

points out that the Kriegsmarine (German Navy) should have made better use of their specialized, albeit limited in number, supply U-boats. While critical of the Allies' failure to fully exploit their intelligence, Middlebrook notes that Admiral Dönitz and his staff never took full advantage of theirs either. Moreover, he notes, the Germans never realized the extent to which their communications had been compromised. This failure is all the more inexcusable because several German U-boat officers were to voice their suspicions of this throughout the last half of the war. The author could have also mentioned that German U-boat commanders were actually more hampered by a lack of aerial reconnaissance than their counterparts. In the end, convoys *SCI22* and *HX229* suffered serious losses—22 merchant vessels lost as against one U-boat. Nonetheless, given that 42 U-boats actually operated against these convoys, their success seems relatively small and is a good indicator of the declining effectiveness of German U-boats.

Middlebrook is not content to leave the story here. His account concludes with a recap of the careers and subsequent history of many of the individuals and ships featured in his text. This is perhaps the strongest element of the story, as readers are given an even better grounding in the consequences of this struggle, in regard to the war itself as well as the personal histories of some of the individuals who appear in this volume. The six appendices are of great value to the reader as well, all but the last of them focusing on these two convoys. Based primarily on countless interviews with participants in these events, the lack of detailed notes and bibliography are at best a very minor quibble. Overall, this volume is still a worthwhile read.

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Nicholas Papastratigakis. *Russian Imperialism and Naval Power. Military Strategy and the Build-up to the Russo-Japanese War*. London, UK: Bloomsbury Academic, www.bloomsbury.com, 2020. x+342 pp., illustrations, maps, notes, bibliography, index. UK £26.09, US \$39.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-35016-549-6. (E-book available.)

In this fine monograph, Nicholas Papastratigakis has delivered to the maritime history community an important account of a much-neglected aspect of the pre-Great War world, that of Russia's late-nineteenth century imperialist ambitions and the role played by its navy in securing them. In contrast, albeit not notably rich, accounts of Russia's far east foe, Japan, enjoy significant attention and regard. Admiration abounds for Japan's pluck and its well-earned triumphs during the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05, tinged perhaps with reservations regarding the future course of history in the middle decades of the twentieth century. For Russia, the received view tends towards contempt for a declining autocracy that set new standards for ineptitude and incompetence. That both perspectives are a little unbalanced is largely due to the historiography, which is decidedly thin, particularly in English. Papastratigakis has provided a needed addition to accounts in English from Russia's perspective on this entire subject. It is an excellent contribution to the history of both the preliminaries to the Russo-Japanese War itself, as well as providing important insights into a largely unstudied aspect of the pre-Great War diplomacy and strategic calculus.

To set the context, Papastratigakis commences his account with two chapters that summarize the role of naval power in relation to Russia's imperial ambition and its influence on national

policy. Some might not need such a review, but it is welcome as it provides the Russian understandings in contrast to the comparatively well-known perspectives of Great Britain, France, and Germany in the same period. The useful point is made that imperial rivalry certainly resulted in tensions and the potential for conflict, but as the vital interests of the European powers were not at stake, with the territories in question far off, there was habitually room for negotiation and compromise. This state of affairs did not apply with respect to northeast China and the antagonistic ambitions of both Russia and Japan for gains at China's expense. The connection with rival objectives in China to the European confrontation on Russia's western borders with Austria-Hungary and Germany, as well as endemic conflict with the Ottoman Empire, is well sketched out. Despite its vast size and enormous economic potential, Russia was hard pressed to maintain its interests and project its power due to its relative immaturity in technological, infrastructural, administrative and, particularly, governance terms. Fielding a top-notch army and navy in these circumstances was beyond Russia's capacity as both the Russo-Japanese War and the Great War were to demonstrate. Papastratigakis is particularly strong in his analysis of the decision-making and governance of the Russian Empire, which overwhelmingly relied on the character and strong hand of the tsar. Absent such oversight and capacity, Russia was prone to infighting, rival cliques, paralysis, and indecision.

With this introduction to the fundamentals, Papastratigakis then explores the development of Russia's naval policy in the last decades of the nineteenth century over the balance of his account. The analysis of Russia's naval problems is thoroughly and well described. The

sprawling nature of the Russian Empire has two important factors that did not apply to its European rivals. Firstly, the contiguous nature of the Russian Empire and the fact that its imperialist ambitions were solidly aimed at territories on its borders was unique. This was entirely different from other empires of the period, with the two exceptions of a moribund China that was scarcely able to defend itself let alone embark on aggressive actions elsewhere, and the increasingly ramshackle and ineffective Austro-Hungarian Empire. In contrast, Russia was aggressive and feared as a result. The second factor applies to its navy more directly in that Russia really needed three navies as it operated in three distinct maritime theatres, with separate threats, none of which enjoyed even remotely convenient geographical connections. Combining naval forces from the Baltic Sea, the Black Sea and the Far East was an enormously difficult undertaking and was anything but speedy given the complete absence of connecting bases such as enjoyed by the Royal Navy and its global network of stations and bases. Complicating matters further is that two of its fleets were iced in for the winter. The fact that Russia stumbled in trying to resolve its difficulties is not in many respects surprising and Papastratigakis does a good job analysing this reality. He also addresses the interplay with wider political issues within the Russian state that stymied the best laid plans and intentions of the shambolic Russian administration of Tsar Nicholas II.

Papastratigakis has conducted impressive research from recently opened archives in Russia, as well as from the relevant sources in Britain and France. His secondary sources are extensive and provide a useful guide for anyone conducting research on naval and maritime affairs in the period in question. His

ability to link thinking in Great Britain, France, and Japan as well as Russia is noteworthy and indicative of a comprehensive approach to his topic. His use of Russian language sources is impressive and represents ground-breaking research. The book is blessed with extensive notes and references, which are of great benefit to any who wish to explore the issues raised further. Lastly, there are maps provided that usefully identify sites of significance to the narrative, rather than simply providing generic maps dotted with irrelevant notations and obscuring detail. The clarity significantly assists in comprehending the points made in Papastratigakis' narrative.

I can heartily recommend this book to readers interested in Russian maritime history in general, as well as all engaged in research in the pre-Great War period and the rivalry between the European imperial powers.

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Nicholas Rogers. *Murder on the Middle Passage. The Trial of Captain Kimber*. Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, www.boydellandbrewer.com, 2020. 281 pp., illustrations, notes, appendix, bibliography. UK £16.99, US \$24.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-78327-482-6. (E-book available.)

Nicholas Rogers's *Murder on the Middle Passage: The Trial of Captain Kimber* benefits transatlantic, abolitionist, maritime, and English historiographies. This six-chapter work seeks to explain a trial often footnoted in the abolition movement literature, yet not fully analyzed until this work. The author's extensive and detailed research in the Bristol, UK archives is undoubtable. The information obtained in the ar-

chives is enhanced by Rogers's depth of knowledge as a career political and social historian.

This work highlights the societal and financial aspects of the slave trade and the consequences of abolition. Via Reverend Thomas Clarkson, the reader is immersed into Bristol, England, as the work chronicles his efforts to recruit crew members to testify in open court to the atrocities of the slave trade. The social dynamics both at sea and in a port city are quickly made clear. Though Clarkson's collar allowed him more accessibility to interview sailors in privacy, he quickly learned why previous attempts to have crew members come forward have failed. His interviews reveal the stories of several different crew members, from common labourers to the ship's doctor, yielding a greater insight into routine ship activities. Rogers expertly weaves the financial implications into the reader's consciousness, not only by direct conversations about crew member wages, but also by exploring why those who were against slavery, as port city members, did not work to abolish it.

This work will benefit the field for years to come. The amount of detail affords the reader an understanding not only of the trial itself, but further, English society in a port town, the town's inter-political workings, the atmosphere crew experienced while at sea, the expectations of sailors while in a port city, and the financial implications of all involved. It is an example of a well-done microhistory that enhances a reader's knowledge of a familiar topic.

Rogers includes 10 illustrations and an appendix: "Newspaper advertisements for the trials of Captain John Kimber and Stephen Devereux 1792-3." While he lists specific bibliographic information and notes what is included in each newspaper entry in this sec-