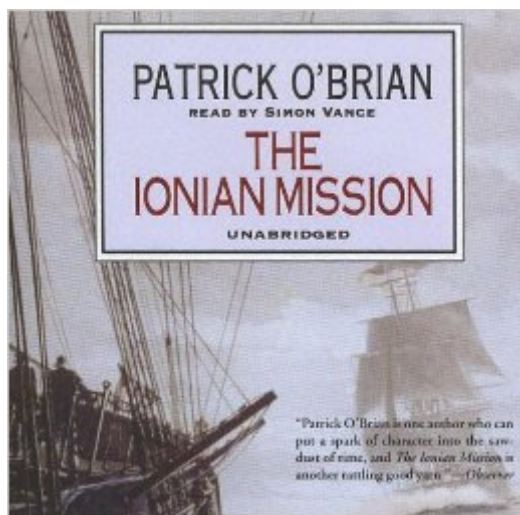


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The Ionian Mission (Aubrey-Maturin (Audio))



Synopsis

Patrick O'Brian's Aubrey-Maturin tales are widely acknowledged to be the greatest series of historical novels ever written. To commemorate the 40th anniversary of their beginning, with Master and Commander, these evocative stories are being re-issued in paperback with smart new livery. This is the eighth book in the series. Jack Aubrey and Stephen Maturin, veterans of many battles, return in this novel to the seas where they first sailed as shipmates. But Jack is now a senior Captain commanding a line-of-battle ship sent out to reinforce the squadron blockading Toulon, and this is a longer, harder, colder war than the dashing frigate action of his early days. A sudden turn of events takes him and Stephen off on a hazardous mission to the Greek islands. All his old skills of seamanship, and his proverbial luck when fighting against odds, come triumphantly into their own. The book ends with as fierce and thrilling an action as any in this magnificent series of novels. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Book Information

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Audio CD

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Customer Reviews

"The Ionian Mission" is every bit as worthy as any of the Aubrey/Maturins that came before. This time they are engaged in Jack's worst nightmare: a blockade, which is bad enough, but in this case Rear Admiral Harte is second in command. Harte is a scrub to those under him whom he doesn't especially dislike. But to Aubrey! Ugh. But Jack gets a respite from the tedium when ordered to escort the ship captained by his old mid, now Commander William Babbington, on a mission that Harte hopes will set Aubrey up for a fall. We're at sea. Babbington is visiting Captain Aubrey aboard

the Worcester, his Dryad sailing along over there, when we are treated to one of tasty little morsels that O'Brian's sack is so full of. Babbington and Aubrey are leaning on the Worcester's rail when the quote begins: The Worcester and the Dryad had hardly sunk the squadron's topsails below the western horizon before the sun came out and the breeze increased so that the sparkling blue was flecked with white horses. "Buttons, the French call them," observed Captain Aubrey in his thick, cold-ridden voice. "Do they indeed, sir," said Captain Babbington. "I never knew that. What a curious notion." "Well, you could say that they are as much like sheep as they are horses," said Jack, blowing his nose. "But sheep ain't poetical, whereas horses are." "Are they really, sir? I was not aware." "Of course they are, William. Nothing more poetical, except maybe doves. Pegasus, and so on. Think of the fellow in the play that calls out 'My kingdom for a horse' -- it would not have been poetry at all, had he said sheep.

Some critics have referred to the Aubrey/Maturin books as one long novel united not only by their historical setting but also by the central plot element of the Aubrey/Maturin friendship. Having read these fine books over a period of several years, I decided to evaluate their cumulative integrity by reading them consecutively in order of publication over a period of a few weeks. This turned out to be a rewarding enterprise. For readers unfamiliar with these books, they describe the experiences of a Royal Navy officer and his close friend and traveling companion, a naval surgeon. The experiences cover a broad swath of the Napoleonic Wars and virtually the whole globe. Rereading all the books confirmed that O'Brian is a superb writer and that his ability to evoke the past is outstanding. O'Brian has numerous gifts as a writer. He is the master of the long, careful description, and the short, telling episode. His ability to construct ingenious but creditable plots is first-rate, probably because he based much of the action of his books on actual events. For example, some of the episodes of Jack Aubrey's career are based on the life of the famous frigate captain, Lord Cochrane. O'Brian excels also in his depiction of characters. His ability to develop psychologically creditable characters through a combination of dialogue, comments by other characters, and description is tremendous. O'Brien's interest in psychology went well beyond normal character development, some books contain excellent case studies of anxiety, depression, and mania. Reading O'Brien gives vivid view of the early 19th century. The historian Bernard Bailyn, writing of colonial America, stated once that the 18th century world was not only pre-industrial but also pre-humanitarian (paraphrase).

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