

the Montgomery writings is the one which is best aligned with the overall environmental thrust of the collection. The others seem to simply conflate the environment with landscape.

Unusually for a collection of essays, the editors' introduction and conclusion are among the high points of the volume. The chapters are diverse but the editors have successfully demonstrated a unity and have provided a thoughtful overview, not merely justifying, but celebrating, the deeper study of the Gulf, no matter how defined. Rather than being the last word in the environmental history of a region, these essays should stimulate research of other locations where the contact between land and sea combines natural and human history to create a unique narrative.

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Alicia Caporaso (ed.) *Formation Processes of Maritime Archaeological Landscapes*. Heidelberg, Germany: Springer International Publishing and the Society for Historical Archeology, www.springer.com, 2017. xii+220 pp., illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. Euro 114,39 €, cloth; ISBN 978-3-319-48786-1. (E-book available.)

Apart from a human tragedy, an economic, or perhaps a cultural loss, the sinking of a vessel is an intrusion into a territory for which it was not designed. As every activity has to meet certain conditions before another state of being is reached, so does the loss of a ship. Most human interaction with the environment is carefully prepared, timed and measured. The marine environment, however, is confronted with mostly accidental encounters, as in the case of a ship losing the ability to stay afloat. Over the years, maritime archae-

ology has evolved from the confines of the study of a single wreck at an individual site to embrace a broader view that takes into account the various motivations that send a ship out to sea, such as market demands, economic necessity or war; as well as the circumstances in which a vessel operates, like rain, fog, storm, with a dangerous cargo, in treacherous waters. In that broader view, the transition of sites in the marine environment is also taken into account; for example, the effect of natural transformation, like the reaction with seawater or storm surges on a site, and the impact of cultural processes like salvage, fishing, blasting and the removal of artefacts. This broader view is expressed in subsequent models that have been developed over the years by Keith Muckelroy in 1978, Michael Brian Schiffer's cultural and natural transformations (1987), William Ward on natural transformational process (1999) and James G. Gibb's (2006) stages in shipwreck and finds. Maritime archaeology is a dynamic discipline that requires an open eye for evaluation and refining, not only for scientific purposes, but also for a better understanding of the interaction between nature and culture.

Caporaso's study of the *Formation Processes of Maritime Archaeological Landscapes* presents an excellent perspective of current research in maritime archaeological landscape formation processes.

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Jesse Cromwell. *The Smugglers' World: Illicit Trade and Atlantic Communities in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela*. Williamsburg and Chapel Hill, NC: Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture and University of

North Carolina Press, www.uncpress.org, 2018. 336 pp., illustrations, maps, index. US \$39.95, cloth; ISBN 978-1-4696-3688-7. (E-book available.)

We often think of smugglers as shady people lurking on the outskirts of society, driven by greed and a certain disregard for authority. Jesse Cromwell's *The Smugglers' World* convincingly flips that stereotype on its head by demonstrating that virtually everyone in eighteenth-century Venezuela had connections to the illicit world of smuggling. Government officials, religious leaders, merchants, ship captains, sailors, waterfront workers, and everyday consumers created a vast network of illegal trade that brought in foreign manufactured goods and foodstuffs in exchange for cacao, Venezuela's cash crop. In other words, Venezuelan society and economy could not function without smugglers and smuggling. Through a combination of rigorous primary and secondary source research and academic argumentation, Cromwell effectively places smuggling at the centre of eighteenth-century Venezuelan society, while carefully negotiating the complexity of law enforcement efforts, inter-imperial struggles, and the vicissitudes of an unforgiving Atlantic economy.

Cromwell organizes *The Smugglers' World* thematically, except for Chapter Eight. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of each aspect of smuggling in Venezuelan society although it has a few drawbacks, which will be discussed below. Despite the thematic approach, the first three chapters have a certain chronological coherency. The first chapter explains Spain's closed system of Atlantic trade prior to 1700, and how that led to scarcity in Venezuela and large-scale smug-

gling operations. We consequently learn in the next chapter that the Venezuelan consumer developed a cultural acceptance of, and economic dependency on, smuggling during the early eighteenth century. In effect, Venezuela became a smuggler society. Finally, Chapter Three examines the creation of the Caracas Company in 1728 by imperial authorities to harness the growing profitability of cacao and to address the rise of illicit trade in Venezuela.

The next four chapters focus on the groups most active in Venezuelan smuggling, including foreign smugglers (Chapter Four), Venezuelan merchants and officials (Chapters Five and Six respectively), and free and enslaved people of colour (Chapter Seven). These chapters have little chronological awareness but rather seek to demonstrate continuities within the Venezuelan system of smuggling. Beginning with foreign smugglers, Cromwell explores how primarily Dutch and English seafarers navigated Spanish American waters to unload their illicit cargoes and retrieve precious cacao, tobacco, and hides. During this most treacherous leg of the smuggling journey, foreign seafarers confronted the possibility of death through combat with Spanish vessels, imprisonment, disease, and forced labour. Cromwell then moves ashore to examine merchant smuggling rings and the tactics employed to avoid detection. To do so, he provides the interesting case study of Luciano Luzardo and the merchant Nicolás Rodríguez who found support and protection for their smuggling within religious circles. Unlike captured foreigners or lower-class Venezuelan smugglers, Luzardo's smuggling network received few, if any, consequences as a result of their actions. Cromwell explains this discrepancy and leniency towards merchant elites in Chapter Six by linking Venezuelan gov-

ernment officials to rampant smuggling. The final thematic chapter explores the complex relationship of free and enslaved people of colour to the system of smuggling. Enslaved Africans participated in the system as both smugglers and smuggled. Meanwhile, Cromwell argues, free people of colour captured in the act of smuggling endured the added risk of potential enslavement.

On its own, Cromwell's chapter on people of colour is informative, but it also best illustrates the organizational difficulties of *The Smugglers' World*. Cromwell's thematic approach dissects and compartmentalizes Venezuela's system of smuggling. As a maritime historian, I was particularly interested in learning about the lives of smugglers at sea and the ships they sailed. Chapter Four left me unsatisfied, in part, because some stories and aspects of the maritime world had been torn out and placed in other chapters. For instance, people of colour, both enslaved and free, had important roles on board smuggling vessels, especially enslaved seafarers hired out by their owners. These seafarers had no choice in their employment and, therefore, served an important role in filling out smuggler crews. To gain a complete understanding of "Foreign Smugglers" and their crews, this needed to be included Chapter Four. The chapter also disappointed by lacking specific stories about individual seafaring smugglers. Chapter Six, however, had the excellent story of John White or "Juan Blanco," a captured Irish smuggler, which could have provided a human face to foreign seafarers (206-207).

This organizational critique can be extended to other themes and chapters. For example, in Chapter Six, we learn the fascinating story of Governor García de la Torre, who developed a web of friendships and obligations among

smugglers due to his leniency. He regularly pardoned smugglers or overlooked their activities. In return, he garnered respect from many Venezuelan's who enjoyed increased access to European goods, alcohol, and food. De la Torre's activities proved critical to the creation of the Caracas Company and it led to his removal from office and incarceration. In many ways, De la Torre's story fit better in Cromwell's analysis of the Caracas Company in Chapter Three, but we don't learn about it until a little over a hundred pages later. As historians, we often make difficult organizational decisions with material. Cromwell's decisions, at times, hurt the narrative flow through disjointed chronologies, impeded analysis of important topics like maritime workers and the development of the Caracas Company, and created some unnecessary redundancies.

*The Smugglers' World* is a well-researched, informed, and academically inclined study. Talented smugglers endeavoured to remain hidden from the historical record, but Cromwell has admirably discovered their networks, both at sea and on land, and told their stories.

Organizational issues aside, Cromwell's argument placing smugglers and smuggling at the center of Venezuelan society is an important contribution to our understanding of colonial Venezuela and its place in the Atlantic world.

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J. Ross Dancy. *The Myth of the Press Gang: Volunteers, Impressment and the Naval Manpower Problem in the Late Eighteenth Century*. Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, www.boydellandbrewer.com, 2018. (First published 2015). xiv+213 pp., illustrations, tables, notes, bibliography, index. US \$24.95, paper; ISBN 978-1-78327-289-1.