

ship capable of carrying fuel and supplies for an extended operational tour. The *Altmark* was one of five ships built to support the German raiders and was specifically tasked to support *Graf Spee*. Known as the Dithmarschen-class, these ships carried everything needed by a raider at sea, including methods of replenishment at sea. The challenges of transferring fuel, spare parts, food, and above all else, munitions between ships while in the open ocean should not be ignored. While a far step from modern fleet replenishment ships, these Dithmarschen-class ships represent the first design built for the purpose of supporting combat ships far from safe harbours.

Equally as important as the design of resupply ships, is the analytical component of each chapter. Taking the reader through the material and then providing detailed analysis is very useful and directly supports Miller's argument that the issues at play here were Langsdorff's command decisions and the forces shaping them. The combination of history and analysis gives the reader a good sense of events and their impact on the mind of the Captain. Miller goes out of his way to try to give the reader a sense of what Langsdorff's options really were, based on what he knew at the time. For example, regarding his decision to head for a neutral harbour, Miller reminds the reader of the intelligence estimates that Langsdorff had and what he knew for certain. It makes for an interesting read regarding his options.

The greatest limitation for this book rests with the serious lack of citation. The little that is provided is minimal and reduces the value of the text, although with so little written on the battle, perhaps it is not surprising. That, however, is exactly why it is needed. For scholars and those interested in naval history, additional sources would greatly improve the field. Likewise, the accounts of events are a bit brief in places, giving a bit of an abridged feel to the story. Readers may be getting the straight facts as they exist, but I was left hungry for more.

On the whole, this is an interesting account, well written and enjoyable to read. It represents some of the best work on the Battle of the River Plate and as such, should definitely be considered by more than just those interested in the period or the individuals involved. It is an account that many would find useful and definitely a satisfying read.

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Nicky Nielsen. *The Pirate Captain Ned Low: His Life and Mysterious Fate*. Barnsley, S. Yorks: Pen & Sword, www.pen-and-sword.co.uk, 2022. xvii+205 pp., illustrations, map, list of crew, bibliography, notes, index. UK £20.00, US \$34.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-39909-431-3. (E-book available.)

When speaking of the Golden Age of Piracy (roughly from the 1650s to the 1730s), certain names often come to the fore. Among them are William Kidd, Henry Morgan, Edward Teach, Calico Jack, Mary Read, Anne Bonny, and Stede Bonnet. Each of them carved out a dedicated niche of infamy for themselves in history. Less often remembered today, although well feared in his time, is the dread pirate captain known as Edward “Ned” Low. Famed for his utter brutality, Low may be most notable because he managed a career of five years in a field that frequently promised a quick death and little mourning. Equally noteworthy is that this career did not end at the end of a rope or a cutlass, but with the vicious captain fading away sometime in the mid-1720s, rumoured to be dead but never confirmed. For all of his notoriety and the many stories written about him at the time, few contemporary works have been released on Low. Author Nielsen does, however, speak highly of George N. Flemming’s historically adjacent 2014 book *At the Point of a Cutlass*. What she seeks to do in this book, then, is to provide a baseline story of the life and times of Edward Low while carefully navigating away from the literary excesses taken by pirate “biographers” such as Captain Charles Johnson.

Over the course of the narrative, Nielsen presents a man who was, at his core, the product of an impoverished upbringing who quickly learned that the only way to get what he desired would be through force and cunning. Growing up mainly on the streets, Low was ill-educated, with a penchant for cheating openly at cards and allowing his size to deter retribution. Added to this were a clear emotional, and possibly mental, instability that saw his moods swing erratically, a seeming enjoyment of violence, and a general disdain for authority that could not impose itself on him. In short, he was neatly suited to the violent life he would come to live. For all of his negative attributes, Nielsen is careful to also show Ned Low as a somewhat compassionate man, who seemingly loved his daughter deeply, and who did what he did, at least in part, in an attempt to provide for her. Further, although Nielsen cannot confirm it, she suggests that Low may have seen his older brother Dick hanged for theft, and if so, he certainly would have been scarred by the experience. Moving forward to his rise into piracy and greater infamy, Low is consistently shown to be a man seemingly balanced on a razor’s edge. On the one hand, he only led a mutiny of fellow log cutters because of perceived abuse at the hands of those in charge. On the other, he would then carry out a multi-year reign of piratical terror that saw innocent sailors and members of his crew actively afraid of crossing him lest he decided to employ one of his many favoured tortures on them.

If there is a limitation to this book, it is that the figure of primary interest within it is in so many ways nebulous. Coming from the streets, Low left no significant records of his early childhood, and being generally uneducated, he

left no personal diaries or journals from which his thoughts could be gleaned. Finally, as he was never arrested and tried for his crimes, court records, one of the most common sources for piratical histories, are no help. Rather, Nielsen has had to work diligently to pull fact from fiction within newspaper articles and often sensationalized accounts of the time, the end product of which is a fine piece of historical work. While readers might desire deeper discussions on particular points, the tapestry of a narrative that Nielsen does weave is awe-inspiring.

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Michael North. *A World History of the Seas: From Harbour to Horizon*. (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, (first English translation), www.bloomsbury.com, 2022. 331 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. US \$30.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-3501-4543-6. (E-book available.)

As I write the review of Michael North's book, out of the corner of my eye I see hummingbirds flickering at our birdfeeder for a brief sip of nourishment and then flying off. They are perhaps a metaphor for his English translation of *A World History of the Seas*. North, a maritime history polymath, covers this vast and complex topic in 240 text pages with occasional illustrations, and maps, and "punctuated" by approximately 40 pages of endnotes. The topics cover maritime events that occurred upon the various bodies of water of the world through to the present time, connecting a world permitting the transport of goods and people from far-flung regions. It appears as a literary millimetre of varnish-coating overlaying an enormous, multifaceted seascape.

The book is challenging because the names of places and people who populated them have changed throughout their history, sometimes many times over. North rarely defines them and they are occasionally in a foreign or antiquated tongue. Therefore, one is relegated to verifying where the author is taking his reader. Still, new perceptions can be gained from overviews that elude scholars habitually focused on details rather than the big picture. Every reader will certainly take away different and personal insights after reading this book, but I wish to mention a few that struck this reviewer.

The book is unequally divided into two segments dealing with many maritime ethnic, social, and religious networks highlighting cross-regional linkages on the world's oceans and seas. The first eight chapters centre on specific oceans and/or seas and their maritime histories and connections. These are followed by two chapters roughly focused on the seas as a resource, and finally, human relationship with the ocean environment. The extensive influence of the Vikings is well covered. The pervasive maritime history of