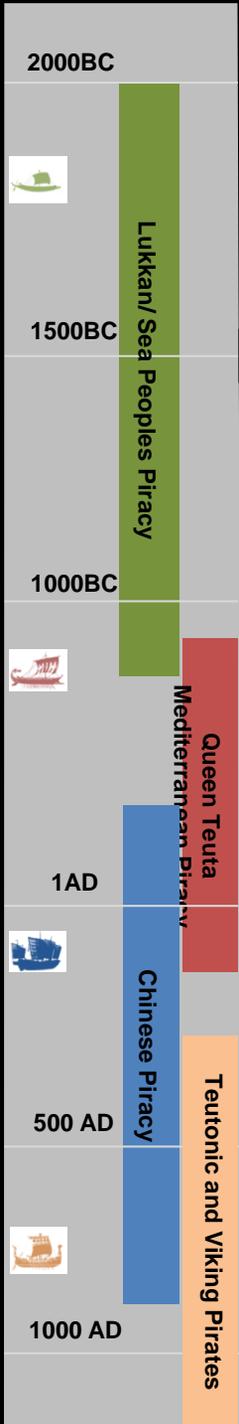


# Evolution of Piracy: Historical Piracy



## Summary:

Piracy has plagued the seas for at least 40 centuries, and been a thorn in the side of nearly every sea going civilization. Pirates have plied their trade as common thieves, instruments of war, or as civilizations in their own right. Most states throughout history have utilized three strategies when dealing with pirates: Collaborate, Suppress, or Tolerate. From the Cilician, Greek, Chinese, Barbary, and Caribbean pirates of history, to the Somali, Malacca Straits, South China Sea, and West African pirates of today, pirates have operated either in collusion with, or in the absence of, state authority.



**Dionysos & the Tyrrhenian Pirates**



### Rome and Pirates

Initially, Rome permitted piracy, as the pirate fleets helped to cripple Rome's enemies and provided trading opportunities. However, once piracy began to threaten Roman shipping, the Romans were forced to respond. The first time Rome faced off against pirates was against the Pirate Queen Teuta in a two year war. The second major counter piracy offensive was led by Pompey the Great against the Cilician pirates and their thousand ships. Pompey slew 10,000 pirates and destroyed 500 ships. The remaining pirates he resettled. Piracy remained subdued until Rome's fall.



### Ancient Chinese Pirates

Ancient piracy was not confined to the West. The earliest Chinese piracy was recorded during the Han dynasty. Ever since, Chinese and South East Asian piracy has waxed and waned with the amount of commerce and the strength of the dynasties and empires in power. The South China Sea is ideally suited to pirates, and remained a problem through the colonial period.



### Piracy in the Ancient World

For as long as humanity has conducted maritime commerce, pirates have preyed on seafarers. Piracy was a ubiquitous part of Mediterranean life in the ancient world. Pirates would prey on shipping, and invade coastal villages, looting and capturing slaves.

The Sumerians, King Minos, Egyptians, and Greeks all dealt with pirates. The Cretan fleet of King Minos was purpose built to defend against the Lukkan pirate peoples. These sea people even managed to topple the Hittite civilization and invade Cyprus.

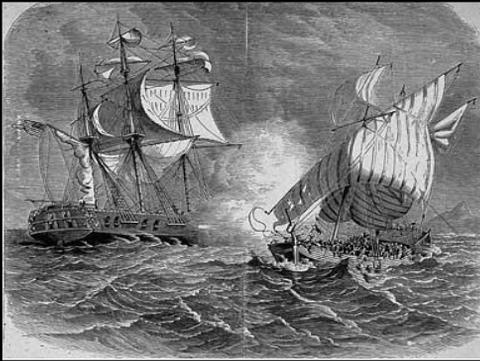
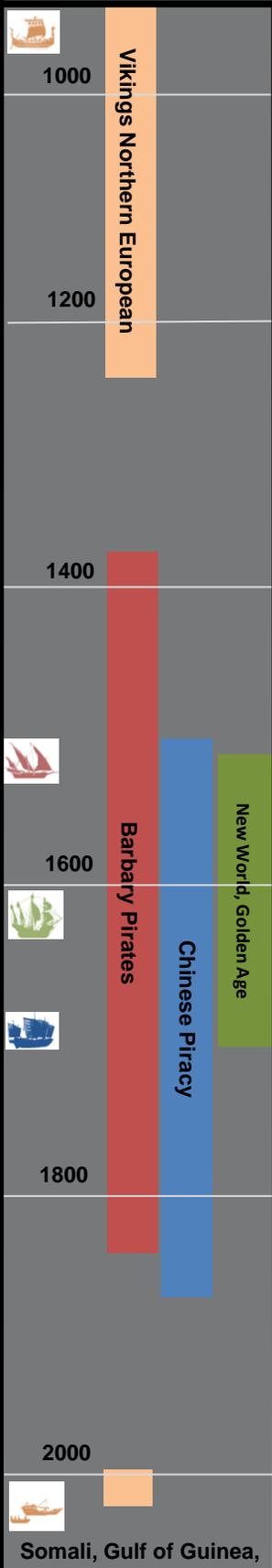
### Roman Empire and Cilicia



### Medieval Pirates

Though not commonly thought of as pirates, the Jutes, Danes, and Saxons raided across Northern Europe and Britain. They were succeeded by the Vikings toward the end of the first millennium. Piracy in the North Atlantic was significant enough that it drove the creation of the Hanseatic League. In Eastern Europe, the Gothic-Herulic pirates plagued the Black Sea. The loose confederated feudal systems of medieval Europe created space for the pirates to operate, and made suppression difficult.

# Evolution of Piracy: Tripoli, Letters of Marque and the Golden Age of Piracy



## The Barbary Pirates

Barbary piracy lasted centuries and terrorized shipping and coastal towns throughout the Mediterranean and Europe. By its end in 1830, after the French invasion of North Africa, Barbary pirates had captured 1.5 million Europeans, holding some for ransom and selling most into slavery. The Barbary pirates operated as a wild card, which European powers attempted to play off of each other in their Balance of Power games. After independence, US shipping was no longer protected under the Union Jack, forcing Jefferson to send the Marines to Tripoli. The Barbary pirates and European Privateers made flag states increasingly important in shipping.



## Caribbean Piracy

Caribbean piracy, the most famous piracy in contemporary culture, began shortly after European conquest of the New World, and initiated the Golden Age of Piracy. After Spain and Portugal laid claim to the World's oceans, other European powers utilized Letters of Marque authorizing Privateers to prey on Spanish and Portuguese shipping. The American Colonists took advantage of the black market the pirates provided, and gave them refuge. English Naval dominance ended the use of Privateers. Pirates lost their operational space and the trade faded.



## South China Sea Pirates

Chinese Piracy reemerged in the early 1500s in response to the Ming Dynasty's strict control over foreign travel and trade. The black markets provided goods much cheaper to locals, and provided an opportunity for trade with opportunistic Europeans, like the Dutch East India Company, who were eager to avoid tariffs. At its height, over 70,000 Chinese pirates operated in the region. The Qing dynasty's severe measures were unable to suppress piracy. Pardons and international naval cooperation finally reigned in

Chinese piracy in the late 1800s.



## Modern Piracy

Modern piracy primarily exists in the Straits of Malacca in the South China Sea, off the coast of Somalia, and in the Gulf of Guinea. These regions each utilize different piracy business models: Somalia is a kidnap and ransom operation working in the absence of state authority, Gulf of Guinea pirates steal oil, and Asian pirates focus on robbery and theft at sea. Gulf of Guinea and Asian piracy primarily occur in territorial waters.



Somali, Gulf of Guinea,