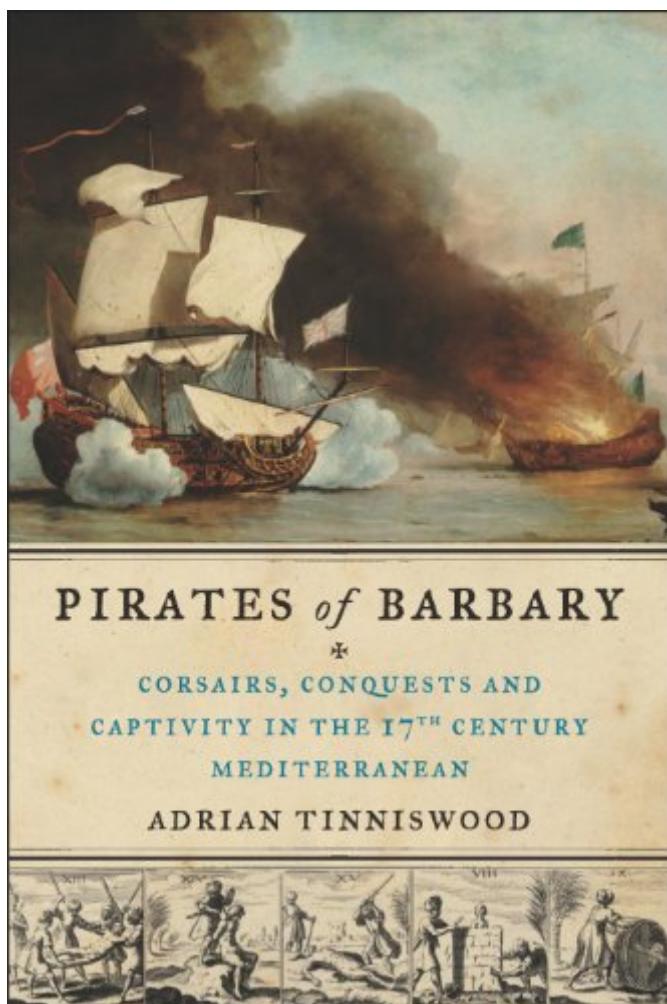


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# Pirates Of Barbary: Corsairs, Conquests And Captivity In The Seventeenth-Century Mediterranean



## Synopsis

The stirring story of the seventeenth-century pirates of the Mediterranean-the forerunners of today's bandits of the seas-and how their conquests shaped the clash between Christianity and Islam. It's easy to think of piracy as a romantic way of life long gone-if not for today's frightening headlines of robbery and kidnapping on the high seas. Pirates have existed since the invention of commerce itself, but they reached the zenith of their power during the 1600s, when the Mediterranean was the crossroads of the world and pirates were the scourge of Europe and the glory of Islam. They attacked ships, enslaved crews, plundered cargoes, enraged governments, and swayed empires, wreaking havoc from Gibraltar to the Holy Land and beyond. Historian and author Adrian Tinniswood brings alive this dynamic chapter in history, where clashes between pirates of the East-Tunis, Algiers, and Tripoli-and governments of the West-England, France, Spain, and Venice-grew increasingly intense and dangerous. In vivid detail, Tinniswood recounts the brutal struggles, glorious triumphs, and enduring personalities of the pirates of the Barbary Coast, and how their maneuverings between the Muslim empires and Christian Europe shed light on the religious and moral battles that still rage today. As Tinniswood notes in *Pirates of Barbary*, "Pirates are history." In this fascinating and entertaining book, he reveals that the history of piracy is also the history that shaped our modern world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Western education skips or glosses over some chapters in our history. Here is an illuminating view of Mediterranean and Indian Ocean piracy, with its participation of European players and its lasting effect upon world commerce. Written as interestingly as a novel, this is how history should be written.

This book reviews the intriguing history of Barbary pirates who operated off the shore of North Africa in the seventeenth century with extraordinary effectiveness and who later motivated the creation of a new navy for the United States. For those interested in maritime history, it covers an important period of armed conflict on the high seas.

Pirates of BarbaryCorsairs, Conquests, and Captivity in the 17th Century MediterraneanByAdrian TinniswoodMr. Tinniswood's new book on "piracy" is particularly relevant in light of today's problems off of the coast of Somalia. While this may seem to be a "new" problem to many, it certainly is not as his book illustrates so well. The book is a collection of very colorful, dramatic and true stories of yesterday's pirates. They have many similarities to today's pirates; however, today's probably will not gain the panache of yesterday's."Pirates of Barbary" starts in the early 1600's. Those were the days when a small group of men in a small boat with scaling ladders, few weapons and sheer nerve would commandeer a much larger vessel for ransom. These men were part of a sophisticated system of a state sanctioned, state regulated, public-private partnership used to grow the coffers of the pirates and the government. Gosh, that sounds a little familiar, don't you think?What do the names John Nutt, Richard Bishop, Peter Eston and Sir Henry Mainwaring have in common? All were Barbary pirates that were offered pardons by King James I, if they promised to come home to England and behave. Oh yes, they were allowed to keep all the booty. Probably the most famous and successful was Sir Henry Mainwaring who not only was pardoned but was also appointed to Vice-Admiral of the Royal Navy by King James. Actually, it makes sense when you realize what a problem piracy was, and the knowledge Sir Henry possessed of other pirates and piracy, in general. It was such a problem that King James ended up offering a blanket pardon to approximately 3,000 British subjects who had participated in piracy at that time.In 2009, the U.S. Navy established a task

force to take care of this problem once and for all. Oh yeh, Thomas Jefferson established a U.S.Navy task force in 1801 to do the same thing (which happened to be the beginning of the U.S. Navy). Both had success, however, have not cured the problem.What Mr. Tinniswood helps make clear is that the solution was and remains onshore. As long as there are governments and pseudo-governments that support and profit from piracy, it's going to be around. The ocean is just too darn big to police (even today). We have to deal with the people and organizations that back these efforts in diplomatic and other ways. There have been major successes in the distant past that have been the result of aggressive onshore efforts that are well documented in this book. Recently FBI agents captured Mohammad Shibi, who negotiated the ransom for the 4 American captives who were recently killed by Somali pirates. The agents had the help of Somalian authorities and, actually did this in Somaliland. Hopefully, this is a step in the right direction to resolve our "piracy problems" of the last 500 years.

This is a terrific book written beautifully. It is a great read, especially for summer but for the child in all of us. Who is not fascinated by pirates? This writer is great. I look forward to more of his work.

Great !

Adrian's attention to detail and research of facts makes for a great education on the truth of piracy in the past.

I truly wanted to give this work a 4- or 5- star review. The understanding that the reader gains from Tinniswood's deft handling of high-level geopolitics to the personal tragedies of the slaves captured was enlightening and entertaining. It is a joy to discover a compelling work on a relatively obscure niche of history such as piracy in the Mediterranean. The pirates themselves are humanized but not excused, which seems an accurate view of the complexity of human nature.However, I was dismayed by the one-sided portrayal of the Westerners as arrogant bigots in contrast to the Moors and Turks. Tinniswood comes to this well multiple times throughout his work, making the book feel at times like a polemic written by a secular moralist, rather than a balanced historian. The reality, as Tinniswood allows us to occasionally glimpse, is that mankind is often hypocritical, cruel, and racist despite their professed creed. He portrays the Turkish Empire as a bastion of tolerance and the Barbary States as aggrieved recipients of naked Western colonialism. The reality is that the Turks and Moors had narrowly been turned back from European domination at Vienna and Tours just

centuries before and the North African states themselves were the product of Arab colonialism. And the feared janissaries were the product of rapacious human theft in the Balkans. The Europeans had every justification to fear and hate their southern neighbors, just as they themselves were capable of barbaric behavior.

In the early 17th century, the Ottoman fleet competed for dominance in the Mediterranean with navies of European powers. Petty rulers of Algiers, Tunis, Tripoli and other North African ("Barbary") city-states paid lip service to the Ottoman Sultan but pursued their own power agendas. In this setting, Barbary pirates forged shifting alliances and captured vessels of many nations, seizing treasure and slaves. The British and others tried to put a stop to the piracy, and their efforts make for fascinating reading. This book is refreshingly written with a strong narrative. Among its surprises: many Barbary pirate captains were Europeans - British, Dutchmen and others termed "renegades" by their own countries. Some became Muslims, others did not. Diversity was the hallmark of these entrepreneurs of discord. Pirate crews were mixed: North Africans, Turks and Europeans. Faith was not a controlling factor; yes, they were in it for the money. [A version of this review appeared in Saudi Aramco World, Sep/Oct 2011.]

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