

historically grounded and gritty blow-by-blow account of a new brand of military colonialism launched by Cromwell in the mid-seventeenth century, one that discloses England's weaknesses as much as its strengths on the international stage during this time.

Christine Walker
Yale-NUS College
christine.walker@yale-nus.edu.sg

DIANA PRESTON. *Paradise in Chains: The Bounty Mutiny and the Founding of Australia*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2017. Pp. 352. \$30.00 (cloth).
 doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.14

This well-written work retells the story of the mutiny on the *Bounty* (April 1789) and details the early years of the colony of New South Wales (January 1788–1808) and the daring escape from that colony in March 1791 by convicts William and Mary Bryant, their two children, and seven others. Diana Preston's title implies a link between the founding of New South Wales and the *Bounty* mutiny. It is true, as Preston states, that part of the original plan was for one of the convict transports, after depositing its human cargo on the east coast of Australia, to travel to New Zealand for flax and then to Tahiti for breadfruit plants. However, this plan was abandoned before the First Fleet sailed.

There was in fact no direct link between the two events. Both were simply part of a larger British government strategy. The Australian historian Alan Frost has clearly shown how the British government's aim was to expand its commerce in the Indian and Pacific Oceans (see, especially, *Botany Bay: The Real Story*, 2011). Bases and supplies would be required along the major sea routes. The new colony on the east coast of Australia was a part of this plan. This is why the government put so many resources into equipping the First Fleet. It was not simply an exercise in the dumping of convicts.

Sir Joseph Banks, the legendary president of the Royal Society, was very much involved in this strategy. He was passionate about the transfer of useful plants between various British settlements. He had visited Tahiti with Cook in 1769 and seen the breadfruit plants as a seemingly cheap source of food. He had, on the same voyage, visited Botany Bay in 1770 and would later advocate the east coast of Australia as the place for a settlement. The *Bounty* voyage was under Banks's direction. If breadfruit plants could be successfully transferred to the West Indies, they would provide cheap food for the plantation slaves.

The reason for the *Bounty* voyage has been obscured by the sensational events of 28 April 1789, when Fletcher Christian seized the ship. The breadfruit plants on which Captain Bligh had lavished so much care (even at the expense of his own crew) were immediately thrown overboard in a marvelously symbolic gesture.

And it is not only the mutiny itself that has intrigued generations, but also its incredible aftermath. Bligh's 3,618-mile voyage from near Tonga to Timor in *Bounty*'s launch with eighteen men and little food was unprecedented. Bligh returned a national hero. However, while he was away on his second breadfruit voyage on *Providence*, from 1791 to 1793, Edward Edwards, who had been sent on the *Pandora* to find the mutineers, returned with those who had not already fled to Pitcairn Island. Tales of Bligh's bullying and manipulation of his role as purser for his personal profit changed the popular view of Bligh and the campaigns by Christian's brother and the Heywood family further blackened his reputation.

The *Pandora* voyage was itself not without incident. Wrecked on the Great Barrier Reef in August 1791, the survivors had to make their way by boats to Timor, partly duplicating Bligh's own voyage of a few years before. Among them were fourteen captured mutineers who had

been confined for five months in a prison, eleven by eighteen feet, built on the deck of the *Pandora*, where they were manacled hand and foot with minimal light and air. Only a guard, acting against orders by throwing them a key, saved them from drowning.

And if all this were not enough, Bligh in August 1806 arrived as governor of New South Wales and was deposed and placed under house arrest seventeen months later—on the twentieth anniversary of the founding of the colony. A little later in the nineteenth century, the settlement on Pitcairn Island was discovered. All the mutineers, except one, John Adams, were dead and the community was thriving, ruled over by Adams as a benevolent Christian patriarch.

Such a story could not be invented. No wonder there have been hundreds of books and articles, as well as documentaries and five motion pictures, all retelling this story with varying degrees of accuracy. The story of the early years of Sydney, with particular emphasis on the acute shortages of food, is only a partial account of these years and there are some troubling inaccuracies. For example, Preston continues the now refuted view that the convict hulks on the Thames were overcrowded and the inhabitants ill-fed.

The Bryants' great escape was a desperate attempt to leave the starving colony and begin a new life. Mary and her husband, William, their two children, Charlotte and Emanuel, and seven other convicts stole the governor's cutter and headed north. After enduring gales, starvation and attacks by Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islanders, they reached Kupang in Timor. They were shipped back to England in irons. William Bryant, the two children, and three of the remaining convicts did not survive the voyage. Mary Bryant and the other four convicts reached England and were committed to Newgate prison. Mary's story attracted the interest of James Boswell, the lawyer and celebrated biographer of Samuel Johnson, who used his influence to obtain pardons for her and her companions. He also arranged an annuity for Mary. She then disappeared from view.

This tale has also been told before, and though it is related to the Bligh story because of the similar long voyage in an open boat (and, in fact, Bligh admired the Bryants' skills), there does not seem much reason why it is told again here. However, Preston has done her research, and while nothing new is added to previous writings, her book provides a clear, accurate, and engrossing account of this perennially popular story.

Paul Brunton

State Library of New South Wales

p.brunton5@gmail.com

ALEXANDER RUSSELL. *Conciliarism and Heresy in Fifteenth-Century England: Collective Authority in the Age of the General Councils*. Cambridge Studies in Medieval Life and Thought, 4th Series, 105. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017. Pp. 223. \$99.99 (cloth). doi: 10.1017/jbr.2018.15

Alexander Russell's *Conciliarism and Heresy* joins a wave of recent Anglophone scholarship on the fifteenth-century general councils, though its attention to specifically English conciliar interest makes it one of only a few studies on the subject to appear since Margaret Harvey, C. M. D. Crowder, E. F. Jacob, and A. N. E. D. Schofield published their foundational work between the 1950s and 1970s. Russell refines or refutes the claims of these historians in particular, but his project also has different aims; rather than attending primarily to English representation at the councils (Constance and Basel in particular)—and instead of focusing on their significance for religious reform or the history of political thought—Russell argues that the communitarian theories that the councils helped to crystallize were