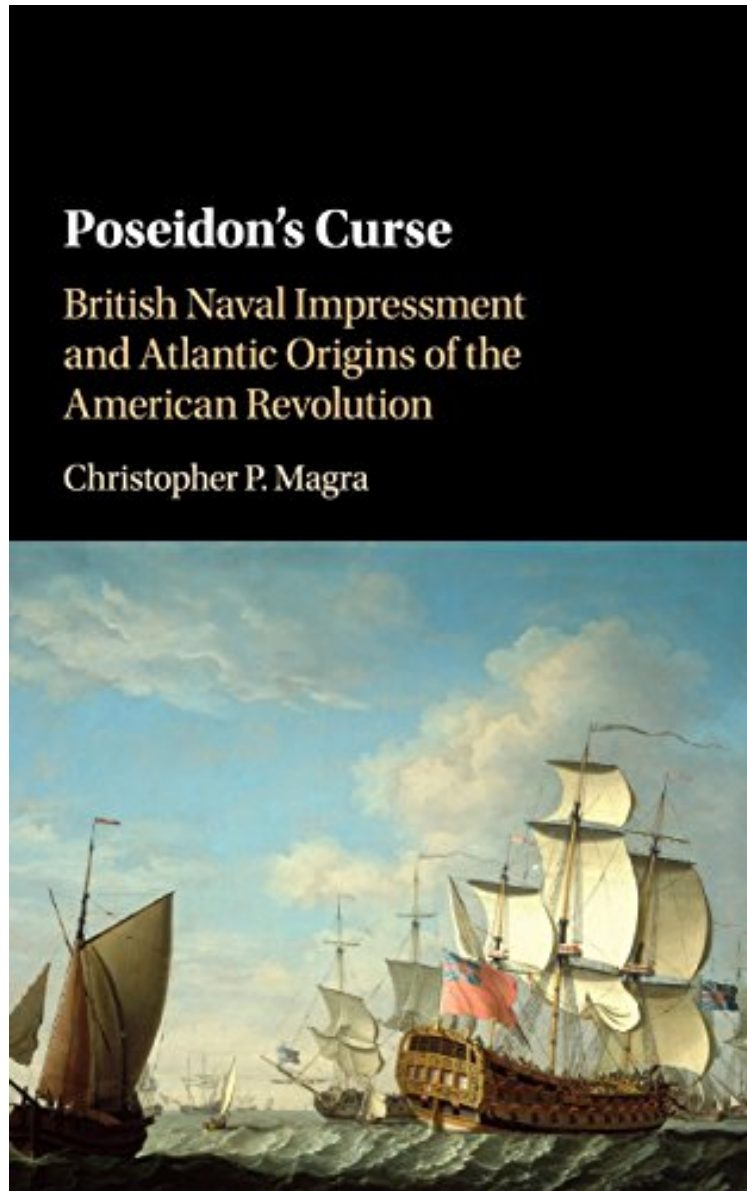


Poseidon's Curse: British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution

Christopher P. Magra

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Christopher P. Magra : Poseidon's Curse: British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Poseidon's

Curse: British Naval Impressment and Atlantic Origins of the American Revolution:

Poseidon's Curse interprets the American Revolution from the vantage point of the Atlantic Ocean. Christopher P. Magra traces how British naval impressment played a leading role in the rise of Great Britain's seaborne empire, yet ultimately contributed significantly to its decline. Long reliant on appropriating free laborers to man the warships that defended British colonies and maritime commerce, the British severely jeopardized mariners' earning potential and occupational mobility, which led to deep resentment toward the British Empire. Magra explains how anger about impressment translated into revolutionary ideology, with impressment eventually occupying a major role in the Declaration of Independence as one of the foremost grievances Americans had with the British government.

"In Poseidon's Curse Christopher Magra shows how the waterfront struggle against body-snatching profoundly shaped the course of history. Once again he illuminates the Atlantic and maritime origins of the American Revolution." Marcus Rediker, author of *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail* "Liberty, as Georgian Britons never tired of boasting, was what set Britain's seaborne empire apart. As Christopher Magra reminds us, such bragadocio obscured a more complex and sordid reality, one where the rights of Englishmen included the right to enslave others, where British jack tars dreaded George III's press gangs almost as much as the cutters of France and Spain, and where thirteen of Britain's North American colonies eventually spoke truth to power and said 'enough'. Offering a fresh account of the American Revolution's origins, Poseidon's Curse is maritime history at its best." Eliga Gould, University of New Hampshire and author of *Among the Powers of the Earth: The American Revolution and the Making of a New World Empire* "British press gangs occasionally menaced the North American coastline by seizing men and ships for the Royal Navy, which led to dramatic acts of violence and widespread resentment and became one of the grievances listed in the US Declaration of Independence. Christopher Magra brings a fresh and welcome perspective to the political and economic origins of the American Revolution, drawing upon his wide-ranging knowledge of the eighteenth-century Atlantic and his acute sensitivity to the many sides of this story." Benjamin L. Carp, City University of New York "Impressment, the coercion of men into naval service - whether by a man-of-war stopping a merchantman at sea or a press-gang capturing men ashore - is an issue most often associated with the War of 1812. In Poseidon's Curse, however, Magra makes a compelling case that 'the press', as the abduction of mariners was colloquially known, played a pivotal role in justifying the movement for American independence. In arguing as much, Magra is swimming against the historiographical current to some extent." Brian Rouleau, *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* About the Author Christopher P. Magra is a prize-winning Early American historian, specializing in the Atlantic dimensions of the American Revolution. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Tennessee.