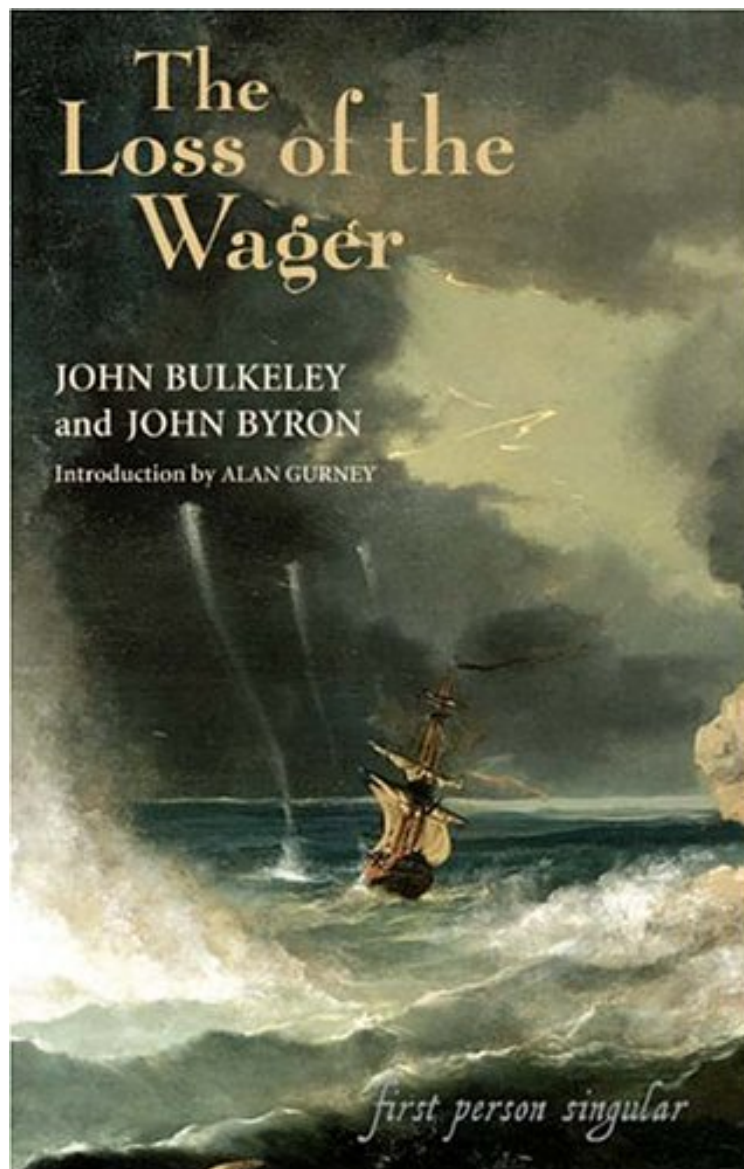


(Ebook pdf) The Loss of the Wager: The Narratives of John Bulkeley and the Hon. John Byron (First Person Singular)

## The Loss of the Wager: The Narratives of John Bulkeley and the Hon. John Byron (First Person Singular)

*John Bulkeley, John Byron*  
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**John Bulkeley, John Byron : The Loss of the Wager: The Narratives of John Bulkeley and the Hon. John Byron (First Person Singular)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Loss of the Wager: The Narratives of John Bulkeley and the Hon. John Byron (First Person Singular):

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. pretty gripping  
By Earnest Sludge  
This book is divided into two halves. The first part, by a seaman, is alright. The story is told plainly and down-to-earth. Unfortunately, it is badly marred by the seaman being totally paranoid about being convicted of mutiny on his return to England. This greatly affected the things he selected to mention and the emphasis he placed on some of them. There are also roughly a dozen formal, signed memoranda documenting the position he and his mates were in and the reasons for their actions that were drawn up on the spot. Very dry and tedious stuff. The second part, by an officer and an aristocrat, generally flows well and is pretty gripping. Some of the passages, especially towards the beginning, are written in that highly convoluted manner the upper classes affected back in those days and are pointlessly difficult to unravel. The strenuous and arduous hardships in the first two thirds of his narrative are especially gripping. The last third that concerns their mostly kind and genteel treatment at the hands of the Spanish is fairly boring. It's only excusable by realizing that there wasn't much info about how people lived in those parts generally available back in Europe at that time. Apparently Byron went on a subsequent voyage and wrote a book claiming there was a race of giants living down in those parts! Crazy. Anyway, I mostly really enjoyed this book and it made me go out and order Richard Walter's narrative of Commodore Anson's voyage and of whose squadron the Wager was a part.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. An incredible tale of survival  
By Luis Mansilla  
Although the wreck of the Wager was really a tragedy, I could not but enjoy the accounts of Bulkeley and Byron since is a good source of information about Chile in the 1740s. The life of these people was miserable, almost surviving in bad weather all the time, cold, rain and more rain, nothing to eat but mussels, limpets, clams and if lucky, they got wild fowl and seal, most of the time rotten seal. The party who traveled south to the Magellan strait, arrived home sooner than the party that headed north, although they suffered the greatest casualties since, as you can imagine, living on mussels could only last till they reach the Atlantic, so when they headed north through the coast of Argentina, it was emptiness, there was no shellfish, so killing seals was the only option to save their lives. Lots of them died of hunger, and as related by Bulkeley, "hunger is void of all compassion; every person was so intent on the preservation of his own life that he was regardless of another's, and the bowels of commiseration were shut up". The small group who decided to go north, suffered a great deal trying to find the way out of Wager Island. It is amazing how these people survived the cold, being wet all the time, they even have to eat the leather of their shoes. If the story of Bulkeley is interesting, the one told by Byron is that and more, since instead of being a diary, it tells the story with much more detail. You learn a little about Kaweskar and Chonos Indians, the way of living of these people, how they reached Chiloe with the help of these Indians, how they were treated by the Chiloe inhabitants, the customs of the island, a story of potatoes, chicha, plenty of food, estancias and the few ones living there -like those women who avidly smoked tobacco. I just smiled, since I thought to myself that "not everything has changed since then". But it is not only that, the book narrates Valparaiso and especially the life in Santiago, the people, its customs and of course the earthquakes, that they experienced in Wager Island, Chiloe and Valparaiso. If I had to choose, I think I would have chosen to go South, since if there is something I eat weekly is mussels, but I am sure also that possibly I could not make it alive. When I was reading this book, I was only thinking about a way to reach Wager Island. When I was a kid I traveled to Punta Arenas in the navy ship "Aguiles". I don't recall Wager Island, but I do recall "Golfo de Penas" and "Puerto Eden". To travel today it would be a fascinating adventure, I can only think of doing that in Kayak, from Puerto Eden heading north to Wager Island, Byron Island and the islands to the south, and from there to follow the same path Byron took, reaching lake "San Rafael" on foot and then navigating the channels till a point favorable to cross to Chiloe. You can go south also, to Punta Arenas, but that is a much more difficult path, certainly more dangerous. In summary, an incredible real story of survival and to be read by anyone, especially if you are from Chile.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Robinson Crusoe meets Rashomon  
By Cristina Bories  
This is the narration of an historic wreck in one of the most inhospitable parts of the world as told by two men; one in each of two opposing bands of survivors. One loyal to an inept captain and the other not. Survivors of both groups eventually make it back to England. The written account of the events as seen by each author, served as pledges for each side. It is fascinating comparing both accounts when they overlap. But the stories separate as the teams split, one to surrender to the Spaniards and the other one to turn back through the treacherous Cape Horn. Both stories unfold with endless suffering through hunger, the cruelty of natives and scariest, the violent sea of southern Chile. I read for the first time in Byron's tale a particularly sad episode in which he witnesses the killing of a native child by his own father. I read again about this in the *Unknown Shore* by P. O'Brien (who lifted the whole story in that novel) and then lately, retold by Charles Darwin in *The Voyage of the Beagle*, when passing through the same part of the world some 80 years later. I guess a good story bears retelling.

The Loss of the Wager is an eighteenth century melodrama set in a ferociously inhospitable climate on one of the world's most remote and dangerous coastlines. When Commodore Anson set out for the Pacific in 1740, to attack the Spanish ships on the Chilean coast, he took eight ships with him. The Wager was effectively a transport ship, carrying stores and a force of marines; as the squadron rounded Cape Horn in fearsome weather, she was unable to keep up with the rest of them, and with her gear wrecked by the storm, was driven ashore on the Patagonian coast. The tale of mutiny, hardship and tenacity that ensued was told by two of the survivors, John Bulkeley, leader of those who

repudiated the captain's authority, and John Byron, then a midshipman, who remained with the captain. Both eventually reached home by different routes, and their dramatic narratives caught the public imagination. Byron was the grandfather of the poet, Lord Byron, who much admired the book and based the shipwreck scenes in *Don Juan* on 'my grand-dad's Narrative'. This voyage was the basis for Patrick O'Brian's historical work *The Unknown Shore*, written before he embarked on the Jack Aubrey novels.

The story of the *Wager*, whether told by Bulkeley or Byron, is one which reveals extremes of human behaviour in adversity. --*International Journal of Maritime History* These lively accounts are full of astute comment and revealing asides on the contemporary Royal Navy, as well as remarkable touches of humour in the midst of the grimmest predicaments. Indeed, both Bulkeley and Byron have left a valuable picture of the lost tribes of coastal Chile, and Boydell and Brewer are to be commended for this first person singular series. In this volume it certainly achieves the purpose of 'telling history in the words of those who took part'. These are true eighteenth-century voices. --*Mariner's Mirror* Two remarkable and fascinating histories. --*The*