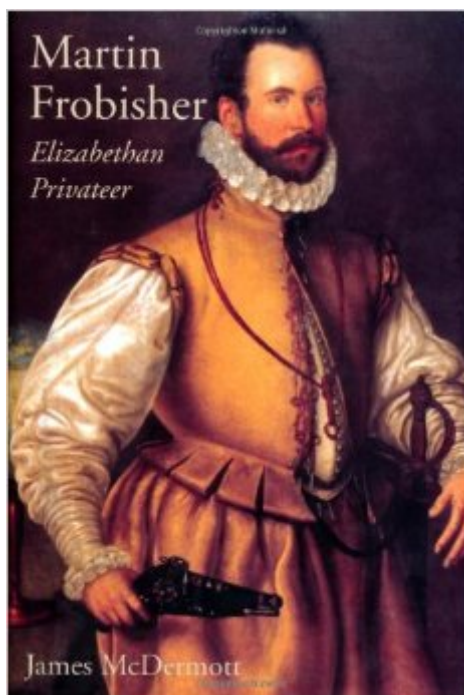


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Martin Frobisher: Elizabethan Privateer



Synopsis

Adventurous and wilful, the swashbuckling Martin Frobisher was both a brave sea-commander who served Elizabeth I with distinction and a privateer who single-mindedly pursued his own interests. This highly entertaining biography provides the first complete picture of the life and exploits of Frobisher, from his voyages in search of the fabled Northwest Passage to his courageous resistance to the Spanish Armada and his activities as privateer and sometime pirate. The book explores Frobisher's vigorous personality and its manifestation in the turbulence of his career and his impact on others. It also illuminates the robust world of maritime enterprise in the sixteenth century, when the shifting objectives of the Elizabethan age brought together felons, merchants, and great officers of state. James McDermott, a leading authority on Martin Frobisher and the Northwest Passage, offers a riveting account of the explorer, based on all extant manuscript and documentary sources. McDermott sets aside the distortions of Frobisher's popular reputation as a hero and offers instead a richly detailed portrait of a fascinating but flawed man whose ceaseless search for wealth and fame defined his ext

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Customer Reviews

Martin Frobisher is remembered today for Frobisher Bay in Canada and as a sea captain in Elizabeth's fleet against the Armada. In death, as in life, his exploits are often overshadowed by more flamboyant seafarers such as Sir Francis Drake and Sir John Hawkins. Martin Frobisher: Elizabethan Privateer attempts to rescue the captain from semi-obscurity and place his life in the context of its times. The spotty documentation on much of Frobisher's life makes this no easy task

but the author is able to fill in the gaps with dexterity. Frobisher was born in Yorkshire England in the mid 1530s. After the death of his father in 1542, Frobisher was set to live with various relatives ending up at his maternal uncle's in London. Sir John Yorke was a well-connected merchant who set Frobisher to sea most likely because he was a drain on Yorke's finances. Frobisher fell out with his uncle after the latter failed to help him escape from captivity in Portuguese hands and soon struck out on his own. By the 1560s Frobisher was well established as a privateer. In this profession he often showed little regard for the legality of which ships were "good prizes" and which were not. He was called often in front of the admiralty court to answer charges of piracy. In 1576 Frobisher became the captain of an expedition to find the northwest passage from Europe to China. This expedition failed in its goal but did spark a gold rush when a souvenir rock brought back was thought to contain gold. Two more expeditions found no gold and nearly bankrupted many of the investors in the scheme. Frobisher's abilities as a captain earned him a place among Elizabeth's admirals during the Spanish Armada of 1588. His command decisions during that time remain controversial to this day.

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