Pirate Passages in Global History

Afterword

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Abstract
This Afterword describes some limitations of conceptual histories of piracy and critiques the field's enduring emphasis on pirates as *hostes humani generis*, enemies of all mankind. The volume's chapters show a wide range of representations of pirates and move beyond the idea of a single or uniquely European perspective on piracy that can be compared or contrasted with other approaches. The Afterword summarizes key insights from the chapters and sketches several promising trajectories in research on piracy, including studies of global patterns of maritime violence, analyses of the spatial and political contexts of piracy, and new approaches to piracy in the history of international law.

Keywords: Historiography, historical conventions, theory, conceptual critique, global history

Piracy should be an ideal subject for world historians. Sea raiding occurred in every region, some piracy spanned interconnected oceans, and anti-piracy campaigns aimed eventually at global prohibition. Still, broad or comparative accounts of piracy in world history have been surprisingly elusive. The problem in part reflects maritime historians’ traditional focus on the study of seaborne trade and navies and the relative neglect of broader political contexts.¹ The study of piracy has helped to produce its own isolation, too,

through a persistent attachment to representations of pirates as stateless rogues operating in opposition to forces of regional and global integration.

*Piracy in World History* helps to move the history of piracy more firmly into the realm of world history. The volume features an expansion of the geographic and chronological contexts of sea raiding and inquires whether finding patterns of “concurrence,” synchronous approaches to piracy in different social arenas and linguistic traditions, can alter well-established Eurocentric accounts. Taken together, the chapters offer some interesting answers, and one goal of my essay is to highlight these insights and to sketch the outlines of ongoing programs for research that come into clear view when the chapters are read together.

The exercise requires first registering some points of critique. I am claiming for the volume a more expansive set of goals and accomplishments than those outlined in the editors’ introduction. Amirell, Buchan, and Hägerdal describe the volume as contributing to the global history of piracy mainly by offering a “conceptual history of piracy” that is global in scope, with an emphasis on “encounters between different concepts.”2 Many of the chapters take a different tack or go much further, and some show the difficulties of a focus on concepts in interaction. Authors analyse the dynamic and fluid production of multiple discourses about piracy in relation to layered and complex political contexts. They contribute to a critique of the idea that a single or uniquely European perspective on piracy existed that can be compared or contrasted with other approaches. Most of the works follow recent trends in global history in analysing intellectual currents and social relations as interrelated phenomena, a perspective also endorsed by the editors.

If pointing out the wider ambitions of the volume resembles a friendly amendment, a second line of criticism might land more forcefully. This volume is haunted, as is the subfield of piracy studies more generally, by an enduring emphasis on European understandings of piracy centering on representations of pirates as *hostes humanis generis*, enemies of all mankind. The bias towards this discourse – sometimes explicit but also often implicit – can introduce distortions into comparative analyses of European and non-European representations of piracy. It privileges a narrow reading of a handful of European legal tracts over both vernacular discourses on sea raiding and maritime practices. These dangers, and the evident attraction of this perspective, by no means apply across the chapters in this volume. But

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lurking assumptions need to be called into the open. Only then can readily available alternatives, many strongly supported by authors represented here, take their place.

After reviewing these points, my essay turns to a summary of some of the many valuable insights from the chapters and sketches several promising trajectories in research on piracy. Much like the editors’ and authors’ focus on “convergence,” a first direction for research identifies global patterns of discourse and practice in maritime violence. A second pathway opens new lines of inquiry about the relation of maritime violence to spatial and political change on regional and global scales. A third suggests new approaches to the history of international law, advancing the non-Eurocentric study of interpolarity law and replacing a focus on piracy with a broader analysis of raiding as a legal phenomenon. The essay’s title, “Pirate Passages in Global History,” refers both to this set of pathways and to the still-incomplete transition towards a global history of sea raiding.

**Beyond hostes humani generis**

There is clearly something powerfully seductive about the association of piracy and universal criminality. The assumption of a strong link has found echoes in romanticized representations of pirates as proto-revolutionary actors standing in opposition to organized political power. It has been reinforced through the revival of interest in the work of Carl Schmitt, who promoted a view of piracy as “the archetype of the so-called world crimes” and portrayed pirates as stateless actors. The view aligns, too, with a tendency among some scholars to emphasize connections between a strand of European legal discourse that labelled pirates as *hostes humani generis*, enemies of all mankind, and recent definitions of terrorism. The

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opening chapter in this volume follows the well-worn tradition of tracing discourse on pirates as universal criminals, even though the author also mentions in passing evidence of other ways of representing pirates.\textsuperscript{6}

Unquestionably, a strand of legal discourse did exist in Europe that classified pirates as the enemies of all; political advantage often lay in labelling sea raiders as men operating beyond the reach of law. Yet other representations of sea raiders and pirates flourished alongside this discourse. Few mariners labelled themselves as pirates, even when they were undertaking raids of questionable legality. In fact, raiders and their sponsors routinely engaged in “legal posturing” to represent their actions as lawful.\textsuperscript{7}

In most cases, states treated piracy as a common crime under municipal (domestic) law. Jurisdiction over pirates’ actions was not universal but depended on their subjecthood, religious identification, diplomacy, the location of ship captures, prevailing conditions of war and peace, and other factors.\textsuperscript{8}

The sources of this complexity cannot be reduced to a gap between theory and practice—as an effect, that is, of a relatively settled theory of piracy as a universal crime contrasting with the practical realities of blurred distinctions between piracy and warfare, and between pirates and common criminals.\textsuperscript{9} The idea of a gap between theory and practice is somewhat useful (though still imperfect) for framing the politics of piracy suppression after the late nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{10} In the long, earlier period covered by this book, definitions of piracy remained unsettled in both theory and practice, within and beyond Europe.

The supposed gap between theory and practice recedes when we take a closer look at classic texts about law and piracy, including writings that serve as touchstones for narratives about pirates as \textit{hostes humani generis}.

\textsuperscript{6} Kempe, “Publique Enemies to Mankind”; for an overview of this tendency, see Mark Chadwick, \textit{Piracy and the Origins of Universal Jurisdiction} (Leiden: Brill, 2019).

\textsuperscript{7} Lauren Benton, \textit{A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 24-25, 113-116.


\textsuperscript{9} The editors of this volume repeat this common framing. Amirell, Buchan, and Hägerdal, “Introduction,” in this volume.

Hugo Grotius and Alberico Gentili, for example, analysed legalities of the sea both in relation to natural law and as a function of limited but important rights to cast jurisdiction across sea space. In justifying the strike by a Dutch captain against the Portuguese ship *Santa Catarina* in the Indian Ocean, Grotius affirmed that the seas could not be owned, but he also allowed that they could be lawfully controlled through the staging of ships on the sea. The presence of ships served to extend jurisdiction over particular stretches of ocean space, from proximate seas to jurisdictional corridors established “when a Fleet, which is a Sea-Army, is kept in any Part of the Sea.”11 Grotius’s description of jurisdiction on the seas echoed the writings of his near-contemporary, Alberico Gentili, another jurist often credited with embedding Roman definitions of pirates as enemies of all into early modern European jurisprudence. For Gentili, too, piracy was no easy “jurisdictional trigger.”12 In his work as an advocate in admiralty cases, Gentili argued for the recognition of jurisdiction by states over proximate seas and over the actions of subjects on ships far from home coasts. He offered contradictory arguments about whether the capture of ships and cargoes by Barbary states could be classed as piratical or defended as the actions of legitimate polities regulated by treaty.13

As these and other European legal tracts show, jurists were operating with a repertoire that encompassed both rhetorical references to piracy as a violation of natural law and recognition of the legal foundations for state regulation of sea space. When judges described piracy as a natural crime but failed to assert that their courts had authority to try pirates, as occurred with most British jurists in the eighteenth century, they were not just responding to practical pressures.14 They were also recognizing fundamental legal ambiguities. Put differently, it was precisely because theory was every bit as complex and contradictory as the world of practice that debates about legalities at sea continued for centuries to roil European strategies of sponsorship and containment of sea raiding.


The error of reading the history of piracy as a genealogy of international criminality is compounded when historians assume that early modern courts were in fact invoking universal jurisdiction. In his chapter in this volume, Kempe illustrates this problem when he asserts that George Cusack was charged in a British court for crimes against the laws of nations.15 The quote comes from a pamphlet about the case, one of two that, as Kempe notes, reproduced inflammatory rhetoric about pirates as enemies of all and highlighted Cusack’s indiscriminate raiding in order to ratchet up popular enthusiasm for his prosecution and punishment. Yet, as Kempe also seems to acknowledge without foregrounding, English courts were not in the business of enforcing “international” law, and judges, even if they referenced piracy as a violation of natural law, could not characterize “international” law consistently. Prize courts did not offer greater clarity. Although operating according to law with elements shared across European borders, prize courts did not bring criminal charges but adjudicated the ownership of captured ships and cargoes. British admiralty courts could try mariners for piracy, but in the long eighteenth century they seemed to grasp at “any excuse not to convict foreigners of piracy.”16 Jurisdictional puzzles pervaded actions against piracy across centuries. In Cusack’s case, although the judge alluded to the universal nature of piracy as a crime, he also grasped the necessity of establishing the foundations for the court’s jurisdiction over Cusack’s acts of mutiny and robbery at sea.17 No amount of rhetoric about Cusack’s depravity or pirates’ calumny could convert his prosecution into an act of “international” justice.

Overly literal readings of the rhetoric of pirates as the enemies of all mankind would matter less if they did not obstruct our view of the tensions pervading European imperial policies. Consider the multiplicity of views among Europeans in discussing piracy and anti-piracy measures in early nineteenth century Southeast Asia. An uptick in sea raiding and slaving prompted British and Dutch officials to voice concerns about the effects

15 Kempe, “‘Publique Enemies to Mankind,’” in this volume.
17 Although he is also too generous in assigning Cusack’s and Kidd’s cases an instrumental role in urging a shift in British opinion towards universal jurisdiction, Chadwick notes the judge’s focus on jurisdictional arguments. Mark Chadwick, Piracy and the Origins of Universal Jurisdiction (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 147–176; cf. Robert C. Ritchie, Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986); Benton, A Search for Sovereignty, ch. 3.
on commerce in the region. British officials sometimes described piracy as a universal crime, but they were reluctant to assert jurisdiction over foreigners, especially in Dutch spheres of influence, and they pressured local polities to aid in policing proximate seas. The complexities of jurisdiction came out clearly in 1838, when the British ship Diana seized about 30 men for an attack on a junk serving the valuable trade between Singapore and China. Only about half the men brought before the British admiralty court in Singapore were sentenced, and when many of them claimed to be lawfully raiding on behalf of the Sultan of Sulu, the court wavered, declaring that the case was evidently “beyond the jurisdiction and powers of a Court of Justice.” A few years later, British naval officers asked fewer questions when they were exhorted by the entrepreneurial James Brooke to attack “pirate” enclaves on the coast of Borneo. Facing harsh criticism in London, officials expressed uneasiness about incentives to label the victims of naval violence “pirates” so that captains could claim head money under the Piracy Act of 1825. A commission that travelled to Singapore in 1854 to investigate whether Dayaks targeted by British navy captains were in fact pirates found that some Dayaks conducted piratical raids against local enemies but not against British ships – a conclusion that spoke volumes about the challenges of defining and punishing piracy under law.

Such episodes – and there are many more, in the British empire and in other empires – confound any assumption that a single European concept of piracy existed or that Europeans defaulted to definitions of piracy as a universal crime. For most of its long history, piracy’s regulation relied on actions by states and courts reluctant to claim the right to exercise universal jurisdiction. Campaigns against “pirates” depended on an unstable mix of diplomacy, interpretations of treaties, regional political dynamics, and inter-imperial jockeying. Decisions were undoubtedly influenced by


20 The convicted mariners were sent to Bombay as punishment and hanged only after they revolted on the ship taking them there and killed its captain. Benton and Ford, *Rage for Order*, 134–137.


pronouncements about the evils of piracy and the notoriety of individual sea raiders such as Cusack or Kidd. But contradictions and complexities pervaded questions about jurisdiction over pirates – in theory as well as in practice. Regulatory regimes were assembled through maritime practices, jurisdictional politics, and interpity conflicts, in Europe and the wider world.

The politics of piracy

We are now ready to survey some of the valuable contributions to the global history of piracy in this volume. Multiple authors observe the way a cacophony of pronouncements about piracy informed fluid legal strategies. Several probe the relation of piracy to political contexts, including consolidating empires and pluri-political regions. Still others demonstrate the value of histories of piracy to understanding the social and temporal dimensions of global and regional ordering in the early modern world.

Authors consistently note the variability and multiplicity of representations of piracy. Angles of vision mattered. North African city states developed different perspectives on piracy from those of Venice or of Ottoman officials at the centre of the empire, as White shows.23 Positioning in hierarchies of power in turn influenced discourses about piracy. White comments on the different views of collaboration with pirates by “governors, fortress commanders, and customs officers” of Ottoman ports.24 The subjecthood and religion of raiders and their victims influenced judgements about whether raiding was legal or illegal, and “the wrong combination at the wrong time” could prompt the labelling of raiders as pirates.25 As a rule, Gaynor concurs, we must be attentive to perceptions of piracy other than those originating with states.26

Discourses evolved in dynamic relation. Tremml-Werner, for example, observes that a “Filipino-Spanish discourse on piracy was co-produced,” and Subramanian finds that Indian and Asian views of piracy were not “hermetically sealed off from European” discourses.27 Nor, as we have seen,

24 Ibid, 161.
25 Ibid, 166.
26 Gaynor emphasizes the importance of being “open to the question of whether one could analyse piracy without adopting statist perspectives.” See Gaynor, this volume, 92.
were European representations of pirates singular or stable. On the Western Indian littoral, European portrayals of sea raiding along the Indian coast shifted as they encountered resistance to their schemes for ordering coastal waters.  

These and other observations take us, as the volume’s editors note, beyond the “alleged opposition between piracy and state power.” The chapters reveal the striking variety of political contexts that prompted waves of maritime violence, and they offer a series of incisive observations about the relation, sometimes counterintuitive, between political power and piracy. Everywhere we find a “porous line between state-condoned warfare and sheer piracy.” Further, anxieties about piracy did not consistently align with political disorder since it was often in moments of consolidating power that it became expedient to label maritime raiders as pirates and take action to suppress them, as Antony shows for China. Parallel or intersecting discourses about land- and sea-based raiders were politically consequential, especially when keyed to representations of bandits or sea robbers as rebels.

Political contexts shifted in subtle ways over interconnected, pluri-political regions in which empires operated in a sea of smaller polities of flexible allegiance. The eastern Mediterranean, the Western Indian littoral, the Indochinese coast, the “Sulu zone” and its borders – these interpolity zones channeled opportunities for raiding and composed a regulatory regime influenced by European power without being subject to European political governance and without being fully incorporated into an emerging ‘international’ legal order. There was nothing necessary about bids for

Lakshmi Subramanian, “Piracy in India’s Western Littoral: Realty and Representation,” in this volume, 130.  
28 Europeans applied the label of piracy to any Indian/Asian actors, “who bypassed or flouted the cartaz-cafila-armada system and who occasionally even adopted an aggressive policy of retaliation.” Subramanian, “Piracy in India’s Western Littoral,” 144.  
31 Robert Antony, “Piracy, Empire, and Sovereignty in Late Imperial China,” in this volume.  
political autonomy by sea raiders, or about particular patterns of subordination to or alliance with powerful governments.

Maritime patrolling and violence concentrated in corridors and the waters around ports. The irregular distribution of sea raiding did not equate to claims of ocean sovereignty but, as Joshua White succinctly puts it in this volume, supported “exclusive claims to policing” in certain sea spaces.34 In some cases, as when the Mughal empire pressured the British to take responsibility for punishing sea raiders in sea lanes connecting the Western Indian littoral to ports for the embarkation of pilgrims to Mecca, European powers assumed jurisdiction at sea with some reluctance.35 Sea raiders, too, could change their stripes. Various groups of raiders in Southeast Asia rotated between “plundering and murdering” and “peaceful commercial transactions,” sometimes combining pillaging and trade in the same voyages.36 Even the very rare sea raiders of the Caribbean who flew the black flag and turned down British offers of amnesty cultivated ties to ports where they could sell plundered goods, and they manoeuvred to keep open avenues for acceptance into port society.37

Sea raiding was closely paired with slaving across ocean regions. Plunder for slaves in waters off the Philippines and “slaving piracy” off Indochina illustrate the way sea raiding was integral to vast complexes of captivity.38 Such systems had distinctive regional dimensions, but the widespread interdependence of slaving and sea raiding also created continuities across regions. Sojourners, merchants, naval captains, and slave owners deployed knowledge gained in one region when maneuvering in newly encountered political landscapes. If all politics is local, then all piracy politics was local and regional.

Alignments and interconnections extended, with great consequence, to state policies. A number of the chapters in this book show the intersection of policies occurring well before the mid-nineteenth century international movement to ban piracy. Robert Antony notes the convergence in China and Europe of “the enactment of increasingly harsh laws and military build-ups that aimed to eradicate” piracy in the early nineteenth century, and he describes the regulatory environment of the South China Seas as one of “overlapping and competing legal regimes.” Here and elsewhere, layered and overlapping projects of maritime regulation gave shape to interpolity regional regimes. As objects of analysis, such regimes represent a welcome replacement for encounters of Europeans and non-Europeans or efforts to trace the spread of Western prohibitions of piracy.

New pirate histories

The findings I have surveyed illustrate several new directions in histories of sea raiding in general, and piracy in particular. Many of the chapters point to the importance of histories of piracy for understanding the spatial dimensions of sea raiding and its regulation. Others open new vistas on the politics of piracy and its relation to processes of forming and sustaining varieties of political communities across the globe. Still others support the movement towards new approaches to the history of international law.

Consider piracy’s spatial dimensions. Gaynor points to the way references to piracy represented land-sea connections. She describes “the offing” as a space literally and figuratively at the edge of the field of vision of land-based authorities and at the point where for mariners the unsurveilled ocean ended. Spatial patterns of raiding reflected pirates’ positioning not beyond but “at the limits of sovereignty.” Land-based labour practices structured seaborne capacity by releasing and reabsorbing men as part-time raiders. Other spatial patterns, such as the location and concentration of prize courts or the replication of coastal forts and townscape designed to be visible

from maritime approaches, influenced the character of ocean regions. As Nathan Perl-Rosenthal and I suggest elsewhere, such connections comprised “land-sea regimes,” assemblages of political and cultural processes and practices spanning terrestrial and maritime spaces.

These insights about the spatial and regulatory contexts of piracy point in two further research directions. One is towards an understanding of maritime politics in relation to vernacular political thought and imperial constitutionalism; another is towards a new narrative of the history of piracy in international law. Perhaps these aspects of repositioning the history of piracy smack of overreaching; certainly, their full discussion belongs in another venue. But numerous findings in the chapters of this volume accelerate these analytical moves.

If we situate the labelling of pirates and their treatment squarely in the realm of politics, then we do not have far to move to position the history of piracy within imperial legal politics, including imperial constitutionalism. Consider the central insight of Buchan’s analysis of piracy in English political thought in this volume. Moving well beyond the usual story of a tradition of marking pirates as the enemies of all, Buchan notes that piracy came to signify “a convenient analogue for illegitimate power over another.” The labelling of individuals as pirates affected not only the legitimacy of sea raiders’ sponsors but also the legality of arrangements delegating the authority to seize ships. Pirates might operate both as the “embodiment of illegitimate power” and as usurpers of legitimate sovereign power committing violence “without sovereign sanction.” The shorthand for the constitutional danger posed by these conditions together was petty despotism. The association of piracy and tyranny converted campaigns to control sea raiding in remote seas into constitutional crises, a pattern illustrated with particular clarity in British nineteenth century campaigns against piracy.

The threat of pirates as usurpers of sovereign authority loomed in other empires, too. The perceived danger paints a different picture of pirates’
maneuvering for political autonomy. Historians toggle between portraying pirates’ experiments in self-governance as oppositional acts of stateless men and characterizing communities of sea marauders as aspirational states. Such alternatives are too limited. Maritime raiders fitted into broader political patterns when they embraced a modicum of autonomy without necessarily opposing the power of empires. As several chapters in this volume affirm, even when sea raiders acted to found independent polities, the political arrangements they helped to craft were fluid, as they were in the negotiations between Madagascar pirates and the Swedish King. Further, sea raiders not only routinely retained economic ties that bound them to powerful polities, but they also found it useful to rekindle claims to “nested rights” or to plead for protection – as individuals, clients of powerful states, or as allies within confederations. Like others within composite political systems of the early modern world, mariners could reconcile visions of semi-autonomy and necessary acts of subordination.

Repositioning sea raiders as full participants in regional politics supports alternative narratives of piracy in international law. The term “international law,” used frequently by authors in this volume, is an anachronism for the period under analysis. There was no settled European law of nations, no singular legal approach to piracy, and no professional group of international lawyers in the early modern world. An alternative focus on “interpolity law” can open analysis to legal practices across political communities rather than beginning with past or present doctrines. This approach examines sets of legal practices across political divides, with “law” defined broadly as a medium of imperial, regional, and global ordering.

Jurisdictional conflicts and protection arrangements were salient within interpolity law, as were patterns of violence and peacemaking. Tremml-Werner and Gaynor point to longstanding practices of raiding in Southeast

48 See Gaynor in this volume on the unstable correlation of piracy and state formation; see also Stefan Eklöf Amirell & Leos Müller (eds.), Persistent Piracy: Historical Perspectives on Maritime Violence and State Formation (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).
50 The phrase is from Subramanian, “Piracy in India’s Western Littoral,” in this volume, 133. On protection and piracy, see Lauren Benton and Adam Clulow, “Empires and Protection: Making Interpolity Law in the Early Modern World,” Journal of Global History 12, no. 1 (2017): 74–92; and on protection in French Indochina, see Amirell, “Pirates of the Sea and the Land,” in this volume; and see Amirell and Antony in this volume on “pirate” confederations.
Asian waters, Subramanian describes raiding as endemic on the Western Indian littoral, and the editors remark on the ubiquity of raiding in Europe. 52 “Slaving piracy” was a particular and widespread kind of raiding. 53 Broadly, raiding was associated with coastal militarization and the construction of forts – both trends that predated European maritime violence and also intensified as a result of European incursions. 54

As chapters in this volume show, such patterns made Portuguese and Maratha power, Chinese and European, and Spanish and Philippine “Moro” power mutually legible, a condition that differed sharply from mutual acceptance. Truces and treaties tamped down raiding at intervals without eliminating it. Commerce almost always continued alongside it. Religious solidarities and differences shaped opportunities and outcomes. Recognizing this complexity, Hägerdal notes that piracy covers a “broad spectrum of activities” and was a product of “a volatile intermixing of devastating war, weaponized religion, and aristocratic ambitions, in an archipelago offering multiple opportunities for trade and profit.” 55 It was not, however, limitless in its varieties or disconnected from institutions. Raiding was a part of the legal world of mariners and their sponsors. Bringing its rhythms into view places piracy and its politics within a truly global legal panorama in which universal criminality and other set pieces of the history of international law figure on the margins.

Conclusion

I have highlighted some of the numerous contributions of the chapters in this volume to new directions in the history of piracy. The contributions go far beyond – and in some cases tilt against – conceptual histories of piracy. At one level, in analysing discourses about piracy, the authors not only investigate how “the essentially European concept of ‘piracy’ was translated and perceived when different cultures came increasingly into contact” but also probe the way representations of piracy entered into the

52 See chapters by Tremml-Werner, Gaynor, Subramanian, and Amirell, in this volume.
54 See especially Subramanian, in this volume.
“regionalization and localization of power.”\textsuperscript{56} The authors peer through and beyond the politics of labelling raiding as piracy to glimpse the workings of “littoral politics” and other assemblages of land-sea regimes.\textsuperscript{57}

Most pirates feature in history as the enemies of some, not the enemies of all. We cannot tell piracy’s history through genealogies of universal criminality. The global imprint of maritime violence was produced instead through repeating patterns of inter-polity engagement. Diverse political communities followed a range of interests and impulses in sponsoring violence, asserting jurisdiction on parts of the seas, and permitting or enjoining others to do the same. Inter-polity regimes worked both to contain maritime violence and to make space for it, rendering piracy a protected but always controversial and unstable phenomenon. Historians exploring such practices and patterns are writing new, truly global histories of piracy.

**Bibliography**


**About the Author**

Lauren Benton is Barton M. Biggs Professor of History and Professor of Law at Yale University. Benton's books include *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (2002); *A Search for Sovereignty: Law and Geography in European Empires, 1400–1900* (2010); and (coedited with Nathan Perl-Rosenthal) *A World at Sea: Maritime Practices and Global History* (2020).