

secondary readings for many upper-undergraduate maritime history classes. While not intended to be all-encompassing, this book certainly is not lacking.

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**Nicholas Rogers. *Maritime Bristol in the Slave-Trade Era*. Martlesham, Suffolk, England: Boydell & Brewer, 2024. 262 pp. US \$115.00, hardback; ISBN 978-183765151-1.**

Discussion of the role and place of Great Britain and of specific maritime-focused cities in the Atlantic slave trade has been a growing topic of interest in recent years. Protests and demonstrations have occurred across Britain as citizens wrestle with the ongoing legacies of the business of enslavement, both publicly and privately. Key to these discussions has frequently been not only a recognition of the histories that exist but a recommitment on the part of historians to delve into the topic and bring it into the light and part of broader discussions of the development of many communities. Much as Anthony Tibbles did in 2018 with his book *Liverpool and the Slave Trade*, Nicholas Rogers picked one of the prominent maritime trade towns of Great Britain (in this case Bristol) and dug deep into how the enslaving trade was woven into the fabric of not only business but also day-to-day life for many of its residents. Over the course of nine collected essays he outlines the shape of Bristolian society from multiple vantage points while also pointing to potential future lines of research.

Rogers's first area of focus is not the slave trade itself, but rather the question of freedom and liberty as it was perceived by the sailors of Bristol. A lieutenant under the command of Captain William Hamilton impressed several local river pilots by aiding others to escape the press gang. In retaliation, the remaining river pilots refused to guide ships through the tricky waters, and Hamilton was forced to gain permission to un-impress those pilots. This process reaffirmed to the sailors of Bristol the importance of maintaining one's liberties. Adding to this, in the next chapter Rogers shows that Bristol sailors were well aware of the variety of dangers they faced in the trade, particularly in the form of ship-board revolts, fears of which added to their desires to strongly limit the liberties of others onboard ship. Rogers contends this brutality was further shaped by the sociology of the crew members themselves, both in how they were often drawn from specific communities within Bristol and how they were "seasoned" for the trade by those who had come before them. Through the perpetuation of certain rituals and rules, as well as the careful selection of specific men, slave-trade ships

were able to formulate a specific culture and attitude among their sailors. An unfortunate side effect of creating these kinds of shipboard societies was their innate violence, which in turn presented numerous opportunities for abuses such as those experienced by Robert Baker, whose memoir Rogers devotes a chapter to highlighting. Paired with this is a chapter on the dangers of murder and mutiny on board ship and how the threat of mutiny was addressed in the contracts of sailors, mitigated onboard ship, and, when necessary, punished by authorities.

Building from this, Rogers moves into a look at the actions of Bristolian privateers during the Seven Years War when they were at their peak of profit and plunder, demonstrating how they generated profit and glory for the town through initial outfitting and subsequent prize trials. While not directly tied into the slave trade, these moments of profit and glory occurred at the same time and in their own way demonstrate how the depredations of the slave trade were tied into a larger system of maritime commerce and engagement. The book ends with two chapters that focus on the political side of Bristol during the American Revolution with Edmund Burke and the rise of Abolitionism. Across these two chapters it becomes clear once again that, for many in Bristol, there was a strong devotion to the importance of maintaining liberty and a recognition that the slave-trade, which had helped to make the city so prosperous, was based on denying those liberties to a group of others. While some would make their opposition to the slave trade known, there were many who either genuinely did not care or for whom the best politics were seen as those which were kept quietly private.

Recent events have accelerated the demand for a new accounting of history, one which encompasses not only the stories of previously overlooked populations but also those darker aspects of the known stories that may have been downplayed to date. Rogers more than meets these new criteria, and does so in a most comprehensible manner which lends to the versatility of this book. For long-term scholars, there is the promise of new lines of research and discourse, while for undergraduates the essay-like nature of each chapter allows for a piecemeal consumption of specific contents. While longevity is only provable with the passage of time, this tome promises to, if nothing else, alter the historical questions relating to Bristol going forward.

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