Þorsteinn Helgason elaborates some of the materials from his 2013 Ph.D. dissertation in this book published in 2018 by the prestigious publisher Brill, in its 'History of Warfare' series. *The Corsairs' Longest Voyage* focuses on all aspects of the kidnapping of about 400 people from Icelandic coastal settlements in 1627, one of the most traumatic historical events in Icelandic history. The events of which the so-called *Turkish Raid* is comprised took place in two separate raids perpetrated by corsairs based in Northern Africa on the southern and eastern coasts of Iceland and the Westman Islands during the summer of 1627. The unusual methodology and the breadth of academic interests the author marshals together is impressive and poignantly discussed. This unusually eclectic book, in fact, grew out of the historical research for a television documentary on the Turkish Raid (*Tyrkjaránið* in Icelandic, henceforth 'TR') by Dr. Þorsteinn Helgason himself, which in turn was sparked by his interest in Third World issues and the ties between Africa and Iceland. If all of these threads sometimes lead the reader in very different directions, the advantage is that the book has the gripping quality of fiction, at times. *The Corsairs' Longest Voyage*, in fact, embraces a holistic view of history, seen as a result of all human endeavors and broadly defined political and sociocultural forces, where even the production of art, memory, folktales and their interpretation are brought to bear on past events just as much as chronicles and more traditional historical sources.

The book consists of 9 chapters, as well as an introduction and an epilogue. In the introduction and first chapter, the author assesses existing sources for the TR, and acknowledges the difficulty of analyzing an inherently complex event such as the TR. The events can be seen as the farthest reach of the Islamic expansion into Europe, carried out not through normal warfare, but through a corsairs' attack. This in turn complicates issues of legality, since corsairs were 'licensed' pirates by their countries of origin, in this case the loose weft of city states on the Barbary Coast of Africa, which at times acted on behalf of the Ottoman empire or North African sovereigns, and more often than not, on their own behalf. On the cultural side, it was a clash of worlds: the Protestant and very homogenous Icelandic population coming into violent contact with the diverse population of Muslim Northern Africa. Coastal Europeans at the time were aware that North African 'pirates' could abduct them and force them into slavery, but Christians were also known to capture Muslim sailors. There is a curious admiration for Murat Reis, the leader of one of these attacks against Iceland, aka privateer Jan Janzsoon, and his ability to survive and reinvent himself as

Muslim after conversion to the point of being in charge of the whole fleet of the city-state of Salé. The unorthodox flourish of imagining Murat Reis in front of the International Court of Justice at the Hague highlights the often subconscious tendency to interpret the past in light of the present, and how misconceived this can be.

Chapters 2-4 focus on Iceland, specifically 2 and 3 on the raid in the East Fjords, and 4 on the Westman Islands and south-western coast, with many detailed maps and an assessment of the trustworthiness of extant sources. It also moves the focus from 'the "grand narrative" of national history' (p. 60), highlighting the anonymous and collective (sailors, pirates, corsairs, Icelanders, victims), to the stories of the individuals that were participants in the events or chroniclers thereof. Þorsteinn delves into local folklore and raises the possibility that the exaggerated instances of heroism found in some folktales were meant to counteract the chroniclers such as Björn of Skarðsá that portrayed the Icelanders merely as victims (p. 86-7).

Chapter 5 on 'Piracy and Defences' raises another 'anachronistic' comparison: that between a defenseless Iceland at the time of the TR and the importance of its lack of a standing army and consequential neutrality in the modern era. The rift between pro/against positions among Icelanders has lasted 'over the past 500 years' Þorsteinn recognizes (p. 144). Both terms of the comparison have become an important part of Icelandic identity. Iceland's defenselessness in 1627 has often been attributed to the Danes, at best absentee landlords, and in any case distracted while engaged in the last stages of the Thirty Years' War. On the other hand, Iceland's neutrality played an important role in some momentous historical events of the 20th century, although the 'rift' has opened again since the NATO base at Keflavík closed in 2006.

Chapter 6 and 7 take the readers away from modern indignation at the corsairs' deeds and brings them back to the 17th century in justifying the killing, pillaging and enslavement of Icelanders as warfare and/or commercial enterprise, and the position of the Christian kingdoms (whether Protestant or Catholic) as hypocrisy at best, considering that the almost 200 years of transatlantic slavery were about to begin. Chapter 7 focuses on the efforts to

ransom some of the captive Icelanders, whose situation was more akin to that of prisoners of war, and ransoms were an important part of the economy of the Barbary states. Only about 30 people returned to Iceland from Northern Africa in a period of ca. 10 years. From the historical and legal details of ransom, the author delves into the personal stories of some captives, those who came back (Tyrkja-Gudda, for instance, Hallgrímur Péturssonʼs wife), as well as those that stayed (Anna Jasparsdóttir, who converted to Islam), as well as the personal history of Murat Reis himself.

Chapter 8 on 'Cultural Memory' looks at what the different accounts of the TR, the number of surviving manuscripts, and when they were copied most often, as well as how the subject is dealt with in modern history textbooks. The material history of the sources and the slant they show can tell us about how the Icelanders of different periods interpreted the events and how they fit them into their national identity.

Finally, chapter 9 focuses on several works of art in Iceland and abroad, their symbolism and their interpretation, including an altarpiece from the church at Kross farm that was never previously connected to the TR. Works of art, Þorsteinn argues, conjoin events and emotions and do not claim to be objective as the written chronicles. Art and landscapes give the community that views them the emotional significance necessary to turn the past into an element of collective memory and identity.

Dr. Þorsteinn Helgason acknowledges his debt to the theoretical approaches of Macro- and Microhistory, as well as of Memory Studies, which provide a structural connection between the interpretation of traditional historical sources, and the human experience of events. The author concludes that the TR should be considered as an example of warfare justifiable in terms of its historical background. However, the book's most important contribution is perhaps its weaving of carefully detailed historical sources, artwork, folklore, and the personal stories of those involved in the *Tyrkjaránið*: its collective memory and trauma, embedded in place names, folktales, and history books, have shaped an important component of Icelandic national identity to this day.