FILIBUSTERO: ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT

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In 1855, an American expeditionary force, headed by soldier of fortune William Walker, descended upon Nicaragua, ostensibly to help the beleaguered Liberal party unseat the reigning Conservative government. Although official U. S. policy was against such privateering, public sentiment was with Walker, during the entire period Walker and his men were referred to as filibusteros in Spanish and filibuster in English, and the U. S. Minister in Nicaragua, John H. Wheeler, whose frank encouragement of privateering expeditions was a flagrant violation of the official policy of neutrality and non-intervention, was referred to by Central Americans as el ministro filibuster. Walker himself was aware that the term filibuster was being applied to him by his Central American foes, and the thought did not seem to bother him; indeed, in the United States the idea of mounting filibustering expeditions captured the public fancy, and despite the reverses suffered by Walker and others, “going a-filibustering” remained a popular subject for daydreams.

At approximately the same time, in the United States, the term filibuster became generalized to mean roughly the seizure of foreign territory through pirate-like actions. Only a few years later (the first attestations come in 1858), filibuster came to mean disruption of meetings of the United States Senate and Congress, in order to

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forestall voting, a meaning that has survived until the present day. Thus, while the average American turns his mind to the national government upon hearing filibuster, his nineteenth-century counter-part would have shared the image that springs to mind in the Latin American, that of a pirate, privateer, or zealous mercenary. French has a similar term, filibuster, also meaning pirate or privateer, and now confined to literary reference to pirates of earlier centuries.

When Central Americans of the mid-nineteenth century applied filibustero to Walker and other soldiers of fortune, they were reactivating a word which had previously enjoyed currency in the Caribbean region as a result of the extensive activities of pirates during earlier centuries. However, this curious word, which had been used in French and English since the early seventeenth century, does not appear in any Spanish language dictionary until the first edition of the dictionary of the Cuban Esteban Pichardo, in 1836. Moreover, both in the first and in succeeding editions of Pichardo and in other etymological accounts in English, Spanish, and French, the history of this word is revealed to be confusing, tortuous, and contradictory, and all but impossible to establish with certainty. Indeed, the word itself seems to have been spawned in the same hideaways that gave rise to the colorful and mysterious lifestyle of the early pirates.

Although the etymology of filibustero is clouded, there is not a total absence of order, nor is there a complete lack of accepted opinions (which does not preclude their reexamination). The Spanish lexicographer Juan Corominas readily admits that the word is of uncertain origin. Following the lead of French and English lexicographers, Corominas supposes filibustero to be ultimately derived from French filibuster or from the presumed original source, Dutch vrijbuiten “corsair,” which also gave rise to English freebooter.

to the addition of the s, Corominas can only suppose a possible association with farabustear, a medieval criminal slang term meaning “cleverly rob or cheat.” The similarity of meaning makes this hypothesis somewhat plausible, but does not answer the obvious question of why, since farabustear already existed, a new similar form should be created. Nor is any indication given of the extent to which farabustear played an active role in Spanish, both in terms of geographical location and frequency of usage among various individuals, although the time period of the first attestations (1609) at least places the word in the same time frame as the supposed origins of filibustero.

Pichardo lists filibustero as a corruption of filibotero “fly-boat pilot.” However, a later revisor, Rodríguez Herrera, believes Pichardo to be in error, “a no ser que aqui censure a los que, haciendo sinónimos estos dos vocablos, usen el primero por el segundo.” Rodríguez Herrera further notes that filibotero is the same as filibotero, which he derives from English fly-boat (translated as barco mosca) “especie de fusta de unas cien toneladas de capacidad, pero en cuyo aparejo no hay armón ni masteleros”; he admits that some individuals may have confused the two terms, but maintains that they have generally been kept separate, in both pronunciation and meaning.

The Oxford English Dictionary provides more food for thought, as well as more room for conflicting opinions and derivations. While coinciding with Corominas that Dutch vrijbuiten is most likely the original source, the OED merely notes that Spanish filibustero is “presumably” derived from French filibuster, which was also current in English until well into the present century. The first attestation of the early variant tribuster is given as 1607, but filibuster does not appear in print until the French edition of Esquemeling’s Historie des aventuriers of 1686; the original Dutch edition of 1678 contains no reference to this word, nor do the English translation of 1685 or the Spanish translation of 1681. Filibuster also appears in De Lussans’ Journal du voyage fait à la mer du sud avec les filibustiers de l’Amérique en 1684.

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b The first English citation, freebooter/filibuster, comes in 1591, while French filibuster is first recorded in 1684.

c Esteban Pichardo, Diccionario provisional cast-razonado de voces cubanas (La Habana, 1836).


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7 Esteban Rodríguez Herrera, notes to the Pichardo, op. cit., in La Habana selecta, 1930, p. 313.


9 Olivier Esquemeling, Historie des aventuriers (Paris, 1678).
accounts begin to share a suspicious similarity, and indeed it is obvious that the majority of the authors have merely copied from earlier sources, without checking original sources or adopting a critical attitude toward the derivation of the word, preferring instead to get down to the more exciting business of describing the pirates’ exploits. The above cited works, and the scores of similar lesser-known statements that could be quoted from the literature on piracy in the West Indies, all take their cue from a very few early works in French, in which the possible derivation from freebooter is mentioned. One is that of Jean Baptiste Lepers, whose Histoire de Saint-Domingue (1732) gives the etymology in question. Another early source is Pierre F. Xavier de Charlevoix, whose Histoire de l’Île d’Espagne ou S. Domingue (1730) mentions the same possibility.

Even if one were to accept English freebooter and/or Dutch vrijbooter as the original source of filibuster, or even if reference to flyboot or filiboot were permitted to enter into the picture, there remains the question of the insertion of s in filibuster and related forms. It has already been seen that Corominas supposes the s to have been added in the Antilles, influenced by tarabustes. The OED takes a different track, assuming that the s originated in French as a sign of vowel length, i.e. not being pronounced. However, a citation from a dictionary of 1704 indicates that the s was already pronounced by that time, which was not long after the supposed origin and spread of filibuster. Thus, in addition to the etymological basis for filibuster and filibuster and the routes of mutual interaction and evolution that the words took in the course of their history, we are also left with the problem of explaining away a rather strange phonetic evolution. Let us consider these problems in turn, before turning to additional data and the formation of a hypothesis that may promise a higher degree of plausibility than some of its predecessors.

Beginning first with the putative root word, one has to look for a source which, in terms of influence and contact spans several languages, including English, French, Spanish, and possibly Dutch. Thus, it would appear that Corominas’ postulate of the influence of
manufacture or origin, used at a particular time and place. It is not
difficult to see how such a term, which may perhaps at one time
have had a single unequivocal reference, came to lose such a high
degree of specificity, to the point where its meaning could encompass
an entire class of ships, which in any case were those used by
pirates in the West Indies during the sixteenth and seventeenth
centuries. In the English translation of Esquemeling (p. 111) we learn
that "to l'Olonais all this seemed but little; and thus he assaulted
her with great courage, his own ship carrying only twenty-two
guns, and having no more than a small asetia, or flyboat, for help."
The sixteenth century author Antonio Rojo y Sojo uses the term
filibote in similar fashion, as does a 1680 document "Recopilación de
la historia de las Indias," while in a later description we learn
that "los aventureros ingleses y franceses compraron a los holandeses pequeños barcos llamados filibote con los cuales recorrieron los ma-
res cercanos, donde capturaron cuantos navíos y barcos españoles pudieron atrapar." In a cárcel dated 1629 we find "la visita y despacho necesario a los urcas o filibotes." Thus it is
impossible to completely rule out the influence of these terms on
the derivation of filibuster/flaglooter. Whether or not the boats in
question were totally appropriate for acts of piracy, if the term
came to refer to an entire class of foreign manufactured vessels whose crews were often pirates and privateers, then the active fermenting process of folk-etymology could not con-
ceivably have forced a semantic rapprochement and eventual co-
alescence between freebooter and flyboat; it has already been seen
how flyboat, through accidental phonetic similarity, became associ-

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19. Cited in the *Real Academia's Diccionario de autoridades*, III (Madrid: Real Academia Española, 1732), 768.
French bucanier. Fortunately the history of this word is rather well known. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the Caribbean region was infested by pirates and privateers of all nations, predominant among them Dutch, French, and English sailors and soldiers of fortune. Eventually, a large number of these individuals settled on the island of Tortuga, off the coast of Hispaniola. Today Tortuga (Tortue) is part of the republic of Haiti, but in the sixteenth century the island, while nominally a Spanish possession, was a no-man’s-land where few law-abiding citizens of any nation dared to go. Originally, before the pirates built their hideaways in the island’s numerous coves and mountains, the island was peopled by groups of renegades living on the margins of the law and trading sporadically with ships that stopped. One of the first activities of the settlers was curing and drying meat of animals they had hunted and selling the dried jerked meat to ships that called. Gradually, the Carib Indian name for the drying hearths, *haukan*, came to be used not only for the hearth itself but also for the settlements and the activities that were pursued therein, and from there it was a logical next step to derive French *boucanier* and Spanish *bucanero*. According to available evidence, it was the former. French word that was adopted into English by the English-speaking members of the groups, while, at least according to the legends, the French in turn adopted *freibooter* into *filibuster*. Whether or not there was really a bilateral exchange of designations, *boucanier*, *bucanero*, and *buccaneer* soon came to mean not only the quasi-legal entrepreneurs and meat curers, but also the lawless pirates that used the island as headquarters, eventually only the latter meaning survived.

The original *boucaniers* lost their quasi-legal status when the Spanish and French governments attempted to tax and regulate the free-lance drying operation, which was operating outside the boundaries of the strict colonial trade laws. The *boucaniers* resisted, and it was perhaps this ambience of defiance that attracted the seafaring pirates that eventually made the island infamous; and who appropriated *boucanier*, *buccaneer*, and *buccaneer* for themselves. The pirates on the island formed a sort of informal but powerful organization, called the Brotherhood of the Coast, formed around 1640.25

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24 Another strange derivation is offered by Julio Calcañi, *El castellano en Venezuela* (Caracas, 1897), p. 492: “Parece que *filibustero* no procede del inglés *freibooter*, saqueador, sino del vocablo del mismo idioma *vibuster*, que en la América del Norte aplican al conductor o patrón del *cliboot* en danés *viboot* y en castellano *filiboti*, formado de *fil* atacar violentamente y *boot*, bote.” Equally original, if not entirely accurate, is the derivation proposed by Juan Sosa and Enrique Arce in the *Compendio de historia de Panamá* (Panama: Casa Editorial del Diario de Panamá, 1931), p. 119, according to whom, *filibuster* is a “decomposición de las voces inglesas *fil-boot*, bote-mosca, por el uso que hacían de embarcaciones pequeñas y sutiles, propias para navegar en mares de poco fondo y para escapar a la persecución de navíos de algún calado.” Objections to the proposed phonological developments are also offered by F. L. Dillard, *American Talk* (New York: Random House, 1970), pp. 38-39.

they spoke a kind of **lingua franca** in which were included elements of English, French, Spanish, Dutch, and indigenous languages, and this motley population came to represent a powerful social force in the lives of the Spanish and French colonies in the West Indies, as well as on the mainland areas of Central America, Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador.

The term **buccaneer** undoubtedly had its origin on Tortuga in the late sixteenth century, but its appearance in written documents does not come until the following century, reflecting the passage from criminal argot to common parlance of land-based literate individuals. When Esquemeling’s book came out in an English edition in 1684, Henry Morgan, who was branded a pirate in the book, started a libel suit against the Flemish writer and referred to both Esquemeling and Malthus, the publisher, as **buccaneers** and **buckanniers**, using a term which was more familiar to the pirates than to the population of England. That the latter statement is accurate is demonstrated by the comment of Esquemeling’s first English translator, who after speaking in general about the pirates, states “of all which actions, as we cannot but confess ourselves to have been ignorant hitherto (the very name of **buccaneers** being as yet known but to few of the ingenious, as their lives, laws and conversation are in a manner unkon)".28 In fact, before the formation of the Brotherhood of the coast, the English knew the **buccaneers** merely as “cow-killers.”29

The word **bucanero** also appears in Spanish at about the same time; for example, in a document written in Santo Domingo and dated 1687, we find “a donde franzeses monteadores que dicen **bucaneros** se mantienen haciendo incredibles daños...si no es sacándoles de raíz con el gran poder de V. M. en cuyo recodo y abuelo de mantenerse en tan violenta posesión han hecho dichos franzeses bucaneros diferentes infames al rey de Francia.” Sigüenza y Góngora, in his **Testo de la justicia española en el casigo de la aleación** (1691)30 speaks of “quienes acompañaron en ella, quanto piratas y bucaneros estaban allí haciendo tiempo para salir al corso.” However, the word did not gain real currency in any language until later in the eighteenth century, despite the fact that by this time, the principal nuclei of West Indian piracy, the **bawos** of Tortuga, Jamaica, Margarita, had already been dismantled by the combined efforts of Spanish, French, and British authorities. The history of this word suggests a possible parallel evolution for **filibuster**, which having its origin among the pirates, made only sporadic contact with the land-based population, which in general would have used the words already available to them for describing the seafaring bands: **pirata**, **corsario**, **enemigo**, and **ladron**.

During the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, English **buccaneers** was used interchangeably with **filibuster**, with the latter never being as frequent in English and eventually fading away altogether, until reintroduced as **filibuster** in the mid-nineteenth century; this may reflect the fact that several influential works on piracy were written in English and/or described the exploits of the most famous English pirates, including Drake, Hawkins, and Morgan.

**Corominas** gives the first attestation of **filibuster** in Spanish as the 1836 edition of Pichardo’s dictionary, but it is certainly possible to push this date back. For example, in a document dated in Santo Domingo in 1783,32 we find “y quedando quasi despoblado un país tan vasto, facilitó la entrada y establecimiento de los **filibusteros**..."
origen de la Colonia Francesa." The fact that this term is not in any way glossed or set apart in the text indicates that, at least in the circles in which the document (a general description of the island of Hispaniola) was read, the word filibuster needed no explanation. By this time, French filibuster had appeared and been explained by LeFers, Charlevoix, Ravenne de Lassus, and others, so that a literate individual may have been aware of the French word merely through reading. However, given the relative isolation of Santo Domingo from the European centers in which the early works were published and the significant fact that no attempt is made to explain the use of filibuster, it is likely that the word was already part of the vocabulary spoken in the Caribbean regions. In a document from coastal Colombia of 1758, we find "aquel espiritu de pirateria, o mas bien de cruelidad y carniceria de los Bucanieros o Filibusteros ..." Previous to this time, filibuster does not appear to have been used extensively in Spanish documents, although an exhaustive search of colonial documents in archives, museums, libraries, and academies would most probably turn up a few more citations. Vera, whose history of Honduras was written at the end of the nineteenth century, notes that "en 1643 fue saqueada e arruinada la ciudad de Matagalpa por los piratas establecidos en las costas del Norte. Fue entonces cuando por vez primera se les designó con el nombre de filibustero." However, there is no indication that this word was recorded in any document of the period; Vera's remark probably points to the spread of French filibuster, which is often indiscriminately translated as filibuster in later Spanish works, although it was a native word and had been all along. In fact the original source for Vera's idea seems to have been Cáceres' Historia de Nicaragua (1888): 'La ciudad de Matagalpa fue saqueada e arruinada en 1643 por los piratas establecidos en la costa del norte, haciendo oir por primera vez entre nosotros el nombre de filibustero con que se designaban.' Again, no documents are cited, and it is probable that the inference is made since Matagalpa was the first site of a major pirate attack on Central America's mainland; the inflexions may then simply refer to the inhabitants of Nicaragua and Honduras.

Santo Domingo had the greatest possibility of an early assimilation of filibuster, given the proximity to Tortuga. However, an examination of documents written in Santo Domingo beginning at the end of the seventeenth century and continuing well past the middle of the eighteenth century reveals no use of the term: the most common word is pirata, with ladron running a close second. An examination of documents from other Caribbean areas where pirates were active during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries reveals a similar lack of usage of filibuster. As late as the mid-eighteenth century, most documents, including those originating in the coastal areas of Colombia, Venezuela, Mexico, Ecuador, and Peru, and in Panama, Honduras, and Nicaragua, refer only to piratas, enemigos, ladrónes, and ladrones. The conclusion that emerges from

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Antonio Narváez, "Informe sobre las provincias de Santa Marta y Riohacha" (1758); published in Antonio B. Cuervo ed., Colección de documentos inéditos sobre la geografía e historia de Colombia (Bogotá: Zalamea, 1894), II, 186-187.


José Dolores Gámez, Historia de Nicaragua (Managua, 1888), p. 208; another source is Tomás Ayón, Historia de Nicaragua, desde los tiempos más remotos hasta el año de 1852 (Granada, 1887), II, 54-55. Gámez cites Ayón on the etymology of filibuster, which he explains as derived from the English [sic] word filth, that significa cosas malas. In another work, Historia de la costa de Mos看 (Managua: Talleres Nacionales, 1936), p. 50, Gámez clarifies his remarks, noting that the pirates that sacked Matagalpa caused the word filibuster to be used for the first time en suelo centroamericano.

Documents consulted include those published by Demorizi and Mejía; in addition, some unpublished documents were consulted in the Dominican National Archives, but no new information came to light.

For Venezuela, see Rodolfo Toréns, Antología documental de Venezuela 1422-1900,_ms. 1948, p. 99-100; José Sucio Reyes, La capturación general de Venezuela (Barcelona: Editorial R. M., 1960); Miguel Acosta Sáenz, Historia de los esclavos negros en Venezuela (Caracas: Herederos de Jesús, 1967); For Costa Rica, see León Fernández, Colección de documentos para la historia de Costa Rica (Barcelona: Imprenta Viuda de Fco. Lasso, 1907); For Panama, see Sosa and Arce; also Carlos Perez-Paz, Historia de la diplomacia española (Madrid: Saturnino Gallejo, 1924). Volume V: Colección de documentos referentes al despoblamiento, por la organización de las antigua y fuezas repúblicas de Ultramar (Madrid: Sociedad de Amigos, 1970). Volume VIII, Ruben Darío Carías, 220 años del periodo colonial en Panamá, 2nd ed. (Panamá: Imprenta Nacional, 1957). Chapters 5 and 6. For Colombia, Juan Froide, "Piratas del pasado para la historia de Colombia," Boletín de la Academia Colombiana de Historia, 1935, Volume I, p. 18; Cuervo, Colección de documentos, For Mexico, see Historia documental de México (Mexico: Universidad Nacional Autónomo de Mexico, 1941). Volumes II: José Antonio Calderón Quijano, Historia de las
these documents is that for some reason *filibuster* was not in common use at the time, or that there was some factor which caused it not to appear in written documents. Both suppositions probably contain elements of truth, in a diachronic perspective. First, given the putative origin of *filibuster* in or around Santo Domingo, the word may well have spread only slowly to the neighboring islands and to Central and South American areas, carried by pirates, travelers, military personnel, religious figures, and other bearers of linguistic innovation. Moreover, there is every reason to believe that for a considerable period of time, *filibuster* belonged only to the slang of the seafaring pirates themselves and the Spanish soldiers and sailors that battled them, and that even when the word became definitively implanted on the shore, it remained a regionalism not able to displace the universal and time-honored words already in use. The vast majority of Spanish documents in which pirates are mentioned are official communications written by or to military personnel, usually in Spain. Given the fact that Spanish already contained several acceptable words, it is not surprising that the New World writers did not choose to employ a word that at best was a regionalism, and that would not have been understood in Spain or even in the more remote American colonies. The military reports and letters are characterized by a laconic style not given to elaborate explanations and the authors, often in spite of an obvious lack of literary skills, tried to adhere to the established norms of official writing. There may even have been a desire to avoid mentioning a word by which the pirates, who were both *ladrones* and *enemigos* to the Spaniards, designated themselves, since to do so would be to give de facto recognition to the Brotherhood of the Coast. Even the eighteenth-century *Inventario* of Sigüenza y Gongora only makes reference to *piratas* and *bucaneros,* despite the fact that the author, having lived both in coastal Mexico and in the Antilles, must surely have come into contact with those who called themselves *filibuster.* As in the case of many etymologies lost in the distant past, one must not confuse dates of written attestation with actual societal usage. Regardless of actual active usage in late seventeenth-century Spanish America, *filibuster* was at least passively familiar in the areas where contact with pirates was a major factor in shaping the lives and cultures developing in the New World. There is no ready explanation for the fact that the word became accepted earlier in French and English than in Spanish, although one might suggest that the origin of the most famous writers and pirates is influential. There were few well-known Spanish pirates, and those that existed operated on a local scale and never attained the stature of the French, English, and Dutch, who also supplied the writers to describe the deeds. An element of nationalism may also be adured, the refusal to use a term which had gained popularity in countries with which Spain was in constant conflict. The early attestations of *filibuster* are suggestive, as is the obvious contact between Spanih military personnel and French and English pirates on Tortuga, Margarita, and Tigre as the Spanish made a definitive move to wipe the islands clean of pirates in the last decades of the seventeenth century.

The most significant detail in tracing the history of *filibuster* is the insertion of the *s,* assuming an original etymon with no syllable-final *s.* It has been seen how several influential writers on the subject of piracy have assumed that *filibuster* represents a phonetic deformation of *frenzibuster* by French sailors, but to make this statement without qualification is extremely rash since there are no precedents for this type of interference when the two languages have come into contact. The fronting of English [u] to French [y] is

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normal, as might be the addition of the suffix -ier, corresponding to English agentive -er; in many cases the English suffix is but a reflection of earlier French influence. The putative change of e to i does not stretch the boundaries of credibility excessively, since the history of French abounds with such changes, as does that of Spanish, Portuguese, Calician, and occasionally also English. However, the introduction of a syllable-final s is not a change to be expected from interference of French phonotactics, since *tribulator could easily have given *tributator or *tributator, both completely consistent with French phonetic and morphological patterns, as indicated by the existing attestations. Flisbat is also attested in French, and flisbat in Spanish. The OED speculates that the insertion of the s “probably originated in Fr. as a mere sign of vowel length,” although as early as 1704 there is testimony that the s was pronounced in French. Precedents do exist for an s indicating vowel lengthening in Middle French, but there are serious objections in the case of *tribulator. Much as is occurring in many contemporary dialects of Spanish, syllable-final [s] was lost in French, apparently first through a process of aspiration: syllable-final [z] also participated in this process, probably even earlier. In any case, the final vestiges of syllable-final [s] appear to have been lost some time during the thirteenth century, and by the end of this century the process was all but complete, except in some isolated dialect areas of France. Obviously, by the time of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pirate activities in the Caribbean, syllable-final [s] in French was long gone, not only in pronunciation and in the memory of speakers, but in most cases also in the orthography.

Beginning in the sixteenth century, the syllable-final s was occasionally introduced orthographically, for a variety of reasons, including vowel length, but none had to do with actual pronunciation of [s]. The letter served merely as a diacritic mark and was accessible only to scribes, printers, and other members of the small elite of literate individuals who were capable of appreciating the orthographical niceties facilitated by the reintroduction of written s.

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43 Lindsay, pp. 257-58.

A syllable-final [s] was added to the pronunciation of a few words, due in most cases to the influence of the reformed Latin pronunciation in the Church and of some learned Italian and Spanish loan words. Some words in which the s had previously been effaced also saw the reinstatement of this sound for purely analogical reasons, and vacillation persisted for some time afterward. More frequent were words influenced by the combination of learned spellings and attempts to mirror the same in pronunciation. A noteworthy characteristic of all words in which a phonetic [s] was reintroduced in syllable-final position is the learned, erudite, and restricted status, found in Church functions, scientific and bellettristic pursuits, and the fine arts.

Given the ease with which the [s] was reintroduced into French and the facility with which modern speakers of French evidence for the pronunciation of this sound, it may safely be concluded that at the time of the reintroduction, the tendency to weaken syllable-final consonants had essentially disappeared. For whatever reason, there has been no indication of resurgence of this weakening tendency, but at the same time there has never been a wholesale tendency to reintroduce lost or non-etymological fricatives; the only non-etymological s to be found almost invariably results from incorrect division during liaison, whence vulgar pronunciations such as zozan for assez, zoreille for oreille, and zaricot for haricot.

While the sixteenth-and seventeenth-century pirate captains were not infrequently men of some education, who might be expected to have had at least a rudimentary knowledge of the finer points of French orthography and the latest in the ever growing list of learned borrowings, such was definitely not the case with the pirate crews, who by all descriptions were truly a motley assortment of largely or totally illiterate adventurers, many of whom did not even speak French as a first language. These sailors were not aware of or interested in the vagaries of orthographic representation and the consequent battles over pronunciation that were being waged in the academic centers of Europe; in their strongholds on Tortuga Island and on their ships the pirates spoke a mixture of
several languages, including indigenous words. Given the slow spread of filibuster, it is clear that this word did not pertain to the erudite vocabulary that might conceivably have participated in the pseudo-etymological reorganization of sixteenth-century French, but rather that its origin was entirely popular and therefore that the source of the s must be sought elsewhere.

Given the preceding review and summary of the known external history of filibuster, I believe that a plausible case may be made for the introduction of the s through Spanish influence, from which s may have passed directly to English or French or may have participated in a process of mutual influence and borrowing. This claim may seem paradoxical in view of the relative dates of first attestations, but this fact alone should not be a deterrent. In order to demonstrate the plausibility of a Spanish origin of the s, it is first necessary to demonstrate sufficient phonological precedents within Spanish to warrant the claim that Spanish could have created such a form, and then to demonstrate adequate contact with the Spanish language in order for the transfer to have taken place.

Current dialects of Spanish present several phonological processes which appear to be historical repetitions of those occurring centuries ago in French; the most noteworthy is the aspiration and deletion of syllable-final s, common not only in southern Spain and the Canary Islands, but also in major areas of Latin America except for some interior highland areas. Within Latin America, this process reaches its greatest extent in the Antilles and on the Caribbean coastal areas of Central and South America, including Nicaragua, Honduras, Panama, Venezuela, and the coastal provinces of Colombia and Ecuador. Various theories have been adduced to account for the spread of this phenomenon in Latin America, including influence by original settlers from southern Spain, the influence of African slaves who spoke Spanish only imperfectly, climatological factors causing natives of southern Spain to seek

dropical regions of Spanish America, and separate but parallel evolution on both sides of the Atlantic. More plausible is the fact that the major coastal areas maintained a constant contact with Spain, particularly with the Andalusian cities of Cadiz and Sevilla where the aspiration appears to have originated, and phonological innovations are more easily transmitted to those areas where the existence of ports facilitates constant linguistic transference. Those inland areas reached only with difficulty from the coast might be expected to remain somewhat insulated from phonological innovations, and it is not coincidental that these same areas largely conserve the s even today.

Although Nebrija did not give any hint of aspiration of syllable-final s in his grammar of 1492, this phenomenon may already have been prevalent in Andalusia towards the turn of the sixteenth century. That there was a stigma attached to weakening of syllable-final s, which is attributed to the most unworthy and low-born individuals, is evident by an examination of various literary documents. Sixteenth-century Spanish playwrights attempted to give a phonetic indication of the speech of black slaves, with clearly derogatory intent, and one of the many changes is loss of syllable and word-final s. While no sociolinguistic description of sixteenth- or seventeenth-century Spanish is available, it is not difficult, by combining an examination of literary documents with a general knowledge of the history of Spanish, to arrive at the conclusion that aspiration or loss of syllable-final s, while perhaps typical of un

educated black speakers, was by no means exclusively confined to this group. Rather, the syllable-final weakening was considered a sign of low breeding and served as a sociolinguistic marker whenever it was necessary to ridicule a character by means of speech patterns. As the Spanish language continued to evolve differences between orthographic representation and popular speech, it became possible to offer, in pseudo-phonetic transcription, glimpses of socially stigmatized pronunciations. According to all evidence, this aspiration did not originate among black speakers, who were merely the recipients of a popular Andalusian tradition, carrying it in many instances to an extreme not present before the introduction of Africans who did not speak Spanish. Blacks imported into Spanish-speaking areas never received the benefits of education, and had to learn the language as best they could. Some had the advantage of being in contact with numerous native speakers of Spanish, while others found themselves most often in the company of other hoaxes (slaves recently arrived from Africa) or other comrades whose knowledge of Spanish was less than perfect. In any case, there was no attempt at indicating the social values attached to particular phonetic variants, since such information would have been of no value under the circumstances. Therefore, if one supposes that aspiration of syllable-final \( s \) was already prevalent among speakers of Andalusian origin, at least among the lower social strata, then it would be equally logical to assume that this pronunciation would be readily absorbed and even extended by the slaves. Aspiration of \( s \) in Spanish is frequently perceived by foreign

speakers as total loss. It is not accidental that down to the present, in the speech of slaves and other uneducated individuals depicted in Hispanic literature, \( s \) is frequently indicated as completely lost. Students of Spanish, imitating speakers who aspired syllable-final \( s \), often pronounce no \( s \) at all, much to the chagrin of their instructors. Even Spanish speakers from dialects where \( s \) is tenaciously retained often perceive aspiration as loss, and their attempts at imitating and ridiculing \( s \) speech are usually inaccurate.

In the later history of Spanish-American literature, it has been common to attribute popular phonetic characteristics to only the socially most inferior characters, including blacks, mestizos, and peasants, even if the characteristics in question are shared by the entire speech community: weakening and loss of \( s \) is one of the traits most found in literature, attributed nearly exclusively to these low-prestige groups. The noted Cuban folklorist Fernando Ortiz noted that "el lenguaje vulgar suele ser un elemento de la poesía mulata, aunque no es indispensable." In all Latin American countries where there is a distinctly identifiable black population, popular tradition (among white speakers) often ascribes to them a whole host of popular linguistic tendencies which may be applied to the entire linguistic community, although perhaps with decreasing frequency among higher social classes and also among immigrants from regions of Spain where \( s \) is consistently preserved.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish, aspiration of \( s \) was beginning to become widespread, in Andalusia and throughout the Americas, among speakers of little education. By the eighteenth century evidence of loss of \( s \) is even beginning to crop up in documents written by educated individuals. Given the distribution

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of aspiration of /s/ in most coastal areas of Latin America, in the speech of all social classes, there is no way that the phenomenon could be considered a spontaneous New World development. Rather, this aspirated pronunciation is part of the Peninsular heritage, not of the first conquistadores, but of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century immigration and trade with Spain.

Lest it appear that the preceding discussion has wandered too far afield, it should be noted that the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century pirates of the Caribbean, the filibusters and buccaneers, spent the majority of their time attacking and sacking the Spanish provinces, and that the cities and territories upon which the pirates concentrated their greatest repeated efforts are precisely those in which aspiration and loss of /s/ has reached its greatest extent: the Antilles and the coastal areas of Central and South America.

There is probably no coastal area of the Caribbean and Central American region that was not visited by pirates at one time or another, but the filibusters based on Tortuga and the other pirate operating in the area showed a preference for certain cities, including the following: Campeche, Veracruz, Acapulco, Puerto Caballos (modern Puerto Cortés), Trujillo, Omoa, Portobelo and Panama, Cartagena, Rio Hacha, Santa Marta, Caracas, Maracaibo, Guayaquil, Realejo, Acajutla, and naturally the Antillean ports. English and French pirates had settled themselves on Tigre Island, in the Gulf of Fonseca, and attacked inland towns in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and Honduras.55 Frequently, the defending soldiers, in a


55 In addition to previously cited works, see the following L. E. Elliott, Central America (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1925), p. 129; Pedro Pérez Valenzuela, Historia de piratas—los aventureros del mar en la América Central (Guatemala, 1936), pp. 9-32; Vito Alessio Robles, Acapulco en la historia y en la leyenda (Mexico, 1932), pp. 85-106; C. H. Harting, Trade and Navigation between Spain and the West Indies in the Time of the Papisbouys (Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1918), p. 232 f.; Solonías Salvatierra, Compendio de historia de Centroamérica, 2nd ed. (Managua, 1946), pp. 125-28; Justo Zárate, Piraterías y agresiones de los ingleses u otros pueblos de Europa en la América española desde el siglo XIV al XVII (Madrid, 1883); Manuel A. Peña Battl Ba la isla de Tortuga (Madrid: Cultura Hispanica, 1931); Romulo Duron, Bookehistoria de Honduras, 3rd ed. (Tegucigalpa: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de Honduras, 1982); Félix Salgado, Elementos de historia de Honduras (Tegucigalpa, 1945), pp. 47-48.

tradition which has not changed radically in the intervening centuries, came from the lowest social classes, and except for the uniform, did not differ substantially in their outlook or behavior from the pirates they were fighting.56 The attacking pirates came into face-to-face contact predominantly with black, mulatto, and Indian soldiers and guards, and it was only when sacking individual homes that the pirates were likely to meet high-born citizens, who did not usually form part of the shock troops sent to hold off pirate attacks. There is even evidence that, of the slaves taken prisoner by the pirates, some eventually became members of the pirate crews, since life aboard a pirate ship was probably no worse than the lot of a slave in the colonies.57

Due to their contact with the coastal populations, many of the pirates spoke Spanish tolerably well. In addition to rapid attacks launched from ships, the pirates frequently spent considerable periods of time on land, mounting massive expeditions and besieging cities. Just as an example, Morgan's troops occupied Panama for 28 days in 1671, while at the same time a troop of pirates marched across Costa Rica in military formation, leaving devastated villages in their wake. It is thus possible to postulate a ready avenue of transference between pirates speaking the jargon of their own group with uneducated slaves, soldiers, and guards, and high-born residents of the colonies, may be added as a key factor in reconstructing the historical trajectory of filibuster and filibuster. The coastal areas frequently attacked by the pirates exhibit an extremely high rate of aspiration and deletion of syllable-final /s/, with the proportion decreasing somewhat in the higher social classes. Moreover, this process of aspiration has developed gradually at least since the seventeenth century and most probably even before, in all


likelihood being first more prominent in the speech of uneducated Spaniards, and of slaves and Indians who learned Spanish from each other, and ultimately from these same relatively uncultured Spanish colonists. On the other hand, the reaction of the more cultured colonists, judging from the sociolinguistic evidence represented by literary documents, was to not accept such a pronunciation so readily, and these citizens, then as now, could be expected to seek a more refined diction and to correct the "defective" pronunciation when they heard it in members of their own class. 86 It is this aspiration of s and the identification of the phenomenon with less educated classes that contains the key to the introduction of s in filibuster and filibusté.

There are at least two distinct ways in which the confluence of factors could have produced the change in question. The first scenario involves the relatively uneducated slave, soldier, or guard who acquired contact with the pirates, the lexical item filibusté or filibustó to refer to pirates and the ships on which they sailed. A superior officer, master, or hightborn citizen, hearing this word for the first time and associating the pronunciation with the speech habits commonly heard among the lower social strata, cold be expected to surmise that the intended word was "filibuster, since there was a phonotactic/morphological paradigm already provided by filibusté, embasté, etc., all of which contain the common sequence VsV. There are parallels in those contemporary dialects where aspiration of syllable-final s is common, and spelling errors, particularly of name names and less common words, indicate that phonological knowledge is often lost and that individuals believe an s should exist in a word in which it was never present. The hypercorrected "filiboster" or "filibustor" could then have made its way back to the pirates, either by the same soldiers and slaves who by force of coercion had themselves adopted the hypercorrected form, or by

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86 A good literary example of this phenomenon is offered by Rómulo Gallegos in La bruja de pan de la huerta de la Habana, Seccenta 1952, pp. 176-78, where several young Venezuelan girls are having a conversation about a play they are going to put on. After one of the middle-class girls imitates popular speech, including weakening of s, her sister asks her "¿Por qué hablas así falsa?" "No estar ante el microfón," to which her sister replies "Es verdad... la costumbre de representar criadas mal habladas."

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direct contact between the pirates and wider segments of the colonial population. It is not even necessary that the Spaniards converted filibúster/filibusté into Spanish for the s to have been added: the word in French could itself have been interpreted as filibúster/filibusté by the Spaniards, using their own phonological model, and the s retransferred to French by imitation.

Since the words filibúster and filibusté appear to have been used somewhat earlier in Spanish than in French, and given that buceamé already existed as a term which the pirates could apply to themselves, it is also possible that the pirates, upon coming into contact with the slaves and soldiers, heard themselves referred to as filibusté, and given their own at times less than perfect knowledge of Spanish combined with an awareness of the aspiration process and a passive knowledge of cognate forms in French in which syllable-final s had already disappeared, added the s to form the hypercorrected filibusté, which then became translated as filibusté. It is not uncommon for a group to adopt, as an emblem of pride, a term originally applied by a hostile group as a derogatory label. William Walker adopted filibusté with pride: one may also consider the term cimarrón used by Cuban exiles, habano used by the early Cuban revolutionaries of Fidel Castro's army, turbó used by Sandinista insurrectionist groups in Nicaragua, cop as used by police officers, chicano as used by Mexican Americans, franc as used by members of the United States counterculture, and so forth.

A hypothesis such as that advanced above would account for the relatively late appearance of filibusté in Spanish, coupled with the earlier appearance of filibúster and filibusté, since the s may have been added by the pirates themselves to a word which had little currency in Spanish outside of the groups in contact with the pirate invaders. However, even if one supposes that the s was added at this time as a hypercorrection, there is no reason to suppose that it would have made much headway amidst the beleaguered population on the shore, who would not have wished to legitimize the pirates' activities by adopting a slang term and who preferred the traditional pirata and the more vehement mamparo y labrón. The French, on the other hand, were not as often besieged by pirates; to the contrary, citizens in France read with curiosity and amusement the accounts
and autobiographies of pirates who plied their trade in the Spanish Main and who attacked the little-loved Spaniards, and hence *flibustier*, which made an early appearance in the seventeenth-century accounts of French piracy, would not have met the same civic resistance in France. The known facts, demographic, geographic, sociological, and linguistic, support some version of this hypothesis, although there is probably no documentation of the event(s) which changed the Spanish colonists' pronunciation of *flibustero* into *flibustero*.

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Se solía ver a Berceo como un cura de poca formación intelectual, pero investigaciones recientes han encontrado en su obra una vena de sabiduría, incluso de sofisticación teológica. En este trabajo, se intenta demostrar que Berceo empleó la redención conocida como la *fia fraus*. Según ésta, también empleada por Fiers Plowman, Juan Ruiz, Robert Campin, y muchos otros, hay que vencer al diablo empleando sus propias armas. Como la perdición humana fue resultado de un engaño, hay que engañar igualmente a nuestro enemigo. Así, Cristo tuvo que esconder su divinidad del diablo ("Gloria de Dios es encubrir la palabra," Proverbios 25.2), para inducir al diablo a intentar tomar al Salvador después de su muerte en la cruz, así causando su propia perdición. Es muy probable que Berceo conociera y empleara esta tentación de Cristo. Así se explican las palabras, hasta ahora mal entendidas, del *Dueto de la Virgen:* "Dixo que havie seped, los labros dessecados, / Ca havie grant codicia de salvar los errados (38cd)," y es superfícia su emendación.

THOMAS DEVENY. Francisco de Quevedo and the Epithalamium ....................................................... 193

El epitalamio es un género que gozó de gran popularidad durante el Siglo de Oro en España, tanto en imitaciones de poemas clásicos como en los cantos de boda tradicionales. Aunque los epitalamios de Quevedo manifestan características de estas dos trayectorias literarias, él añade el uso de la ironía y la sátira. Así, además de burlarse de costumbres sociales, Quevedo desmitifica figuras mitológicas y el género en sí. Este proceso desmitificador, junto con ciertos comentarios de su *Epistulario*, nos hace pensar que este género era más popular en el siglo XVI que el número de textos existentes nos indica.