

both ships as they would look at sea (11, 37). Furthermore, the concept of including such a scenario would work better if ones were provided for the other addressed classes in a separate section. The addition of a British versus German and Soviet versus German would further highlight the differences in designs and bolster the effectiveness of the existing scenario in addressing strengths and deficiencies between the creations of the various adversaries.

All in all, *Super-Battleships of World War II* is a useful introduction into the abandoned, heavy capital ship designs of the Second World War's main combatant nations. Stille is able to provide comparable data or reasonable projections for the key aspects of each proposed vessel along with the reasoning behind their abandonment. The combination of period images and profile drawings allows one to visualize the changes meant to occur with each design in comparison to their predecessors, while information tables allow for a similar comparison between each type. Although there is room for improvement, or expansion, *Super-Battleships* does a good job of exposing those unfamiliar with the designs to their concept and offers useful depictions for those interested in modeling warships that never made it far beyond the drawing board.-

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Angela C. Sutton. *Pirates of the Slave Trade: The Battle of Cape Lopez and the Birth of an American Institution*. Essex, CT: Prometheus Books, www.prometheusbooks.com, 2023. xxiv+274 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, index. US \$29.95, cloth. ISBN 978-1-63388-844-9.

In the annals of decisive sea fights, the Battle of Cape Lopez off what is now the country of Gabon in West Africa must certainly rank high. For it was there, on 10 February 1722, that Captain Chaloner Ogle of the British Royal Navy defeated Captain Bartholomew "Black Bart" Roberts, ending the golden age of piracy and ensuring the stabilization and British dominance of the slave trade.

Angela C. Sutton, an assistant research professor at Vanderbilt University, examines this battle, its complicated context, and how she believes it fundamentally transformed slavery, most specifically how, though it took place 54 years before the United States even existed, "it shaped the type of nation we would become." (xxiii) That is a lot of interpretive baggage to pack into a short book about one battle. Doubtless other scholars will debate Sutton's claims, but in this reviewer's opinion they are too sweeping.

Sutton focuses on three principal characters, and she could not have asked

for a more memorable group. They include Ogle, a determined and calloused navy man; Black Bart, infamous for his audacity and ostentatious dress, which included a red waistcoat, a diamond-encrusted gold cross, and feathered hat; and the African king, John Conny, who “feasted with pirates, drank from Dutchmen’s skulls, and dressed his wives in solid gold.” (3)

According to Sutton, prior to 1722 “competitive chaos characterized the Atlantic slave trade in Africa.” (xix) The British, Dutch, and Prussians all vied for the lucrative commerce in human beings and established forts along the Guinea coast to help secure it. These tenuous footholds existed at the pleasure of local leaders like Conny. One observer described him as “a strong-made man, about fifty, of a sullen look, and commands the respect of being bare-headed, from all the negroes about him that are worth caps.” (113) Conny controlled access to fresh water, supplies, and slaves from his headquarters at Fort Great Fredericksburg, more generally known as “Conny’s Castle.” (19) Besides the fort’s stone walls and cannon plundered from European shipwrecks, Conny enjoyed a sophisticated network of European and African alliances as well as a personal army “trained in the battle tactics of both Prussian oblique formation with muskets and Asante pincer formation with swords.” (121)

Among those who freely anchored at Conny’s Castle was Black Bart, a Welshman and former slave-ship second mate gone pirate. He flourished at his new calling and colourfully dubbed it “A merry life but a short one.” (130) During his brief tumultuous career, Black Bart cruised the Atlantic and Caribbean, captured over 400 ships, audaciously hung the French governor of Martinique, and assembled a small fleet led by the *Royal Fortune* of some 40 guns and 250 men. Through a careful examination of the primary source material, Sutton doubts the most notorious crime attributed to him, namely that he burned a captured vessel filled with shackled Africans. If not a mass murderer, he was nonetheless a bold robber who thoroughly disrupted maritime commerce.

British merchant captains, and more particularly slavers, complained loudly, and the Crown sent Capt. Ogle to West Africa with a pair of 50-gun fourth raters, HMS *Swallow* and *Weymouth*, to crush the pirates. The resulting clash had a predictable outcome. As the *Swallow*’s surgeon, John Atkins, later wrote, the buccaneers’ “drunkenness, inadvertency, and disorder” made “them fall an easy prize to us.” (135) Casualties were low on both sides, likely in part because Black Bart fell early, which disheartened his men. Ogle hauled the surviving pirates back to the African coast where they stood trial. British authorities hanged 52 of the worst cases; acquitted 74 so-called forced men; and sold the 48 Black buccaneers into slavery.

And what of John Conny? He soon lost his influence and fled into the interior, his fate unknown. Interestingly, Africans transported to the Bahamas

and other British-speaking Caribbean colonies preserved his memory in the wintertime Junkanoo (or John Canoe Festival). Back in Africa, with Conny gone, the warlike Dahomey tribe filled the power vacuum and aggressively expanded the slave trade, funneling ever larger numbers of Africans onto European, mostly British, slave ships.

Sutton argues that the Battle of Cape Lopez “becomes a way to see what the Atlantic world looked like before chattel slavery became inevitable and to investigate the legacies of this inevitability.” (xxi) Among the latter, she contends, was the transition of slavery from a tolerant Roman model as theretofore practiced in French Louisiana and Spanish Florida, to a draconian chattel system. In the Latin South, bondage was “often a temporary state of being, not a permanent identity.” (221) But the British developed a different philosophy in their colonies. There, slavery meant “total ownership and dominion over their involuntary workforce and any future descendants.” (221) This practice carried over into the early United States. Sutton closes with a *cri de coeur* titled “Reverse-Engineering the Slave Society” on how everyday moderns can fight against the chattel model’s racist legacies.

Sutton writes well, but her use of slang like “intel,” (113, 119), “wishy-washy” (80), and “piddly” (82); non-nautical prose (“Ogle ordered the *Swallow*’s mate to steer a hard right ” 134); and judgmental language compromise its effectiveness. On the latter point, it avails nothing to castigate men 300 years in the grave for ghastly attitudes and behaviour. Slavery, flogging, child labour, animal abuse, and public hanging were all fixtures of the age. There were abolitionists and reformers to be sure, but they were thin on the ground in the very rough world of West Africa.

Taken in toto, Sutton attempts too much, and the result is a sprawling, top-heavy book. The Battle of Cape Lopez was an extraordinary event for which there is rich documentation. Better for the historian to let the story do its work and trust the reader’s intelligence to absorb the implications and horrors.

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Barret Tillman. *When the Shooting Stopped: August 1945*. Oxford, UK: Osprey Publishing, www.ospreypublishing.co.uk, 2022. 304 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index. US \$29.00, CDN \$47.00, hardback; ISBN 978-1-47284-898-7. (E-book available.)

When the Shooting Stopped August 1945 explores the final month of the Second World War, more specifically the events and reactions by individuals, at all levels, to what occurred between the dropping of the atomic bomb on