

slaving, recognizing that the simple toppling of statues is hardly an appropriate gesture of contrition. He suggests a more active approach to recognizing and salvaging shipwreck sites, writing “Every time we bring up a slave-ship or its relics from the deep, toll the Lutine Bell twice, for the arrival of a vessel long overdue” (142).

Unusually for a volume which is aimed at a broad audience rather than academic specialists, the book contains an extensive bibliography ranging from Juvenal and Virgil to the most recent articles and sources, many of them online. Another departure from the popular “show and tell” books is that it has an index, which is actually useful.

This is a remarkably engaging and readable book. It can serve both as an introduction to nautical history and as a refresher of how wide the scope of research on the subject can be.

H.T. Holman

Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island

Pinkerton, Gary L. *Paper Diver: How the World's Greatest Underwater Treasure Hunter Never Got Wet*

McFarland & Co., 2024

vii + 255 pp., illustrations, notes, bibliography, index

ISBN 9781476694023 (softcover) US\$39.95; 9781476652160 (e-book)

Harry Earl Rieseberg's claims to be a treasure-finding genius from the 1930s to the 1960s illustrate how spurious make-believe, published convincingly, widely, and repeatedly, influences people. This unusual and broad biography by Gary L. Pinkerton, subtitled *How the World's Greatest Underwater Treasure Hunter Never Got Wet*, explains Rieseberg and those he influenced, including Robert Marx, Gilbert Doukan, Robert Stenuit, and E. Lee Spence. Marx describes how, after finding two out of 100 treasure wrecks Rieseberg listed in “all these phony charts and books, [he] ... learned the hard way that seventy-four of those one hundred existed only in the fertile imaginations of the authors.” Marx, a world leader in finding ocean treasure, “became convinced that all the books on treasure hunting at the time by Harry [Rieseberg] types were all complete bullshit. They never even went in the water” (208).

The book's layout is unusual, recognizing a modern appetite for short bites of information. In 255 pages there are roughly 275 subheadings and headings. It is readable, informative and accessible, in chronological order, and illustrated with approximately 30 black and white illustrations. These are

varied and include sharks attacking an octopus, bathyspheres, diagrams, and images of important inventors, actors, posters, and supporters. Although the geography of voyages by the schooner *Constellation*, voyages to Port Royal, Jamaica, and voyages up and down the US eastern seaboard and West Coast are central in the narrative, there are no maps or charts.

Pinkerton's verdict is clear: "Harry Rieseberg made it all up. ... his thirty-five-year campaign to promote himself as the world's greatest underwater treasure hunter was built on stories that were not true." We also learn Rieseberg was "the Imperial Representative of the KKK in Washington, D.C., [which] operated like a pyramid sales organization whose product was racism" (45). Unfortunately, neither "KKK" nor "Ku Klux Klan" appears in the seven-page index.

There have been many snake-oil salesmen, of course; one recently falsified the cargo manifest of the *Port Nicholson*, claiming it carried billions in precious metal near Cape Cod in World War II. Rieseberg wrote about being attacked by an octopus in the ocean deep and fighting it off with a knife, filming a shark attacking an octopus, and finding the city of Port Royal, Jamaica, undamaged under the sea following an earthquake, with bars of gold lying around.

The book describes Rieseberg's human failings – living with his parents into middle age, his wife leaving him while he was imprisoned, being fired for stealing from the government and other employers. The odd thing is that Rieseberg's main attraction seems to be attention. He would do anything to get it: ride in a parade past the president dressed as a cowboy or claiming he went on safari with Teddy Roosevelt. *Kook Science* said he aggressively circulated articles to a hungry global audience and published nine books, the central one being *I Dive for Treasure*.

Rieseberg really was a salesman, but his wares were often on shaky ground. He embellished his military record and put himself in fictional positions which could not be proven. Often he relied on the work of others to create or give authenticity to his own. He did not have a passport, so how did he get to Jamaica? Pinkerton says Rieseberg is "a complex man who could write romantic poems about places of beauty as easily as rancorous memos to his publisher and deliver speeches about the separation of races" (46). The rights to words and films were always contested, however, and he often fought with publisher and agents.

Not everything Rieseberg initially worked on was kooky – the US Navy showed an interest in his sub-sea sphere with grapples attached called a Romano diving bell. The revolutionary concepts in *Floating Drydock Would Hoist Sunken Vessels* were in fact put to use in the 1974 effort by the CIA to

raise the Soviet sub K-129 (161).

Reiseberg was clever and duplicitous, but Pinkerton shows us how most of his perceived greatness was absorbed from others. The author challenges Rieseberg's stories by placing texts convincingly side-by-side and under "this looks familiar" to point out falsehoods. Pinkerton spells out how, "even with repeated evidence that his tales were false accounts of underwater adventures, he never once relented in his affirmation that he did all the things he claimed" (223). Many of those duped into believing Rieseberg's bullshit seem to have been entertained by it, recognized it as falsehoods, and even forgave him. Whether Rieseberg was a Mason protected by a code of secrecy, a Klan leader protected by a mask, or was in a diving bell with an octopus being attacked by a shark, he always survived, an emission's risk before aerosol.

Eric Wiberg

Boston, Massachusetts

Pomey, Patrice and Eric Reith; translated by Colin Clement. *Nautical Archaeology*

Texas A&M University Press, 2024

xi + 248 pp., photographs, diagrams, maps, bibliography, glossary, index

ISBN 9781648431920 (hardcover) US\$65.00

This work is a translation of *L'archaéologie navale*, originally published in 2005, "completely revised, expanded and updated both in terms of text and illustrations" (ix). It is intended to be a manual for discussion of highest-level concepts governing the archaeology of wrecks and "to educate by describing, explaining and analyzing, with as much rigor and clarity as possible nautical archaeology as a scientific discipline with its own definitions, concepts, theoretical principles, methods, and issues" (5). Its coverage is of pre-industrial wooden boats and ships, which includes Viking, Mediterranean, and Keralan designs. Vessels for riverine, coastal, and open-ocean uses are included. The cover illustration is the only colour photograph, presenting the inside of an open wooden vessel's hull, which is notable for being sewn together. This sets the tone: we are about to explore the detail and myriad complexity of ancient and historical boatbuilding technologies. The introduction humbly details the classic texts of nautical archaeology as primary sources for the work.

There are four major chapters. "Definitions and Issues" introduces the technical complexities of a range of craft from an ancient dugout canoe (logboat) to a 74-gun ship of the line from the eighteenth century. The ship