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*The Maritime World of Early Modern Britain*

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THIS COLLECTION of ten essays sets something of a benchmark for understanding the early-modern British maritime world. As the introduction notes, the volume considers that archipelago's populations and whether they viewed themselves as a 'maritime nation', though that term is not unproblematic. Arguably, when dealing with several kingdoms, each supporting numerous maritime traditions, more contributions from scholars who work on similar themes albeit focusing on different areas of Britain and Ireland would have facilitated a truly 'British' overview. For example, the contention that, prior to the sixteenth century, British trade was focused on France and Flanders indicates that the Scottish trade with Scandinavia and the Baltic, or indeed the Low Countries, has not benefited from the same close attention as given to English commerce. Although such connections are directly mentioned by Meredith Greiling, they are brief.

There is one invaluable chapter on Scottish trade however. Claire McLoughlin highlights the role played by Scottish merchants who traded between Britain and Iberia during the period of the Armada. As McLoughlin points out, any engagement between Calvinist Scotland and Catholic Spain at this juncture might seem surprising. However, neither kingdom's merchants appeared overly concerned about confessional issues, at least not to the detriment of commercial opportunities. In terms of originality and presentation, this is a strong contribution to the collection. It includes interesting commentary on the spheres of commerce, espionage and deceit, and scholars of later Tudor England will learn much from this chapter, not least the ways in which Spanish goods continued to be enjoyed in England during a period of sustained maritime hostilities.

The multifaceted role of seafarers is also brought out in Bernhard Klein's excellent 'biography' of the ship *Minion*. Klein details the ship's battle scars

gained over a 50-year period from conflicts with Sweden, Portugal, Spain and France. The author discusses both the vessel's Crown service and slaving voyages with impartiality. The detail of the Guinea voyages and the arrival of African merchants in England is fascinating and the whole essay offers a sober reflection of what we can learn about the maritime world from scrutiny of a single vessel. In something of an opposite take, Craig L. Lambert and Gary P. Baker are no less incisive in their coverage of an entire fleet of ships in a much more tightly-focused period covering only a single year. The expansive introduction to the topic (which covers a much broader time-range than the case study) discusses the problems of source-base. Questions are raised about why a comprehensive study of the merchant rather than the naval assets of England have taken so long to compile. Through this case-study the authors issue a challenge to others to consider a more comprehensive evaluation over time, not just for England, but for Scotland and Ireland as well.

In discussing later Tudor mariners the volume naturally must turn to Sir Walter Raleigh at some point. Both Alan James's and Claire Jowitt's chapters have Raleigh at their core. That said, the contributions are extremely different, and both authors develop aspects of Tudor England's favourite seafarer and his influence – and influences – in different ways. Alan James explores the stimulus of the French Huguenot author La Popelinière on Raleigh's notions regarding the benefits of the navy in enhancing royal power and 'commanding the riches of the world'. This extremely important chapter hammers home the significance of understanding the language and symbolism of the sea in a truly international context. The 'Republic of (seafaring) Letters' is wonderfully exposed, and the continental influence on England is fully expounded. Claire Jowitt similarly considers Raleigh by offering a wonderful insight into the man as the inspiration for theatrical productions. Jowitt's evaluation of these plays include insights into the works and how they were received, even long after the period in question. There was far more to these plays than simply entertainment, or partisan politics. The very nature of authority, legitimacy and governance are all brought sharply into focus, albeit seen through a particularly Elizabethan rather than Stuart-British lens. This is a theme taken up in Rebecca Bailey's chapter. It presents another very erudite discussion of the maritime passion of King Charles I, both where this originated and how it manifested itself. The visual signalling of Charles's intent for absolute rule are discussed. It would have been of interest to see some comparison with other European failed vanity projects. Some were signalled earlier in the book by Alan James, but perhaps others such as Scotland's *Michael* the century before or Sweden's *Vasa* just before the *Sovereign* would have been of interest. Both were 'white elephants' built with similar intent to the *Sovereign of the Seas* and

both ego-driven projects proving to be as ineffective as *Sovereign*, at least until the ship was remodelled in the early 1650s.

Meredith Greiling continues our journey through the symbolism of the sea, this time focusing on the much less familiar Church ship models and Shipmaster's societies in north-east Scotland. Greiling carefully navigates the transition that seafaring symbolism underwent from the pre-Reformation mystical and ritualistic aspects to the more symbolic displays of wealth. The importance of the seafaring communities as emphasised through that display linked the port communities to the wider North Sea and Baltic worlds with all that implied for cultural and financial exchange. One could quibble about the supposed Dutch origin of the model of the '*Schep*' based on the 'sch' spelling, not least as that was standard seventeenth-century Scots orthography. But this does not detract from an otherwise excellent article.

A lovely feature of this volume is the variety of contributions. One reflection of this is Cheryl Fury and her chapter on Capital Trials on early East India Company voyages. Using a social review rather than a legal approach allows Fury to present a fabulous insight into the world of the early-seventeenth century EIC mariner. The topics covered in the trials range from sexual deviancy, suicide, and violence on voyages that saw men confined at sea for several years at a time. The methods of punishment are discussed, but not voyeuristically dwelt upon. There are fascinating insights into when capital or corporal punishments were implemented, particularly the ways in which sentences were handed down when the same offences were committed by men of different rank and age. Moreover, Fury skilfully contextualises her studies with non-EIC trials in the same period. From these comparisons we learn that leniency and compromise – "displays of authority and mercy" – were equally as likely to be applied at sea when seeking to maintain order on these long-haul voyages.

Moving from the all-male world, Elaine Murphy examines the role of women at sea during the British and Irish Civil Wars. Although known female mariners, like Queen Henrietta Maria, are discussed but the revelations in this chapter concern lower status women. These include those who visited their husbands or partners on board ships, usually for short periods of time (likewise the occasional prostitute). Perhaps such visits were only to be expected. Sometimes women found themselves at sea after being rescued from besieged coastal garrisons. Their reception aboard ship in an era of superstition relating to their presence varied. The execution of Irish women captured at sea by English Parliamentarians reveals the "perilous and indeed fatal" risks some took when boarding vessels. Murphy does not confine her discussion of women at sea to partners, prostitutes or victims. She also

carefully details women in other maritime roles, such as in supply and finance, and the sum of the research is yet another major contribution by this scholar to our understanding of the maritime world. Philippa Hellawell introduces more scientific aspects, and in particular the connections between science and empire building through shared notions of power. From this chapter one learns numerous facets of late seventeenth-century English understanding and developments in the maritime world through the evolving sciences. There is certainly scope for similar work on a deeper analysis of similar developments in other parts of Britain and Europe but what is presented here is well researched and presented.

As with any collection, some of the assertions are open to query, but this volume provides both an enjoyable and necessary gateway to understanding the early-modern maritime world. This reader feels that the specifically British aspect of the Early Modern Maritime world could have been more fully developed as shown by some useful internal dialogue between the contributors. Nevertheless, the editors have done a great job in bringing an exciting collection together and it must surely be regarded as a foundational work which will hopefully encourage others to look beyond simply just one constituent part of the Early Modern Britain when studying the maritime world. After all, England is not, and never has been, an island.

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