as creoles to use firearms. Moreover, not everyone shared Knight's belief in the militia's effectiveness. In 1730, Governor Robert Hunter disparaged the militia as "indifferent," worrying that most of its men were "not to be trusted with arms." Knight admitted that in the 1730s, Jamaicans were "not so well Disciplined as formerly," referring to past years when the militia had more war veterans experienced in imperial campaigns.[54]

A more precise portrayal of the Jamaican militia emerges in the writings of the Swiss naturalist and collector Pierre Eugène du Simitière, who arrived on the island in the late 1750s after a stay in the neighboring French colony of St. Domingue. In general, he found the Jamaican militias overrun with pride, pomp, and regalia. He was especially unimpressed by the countryside militias, like Thistlewood's in Westmoreland Parish, which were top-heavy with men of rank, he observed, having too many leaders in command of too few followers. The soldiers were mostly the overseers, bookkeepers, and other white servants of the plantations, with the estate owners and attorneys serving as officers. "No planter or owner of an Estate is willing to muster as a private man," du Simitière explained, "if he can for a dobloon purchase a commission from the governors secretary, which is seldom refused." Having easily bought an officer's rank, no matter for how long a term of service, a planter gained the pleasure of "hearing himself call'd all his life afterward Cap[tai]n Such a one[,] Major or Col[onel]." Indeed, the militia was littered with colonels because, once having held the commission, planters were "stiled Colonels forever after."[55] This system helped elite colonists maintain an exalted sense of self-worth, but it saddled the militia with proud men of no formal military training, skill, or virtue. Military rank merely reflected prevailing social hierarchies of property, race, and nationality.

Du Simitière had little more confidence in the Spanish Town units. These reflected social rank in the capital, a "mixture of high & low without any medium."[56] As in the countryside, the Spanish Town militia was made up of wealthy men holding officers' commissions and so-called private men of modest means. Du Simitière observed that "those that muster in the capacity of soldiers are little better in general than what is understood by common white men in that Island." The officers, though, were mostly lawyers, doctors, and a small number of planters, "whose Pride exceeds always their fortune."[57] The distinction showed up starkly in the militiamen's attire.

Divided into companies, each with their own coats, capes, and hats of distinctive colors, "the lower class of them looks ragged & despised," sniffed du Simitière, while the officers "cover themselves with Regimentals veneer'd all over with lace."[58]

Du Simitière also disapproved of the way Jews were "promiscuously mixt with the Christians & the blacks with the mulattoes." Spanish Town was home to a sizable population of Jewish and free black and brown people, the latter composing nearly a third of the town's 1,271 inhabitants in 1754. These groups were middlemen of sorts, brought into the militia to secure their allegiance to the dominant white Christians. Many of the Jews were descended from those who had fled the Iberian Peninsula during the Inquisition and continued to practice their religion secretly in the colonies. They engaged principally in shopkeeping and trade, and needed to maintain amicable relations with the planters, as did the free people of color, who worked mostly in service occupations. So-called mulattoes, having white as well as black ancestry, generally required white patrons to make their way in society. Some were granted the privileges of white people by acts of legislature. Free black people lacking the benefit of blood relations could also seek out patrons. Militia service offered each of these groups a way to demonstrate loyalty to the ruling race.

There were also many Jews and free black and brown people in Kingston, but its greater wealth supported the finer distinctions of an ascending social pyramid.[59] The Kingston militia was more formidable than Spanish Town's, in du Simitière's view. It comprised some one thousand men, including the free people of color, divided into eight companies that were each distinguished by regiments with their own distinctive uniforms. Du Simitière described these in detail from high social status to low: "a Scarlet regimental faced with Blue & metal Buttons" for the colonel's company, with officers donning a "Scarlet Coat faced with blue velvet without any lace but a gold one upon the Hat"; the merchant colonel's company sporting "blue faced [regimental] with red & gold-laced Hat"; the numerous "True Blues" with blue and red coats and plain hats; red with green capes for the major's company; blue with crimson velvet cape for the captain commandant's; a sizable Jewish company in red; a "mulattoe's company" with red and green colors; and the blacks' "Blue faced with Buff." Besides these there were horse troop units, one Jewish and two Christian, with their own colors and standards. The infantry regiment had "two Pair of Colours one of which is the union flag Such as it is used by all his majesty's & the other is white with the coat of arms of the Island as granted by King Charles II emblazoned in her proper colours upon it." The drummers of all these companies, including the drum majors, were black men, with "liverys Generally

the Reverse of the Regimental of the Companys whom they belong to, adorned with a great deal of Rich livery lace." Kingston's wealth kept these units cohesive and well-decorated.[60] Drilling in the commercial capital, though, they had little deterrent effect on the great populations of enslaved Africans in the countryside.

A few white men received religious exemptions from militia service. In the mid-1750s, at the invitation of several absentee landholders, the Unitas Fratrum, or Moravian Church, established a chain of mission stations at estates in the parishes of Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth, where they proselytized among the enslaved. Begun by Zacharias George Caries late in 1754, the mission grew with the arrival in 1757 of Christian and Anna Rauch, Brother Nicolaus Gandrup, and their converts. As pacifists opposed to military service, they shunned the taking of oaths, the bearing of arms, and military service in any capacity. A parliamentary act of 1749 allowed them full liberty of conscience in the exercise of their religious beliefs, though they remained a scorned religious minority in a colony under the jurisdiction of the established Anglican Church.[61]

The Moravian missions had been approved by the property owners, but the attorneys, overseers, and bookkeepers who managed the sugar plantations disdained the brethren. Most slaveholders feared that converting slaves to Christianity might propagate dangerous notions of equality, weakening the sense of awe required to keep them in subjection.[62] They also resented the missionaries' refusal to take up arms, especially as they worked in parishes where the black population vastly outnumbered the whites. Despite the missionaries' best efforts to placate the slaveholders by preaching obedience and avoiding direct criticism of planter brutality, they took little part in the martial masculinity that underpinned the whites' sense of security. To most free men in a colony perpetually on alert, Moravian pacifism appeared fainthearted, perhaps disloyal. In a society committed to aggression as a way of life, the brethren were the exceptions that proved the rule of Jamaican militarism.

Jamaica's internally violent system remained productive only insofar as it was not undermined by Great Britain's imperial conflicts. Wars between European empires interrupted trade and disrupted plantation output. As a military outpost, Jamaica was viewed in Great Britain as a fortress to protect British agriculture and commerce. But it was no remote bastion. Since maritime trade extended British interests along the lattice of sea lanes connecting Europe, Africa, and America, Jamaica was a key node in a network of military power that linked landscapes and seascapes across the Atlantic.

The combined forces of the British Empire—militia, army, navy, and marines—stood ready to protect shipping and defend plantation colonies against attack. When called upon to serve larger ambitions, they could also take ships and territory from rivals. Patrick Browne crowed that Jamaica was "so advantageously situated in regard to the main continent, that it has been considered for many years as a magazine for the neighbouring parts of America."[63] While the British concentrated their land forces in the more populous expanses of the North American continent, a report of 1748 counted 7,500 men on the island fit to bear arms, including the militia. Colonial governors often complained that militia men were not as well trained or strictly disciplined as regular imperial forces, yet the regulars often served as adjuncts to the militia's prosecution of the internal war against the enslaved. Through the 1720s and 1730s, British redcoats fought the maroons to a stalemate. At the end of 1743, the British raised a regiment from the eight independent companies of the regular army, placing it under the direct command of Governor Edward Trelawny, who was especially alert to the danger of slave revolt and maroon war. "Edward Trelawny's Regiment of Foot" was redesignated as the "Forty-ninth Regiment of Foot" in 1751, when a royal warrant reorganized the British infantry. The Seventy-fourth Regiment soon joined the Forty-ninth, and the primary purpose of these troops was to formally prosecute "intestine war."[64]

The Navy was crucial to this effort. Though much attention has been devoted to the Navy's outward engagements with foreign enemies and its practice of pressing unwilling men into service, another of its missions was to aid in the suppression of domestic revolts. The Royal Navy's well-deserved historical reputation as an antislavery organization in the nineteenth century has deflected attention from its active eighteenth-century role in the maintenance of slavery in the sugar colonies. James Knight lauded British maritime strength not only in imperial war and commerce but also for its value in intimidating the enslaved. "The Men of War that are constantly on the Station & the great Number of Shipping continually coming and going gives Them an Idea of the Strength & Power of the English Nation, & Strikes an awe and Terrour into Them," he contended. The Navy's role in protecting planters proved as vital as its defense of merchants.[65]

Without question, the Jamaica garrison relied upon the Royal Navy to fight its external wars. The island's location at some distance from Cuba and Hispaniola made it an excellent base for campaigns against the Spanish possessions in the Caribbean and the French in St. Domingue. From the time of Queen Anne's War, the Admiralty deployed a permanent squadron at Jamaica, keeping it there after the war to intercept Spanish galleons when

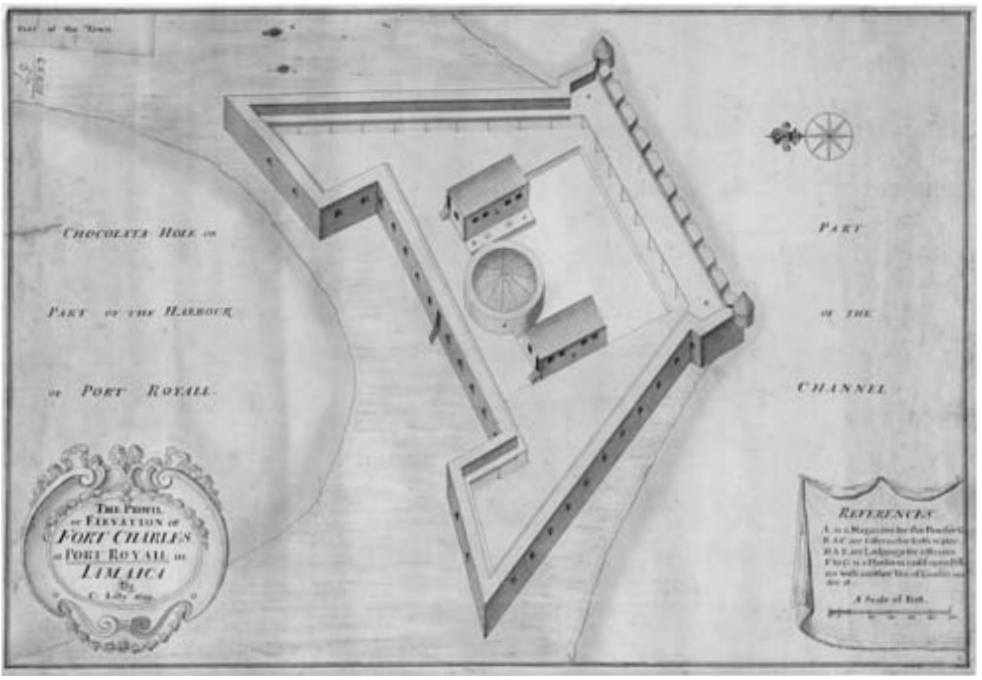

Figure 2.2. Profile or Elevation of Fort Charles, 1699.
Ink on paper by C. Lilly. *Courtesy of the British Library.*

possible and to take opportunistic advantage of trouble between Spain and her colonial subjects. During the War of Jenkins' Ear and the Seven Years' War, as the British reengaged the increasingly powerful French navy, the government committed more consistent naval firepower to the Caribbean than ever before.[66]

Although Port Royal had been destroyed in the 1692 earthquake, damaged by fire in 1702, and leveled again by successive hurricanes in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, in 1735 the Admiralty expended significant resources to rebuild and expand its wharves and dockyards. It remained, according to James Knight, an excellent harbor and a "Convenient Place for a Garrison, the Fortifications on which the Security of the Island, at least of the Trade and Navigation depend being chiefly here." An independent company of about one hundred regular army soldiers kept constant watch, accompanied by a regiment of militia, which kept a nightly guard. Military deputies oversaw the entrance and clearance of ships. Port Royal continued to maintain an impressive battery. Sixty-five cannon lined the fortifications at Fort Charles, thirty-four more constituted the Hanover

Line built in 1717, and forty heavy cannon and some mortars topped the wall running from the northeast to the south end of the town. More fortifications and batteries at Augusta Fort on Mosquito Point defended the passage into Kingston Harbour. In the 1720s, an additional, smaller naval base had been established at Lynch's Island off Port Antonio, to supplement the facilities at Port Royal.[67]

The size of the Jamaica squadron varied according to circumstances. The colonists had requested ten or twelve warships for the station during the early eighteenth century but seldom hosted so many. During the War of Jenkins' Ear, however, the squadron commonly included ten to fourteen warships of various sizes, including as many as seven ships of the line—heavy warships built to fire successive rounds of cannon alongside others—for major engagements. The Admiralty decided to keep eight ships of the line and eleven smaller craft at Jamaica in 1757. By 1760, at the height of the Seven Years' War in the Caribbean, there were sixteen British warships assigned to Jamaica, with 478 cannon and nearly 3,700 men between them, as compared to eighteen ships in the Leeward Islands and nineteen vessels assigned to the whole of the North American continent.[68]

Despite a chronic shortage of seamen, compounded by high death rates and frequent desertion, the Royal Navy maintained permanent squadrons in the West Indies while the French did not. Most importantly, British sailors with long-term residence in the region grew accustomed to the disease environment, which ravaged the large French flotillas sent to the Caribbean on special expeditions. North America provided abundant provisions, timber, and pitch, and the Caribbean dockyards at Port Royal, English Harbour, and Bridgetown allowed for most necessary repairs. Warships could stay in the West Indies for long periods of time, relieved periodically by those that accompanied commercial convoys from across the Atlantic once or twice a year. When a new admiral or commodore arrived to take command of the station, he generally brought a large company of ships with him. Station commanders therefore had the flexibility to send smaller ships on regular cruises to gather intelligence and intercept trade, while reserving their ships of the line for strategic attacks or defense against invasion.[69]

Adjunct to the Navy, the Royal Marines provided light infantry troops for amphibious warfare. Tracing their origins to the first maritime regiment of foot founded in 1664, His Majesty's Marine Forces formed three divisions under the control of the Admiralty in 1755.[70] Their establishment coincided with an increasing investment in "conjunct expeditions" of land and sea forces. While military planners developed grand plans for invasions of France and Spain, smaller expeditions in the colonies provided continuous experience, especially in the Caribbean, where amphibious fighting

was the established way of war. In 1759, Thomas More Molyneux published a detailed analysis of all British amphibious expeditions carried out since the time of Queen Elizabeth, divided into great and small and successful and unsuccessful campaigns. Of the sixty-eight expeditions that he counted in Europe, Africa, the East Indies, and America, nearly a third took place in the Caribbean, and the West Indies accounted for more than eighty percent of the American campaigns.[71]

Among the failed ventures, the 1741 siege of Cartagena loomed large, and Molyneux's analysis would have been of special interest to veterans of that disaster. Admiral Thomas Cotes, who commanded the Jamaica station in 1760 and had led a group that included young Arthur Forrest in taking a Spanish battery at Cartagena, was surely well-versed in the latest wisdom on amphibious assaults when the slaves of St. Mary's Parish first rose up in revolt.[72] So, too, was his successor on the station, Rear Admiral Charles Holmes, who arrived during the rebellion soon after serving as Major General James Wolfe's third-in-command during the siege and capture of Quebec in September 1759. But despite railing against Britain's propensity to "flounder and flounce about" in the conduct of amphibious warfare because of a lack of systematic study, Molyneux said nothing about combined operations against rebellious slaves. Jamaica's military commanders would have to figure that out for themselves.[73]

In pursuit of its war aims, the Admiralty employed the most notorious system of discipline outside the slave plantation. British forces were bound by the rigor of martial law on land and at sea. Following some disappointing performances by naval officers during the early years of the War of the Austrian Succession in the 1740s, a powerful faction of the British government became convinced of the need for a more professional navy with a stronger sense of duty, tighter discipline, and greater courage in battle. These authoritarian Whigs sought naval reforms aimed at standardizing military regulations, reasserting hierarchy, and securing obedience to central authority. Accordingly, in 1749, Parliament revised the 1661 Articles of War and subsequent laws "relating to the Sea Service," which regulated the conduct of sailors.[74]

The new Articles of War ran like a cable throughout the Royal Navy, connecting, combining, and strengthening its exertions while promising punishment to the disobedient. The officers frequently read their provisions aloud to the crew, a ritual intended to incite fear of the naval command as much as of the enemy. Invoking the spiritual authority of the Anglican Church, the Articles of War compelled the performance of public piety aboard ships, "according to the Liturgy of the Church of England." Under the "good Providence of God," they also reaffirmed the Navy's jurisdiction

over sailors on the "main Sea, or in great Rivers," and "beneath the Bridges of the said Rivers nigh to the Sea, or in any Haven, River, or Creek within the Jurisdiction of the Admiralty." Crew members in "actual Service and full Pay of his Majesty's Ships and vessels of War" could not escape the Admiralty's justice by committing crimes on shore.[75]

One special concern of the reform was a tendency by those in the officer corps to use status and connections to influence outcomes of courts martial. It addressed this by limiting the courts' power to reduce punishments for particular crimes.[76] Twenty-one of the thirty-six articles threatened the death sentence, which was expressly mandated for murder or "holding illegal correspondence with the enemy," but could also be fitting punishment for "uttering seditious words," concealing "mutinous Practice or Design," striking a superior officer, or committing buggery or other offenses.

Most of all, the Articles of War were designed to stimulate aggression against the enemy. Yielding or crying for quarter in a treacherous or cowardly manner was punishable by death. So, too, was "Cowardice or Neglect of Duty during a time of Action," as British subjects discovered when the rich and well-connected Admiral John Byng was famously executed for failing to "do his utmost" to defend the British fortress at Minorca, taken by the French in the spring of 1756. Article XIII promised death to "Every Person in the Fleet, who through Cowardice, Negligence, or Disaffection, shall forbear to pursue the Chace of any Enemy, Pirate, or Rebel, beaten or flying." Sailors were similarly discouraged "upon pain of death" from "relieving an enemy or rebel" with money, munitions, food and drink, "or any other supplies whatsoever." The common problem of desertion or inciting others to desert invited "death, or other such punishments as the Circumstances of the Offence shall deserve." Most offenses and punishments remained vaguely defined; courts martial still had broad discretion in most cases, and the death penalty was infrequently imposed. But the ascendancy of the Articles of War fulfilled its intention to intimidate, and an anxiously observant officer class led to more browbeaten common seamen as the coercion cascaded downward. Officers made liberal use of public flogging to punish "Other Crimes not Capital," according to the "Laws and Customs in such Cases used at Sea." With hierarchy, discipline, and bellicosity reasserted, the Articles of War strengthened Britain's capacity to subdue its enemies, both foreign and domestic.[77]

Wager, the enslaved man from the Gold Cost owned by Captain Arthur Forrest, fought in Great Britain's foreign wars before he became an internal enemy. Prior to being a driver on Forrest's estate, Wager labored for more than a year aboard a Royal Navy warship, but what little we know of

FIGURE 2.3. Arthur Forrest.

Engraving by Richard Purcell, after Johan van Diest, published ca. 1758. © *National Portrait Gallery, London.*

his military service emerges obliquely through the story of his master. Born in Edinburgh, Scotland, Arthur Forrest moved to London as an adolescent and went to sea at an early age. He was working as a master of a merchant ship in the Jamaica trade when war broke out between England and Spain in 1739. Captain Charles Knowles and Vice-Admiral Edward Vernon recruited him to join the expedition to Porto Bello as a pilot. The capture of Porto Bello made Vernon a national hero, and Forrest shared in the glory of the victory, ascending to the rank of Lieutenant in the Royal Navy the next year.[78] At Jamaica, Vernon planned his next campaign, sending Forrest to scout the route to Santiago, Cuba, before deciding instead upon Cartagena, the commercial and military hub of Spanish New Granada, a great swath of South America that was rich in precious minerals, agricultural products, and timber. Forrest sailed from Jamaica aboard HMS *Burford,* in the company of some 186 vessels, including twenty-nine ships of the line. He was one of fifteen thousand sailors, and about twenty-nine thousand men in total, the largest military force that had ever been assembled in the Caribbean.[79]

The British laid siege to Cartagena for over a month, but yellow fever ravaged the troops as their commanding officers squabbled over tactics. The campaign ended in disaster. More than eight thousand soldiers and sailors died in less than two months at Cartagena; another thousand-plus would perish within a few weeks of the fleet's return to Jamaica. Yet Forrest had distinguished himself during the amphibious assault, leading a party of seamen that took a four-cannon Spanish battery while capturing six prisoners. He and the other seamen in the operation personally received a financial token from Admiral Vernon as a reward for their "gallantry."[80]

Credited for courage in battle, Forrest accelerated in his rise through the ranks, commanding three different vessels before being promoted to the rank of post captain on HMS *Wager* on March 9, 1745.[81] Around this time, too, he acquired an enslaved African with a name that sounded something like Apongo, and renamed him Wager to mark this significant career milestone. If he had learned anything of Apongo's background, Forrest might even have seen the new appellation as a way of subsuming Apongo's formerly exalted status by making him a mascot. During the insurrection of 1760 it was rumored that Wager had sailed in this ship, which Forrest commanded from 1744 to 1748, and indeed, one able seaman named James Wager mustered aboard at Port Royal on April 13, 1746.[82] It was common for slaves serving on Royal Navy ships to receive generically Christian forenames such as James, John, or Peter, attached to the single designations, of African or European origin, that the enslaved usually carried. Wager sailed alongside at least three other black men listed on the same musters. Judging by their Akan names, at least two of these were probably from the Gold Coast: John Quaco, an able seaman who served from January 9, 1746, to June 14, 1747; and Peter Quamina, a servant to the ship's carpenter, who mustered on July 18, 1746, and left the ship on May 3, 1747. They accompanied able seaman John Primus, who arrived November 16, 1746, and served until July 3, 1747.[83] These men joined dozens of other black seamen employed at Jamaica, who constituted about a quarter of the crews plying the island's shipping lanes at the time.[84]

After James Wager joined the crew, HMS *Wager* spent the next fourteen months patrolling Jamaica's coastal shoreline and cruising its eastern waters to the French colony of St. Domingue. He had been aboard only six days when the *Wager* chased, attacked, and captured a Spanish privateer off the east end of Jamaica. Less than two weeks after that, the crew pursued two vessels off Cape Tiberon. The *Wager* quickly caught up to the smaller of them, a sloop, and sent out a barge and canoe "Man'd & Arm'd" with a boarding party. Alarmingly, the sailors "found her to be a French Privateer of Great Force," and they aborted their attempt, rowing away as fast as they could under fire from cannon and small arms. When a bigger ship, and

likely a better prize, appeared on the horizon, the *Wager* broke off and gave chase. The next night, with a brief exchange of cannon fire, Forrest captured his prize—a French warship bound for home from the colonies—and took sixty-five prisoners. Forrest sent the French prisoners to shore at Port Royal a few days later, and Wager might have noted that they were not to be sold as slaves as African captives generally were.[85]

The French cannon fire had torn up the *Wager's* rigging and shot through the main and mizzen masts, and the ship had to spend the next two weeks undergoing repairs in Port Royal Harbour. Watching the comings and goings in a naval port at war, Wager surely reflected on British power. The waterfront was busy and growing. In the previous decade, workers had constructed a careening wharf, storehouses, officers' quarters, and a wall to surround the naval yard. Another new wharf had just come into service in 1744. He would have noted the polyglot composition of the military's workforce. Black people performed much of the basic labor on the station: a report of 1748 listed fifty-three caulkers, two sawyers, six smiths, and fifty-one laborers, all paid five shillings a day. Alongside these were fourteen more black laborers and seven boat crewmen earning less than two shillings a day, as well as ten "King's Negroes," slaves owned by the Navy. Listening to the guttural commands and urgent translations among multiple languages, he must have become aware of the chronic shortage of seamen, made acute by sudden death and desertion.[86]

Wager also probably paid close attention to the rituals of hierarchy, the stern discipline, and the eager aggression that made the Royal Navy such a capable force. Yet, having seen sailors repelled in a battle and the *Wager* wounded even in victory, he would have known that the British military was not invulnerable. And he would have heard from other crewmembers the story of the *Wager's* deadly dispute in Boston, less than six months before he mustered, when Captain Forrest had caused a fracas with the locals there by pressing some men into service. Two men died in the skirmish and the *Wager's* boatswain was arrested, charged with murder, and sentenced to die, although it appears he escaped the hangman. The story of this recent conflict might have been Wager's earliest lesson on imperial compulsion and local rebellion in the Americas.[87] More directly, he would have seen that the Navy's role in fighting the French and Spanish was not distinct from the maintenance of colonial slavery. At least once, the *Wager's* crew helped to police the enslaved population, as in September 1746, when they captured a canoe carrying "two English Negros" who had escaped from Spanish Town.[88]

Several months later, Wager participated in a major engagement. In company with two other warships on June 6, 1747, HMS *Wager* chased two French ships of twenty-four and thirty-six guns between the St. Domingue

coast and the small island of Tortuga toward the forts overlooking the bay at Port Paix. Arranging into a line of battle, the English ran by the bay firing upon the ships and forts, but then came too close to the shore and had to bear away before they could get within cannon range. Brisk return fire from the French did little damage. The forts above the bay had made the difference, something Wager might have remembered years later when he gathered with fellow African rebels at a barricade high above the Westmoreland plain.[89]

James Wager was discharged as "unserviceable" on July 3, 1747, before the *Wager* made its return voyage to Great Britain via North America.[90] He may have been ill, like most sailors so listed in the muster. Just as likely, Forrest may have discharged him as part of a general practice of employing black sailors, often enslaved, in Caribbean waters and then leaving them behind when the ships returned to England. Ships' crews carried more black men in the Caribbean than elsewhere, even though the Admiralty generally discouraged slavery within its ranks. Following regional expectations, captains often took on black sailors in the slave colonies and discharged them before going home, as Forrest also did with John Quaco and John Primus.[91]

Captain Forrest himself had no disagreement with Caribbean slavery. Indeed, he had deep roots among Jamaica's local elite. His family had owned property on the island from the late seventeenth century, and his many years of service in the region had acclimated him physically and culturally. Having recently inherited sugar plantations from his father, Thomas, in 1747 Forrest married the daughter of another wealthy Jamaica planter. By the time Forrest left for Great Britain with his new wife, in August 1747, he was sole or part owner of nearly three thousand acres in the parishes of Westmoreland and St. Elizabeth. He had also added commercial assets to his landed wealth, investing heavily in prize cargos captured from Britain's enemies. In England, Captain and Mrs. Forrest purchased a country estate called the Grove at Emmer Green, north of Caversham in Oxfordshire. Still, Forrest's friends thought Jamaica was "the place most agreeable to him." Since he was an accomplished naval officer, a great planter, and a war profiteer, there were no tensions between Forrest's military service to the British Empire, his zeal in the protection of its trade, and his personal interest in slavery. He knew as well as anyone that slavery thrived as the fruit of war, even if he did not acknowledge, as his fellow mariner Olaudah Equiano did, that slavery itself was a form of war.[92]

With Forrest away from the island from 1748 through 1755, Wager's next encounter with the captain probably occurred upon Forrest's return to the island in 1756 aboard the *Rye*. John Cope had died on February 3

of that same year, only weeks before the *Rye* anchored at Port Royal Harbour.[93] Would Cope have made good on his promise to Apongo to "have purchased him and sent him home had Capt. Forest come to the island" sooner, as Thistlewood surmised?[94] There is no way to know. Yet, given what we do know of their travels and experiences, we might imagine a palaver between Cope, Forrest, and Wager to decide the African's fate. In their arguments, each might have drawn upon how he understood the relationship between war and slavery.

Cope might have impressed upon Forrest that Africans, as he knew them, could easily be the equals or even the superiors of Europeans. On the Gold Coast, he had learned the need to resolve conflicting interests and discovered that the black-white racial distinction was rarely the most salient division among contending parties. In Africa, the British jockeyed with the Dutch, the Danish, and the French, even as they negotiated seriously with various African polities. To play all these parties off against each other to one's own advantage, one had to recognize the differences and various status hierarchies among them. That might allow one to maintain an advantageous position from a cramped and undermanned fort, just as one might occupy a plantation's great house in Jamaica surrounded by armies of slaves. Cope had seen the cost of the Ahanta Palavers at Sekondi and Dixcove. Surely, too, he must have agreed with the Danish perspective on the calamitous actions of Director-General Des Bordes at Elmina, who had "set an example to all Whites how not, without reason, to provoke the Blacks into trying their own strength."[95]

Having learned over decades in the Caribbean that war and slavery were a lucrative pairing, Forrest might have countered that Wager was his property by right of commerce and conquest. Having purchased him legitimately, he held a fair title. Like most American slaveholders, he would have felt certain that skin color was the surest indication of rank. Plus, he had mastered Wager twice, as owner and as military commander. Subordinates took orders; they did not negotiate terms. If Cope wanted to make such an altruistic purchase, perhaps Forrest would have considered it. But it would have been a business transaction between propertied white men, not a diplomatic palaver.

Wager had also known war. In 1756, he would have had fresh memories of Asante's expansion, of the swelling power of the Fante along the coast, and of the deadly struggles around the European forts. He, too, had developed a habit of command and was not in awe of Europeans, either as a free man or as a slave. If he was painfully aware of how precarious his own status had become, he would also have known that force worked against Europeans as well as any other people.

Of course, few slaves in Jamaica could have imagined such a meeting. Wager's story, as imprecise as it is, seems exceptional. By the time of his rebellion, Apongo had been an adult man of elite status and a captive, with a sense of the world that encompassed coastal West Africa, the greater islands of the Caribbean Sea, and life on a sugar plantation. He had played multiple roles and occupied several positions in this geography, but always with a capacity to soldier. And he was not alone in this, even if most enslaved migrants moved through worlds of more limited scope.

Though few shared Apongo's exalted status, most slaves engaged in a fluid struggle that compelled them to make unbearable decisions about when to yield, how to protect themselves and others from harm, whom to align with, and when and how to fight back, if at all.[96] In these decisions, the matrices of movement traced by soldiers, slavers, and their captives made political histories of space, connecting the expansive to the intimate as small wars kindled within larger wars. Jamaican slave society was therefore not only the commercial and military heart of the British Empire, but also a constant battleground at the intersection of the seascapes and landscapes that formed the martial geography of Atlantic slavery.

Whether or not a palaver would have resolved the dispute over Wager's freedom, the issue remained unsettled, and four years hence he would lead a West African war in Jamaica even as the island was embroiled in a European world war.

Given Jamaica's capacity to wage war within and beyond its shores, the importance of the garrison was not in doubt on the eve of the Seven Years' War. In 1754, with British colonial settlements pushing ever deeper into the North American continent, a territorial dispute with the French and their Indian allies in the Ohio backcountry sparked a conflict that would last until 1763 and would eventually encompass the globe, with theaters in North America, the Caribbean, South America, West Africa, India, and the Philippine Islands. The war ended with the Treaty of Paris and an overwhelming victory for Great Britain, including the formal recognition of Britain's dominance in eastern North America. But this outcome was far from certain when the war began.

The conflict elevated to power William Pitt, Earl of Chatham, who maintained an aggressive outlook on European rivalries and a firm conviction that American trade and sea power were crucial to national fortune. Having been an influential member of the Board of Trade, Pitt emerged as an advocate for the interests of West Indian planters and merchants. When he assumed the position of secretary of state and the *de facto* leadership of the government in 1756, he doubled the size of the naval squadrons at

Jamaica and the Leeward Islands, though the West Indies remained ancillary to Britain's strategic considerations in continental Europe and North America for the first several years of the war.[97]

Meanwhile, Jamaica was ripe with the expectation of a French invasion. In November 1756, colonists received news that a French expedition of six warships had arrived in the Caribbean. The Navy's squadron commander called his ships of the line back to station, and merchants and planters fretted over the consequences for their trade. Vessels had been scarce at Jamaica all year, and the principal shippers could not fix the price of freight for the following year for fear that their cargos would be taken by the French. The governor declared martial law, putting a stop to the ordinary business of the courts and obliging all white men of fighting age to report for militia duty. The islanders anxiously awaited the arrival of more ships from England, worried that they might be intercepted by the French cruising off Cape Tiberon.[98]

Well into 1758, the colonists complained of the bad fortune caused by the war. One described the situation to a colleague in London in dire terms: "There is no business to be done here with any pleasure as the Planters in general are greatly distressed for money. The Guinea Trade is in a very languid situation, and nothing has been done in that branch for many Months past, neither are the Merchants desirous of doing any more 'til they have collected their outstanding debts. I am afraid that the long credit, and bad pay, will be the ruin of this country, the scarcity of money never was known to be so great as it is here at present."[99] Importations of Africans had decreased nearly 60 percent between 1755 and 1758, down from a twenty-five-year high of nearly fifteen thousand to fewer than 5,600.[100] The decline in the slave trade betokened a decrease in business across the board. Because the British government required colonists to supplement the costs of housing, feeding, and equipping the army, this dip strained Jamaica's defenses.[101] Zachary Bayly noted how the slumping slave trade hindered Jamaica's military readiness, despite the news of promised relief from England: "We are big with Expectation of our new Governor, and another Regiment; but few Negroes having arrived this Year it's a difficult Task to find money, out of all our Friends, to maintain the Regiment we have here."[102] As the war dragged on, Jamaica's colonists desperately hoped that their lobby in Great Britain would convince the government to pay closer attention to the West India interest.

In London, Pitt was indeed preparing a strategy that would bring the Caribbean more directly into the war. He maintained that British sea power could break the stalemate in Europe by stripping France of its colonial possessions. In August 1758, he learned of the capture of France's North

American stronghold at Louisbourg, a crucial step toward the conquest of Montreal. But if Canada remained the biggest territorial prize, the richer nodes of Atlantic trade to the south offered other opportunities to utilize British naval superiority. France's wealth, like that of Great Britain, was greatly enhanced by African labor in the sugar islands, making West African slaving forts a military priority. In Senegal, the French had monopolized access to the trade in gum arabic, a crucial raw ingredient in silk manufacture, and they commanded the labor of a large population of "slave sailors" who plied their trade along the river. In the Lesser Antilles of the Caribbean, Martinique and Guadeloupe were as prodigiously profitable as Jamaica and Barbados; in fact, Pitt believed that Guadeloupe was worth more to Britain than the whole of Canada. Naval victories against the French in West Africa and their plantations in the Caribbean would sap their finances and make it more difficult for them to continue the war elsewhere.[103]

Pitt received advice from William Beckford, who had enlisted with Pitt's faction of the government: "In the militia of Jamaica I was no more than a common soldier," he declared. "In our present political warfare, I intend to act as one of your private soldiers without commission." Beckford counseled Pitt that an attack on the French island of Martinique would bring an easy victory and laudable spoils. "The negroes and stock of that island are worth above four millions sterling," he claimed. "For God's sake," Beckford urged, "attempt it without delay."[104] British West Indian planters did not hope to bring more sugar colonies into the fold—the competition would lower the price of their own commodities—but they did want to bring more British armaments into the region and more slaves to their own estates. Pitt was persuaded that capturing one of France's most profitable possessions would give the British considerable leverage in diplomatic bargaining when the war ended. Successful operations in Africa and the Caribbean might force the French to sue for peace on favorable terms and would serve West Indian interests, as well.[105]

Military strategists in London must have been encouraged by Captain Arthur Forrest's success during the war. Forrest had lived on a well-appointed countryside estate in England from 1748 until he earned his next command in May 1755, of HMS *Rye,* a twenty-four-gun frigate. By March 1756, he was back in Jamaica. A year later, he transferred his command to the sixty-gun ship of the line HMS *Augusta,* and embarked on what would be his most celebrated tour of duty.[106]

In October 1757, off the coast of St. Domingue, Forrest led the *Augusta,* the *Dreadnought,* and the *Edinburgh* into an engagement with a far supe-

rior French fleet of seven ships—four ships of the line and three well-armed frigates. By this time, the news that Admiral John Byng had been shot on his own quarterdeck in March for failing to fight the enemy had circulated around the officer corps, stimulating what naval historian Nicholas Rodger has called a "culture of aggressive determination which set British officers apart from their foreign contemporaries, and which in time gave them a steadily mounting psychological ascendancy."[107] According to several accounts, the war council between Forrest and the two captains of the accompanying ships was brief and direct: despite their numerical disadvantage, the three captains were eager to fight.[108]

In the "furious action" that commenced on October 21, the ships under Forrest's command crippled the French squadron, though the British ships were themselves so damaged by the fighting that they were unable to take any prizes. By one estimate, the French had between five hundred and six hundred men killed and wounded. The *Augusta* had nine men killed, and twenty-nine wounded, adding to the fourteen killed and sixty wounded between the other two British warships. Forrest's bold action made his reputation and epitomized the new spirit of gallantry among naval captains. What came to be called the Battle of Cap François was soon one of the Royal Navy's most widely known actions, even memorialized a few years later in a Church of England hymn. Just one month later, off the coast of Gonaïves, Forrest single-handedly captured a convoy of nine French ships carrying 112 guns and 415 men, and laden with sugar, indigo, and cotton valued at £170,000. That feat, too, was reported throughout the empire, but the news was especially celebrated in Jamaica, where Forrest brought the prizes to harbor.[109] His success in taking French prizes continued into the new year.

In the meantime, Forrest's slave Wager labored as a driver on Masemure estate. He had missed the Battle of Cap François and the Tiberon Cruise off Gonaïves, though at least three other black sailors—James Cudjoe, Jupiter Anon., and John Fortune—had mustered from the *Rye* to the *Augusta* along with Forrest. It is almost certain that when these men were discharged at Port Royal on December 31, 1757, they eagerly told their stories to other black sailors and to slaves. The deeds of their crew were the talk of the station, and it is safe to assume that the news reached Wager in Westmoreland Parish even before Forrest came to visit his plantation. This was less than two short years after John Cope, Wager's potential patron, died in 1756, and with him Wager's hope of manumission. Through 1758 and 1759, while Forrest became the hero of the Jamaica squadron and the toast of the empire, Wager contemplated his dwindling prospects for freedom.[110]

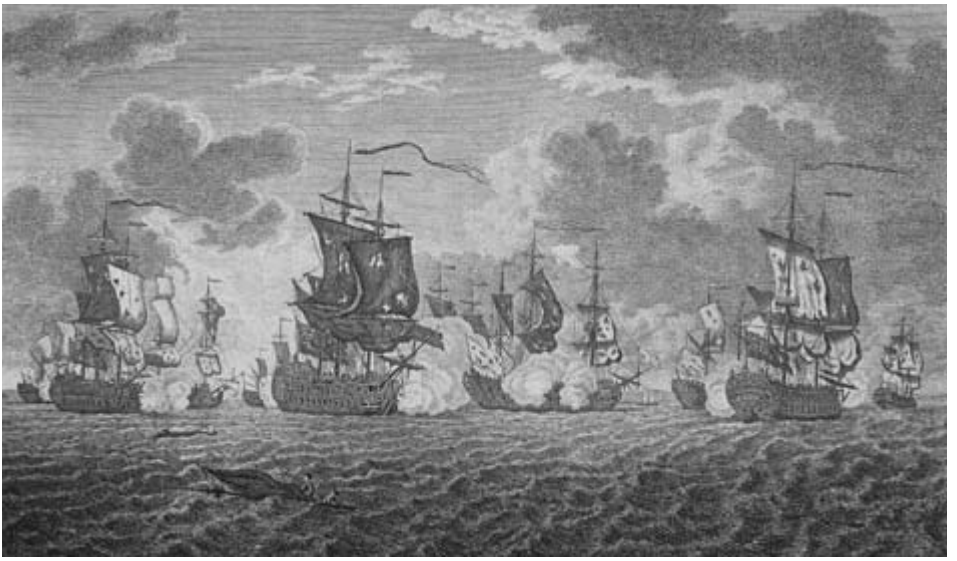

FIGURE 2.4. The Battle of Cap François, 21 October 1757.

"The Glorious Action off Cape Francois Octr. 21, 1757, between three English, and seven French Ships of War wherein the latter were entirely defeated," in Francis Swaine, *Twelve Prints of Sea Engagements,* ca. 1760. Painting by John Cleveley, after an engraving by Francis Swaine. *Courtesy of the Collections of the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London.*

It is impossible to know with any certainty what the news of the triumphs meant to Wager, at once Forrest's mascot, former crew member, and one of the "principal men" on his Jamaican estate. But it is likely that at least some of his sentiments revolved around the relationship between martial masculinity and mastery. In part because Africans from the Gold Coast often had experience in military campaigns, Jamaican slaveholders thought of them as a superior but difficult-to-manage species of property; like wild horses broken to domesticity, they conferred prestige upon the master. One can imagine that Arthur Forrest felt pride in enslaving another military man, absorbing him into his self-image as a conqueror—and that Forrest's martial achievements galled Wager all the more. How this weighed in his decision to plot a slave revolt we cannot know, though he probably began planning soon after Forrest left the island again in August 1759.

Forrest returned to England as a rich man made wealthier by war. He moved his family to a sumptuous estate, where he fashioned several additions and improvements to the house. The centerpiece of the renovation was a suite of rooms connected to the original house by a splendid picture gallery, a spacious drawing room, a salon, and an octagonal music room lighted by an overhead dome. Along the walls he hung large paintings to commemorate his various naval battles, most conspicuously the Battle of Cap Fran-

çois. In April 1760, on the eve of the slave insurrection in Jamaica, he commissioned the *Centaur,* a seventy-four-gun ship of the line, captured from France the previous year. Forrest would not return to Jamaica until early 1761, after his slaves had risen up to destroy his plantation.[111]

As England pursued its campaigns in West Africa and the West Indies, its ships, sailors, and soldiers traced the connections between the Jamaica garrison and the wider war. By their movements and actions, these instruments of empire bound the disparate regions of the Atlantic world to the slaving economy. The belligerent cruise of HMS *Harwich* offers a telling example. The *Harwich's* Captain, William Marsh, is known for the capture of Senegal in 1758, which preceded and prepared the way for the more celebrated conquest of Goree by Augustus Keppel later the same year.[112] Yet Marsh's conquest may be the least illuminating event in the ship's deployment.

Representing more than a single victory in a global imperial struggle, the *Harwich's* eventful mission along the Guinea coast and in the Caribbean highlights the inextricable link between soldiering and the geography of slavery during the Seven Years' War. The actions in Senegambia became a template for future marine operations during the period. At Senegal, the *Harwich's* marines proved the Navy's ability to project British sea power ashore and to seize strategically valuable assets without the help of the army.[113] Crucially, the campaign prepared the marines to fight Africans in close quarters, an experience they would call upon when suppressing the slave insurrection in Jamaica two years later.

Commissioned by the Royal Navy in 1756, the *Harwich* was a fourth-rate ship of the line bearing fifty heavy guns. In 1758, Captain Marsh assumed command of a small expedition under Pitt's orders to attack "any French forts and settlements on the River Senegal or the Coast of Africa" and to take stock of armaments and manpower at the British trading forts along the littoral.[114] Aboard the ship were one hundred fifty sailors and two hundred marines, prepared to bombard the French forts, land for close combat, and carry away prize ships and cargos. The *Harwich* sailed in company with HMS *Nassau,* sixty-four guns, Arthur Forrest's former ship HMS *Rye,* and three smaller vessels. The fleet arrived at the mouth of the Senegal River on April 23.

For the next few days, they transferred marines, munitions, and provisions to the smaller ships for landing, and then began to work their way past the dangerous sandbar bordering the harbor toward Fort Saint-Louis, the strongest post on the river, situated on an island about twelve miles within the bar. The French fired on the British from several small ships

while their African allies "kept up a continual fire with small arms," but by April 29, with the ships of the line bombarding the shore, the British had landed seven hundred seamen and marines with their artillery. On May 1, the French formally capitulated, yielding "all the forts, storehouses, vessels, arms, provision, and every thing belonging to the company, upon the River Senegal." Between the spoils in the fort and the sixteen prizes in the harbor, the British took ninety-two pieces of cannon, four hundred tons of gum, a great quantity of gold dust, nearly fifty thousand dollars, and a year's supply of goods for barter, in addition to fifty slaves and more than two hundred other prisoners.[115]

Leaving a large contingent of marines to occupy the fort, the fleet sailed on to the French naval station and slave barracoon at Goree Island, considered the key to French West Africa. On May 21, under fire from the fort's batteries, the warships anchored in Goree Road and prepared their assault on the fort. The smaller vessels took soundings of the water's depth between the island and mainland, but musket fire from African soldiers in canoes slowed their work. The *Harwich* anchored close to the shore, near one of the smaller ships, to prevent the canoes passing from the mainland to the island. By May 25, the crew were "making all clear for attacking Goree." Before daybreak the next morning, the *Harwich* formed a line of battle with the *Nassau* and the *Rye*. The British and French exchanged cannon fire for more than two hours, after which Captain Marsh found the *Harwich* badly damaged, its "mast & Rigging so much Shattered & Cutt," the main mast and main topsail yard "Shott in Pieces," and the foremast and rigging "very much Shattered." He ordered a retreat, but before they could sail out of range the French guns blasted the *Harwich's* stern, wounding many of its crew with flying shards of wood. Anchoring a safe distance from the fort, the officers counted their casualties: nine wounded from the *Harwich,* twelve killed and fourteen wounded on the *Nassau,* two killed and several wounded on the *Rye,* and one killed and several more wounded on one of the smaller ships.[116] The invasion had stalled.

The fleet retreated to the adjacent Gambia River, where the British secured the local trade from their fort at James Island. On May 30, the *Harwich* parted company with the *Nassau* and most of the rest of the fleet, who had been ordered home to England; it remained only with the *Rye* and one smaller ship. Casualties mounted as several sailors and marines died of their wounds, including a seaman who had "Lost his Leggs at Goree," but the campaign continued. The rump squadron's next target was Allbreda, a small outpost two miles up the Gambia River from James Fort. Allbreda was isolated from France's other positions on the Senegal River but had strong support from the local African polity. On June 6, before Marsh had a

decided plan of attack, the *Harwich's* crew "saw the *Rye* and Brigantine firing at the natives and French factory." They learned that the "Officers of Marines & some of their People was Stop'd by the Natives," and the *Harwich* ran upriver to join the battle. On the morning of June 9, a force of more than two hundred sailors and marines went ashore "to Distroy the French Factory," while the *Harwich* and *Rye* bombarded the fort to cover the landing. The British fought a "close engagement" on the coast, but the Africans heavily outnumbered them and forced the invaders to retreat to the ships. Before leaving, the troops set fire to the factory. Nine men from the *Harwich* had been "dangerously wounded and several slightly." Three men from the *Rye* had been killed and "a great many wounded in Bush fighting."[117] Several of the wounded sailors and marines died as the ships worked their way down the coast. For the next several months, the *Harwich* attended to protecting the slave trade on the Gold Coast—once engaging in "very Hott" battle with a French warship—before departing Africa for the Caribbean.[118]

The *Harwich* arrived within sight of Jamaica on December 1. Soon after, a black pilot came aboard and "took Charge of the Ship," steering it safely into Port Royal Harbour. Here, Marsh came under the orders of Admiral Thomas Cotes in HMS *Marlborough,* the flagship of the Jamaica station, where the *Harwich* would be based for the next two years and where its campaigns against the French and their African allies would inform the Jamaica garrison's war against the enslaved.[119]

In 1758 and 1759, the Seven Years' War turned decisively in Britain's favor. London received good news from the European continent as well as from India, Africa, North America, and the Caribbean. The United Kingdom's combination of superior sea power and trade, inventive financing, and military fortune had enabled a string of victories that brought the British to the verge of global supremacy. In the Atlantic theater, the conquest of Quebec led to the fall of Canada. Along with the capture of Guadeloupe, this secured an advantage for Britain that it never relinquished and heralded the defeat of France, though the war would drag on for several more years.[120] The reverberations of these battles came to Jamaica with the soldiers, marines, and sailors who fought them.

The war brought militant slaves to the island, too, as captives. Black people were employed on both sides of the conflict, but the French employed more blacks in arms, both free people of color and slaves. One naval lieutenant, who had resided for a time at Martinique, noted that there were 60,000 black people on that island, "many of whom are dextrous in Shooting, and all know the Use of small Arms, tho' not of Artillery." Something similar

could be said of Guadeloupe. Some of these combatants were slaves promised freedom in exchange for service in the militia; others formed private armies for planters.[121]

Early in 1759, after a failed attempt on Martinique, the British attacked the island of Guadeloupe with a fleet that included HMS *Cambridge,* which would become the flagship of the Jamaica station a year later. Jamaica's governor-elect, General George Haldane, commanded an army brigade on the expedition. Heavy bombardment set fire to the island's main town, Basse Terre. The French abandoned their fort, broke into smaller detachments, and retreated to the hillside plantations around the town and to the clefts in the mountains. In these enclaves, they could "fortify themselves on the Hills, putting their Negroes in a Situation of Defence," making them "capable of disputing the Ground, at every Gully where the Troops should appear."[122] The British landed marines and soldiers, who encountered small parties of French soldiers firing from the cover of the sugarcane fields and entrenchments rapidly constructed by their slaves. The British burned nearby villages and fields in response, and continued fighting all around the forested hills. In one battle, they came under attack from a woman named Madame Ducharmey and her "armed Negroes," who had built fortifications on an opposing hill. According to Marine Captain Richard Gardiner, this slave militia, commanded in person by their mistress, killed twelve and wounded thirty British troops. Ten of the armed slaves died fighting, and a number were taken prisoner. Such skirmishes continued for several weeks, with the French continuing to occupy strongholds in the mountains and woods, while thousands of British troops succumbed to disease. The British did not take the island until the end of April.[123]

In the meantime, on March 21, George Haldane sailed to Jamaica aboard HMS *Renown* to take up his position as governor.[124] Black prisoners of war went to Jamaica, as well. In the conquest of Guadeloupe the British captured scores, perhaps hundreds, of slaves and free blacks. Free people of color were not supposed to be sold as slaves, but this was a difficult policy to enforce.[125] Before leaving Jamaica for England in August, Arthur Forrest bought some of these war captives for his Masemure estate. Hearing the stories of the blacks' resistance on Guadeloupe, perhaps Captain Forrest congratulated himself on completing their defeat by making them his vassals. Perhaps, too, the new captives learned from Wager that Forrest had a taste for enslaving military men.

More British troops and sailors made their way to Jamaica from Guadeloupe in the ensuing months. Among them, a year later, were the marines aboard HMS *Cambridge*.[126] Admiral Charles Holmes had assumed command of the *Cambridge* upon its brief return to England following the cam-

paigns against the French. He had been a member of the court martial that tried and convicted Admiral Byng in 1757, was a recently elected Member of Parliament for Newport on the Isle of Wight, and was a veteran of Wolfe's Quebec conquest. A military grandee and an acknowledged hero of the war effort, Holmes arrived at Jamaica on May 13, 1760, with a complement of marines celebrating their triumph in Guadeloupe. Their next mission would be to aid in the suppression of a slave revolt.

The Seven Years' War was, first and foremost, a global conflict between the powers of Europe. But within this war was another struggle that aimed to secure the benefits of slave labor. To ensure the success of imperial slavery, the British military fought Africans on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, as both foreign and intestine enemies. These British fighters, trained and experienced in warfare against imperial enemies, did not know that they would soon be fighting Jamaica's internal war against the enslaved. They may not have suspected that their adversaries at Guadeloupe would soon be plotting alongside former comrades in arms like Wager, recently an able seaman in the Royal Navy. Yet the sailors aboard HMS *Harwich* and the marines on HMS *Cambridge* certainly had fresh memories of combat against African soldiers. In Senegambia and Guadeloupe, they had fought them closely in the bush and in steep mountain gullies. Now, on Jamaica, they would draw upon that experience to suppress a slave insurrection, and to keep the Jamaica garrison securely within the British empire. Just as the itineraries of slaveholders, soldiers, and slaves interwove trade, war, and empire, the Atlantic campaigns of the Seven Years' War connected the Jamaica garrison's imperial purpose to its internal war between slaveholders and the enslaved.

In early 1760, however, Jamaica's colonists felt more secure from foreign invasion than they had since the beginning of the war. And with their overwhelming power over the enslaved, the colonists convinced themselves that they were relatively safe from uprisings, too. Despite the slaves' numerical superiority, the planters enjoyed the comfort of a thoroughly militarized society, confident in their ability to meet any disturbance in the prevailing social order with massive violence. They were also consoled, perhaps paradoxically, by the diverse and fractious nature of their enslaved population. "So great a superiority one would think should render it exceeding dangerous and unsafe being amongst them," James Knight acknowledged, before explaining how the slaveholders convinced themselves otherwise. Because the Africans had been brought from various regions of the coast, where they spoke different languages and upheld different customs, the slaveholders believed most slaves could not "converse freely, nor confide in

each other." More importantly, their own rivalries were at least as immediate and pressing as their shared opposition to enslavement. "Those of different Countries have as great and Natural an Antipathy to each other, as any two Nations in the World; so that They are under mutual apprehensions of falling into Subjection one of the other, should they shake off the yoke of the English, which makes them easy, and have no thoughts of attempting it."[127]

Having written in detail about recent slave revolts, Knight certainly knew better than to believe that the slaves had "no thoughts" of insurrection. He did, however, perceive something vitally important: disputes among Africans did not end when they crossed the Atlantic Ocean. They might have lost their former ranks in society, their social connections, and any wealth they had held, but their prior experiences continued to shape their political loyalties, even as strangers in a strange land. If the slave revolt of 1760 was a war within the Seven Years' War, it was also a war within a long history of conflicts beyond the African coast—conflicts transformed, given new contours and meanings, and differently manifested in Jamaica. Jamaica's internal and external wars took their shape not only from the economic and military imperatives of the British Empire but also from West Africa's diasporic warfare.