**Antiquity**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Piracy&action=edit&section=4" \o "Edit section: Antiquity)]

*Further information:*[*Ancient Mediterranean piracy*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Mediterranean_piracy)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Romtrireme.jpg)

Mosaic of a [Roman Trireme](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trireme) in Tunisia.

The earliest documented instances of piracy are the exploits of the [Sea Peoples](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_Peoples)who threatened the [Aegean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegean_civilization) and [Mediterranean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean) in the 14th century BC.[[8]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-buccaneersoft1-8) In[classical antiquity](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classical_antiquity), the [Illyrians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illyrians) and [Tyrrhenians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tyrrhenians" \o "Tyrrhenians) were known as pirates, as well as[Greeks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Greece) and [Romans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Rome). During their voyages the [Phoenicians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Phoenicia) seem to have sometimes resorted to piracy, and specialized in kidnapping boys and girls to be sold as [slaves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave).[[9]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-9)

In the 3rd century BC, pirate attacks on [Olympos](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Olympus_(Lycia)&action=edit&redlink=1" \o "Olympus (Lycia) (page does not exist)) (city in [Anatolia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatolia)) brought impoverishment. Among some of the most famous ancient pirateering peoples were the [Illyrians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Illyrians), populating the western Balkan peninsula. Constantly raiding the[Adriatic Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriatic_Sea), the Illyrians caused many conflicts with the [Roman Republic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Republic). It was not until 168 BC when the Romans finally conquered Illyria and made it a province that their threat was ended.

During the 1st century BC, there were pirate states along the [Anatolian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anatolia) coast, threatening the commerce of the [Roman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_Empire) in the eastern Mediterranean. On one voyage across the [Aegean Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegean_Sea) in 75 BC,[[10]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-10) [Julius Caesar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Caesar) was kidnapped and briefly held by [Cilician](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cilician) pirates and held prisoner in the [Dodecanese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dodecanese) islet of [Pharmacusa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Farmakos" \o "Farmakos).[[11]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-11) The Senate finally invested the general [Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompey" \o "Pompey) with powers to deal with piracy in 67 BC (the *[Lex Gabinia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lex_Gabinia" \o "Lex Gabinia)*), and Pompey, after three months of naval warfare, [managed](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pompey#Campaign_against_the_pirates) to suppress the threat.

As early as 258 AD, the [Gothic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goths)-[Herulic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heruli" \o "Heruli) fleet ravaged towns on the coasts of the [Black Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Sea) and [Sea of Marmara](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sea_of_Marmara). The[Aegean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aegean_Sea) coast suffered similar attacks a few years later. In 264, the [Goths](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Goths) reached [Galatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galatia) and [Cappadocia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cappadocia), and Gothic pirates landed on Cyprus and [Crete](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crete). In the process, the Goths seized enormous booty and took thousands into captivity. In 286 AD, [Carausius](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carausius" \o "Carausius), a Roman military commander of Gaulish origins, was appointed to command the *[Classis Britannica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Classis_Britannica" \o "Classis Britannica)*, and given the responsibility of eliminating [Frankish](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franks) and [Saxon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saxons) pirates who had been raiding the coasts of [Armorica](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armorica) and Belgic [Gaul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaul). In the Roman province of Britannia, [Saint Patrick](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saint_Patrick) was captured and enslaved by Irish pirates.

**Middle Ages**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Piracy&action=edit&section=5" \o "Edit section: Middle Ages)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wikinger.jpg)

A fleet of [Vikings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vikings), painted mid-12th century.

The most widely known and far reaching pirates in medieval Europe were the[Vikings](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vikings), warriors and looters from [Scandinavia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scandinavia) who raided mainly between the 8th and 12th centuries, during the [Viking Age](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Viking_Age) in the [Early Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Early_Middle_Ages). They raided the coasts, rivers and inland cities of all Western Europe as far as [Seville](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Seville), attacked by the Norse in 844. Vikings even attacked coasts of North Africa and Italy. They also plundered all the coasts of the [Baltic Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_Sea), ascending the rivers of Eastern Europe as far as the Black Sea and Persia. The lack of centralized powers all over Europe during the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages) favoured pirates all over the continent.[*[vague](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Vagueness" \o "Wikipedia:Vagueness)*][[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]

In the Late Middle Ages, the [Frisian pirates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arumer_Zwarte_Hoop) led by respectively [Pier Gerlofs Donia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pier_Gerlofs_Donia)and [Wijerd Jelckama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wijerd_Jelckama" \o "Wijerd Jelckama), fought against the troops of the [Holy Roman Emperor](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Holy_Roman_Emperor)[Charles V](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_V,_Holy_Roman_Emperor) with some success.

Toward the end of the 9th century, Moor pirate havens were established along the coast of southern France and northern Italy.[[12]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-12) In 846 Moor raiders [sacked Rome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sack_of_Rome_(846))and damaged the Vatican. In 911, the bishop of [Narbonne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narbonne) was unable to return to France from Rome because the Moors from [Fraxinet](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fraxinet" \o "Fraxinet) controlled all the passes in the [Alps](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alps). Moor pirates operated out of the [Balearic Islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Balearic_Islands) in the 10th century. From 824 to 961 [Arab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab) pirates in the [Emirate of Crete](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emirate_of_Crete) raided the entire Mediterranean. In the 14th century, raids by Moor pirates forced the Venetian Duke of [Crete](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crete) to ask [Venice](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Venice) to keep its fleet on constant guard.[[13]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-13)

After the [Slavic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slavs) invasions of the former [Roman province of Dalmatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Roman_province_of_Dalmatia) in the 5th and 6th centuries, a tribe called the[Narentines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Narentines) revived the old Illyrian piratical habits and often raided the Adriatic Sea starting in the 7th century. By 642 they invaded southern Italy and assaulted [Siponto](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siponto" \o "Siponto). Their raids in the Adriatic increased rapidly, until the whole Sea was no longer safe for travel.

The Narentines took more liberties in their raiding quests while the [Venetian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Republic_of_Venice) Navy was abroad, as when it was campaigning in Sicilian waters in 827–882. As soon as the Venetian fleet would return to the Adriatic, the Narentines temporarily abandoned their habits again, even signing a Treaty in Venice and baptising their Slavic pagan leader into Christianity. In 834 or 835 they broke the treaty and again they raided Venetian traders returning from Benevento, and all of Venice's military attempts to punish them in 839 and 840 utterly failed. Later, they raided the Venetians more often, together with the [Arabs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabs). In 846, the Narentines broke through to Venice itself and raided its lagoon city of [Caorle](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caorle" \o "Caorle). In the middle of March 870 they kidnapped the Roman Bishop's emissaries that were returning from the Ecclesiastical Council in Constantinople. This caused a Byzantine military action against them that finally brought Christianity to them. After the [Arab](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caliphate) raids on the[Adriatic coast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Adriatic_coast) circa 872 and the retreat of the Imperial Navy, the Narentines continued their raids of Venetian waters, causing new conflicts with the Italians in 887–888. The Venetians futilely continued to fight them throughout the 10th and 11th centuries.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Vitalienbrueder.jpg)

The Vitalienbrüder. Piracy became endemic in the [Baltic sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_sea) in the [Middle Ages](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Middle_Ages).

In 937, Irish pirates sided with the Scots, Vikings, [Picts](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Picts" \o "Picts), and Welsh in their invasion of England. [Athelstan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Athelstan) drove them back.

The [Slavic piracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_Slavic_piracy) in the [Baltic Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_Sea) ended with the Danish conquest of the[Rani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rani_(Slavic_tribe)) stronghold of [Arkona](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Arkona" \o "Cape Arkona) in 1168. In the 12th century the coasts of western Scandinavia were plundered by [Curonians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Curonians" \o "Curonians) and [Oeselians](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oeselians" \o "Oeselians) from the eastern coast of the [Baltic Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Baltic_Sea). In the 13th and 14th century, pirates threatened the[Hanseatic](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanseatic_League) routes and nearly brought sea trade to the brink of extinction. The[Victual Brothers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victual_Brothers) of [Gotland](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gotland) were a companionship of [privateers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privateer) who later turned to piracy. Until about 1440, maritime trade in both the [North Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/North_Sea) and the Baltic Sea was seriously in danger of attack by the pirates.

H. Thomas Milhorn mentions a certain Englishman named William Maurice, convicted of piracy in 1241, as the first person known to have been [hanged, drawn and quartered](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hanged,_drawn_and_quartered),[[14]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-14) which would indicate that the then-ruling King [Henry III](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_III_of_England) took an especially severe view of this crime.

The [ushkuiniks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ushkuiniks" \o "Ushkuiniks) were [Novgorodian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Novgorod" \o "Novgorod) pirates who looted the cities on the [Volga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Volga) and [Kama](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kama) Rivers in the 14th century.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Cotes_de_la_Mer_Noire._Cosaques_d%27Azof_abordant_un_corsaire_Turc._(1847).jpg)

"Cossaks of Azov fighting a Turk ship" by [Grigory Gagarin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grigory_Gagarin" \o "Grigory Gagarin)

As early as [Byzantine](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Byzantine_Empire) times, the [Maniots](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maniots" \o "Maniots) (one of Greece's toughest populations) were known as pirates. The Maniots considered piracy as a legitimate response to the fact that their land was poor and it became their main source of income. The main victims of Maniot pirates were the [Ottomans](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) but the Maniots also targeted ships of European countries.

[Zaporizhian Sich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporizhian_Sich) was a pirate republic in Europe from the 16th through to the 18th century. Situated in [Cossack](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cossacks) territory in the remote [Steppe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Steppe) of [Eastern Europe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eastern_Europe), it was populated with Ukrainian peasants that had run away from their feudal masters, outlaws of every sort, destitute gentry, run-away slaves from Turkish[galleys](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Galleys), etc. The remoteness of the place and the rapids at the [Dnepr](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dnepr) river effectively guarded the place from invasions of vengeful powers. The main target of the inhabitants of [Zaporizhian Sich](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporizhian_Sich" \o "Zaporizhian Sich) who called themselves "[Cossacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cossacks)" were rich settlements at the [Black Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Black_Sea) shores of[Ottoman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) and [Crimean Khanate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crimean_Khanate).[[15]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-15) By 1615 and 1625, [Zaporozhian Cossacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zaporozhian_Cossacks" \o "Zaporozhian Cossacks) had even managed to raze townships on the outskirts of [Istanbul](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Istanbul), forcing the [Ottoman Sultan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Sultan) to flee his palace.[[16]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-16) [Don Cossacks](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Cossacks) under [Stenka Razin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stenka_Razin" \o "Stenka Razin)even ravaged the Persian coasts.[[17]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-17)

**Asia**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Piracy&action=edit&section=6" \o "Edit section: Asia)]

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Wokou.jpg)

Sixteenth century [Japanese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wokou) pirate raids.

In [East Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Asia) by the ninth century, populations centered mostly around merchant activities in coastal Shandong and Jiangsu provinces. Wealthy benefactors, including [Jang Bogo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jang_Bogo) established [Silla](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silla" \o "Silla) Buddhist temples in the region. Jang Bogo had become incensed at the treatment of his fellow countrymen, who in the unstable milieu of late Tang often fell victim to coastal pirates or inland bandits. After returning to Silla around 825, and in possession of a formidable private fleet headquartered at Cheonghae ([Wando](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wando_County)), Jang Bogo petitioned the Silla [king Heungdeok](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=King_Heungdeok&action=edit&redlink=1) (r. 826–836) to establish a permanent maritime garrison to protect Silla merchant activities in the [Yellow Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yellow_Sea). Heungdeok agreed and in 828 formally established the Cheonghae (淸海, "clear sea") Garrison(청해진) at what is today Wando island off Korea's South Jeolla province. Heungdeok gave Jang an army of 10,000 men to establish and man the defensive works. The remnants of Cheonghae Garrison can still be seen on Jang islet just off Wando's southern coast. Jang's force, though nominally bequeathed by the Silla king, was effectively under his own control. Jang became arbiter of Yellow Sea commerce and navigation.[[18]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-18)

From the 13th century, [Wokou](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wokou" \o "Wokou) based in Japan made their debut in East Asia, initiating invasions that would persist for 300 years.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:4ChinesePirates.jpg)

Four Chinese pirates who were hanged in Hong Kong in 1863

In [South East Asia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_East_Asia),[[19]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-19) piracy began with the retreating [Mongol Yuan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuan_Dynasty) fleet after [the betrayal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mongol_invasion_of_Java) by their [Javanese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Javanese_people) allies (who, incidentally, would found the empire of[Majapahit](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Majapahit) after the Mongols left). They preferred the junk, a ship using a more robust sail layout. Marooned navy officers, consisting mostly of [Cantonese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cantonese_people) and[Hokkien](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hokkien_people) tribesmen, set up their small gangs near river [estuaries](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Estuaries), mainly to protect themselves. They recruited locals as common foot-soldiers known as 'lang' (lanun) to set up their fortresses. They survived by utilizing their well trained pugilists, as well as marine and navigation skills, mostly along [Sumatran](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sumatra) and [Javanese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java" \o "Java)estuaries. Their strength and ferocity coincided with the impending trade growth of the maritime silk and spice routes.

Starting in the 14th century, the [Deccan](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deccan) (Southern Peninsular region of India) was divided into two entities: on the one side stood the Muslim [Bahmani Sultanate](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahmani_Sultanate" \o "Bahmani Sultanate) and on the other stood the Hindu kings rallied around the [Vijayanagara Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vijayanagara_Empire" \o "Vijayanagara Empire). Continuous wars demanded frequent resupplies of fresh horses, which were imported through sea routes from Persia and Africa. This trade was subjected to frequent raids by thriving bands of pirates based in the coastal cities of Western India. One of such was [Timoji](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timoji" \o "Timoji), who operated off [Anjadip Island](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anjadip_Island" \o "Anjadip Island) both as a privateer (by seizing horse traders, that he rendered to the raja of [Honavar](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Honavar" \o "Honavar)) and as a pirate who attacked the Kerala merchant fleets that traded pepper with [Gujarat](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gujarat).

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pirates_Cemetery_Ile_Ste_Marie_Madagascar.jpg)

The cemetery of past pirates at Île Ste-Marie (St. Mary's Island).

During the 16th and 17th centuries, there was frequent European piracy against[Mughal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mughal_Empire) Indian merchants, especially those en route to Mecca for [Hajj](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hajj). The situation came to a head when the Portuguese attacked and captured the vessel*Rahimi* which belonged to [Mariam Zamani](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mariam_Zamani" \o "Mariam Zamani) the Mughal queen, which led to the Mughal seizure of the Portuguese town Daman.[[20]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-20) In the 18th century, the famous[Maratha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maratha_Empire) privateer [Kanhoji Angre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kanhoji_Angre" \o "Kanhoji Angre) ruled the seas between Mumbai and Goa.[[21]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-21) The Marathas attacked British shipping and insisted that [East India Company](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/British_East_India_Company) ships pay taxes if sailing through their waters.[[22]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-22)

The [Buginese](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bugis" \o "Bugis) sailors of [South Sulawesi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Sulawesi) were infamous as pirates who used to range as far west as Singapore and as far north as the Philippines in search of targets for piracy.[[23]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-23) The [Orang laut](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orang_laut" \o "Orang laut) pirates controlled shipping in the [Straits of Malacca](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy_in_the_Strait_of_Malacca) and the waters around Singapore,[[24]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-24) and the [Malay](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malays_(ethnic_group)) and [Sea Dayak](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iban_people) pirates preyed on maritime shipping in the waters between Singapore and Hong Kong from their haven in [Borneo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sarawak).[[25]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-25) The [Moro pirates](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moro_Pirates) of the southern [Philippines](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Philippines) harassed Spanish shipping and terrorized Christian Filipino settlements. David P. Forsythe wrote: "Of particular significance in Southeast Asia were the incursions of Moro raiders in the southern Philippines who may have captured around 2 million [slaves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Slave) in the first two centuries of Spanish rule after 1565."[[26]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-26)

During the [Qing](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Qing) period, Chinese pirate fleets grew increasingly large. The effects large-scale piracy had on the Chinese economy were immense. They preyed voraciously on China's junk trade, which flourished in [Fujian](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fujian) and [Guangdong](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Guangdong) and was a vital artery of Chinese commerce. Pirate fleets exercised [hegemony](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hegemony) over villages on the coast, collecting revenue by exacting tribute and running [extortion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Extortion) rackets. In 1802, the menacing [Zheng Yi](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cheng_I" \o "Cheng I) inherited the fleet of his cousin, captain Zheng Qi, whose death provided Zheng Yi with considerably more influence in the world of piracy. Zheng Yi and his wife,[Zheng Yi Sao](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zheng_Yi_Sao" \o "Zheng Yi Sao) (who would eventually inherit the leadership of his pirate confederacy) then formed a pirate coalition that, by 1804, consisted of over ten thousand men. Their military might alone was sufficient to combat the Qing navy. However, a combination of famine, Qing naval opposition, and internal rifts crippled piracy in China around the 1820s, and it has never again reached the same status.

**Barbary corsairs**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Piracy&action=edit&section=7" \o "Edit section: Barbary corsairs)]

*Main article:*[*Barbary corsairs*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbary_corsairs)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:French_ship_under_atack_by_barbary_pirates.jpg)

French ship under attack by Barbary pirates, ca. 1615

Pirates and [privateers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Privateers) that operated from North African (the "[Barbary Coast](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barbary_Coast)") ports of [Algiers](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Algiers), [Tunis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tunis), [Tripoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tripoli) and ports in Morocco were known as the Barbary corsairs. They preyed on shipping in the western [Mediterranean Sea](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediterranean_Sea) from the time of the[Crusades](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crusades), as well as on ships on their way to Asia around Africa until the early 19th century. The coastal villages and towns of Italy, Spain and [Mediterranean islands](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_islands_in_the_Mediterranean) were frequently attacked by them and long stretches of the Italian and Spanish coasts were almost completely abandoned by their inhabitants; after 1600 Barbary corsairs occasionally entered the Atlantic and struck as far north as Iceland. According to Robert Davis[[27]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-27)[[28]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-28) between 1 million and 1.25 million Europeans were captured by Barbary corsairs and sold as [slaves](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arab_slave_trade) in North Africa and the [Ottoman Empire](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ottoman_Empire) between the 16th and 19th centuries. The most famous corsairs were the Ottoman [Hayreddin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hayreddin_Barbarossa" \o "Hayreddin Barbarossa) and his older brother [Oruç Reis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oru%C3%A7_Reis" \o "Oruç Reis) (Redbeard), [Turgut Reis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turgut_Reis" \o "Turgut Reis) (known as Dragut in the West), [Kurtoglu](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurtoglu_Muslihiddin_Reis" \o "Kurtoglu Muslihiddin Reis) (known as [Curtogoli](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurtoglu_Muslihiddin_Reis" \o "Kurtoglu Muslihiddin Reis) in the West), [Kemal Reis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kemal_Reis" \o "Kemal Reis), [Salih Reis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Salih_Reis" \o "Salih Reis) and [Koca Murat Reis](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murat_Reis_the_Older" \o "Murat Reis the Older). A few Barbary corsairs, such as the Dutch [Jan Janszoon](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jan_Janszoon) and the English [John Ward](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Ward_(pirate)) (Muslim name Yusuf Reis), were renegade European privateers who had converted to Islam.

At one point, there were nearly 1,000 pirates located in Madagascar.[[29]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-29) [Île Sainte-Marie](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%8Ele_Sainte-Marie" \o "Île Sainte-Marie) was a popular base for pirates throughout the 17th and 18th centuries. The most famous [pirate utopia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pirate_utopia) is that of the probably fictional Captain Misson and his pirate crew, who allegedly founded the free colony of [Libertatia](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Libertatia" \o "Libertatia) in northern Madagascar in the late 17th century, until it was destroyed in a surprise attack by the island natives in 1694.[[30]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-30)

**"The Golden Age of Piracy" in the Caribbean**[[edit](http://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Piracy&action=edit&section=8" \o "Edit section: \"The Golden Age of Piracy\" in the Caribbean)]

*Main article:*[*Piracy in the Caribbean*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy_in_the_Caribbean)

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Puerto_del_Pr%C3%ADncipe_-_being_sacked_in_1668_-_Project_Gutenberg_eText_19396.jpg)

[Puerto del Príncipe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Camag%C3%BCey) being sacked in 1668 by Henry Morgan

The classic era of piracy was in the [Caribbean](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Caribbean), from around 1650 up until the mid-1720s.[[31]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-31) By 1650, [France](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/France), [England](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/England) and the [United Provinces](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dutch_Republic) began to develop their colonial empires. This involved considerable seaborne trade, and a general economic improvement: there was money to be made—or stolen—and much of it traveled by ship.

French buccaneers were established on northern [Hispaniola](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hispaniola) as early as 1625,[[32]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy" \l "cite_note-32) but lived at first mostly as hunters rather than robbers; their transition to full-time piracy was gradual and motivated in part by Spanish efforts to wipe out both the buccaneers and the prey animals on which they depended. The buccaneers' migration from Hispaniola's mainland to the more defensible offshore island of [Tortuga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tortuga_(Haiti)) limited their resources and accelerated their piratical raids. According to [Alexandre Exquemelin](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexandre_Exquemelin" \o "Alexandre Exquemelin), a buccaneer and historian who remains a major source on this period, the Tortuga buccaneer [Pierre Le Grand](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pierre_le_Grand_(pirate)) pioneered the settlers' attacks on galleons making the return voyage to Spain.

The growth of buccaneering on Tortuga was augmented by the English capture of Jamaica from Spain in 1655. The early English governors of Jamaica freely granted letters of marque to Tortuga buccaneers and to their own countrymen, while the growth of Port Royal provided these raiders with a far more profitable and enjoyable place to sell their booty. In the 1660s, the new French governor of Tortuga, Bertrand d'Ogeron, similarly provided privateering commissions both to his own colonists and to English cutthroats from Port Royal. These conditions brought Caribbean buccaneering to its zenith.

[](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Pg_003_-_Engraving_(bw).jpg)

[Henry Every](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Every) is shown selling his loot in this engraving by Howard Pyle. Every's capture of the Grand Mughal ship *[Ganj-i-Sawai](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganj-i-Sawai" \o "Ganj-i-Sawai)* in 1695 stands as one of the most profitable pirate raids ever perpetrated.

A new phase of piracy began in the 1690s as English pirates began to look beyond the Caribbean for treasure. The fall of Britain's Stuart kings had restored the traditional enmity between Britain and France, thus ending the profitable collaboration between English Jamaica and French Tortuga. The devastation of Port Royal by an [earthquake in 1692](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1692_Jamaica_earthquake) further reduced the Caribbean's attractions by destroying the pirates' chief market for fenced plunder.[[33]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-33) Caribbean colonial governors began to discard the traditional policy of "no peace beyond the Line," under which it was understood that war would continue (and thus letters of marque would be granted) in the Caribbean regardless of peace treaties signed in Europe; henceforth, commissions would be granted only in wartime, and their limitations would be strictly enforced. Furthermore, much of the Spanish Main had simply been exhausted; [Maracaibo](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maracaibo) alone had been sacked three times between 1667 and 1678,[[34]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-34) while [Río de la Hacha](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rio_de_la_Hacha) had been raided five times and [Tolú](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tol%C3%BA" \o "Tolú) eight.[[35]](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Piracy#cite_note-35)

Popular Image

In the popular modern imagination, pirates of the classical period were rebellious, clever teams who operated outside the restricting [bureaucracy](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bureaucracy) of modern life. Pirates were also depicted as always raising their [Jolly Roger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jolly_Roger) flag when preparing to hijack a vessel. The Jolly Roger is the traditional name for the [flags](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flag) of mainly English pirates and a symbol for piracy that has been adopted by film-makers and toy manufacturers.

Various claims and speculation about their overall image, attire, fashion, dress code, etc. have been made and contributed to their fanciful mystery and lore. Including, for example, men getting their ear pierced was popular with pirates; the value of the earring was meant to pay for their burial if they were lost at sea and their body washed ashore.[[*citation needed*](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Citation_needed)]