

shows not only the possibilities of advancement for freedmen but also the potentially dangerous ambiguities of their necessary patron-client ties to the families of former masters. Thomas McDow was able to unearth a more representative archive of manumitted slaves in surviving ‘contracts and business deeds in Zanzibar’, which not only identifies such individuals but also tell us about their property ownership and general affairs. McDow does not make any statistical use of these documents and his chapter ranges over wide issues using many more traditional European documents and secondary references to African oral sources, but he does provide enough details on both manumission and its effects so as to suggest that still further research could be pursued using the methods he introduces.

European abolition gets fairly short shrift here because it has already been well-established that both the British Navy’s efforts to end the slave trade and the initial efforts of British and German colonial regimes did not effect much change in systems of commerce and servitude operated, unlike those in the Atlantic, by local groups on their own terms. Even some Europeans, most notably the French on Mascarene island of Réunion, used what McDow calls ‘insincere manumission’ to obtain indentured plantation labor. Richard Allen, a leading historian of European slave-trading and indentured labor in the Indian Ocean contributes a very informative chapter on the latter topic but does not come to any clear conclusion as to whether it constituted ‘a new system of slavery’.

Two chapters on the Royal Navy’s anti-slave trade patrols of the Indian Ocean confirm both their limited effectiveness and an apparent lack of interest in the slaves being freed as opposed to the traders being punished. Lindsay Doultton spends a bit too much time refuting ‘the rhetoric of abolitionism’ but offers some valuable accounts of how naval personnel viewed the people they rescued. Detailed analysis by Mandana Limbert of the documents from one capture provides excellent insight into the organization of the trade and can, perhaps, be replicated more widely. Bernard Freamon and Gervase Clarence-Smith each contribute an essay on Islamic abolitionism but neither makes a strong case for the power or pervasiveness of such discourse in the nineteenth or twentieth centuries, even among Islamic modernists. Freamon instead concludes that concerns of this kind ‘*should* occupy the attention of modern Muslim minds’ (p. 74, emphasis added).

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## A TRANS-ATLANTIC AFFAIR

*British Captives from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic, 1563–1760.*

By Nabil Matar.

Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 2014. Pp. xv + 334. \$149/€115, hardback (ISBN 9789004264496).

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**Key Words:** North Africa, global, slavery, trade, violence.

Nabil Matar’s new study complements his extensive previous research into the relations between Great Britain and North Africa. Matar examines the question of British captivity,

first, to provide better figures for the total numbers of Britons seized and, second, to distinguish between captives (merchants and others who might have been captured while sailing in the wrong place at the wrong time) and prisoners (of war, pirates, or others who themselves broke the terms of existing treaties). Despite his title, Matar focuses on the Old World, with the North American versions of captivity only occasionally invoked as a comparison. His aim is to contextualize Mediterranean captivity while defusing its utility as a transhistorical flashpoint for Christian-Muslim enmity. The enduring force of the Mediterranean divide as a conceptual category seems likely to resist even this effort at archival correction. Nonetheless, this book is an admirable attempt to tell a more accurate story, in terms of both numbers and the important distinctions among captives. Captivity was far more nuanced than we recognize, Matar argues, determined by national allegiances and specific political contexts rather than by any timeless enmity between East and West, or Islam and Christianity.

Matar's project is open-ended. The book includes an extensive appendix of one hundred pages listing 'the minimum number of British captives' (p. 17) that Matar encountered in his investigations, and he proposes to set up a collaborative website on which additional names can be recorded as they turn up in subsequent research. The provisional nature of these conclusions stems from the bewildering range of numbers cited by earlier sources, and Matar's recognition that class and sectarian prejudice, plus the absence of a formal system for redemptions in Britain comparable to the Mercedarians or Trinitarians, makes the records incomplete at best. What records there are do not fully account for the Britons who converted to Islam and essentially disappeared, or for illiterate sailors whose presence on lists of captives was reduced to a mark, or for the very high mortality among both sailors and captives. Matar also explores the overall British reluctance to redeem ordinary seamen and the rampant corruption among merchants at home and consults abroad when redemptions were attempted. The dangers of Mediterranean captivity, he suggests, played an important role in promoting British expansion into North America, as the dangers of captivity in that arena were themselves minimized, at least until the late seventeenth century.

Matar reminds us that piracy obfuscates national identity: many 'Barbary corsairs' were in fact British or Dutch, and pirates from these nations were known to 'borrow' Turkish colors in order to attack Spaniards in times of peace. Writing the history of piracy is thus a much messier enterprise than even the history of war, and requires careful attention to the representational strategies through which various actors disguised their actions or deflected attention from them. At the same time, by the late seventeenth and early eighteenth-century, Matar argues, 'Spanish and French piracy was by far more devastating and far-reaching than that carried out by the North Africans' (p. 65). Moreover, as the English slave trade grew exponentially, 'Moors' as well as sub-Saharan Africans were enslaved in Britain and the New World. The British captured North Africans for labor and exchange: in 1671, Charles II authorized the first *bagnio* for Muslim slaves in occupied Tangier (p. 67).

Matar offers a detailed survey of the fate of captives reign by reign. Overall, he traces a gradual disengagement by the Crown from Elizabeth I, associated with concern for her subjects' liberation, to Charles I's 'failure to recognize the magnitude of the crisis of captives' (p. 102). Under Cromwell, the English took a more aggressive role in the

Mediterranean, compelling peace treaties and forcibly redeeming captives, and the Restoration saw a greater concern for captives. Even as British naval power grew and peace was secured with Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli, captives continued to be taken, in part because British ships continuously abused the terms of the treaties. Increasingly, captivity became a transatlantic affair, with North Americans ‘who ransomed their kin from Indian and French captivity’ also ransoming ‘travelers and would-be colonists from North Africa’ (p. 134).

Matar’s final chapter expands on the role of captivity as a *casus belli* for Britain, invoked to justify what Fernand Braudel called the ‘Northern Invasion’ (a term Matar borrows for his chapter title) of the Mediterranean. In this, he follows Gillian Weiss’s parallel argument for France in *Captives and Corsairs: France and Slavery in the Early Modern Mediterranean*, that the pretext of liberating captives enabled attacks on Mediterranean ports and the broader project of European dominance. As British military and commercial ambitions grew, captivity became the excuse for conquering North African ports and eliminating them as commercial rivals. While Matar’s account of how the literary sphere relates to this context feels intermittent and overly simplistic, he succeeds admirably in his larger goal of historicizing captivity as precisely as possible given the limited records, and showing its military and political utility to Europe. Perhaps unsurprisingly, captivity turns out to be about money, trade, and dominance, rather than about religious enmity.

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## THE AGE OF CHILD ENSLAVEMENT

*Amistad’s Orphans: An Atlantic Story of Children, Slavery, and Smuggling.*

By Benjamin N. Lawrance.

New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014. Pp. xiv + 358. \$85, hardback (ISBN 978-0-300-49845-4).

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**Key Words:** Western Africa, children, gender, labour, slavery abolition, slave trade, smuggling.

I confess that I grossly underestimated this fine and important work of historical deduction and analysis. After a surfeit of literature on the *Amistad* case, I expected a similar work focusing on the children aboard that vessel. However, *Amistad’s Orphans* is far more than that. It is a *cri de cœur*. By questioning how child slavery ‘has emerged as a central issue of twenty-first century humanitarianism’ (p. 268), Benjamin N. Lawrance was led back to his historical training. The result is a book that not only casts light on enslavement today but also recasts our understanding far beyond the *Amistad* affair.

*Amistad’s Orphans* informs knowledge of illegal transatlantic slave trading more generally, demanding nothing less than a renaming of the nineteenth century’s titular epoch. Instead of the ‘Age of Abolition’, Lawrance’s work shows how the era after 1808 should more accurately be called ‘an age of child enslavement’ (p. 7), when abolitionism, missions, colonization, and ‘the mischievously named “legitimate commerce”’ (p. 33) spread rather