in the introduction the editors offer a succinct, yet up-to-date biographical profile of the admiral, taking into account the conclusions of the most recent scholarship.

Equally commendable is the decision to annotate each letter with copious footnotes, the notes providing exhaustive biographical profiles of all the individuals mentioned by Nimitz, thus amounting to a virtual who's who of the Pacific War as seen from the admiral's headquarters. All in all, *Best Beloved* is a commendable publication enriching our understanding of the psychology of one of the key figures in the Allied war effort: although it does not provide any new information capable of challenging established historical interpretations, it still makes for a genuinely intriguing read.

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Barcia, Manuel. ***Pirate Imperialism: Trade, Abolition, and Global Suppression of Maritime Raiding, 1825–1870***
Yale University Press, 2026
296 pp.
ISBN 9780300269451 (hardcover) US$38.00; 9780300289299 (e-book) US$38.00

It is a fact that the line between horrible piratical criminals and daring, if not downright dashing, privateering heroes frequently comes down to the political alliances of whoever is making the distinction. Ask a nineteenth-century Englishman who Sir Francis Drake was, and they would almost certainly sing his praises as an explorer and defender of the realm. Ask them what they think of John Paul Jones, and there is a good chance his name would be among the foulest of blackhearts to ever put to sea. In recent decades, historians such as Marcus Rediker, Peter Linebaugh, and Jaime Goodall have further delved into the multiplicity of push and pull factors that brought people into piracy and incentivized communities not only to tolerate but also to welcome and protect them.

In *Pirate Imperialism*, Manuel Barcia examines the imperial side of piracy in the nineteenth century, arguing that "suppression of piracy" was often a proxy for both formalized and informal imperialist efforts by Western and non-Western powers. Specifically, he argues that imperial powers would use phrases like "suppression of piracy" (2), "commerce protection" (92), "anti-slave trade enforcement" (57), and "civilizing efforts" (31) to justify military actions against amphibious communities. These communities, which resided

near oceans, seas, or rivers and were reliant on the waterways for their survival, frequently came into conflict with imperial powers in several ways. First, they resided in places where it was expedient and desirable to land soldiers and colonists and represented resource competitors for those two groups. Second, when imperial pressures mounted on these communities, they would engage in maritime raiding to both protect themselves and supplement their resource holdings. Barcia uses the term "maritime raiding" (4–5) to cover a gamut of activities from attacks on commerce and the theft of goods to kidnapping for ransom and outright engagement in the enslaving trades. He argues for this wording as both more accurate to the often-blended nature of their actions and less judgmental than referring to it as piracy. Third, these raiding activities could bring various imperial powers together to try to stop them, but they could also fracture such alliances by pitting individual states against one another. In this way, many amphibious communities were able to survive for extended periods by playing various imperial ambitions off one another. While these actions of "piracy" helped fuel the imperial backlash, Barcia stresses that "Pirate Imperialism" specifically refers to the retributive, allegedly suppressive, and protective actions of the imperial powers. He argues that these states were themselves acting as pirates but using language that stressed their standing in society (i.e., civilized government, often Western) to muddy the waters. In this way, he ties into earlier debates about who and what is a pirate, while also delving into the hypocrisies of imperial "peacekeeping" in this period. This becomes even more evident when he makes a point in his introduction to emphasize that any crimes committed by the pirates of Amphibius Communities were minor compared to those of imperial powers. In this, some will see parallels with Noam Chomsky's 1986 book, *Pirates and Emperors, Old and New: International Terrorism in the Real World*, which touched on several similar points, albeit through the lens of acts labeled as terrorism.

In laying out his argument, Barcia conceptualizes five maritime regions of the nineteenth-century world: the Atlantic Basin, the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia, and the South China Sea. He then looks at the interconnecting threads within and between these regions as they relate to "Civilization," "Abolition," "Commerce," "Proto-Colonial Expansion," and "Inter-Imperial Cooperation and Conflict." Dividing the book in this manner allows for focused analysis of the various lanes of expansionist justification and methodology, while demonstrating the consistencies and interconnectedness across the globe. It will also, in a classroom setting, allow for the use of specific chapters in broader discussions of topics such as the abolition of the enslaving trades, the use of civilization as a weapon against Indigenous populations,

and the complex nature of international imperial politics. If there is a critique to be made about this particular layout, it is that these topics cannot be fully separated from one another, meaning that there are instances of the text to a degree repeating itself. Yet, the other readily available division would seem to have been across regions, which would have detracted from Barcia's larger point of the global nature of these patterns. In the end, these repetitions are generally minor and drive home the core arguments all the more strongly.

Beyond its classroom applicability, the book's accessible language makes it easy to pick up and read for both academic and casual readers. Through lively, contemporaneous narratives that highlight the highs and lows of various "piratical" persons and the political wranglings over who and what were seen as a pirate problem, the more technical aspects of the work remain engaging without becoming fictionalized adventure. Almost certain to become a frequently cited text in the years to come, this tome will make an easy addition to nearly any shelf and collection.

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Barritt, Michael. ***Nelson's Pathfinders: A Forgotten Story in the Triumph of British Sea Power***
Yale University Press, 2024
xvi + 267 pp., illustrations, plates, figures, maps, endnotes, index, appendix, glossary
ISBN 9780300273762 (hardcover) US$35.00; 9780300280210 (e-book) US$35.00

The safe navigation of Mahan's "far distant, stormbeaten ships, upon which the Grand Army never looked, [that] stood between it and the dominion of the world" is frequently assumed. At best the hazards and challenges might be dismissed in a few lines. Yet in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars "more than twice as many British ships had been lost to shipwreck than in action with the enemy" (3). The challenge is easily stated. At Aboukir Bay, Mahan's sole navigational comment was that "the only chart in the fleet was a rough sketch taken from a captured merchant vessel and no British officer knew the ground." When Nelson chased the French into the eastern Mediterranean, he had no small scale chart of the area. Until Hurd's own work the ships blockading Brest had no reliable chart of the area. The dangers were summed up in Collingwood's much quoted August 1803 comment when on the blockade, "an anxious time I have had of it, what with tides and rocks, which have more danger in them