Mark G. Hanna

Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570–1740. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015. xvi + 448 pp. (Cloth US\$ 45.00)

This carefully researched, beautifully written, and exquisitely detailed monograph turns the study of piracy on its head. In contrast to previous scholarship, which has focused on isolated accounts of colorful individuals and their flamboyant behavior, Mark Hanna concentrates on the nexus between land and sea. He argues that piracy persists for a reason, and when that reason disappears so do the pirates. Because the root of piracy lies in supportive nests on land, they, not the perpetrators, should be the focus of all suppression endeavors. For Hanna, the history of English piracy is tied to England's initial attempts to expand westward in patterns that repeated themselves throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a period when independent seafarers, merchants, and gentry from colonial bases invested in plundering at sea. The Crown's efforts to extend its administration were resisted on the grounds that acquiescing would curtail beloved local customs and common law. Ironically, with the passage of time, sea-farers and merchants alike began investing in long-term enterprises that gradually transformed nests of ill repute into respectable communities more closely integrated with the Crown. Herein lies Hanna's greatest contribution: a coherent narrative of previously disparate episodes of maritime dissidence and a full integration of maritime and continental history in ways that bring the former, once deemed peripheral, into the mainstream. As a result, this is a must-read book for scholars of Atlantic, colonial, maritime, or imperial history, and even students of Daniel Defoe.

Hanna's account begins with the Elizabethan Sea Dogs who, from bases in the West Country and markets at Plymouth, simultaneously enriched Tudor coffers from Spanish plunder and defended their local communities until profits from ill-gotten proceeds enabled them to become Devonshire landholders, and their most prominent leader, Sir Francis Drake, to become mayor of Plymouth (1581) and member of Parliament (1584). Further "royalization" of the Western Country occurred during the Stuart era as fisheries in Newfoundland attracted thousands of sailors and stabilized Plymouth's commerce. Similarly, the chance to secure colony-founding charters also attracted investment from West Country gentry such as the Earl of Warwick who, during the first half of the seventeenth century, conducted plunder-based colonization and planting. His men-of-war functioned as independent pirates who enriched colonies in Virginia and New Providence with bullion from Spain and slaves from Madagascar. However, Warwick's exploits were legitimized as an imperial expansion

of the Protestant Reformation, and in 1642, this one-time freebooter became Parliament's chief admiral, in charge of an imperial fleet.

Despite the ultimate failure of both Virginia and Providence Island, pirates throughout the seventeenth century had a continuing *raison d'être*, since fledgling colonies elsewhere in the New World were constantly in need of currency, slaves, and luxury commodities (such as Indian calico), which were always in short supply. This was the case in Jamaica, captured by Cromwell in 1655 with the intention of creating a new base of plunder and planting for the Commonwealth itself. When, five years later, the island was abandoned by its conquerors and its defense was left to private men-of-war, those who remained were the remnants of Warwick's former fleet. The door was further opened to newcomers such as Henry Morgan, who, while raiding Portobello and other cities of the Spanish Main in the 1670s, generated the capital and labor necessary for the establishment of plantation culture. By 1680, however, the cleanup had begun. Governor Modyford was sent to England for trial; the Royal African Company increased its sale of slaves; and Henry Morgan himself, now plantation owner and acting governor, began complaining about pirates who interfered with the island's trade.

With Morgan's men turning to planting, those who wanted to continue marauding fanned out to new ports, mostly in New England, and the governors of Boston, Charleston, and Newport blamed the East India and Royal Africa Companies for their shortages of currency and slaves and welcomed freebooters from the South and Red Seas during the remainder of the century. However, between 1695 and 1713 the tide slowly turned, and men-of-war, once regarded as mythic heroes of maritime communities, became their enemies, because the root causes that had previously engendered piracy were gradually being addressed: the Crown was able to extend and regularize its administrative scope; monopoly trade was opened up; and newspapers, preachers, and the popular press decried both pirates and the communities that supported them.

The result was that piracy's next round (the "Golden Age," 1716–26) also constituted its last gasp as the war against it intensified. In the aftermath, with no more safe harbors, no ability to recruit crews, and no *raison d'être*, the world of a more consolidated empire moved on, turning pirates into "abandoned wretches." The once vital nexus between land and sea had been permanently severed.

Dian Murray

Department of History, University of Notre Dame,
Notre Dame IN 46544, U.S.A.

Murray.1@nd.edu