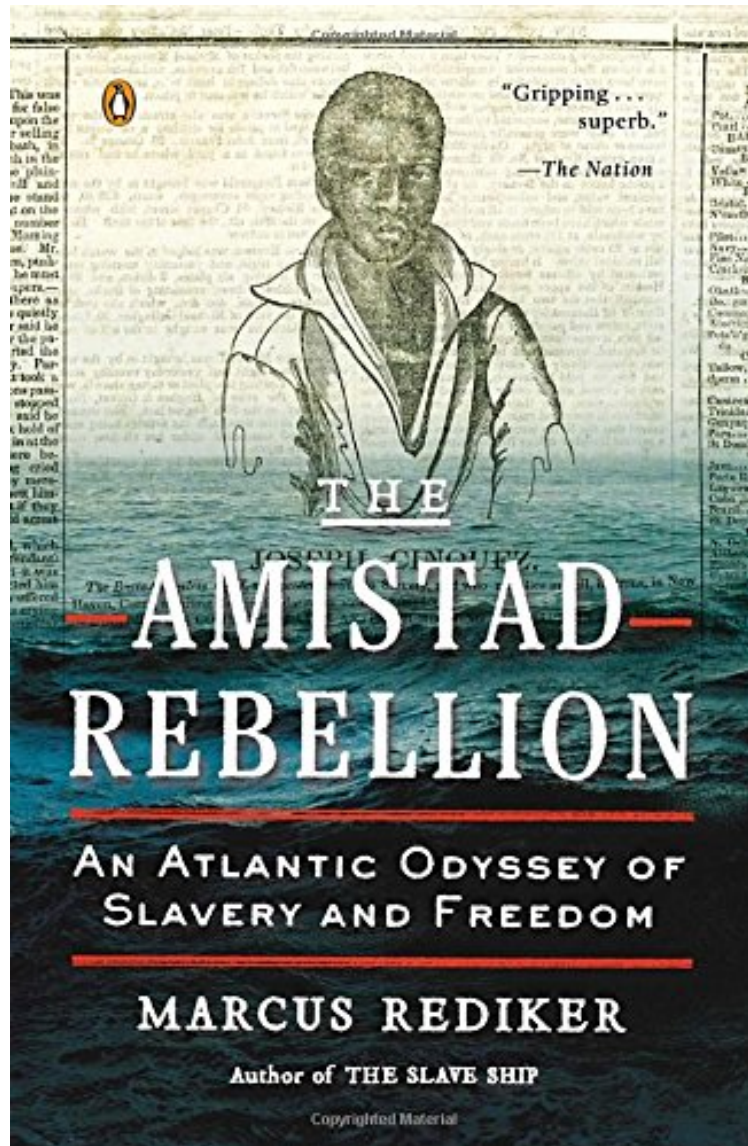


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The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom

Marcus Rediker

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#287273 in Books Marcus Rediker 2013-11-26 2013-11-26 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.40 x .71 x 5.40l, .65 #File Name: 014312398X320 pages The Amistad Rebellion An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom | File size: 29.Mb

Marcus Rediker : The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Amistad Rebellion: An Atlantic Odyssey of Slavery and Freedom:

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. An Informative and Well Written Book
By Lionel S. Taylor
In the acknowledgements of *The Amistad Rebellion* Rediker says that he wrote the book as a companion to his earlier book *The Slave Ship*. He says that after writing about the failed struggles of those enslaved and tortured within the machinery of Atlantic World commerce he wanted to write a story about successful rebellion. And this is what he has done excellently in this book. Just as in *The Slave Ship*, Rediker tells the story from the perspective of those on the bottom. This is especially challenging as most of the historical sources are written and created by those in more privileged positions. Indeed even when being told from the perspective of the abolitionists who are supporting the *Amistad* the author is careful to point out that their motives for helping them did not line up perfectly with the rebels themselves and that both used the other to get what they wanted. The reader gets the impression that from the moment they broke their chains on board the ship the rebels played an active hand in their destiny overcoming a language barrier and the many racist assumptions about them. Rediker does an excellent job of describing how the rebels fashioned a new African identity in the new world that served their cause of getting back home. He also puts many of the actions and words of the rebels in the appropriate cultural lens so that they do not just come off as quaint tribal customs. Despite his own self-criticism, I felt that Rediker demonstrated that even in the most desperate and cruel conditions, enslaved Africans managed to show some agency in their passive and futile resistance to the slave trade. In *Amistad* he shows just how far this resistance could go. Despite the fact that most of the main characters of the story were African and did not even speak English (at least in the beginning) their struggle for freedom is a very American one.

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. Very interesting well researched take on what was a pretty epic movie
By RusticBK
The book delves into many facets of the event (and those leading up to it) as well as the time the "AFRICANS" spent in jail. The interplay of politics reminds all of us that the present stupidity in Washington is not a new state of affairs. The, like now, it was about what will win my next election. We also learned more about the principals and the slavers (many of whom were the "folks back home" who reaped large profits in the trade of humans. All in all, a fine book that puts a hard time in our history in context. I'd recommend this book highly, and in fact - already have

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Liberty or Death !
By Paul Gelman
The slave trade of many millions of Africans during more than 400 years, starting in the fifteenth century onwards, has been perhaps the biggest crime ever perpetrated in modern history. True, there were many more horrendous crimes, including the horrible Shoah against 6 million Jews, however the proportions and magnitude of the slave trade are unique in themselves. One can easily say that tens of millions were murdered after being fully exploited in the name of Mammon. In his new book, Professor Rediker tells the tragic story and history of the *Amistad* from another perspective, namely that of those rebels who fought for their freedom. Ironically, the name "*Amistad*" means "friendship" in Spanish. But the Spanish who enslaved the tens of slaves on the ship were hardly the friends of those wretched souls who eventually rebelled against the ship's captain and the rest of the story need not be repeated here. However, the second part of this fascinating book is more significant and thus more interesting, since it describes in great detail how the rebels adapted to the new life in New Haven, with the strong help offered by their abolitionist supporters and friends. The anti-slavery movement, which started to be active to a greater degree during the 30s and 40s of the nineteenth century, decided on a mass propaganda campaign in order to free the slaves who were originally intended to be dropped as human cargo in Cuba, courtesy of the Spanish government. Sugar was the name of the game and Cuba hoped to become the main trading center of it. The island belonged to Spain and slave ships were landing around 10000 Africans in Cuba every year. Professor Rediker explains to what extent the legal procedures were focused on one main issue which was whether the slaves were legally or illegally enslaved. One of the main heroes in this book is Lewis Tappan, who had been a supporter of the abolitionists. He was a wealthy silk merchant and an evangelical Christian and zealous abolitionist whose commitment of money, time and energy to the rebels was extraordinary from the moment he heard of the uprising. The judge, Andrew Judson, accepted that the Africans were enslaved illegally, however the final decision rested with the Supreme Court of the USA. Another lawyer, Roger S Baldwin, who descended from a powerful political Connecticut family, made the argument about the fact that the rebels arrived in the United States in "the actual condition of freedom" which they had legitimately won under arms. Eventually, the rebels were released and after 1842 returned to Africa. One of the most moving episodes in the book is about the mother of one of the rebels, Burna, who threw herself at his feet, after she had not seen her son for more than three years. One missionary accompanying Burna wrote that he had never seen "before such an expression of nature's own feelings, unrestrained by art or refinement". After a considerable time, the mother began to sing a song of welcome, as she and her long-lost son joyously rubbed the palm of their right hands in the traditional way. However, the missionaries who accompanied them on their way back were disappointed in them, since many of the rebels discarded many of the acquired American habits and ways of life. Some have even succumbed to licentiousness, meaning whoring and bigamy, and even those newspapers in the USA which supported the rebels began asking themselves many questions about the rebels' ways of life. This book is a more than wonderful and engrossing history from below, which gives a spectacular account of everyday life of the rebels and the efforts invested in them to Americanize them. There are chapters about the daily lives of the prisoners, their meetings with the abolitionists, what they ate, drank or talked about, the hellish conditions in which they were being held on the ship, the atmosphere outside

the courtroom, the deeds of the activists who spared no effort to free the rebels, the various speeches made by their lawyers, including that of John Quincy Adams, the American President, who "had some fun about the definition of piracy"-the issue which the prosecutors brought up in order to indict the rebels, and many more episodes which happened after their release as well as descriptions about the daily lives of the rebels' leader Cinque, whose message to his people was the death was preferable to slavery. There is a chapter on a play about the rebellion, which was performed at the Bowery theatre in New York, which opened six days after the rebels were brought ashore in Connecticut. The play was seen by thousands of New Yorkers, many of them workers, and was called one of the hits of the season. Based on new documents, this book is superb and will become a landmark in the historiography of slavery. It is also important because it is one example of the human spirit which defied and vanquished the evil forces. "A small band of multiethnic Africans aboard the "Amistad" succeeded against all odds", writes Professor Rediker. The odyssey of the captured slaves was unprecedented in the annals of New World slavery.

A unique account of the most successful slave rebellion in American history, now updated with a new epilogue from the award-winning author of *The Slave Ship*. In this powerful and highly original account, Marcus Rediker reclaims the Amistad rebellion for its true proponents: the enslaved Africans who risked death to stake a claim for freedom. Using newly discovered evidence and featuring vividly drawn portraits of the rebels, their captors, and their abolitionist allies, Rediker reframes the story to show how a small group of courageous men fought and won an epic battle against Spanish and American slaveholders and their governments. The successful Amistad rebellion changed the very nature of the struggle against slavery. As a handful of self-emancipated Africans steered their own course for freedom, they opened a way for millions to follow. This edition includes a new epilogue about the author's trip to Sierra Leone to search for Lomboko, the slave-trading factory where the Amistad Africans were incarcerated, and other relics and connections to the Amistad rebellion, especially living local memory of the uprising and the people who made it.