

Book Reviews

Correction

In the review of *Suffren Versus Hughes: War in the Indian Ocean 1781-1783* that appeared in the print edition of vol. 34, no. 3: 415-16, the name of Admiral Suffren was misspelled. This has been corrected in the online edition. The editors apologize to Quintin Barry, the book's author, and to Helion & Company, the publisher.

Richard Blakemore. *Enemies of All: The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age of Piracy*. New York, NY Pegasus Books, Ltd, 2024, 352 pp., illustrations, maps, bibliography, index. US \$29.95, HC, ISBN 978-1-63936-633-0.

Enemies of All is a complex account of the adventures, misadventures, and politics concerning the rise of piracy during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The definition of piracy evolved over time to becoming the act of taking a vessel on the high seas from those lawfully entitled to it according to the accepted declaration of the International Law of the Seas. However, powers in a condition of war who have declared a state of blockade can proclaim a justifiable reason for detaining of any ship suspected of carrying contraband, whether neutral or belligerent. Without that legal right, any seizure or sinking of a vessel would be considered an act of piracy. Before the formation of state navies, piracy was pervasive among all seafaring nations. Early in maritime history it was recognized and agreed that pirates were enemy of all nations and could be punished by the competent courts of any country.

The author explores the debate centered around the interpretation of these laws that governed the act of piracy and international efforts to suppress the maritime crime as it tumbled into the eighteenth century. Blakemore composes complex narratives, many of which encompass the escapades of Francis Drake, Henry Morgan, Anne Bonny, Mary Reed, Henry Every and William Kidd, among countless lesser-known others. Britain, France, Spain,

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Portugal, and the Netherlands had colonies in the Caribbean and in North America that were plagued by piracy, but Blackmore's work is truly more global. The multiple stories take place in London, Paris, Amsterdam, Curaçao, Port Royal, Tortuga, Charleston, and send the reader to Jamaica, Cuba, the Yucatán, Ireland, Mediterranean ports, Madagascar, and India, as well as the Arabian Gulf and the Pacific Ocean: a dizzying world tour.

Blakemore explores many languages including Greek, Latin, English, French, Italian, Spanish, German, Dutch, and even Ottoman Turkish, Chinese, and Hindi to discuss the definition of pirate in various cultures. But more important are the distinctions between a buccaneer, freebooter (*vrijbouter*; *flibustier*), and privateer. The author recounts how Emmanuel Heath, then rector of London's Saint Paul's Cathedral, used the latter term to replace the previously common "private men of war," an appendage of a nation's naval force. When they were deemed lewd, rogue privateers, guileless lawbreakers, they became known as pirates. The distinction in some societies, however, was ambiguous, not cut and dry. As Blakemore points out, one nation's outlaw can be considered an entrepreneur by a competing nation.

In constructing his narrative, the author admirably brings to life the rather complicated story of Henry Morgan's relationship to piracy and politics. This book provides a detailed history for this colorful reprobate, military officer, and distant colonial governor, that is not found in the usual profile of this flamboyant rogue. Morgan and his men are credited in forming what Blakemore termed "Jamaica discipline," a kind of slavery pursued by socially respectable planters. This unique relationship inflicted brutal cruelties on enslaved people, but these were deemed locally legal. Thus buccaneering and slavery became closely intertwined.

Blakemore describes the history of many well-known pirates, but his portrayals of the female pirates Anne Bonny (Ann Fulford) and Mary Read are especially well done and likely to change the reader's view of their lives and, particularly, the role of women during the age of piracy. This is the first surviving evidence of the most famous partnership of female pirates in history. Their true story, however, remains an intriguing mystery since almost nothing certain is known about these now-mythical women. The author identifies several more women who crossed-dressed to go to sea, serving as both soldiers and sailors aboard vessels of several nations. Among the most interesting was a woman called Elizabeth Watson, another Maria van Antwerpen, and the third Hannah Snell. All served within a man's world effectively and memorably.

Blakemore's central theme emerges that "condemning some plunderers as 'pirates', claiming they were 'enemies of all' and therefore outside politics is itself a political move. Without pirates there would have been no empires, and without empires there would have been no pirates" (296). He cautions his

reader when reading a history about pirates or piracy that one should ask who should be called pirates and how were they defined as such.

The scholarly book contains a large section devoted to “further reading,” giving primary source material and printed sources, but the author spends many pages referring to, and usually refuting, Charles Johnson’s 1724 book, *A General History of Pyrates*. In writing an academic thesis in history, it is well-advised to touch on every pertinent event and its historical primary or secondary source reference. Sometimes it is like an exercise of trying to count sheep in a distant pasture while riding on a rapidly moving train. Writing a book for more popular consumption, however, is more effective if its characters and interactions are limited and clearly drawn. Richard Blakemore appears to have revised his Cambridge University PhD thesis into a more readable work. He presents many fascinating episodes and thoughtful character analysis of men and women who were accused of being pirates and those who applied contemporary law against the maritime criminals. Unfortunately, in several instances, there are so many minor characters mentioned and only briefly explored in the book that a reader may have difficulty following the stories.

Enemies of All is a dynamic account of “The Golden Age of Piracy,” a rich and detailed history of piracy around the world in the twilight of the seventeenth century and into the eighteenth century. Over time, the facts about piracy have been altered by an abundance of myths. Blakemore’s scholarly work is thought-provoking and useful to readers interested in how this rogue enterprise was able to change the world, perhaps in what will be to some unexpected ways. I recommend this book to maritime historians who are interested in the evolution of piracy and privateering throughout the world during this time.

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Bowers, Ian (ed.). *Coalition Navies during the Korean War: Understanding Combined Naval Operations*. London and New York: Routledge, 2024. xiv+126 pp., tables, notes, index. US \$180, hardback; ISBN 978-1-032-62652-9. (E-book available.)

Coalition Navies during the Korean War, edited by Ian Bowers, is a surprisingly slim volume, fitting eight essays and an introduction into fewer than 150 pages. It is unrealistic to expect a book this length to provide a comprehensive overview of naval operations in Korean waters from 1950-1953, and one of the major strengths of the volume is that it does not attempt this. Instead, the volume takes a forward-looking perspective, with each contributor choosing a