



Bringers of War: The Portuguese in Africa during the Age of Gunpowder & Sail from the 15th to 18th Century

John Laband

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Long before coal-fuelled ships and machine-tooled firearms, in the age of sail and black powder, the Portuguese were engaged all around the coasts of Africa in capturing trading towns, seizing slaves and searching for mineral riches. They fought their ancient Muslim foes wherever they encountered them, overthrew African kingdoms and resisted Dutch, Omani and Ottoman rivals.

Campaigning over difficult terrain and in notoriously inhospitable climates, these were far from one-sided contests. Often victory was theirs, but so too were crushing, ignominious defeats in the field, debilitating sieges and humiliating capitulations. These were clashes between very contrasting societies with their own methods of warfare, choice of weaponry and concepts of what it took to be a heroic warrior.

The enthralling tale of the Portuguese in Africa before the nineteenth century deserves to be every bit as familiar as the Spanish conquest of the Americas. Yet, surprisingly, English-speaking readers know few if any of their ferocious African wars. In this impeccably researched and spellbinding new book, John Leband seeks to redress this imbalance expertly recalling this remarkable saga in full for the first time.



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