

ALL ABOUT HISTORY

FAKE 1984 **SOVIET** OLYMPICS



OVERTHROWING THE MONGOLS

The Buddhist rebellion that changed China

FEAR & FOLKLORE

What historic monsters reveal about our past

SECRETS OF THE

PYRAMIDS

From sacred rituals to hidden treasure, uncover why these world wonders were built



JAZZ PANICS & VIDEO NASTIES

Cultural crusades that did more harm than good



HISTORY OF MONEY

From trading shells to vaults of gold bullion



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to write on this fascinating subject.'

ANDREW ROBERTS

Author of Churchill: Walking with Destiny

'An engrossing account
of over a thousand years of conflict
that has shaped our world.'

DAN SNOW

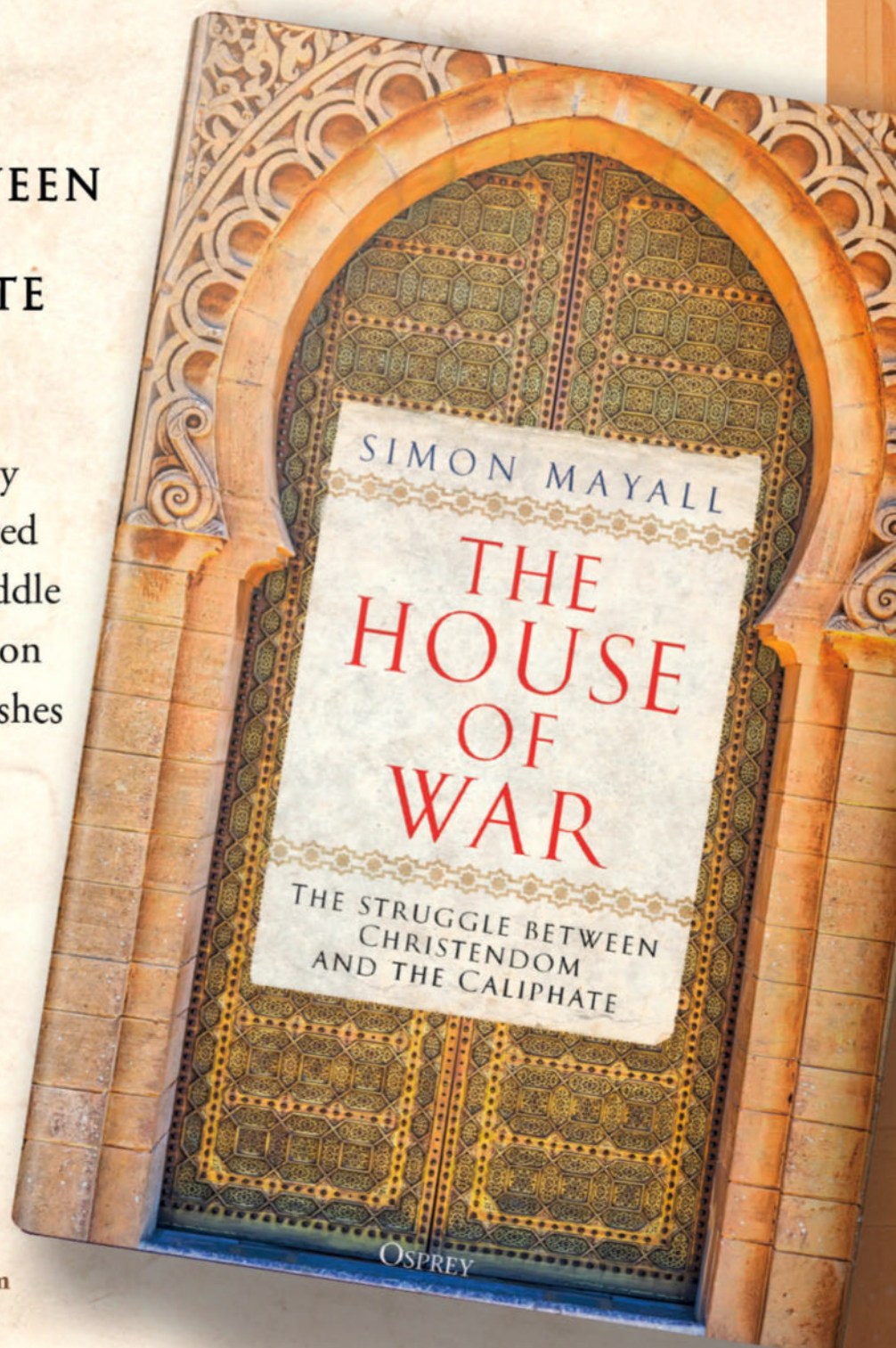
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expert on the history of the Middle
East and the crusades, focuses on
some of the most significant clashes
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Welcome

It's remarkable how much we continue to learn about the pyramids in Egypt. They've stood for thousands of years and been examined and combed over generation after generation, and yet we keep discovering new details about how they were built, who built them, what was inside them and how they were used. If you're subscribed to our newsletter, you'll know that hardly a week goes by that we don't have some new revelation about the ancient Egyptians to share, and frequently that has to do with the pyramids.

With that all in mind, it seemed like we needed to take a look at the pyramids in more detail and examine what we know, what we used to know that has been corrected, and what mysteries still remain. These incredible monuments to the ingenuity and drive of the ancient Egyptians will likely continue to astonish and amaze us for centuries to come.

We welcome Ben Gazur to be our guide this issue as we delve into the latest research and dig up what the ancient world used to say about these sites too. Also in this issue, we learn about the Ukrainian slave girl who became empress of the Ottomans, learn why folklore monsters get invented, discover the Buddhist uprising that overthrew the Mongols, and tell the story of the USSR's 'fake Olympics' when they boycotted the Summer Games in 1984. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jonathan Gordon
Editor



Nearly 15 million people are estimated to have visited the pyramids in 2023

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SECRETS OF THE PYRAMIDS

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From sacred rituals
to hidden treasure,
uncover why these
world wonders
were built

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Defining Moments





8 August 1963

THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY

In the early hours of the morning on 8 August 1963, a Royal Mail train travelling from Glasgow to London was stopped and ransacked by a group of 15 men. The robbers attacked the train's driver and proceeded to steal £2.6 million (approximately £69 million today). At the time, it was the largest robbery in British history. Much of the money was never recovered, but most of the criminals were eventually arrested despite many being on the run for a number of years.

© Getty Images

15 August 1998

OMAGH BOMBING

In Omagh, County Tyrone in Northern Ireland, a car bomb inside a Vauxhall Cavalier exploded killing 29 people and injuring over 200 others. The attack was carried out by the Real Irish Republican Army (Real IRA) who warned the police about the bomb before it exploded. The police attempted to evacuate the area around the courthouse, believing the bomb was nearby, and directed people towards the market where the car containing the bomb was actually parked. The bombing was the deadliest attack to take place during Northern Ireland's Troubles.





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ALL ABOUT MONEY



From cowrie shells to crypto, uncover the long history of currency and finance from across the globe



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BULLION DEPOSITORY**



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FINANCIAL CRISIS**

Written by Emily Staniforth, Callum McKelvie & Jonathan Gordon



Key Events



Cowries are one of the longest used forms of currency in the world.

1200 BCE

SHELLING OUT

One of the earliest forms of money is cowrie shells, belonging to molluscs. China is among the first countries to use the shells for trading, with cowries being plentiful in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. They are also widely used in Africa right into the 20th century.

COW CURRENCY

c. 9000-6000 BCE
The barter system is one of the earliest forms of transaction between people, with valuable possessions such as cattle and grain becoming early trading commodities.



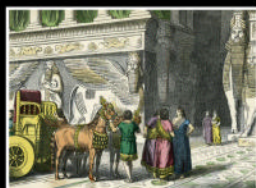
CODE OF HAMMURABI

c. 1792-1750 BCE
The famous stele of laws from Babylon is inscribed on a piece of basalt and includes governance for how banking operations should be conducted.



PAPER MONEY

806-821 CE
The earliest example of paper money being used comes from the Tang Dynasty as paper script known as 'flying cash' was used by private merchants.



FIRST BANKS

c. 3000 BCE
The first recorded examples of banking come from Mesopotamia where commodities and valuable items are held by temples and palaces to keep them safe.



1200 BCE

630 BCE

FIRST MINT

c. 640 BCE
The ancient city of Guanzhuang, in the Henan Province of China, is home to the oldest recorded mint. It produces spade coins, shaped like the farming tool.



DROPPING NOTES

1189
The Jin Dynasty adopts paper money in an official capacity, similar to modern notes. These Exchange Certificates had no date limitations. The Mongols later accept only paper currency.



630 BCE

OFFICIAL CURRENCY

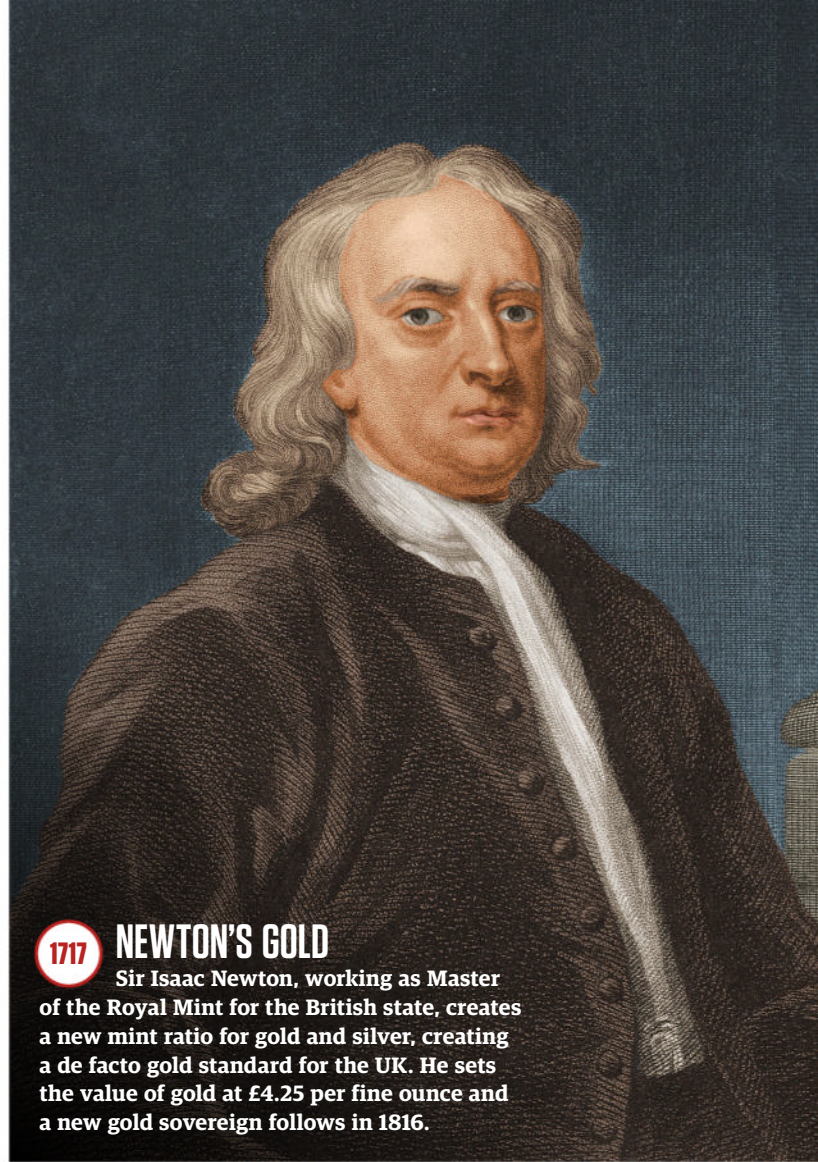
The first recorded official state currency is created in the Lydian Empire. Its stater starts off made of electrum, a combination of silver and gold. The 'coins' are shaped like beans and feature the royal symbol of a lion. In later years separate gold and silver staters are minted.

Some historians believe Greece, China or India could have been first with a state currency, not Lydia.

1535

BEAD TRADING

While the practice is believed to go back centuries, the first recorded use of wampum as currency by Native Americans is made. They are woven items using tubular shell beads. It continues to be used as a currency well into the 19th century.



1717

NEWTON'S GOLD

Sir Isaac Newton, working as Master of the Royal Mint for the British state, creates a new mint ratio for gold and silver, creating a de facto gold standard for the UK. He sets the value of gold at £4.25 per fine ounce and a new gold sovereign follows in 1816.



1950 CASH CARD

The Diners Club card is introduced as the first multipurpose charge card for making purchases without the need for money on hand. It is an innovation of Frank McNamara and Ralph Schneider. Membership reaches 42,000 in 1951.



eCash, Bit Gold, B-Money and Hashcash were all failed attempts at electronic cash.

CRYPTOCURRENCY 2009

Bitcoin, the best known of the cryptocurrencies, is created by an anonymous programmer or group known as Satoshi Nakamoto. Its value is determined through bidding (like stocks) and created by 'mining' complex equations to 'mint' a new bitcoin.



STINKING RICH 1200

Parmesan is used as a valuable trading commodity in Italy to a level that some banks begin to store wheels of cheese as collateral for loans to farmers.

THE DOLLAR 1792

Following the ratification of the US Constitution, the Mint Act is passed to establish a new currency for the United States. It adopts a decimal system, following Russia in 1704.



DROPPING GOLD 1930

Following the Great Depression, the gold standard begins to be dropped by nations around the world as they seek greater flexibility in controlling their currencies.



1535

1717

CHEQUES 17TH CENTURY

Seeking a more secure way of transferring money or valuable items, jewellers in Europe begin using the equivalent of modern cheques or bank drafts.



GOLD STANDARD 1821

The gold standard is established in the UK, tying the currency to the amount of gold held in reserves. It is intended to increase confidence in the pound and temper inflation.

1950

CREDIT CARD 1958

The first widely accepted charge card is launched in the form of the American Express card, expanding on their business of providing traveller's cheques for use around the world.



1999

2009

1999 THE EURO

Starting off as a currency used only for accounting and electronic payment purposes, the euro is launched on 1 January 1999. Coins and banknotes for the currency are introduced from 1 January 2002 as 12 EU nations make the biggest cash changeover in history.

The euro is now the official currency of 20 of the 27 EU member states.





Inside History

FORT KNOX - BULLION DEPOSITORY

United States
1937 – present

Widely considered one of the most secretive and secure establishments in the world, the depository at Fort Knox was first constructed in 1936. At the time the US government was concerned that keeping the country's gold reserves at their current location of New York might make them vulnerable to coastal attack. The American professor of economics William C Wood stated in a 1994 paper that this gold hoard largely came from "Depression-era gold coins", "World War II lend-lease arrangements" and "government operations under the gold standard". The first of these refers to Franklin D Roosevelt's Executive Order 6102, whereby much of the nation's gold was taken, exchanged for paper money and melted down.

The Fort Knox military base in Kentucky was chosen as a suitable location to house the reserves and the depository was built at a cost of \$560,000. In January 1937 the first consignments of gold began to arrive. The bars arrived on trains, shipped by the United States Postal Service, who according to the US Mint, was the only agency capable of bearing responsibility for insurance purposes, should something happen to the gold en route.

One of the reasons for the enduring interest and fascination with Fort Knox is the secrecy surrounding the establishment. Visitors are rarely allowed and even the president cannot demand entry. In 1974, following allegations by Dr Peter Beter that much of the gold had been secretly sold, a partial inventory was carried out with the press invited to view. Today, these few scant video clips and photographs remain some of the only imagery of the depository's interior.

As such, only those with first-hand knowledge of the depository know its layout. Therefore, while the following has been compiled to the best of our knowledge, only a few individuals can say for sure what exactly lies within the walls of this highly secretive establishment. ○

CEMETERIES

116 historic cemeteries are located on the Fort Knox military base, which according to the US Army primarily belonged to historic villages that occupied the area prior to the establishment of the military base in 1918. The most famous however, the Post Cemetery, was originally adjacent to St Patrick's Parish Church, which closed its doors in 1899. The building was demolished and the current Post Cemetery was established in 1920. The Cemetery is the final resting place for over 967 people, the majority of which are soldiers.



NOT JUST GOLD

During World War II, it was decided a number of items of historical importance should be moved to the depository at Fort Knox for safekeeping. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor had concerned the government that several of the country's treasures might be at risk from aerial bombardment. Among the items was the Declaration of Independence, President Lincoln's Gettysburg Address, copies of the Gutenberg Bible, a copy of the Magna Carta and the Constitution. Following the development of the Cold War, a hoard of raw opium was secreted in the vault, should the USA's supply be cut off due to geopolitical developments.

EXTRA SECURITY

Should any would-be thieves manage to make it past the main gate, there are many unsubstantiated rumours of extra layers of security in the area surrounding the depository, including stories of landmines, barbed wire and hidden alarms. Two fences surround the enclosure, the second of which is three metres tall and with either one or both reputed to be electrified. Modern additions to this arsenal are said to include night vision cameras and complex surveillance systems.

BULLION DEPOSITORY

According to the US Mint, the building itself is constructed out of "16,000 cubic feet of granite, 4,200 cubic yards of concrete, 750 tons of reinforcing steel and 670 tons of structural steel". The exterior of the building is granite with two main entrances, one at the front and one at the back. The back entrance has large doors that allow for the delivery and removal of shipments of the depository's gold. The building is completely independent and houses its own electrical generators and water supply.

VAULT

The vault itself sits independently inside the main building, constructed out of concrete, steel panels and supports. A 1974 report to Congress - on the inspection that occurred that same year - states that the gold is held in 13 individual cupboards like 'compartments' inside the main vault. Tantalising clips and photographs from the press visit at this time show the then director of the US Mint, Mary Brooks, presumably standing inside one of these, surrounded by walls of gold bars. Of all those who have held the key to the White House, only President Roosevelt was lucky enough to venture inside.

MAIN GATE

Anyone approaching the depository first has to make it past the main gate. According to an article in a 1960 issue of *LIFE* magazine, anyone attempting to approach this gate from Bullion Boulevard would receive a stern warning from a loudspeaker located here. The intruder would be asked to halt and move no further. Were the intruder to somehow make it past undetected, then a wire with an 'electric eye' would denote their presence and set off numerous alarms.



GUARD POST

The main depository is surrounded by four pillboxes, one on each corner of the building. Housed inside these are guards, who maintain careful vigilance over the surrounding area. Below the building is a basement, with tunnels for the guards to access the pillboxes but also a shooting range where they can practise their aim. Somewhere below the building there is rumoured to be a sealed escape tunnel, should someone accidentally find themselves trapped inside the vault.

GOLD

The United States Mint claims that there is currently 147.3 million ounces of gold held within the depository. It was in the 1940s that the holdings were at their highest, a whopping 649.6 million ounces. A number of ex-high school football players from schools surrounding the area have claimed that they were hired to help move the gold during a number of audits in the 1970s, though it's unclear if the US government has ever confirmed this.

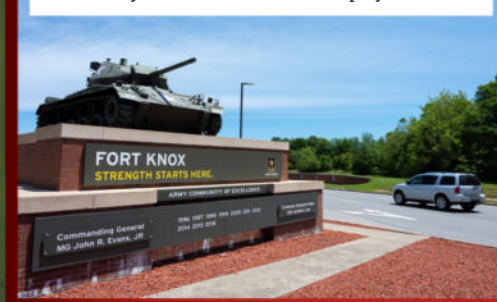
VAULT DOOR

The interior vault door weighs some 20 tonnes and is resistant to attack by drills or cutting torches. The door is also blast proof, likewise preventing the use of explosives by would-be thieves. In case the staff of the depository should become targets, measures are taken to ensure that no single person knows the entire combination. Sections of the combination are given to a select few, who input only the part they know. The vault is protected by offices and storerooms on either side, providing a barrier should anyone attempt to circumvent the door by drilling through from the outside.



MILITARY BASE

The military installation at Fort Knox was first established in 1918 as part of a wave of new bases following the United States' entry into WWI. Although its size was reduced in the years following the war, in 1932 it was made permanent and a few short years later selected as the home for the United States depository. Now, according to the US Defence Department's Military Installations website, the Fort Knox installation comprises 109,000 acres and is home to some 26,000 people, including soldiers, their family members and civilian employees.





Anatomy

FLORENTINE BANKER

Florence

1390 – 1494

RESERVE CURRENCY

Florence became such a powerful centre of banking and exchange that the florin became one of the most used and recognised currencies in western Europe, not unlike how the American dollar has been the leading reserve currency since the end of WWII. With Florence being a republic, the city state was comparatively stable in the region, so the florin was trusted to hold its value.

WEIGHT NOT QUANTITY

The gold florin was used in foreign exchange and weighed 3.53 grams. Knowing this meant that weighing coins was the fastest way of calculating. A set of scales and reliable weights would have been incredibly important for any banker. Gold florins are estimated to be worth about £107 in modern terms. These were only used for foreign exchange, however, with smaller silver florins used locally.

NEW TERMS

Several modern terms have their roots in this era of financial services. For a start, the term bank derives from the name for medieval bankers, banchieri, who sat at banchi (benches or counters) in the street. Credere, meaning to believe, is where we get the term credit.

MEDICI MONEY

The Medici family was one of the most successful and powerful banking dynasties to emerge out of the 14th century. Having made his money in the wool trading industry, Giovanni de Medici opened the Bank of Rome in 1397. Trading of goods evolved into the trading of currency and new guilds were established to differentiate new banking establishments from street vendors.

BOOKKEEPING

Complex trading and money lending required new methods of tracking transactions, which included double-entry bookkeeping. This entails recording a transaction as an incoming and outgoing, which was essential for managing credit and debt on an account. The first known documentation of this method comes from 1494 by Franciscan friar Luca Bartolomeo de Pacioli who published a book on the subject.

NEW MONEY

Usury, the act of charging large amounts of interest, was widely prohibited by the church and, by extension, governments in this period. However, having learned about Hindu-Arabic numerals, merchants also learned about new terms that could be used. Letters of credit, for instance, indicated a debt and might have future fees attached. Debts could also be bought and sold, similar to modern bond markets.

MUSLIM INNOVATIONS

Italy had become a hub of trading thanks to the Crusades, but as much as the exchange of goods had made Italian merchants rich, the exchange of ideas with the Muslim nations had inspired new commercial opportunities. Using Hindu-Arabic numerals (as we do today) allowed for fractions, percentages and interest to be calculated, unlike Roman numerals used up to that point.



Historical Treasures

KNIFE MONEY

This unusual form of currency is believed to have originated from the trading of actual blades
China Warring States

One of the earliest examples of coinage in the world, knife money, takes its name from the unusual shape used for this unique currency. Knife money was largely created and used by merchants in China from the 5th to the 1st century BCE. Their shape and design varies depending on the province from which they originate. According to Paul Einzig in *Primitive Money*, as knife coinage was not issued or sanctioned by the state, it cannot be considered true currency like we have today. However, these fascinating artefacts remain intriguing examples of mankind's ingenuity when it comes to all things money and to the financial innovations of ancient China.

The true reasons for the introduction of knife-shaped currency have been lost to time, but a popular legend states that in the 7th century BCE, a Prince Hwan was trying to quell rising discontent among his men. The prince, unable to provide his troops with suitable coinage, instead told them to use their knives in trade. This innovation proved popular and the knife was quickly adopted as both a form and symbol of currency.

From the Zhou dynasty to the Qin dynasty, provinces such as Henan used 'spade money'. According to the BBC, this reflected the nature of the province as spade money originated in more agricultural areas. In 2021, it was reported

that archaeologists working at the ancient Chinese city of Guanzhuang had discovered what is considered to be the oldest example of a coin mint, dating from 2,600 years ago. The mint produced spade money and alongside examples of the coins, they also found the original casts used to make them.

It was as part of the reforms of the Emperor Qin Shi Huang that the Ban Liang, China's first unified currency, was introduced. As a result, all previous forms of currency - including the spade and knife coins - were abolished. During the relatively short rule of the Emperor Wang Mang between 9 - 23 CE, knife and spade money were very briefly reintroduced. ○

QI KNIFE MONEY

There are various types of knife money, the example shown here is a Qi Knife - the rarest. Qi Knives are often placed into groups, depending on the number of characters in the inscription.

HOLE IN THE HANDLE

Knife money contains a small hole in the handle. This would have been used to thread the money onto a piece of string. When the Ban Liang was introduced, this aspect was kept and quickly became recognised as a signature of historical Chinese money.

BLADE

According to Mary Ellen Snodgrass in *Coins and Currency*, prior to the introduction of these specially created coins, it is believed (as in the legend of Prince Hwan) that traders used actual knives as currency when bartering.

BRONZE

The coin shown here is made out of bronze, the material used due to its value but also its relative availability. According to a Chinese minister from the Zhou dynasty, jade was the most valued substance and was used as 'superior money', gold was seen as middling and knife coins as the least valued.

LEFT A horde of bronze knife coins originating from the Ming province





Hall of Fame

WOMEN ON MONEY

A selection of extraordinary historical women commemorated on banknotes around the world



Rose Chibambo Malawi, 1928 – 2016

Featured on the 200 kwacha banknote since 2012, Rose Chibambo was a politician in the British Protectorate of Nyasaland before the state became independent Malawi in 1964. As a politician and activist she is credited with organising the women's movement for independence in Malawi and heading up the Women's League. She was arrested by British forces in 1959 for her anti-colonial activism just two days after she had given birth to her daughter. In 1964, Malawi became independent, and Chibambo became a minister in the new government. However, clashes with the new president saw her exiled from Malawi.

Chibambo returned to Malawi in 1994 where she became involved with a number of charitable, political and religious organisations.

LADI KWALI

NIGERIA, 1925 – 1984

Appearing on the Nigerian 20 naira banknote, Ladi Kwali was a potter and ceramicist who worked using a traditional, ancient technique known as coiling. Kwali's work stood out as being particularly special for the way it combined indigenous and western pottery traditions, and was often highly decorative and beautiful. She was revered as an artist in Nigeria and across the world, with her work being on display in major institutions like the Smithsonian and the British Museum.



DIDO

TUNISIA, UNKNOWN – UNKNOWN

Dido, Queen of Carthage, was the first woman to feature on Tunisian currency when she was incorporated into the design of the 10 dinar banknote in 2005. Though it remains unclear whether Dido was an entirely mythical figure or whether she had some basis in history, she is said to have been the founder of the ancient city of Carthage, now in Tunisia. Dido, most famously, fell in love with the hero Aeneas according to Virgil's epic.

Kate Sheppard New Zealand, 1847 – 1934

Originally from Liverpool, Kate Sheppard is one of the featured figures on New Zealand's dollar banknotes. She emigrated to New Zealand in the 1860s and in 1885 joined the New Zealand Women's Christian Temperance Union. A couple of years later, she became head of the organisation's suffrage movement and began to fight for the rights of women to vote. Sheppard believed that women should not be confined to traditional female roles and organised petitions, lobbies and public meetings to further the movement. In 1893, largely due to her determination, New Zealand became the first nation to grant women the right to vote.

Tamar Georgia, c.1160 – 1213

Adorning the 50 lari banknote of Georgia is Tamar, Georgia's greatest medieval queen. During her reign, the country experienced a golden age, expanding its borders and political influence, defending itself from foreign threats and overseeing a cultural renaissance. As a female monarch, Tamar faced opposition from the powerful men around her who tried to reduce her authority, but she stood her ground and succeeded in consolidating her throne. As a result of all her successes as queen and the prosperity she presided over, Tamar holds a special place in Georgian history and was eventually canonised in the Georgian Orthodox Church.



ADELA & CELSA SPERATTI

PARAGUAY, 1865/1868 – 1902/1938

Born in Paraguay during the War of the Triple Alliance, the Speratti sisters were brought up in Argentina after seeking refuge there. In 1890 Adela, the oldest sister, returned to Paraguay to help the country rebuild in its post-war era, and having taught reading and writing in Argentina set about establishing an innovative education system. Adela was joined by Celsa, and together they founded a school that trained other teachers and educators.



ANNA ANCHER

DENMARK, 1859 – 1935

Anna Ancher was born in Skagen on the Jutland peninsula of Denmark, and later became part of the Skagen artists' colony located there. Influenced by the visiting painters to Skagen from an early age, Ancher honed her own artistic talents and attended a private art school in Copenhagen. She made a name for herself in the Scandinavian 'Modern Breakthrough' movement, painting scenes of everyday life. Ancher appeared on the Danish thousand-kroner banknote alongside her husband Michael.



Elizabeth II's face has appeared on more than 100 currencies from more than 20 countries and overseas territories.

Elizabeth II

Various, 1926 – 2022

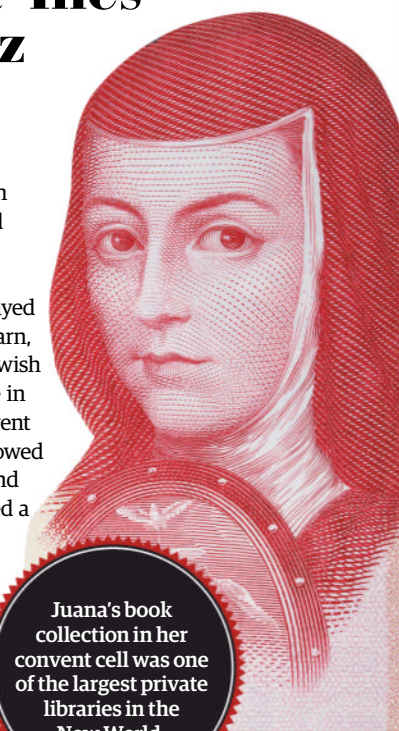
Potentially the most famous woman in the world until her death in 2022, Elizabeth II served as the British queen for a whopping 70 years and 214 days. Becoming monarch at the age of 25 in 1952, Elizabeth was not only Britain's queen but also the head of the Commonwealth, which meant she held significant positions in a number of countries. She has therefore been featured on currencies in countries ranging from Australia to the Bahamas, and holds the Guinness World Record for being the person whose portrait has appeared on the most banknotes in the world.



Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

MEXICO, c.1648 – 1695

Juana Ramírez was born to an unmarried Creole mother and Spanish father in San Miguel Nepantla, New Spain (now Mexico). As a child, she displayed intelligence and a desire to learn, and as a young adult did not wish to marry but only to continue in her studies. She joined a convent and became a nun, which allowed her to pursue her academic and literary interests and published a number of prominent works. She defended women's rights to study and earned a revered place as a literary and feminist icon in Mexican history.



Juana's book collection in her convent cell was one of the largest private libraries in the New World.



SHIN SAIMDANG

SOUTH KOREA, 1504 – 1551

A woman of many artistic talents, Shin Saimdang is the face seen on the Korean 50,000 won note since 2009. Active during the first half of the 16th century, she was a painter, poet, writer and calligraphist, and was also thought to have worked in embroidery. She has also been seen as a model for Confucian values, though is most remembered for her artwork. As a woman during the male-dominated Joseon Dynasty, little is known about her life.





SURVIVING A FINANCIAL CRISIS

Jame DiBiasio explores how financiers can learn from the mistakes of the past

What is one of the earliest examples of a financial crisis?

We've had financial crises since we've had markets. One of the best-known examples is the tulip bulb mania of 17th-century Amsterdam, a wild speculative investment bubble in tulips, which at the peak sold for ten times the annual income of skilled artisans. It was the Dutch who created banking institutions as we recognise them today and the first 'modern' capitalist society. They invented the stock exchange and the model for a central bank. Following the Wars of Religion, the Dutch were also the first to introduce a very pragmatic version of tolerance – Protestant, Catholic or Jewish, you could do business together. People began to get much more excited about money and what they could do with it.

One of the most infamous financial crises is the 1929 stock market crash. What is the background to this?

To understand the great crash, you have to go back to World War I. The old gold standard was destroyed because European countries couldn't afford to uphold it due to their war debts. You also had reparations forced upon the Germans by the French and the British and at the same time an insistence by bankers in New York that the British and French would pay their debts. So you had this cascading of debts that was never eliminated from the system, and it never really allowed a proper recovery. During the 1920s there was economic growth and takeoff but also a lot of unrest, especially when the Weimar Republic in Germany were unable to meet their

Jame DiBiasio is a financial journalist and historian based in Hong Kong. He is the author of multiple books including *Planet VC: How the Globalization of Venture Capital is Driving the Next Wave of Innovation* (2023) and *Who Killed the King of Bagan?* (2020).

BELOW A Chinese money changer cutting silver; in the Qing Dynasty, silver was highly valued

reparations payments. In the US, you had the Roaring 20s with this giant stock market boom, but the German banks were borrowing heavily to repay their debts. So when you had a crash, it wasn't just something happening on Wall Street, it had implications internationally. And this house of debt, the roots of which were in mistakes around the Treaty of Versailles, came crashing down on top of what turned out to be a very unstable system. The Federal Reserve Bank of the United States could have stepped in, they had the funds, but they did not have either the will, the experience or the knowledge. It was this refusal to intervene which turned a financial crash into what we now call the Great Depression.

What is one of the most devastating financial crashes?

One that may not be well appreciated in the West is the Japanese bubble bursting in 1989. People were over-borrowing to invest in the property market and the local stock market. The Nikkei hit an all-time high in early 1989 and it was only in February 2024 that the Nikkei index finally returned to its 1980s value. Japan went through 40 years of essentially, from an investor's perspective, a complete wipeout.

What lessons can we learn from the history of finance when dealing with something completely new, for example cryptocurrency?

I'm wary of any system that would be based around Bitcoin. This goes back to the histories of both China and Europe. In China they had paper money from the 11th century onwards but to fund projects or wars, the emperor would just print more until they created hyperinflation. In 12th-century Italy, Venice paid for its





ABOVE The stock market crash of 1929 is one of the most devastating financial crises on record

wars by forcing the elites to lend them money in the form of what we'd today call a bond, which they called 'Prestiti'. The elites could then use the bonds as collateral to raise their other finances. They began to trade those bonds amongst each other which began a market for credit; 'credere' is the Italian word for 'believe'. Today, fractional-reserve banking is fundamental to the way that governments enact monetary policy.

This didn't happen in China. In the intervening years the Spanish had arrived with lots of silver. The Chinese really valued silver as a currency and were hungry for it due to the hyperinflation caused by the over-printing of fiat paper money. However, people didn't use silver in the normal economy: they hoarded it because it was precious. As a result, the retail economy withered and died. This goes back to Gresham's Law, from Thomas Gresham, who said that "bad money drives out good". You had bad money in China and the arrival of Spanish silver didn't mean the silver got used. Similarly,



ABOVE How did Ben Bernanke learn from the past when handling the 2008 crisis?

in the cryptocurrency world the issue with Bitcoin being a reserve currency is that no one is using it to buy things, they hoard it as a speculative asset. To me, it's the same as silver in Qing Dynasty China. So this reading of history has made me sceptical about cryptocurrency as a foundation in any kind of economy.

How useful is historical knowledge of financial crises?

Ben Bernanke, who was the chair of the US Federal Reserve at the time of the 2008 crisis, was very well versed in the mistakes made in the 1920s and 1930s. He ended up pursuing a programme that avoided those mistakes and avoided tipping the Western world, and maybe the whole world, into a calamitous depression - which could have happened. So, yes, history is essential. Now, other mistakes were made in 2008 and afterwards, but I think that having a sense of financial history is very important, especially for anybody who works in financial services. My day job is as a journalist. I write about financial services and technology. There are so many people who don't know the history of their own industry. Those people are more than likely to repeat the mistakes of the past or not spot an unstable situation. ○



Places to Explore

HISTORIC BANKS

From the oldest bank to the failed Second Bank of the United States, five historic financial institutions from around the world

1 THE BANK OF FINLAND HELSINKI, FINLAND

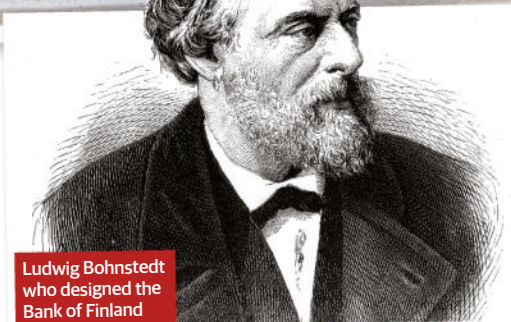
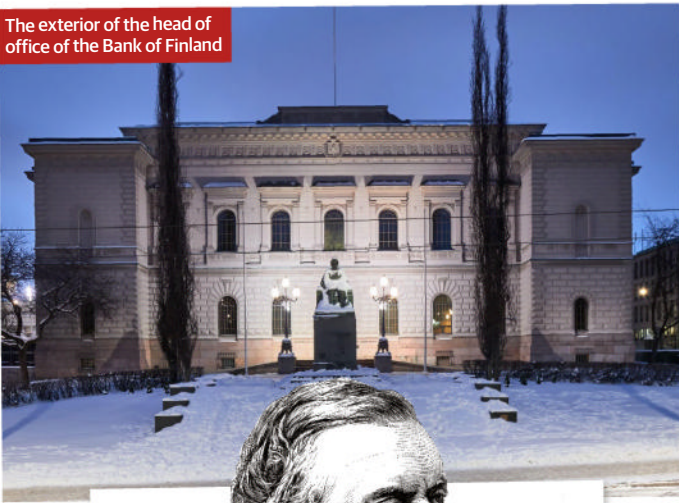
The fourth oldest bank in the world, the Bank of Finland was first established by Tsar Alexander I of Russia in 1811, predating Finland's independence. Although it was originally based in the country's old capital of Turku, the bank was moved to Helsinki in 1819.

For some time the bank was housed in the House of the Senate, but in 1876 a competition was held to design a new and permanent home for the financial institution. The winner was the German architect Ludwig Bohnstedt. His designs proved controversial as, according to Taide Art, the Board of Public buildings cited various concerns regarding issues such as fire safety and protection from thieves. However, a touch of scepticism is advised due to one of the board members being an architect whose designs were rejected!

The Bank of Finland has a rich history, celebrated in a museum housed on the site. There are numerous exhibitions, including a permanent exhibit that explores the history of Finnish banknotes and banknote design.

The Bank of Finland's Museum is open 11am to 5pm Tuesday to Friday, 11am to 4pm on Saturday & Sunday. Entry is free.

The exterior of the head of office of the Bank of Finland



Ludwig Bohnstedt who designed the Bank of Finland



The original Bank of Canada sits next to the more modern glass skyscraper



2 BANK OF CANADA OTTAWA, CANADA

A more modern institution, the Bank of Canada first opened its doors in 1935. Prior to this, according to the Bank themselves, there was no need for a centralised banking system within Canada and for centuries various banks, both large and small, operated without issue. The institution was founded in the midst of the Great Depression and concerns that Canada was not prepared to deal with such a crisis. Originally the bank was a privately owned venture but by 1938 it had been nationalised and became the property of the Canadian public.

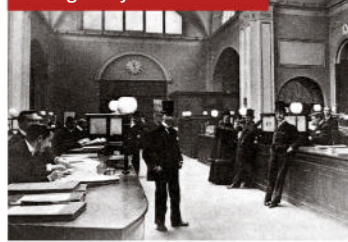
Finance history fans can see the bank's striking offices in Ottawa, where a more modern glass structure has been built directly next to the original building, a representation of the bank honouring its history while still taking a fundamentally modern approach to finance. A museum opened its doors in 1980 and tells the story of the Bank of Canada, with a variety of exhibitions aimed at visitors young and old alike.

The Bank of Canada Museum is open seven days a week from 10am to 5pm. Admission is free.



The Bank of England moved to its current location in 1734

The historic interior of the bank as designed by Sir John Soane



3 THE BANK OF ENGLAND LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Arguably one of the most historically important banks in the world, the Bank of England was first founded in 1694. The Bank of England state that the primary reasons behind the institution's creation was William of Orange's attempts to fund his war against ongoing French expansionism under King Louis XIV. Members of the public were invited to invest in the scheme, a whopping £1.2 million being raised from private funds alone.

It was in 1734 that the bank moved to its current location on Threadneedle Street, between Bishopsgate and Bank Junction. The original building was created by George Sampson, but in 1788 Sir John Soane was appointed architect and commenced a radical redesign. Sir John Soane's

historic design was widely celebrated and stood for centuries, but in the 1920s the decision was made to destroy much of his work as part of a vast redevelopment. This has come to be seen as one of the greatest architectural losses in the history of the United Kingdom.

Contemporary visitors to the Bank of England can visit its museum and see a variety of permanent and temporary exhibits. Among the many highlights include the opportunity to try to lift a real gold bar - weighing some 12.4kg!

The museum is open Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm. Entry is free and no booking is required. Please check online before travelling.



The exterior plaza of the Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena at night

4 BANCA MONTE DEI PASCHI DI SIENA SIENA, ITALY

The oldest bank in the world, the Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena was founded in 1472. The bank itself states that the core idea at the heart of the institution was to try to help the poor and underprivileged during times of economic hardship. In 1624, the Grand Duke of Tuscany introduced what can be seen as a precursor to contemporary deposit protection schemes. Anyone with an account at the bank would have their money guaranteed by the proceeds from local farming lands.

Following the global financial crisis of 2008, the bank purchased Banca Antonveneta, which according to *The Guardian* made it the third-largest Italian bank. After centuries of operating as a small regional bank, it was now a national powerhouse. Despite the occasional crisis, the oldest bank in the world continues to thrive. Visitors to the Banca Monte dei Paschi di Siena can marvel at the building's fantastic architecture and explore the beautiful square where a statue of the Italian economist Sallustio Bandini can be seen.

Open to the public at specific times, please check before travelling. The square can be visited throughout the year.

5 SECOND BANK OF THE UNITED STATES PHILADELPHIA, USA

Founded in 1816, the Second Bank of the United States had a turbulent history, leading to its closure in the mid 19th century. The First Bank had been created in 1791 after Alexander Hamilton submitted a proposal which suggested that such an institution might help stabilise the national economy. After several decades in operation, the First Bank was shut down in 1811 and for years after discussions were had concerning a possible successor.

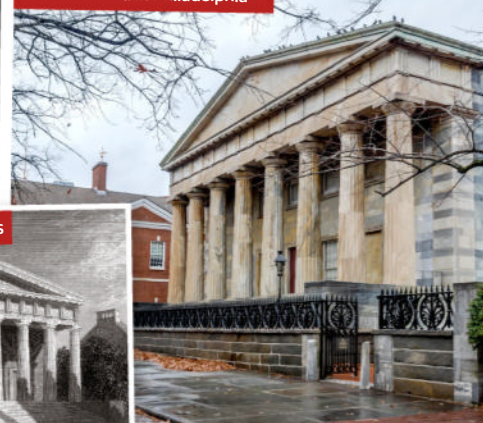
Unfortunately, the Second Bank quickly became the victim of ill-considered financial dealings. The bank's first president William Jones within a few short years caused a financial crisis and recession and his successor, Langdon Cheves likewise brought about similar calamity. It was not until the appointment of Nicholas Biddle that things began to improve. Although Biddle worked hard to stabilise the bank and restore public faith, it may have been too late.

In 1832 Andrew Jackson was elected president of the United States and he began to wage war against the Second Bank. Biddle fought valiantly against Jackson's attacks but the latter's decision to veto a renewal of the Bank's Charter sealed the institution's fate for good.

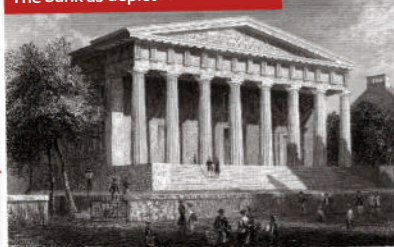
Now it houses a collection of over 150 portraits, focusing on key American figures. However, visitors can still marvel at the bank's architectural design and see this historic financial site.

Opening hours and entrance fees vary and the Bank is currently closed. Please check online at <https://bit.ly/4f4PuCI> for further details.

The Second Bank of the United States located in Philadelphia



The bank as depicted in the 1820s





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SECRETS

PYRA

From sacred rituals to hidden treasure, uncover why these world wonders were built

Written by Ben Gazur

If you go looking for the seven wonders of the ancient world today, you are in for a disappointment. You will search in vain to find more than a few scraps of them.

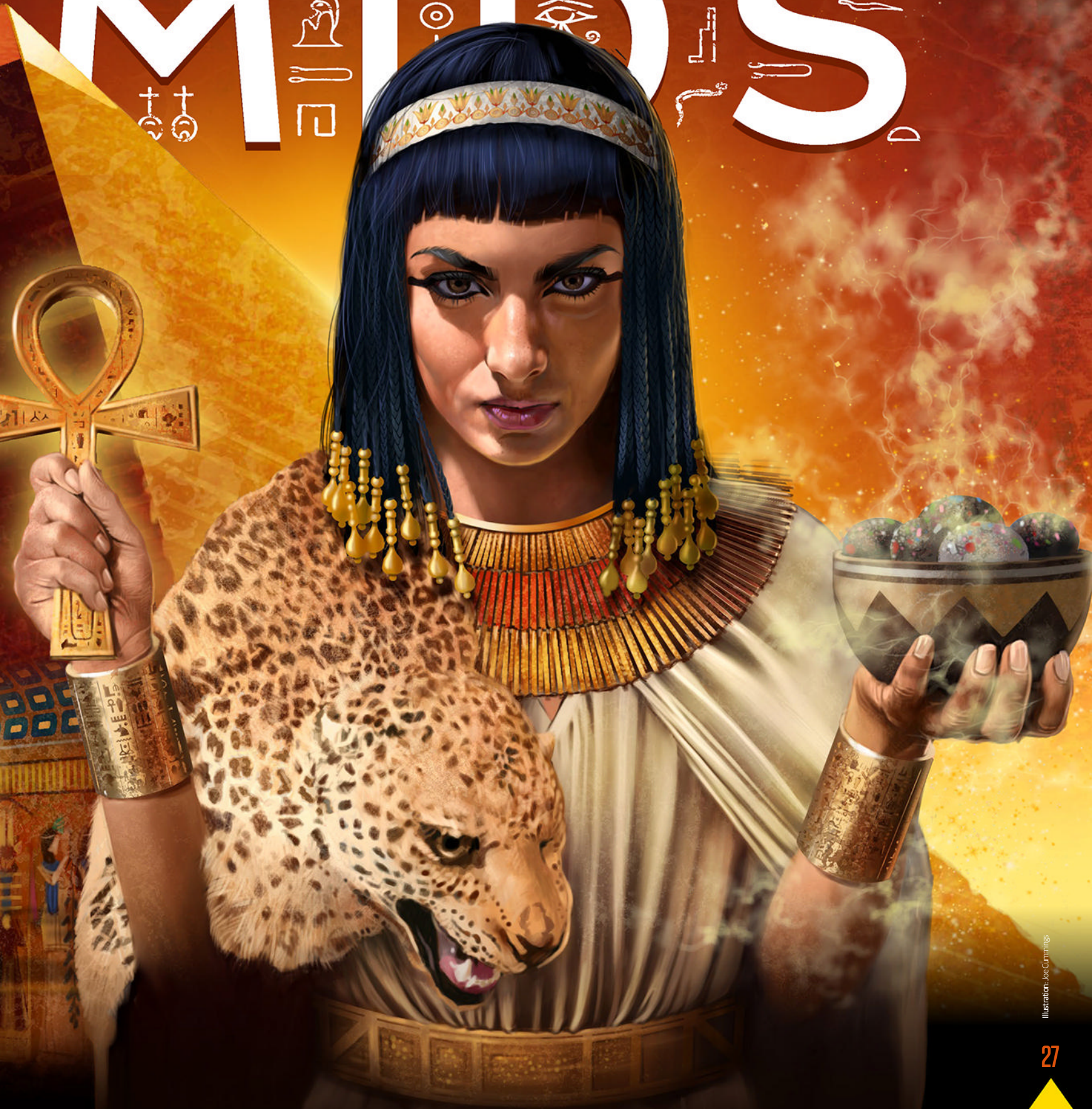
The statues from the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus can be found in museums around the globe, but of the wonder itself little remains in the ground. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon have so thoroughly crumbled to dust that academics debate whether they really existed at all. The Colossus of Rhodes, a statue of the god Helios that towered over the harbour, was felled by an earthquake less than 60 years after it was erected. Time has left precious little other than their names.

Visit Giza however and the Great Pyramid of Khufu still stands. The oldest of the Seven Wonders, it is also the only one which has, largely, survived despite millennia of weathering and the despoliation of visitors. Stand before the geometrical perfection of the pyramid, built from millions of blocks of limestone, and you will be sharing the wonder experienced by everyone who has seen them for thousands of years. Pyramids have become symbolic of the public's idea of ancient Egypt, sparking many misconceptions and pseudo-archaeological theories, but their real history can tell us much about life and death for the Egyptians. ►



OF THE

MIDS

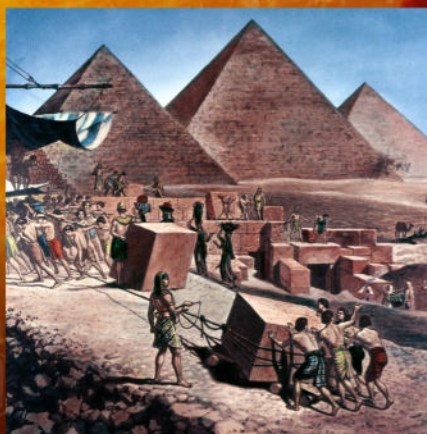




"PLINY THE ELDER
DESCRIBED THEM AS
'IDLE AND FRIVOLOUS
PIECES OF OSTENTATION'"

RIGHT How these great pyramids were built still remains a topic of debate - in this depiction, slaves use ramps to transport large stones

BELOW The Step Pyramid of Djoser developed from earlier mastaba tombs and is essentially six mastabas piled on top of each other to create a pyramid



PURPOSE OF THE PYRAMIDS

The pyramids of Egypt were so massive and so unlike any other human constructions that for thousands of years they have attracted legends about their origins and use. The Great Pyramid of Giza was the tallest building in the world for nearly 4,000 years. When most people would only have seen buildings of one or two stories in height, it boggled the mind that such objects could have been made at all. The ancient author Diodorus Siculus commented that "they do not have the appearance of being the slow handiwork of men but look like a sudden creation, as though they had been made by some god and set down bodily in the surrounding sand."

Not everyone was impressed by the pyramids. Pliny the Elder described them as "idle and frivolous pieces of ostentation" built for the pharaohs. He wrote, "Indeed, it is asserted by most persons, that the only motive for constructing them, was either a determination not to leave their treasures to their successors or to rivals that might be plotting to supplant them, or to

prevent the lower classes from remaining unoccupied." Archaeological studies and a better understanding of Egyptian culture has allowed us to pierce deeper into the mysteries of the pyramids.

It is impossible to discuss ancient Egypt without talking about religion, because their whole world was tied to the divine. The pharaohs were considered to be emissaries who stood between the common run of man and the gods. So long as the Pharaoh performed the proper religious duties, then the commonwealth would be preserved - and their role did not end with their death.

For ancient Egyptians the idea of their soul surviving in the afterlife was all important, and to guarantee it many rites and rituals needed to be performed and their physical bodies preserved. Religious belief evolved over the thousands of years of Egyptian civilisation, but generally it was thought that after death two parts of the soul, known as the *ba* and *ka*, had to be reunited to form a spiritual being called an *akh* deemed worthy to live with the gods.

Mummification was just the first step on the path to immortality and a suitable resting place was needed to house it. For the pharaohs though a pyramid was not



When memory of the pharaohs failed, legendary tales arose

What were the pyramids for? In the ancient world most sources agree that they were the resting places of pharaohs, as do most archaeologists, but many stories and legends have attached themselves to these fascinating monuments throughout history.

In the medieval period, an Arabic tale developed that said the pyramids of Giza had been built by a certain King Saurid before the great flood. Following a dream that seemed to prophesy the end of the world, Saurid ordered the pyramids to be constructed as both a tomb and

ANCIENT

just a tomb, it was also the centre of a mortuary complex that housed temples where priests would pray for their souls in perpetuity. Today many of these temple complexes have disappeared, which gives the appearance of pyramids standing in splendid isolation.

It is to the interior of pyramids that we must look to discover the intentions of their builders. From the pyramids of the 5th dynasty (c.2500 BCE) come a series of inscriptions known as the Pyramid Texts, which describe how the dead pharaoh should be treated and also offer instructions to the spirit of the departed on how to overcome the challenges facing Egyptians in the hereafter.

Each soul had to traverse the underworld and its many dangers before being granted everlasting life. There were a number of judgments to be passed for which one had to know the correct responses, and these were carved onto the chamber walls of some pyramids as an *aide-mémoire* for the dead. The Pyramid of Unas has texts informing the dead pharaoh how to secure the blessing of the gods. "Re and Thoth, take me with you, that I may eat of what you eat, that I may drink of what you drink, that I may live on what you live on, that I may sit on what you sit on, that I may be strong through ►



a store of human knowledge. This medieval tale placed the origins of these great structures in the context of religious beliefs of the time.

Christians of the Middle Ages believed the pyramids were built by Joseph. The Book of Genesis recounts how Joseph interpreted one of Pharaoh's dreams to mean that a long famine was coming after a period of bounty, and so created storehouses to gather supplies of grain to feed people when the time came. The pyramids, it was claimed, were these storehouses. A 13th-century mosaic in Venice shows grain being carried into the pyramids. Nor has this belief entirely died out. The Republican presidential candidate Dr Ben Carson repeated this claim in 2015.

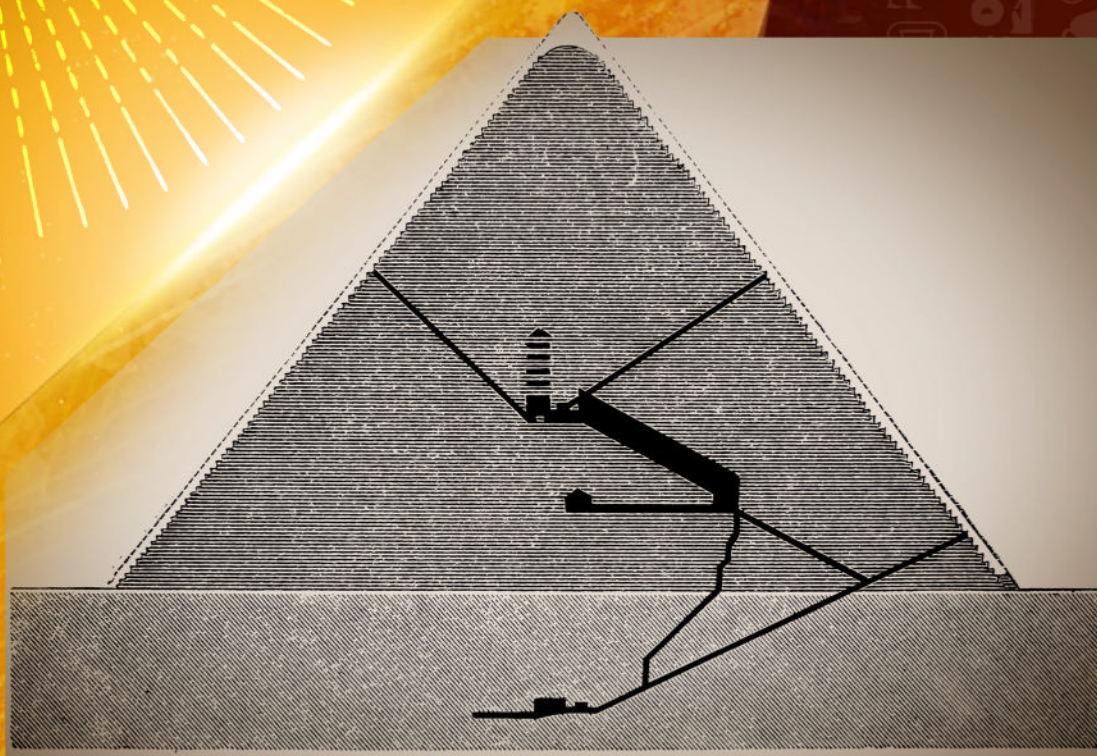


TOP Visitors can enter the Red Pyramid, believed to have been built as a burial place for Pharaoh Sneferu

ABOVE Construction of the pyramids may have required the labour and support of over 20,000 people

LEFT Mud brick and limestone were two important materials used in the building of the pyramids

LEGENDS



that whereby you are strong, that I may sail in that in which you sail." The god Re was said to sail across the heavens in a solar ship known as the Boat of Millions of Years, and several full-size boats have been found buried beside pyramids, suggesting these boats were meant for the pharaoh to join the gods.

Pyramids were tombs on an incredible scale, yet do not appear to have been furnished in unimaginable splendour, as exemplified by the treasures of Tutankhamun's burial chamber. A few pieces of jewellery have been recovered from the smaller pyramids set up for queens, but nothing like the obscenely large amounts of gold most people might expect. The pyramid itself was the show of wealth meant to guarantee a prosperous afterlife rather than objects buried inside them.

But of course these fascinating pyramids did not spring from the sands of Egypt by accident - how did pyramid builders stumble their way towards these lasting monuments.

EVOLUTION OF THE PYRAMID

The 'Ancient Egyptian' civilisation is a label we use to describe a period of over 3,000 years, but by doing so we risk thinking of ancient Egypt as an unchanging society. In fact, there were many developments in how Egypt was governed, how its people worshipped, and the art created across this period. The development of pyramids, dozens of



TOP Inside the Pyramid of Khufu - the entrance is bottom-right, with the King's Chamber in the middle

ABOVE *Passage From The Second To The Third Gallery In The Great Pyramid*, 1802

which dot the Egyptian landscape, helps us delve into the history of their builders.

Because it is the largest and most easily visited of all the Egyptian pyramids, most people focus on the Great Pyramid of Giza. This can lead to the notion that all pyramids are the same, just in different sizes. Archaeologists however have found that the path to building the Great Pyramid was littered with both failures and inspired innovations.

The oldest known pyramid looks completely different to the smooth-sided pyramids most people picture. This is because they evolved from an earlier style of grand tomb known as a *mastaba*. The mastaba was a rectangular construction with sloping walls made from stone or mud brick, often with a chapel for devotion to the dead inside the structure with a burial chamber beneath. For the pharaoh Djoser, who ruled in the 27th century BCE as the founder of the 3rd dynasty, the royal architect Imhotep is credited with creating a radical new design for a tomb.

The pyramid of Djoser at Saqqara is better known as the Step Pyramid because it is halfway between a mastaba and a true pyramid. Djoser's pyramid seems to have gone through several stages of development, resulting in what are essentially six mastabas of decreasing size stacked on top of each other to create



Fanciful theories have emerged on the pyramids' construction

The vast scale of the Egyptian pyramids has led some to question how they could possibly have been created in the Bronze Age. The conclusions reached tend not to be looked on kindly by academic researchers.

One of the most famous theories about the pyramids is that they must have been made by either a lost advanced civilisation, or by alien visitors from the stars. The fact that pyramid structures exist in many far distant places and produced by many cultures is presented as evidence that they must have all come from a single source, whether

ALIENS &

a roughly pyramidal shape. Once this form of tomb - which looms 60m into the sky and was once clad in smooth white limestone - was invented, later pharaohs required similarly impressive structures for their mortal remains.

Djoser's successor Sekhemkhet apparently decided he wanted an even taller monument, and building was started on a stepped pyramid that would have had seven steps nearby. Unfortunately for this pharaoh his brief reign did not give time for it to be completed, and the single story of the pyramid was lost until the 1950s, leading to it being known as the Buried Pyramid. It was only under the pharaoh Sneferu, around 2600 BCE, that pyramids began to take the shape we are familiar with today.

Sneferu was apparently so enamoured with the idea of being buried in a pyramid that he ordered the construction of at least three while attempting to perfect his tomb. The three pyramids of Sneferu give us the best insights into how pyramids evolved through repeated failure.

The Meidum Pyramid today looks nothing like a pyramid. It now stands like a tall tower surrounded by rubble, but it was the first straight-sided pyramid. Failure is the risk of trying something new and Meidum was a failed project. It started as a stepped pyramid but had a smooth facing added late in construction. Unfortunately, the smooth surface layer was built outwards and rested on sand rather ▶

"ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPLORATION IS REVEALING MORE ABOUT THE WORKERS, HOW THEY LIVED AND DIED, AND HOW THE PYRAMIDS WERE RAISED"



extraterrestrial or a globe-spanning Atlantean empire. It does beg the question why each culture decided to employ wildly different techniques in building pyramids when they apparently had access to unspecified advanced technology.

Other researchers have suggested that the Egyptian pyramids were never meant to be used as tombs. New Age thinkers have claimed that the pyramidal shape somehow harnesses energies. In the 20th century some claimed that food kept in a scale model of a pyramid would not rot. In the 1940s a patent was applied for on the Cheops Razor Blade Sharpener, which its inventor said harnessed pyramid power to keep razors sharper for longer.

ATLANTIS



ABOVE The pyramids of Giza were recognised in ancient times as being one of the wonders of the world, and they still receive millions of visitors each year

LEFT Many early pyramids were undecorated on the inside, but after around the 24th century BCE they had engraved copies of the pyramid texts designed to aid the soul of the dead



"THE BURIAL CHAMBERS ARE MOSTLY EMPTY TODAY, THEIR STONE SARCOPHAGI HOLDING NOTHING MORE THAN DUST"



than rock. It seems rain undermined the building and led to the outer layers catastrophically sliding off.

Sneferu's next pyramid is known as the Bent Pyramid and may have its distinctive crooked appearance because of lessons learned in building the Meidum Pyramid. The bottom half of the pyramid rises at an angle of 54 degrees but suddenly changes to a shallower angle of 43 degrees. It is thought that following the collapse of the Meidum Pyramid the builders realised that such steep sides would lead to structural weakness. The final pyramid constructed by Sneferu is the Red Pyramid, which has the 43-degree sides developed during the building of the Bent Pyramid. This is the first successful straight-sided pyramid built in Egypt and became the model for all later pyramids.



It was under Sneferu's son Khufu that the pyramids of Egypt reached their greatest heights when he ordered the construction of the Great Pyramid at Giza as his final resting place.

BUILDERS & BURIALS

It is a mistake to examine the pyramids and think only of the royals they were intended to honour. Such colossal undertakings involved the physical labour of a great many people. The Greek writer Herodotus claimed that the road along which the blocks for the Great Pyramid were dragged took teams of 100,000 men ten years to construct. His figure may be fancifully large, as it would be impossible to have so many people working at the same time on the site of the pyramid, but no doubt thousands of workers were required at every stage of erecting the pyramids.

Ancient commentators believed that the pyramids were built with slave labour, but archaeological exploration

ABOVE The Meidum Pyramid was a first attempt to create a smooth-sided pyramid, but during construction the outer layers collapsed, leaving just the core standing

BELOW LEFT An 1802 illustration by Thomas Milton depicting a subterranean chamber near the Giza pyramids

BOTTOM RIGHT Venturing inside the narrow, scarcely lit Grand Gallery inside the Pyramid of Khufu

is revealing more about the workers, how they lived and died, and how the pyramids were raised. While the pharaoh, with his god-like powers, could order his people to do anything, the workers on the pyramids were free, well-fed, and housed at government expense. Specially constructed villages where workers were housed have been excavated, along with a wealth of papyri texts and personal effects of the people who lived there.



BURIED LIKE

If you have to die, why not be buried in style... inside a pyramid?

Egypt was a popular tourist destination for Romans in the late Republic and early Empire, so it is perhaps understandable that some wished to recreate some of the sites they visited. For Gaius Cestius this took the form of building a pyramid to house his tomb. Rather smaller than the Egyptian type, and with the steep side of a Nubian pyramid, it still stands in Rome today. It survived in part because when walls were constructed for the city, the pyramid of Cestius was incorporated into the structure.





LEFT The King's Chamber in the Great Pyramid once housed the remains of the pharaoh Khufu, but today his sarcophagus stands empty

BELOW LEFT The pyramids were originally clad in white limestone that was mined at special locations. This limestone has mostly been removed to be used elsewhere

To build a pyramid you must first gather your workforce. Modern estimates for the number of people required to build the Great Pyramid differ, but there was likely a core of skilled masons and quarry workers of around 4,000. These could build a pyramid over a period of around 20 years, but these builders would require the support of about 20,000 people to haul the blocks of stone, prepare all of the equipment



needed, and provide food for the workers. This was a significant number of workers when the population of Egypt was probably 2-3 million. There were also numerous administrators and architects required to keep the project on schedule.

The population of Egypt was largely agrarian in this period, but thanks to the nature of the Nile much of this population was unable to work for months at a time. The annual inundation of the Nile was necessary for farming as it spread fertile soil onto fields, but while the river was high it was impossible to work on the land. These unemployed workers could then be put to work on royal projects, such as the pyramids, as a duty owed to the pharaoh. Since the pharaoh was semi-divine, workers may also have considered working on their tombs a religious act meant to ensure the continued prosperity of Egypt.

To begin building a pyramid you must first clear the location. After the disastrous subsistence on the pyramid at Meidum, builders were careful to build directly on bedrock. This had to be mapped out and levelled. This seems to have been achieved by cutting out a grid of channels over the area and filling them with water. The rock could then be removed down to the level of the water to ensure the land was flat.

Next the central core of the pyramid had to be constructed. For the Great Pyramid of Giza the main structure is made from around 2.3 million blocks of limestone weighing several tonnes each. Once these were in place a white cladding of polished white limestone was added.

We know much about how this special white stone was mined and transported ▶



The British were not immune to the charms of a pyramid. The eccentric John 'Mad Jack' Fuller had a pyramid tomb constructed for himself in 1811. Local legend said that he was entombed seated at a dinner table with a final meal set in front of him.

An astonishing plan was hatched by Thomas Willson in the 1820s to find space for London's dead, who were threatening to overwhelm all available burial space. His idea was to build a pyramid, to be called the Metropolitan Sepulchre, which would have contained space for 5 million corpses. The cost of such a construction made it impossible to build and instead the Victorians simply designated new cemeteries on the outskirts of London.

THE PHARAOHS



to the site of the pyramids thanks to the remarkable discovery of the oldest written papyrus. Known as the Diary of Merer, it records the schedule of a works overseer called Merer how white limestone was mined and transported by boat along the Nile to the Great Pyramid at Giza. From this discovery we know that Merer commanded a workforce of around 40 boatmen who ferried around 200 blocks per month from the mines to the pyramids. Recent research has revealed that 31 of the pyramids border on a branch of the Nile that has since dried up, suggesting the blocks were carried very close to the construction site by water.

We can also glimpse the lives of those who moved the stones for the pyramids thanks to the graffiti they left in hard-to-reach places. From this we know that the work gangs who built the pyramid gave themselves names such as "Friends of Khufu" or "Drunkards of Menkaure".

A capstone, called a pyramidion, was placed on the summit. Sometimes this stone was covered in gold, silver, or copper to make it flash with reflective sunlight. The pyramidion had special significance as it was related to the Benben stone mentioned in Egyptian religion. Accounts say that the Benben stone was the first land to rise above the primordial waters. Examples have also been found above the tombs of private individuals, suggesting everyone wanted to be associated with the Benben stone - those of the pharaohs were simply more extravagant than most.

All of this stonework, as well as the quarrying of stone blocks, was undertaken with simple tools made of stone, wood, and copper. Manpower and



TOP Pyramids were once capped with a highly decorated stone, called a pyramidion, associated with the religiously significant Benben stone

ABOVE Venture into the centre of the Great Pyramid and you'll find Pharaoh Khufu's (empty) sarcophagus

patience were needed to construct the pyramids, and that is about all that can be said of their building. People from antiquity were just as unsure about how they were made as researchers are today. How were the blocks of the pyramid carried to the top?

Without cranes the pyramid builders could not have lifted stones from one layer to the next directly. Most likely, large ramps were constructed so that the blocks could be dragged on sleds, but even the form of these is debated. Was there a single long ramp projecting outwards from the pyramid, or one that clung to the side of the pyramid in a spiral? There have even been suggestions that internal ramps were built into the structure of the pyramid. The ancient writer Diodorus Siculus was told that the ramps were made of salt and once construction was complete the river was diverted to dissolve them away. Diodorus did not believe this.

However it worked, it must have been efficient. For the Great Pyramid to have been built in 20 years, a block would have to be put in place every five minutes if teams were working around the clock. Yet there is a secret to pyramid construction that makes them easier to build as they get taller, which springs from their geometrical form. Because pyramids taper towards the top, each level requires far fewer blocks than the one below it. When a pyramid has reached a third of its total height, two thirds of the total number of blocks have been laid. When it is half its total height, then almost 90% of the blocks are in place.





"THE PYRAMIDS
HAD BEEN BUILT AS
THE ETERNAL RESTING
PLACES OF THE PHARAOHS.
IN THIS THEY FAILED"

FALL OF THE PYRAMIDS

The pyramids had been built as the eternal resting places of the pharaohs. In this they failed. The pyramids were all plundered in antiquity and all the sarcophagi that once housed the mummies of the pharaohs in them are empty. The massive structures of the pyramids presented a far too tempting target for grave robbers who were well aware of the treasures that must have rested inside.

The burial chambers within pyramids are mostly empty today, their stone sarcophagi holding nothing more than dust. What human remains have been discovered often date from much later or

ABOVE Shawabti figurines were funerary objects placed inside Egyptian tombs

BELOW The Bent Pyramid shows two clear phases of construction. The shallower upper layers may have been designed in response to the failure of the Meidum Pyramid

BOTTOM RIGHT Hieroglyphic texts can be found inscribed on the walls of ancient Egyptian burial chambers from the time of the 5th Dynasty

consist of tiny fragments of bone. Robbers knew that golden amulets lay within the wrappings of a pharaoh's mummy and tore into the bodies to retrieve them. Later monarchs chose to be buried in more discrete underground tombs to try and avoid this postmortem plundering.

While the pyramids were created as sites of sacred importance, the passing of time meant locals no longer held them in such awe. All of that gleaming white limestone proved too valuable to waste on old tombs. It was stripped off and reused in other constructions, leaving only a few scattered remnants to hint at how glorious the pyramids once looked.

The golden age of pyramid building came to an end in the 16th century BCE. The Pyramid of Ahmose is little more than a mound of rough rocks today and shows none of the elegant design

and intense labour of the Great Pyramid built nearly a thousand years earlier.

Indeed it was constructed by piling up a heap of rubble and covering it with an external layer of limestone. When this was removed later to be used in other buildings, the pyramid simply fell apart. It seems that pyramids were a luxury that Egypt could no longer afford to indulge.

Even the ruins of pyramids like this can tell us much about the real history of ancient Egypt, revealing the level of manpower and resources a pharaoh could command. And the pyramids have many more secrets to uncover. In 2023 scientists used muons, particles created by cosmic rays striking the atmosphere, to discover a large chamber deep within the Great Pyramid. The pyramids may be old, but they always have something new to discover. ☉



10 MORAL PANICS

TERRIBLE

Recurring throughout time, these witch hunts have resulted in discrimination, unfair arrests and even death...

Written by Callum McKelvie



In 1972, Stanley Cohen published his monumental work *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*. The book is widely credited for defining the latter term, but just what is a 'moral panic'? Well, chances are you will have lived through several, and may have even unknowingly participated in one. Moral panics are cases of widespread anxiety towards a particular group (be it defined by race, sexuality, gender or religion), art form or attitude.

When examining this unique social phenomenon, we can see links between the various examples. There may be some basis for concern, but during moral panics, facts are often distorted and sometimes wholly made up. Frequently, children or young people are claimed to be in either physical danger or under threat of corruption. Finally, examples from the 19th century onward tend to involve a large element of media coverage, propagating the hysteria. But although the term was not fully formulated until 1972, this does not mean that there are not devastating examples of moral panics stretching back through time. From the witch hunts of early-modern Europe to the Video Nasties scare of the 1980s, here are ten of the most troubling moral panics...

THE VIDEO NASTIES

How Britain's fear of gory **BRITAIN 1980s** horror movies got out of hand

The 1980s witnessed the birth of the home video market as movies on VHS became more widely available. In Britain, this new medium was initially not required to be rated by the BBFC in the same way that films released in cinemas would be. The market quickly became flooded with uncut gory horror films, among their number *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978), *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979) and *The Evil Dead* (1981).

Social activist Mary Whitehouse, who had been campaigning since 1964 against what she perceived as the British media's lack of morals, quickly took umbrage with such releases, becoming concerned that young children might be exposed to these "Video Nasties". The argument was incredibly one-sided, and as the BFI states, "seldom did the debate shift to encompass the rights of adults to read, watch or make stories unsuitable for the young."

A key ally for Whitehouse was Conservative MP Sir Graham Bright, who famously stated, "I believe there is research taking place and it will show that these films not only affect young people but I believe they affect dogs as well." The 1959 Obscene Publications Act was used to target films that were deemed to be among the worst offenders while Bright worked to introduce



the Video Recordings Act (1984). A list of 72 films was released, whose distribution could result in prosecution, and another list of 82 films were made of titles that could be seized.

As a result, individuals did indeed face prosecution. Famously, David Hamilton-Grant was sentenced to 18 months in 1984 after releasing *Nightmares in a Damaged Brain* (1981) with 50 seconds more than the cut permitted by the BBFC. However, in 2009 it was revealed that the Video Recordings Act had never been officially enacted by the European Commission and technically could not be enforced.

ABOVE Cinema release posters for two of the most infamous Video Nasties, *I spit on Your Grave* (1978) and *Zombie Flesh Eaters* (1979)

THE RED SCARE & THE HOLLYWOOD BLACKLIST

USA 1950s
The nationwide witch hunt for communist infiltrators sparked by Senator Joseph McCarthy

By the late 1940s the Cold War was in full swing. The USA was suspiciously eyeing the USSR and concern grew about communist infiltrators. In 1950 Senator Joseph McCarthy began to proliferate this fear, claiming some 200 Soviet agents had occupied positions within the US government. Between 1950 and 1954, McCarthy and the House of Un-American Activities Committee (a group formed in 1938) ruthlessly hunted down any suspected communists.

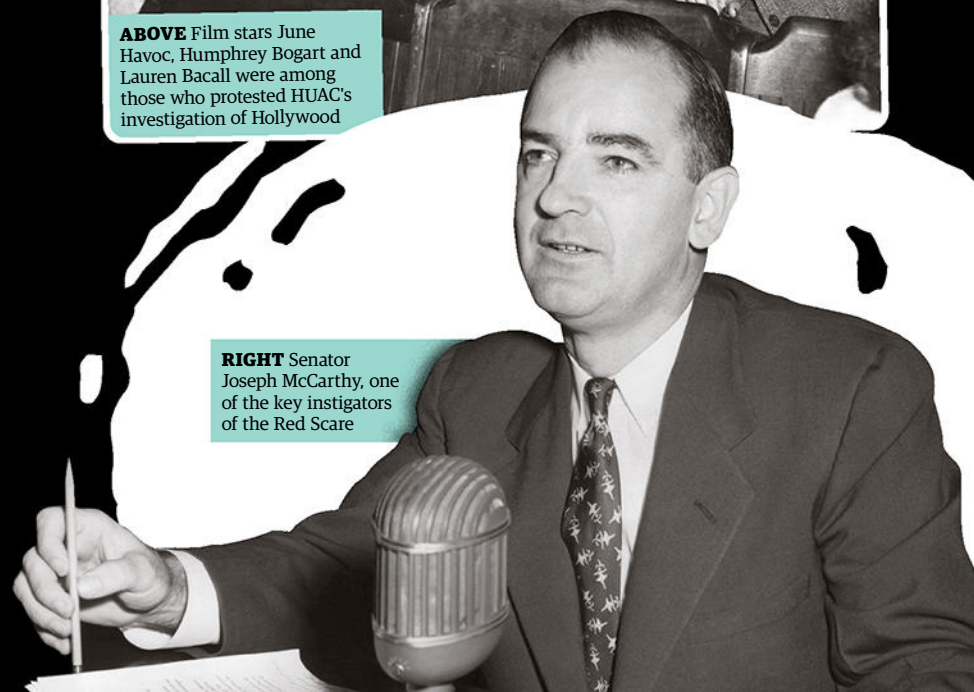
However, HUAC was not confined solely to dealing with infiltrators within the US government and other institutions were targeted too. Perhaps most famously they began to direct their suspicions towards Hollywood.

As paranoia spread throughout the film industry, a 'blacklist' was created out of all those who were named during the HUAC hearings. Those who were accused were forced to confess and name others, or face prosecution. Ten individuals refused to testify, among them screenwriter Dalton Trumbo and director Edward Dmytryk, and as a result, served time in jail.

Anyone whose name appeared on the blacklist would find themselves denied work. Some fled abroad, such as Joseph Losey who was able to build a career in Britain, going on to direct classics such as *The Servant* (1963) and *The Go-Between* (1971). By the 1960s Hollywood began to ignore the blacklist and the Red Scare finally began to wane. ▶



ABOVE Film stars June Havoc, Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall were among those who protested HUAC's investigation of Hollywood



RIGHT Senator Joseph McCarthy, one of the key instigators of the Red Scare

LONDON GARROTTING PANIC

BRITAIN 1856 & 1862

Victorian London was in the grip of a malevolent criminal class who violently robbed respectable citizens - or was it?



ABOVE A contemporary cartoon showing a gentleman being assaulted by a pair of garrotters

Upper-class ladies and gentlemen in 19th-century London had to be on their guard. For the streets at night were populated by 'garrotters', members of a 'criminal class' who would grab their victim around the neck with their arm while an accomplice would then relieve them of their valuables. But did such a 'criminal class' even exist?

There were two distinct 'Garrotting Panics', the first occurring in 1856. The origins of this panic appear to have been changes to the British penal system, including the ending of the transportation of prisoners to Australia and the so-called 'Ticket of Leave Men'. The latter referred to a new arrangement by which prisoners were granted freedom despite only having served part of their sentence. The second panic occurred in 1862 and, according to the BBC, seems to have been caused by the mugging of Hugh Pilkington, a prominent MP.

However, the extent of the danger seems to have been wildly exaggerated and the press of the time greatly assisted in spreading the fear far more than it deserved. R Sindall in his 1987 paper on the topic notes that figures reporting on the level of criminal activity at the time are notoriously poor and cannot be fully trusted, but even then there is little evidence of an increase in 'garrotting'.

Despite the distinct lack of crimes, the government leapt into action, introducing the 1863 Garrotters Act that dictated that any perpetrators found guilty of such assaults would find themselves flogged.



ABOVE The ducking stool was used to interrogate suspected witches

WITCH HUNTS

EUROPE & USA c.1400 - c.1700

For roughly 300 years innocent people were tried and even executed for practising black magic

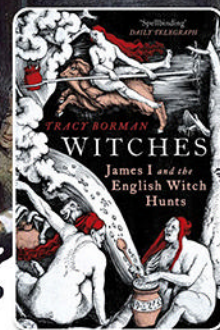
For several centuries, Europe found itself gripped by the terror of witches in its midst. In 1486 the inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger published the *Malleus Maleficarum*, also known as "The Hammer of Witches". The book served as a manual for would-be witch hunters, sparking a craze by stating that the practising of witchcraft should be seen as a heretical crime.

For roughly the next 300 years, some 30-40,000 people were executed for supposedly practising black magic. England's King James took a personal interest in the hunting of witches, blaming them for a particularly bad storm that claimed a ship in his fleet. He even wrote the *Daemonologie*, a treatise explaining his ideas on the subject.

Perhaps most famously, the witch craze spread to the New World, where the small town of Salem became the epicentre of a panic that resulted in the executions of 20 men and women. The *Smithsonian Magazine* even claims that two dogs were slaughtered as they were "believed to be linked to the devil."

"The witch hunts that swept across Europe from the mid-14th century gripped tens of thousands of people with fear, suspicion and panic for 300 years or more," renowned historian Tracy Borman told *All About History*. "It was called a 'craze' for good reason: it was as if those involved had lost their minds, so intent were they upon ridding the earth of these 'slaves of the devil', as they saw them."

BELOW A depiction of the trial of Elizabeth Johnson, one of the supposed 'Salem Witches'



Tracy Borman's book *Witches* is out now from Vintage priced £12.99. Her historical fiction trilogy *The King's Witch* also explores Britain's witch-hunting past.



ABOVE Therapist Lawrence Pazder and patient Michelle Smith, whose book *Michelle Remembers* sparked the Satanic Panic

BELOW The tabletop game *Dungeons & Dragons* was also accused of proliferating satanic ideas

THE SATANIC PANIC

USA 1980s

Stories of satanic ritual abuse terrified a nation, but as always the devil was in the detail

In 1980, Canadian therapist Lawrence Pazder and his patient Michelle Smith released their book *Michelle Remembers*. The book told how Smith, as a child, had been subjected to a prolonged period of abuse at the hands of a group of devil-worshippers. The disturbing book was a bestseller, with a horrified nation rushing to read the harrowing story for themselves.

The prior decade had seen widespread interest in all things occult. Kier-La Janisse states in her introduction to the edited collection *Satanic Panic* that "there was a marked social curiosity and acceptance of occultism, even among the most square pop-cultural day-trippers." Now, that interest began to turn sour.

Others came forward and soon thousands were being accused of satanic ritual-based abuse. A 1994 *New York Times* article quotes the National Center on Child Abuse and Neglect as stating there were nearly 12,000 claims, but none that could be substantiated.

Quickly, the hysteria got out of hand. The famous manufacturing company Procter & Gamble were forced to deny that they were using profits to fund satanic rituals, due to suspicions that their logo was actually an occult symbol. By the end of the decade, even the popular roleplaying game *Dungeons & Dragons* was being accused of proliferating satanic ideas among the youth.

In the decades since the panic has faded, many of the claims in *Michelle Remembers* have been debunked. But as Alexandra Heller-Nicholas states in her paper on the topic: "Satanists did not torture Smith but that does not mean that something terrible - albeit less supernatural - did not happen to her."

THE JAZZ PANIC

Did the smooth tones of jazz and upbeat dances such as the Charleston morally corrupt the young? USA & BRITAIN 1920s

While the 'roaring twenties' is fondly seen as a period of vibrant decadence and youthful exuberance, at the time certain moral groups feared for the damaging effects upon the young. At the centre of this was a recently emerged new style of music: jazz.

One important element of the jazz panic was the music's origins in African-American culture. Lynne Seago wrote that "traditionalists thought jazz was barbaric, whether or not it actually had roots in Africa, and believed that jazz's 'heathen' roots would influence Americans."

It was not just the music that was targeted either, and moral campaigners also took umbrage to new developments in dancing. Seen as particularly

inflammatory was the Charleston, a dance that originated in James P Johnson's 1923 musical *Runnin' Wild*. In 1922, The Morality League denounced the "cherry pickers, tack-hammers, cheek-pressers, hip-swingers and lemon rollers of the fierce dance invaders" before demanding some form of "anti-vulgar dance ordinance."

The moral panic surrounding jazz is just one of a number concerning musical developments including rock 'n' roll in the 1950s, heavy metal in the 1980s and 'gangsta rap' in the 1990s. ▶

LEFT The Charleston dance in particular was targeted by those fearful of jazz

RIGHT During the 1920s jazz was perceived as immoral and there were fears regarding its 'corrupting influence'





ABOVE California senator Leland Yee, who campaigned against violent video games. Yee was later sentenced for charges that included gun running

VIDEO GAME PANIC

As their popularity grew, video games **USA & UK 1999 -** were soon claimed to incite violence

Video games are no strangers to controversy, with the National Coalition Against Censorship stating that the first game to cause a public outcry was *Death Race* in 1976. The game was removed from sale due to distress surrounding the screams and gravestones that appeared after the hero ran over 'gremlins'.

However, it was the 1999 Columbine massacre that resulted in a panic that saw games linked to youth violence. Over the subsequent years the *Grand Theft Auto* series would become a particular target, with the game's depiction of street crime frequently cited as having resulted in real-life attacks.

As controversy grew, numerous laws were enacted to attempt to limit the sale of video games, though many failed to pass and those enacted at state level were eventually revoked.

In 2022, a study conducted by researchers from Stanford Brainstorm Lab found that no



ABOVE A 2005 protest against the release of *Bully*, a game released by Rockstar Games, who were the target of much controversy

discernible link could be discovered between video games and violence. Furthermore, the researchers claimed that "with the spread of collaborations between the gaming industry and clinicians, video games might even be part of the solution." Studies continue to be conducted as to the cognitive and developmental influence of gaming.

HORROR COMICS

As nations sought a cause for rising cases of juvenile delinquency, popular comic books soon became an obvious target

USA & UK c.1950s

Crime Patrol, *The Vault of Horror*, *Tales from the Crypt* - all titles of popular 1950s American comic books. However, the content depicted in these 'crime' or 'horror' comics disturbed conservative groups and it was not long before they were seen as the cause of what was then a rising problem - juvenile delinquency.

1954 saw the release of *Seduction of the Innocent*, a book by psychiatrist Fredric Wertham that claimed that immoral or illegal content depicted in comics led children to act out the same behaviour - despite the fact that the criminals and villains featured in the stories often met a sticky end. Bizarrely, despite comics now being used to encourage children to read, Wertham also claimed that they could lead to illiteracy.

The result of this scaremongering was that the Comics Magazine Association of America felt compelled to create the 'Comics Code Authority'. This organisation enforced rules regarding content, among them the prohibiting of the use of the words "horror" or "terror" in a comics title and the "excessive use" of slang words. If a publisher did not obey, then they would not receive the comic codes stamp and shops would likely refuse to sell their books. It took until the early 2000s for the code to be fully abandoned. The panic spread to Britain too, where laws restricting horror comics were introduced.

Now, the panic surrounding these titles has all but been forgotten. Indeed, one of the comics often cited for its gruesome stories was *Tales from the Crypt*, which has since been the subject of a 1972 film and a popular TV series that itself had multiple spin-offs, including feature films, a game show, a radio series and (ironically) a children's cartoon.

BELOW Women from the Women's Auxiliary American Legion collect comic books from children to be burnt

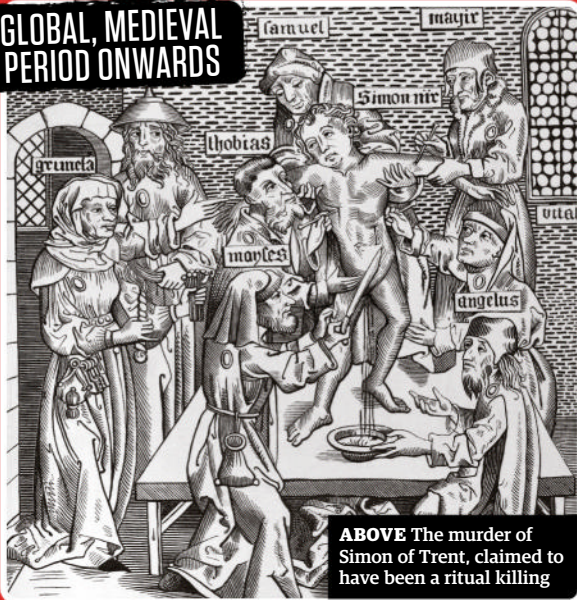


ABOVE The cover of a British horror comic from 1952. In 1955 parliament passed an act banning horror comics

BLOOD LIBEL

An antisemitic myth of Jewish blood rituals hate groups still use

GLOBAL, MEDIEVAL PERIOD ONWARDS



ABOVE The murder of Simon of Trent, claimed to have been a ritual killing

During the medieval period antisemitic beliefs led to the proliferation of the 'Blood Libel' myth. This fiction purported that Jewish people would kidnap young Christian children and sacrifice them, using their blood to bake Matzah (also spelled matzoh or matzo). While this form of unleavened bread is important to the Passover festival, no recipe for it requires blood to make.

Across Europe there were numerous examples of Jewish people being tried for the murder of young children for this purpose, despite the fact that, as the Holocaust Encyclopedia states, both murder and the ingesting of blood go against Jewish teachings.

Unfortunately, 'Blood Libel' is a racist fiction that refuses to fade. In 1903 the Kishinev Pogrom started after a boy was killed and newspapers blamed Jews. In 1911, in modern Kyiv (then Russian Empire), Mendel Beilis served two years after he was accused of killing a 12-year-old boy as part of a ritual. Later, Adolf Hitler's Nazi Party would use Blood Libel in their antisemitic propaganda.

In the second edition of their work on moral panics, published in 2009, Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda state: "In the past decade or two, Jews in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Siberia, Belarus and Ukraine have been accused of kidnapping Muslim or Christian children and using their blood to prepare Passover matzoh."



LEFT A Nazi propaganda newspaper detailing supposed blood rituals



LEFT Protestors at the 1987 Chicago pride campaign against mandatory testing of particular groups, a motion proposed by the White House

THE AIDS CRISIS

GLOBAL, 1980s ONWARDS



ABOVE In the UK, Princess Diana was instrumental in shifting attitudes towards AIDS, including shaking hands and hugging AIDS patients

Stigma surrounding HIV/AIDS patients has led to myths and misconceptions that continue to cause harm

One of the most destructive and devastating moral panics of the 20th century, the ripples of which can still be felt, is the furore that occurred surrounding the AIDS epidemic. In the early 1980s, the medical profession in the United States became concerned after deadly diseases, usually contracted in cases of immune suppression, began to be noticed in otherwise healthy men.

At the time, HIV was a hitherto unknown disease and as a result many misconceptions regarding the virus began to spread. Initially it was suspected that the disease exclusively affected gay men, before a rising stigma towards people with HIV and AIDS saw them become the targets of much prejudice.

"The long destructive tail of the HIV/AIDS moral panic continues to this day," Adam Freedman, the Policy, Research and Influencing Manager at the National Aids Trust explained to us. "Government messaging on AIDS in the 1980s scaremongered to such an extent that the public became fearful of interacting with or even being near to people living with HIV or AIDS, even though HIV was and is incredibly hard to transmit."

"Much of the HIV discrimination we see today similarly stems from people not understanding how HIV is transmitted and what the risks are," Freedman explains. "Working to break these long-held fears of HIV transmission is vital to ensure people living with HIV can lead stigma- and discrimination-free lives today."

National AIDS Trust is the UK's HIV rights charity, working to stop HIV from standing in the way of health dignity and equality; and to end new HIV transmissions. Further information can be found at www.nat.org.uk

CONCLUSION

Moral panics can be an unpleasant social phenomenon, especially when genuine concern is used to justify harmful solutions or the ostracising of innocent social groups. In recent years, attempts to ban or prohibit LGBTQ+ books in the USA, furore over trans rights and even scaremongering around TikTok can all be seen as contemporary examples of moral panics. ○



MAKING A



MONSTER

Natalie Lawrence explores the creation of enchanted creatures through 15,000 years of history

Interview by Emily Staniforth

Throughout history, monsters and mythical creatures have haunted the societies and cultures that created them. From hydras to Gorgons to cyborgs, the monsters humans have imagined reflect our worst fears and our darkest nightmares, and can tell us a lot about the times in which they were constructed. Writer Natalie Lawrence explores this phenomenon of monster-making as she tours European history, searching for the anxieties and beliefs that birthed these mystical beasts in her new book *Enchanted Creatures: Our Monsters and their Meanings*. We were lucky to sit down with Natalie to discuss her research and all things monstrous.

What first inspired you to go hunting for exotic monsters from Europe's past?

I think I'd always had a fascination with outlier creatures - things like echidnas and platypuses - and I loved the idea of looking at the world through different eyes, from a time when the world seemed unimaginably large and full of wonders. The things that were being discovered in, let's say, the 16th century, when global exploration really kicked off, were from distant places and seemed totally new. I really wanted to inhabit that mindset and to explore these creatures as they were seen several hundred years ago as novel and quasi magical. There was a literal quality to the hunting as well, because I had to leaf through these big tomes with no indices or contents. So you're sifting through to try and find some iteration of a beast that may be there, and then find that it might have been turned into something new that served a different symbolic purpose. It was quite exciting.

What were the first monstrous creatures you found that were shaped by the attitudes and beliefs of a society?

I think the first ones I came across where it was so obvious that something had happened were the birds of paradise. The cultural effects were so clear to me, because they were depicted like angels. They clearly had been given very strong symbolic roles. The birds were totally new to Europeans in the 16th century, so to explain them they made them into angels. There was a physical reason for this, in that when bird of paradise skins arrived in Europe, they had been processed by tribespeople in New Guinea and then traded through Southeast Asia. But the preparation process that they underwent initially was to have their legs, wings and internal organs removed, and then the skins were smoked to preserve them. The birds often arrived in Europe with these amazing, gorgeous



ABOVE This depiction of a dodo from the 1620s shows how Europeans imagined the birds to look from the descriptions perpetuated by Dutch sailors who encountered them in Mauritius

plumes that the birds of paradise have, which looked like they were sprouting from these tiny shrivelled bodies. They looked unfamiliar because they didn't have any of the normal appendages of birds. They were something alternate. They didn't fit into the categories of animals that Aristotle had laid out, which natural history was based upon at the time. You have these incredible plumed creatures that aren't like other birds arriving from this exotic Eastern paradise, which is meant to be full of wonders and riches, and so rather than just say "well, they're just birds with their legs cut off", they become something with more meaning and value. It meant the birds, or angels, slotted somewhere higher up in the cosmic order.

Why has the idea and the fear of monsters always been prevalent throughout different societies and cultures?

We need ways of splitting things off that we don't want inside us. It's very difficult to be human and have self-awareness in societies where you have moral structures, if you have to keep everything inside. Everyone has dark parts within them somewhere, even just metaphorically, and in a society where those things are bad and you don't want to be bad, they're powerful emotions to deal with. Making monsters is a very potent mechanism for pushing those feelings into the outside world - projecting them onto another organism; another person; another entity, so they're not yours anymore. That makes us feel better.

What are the most common fears that have influenced the creation of monsters?

One is the fear of death and harm. We're terrified of our own animality; our own organic limitations.

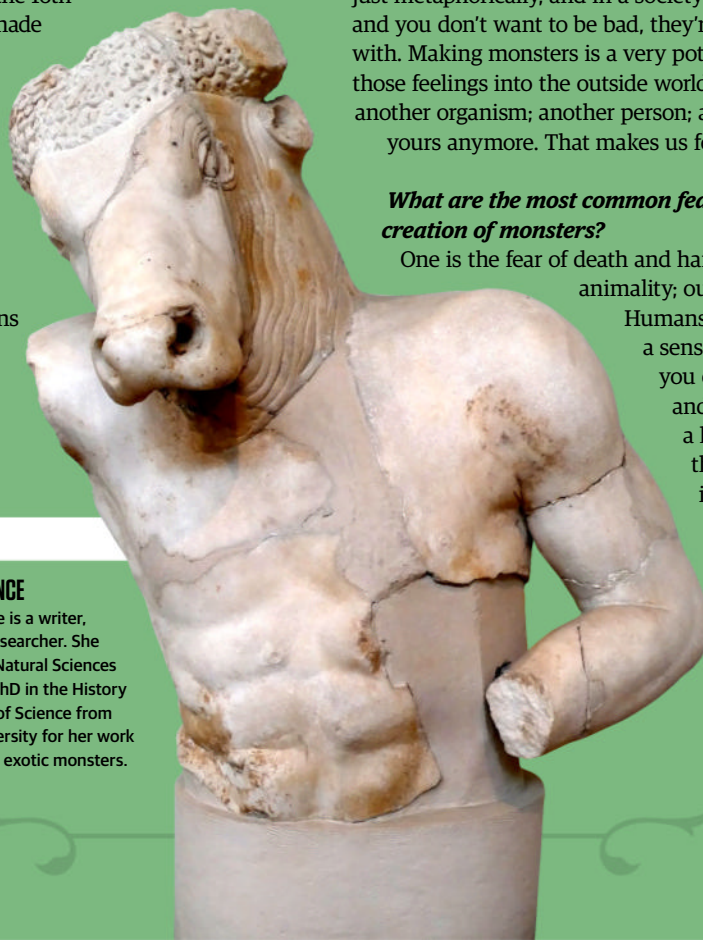
Humans have a sense of foresight and a sense of self to deal with, and if you can project into the future and see your death, that's quite a lot to take on. That's what the opening of Pandora's Box is about! The fear of being hurt or death is definitely something that has generated monsters. ►

EXPERT BIO

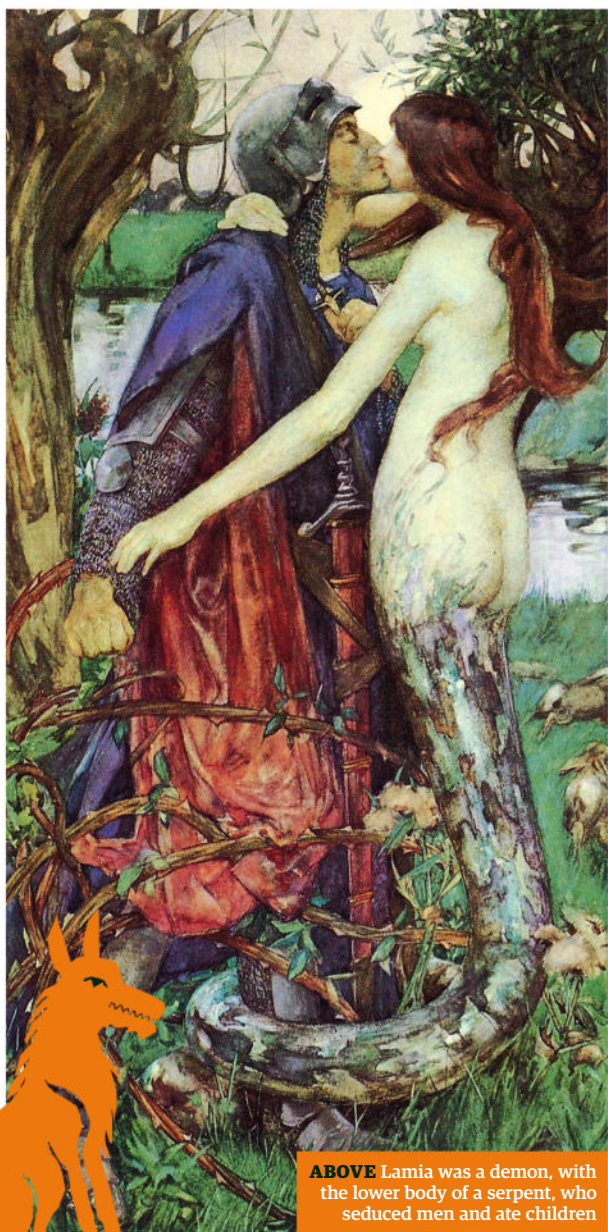


NATALIE LAWRENCE

Natalie Lawrence is a writer, illustrator and researcher. She has a degree in Natural Sciences and received a PhD in the History and Philosophy of Science from Cambridge University for her work on early modern exotic monsters.



LEFT The creation of monsters as hybrid creatures, like the Minotaur who had the head of a bull, reflected the relationship between humans and animals



ABOVE Lamia was a demon, with the lower body of a serpent, who seduced men and ate children



ABOVE Medusa, the infamous Gorgon from Greek mythology, was commonly depicted with snakes for hair and the ability to petrify those who gazed upon her face

There's also fear of the 'Other' and that is essentially what monster making is. 'Othering' is a commonly used term, and a politically very complicated one at the moment. I think there's an evolutionary basis for this, in that being able to identify individuals who are going to stick to their social contracts with you is an evolutionary advantage. It also gives you the opportunity to project out the things that you don't want in your society onto others. For example, early European depictions of natives in South America or North America portrayed them as cannibals - because that was something humans were not supposed to do, and something that it had always been imagined that 'savages' did. Foreign native people were depicted as monstrous in all sorts of ways - they had heads in their chests or they only had one foot and they did monstrous things that were inhuman. Europeans made other races into monsters as an easy way to represent the fear of difference and otherness. It also was a colonial mechanism that justified the ability to colonise.

It was viewed that if native people were monstrous, Europeans could take over and 'civilise' the land.

"MAKING MONSTERS IS A VERY POTENT MECHANISM FOR PUSHING THOSE FEELINGS INTO THE OUTSIDE WORLD"

Are there any creatures you have researched that you found particularly fascinating?

I do really like small-scale mysteries like the early modern monsters that I talk about in the book. The way you can piece those together and see how they were constructed fascinates me. I really like the ones that speak most about our relationship with nature, so I think the snake women possibly are some of my favourites. Things like Medusa and Lamia represent such fundamental things about the human



condition and are so ubiquitous. That symbolism is repeated over time and place, which tells us a lot about how our relationship with nature and our own vulnerability has changed.

The history of the dodo, a famous example of an extinct bird, was also interesting. Dutch ships trying to sail to Southeast Asia in the 16th century used Mauritius as a stopping off point and found the weirdest creatures, like these big fat birds that didn't seem to want to run away. The sailors had a great time because they could eat dodos, much better than the reserved food on board, and when they got home, they told stories about these vast birds that couldn't fly, which immediately made dodos seem slightly monstrous. Sailors also said that the meat was really greasy and it made them a bit nauseous. Ships used to stop at Mauritius regularly after that, but no dodos really came back to Europe because they were eaten before they made it. There were bits of beak and foot that arrived, and then there were these stories of this fatty meat that had

been circulated after that first voyage, so it got built up in European natural history that the dodo was this massive, obese bird that could barely walk and dragged itself along the ground. But then it died out very quickly and no one really knew what a dodo was like for a very long time. It took paleobiologists to reconstruct it recently from some actual specimens that have been found, and it turns out it was probably quite a zippy bird that was lithe and ran fairly fast.

The walrus was another strange case where there was lots of contact for sailors going hunting in the Arctic from the 16th century. Walrus ivory, blubber and skins were really valuable so sailors hunted walruses, chopped them up and brought them back. But no one brought a whole walrus back and obviously, if you're a hunter going out into the Arctic and essentially risking your life in difficult conditions to bring back these products, it probably seems like you're fighting monsters. Also, if you can make something magical, it's worth more. If you can sell walrus skins as this impossibly strong material which has come from a magical beast in the northern seas, it's going to make more money.

One of the funniest stories about the walrus from some late medieval or early Renaissance texts is that they would use their tusks like ice picks and climb up the ice, in great big herds, and just stick them in and hang and then fall asleep. Then hunters would sneak up on them, tie a rope around their tails and then spook them and the walruses would jump off into the seas leaving their skins behind. The poor skinless walruses would wash up later on the shore dead.

What would you like readers to know about your book *Enchanted Creatures*?

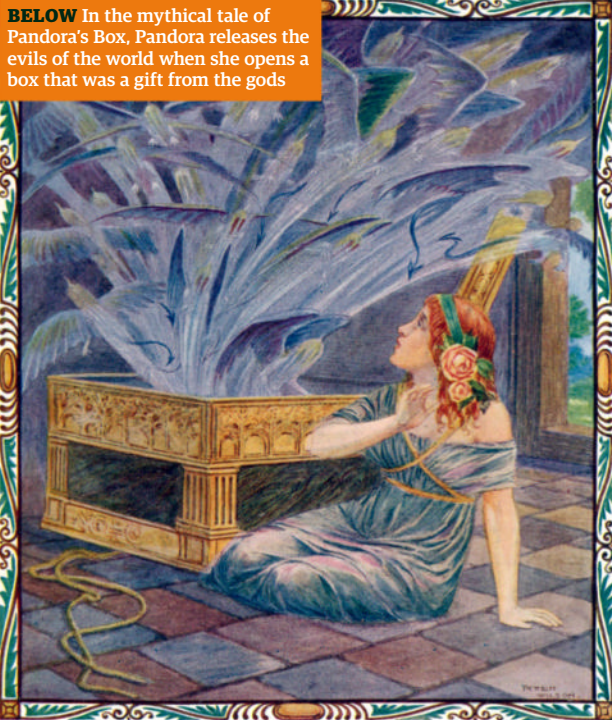
It's a history of our relationship with other animals, nature and our own animality at one level, but it's also an exploration of how we've psychologically dealt with the darker aspects of being human. I used science, history, psychology and other areas to answer these important questions, but I think there's a lot more to say as well. I've shied away from some topics, especially more politically hot potato ones, but I think it's very important to think about these things, to understand ourselves better. Though so much has changed over time, being human hasn't changed that much - monsters and their stories still speak to us so powerfully, even if we don't quite know why. The different kinds of monsters also show that there are lots of different ways of framing the world. I focused on Europe, but if you look at the way that monsters are done in other traditions, there's slight interesting differences which say a lot about the differences between, for example, Judeo-Christian perspectives and Eastern perspectives. ○

Plant 2.



BELOW Sailors who hunted walruses in the Arctic made it seem as if they were huge monstrous magical creatures

BELOW In the mythical tale of Pandora's Box, Pandora releases the evils of the world when she opens a box that was a gift from the gods



Floods, famine, pestilence. For the hard-pressed peasants of Yuan China, ruled over by the domineering descendants of the Mongol conquerors who had established themselves as overlords of the land, the series of natural calamities indicated one thing: their Mongol rulers had lost the Mandate of Heaven. With the Mandate of Heaven withdrawn, rebellion became not just possible but legitimate: Heaven itself asked of them to remove their unjust emperor and replace him with a new ruler.

But the Yuan dynasty, descended through Kublai Khan from Genghis Khan himself, was not about to simply shuffle back to Mongolia. There would be 17 years

embankments. But this forced labour, rather than securing the regime against future floods, served simply to push more people into following the various rebel groups that were springing up around China. Of these, the most important and the most successful was the White Lotus Society.

Originally a Buddhist sect, the White Lotus adapted to persecution by the Yuan dynasty by broadening both its religious base – bringing elements of Daoism, Manichaeism and folk religion into its belief system – and its social base, opening out membership and, crucially, leadership to secular Chinese. As such, it became a focus of resistance against the corrupt rule of the Yuan.

The White Lotus planned to begin an open rebellion in 1351, but the putative leader

OVERTHROW THE MONGOLS

of conflict before a new emperor was able to found a lasting dynasty.

The conditions for this long transition had been laid earlier in the political weakness and infighting of the last Yuan emperors and the range of natural disasters that afflicted China in the 1340s and 1350s. The first phase of natural disasters culminated in the 1344 flood of the Yellow River. The river itself, sometimes called 'China's Sorrow' for the devastation inflicted by its floods, is an essential part of China's wealth, its waters providing irrigation for vast areas of agriculture. But because it carries huge amounts of silt, the river lays down deposits on its river bed wherever the stream runs slowly, raising the underlying level and, roughly every 100 years, causing the Yellow River to break through the levees and seek a new path to the sea. But the flatness of the North China Plain, while ideal for agriculture, means that these new channels can be hundreds of kilometres apart: in historical times, the Yellow River has flowed into the sea both north and south of the Shandong Peninsula. The 1344 flood moved the river's mouth to south of the peninsula, where it remained until the middle of the 19th century.

The response of the Yuan regime to the flood of 1344 caused them as much political damage as the flood itself. To try to prevent future floods, the emperor forced huge teams of Han Chinese peasants to raise new

How a Buddhist rebellion toppled the mighty empire and began the rise of the Ming dynasty

Written by Edoardo Albert

of the rebellion, Han Shantong, was betrayed and executed by the Yuan. However, the White Lotus united around his son, Han Lin'er, proclaiming him the legitimate heir to the Song dynasty that the Mongols had overthrown under the title 'Little Prince of Radiance'. Contemporary records have been either lost or suppressed, so not much is known about Han Lin'er, but what is clear is that one of his generals, Zhu Yuanzhang, quickly became an important part of the movement supporting the 'Little Prince of Radiance', his ability outweighing his humble birth.

While the response of the Yuan to these mounting threats was ►



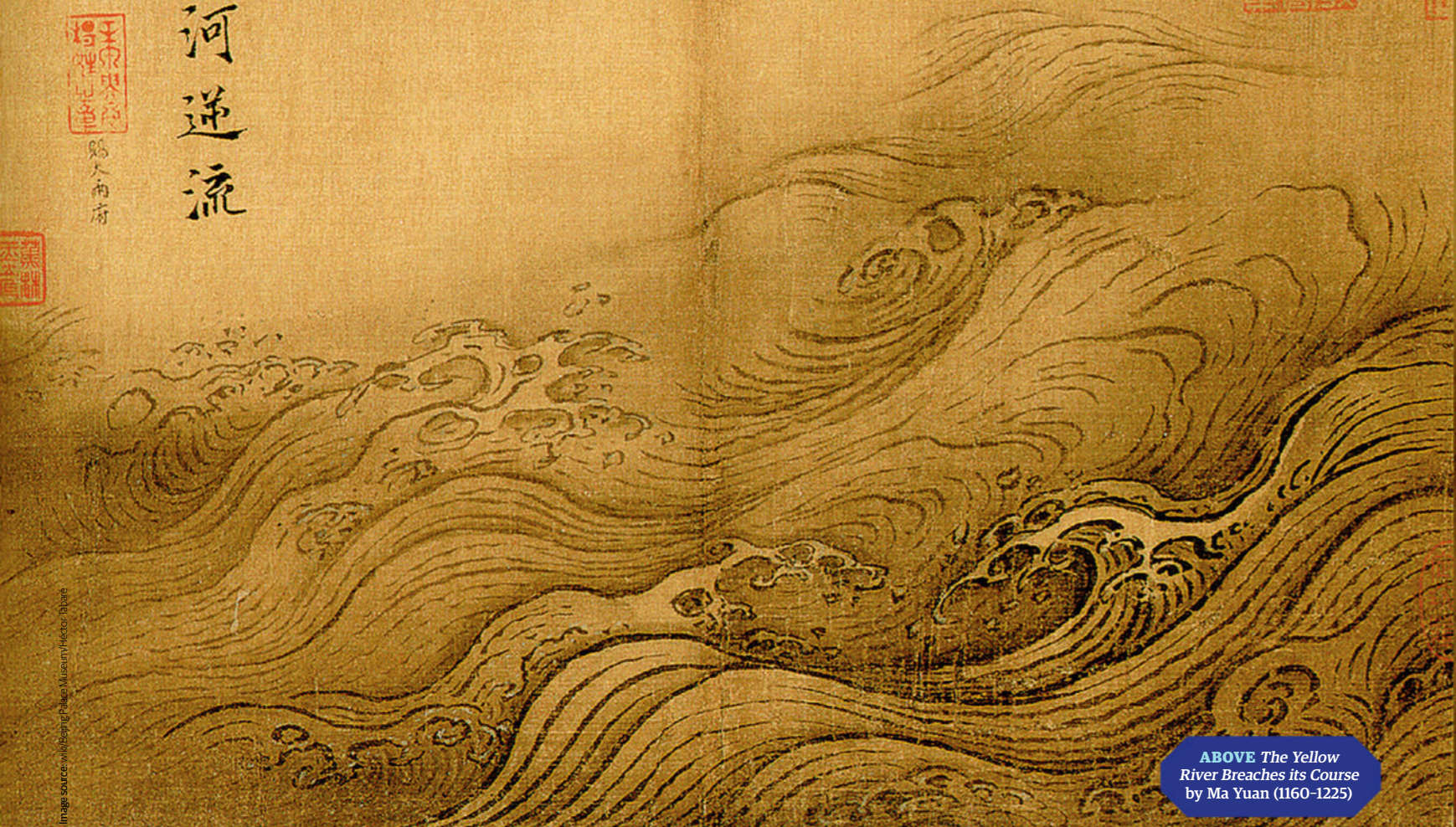
YING OLS

ABOVE The Great Wall was largely built during the time of the Ming dynasty, which took control of China following the rebellion

黄河逆流



王中丞
馬大兩府



ABOVE *The Yellow River Breaches its Course* by Ma Yuan (1160–1225)

THE WHITE LOTUS

The Buddhist secret society that overthrew the Mongol Empire

Buddhist sects had provided the focus for opposition to the later Yuan dynasty, but since most were limited to professed monks the regime had managed to suppress them. The White Lotus Society was a different beast altogether. Its doctrine, that the Maitreya, the Buddha Who is to Come, would arrive and overthrow the Yuan dynasty, gave it huge eschatological appeal. With the Maitreya's arrival, the order of life would be restored following its decay under the Mongols who had dominated China for the last century.

Just as important as the coming of this divine figure was the social innovation that allowed the White Lotus Society to accept secular leaders alongside religious ones. With its spread into wider society – the Society even allowed women to join its ranks – the White Lotus became a force to be reckoned with and a strong opponent of the Yuan loyalists.

The White Lotus broadened its popular appeal further by incorporating aspects of Daoism, Manichaeism and Chinese folk religion into its stew of beliefs, making itself a belief system that could accommodate almost anyone among the Han Chinese. It was from the White Lotus Society that the Red Turbans emerged.



ABOVE A Ming-era depiction of the White Lotus Society meeting to prepare for the arrival of the Maitreya, the Buddha who will put the world to rights

hampered by political infighting and rivalry, the same was also true of the rebels. About the only thing that united them initially was their headwear: red turbans, which distinguished them from the forces loyal to the Yuan dynasty. Thus the revolt became known as the Red Turban Rebellion.

As with other turbulent periods in Chinese history, the revolt soon devolved into a contest between rival warlords, each one controlling part of China's huge area and its resources. The Yuan dynasty had effectively sabotaged its own chances of winning the struggle because of Emperor Toghon Temür's decision to sack his most effective general, Toqto'a, and then later allow him to be assassinated.

General Toqto'a, who was also a notable historian, was extremely popular among his troops; if he had commanded it, they would have followed his standard rather than that of the emperor's. But Toqto'a accepted his sacking rather than rebel. However, many of his soldiers, disgusted by the treatment of their beloved general, deserted to the various rebel forces rather than continuing to fight for the emperor. Toghon Temür himself seemed to lose interest in the struggle, nominating his son to reign after him but doing little to halt the disintegration of his regime.

Meanwhile, Red Turban warlords were establishing their own fiefs over various parts of China and jockeying for the necessary position that would enable them to strike the final blow against the Yuan, while still keeping an eye open for a knife in the back from a rival warlord.

As the power of the Yuan waned, the Red Turban warlords gradually realised that the Yuan emperor could be put to one side while they decided among themselves who would finally remove him and become emperor in his place. In this messy conflict, with up to a dozen or so warlords in competition, there were nevertheless only a small number who ever looked capable of seizing power. The

“The revolt devolved into a contest between warlords, each one controlling part of China”

first two serious contenders were Zhang Shicheng (1321-1367) and Fang Guozhen (1319-1374), both of whose careers had started with smuggling and piracy.

Fang Guozhen was a pirate whose main business income was salt smuggling (a very profitable enterprise when salt was the only effective food preservative and the government taxed it), and he established his superiority at sea, but he proved unable to effectively govern the coastal strip that he controlled.

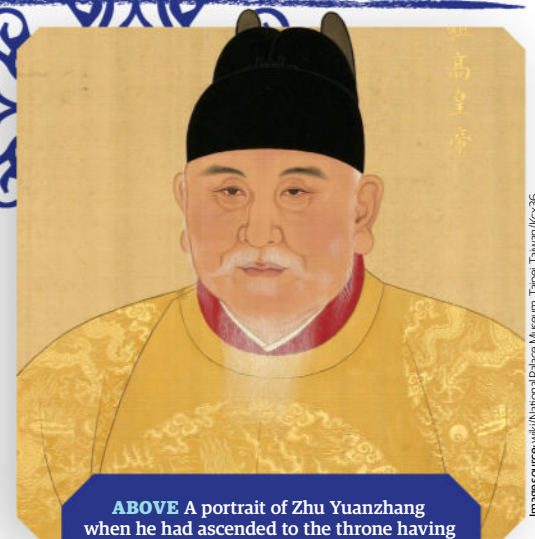
For his part, Zhang Shicheng gained control of some of the richest and most-populated parts of China, from the

THE LIFE OF ZHU YUANZHANG

The man who went from starving orphan to emperor of China

Some rulers may have clawed their way to power from humbler beginnings, but not many started life as Zhu Yuanzhang did. Born on 21 October 1328 to a peasant family about 160 kilometres (99 miles) northwest of Nanjing, his parents were so poor that they had to give away some of Zhu's older brothers and sisters since they could not feed them. Despite this, the family still fell victim to the famine in 1344 that resulted from the flooding of the Yellow River: all died save 16-year-old Zhu.

In a China torn by floods, famine and conflict, the prospects for a 16-year-old orphan were poor. To avoid starvation, Zhu took refuge in a local Buddhist monastery as a novice monk. But the monastery, desperately poor itself, could not afford to support him, and soon Zhu found himself on the road, eking out the most meagre of existences as a wandering beggar. Having survived three years like this, Zhu returned to the monastery, learning to read and write.



ABOVE A portrait of Zhu Yuanzhang when he had ascended to the throne having left his days of starvation far behind

In 1353, he joined a rebel Red Turban force led by Guo Zixing, rapidly rising to second in command and marrying Guo's daughter. When Guo Zixing died in 1355, Zhu took over command and, a year later, seized control of Nanjing, making it the power base from which he gradually conquered the country.

BELOW The changing course of the Yellow River: its floods left sheer devastation in their wake

BOTTOM RIGHT Toghon Temür, the last Yuan emperor of China

coast south of the Shandong Peninsula and covering a wide swathe of the rich agricultural plain inland from the coast. However, according to later historians, having gained mastery of these rich lands, Zhang and his entourage decided to indulge themselves on the fruit of their spoils, rather than attempt to govern effectively or move against rivals. China's administration depended on an educated

class of professional bureaucrats: without their support, it was all but impossible to run an effective administration.

For a while, Chen Youliang (1320-1363) looked the warlord most likely to consolidate control over the rival leaders and oust the Yuan. Playing for an opportunity, he would ally himself with other rebel factions only to betray them. A skilled but brutal general, Chen Youliang ▶



元朝

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ABOVE 'Yuan dynasty' in Chinese (top) and Mongolian (vertically down)

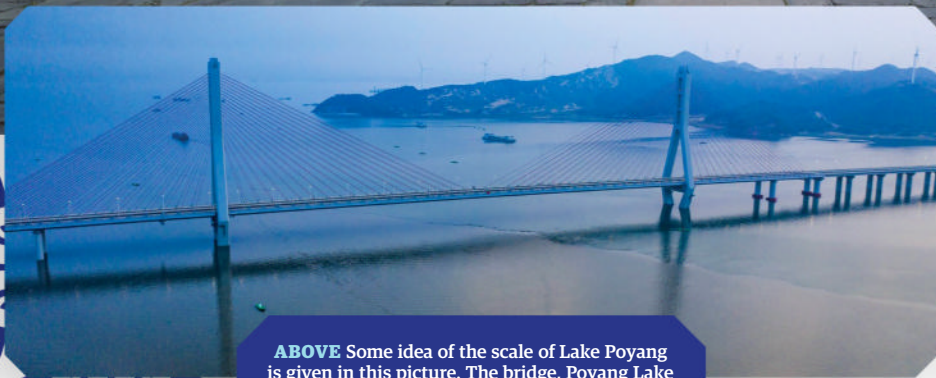


Image sources: wiki/National Palace Museum, Taipei, Taiwan/Vic-35

RIGHT The Ming Xiaoling Mausoleum, final resting place of the Hongwu Emperor



Image source: wiki/Zhanghuigang CC BY-SA 4.0



ABOVE Some idea of the scale of Lake Poyang is given in this picture. The bridge, Poyang Lake No.2 Bridge, is over 5.5km (3.4mi) long



Image source: wiki/National Palace Museum Taipei Taiwan Yagm

ABOVE A portrait of Emperor Zhu Yuanzhang

THE BATTLE OF LAKE POYANG

This colossal naval conflict was a battle like no other

The Battle of Lake Poyang was the largest naval engagement in Chinese history, as well as one of the biggest naval battles in terms of numbers of men taking part in world history. And it happened on a lake. Albeit, Lake Poyang is a very large lake: its size depends on the season, wet or dry, but in this time period it typically covered 3,500 square kilometres (1,351 square miles).

In 1363, Chen Youliang learned that his rival Zhu Yuanzhang was engaged on the southern borders of his territory. Taking the chance, Chen launched a naval assault on Zhu's fortress city, Nanchang, which was then on the shores of Lake Poyang. To do so, Chen assembled a force of 300,000 men manning an armada of ships, with the largest - tower ships - being armoured assault vessels. However, the defenders of Nanchang held out for two months before a messenger got through the siege to tell Zhu Yuanzhang what was happening.

In response, Zhu's fleet of 100,000 men on 1,000 ships advanced into Lake Poyang. Eager for a decisive battle, Chen Youliang ended the siege and sailed his fleet out into the lake. On 30 August 1363, the fleets met. While Chen's fleet had the advantage

in men and ships, the lake's water levels had declined through the dry season: the tower ships, with their deep hulls, could barely move.

The battle lasted four days and, after nearly coming to grief himself on the first day, Zhu realised that the low water levels gave his smaller ships an advantage over Chen's fleet, bunched together in the deep water channels. On the second day, Zhu launched fire ships that, blown by a favourable wind, drifted into the tightly packed vessels of Chen Youliang. More than 100 ships were sunk. The battle was not yet over though, with the third day used by both sides for regrouping. Chen Youliang still had the advantage in men and ships, an advantage that endured after a fourth, inconclusive day of battle. Zhu withdrew his fleet, but Chen Youliang was still contained in the lake with his escape blocked.

A month later, Chen Youliang made his break-out attempt. His fleet fought its way past the land forts blocking the entry into the Yangtze River only to find Zhu waiting for him. The two fleets engaged in desperate battle, but the whole affair was decided when an arrow from one of Zhu's archers hit Chen Youliang in the eye, killing him.

“Chen Youliang sent his tower ships, vessels that could hold 2,000 troops, to attack Zhu's fortress at Nanchang”

built up a strong army and brought more and more territory under his control until, in 1360, he felt strong enough to declare himself emperor of nothing less than a revival of the Han dynasty that had ruled from 202 BCE to 220 CE.

Such a claim betokened a breathtaking ambition, but Chen Youliang relied almost entirely upon military might to back up his vaulting claims. His lofty ambitions came crashing down at the Battle of Poyang Lake in 1363. The battle is one of the largest in naval history in terms of the number of men involved in the fighting, with some estimates suggesting as many as 850,000 sailors, soldiers and marines.



The battle pitted Chen Youliang's supporters against Zhu Yuanzhang's men. The latter had come a long way from the days when he was too poor to pay the pittance required for him to continue within the Buddhist monastery that had been his first recourse against starvation.

Zhu Yuanzhang had taken on military command of the Red Turban faction that had arisen from the White Lotus Society and, following the betrayal and death of its original leader, Han Shantong, he had gradually expanded his power base while continuing to profess loyalty to Han Shantong's son and heir, Han Lin'er. In 1356, Zhu Yuanzhang took control of the city of Nanjing, which became his capital and power base. Unlike the other warlords, Zhu Yuanzhang made it a point of policy to govern his territory well, which had the effect of attracting many incomers to Nanjing, attracted by its stability among the violence and corruption prevalent in the lands controlled by the other warlords. Such was Nanjing's reputation for safety and good government that its population swelled tenfold in the decade following Zhu Yuanzhang's conquest.

With the Yuan making no effort to dislodge the rebels, Zhu Yuanzhang set about forming an administration that could turn him from a warlord into an emperor, although he still publicly proclaimed his allegiance to Han Lin'er as the emperor of a renewed Song dynasty. But by taking the title Duke of Wu, Zhu Yuanzhang began to advance up the ladder of nobility towards the throne. With

many of the most talented administrators in China coming into his service, Zhu Yuanzhang was slowly assembling a team that would be able to control the country.

However, he first had to remove his dangerous (and more powerful) rival to the east, Chen Youliang. The realisation was mutual, and it was Chen Youliang who precipitated the decisive battle by sending his armoured tower ships - vast vessels that could hold 2,000 troops as well as having separate holds for cavalry and an armoured superstructure - to attack Zhu's fortress at Nanchang. Despite the size of Youliang's fleet the garrison at Nanchang held out

ABOVE Following the expulsion of the Mongol Yuan dynasty, the Hongwu Emperor and his Ming successors were determined to stop the Mongols returning, building a massive wall to ensure that they did not

BELOW The areas of China controlled by the various warlords in c.1363



and sent a messenger to Zhu asking for his help. The result was the Battle of Poyang Lake, which over four days (30 August to 2 September) saw a tactical defeat of Chen Youliang's forces, followed by their rout on 4 October, when Chen Youliang was killed.

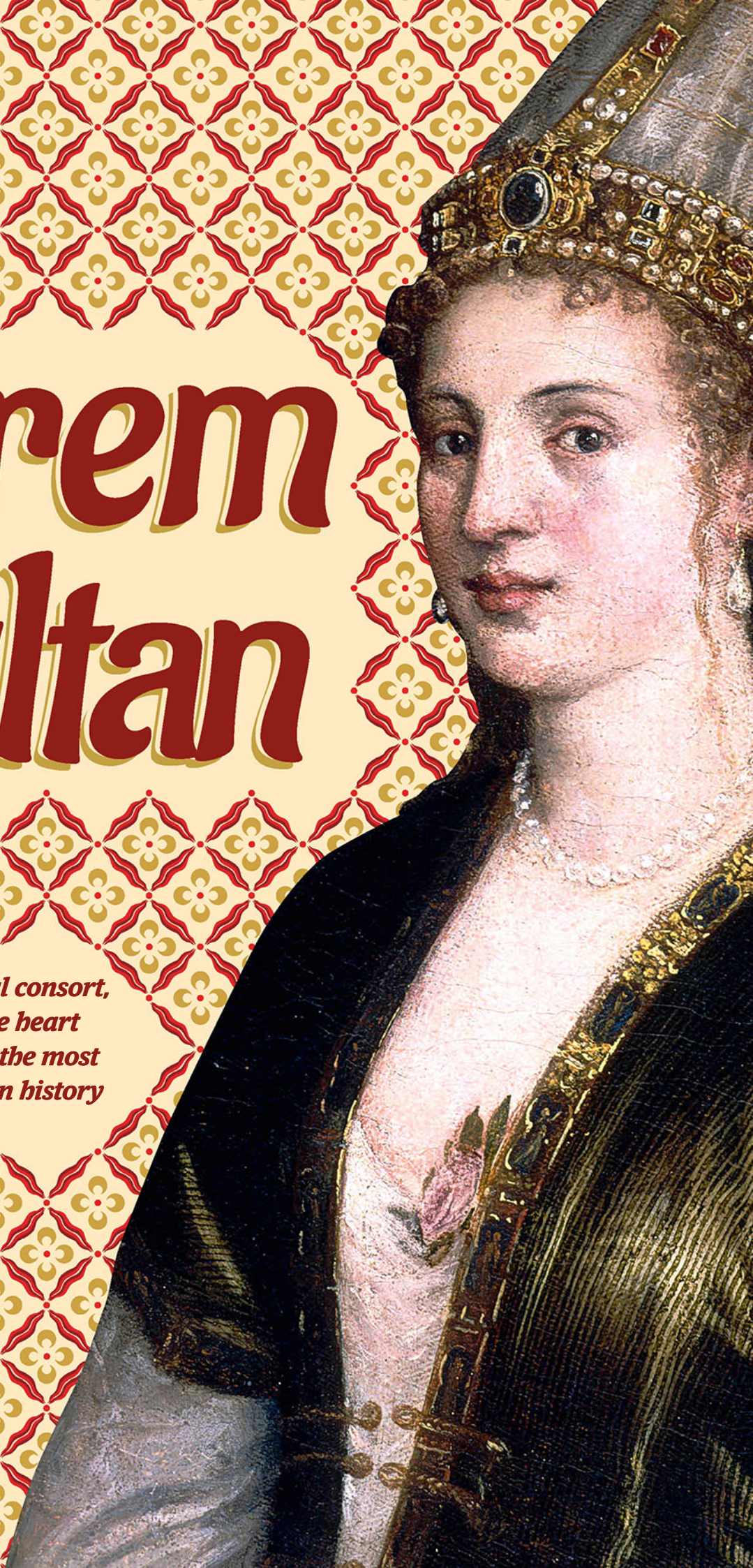
Zhu Yuanzhang now turned his attention to Zhang Shicheng's kingdom, laying siege to its capital, Suzhou, and capturing it in 1367 after ten months of besieging it. With the heavens clearly favouring Zhu Yuanzhang, the remaining warlords decided that surrender was the better part of valour and placed themselves under his sovereignty. There was, however, the small matter of Han Lin'er, the putative emperor of a renewed Song dynasty in whose service Zhu Yuanzhang had first risen to prominence. No doubt, Zhu Yuanzhang would have served under Han Lin'er if an unfortunate accident had not befallen the would-be emperor in 1366 or 1367, in which Han Lin'er drowned in a pond. With the titular claimant out of the way, Zhu Yuanzhang accepted the Mandate of Heaven and proclaimed himself emperor in January 1368, taking the name Hongwu (vastly martial). As emperor, he founded the Ming dynasty that would rule China until 1644.

With all the rival warlords out of the way, the Hongwu Emperor turned his attention to the rump state still under the control of the Yuan in the north of China, marching north in 1368. Rather than give battle, the Yuan abandoned their capital (present-day Beijing) and retreated into Mongolia. By 1381, the emperor's forces had brought the entire country to heel. After 89 years of foreign domination the Chinese ruled China again. ○

Hürrem Sultan

*From slave girl to imperial consort,
how one girl captured the heart
of an emperor to become the most
powerful woman in Ottoman history*

Written by Emily Staniforth





When people think of the Ottoman Empire, they often picture grand sultans and their viziers ruling over large swathes of land from their luxurious bases in what is now Istanbul. Of all these sultans, one springs to mind more than any other: Suleiman the Magnificent. As his famous moniker suggests, Suleiman's reign (1520-1566) encompassed a golden age for the Ottomans. But what many people do not know is that throughout much of his reign, an intelligent, powerful and unexpected woman stood by his side. Hürrem Sultan became the most prominent woman in the Ottoman Empire when she caught Suleiman's eye, having risen from humble beginnings. This is her story.

THE RUTHENIAN MAID

The tale of Hürrem Sultan begins in the early 16th century in Ruthenia, a region located within the Kingdom of Poland but which now sits in modern-day Ukraine. It was there that a young girl lived. Historians have not been able to piece much together about the early life of this Ruthenian girl, though some have suggested that she may have been the daughter of an Orthodox priest and was born sometime between 1502 and 1506. As to what her name was, some have identified her original Christian name as Aleksandra Lisowska, though again this cannot be proven. Despite her original identity having been lost over the centuries, this girl was destined for a magnificent life as one of the most powerful figures in the most powerful empire in the world.

In her early teenage life, the girl who would become Hürrem Sultan was snatched from her hometown by the Crimean Tatars in a slave raid. She was transported to the slave market in Caffa in the Crimean peninsula

the heir of Sultan Selim I. As a result of this comparatively fortunate deal, an anonymous girl from Eastern Europe found herself at the very heart of the Ottoman Empire.

IN THE SULTAN'S HAREM

After being bought from the slave market, the young girl was placed in the imperial harem as a concubine. The harem at the Ottoman court did not just house the women who lived as concubines, but also other female domestic servants, and the female members of the Sultan's family. Fortunately for historians, it becomes much easier to identify the girl from this point onwards, as she was given two nicknames. The first was Roxelana or Roxolana - a name which presumably came from her Ruthenian origins. The second moniker bestowed upon her was the Turkish name Hürrem, meaning joyful or the laughing one, which allegedly came about due to the sunny disposition she displayed while a member of the harem. Both of these names have been used interchangeably, though she was more likely known as Hürrem to the Ottomans and Roxelana to the rest of Europe.

It was supposedly Hürrem's bright and engaging personality that first attracted special attention from Suleiman I, who in 1520 had been made Sultan after the death of his father. Though many of the sources regarding Hürrem's appearance and nature do not refer to her as being particularly beautiful or attractive, they do paint a picture of a striking young woman. Her red hair and fair skin made her distinctive in the harem and undoubtedly helped her to stand out among the 300 or more concubines. She was also extremely intelligent - a quality that would serve her well later in her life and would likely have been attractive to a relatively new Sultan in his first years of rulership. Suleiman was known to value the support and advice of his mother, Hafsa Sultan, his

“Hürrem became the first woman in the empire's history to have enjoyed such a privileged and elevated position”

and from there was taken to Constantinople, the capital of the Ottoman Empire, which is now Istanbul in modern-day Turkey. She arrived at a slave market called Avret Pazarı or the Woman's Bazaar. The journey from Ruthenia to Constantinople would have taken around 10 days in all, and though a slave, it is likely that as a young woman, the teenager would have been treated relatively well - attractive young female slaves fetched a higher price and so needed to be kept in a good condition. It was at this particular market that the Ruthenian girl was allegedly purchased by a wealthy man for his friend. The friend happened to be Prince Suleiman,

sisters and his closest friends and advisors, and it is known that Hürrem quickly became part of that support system. She acted as his confidant, and her letters to Suleiman show that she did her best to keep him informed of what was happening at home while he was away attending to matters elsewhere in the empire. Perhaps it was this meeting of minds that bonded Suleiman and Hürrem, or perhaps they simply fell in love. Whatever the reason for the attraction of Suleiman to Hürrem, she was to become an exceptional figure in his life.

As a concubine, it was Hürrem's job to join the Sultan in his bedroom whenever ▶



WRITING LOVE LETTERS

Suleiman and Hürrem were not shy when it came to discussing their feelings

While sources are abundant for historians exploring the relationship between Hürrem and Suleiman, arguably nothing is more useful than the love letters and poetry the pair wrote to each other right from the start of their relationship. While some of the letters spoke of practical and political matters, they also included beautiful statements of love for each other. In this particular passage from an undated letter, Suleiman takes the time to express his feelings for his wife, calling her, among other things, his Sultan. It's quite a statement from the "magnificent" emperor himself.

*"Throne of my lonely niche, my wealth,
my love, my moonlight.
My most sincere friend, my confidant,
my very existence, my Sultan
The most beautiful among the beautiful...
My springtime, my merry faced love, my
daytime, my sweetheart, laughing leaf...
My plants, my sweet, my rose, the one
only who does not distress me in this
world...
My Istanbul, my Caraman, the earth of
my Anatolia
My Badakhshan, my Baghdad and
Khorasan
My woman of the beautiful hair, my
love of the slanted brow, my love of
eyes full of mischief...
I'll sing your praises always..."*



ABOVE In this painting of a woman in Ottoman dress presumed to be Hürrem Sultan, she is shown with features more typical of an Eastern European woman



ABOVE The interior of the Haseki Sultan mosque complex in Istanbul, which was commissioned by Hürrem from around 1538

BELOW *The Slave Market* (1866) by Jean-Léon Gérôme shows a young woman being examined by potential buyers. Hürrem Sultan may have gone through something similar at the market in Constantinople



ABOVE Hürrem's husband, Suleiman the Magnificent, is remembered for expanding the Ottoman Empire and presiding over a golden age

he requested her presence. However, though all concubines were in a similar position with similar roles, there was a hierarchy to abide by. In order to prevent power struggles within the harem, it was traditional that each concubine would only give birth to one son by the Sultan and by the time Hürrem had caught Suleiman's eye, he already had a son with his favourite concubine. Mahidevran Hatun had given birth to Mustafa in around 1516, before Suleiman had replaced his father as Sultan, and she had held a place as Suleiman's favourite, or Haseki, ever since. However, Hürrem quickly supplanted Mahidevran as the Haseki, and by 1521 she had given birth to a son, Mehmed.

Having had a son by the Sultan, Hürrem should never have had another child. By restricting concubines to a policy of one mother to one son, it ensured that no woman would ever have any considerable sway or influence over the Sultan or the line of succession. However, it is clear that Suleiman already saw Hürrem as much more than just another of his concubines as in 1522, just a year after the birth of her son, Hürrem gave birth to a daughter named Mihrimah. Hürrem and the Sultan continued to defy the traditional expectations of an Ottoman emperor's relationship with his concubine and had four more children together, who were all sons - named Selim, Abdullah, Bayezid and Cihangir.

As the mother of the Sultan's six children, Hürrem became the first woman in the empire's history to have enjoyed such a privileged and elevated position, and it must have been apparent to everyone that Suleiman's feelings towards Hürrem were strong enough to overcome centuries of ritual and convention. If his feelings were not already evident, they would become so in 1533 when Suleiman made a decision that would transform Hürrem's life.

As the wife of the emperor, Hürrem's status was elevated accordingly and she was granted luxuries she likely would never have dreamed of. She was looked after by her own servants and was given a substantial allowance to spend on clothes and comforts. She also made the decision to move the Sultan's harem from its residence at Eski Saray (the Old Palace) to the Topkapi Palace where her husband lived. This proved to be a monumental event, as it placed Hürrem and other women of the harem at the very centre of Ottoman power where they had never been before. This allowed Hürrem more frequent and closer access to the Sultan, but also ensured that her female successors maintained a presence at the Topkapi Palace even after her lifetime, transforming the role of Ottoman women forever.

Hürrem also allegedly arranged for all the most beautiful of her husband's concubines to be married off, meaning they left the harem completely. As the first woman to marry the Sultan, it was unsurprising that Hürrem felt as though she had to protect her relationship with Suleiman, though many of her contemporaries believed her to be holding onto power as tightly as she could. It seems as though Hürrem's fears of threat and competition from other women were unfounded however, as once they were legally married the Sultan stayed faithful to his wife, and their relationship, in another unconventional move for an Ottoman leader, became a monogamous one.

As Suleiman's wife, Hürrem acted as a consort and used her intelligence and political astuteness to her advantage. She discussed state affairs with her husband and influenced him and his viziers (politicians). Due to her background and Eastern European roots, Hürrem utilised her skills to foster a political relationship with the King of Poland, Sigismund II Augustus, with whom she

“The Janissaries and the entire court hate her and her children likewise”

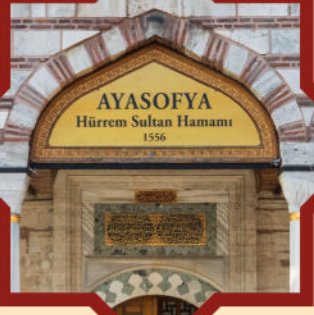
EMPERESS OF THE OTTOMANS

In 1533 or 1534, Hürrem's position as a concubine was nullified and Suleiman married her, making her his legal wife. This move shocked the Ottomans and the Western world alike, as it was not customary for the Ottoman Sultans to marry at all. An ambassador present in Constantinople at the time of the wedding described the affair as an “extraordinary event, one absolutely unprecedented in the history of Sultans.” Hürrem had arrived in the city as a foreign slave and in just a few short years had become the most powerful Ottoman woman in centuries.

corresponded about state affairs. However, it was in her patronage of the arts and architecture, and through her philanthropic and public endeavours, that Hürrem came into her own.

CONTEMPORARY CRITICISM

As a woman in the 16th century, it is not surprising that Hürrem had her detractors, both within the empire and from external observers. The Ottomans in particular were not Hürrem's biggest fans, as many of them found the situation between herself and the Sultan confusing to say the least. Many of the traditions that had been broken by ▶



PHILANTHROPIC PURSUITS

How Hürrem Sultan built her legacy

Engaging in charitable endeavours proved to be an important part of Hürrem's life as the Sultan's wife, and in 1538 she began her first project with the chief architect of the Ottomans, Mimar Sinan. They had a new mosque built in a neglected part of Constantinople and over a number of years, more structures were added that were intended to benefit the community in that area. Two schools, a soup kitchen, a fountain that provided fresh water and a hospital became part of the Haseki Sultan complex.

In addition to this complex, Hürrem also built a number of mosques in other regions, as well as soup kitchens in Mecca and Jerusalem, the latter of which reportedly fed around 500 people twice a day. Hürrem also commissioned the building of a bathhouse in the Hagia Sophia area of Constantinople, which still stands today. As well as participating in building projects, Hürrem also established foundations across the empire. Leslie Peirce states in her biography of Hürrem: "By the time of her death, major charitable institutions existed in her name in the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem and in the Ottoman capitals of Istanbul and Adrianople, while smaller endowments were scattered across the empire in regional capitals and towns."

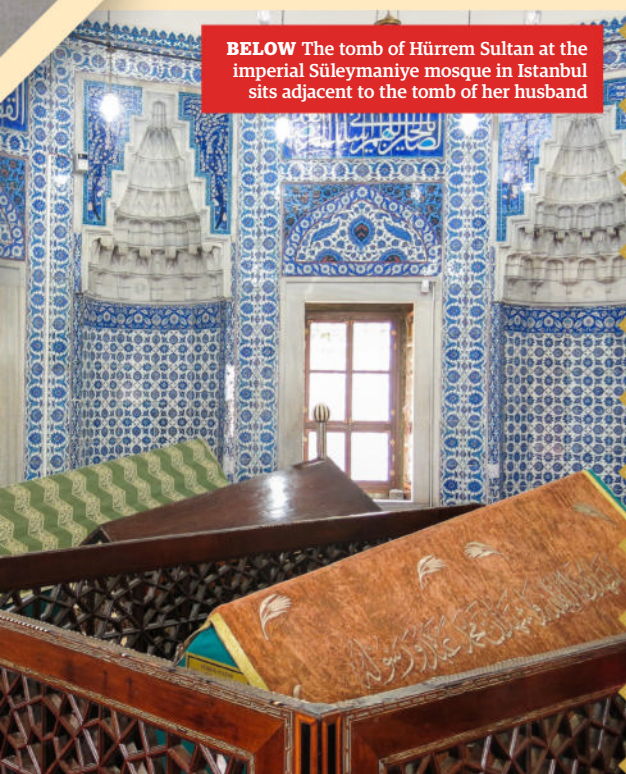


ABOVE Hürrem's son succeeded Suleiman as Sultan, becoming Selim II

ABOVE This image depicts Suleiman being entertained at the Topkapi Palace, where Hürrem relocated the imperial harem



ABOVE European contemporaries of Hürrem referred to her as Roxelana, a name that honoured her Ruthenian heritage



BELOW The tomb of Hürrem Sultan at the imperial Süleymaniye mosque in Istanbul sits adjacent to the tomb of her husband

Suleiman and Hürrem were designed to curtail the influence of a single woman over the Sultan – she was not only a woman in a powerful position, but she was also the first woman to have ever achieved such influence. Many courtiers reportedly disliked Hürrem due to her sway with the Sultan, with one Italian visitor to Constantinople writing of the situation: “the Janissaries and the entire court hate her and her children likewise, but because the Grand Turk loves her very much, no one dares to speak, and always every one speaks ill of her and of her children, and well of the first-born and of his mother, who has been repudiated.”

Comparisons to Mahidevran, the “perfect” mother of the first son who had abided by all the traditional conventions of a favoured concubine seem unfair, given that Suleiman had a huge part to play in Hürrem’s elevation from slave to wife. But living as a prominent woman in a traditionally patriarchal system was never going to be easy for Hürrem. She had been allowed to stay in Constantinople while her sons moved away to take up political positions in other areas of the empire, again not a usual custom for a mother of the Sultan’s son, which added to the negative judgements about her proximity to the Sultan’s power. Not being able to comprehend Hürrem’s hold over Suleiman, people drew their own conclusions about her appeal. Some contemporary sources talk of speculations that Hürrem had somehow bewitched the Sultan.

Two of the worst accusations levelled against Hürrem however involved the grisly deaths of two of the most prominent men in Suleiman’s court. In 1536, the Grand Vizier (the most important politician aside from the Sultan) Ibrahim Pasha was discovered dead in a guest room of the Sultan’s palace. He had eaten with Suleiman the night before, as his closest political advisor, and had retired

Hürrem’s sons to succeed their father, and it is believed that this may have played a part in Suleiman’s decision to have his own son executed. Once again, however, the extent of Hürrem’s influence over this decision has long been debated, and it is acknowledged that Mustafa’s actions in the months leading up to his execution had threatened the authority of his ageing father.

LEGACY

Hürrem Sultan died in April 1558 after suffering from an unknown illness for quite some time. Historians have estimated that she was likely in her early 50s. Her death was significant in that she left her husband alone for the first time since he had become Sultan in 1520. He was reportedly devastated by the loss, and had Hürrem laid to rest in a mausoleum within the imperial Süleymaniye mosque. Upon his death eight years later, Suleiman was buried near to his beloved wife.

One of the greatest legacies left behind by Hürrem were her children. Though she had outlived some of her sons, several of her children continued to thrive. One of her sons, Selim, inherited the sultanate from his father upon his death and became Selim II, ruling the Ottoman Empire from 1566 to 1574. Hürrem’s daughter, on the other hand, stepped into her mother’s shoes somewhat after her death, becoming a support to her father in the last years of his life. Mihrimah was similar to her mother in many ways as she took on political positions, advised her father on state matters and patronised charitable projects. Without the influence of Hürrem, and the ways in which her presence by Suleiman’s side had changed the roles women could play in the Ottoman world, Mihrimah would likely not have had the chance to demonstrate her own capabilities. In fact, Hürrem’s relationship with Suleiman is crucial in defining a new age for the Ottomans

“Contemporary sources talk of speculations that Hürrem had somehow bewitched the Sultan”

to his chambers where he was brutally killed. The motive for his execution remains unclear, and over the centuries, historians and detractors of Hürrem’s have speculated about her involvement in the event. Though there are no records of her being part of the decision-making process, we do know that the relationship between Pasha and Hürrem could be tense and competitive as the two favourites of Suleiman.

Another historical narrative has placed Hürrem as the party responsible for the death of the Sultan’s oldest son, Mustafa, in 1553. Mustafa’s existence had posed a substantial threat to the potential for one of

– the Sultanate of Women. Hürrem was one of the first women to exercise power in the empire, but she was certainly not the last.

Passing judgement on Hürrem’s time as consort is a polarising issue. To some she was a cruel, manipulative woman, while to others she was an astute politician who took advantage of the opportunities afforded to her. Hopefully what is apparent though, is that Hürrem was an extraordinary woman of her time. Her rise to power, from slave girl to the Sultan’s consort, was incomparable and she certainly left her mark on the history of the Ottomans, of women in the 16th century, and on modern-day Turkey. ○

THE USSR'S FAKE OLYMPICS





Having boycotted the 1984 games in Los Angeles, the Soviet Union hosted its own competition

Written by Jonathan Gordon



Following the death of Stalin in 1953, sport had increasingly become an important pillar of the Soviet Union. Great effort had been made to re-engage with international sporting communities following years of self-imposed exile. In this context, the USSR's decision to boycott the 1984 Summer Olympics being hosted in Los Angeles, California, comes as a bit of a surprise. That the state decided to organise its own competing athletics competition to overlap with the Olympics, even more surprising.

THE SECOND COLD WAR

Relations between the superpowers of the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics had been deteriorating in this period. The age of Détente, when the Cold War had cooled even more, was over and a more aggressive foreign policy was being pursued (or at least postured) by both nations. Military budgets were increased, political rhetoric heightened and proxy conflicts escalated. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 was a key flash point for this diplomatic shift, which resulted in the United States leading a boycott of the 1980 Summer Olympics being hosted by Moscow. In total 65 nations chose not to participate in the games, with 80 nations still attending.

In a conflict where the possible use of nuclear weapons casts a dark shadow over events, choosing not to send athletes to a sports competition may not seem like a massive slight. 1980 was also not the first time that nations had chosen to boycott an Olympic Games for one reason or another. It was the largest such action to date, which was a blow to the prestige of the event. And, as mentioned, the Soviet Union took sporting achievement very seriously, especially when it offered an opportunity to compete with the Americans and show superiority or dominance for all the world to see.

SOVIET SPORT

By the 1980s, the USSR had become a dominant force in sports across multiple disciplines. Writing for *International Journal* in 1988, sports historian Jim Riordan stated, "Sport is a political

institution run by the state," but it hadn't always been that way. The Olympic movement was still relatively young when the Bolsheviks had seized power in Russia, and Joseph Stalin, who took power in 1922, had been opposed to engaging with international sporting organisations that involved non-communist nations.

However, health and sporting targets were beginning to be added to the nation's Five Year Plans and following Nikita Khrushchev's succession, the USSR began to consolidate its approach. In 1959, the Central Committee approved a joint resolution ordering the complete restructuring of sports programmes, bringing them under the central control of its health ministry.

Mass participation was at the heart of this push to maximise the chance of finding the best athletes from across the Soviet Union. The stated intent of this push was to break records and win competitions on the international stage, and to that end they began reaching out to sporting bodies like the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

Being outside of these organisations blocked the USSR from competing with other nations in many instances. If only to be able to compete with its friendly neighbouring states, like Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania, the USSR needed to join the international sporting community. If it wanted sport to act as a demonstration of their philosophical and political superiority over their rivals, there was no other way for this to be achieved. In 1952, the USSR would appear at its first Summer Olympics, being hosted in Helsinki, winning 71 medals and finishing second to the USA by only five medals. ►



ABOVE The competition was held across nine countries, but Moscow had many of the key facilities from hosting the 1980 Summer Olympics



This was only the beginning, as USSR delegate to the IOC Aleksey Romanov said, "In all spheres of international life, including the Olympic Movement, there is a continuous struggle of the new with the old, of the progressive with the reactionary, and, as a mass social movement, international sport is in our time an arena of sharp political and ideological struggle."

THE 1984 BOYCOTT

So, why boycott the 1984 Summer Olympics? The athletes of the USSR were some of the best in the world and this was a massive propaganda opportunity to win medals in America's backyard. Soviet officials offered a number of reasons. They pointed to the commercial contracts that the Los Angeles Olympic Organizing Committee (LAOOC) had done as being against the spirit of the Olympic Movement, they expressed concerns over potential earthquakes and political tensions within the US, and they claimed the Americans were seeking to block the entrance of some of their competitors.

The IOC dismissed the first claim and the second had no real basis in evidence. The third was sparked by a Soviet Olympic official being refused a visa to enter the US. However, on 3 March 1984, *The Washington Post* revealed the fuller picture that the official in question, Oleg Yermishkin, was denied entry to the US as he was "identified as a fairly high-ranking KGB official."

At the same time, there was the possibility of defection, with groups like Ban the Soviets Coalition in South California offering to provide safe houses for any Soviet asylum seekers. It's unclear how concerned the communist government was that athletes would defect, but some commentators were. Journalist L Jon Wertheim in his book

Glory Days quotes the Kremlin magazine *Literary Gazette*, which warned that athletes "will be seized and whisked away to clandestine hideouts. And there, all conceivable methods will be used to extort from them betrayal of their motherland. They will be wrapped in the Stars and Stripes - all in the light of the Olympic flame."

Ultimately, such concerns had not stopped the USSR from attending the Winter Olympics in Lake Placid, New York in 1980. Whatever reasons were given or speculated, the simplest answer remains: the Americans boycotted Moscow, so the Soviets boycotted Los Angeles in return. Neither would get to host a truly global and inclusive games. 14 nations would choose to opt out in the end. Romania was a notable exception in the Eastern Bloc, as Nicolae Ceaușescu looked to assert his nation's independence from Moscow.

BATTLE OF THE GAMES

It didn't take long for an alternative athletics competition to be pitched for the USSR to take part in. News of the event first emerged from Poland with the idea that rather than being hosted in a single city, a Friendship Games would be spread across multiple nations. These events would be a substitute to the Olympics, but importantly not competing with them. This distinction was made repeatedly as everyone boycotting the Olympics wanted to be able to return in the future.

UPI (United Press International) reported *Sovetsky Sport*, the USSR sports newspaper, as saying: "The purpose of these competitions is to give sportsmen who did not go to the Olympics because of the atmosphere of anti-Sovietism and hostility to socialist countries, the chance to demonstrate their abilities."

Still, the rhetoric around the games and comparisons to the experience in LA began to escalate. State controlled



ABOVE While not directly competing with or replacing the Olympics, Friendship-84 still had a similar feel



newspaper *Pravda* stated that the Friendship Games would show "that Socialist society provides more favourable facilities for the human beings' all-round physical and spiritual development."

"It is a pity that the Olympic flame in Los Angeles was darkened by the spirit of profit-making," said Sergey Bubka, a Soviet pole vaulter and record holder at the time. "The atmosphere of anti-Soviet and anti-socialist hysteria in the USA prevented athletes from most Socialist countries from participating in the Olympic Games... We hope that 'friendship' competitions will show to the world at large anew the strength of athletes from socialist countries and their loyalty to the Olympic ideals."

FRIENDSHIP-84

The 1984 Friendship Games, also known as Friendship-84 (*Druzhba-84* in Russian) ran from 2 July to 16 September. The competition actually began before the Olympics in LA, but paused once that competition began on 28 July and restarted after 12 August when it had completed. The Friendship-84 opening ceremony wasn't until after the Olympics, on 18 August.

The opening ceremony of the Friendship Games was held in Lenin Stadium, Moscow in front of 100,000 spectators. Interestingly, and amid rumours of his ill health, general secretary Konstantin Chernenko did not attend the opening. Members of the Politburo were there, however, including Chernenko's successor Mikhail Gorbachev. The opening ceremony was full of Soviet messages promoting the health of the USSR, according to the Associated Press. They spotted signs that read "Physical culture and sport in the service of the five-year plan" and "Sports and labour go together". Placards in other languages, including English and French, read "Sports is the ambassador of peace" and "Sports, Friendship, Peace". A new song ▶

ABOVE LEFT Alberto Juantorena and Ryszard Ostrowski of Cuba and Poland, respectively, shared gold in the 800 metres

ABOVE Many nations took part in both the Olympics in Los Angeles and the Friendship Games, including the US

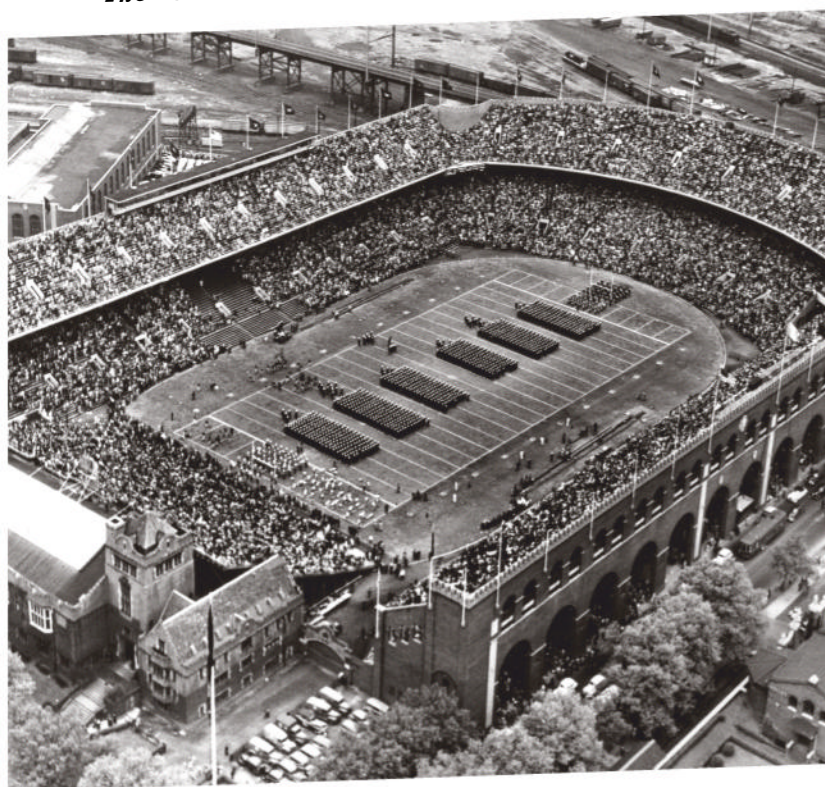
ABOVE RIGHT The swimming events had their own opening ceremony as well

TOP RIGHT All of Friendship-84's men's gymnastic events were held in Olomouc, Czechoslovakia

"BY THE 1980S, THE USSR HAD BECOME A DOMINANT FORCE IN SPORTS ACROSS MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES"

THE LIBERTY BELL CLASSIC

The US had its own 'alternative Olympics' in 1980 too



Perhaps even less well known than the Friendship Games in 1984, the United States held its own alternative athletics competition when it boycotted the 1980 Summer Olympics in Moscow following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. 29 nations took part in the event, including fellow boycotters like Canada and Japan, held at Franklin Field at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia.

The Liberty Bell Classic covered only track and field events, with the US

Congress allocating \$10 million to stage competitions across four cities to rival those in Moscow. It wasn't the most glamorous affair, however, with the weather across the two days varying from intensely hot to stormy and key nations such as Great Britain, France and Australia not competing.

Still, it was the largest track and field event to be held in the United States since the 1932 Olympics and hosted 20,111 spectators despite the mixed weather.



was also written and composed for the event with lyrics saying "To a sunny peace, yes, yes, yes, to a nuclear war, no, no, no."

While officials publicly distanced themselves from suggestions they were competing with the Olympics, many of the trappings of the opening were drawn from that event. The cauldron used to house the Olympic flame four years previously remained in the Lenin Stadium and was lit again. 400-metre Olympic gold medalist Viktor Markin delivered the torch, lit at the eternal flame of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at the Kremlin.

Moscow remained the focus of the games, hosting many of the main athletics events, alongside basketball, rowing and swimming. Another eight countries also hosted events, however, from Cuba to Mongolia. And while this was all started by a largely Eastern Bloc boycott, 50 states participated in Friendship-84 including the United States and Great Britain. Even so, most of those who also competed at the Olympics sent only partial representation or athletes who had narrowly missed out on Olympic qualification. Around 2,300 athletes took part across 22 Olympic disciplines, plus women's shooting which at that time was not an Olympic event.

As the events kicked off anew from the opening ceremony, all eyes were on potential records to be broken, especially as only two had fallen in Los Angeles.

COMPARISONS

Comparing the performance of athletes between the 1984 Summer Olympics and Friendship-84 became a point of great interest and contention. While two world records were broken in Los Angeles, Friendship-84 could claim 30 broken in weightlifting alone, with an additional five in swimming and one in track and field. Unsurprisingly, the USSR came out on top

in terms of medal tally, ending the games with 126 gold medals, followed by East Germany with 50 and Bulgaria with 21.

Comparing the Friendship Games to the Summer Olympics, it's estimated, based on distances and times set, that over 60 of the participants in the Soviet competition would have won medals in Los Angeles with the same performance.

UPI shared the TASS (Telegraph Agency of the Soviet Union) report that boasted, "On the opening day, the winners of the hammer, javelin, shot put, pole vault, discus, the 20-kilometre walk and that 50-kilometre walk all bettered the results scored by the gold medalists in those events at the Los Angeles Games."

Writing in August 1984, the *Edmonton Journal* saw a more balanced picture: "In track and field, a comparison of the results shows

"THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FRIENDSHIP GAMES WAS HELD IN LENIN STADIUM, MOSCOW IN FRONT OF 100,000 SPECTATORS"

TOP LEFT German Petra Felke went on to break the javelin record four times from 1985 to 1988

TOP MIDDLE A Friendship-84 stamp depicting a weightlifter. Similar stamps were designed for other events

TOP RIGHT Lenin Stadium was renamed Luzhniki Stadium in 1992 after the fall of the USSR

BELOW Russian long jumper Konstantin Semykin achieved a personal best at the Friendship Games

that Friendship women had superior performances in 12 of 17 events, but that Olympic men had better results in 16 of 24 events. Overall, Olympic competitors had a 21-20 edge."

And, while many of the times and distances achieved at the Friendship Games were better than the gold medal-winning results in the Los Angeles competition, some of the results have since been called into question as doping regimes under the USSR have come to light. "Those rumours were always there," Joyce Hepher, British long jumper, told the BBC in 2021. "Things about Eastern Bloc athletes and their programmes and 'vitamins'. But until anyone was caught, no-one could really say whether they were drug takers or not."

Legitimate or not, whether these performances can really be compared regardless has also been disputed. Sam Lacy, a celebrated sports writer of the time, gave an example in a September 1984 issue of *The Afro-American*: "Evelyn [Ashford]'s 100-metres clocking was 10.97 seconds... in the Friendship Games 100 metres, Marlies Gohr of East Germany was timed in 10.95 seconds, making her the faster, right? Wrong... The two met head-on in Budapest a week later, and Ashford defeated Gohr by two healthy strides."

Ultimately the Friendship Games was deemed a success by its organisers at the time, with Soviet National Olympic Committee president Marat Gramov claiming, "They were a success and promoted peace, stronger cooperation and understanding." However, they are little more than a footnote in the wider history of the Cold War, albeit a fascinating one. ○



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Greatest Battles

BATTLE OF DETTINGEN

DETTINGEN (MODERN-DAY KARLSTEIN AM MAIN, GERMANY),
27 JUNE 1743

Written by David Smith

The origins of the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-48) are labyrinthine, complex and easily fill several books. Triggered by the death of Emperor Charles VI, it was essentially a conflict between two coalitions, each supporting a different potential inheritor of the emperor's throne.

The Pragmatic Allies took their name from a proclamation issued by Charles in 1713. This Pragmatic Sanction insisted that a daughter could inherit all his titles, including that of Holy Roman Emperor, which had never previously been held by a woman. Upon his death, his daughter, Maria Theresa, was supported by the Habsburg Empire itself (often referred to as Austria), Britain, the Dutch Republic and Hanover. The Pragmatic Allies were opposed by France, Prussia and Bavaria, who wanted to break the Habsburg's grip on Charles'



George II's desire to pursue the defeated French after the battle was thwarted by his forces' fatigue and dwindling supplies

titles. Their preferred candidate was Charles Albert of Bavaria.

The first move of the war saw Prussia invade Silesia in 1740, and by 1742 Austria had accepted the loss of this territory, freeing its forces to leave Silesia and join other elements of the Pragmatic Allies for offensive action elsewhere. The shift in the deployment of power threw the French onto the defensive and they were now in a position where they had to wait for the Pragmatic Allies to make the first move rather than taking the initiative themselves.

FRANCE ON THE DEFENSIVE

The commander of France's forces, Marshal Adrien Maurice de Noailles, had the almost impossible task of protecting France's ally, Bavaria, as well as French territory. He did

not have the manpower for such an immense challenge and was wrestling with the two possible responses - a chain of small positions or a massing of force that might turn out to be in the wrong area - when the Allies made a move.

Austrian forces were marching on Luxembourg, with a combined British-Hanoverian army following. This at least gave Noailles something on which to focus his attention, and he carefully followed the progress of the Allies.

The military and diplomatic situation was complicated by the death of the Prince-Archbishop of Mainz (one of the electors of the Holy Roman Emperor) and the arrival of George II in Hanover (of which he was elector as well as being the British monarch). The Pragmatic Army was under the command of Field Marshal John Dalrymple, the 2nd Earl of Stair, but the king

would take at least nominal command when he arrived from Hanover.

As the progress of the Allies was shadowed by Noailles, the problem of supply, always a critical element in campaigning, soon became an issue. As Stair marched along the eastern bank of the Main River, supplies had to either follow the land route he was taking or instead be shipped along the river. Either route, however, was susceptible to French interference and each mile advanced made his line of communications more vulnerable. Aware of this, Noailles had hopes of securing a decisive victory.

Setting a trap for an opponent always relies on them doing exactly as you predicted, and in this case Noailles was to prove lucky. The Pragmatic Army was about to be paralysed for several days, allowing him to spin his web without interference. ▶

THE OPPOSING FORCES

The French commander had significantly more troops on hand than his enemy, around 70,000 compared to just 35,000 under Stair. The Pragmatic Army, on paper at least, had a superiority in artillery, but this was misleading. The vast bulk of their artillery train was comprised of three-pounders - effective in infantry support but unlikely to make any difference on the battlefield. Noailles had fewer guns, but 40 of his were far heavier 12-pounders. With greater range and vastly superior hitting power, batteries of these guns could indeed tip the balance of a battle.

The wealth of options open to him, along with his numerical advantage, allowed Noailles to be creative in his thinking and he drew up a plan to not just defeat his enemy but completely destroy them. The fact that George II was on his way to join the Pragmatic Army gave Noailles the added prospect of capturing a monarch - a very enticing prize.

Critical to the success of the plan was that his opponents remained passive and allowed him to move his pieces into place. In this respect, the approach of the king played directly into his hands.

Stair had intended to link up his army with that of Prince Charles of Lorraine in Upper Bavaria, but the imminent arrival of the king forced him to halt his march. His advanced units, comprising British regiments, made their camp around Aschaffenburg, while his rearmost units were positioned around six miles (10km) to the northwest. A few units, Austrian dragoons, were left at Dettingen to keep an eye on enemy movements and the road back towards Hanau.

The stone bridge at Aschaffenburg, offering the easiest way of crossing the Main, was obviously important but Stair neglected to secure it, instead remaining inactive in a string of camps that could hardly have been in a more dangerous position.

The land on the east bank of the Main was



King George II at the Battle of Dettingen



Marshal Adrien Maurice de Noailles came from a distinguished line of French military aristocrats

exceedingly marshy in parts, and was cut through by two sizeable streams, running roughly east to west. The stream nearest to Dettingen, the Forchbach, could be crossed easily only at two causeways. Further to the east was a ridge of heavily wooded hills. The Pragmatic Army was therefore penned in between impassable hills and an uncrossable river, on ground that was severely waterlogged close to the river and impeded by tall crops in the centre. Stair may have been relieved by the arrival of the king, which took the weight of responsibility off his shoulders. By now he was well aware how precarious his situation was, but the king's arrival did nothing to change the picture because the Pragmatic Army did nothing but eat its way through its supplies for the week after George II's arrival.

NOAILLES' TRAP

The baffling inactivity gave Noailles all the time he needed to prepare his trap. The bridge over

the Aschaffenburg had already been secured and now a bridgehead across the Main was taken at Stockstadt, cutting off another potential avenue of escape for the Allies.

At Seligenstadt, across the river from Dettingen, he positioned a sizeable force of infantry and cavalry under his nephew the Duc De Gramont. Two pontoon bridges had been constructed and were ready to swing across the river to allow Gramont to take up a position behind the Forchbach and block the Allies' retreat.

Noailles had one more wrinkle to his plan. He placed his 40 12-pounders in five batteries near Mainflingen, from where they could fire into the ranks of the advancing Allies as they attempted to get past Gramont. The remainder of his army was held ready to cross at Stockstadt and bottle up the Allies. It was a sophisticated plan, and one that had every chance of succeeding, but the rogue factor of human misjudgement can never be accounted for and it was to be Noailles' undoing.

Noailles' sophisticated plan for the battle was undone by the poor judgement of his nephew, allowing George II's forces to escape



Despite his lack of martial prowess, George II led his forces in the battle, though this is a highly fanciful depiction of the king

Ironically, though, it was the Allies who first suffered due to misjudgement. Having decided that the only sensible course of action was to retreat back to their supply base at Hanau, George II insisted that the British occupy the position of honour at the front of the march - this despite the fact that they had marched to their current camp at the front of the army and would therefore be at the rear if the army reversed its direction of march. Considerable time would be lost manoeuvring the British regiments through the ranks of Hanoverian and Austrian troops to get to the front, but the decision was not disastrous because, as it turned out, retreat was no longer an option.

BOTTLED UP

In the early hours of 27 June, Noailles had reinforced his contingent at Seligenstadt and ordered it to start crossing the Main. The trap had been sprung, and Noailles made it clear to his officers that they were to hold their position and allow the Allies to break themselves trying to cross the Forchbach.

Artillery was positioned to cover the causeways across the stream and if the Allies did manage to cross, they would be in such a state of disarray that a bayonet charge from the 23,000 infantry under Gramont would surely send them reeling back.

Noailles, confident that his orders were understood, moved to his main force at Stockstadt, where he issued orders for the Prince de Tingry to send troops across the bridge at Aschaffenburg, link up with the bridgehead at Stockstadt and then command the men (mostly infantry, but with around 3,000 mounted troops) who would cut off the other route out of the trap. The Pragmatic Army would be well and truly bottled up.

Once aware that rather than undertaking a march they would instead be waging a battle, the Pragmatic Army began to deploy accordingly, constricted by the difficult terrain on which they were manoeuvring. Confusion among their ranks was inevitable considering the changing nature of the situation, and it appears that this confusion led to a serious problem in the left wing, where the bulk of the cavalry would be massed. Five ranks of cavalry units were mistakenly mixed with a line of infantry, making it impossible for all of the Allies' cavalry to be deployed at the same time.

In one of those strange quirks of war, the first result of the Allies' obvious confusion was to tip the odds of success back in their favour. Viewed by Gramont, impatiently awaiting his enemy's approach, the turmoil in the Allied ranks appeared terminal. Seeing a chance for personal glory, he abandoned his orders and his defensive position, ordering his men to cross the stream that was their primary line of defence. Gramont was going to attack the Pragmatic Army head-on.

THE OPENING MOVE

The Pragmatic Army was advancing slowly, infantry pushing through chest-high stalks of ►

THE PRAGMATIC ARMY



GEORGE II

The British king was officially in charge of the Allied army, aided by his son, the Duke of Cumberland, but the Earl of Stair was the man who had command on the ground in reality. The king awarded a number of men promotions and medals following the battle, despite the battle only marginally going their way. He went on to lead Britain into the Seven Years' War from 1756.



JOHN DALRYMPLE

The Earl of Stair was a Scottish nobleman and diplomat (he was the British Ambassador in Paris before the war) who was promoted to field marshal in 1742 to lead the Allied army and then to Commander-in-Chief of the Forces of South Britain and colonel of the Black Dragoons from 1743. He chose to retire from his command a few months later, but remained in the forces.



LÉOPOLD PHILIPPE

The Fourth Duke of Arenberg and 10th Duke of Aarschot was an Austrian field marshal who had fought in the War of Spanish Succession, the Austro-Turkish War and the War of Polish Succession before forging an alliance with Britain and the Netherlands for this conflict. Following hostilities he took up the role of governor of Hainaut, mixing with luminaries of the era.

THE FRENCH ARMY



ADRIEN MAURICE DE NOAILLES

The Third Duke of Noailles fought in the War of Spanish Succession, was president of the Finance Council and fought again in the War of the Polish Succession when he was made Marshal of France in 1734. He took command of French forces in 1743 ahead of Dettingen and, despite defeat there, was able to force the Austrians out of Alsace-Lorraine the following year.



LOUIS DE GRAMONT

The Sixth Duke of Gramont was the son of a former Marshal of France thanks to his father and the grandson of one too, thanks to his mother. Despite this military pedigree, he has been given much of the responsibility for allowing the Allied forces to break out of the trap set for them at Dettingen by attempting to attack rather than hold them in place. He would die at the Battle of Fontenoy in 1745.

The Battle of Dettingen

June 1743

■ British/German Army
■ French Army

01 The Allies advance

With supplies running low and lines of communication broken, the Pragmatic Army reverses its direction of march, intending to return to its magazine at Hanau. On seeing French forces around Dettingen, the army redeploys for battle.

08 The last moves

With his army badly mauled and his confidence broken, Gramont compounds his errors by abandoning the field completely, clearing the road to Hanau for the Pragmatic Army to escape from the carefully laid trap.

02 Gramont's gamble

The Duc de Gramont sees a chance to grab personal glory and orders his men to cross the stream, taking several hours to establish a new position as the Pragmatic Army makes slow progress due to difficult terrain.

03 The first shots

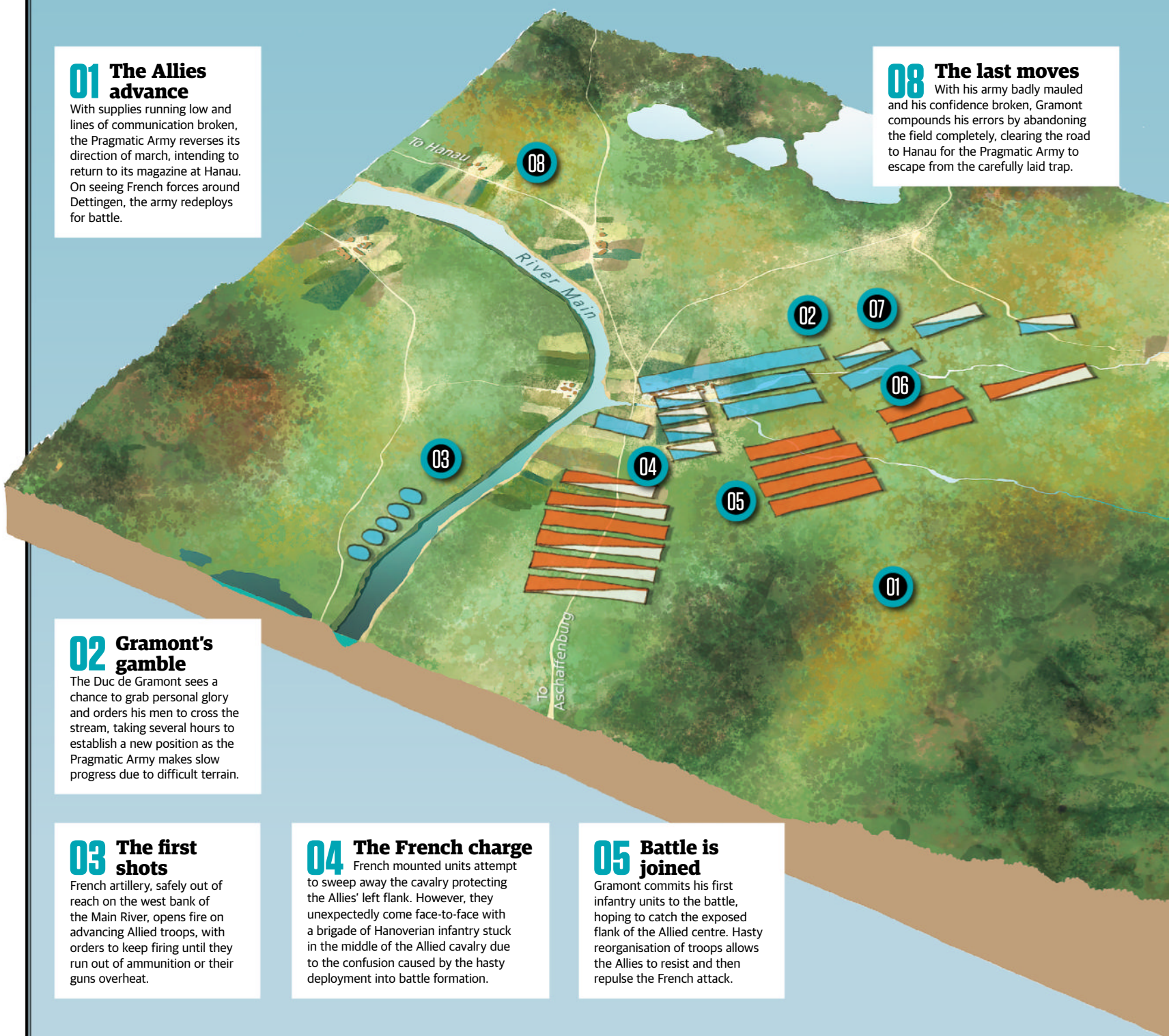
French artillery, safely out of reach on the west bank of the Main River, opens fire on advancing Allied troops, with orders to keep firing until they run out of ammunition or their guns overheat.

04 The French charge

French mounted units attempt to sweep away the cavalry protecting the Allies' left flank. However, they unexpectedly come face-to-face with a brigade of Hanoverian infantry stuck in the middle of the Allied cavalry due to the confusion caused by the hasty deployment into battle formation.

05 Battle is joined

Gramont commits his first infantry units to the battle, hoping to catch the exposed flank of the Allied centre. Hasty reorganisation of troops allows the Allies to resist and then repulse the French attack.



07 Retreat across the Forchbach

Gramont manages to withdraw his men across the Forchbach, back to their original positions. Unknown to him, reinforcements are on their way to strengthen his position and the day is not yet lost.

unripe crops, trampling them down and moving on. Progress was slow, as frequent stops had to be made to reorganise. This progress was being carefully watched by a 74-year-old artillery officer, Jean-Florent de la Vallière, commanding the five batteries of 12-pounders on the opposite bank of the Main. At midday, he decided it was time to join the fight.

The situation now faced by the Pragmatic Army could hardly have been more dire. With limited room for manoeuvre, forced to move slowly due to the thick crops and tormented by 40 pieces of artillery (out of range of effective counter-battery fire), they grimly pushed forward. The intervention of de la Vallière might have tipped the balance, but final reports of the battle show a surprisingly low number of casualties inflicted by artillery. It is not quite so surprising, however, when the reason is understood. The French artillery had to cease fire when Gramont's cavalry forces, under the Duc d'Harcourt, were hurled into an attack they were never intended to have made. There was at least some sense in the move, though. If they could destroy the British cavalry facing them, the entire Allied position would be compromised.

What had appeared to be an almost certain victory now hung in the balance. Gramont had changed the nature of the battle from one where the French held an overwhelming superiority of numbers to one where they actually had fewer men engaged than the Allies.

Three lines of French cavalry were committed to the attack, breaking through the first two lines of British horsemen but not routing them. In full cry, the French rushed on, only to come upon dense ranks of Hanoverian infantry, out of place but perfectly suited to stopping a cavalry charge. Harcourt's men had no choice but to withdraw, fighting their way through the reformed ranks of British cavalry to regain the safety of their lines.

THE DUCKS OF THE MAIN

The cavalry attack, though ultimately unsuccessful, had prised open a gap between the left wing and the centre of the Pragmatic Army, and Gramont sent in infantry to exploit it. The six battalions of the Gardes Françaises, however, were repulsed by combined British and Austrian infantry and forced to retreat. Some of them, perhaps the more inexperienced troops, fled all the way to the river and some drowned attempting to cross it, earning the guards the cruel nickname 'Les Canards du Mein' (the Ducks of the Main).

Still Gramont saw a chance for victory. Ordering the rest of his force forward, he hoped to tip the shaken Pragmatic Army into a retreat, onto the muskets and bayonets awaiting in their rear. Fighting now erupted along the entire line, but the Allies refused to crack. Upon receiving word that the cavalry action on his

flank had descended into a slugfest, with no hope of securing a decisive advantage, Gramont was forced to withdraw.

He now faced exactly the problem he was meant to have imposed upon his enemy - crossing the Forchbach under fire. A combination of his men's steadiness while withdrawing, a sacrificial charge by the elite Brigade de Cuirassiers and fatigue in the enemy ranks saw Gramont pull off an effective retreat, but he had also cost his army a potentially crushing victory.

Noailles still believed the day could be saved, and was rushing men to reinforce Gramont, who could still hold his initial position and fight the battle that had been intended all along. Gramont, though, now concluded his woeful performance by ordering his men to abandon their defensive position altogether and cross the Main, ending the battle and opening the path for the Pragmatic Army to march back on Hanau.

A MIRACULOUS ESCAPE

The Battle of Dettingen saw the French army suffer around 4,000 casualties, including around 900 dead and 1,500 taken prisoner. The Pragmatic Army claimed to have lost just 2,000 men.

Any thoughts of pursuing the defeated French were unrealistic (legend has it that George II pushed for this, which would be characteristic of his distinct lack of martial awareness), as the Allies were tired and short on supplies. The cavalry, especially, were in no condition for a pursuit. Instead, the army marched away from the death trap it had so narrowly avoided.

Noailles could take some comfort in succeeding in his initial aim, preventing the Pragmatic Army from marching further into Bavaria. He had sent them back from where they came, but the tantalising possibility of a decisive victory had somehow slipped through his fingers. ○

06 The last roll of the dice

As his cavalry fail to gain a decisive advantage, Gramont is forced into a last-ditch effort to grab victory, launching the entirety of his men against the shaken Allies. A 30-minute musket duel ensues before he is forced to break off his attack.

Map by: Rodó Espin Pinar. Inset: © Alamy

Duke of Cumberland William Augustus was wounded in the right leg by a musket ball



What If...

MUSSOLINI HAD JOINED THE ALLIES?

Driven by ambition, Italy's participation in the Axis war effort led to the collapse of its empire, the fall of the Fascist Party and Mussolini's death

Interview by David Williamson

INTERVIEW WITH



PROFESSOR RICHARD BOSWORTH

Richard has written and edited over 30 books. He has written extensively on Italian fascism and his latest book, *Politics, Murder and Love in an Italian Family*, is out now.

Stuck in the power politics of the Great War, Italy was enthusiastic to join the German war effort following the defeat of France, believing it would significantly grow its African empire. This aim contradicted the German fanatical and pseudo-scientific war goals and Italy soon became isolated as Germany shifted its army towards Operation Barbarossa in the East. Italy burned with humiliation as its treasured empire fell, Mussolini was ousted and the Wehrmacht took control of Italy. Could aligning with the Allies instead in 1939 have saved the Italian Empire, Mussolini and the Fascist Party?

What was Mussolini's motivation for joining the war on the Axis' side in June 1940?

It wasn't Nazism that drove Italy, but imperial ambition. It is easy to make coloured shirt and Holocaust parallels between fascist Italy and Nazi Germany dictators, but there are plenty of reasons to instead consider Italy as a belated European imperial power. After 1860, Italy was dogged by the fact it was elevated to a great imperial power but remained the least economically advanced of its contemporaries. Italy was forced to be overambitious and overcommitted itself economically and militarily to its empire. It took until after 1945, when Italy became a small but reasonable player on the stage of international politics, for Italy to reduce the scale of its imperial ambitions. For example, it hasn't invaded Ethiopia despite having a prime minister who admired Mussolini in her girlhood.

The other great generalisation that can be made is that once Italy was united in 1861, it entered all wars aggressively. The same can be said of June 1940, where Italians desired a quick victory. It was not only Mussolini - there were plenty of people who were more doubtful than him in the agonising months between September 1939 and June 1940. Questions were being asked about whether Italy was repeating 1914-15 when Italy delayed its entrance into the Great War, and in many ways, it was. By June 1940, France had been defeated, and by a conventional reading of Italian power politics, it was time to go into the war on the winning German side. Italy could then easily betray Germany when it came to making peace deals with Britain and France and add places like Djibouti and Malta to the empire.

How was the personal and political relationship between Mussolini and Adolf Hitler?

I'm increasingly convinced that Italy is better thought of in comparison with the other European imperialist states, including Britain and France. Its killing fields were in Africa rather than Europe. Perhaps 3,000 people died during Mussolini's rise to power and 7,000 Italian Jews were killed in Italy's grovelling participation in the Holocaust. However, there's no particular reason to think that in 1930, Mussolini was any more anti-Semitic than Churchill.

It's the empire that's interesting - old, traditional and nationalist Italy is as present in the political culture as fascism. The Duke of Aosta became the viceroy and governor-general of Italian East Africa in ►



© Gettyimages

Main image source: © Alamy

RIGHT Mussolini, centre, during the March on Rome in 1922



THE PAST

JUNE 1940

JOINING THE AXIS

As the summer of 1940 began, Mussolini was absolutely convinced that a German victory was inevitable.

Germany had defeated France and the British Army evacuated via Dunkirk. Mussolini joined the war on the side of the Axis in June 1940 and wasted absolutely no time in launching his East African Campaign, seizing British Somaliland alongside Kenyan and Somali territories, which were promptly added to Italian East Africa.



FEB 1941 – SPRING 1943

MILITARY COLLAPSE

In early 1941, the Italian Army began to struggle, forced back to Libya during Operation Compass. Its position in Africa became untenable during the Tunisia Campaign in early 1943

and the Allied invasion of Sicily brought the war onto the Italian home front. Discontent grew with labour strikes beginning in March 1943 and concern about the German presence in the country.



JULY 1943

MUSSOLINI FALLS FROM POWER

Mussolini called a Grand Council meeting in July 1943, during which a no-confidence resolution against him is carried. The next day, Mussolini was arrested by 200 Carabinieri on the king's orders and Pietro Badoglio was appointed as prime minister. Upon being discovered by communists, on 28 April 1945 Mussolini was executed, and an angry mob hung his corpse alongside his mistress, Claretta Petacci.



ABOVE Italian crowds celebrate the conquest of Ethiopia, reflecting imperial ambition across the country

ABOVE RIGHT Left to right, Mussolini, Hitler and Ciano meet in 1940 to discuss the war

1937. He pursued a policy that was exactly what you would expect from a European imperial power, with the same amount of bloodshed as seen with the British in Kenya and the French in Algeria.

Mussolini had accepted the rhetoric of his regime and thought himself Hitler's superior, even though Germany's military and economic strength was much greater than Italy's. In my biography of Mussolini many years ago, I called Italy the 'ignoble second' to Germany, whereas Austria-Hungary had been Germany's 'noble second' in World War I. Mussolini was also trying to persuade Hitler to make a separate peace in the East without understanding the fanaticism and pseudo-science behind Nazi anti-Semitism and anti-communism. Hitler desired to completely extirpate Jewish people, Russians and communists. Meanwhile, Mussolini was still thinking in terms of pre-1914 power politics, whereby one side was pitted against the other purely based on imperial ambitions.

When Italy joins the war, it suffers near continuous military defeats. What was the impact of these failures on the Italian political environment and Mussolini's control of the country?

It was a pathetic failure to be unable to defend the empire that had been taken with so much propaganda and endorsed by all sorts of Italians. Even



liberal anti-fascists supported the empire, including Benedetto Croce who gave his senator's gold medal to the state when it was collecting jewellery to prop up the economy against sanctions organised by the British. Yet, the empire collapsed without a whimper. The army that took over in Eritrea and Somalia was ridiculous, but the Italians had no military or economic power to provide the Duke of Aosta with the necessary forces in 1942.

There wasn't a huge distinction between Mussolini and the other members of the Italian ruling elite. Mussolini was increasingly baffled by the military failure and more baffled by having to wear a coloured shirt, but he knew that the party was in trouble. By the second half of 1942, the Italian elites and sensible members of the Fascist Party, like Mussolini's son-in-law Galeazzo Ciano and justice minister Dino Grandi, thought it was time to make a peace deal. Conversations started occurring between the king and the military chiefs. Ciano was made ambassador to the Vatican. Despite the disagreements and even though in July 1943 Ciano betrayed Mussolini and got executed, it was clearly hoped that there would be whispers around the corridors of the Vatican about a growing Italian desire for a deal that could get leaked to the United States.

Meanwhile, Mussolini was seeking a way to make sufficient military progress to negotiate the return of Mogadishu and Djibouti to the Italian Empire. He thought Italy could still be a traditional great power, combined with the paraphernalia of a coloured shirt-wearing dictatorship. There's a contradiction between this superficial ideology and propaganda and anything beyond the surface. Mussolini got more depressed as the war went on and

"Mussolini was increasingly baffled by the military failure"



was troubled by what was happening. The party was disappearing, and the Italian public started to wonder why exactly they were involved in this war, given that they were losing the empire.

Had Mussolini brought Italy into the Allied camp, how would the power dynamics have changed and what tensions could have emerged among the Allies?

Had the Italians been on the British and French side in 1939, I don't know how they would have fared militarily. Germany remained militarily stronger and Italy was financially exhausted from its empire. What you find when reading about Eritrea and Ethiopia from 1940 and 1945 is that when the British came in, they didn't talk about the alleged number of killings across the Italian Empire that reached up to 770,000. Instead, the British saw the Italians as feckless, spending far too much on their empire. Italy would have had to negotiate its way around that with the British.

ABOVE An Italian family enjoys their first meal for three days, which was provided by the Allied liberators

BELOW Partisans round up fascist sympathisers in Rome

The other potential 'What If?' is that Ciano flirted with supporting Finland when the Soviet Union invaded it in alliance with Nazi Germany. What if the Italians had intervened in Finland and engaged with Stalin's Soviet forces when Stalin was allied with Hitler? What on Earth would that have meant for World War II? I can't imagine that the Italians would have been particularly helpful to the Finns.

If Italy had become Allied, what difference would it have made to its post-war experience?

The simple answer is, if Franco lasted until he died, then why wouldn't Mussolini? The medical reports on Il Duce when the Americans took his corpse showed that he was in good health. Therefore it's reasonable to assume that the Fascist Party, alongside the monarchy, might have remained in power for a long time.

Once Mussolini fell in 1943 and the state was run by the Germans via a puppet dictator, it was communists who were the main centre of military resistance in Italy. A post-war fascist regime may have struggled to deal with these same communist elements. There is also no reason to think that the later post-Mussolini Italy wouldn't have converted to liberal democracy as Spain and Portugal did after their fascist regime fell. The only troubling aspect of that point of view is that Spain and Portugal had residual empires that later collapsed when their dictatorships fell. Meanwhile, Italy would have been a bigger empire with much more invested in it, so it would have had to make a greater adjustment. ○

Mussolini Had Joined the Allies?

THE POSSIBILITY

1939-45

WARTIME STRUGGLES

Joining the Allies would have drawn Italy into direct conflict with the Wehrmacht on the home front and throughout its African empire. As a military and economic inferior, Italy would have struggled to hold its own. The other Allies would have had to provide extensive military support.



1947

PARIS PEACE TREATIES

The Paris Peace Treaties were created in negotiations with the Axis nations that had switched sides during the war. However, if Italy had never joined the war on the Axis' side, it would not have been subjected to the treaty and could have kept hold of its precious African colonies. Italy might have even been able to use the treaties to expand its empire.



1963

MUSSOLINI'S REIGN CONTINUES

When he was killed in 1945, Mussolini was 61 years old and in relatively good health. Without being removed and later executed due to a disastrous war against the Allies, he could have remained in power. If he had survived and died years later, either the Fascist Party would have remained in power under his son-in-law Ciano, or democracy may have eventually emerged.






Through History

CARTOMANIA

A new book explores Victorian celebrity and culture through the phenomenon of cartes de visite

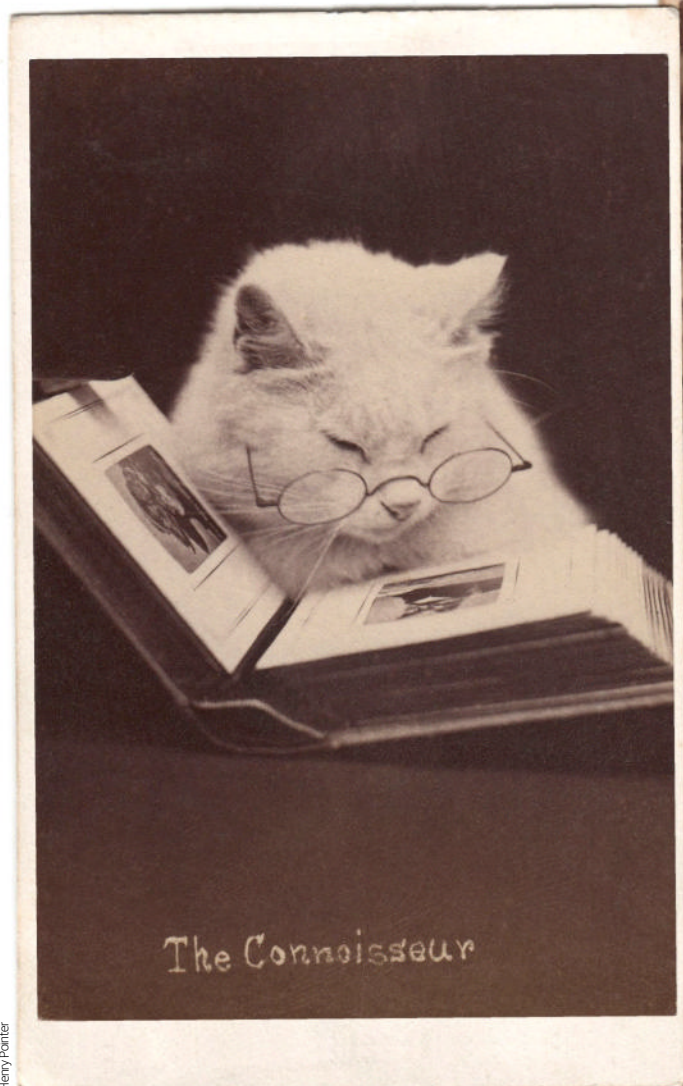
The widespread use of photography during the 19th century was a significant advancement for the Victorians, providing them with a new, visual way to document and celebrate their lives. The artistic medium became a novel form of entertainment, and people began to use, view and collect photographs for their own amusement. In his new book *Cartomania: Photography and Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century*, Paul Frecker explores the fascinating history of a specific form of Victorian collectible photography – the cartes de visite.

Popularised by French photographer André Disdéri in the 1860s, the cartes de visite were

small-sized photographs created and shared by the Victorians – similarly to how we might use Instagram or Facebook today. They were used to document everything from personal milestones to historical events; from ordinary people to celebrities of the day. The cartes craze captured the public imagination, from the working classes who viewed the cartes through shop windows, to the aristocrats who first participated in the sensation, and even Queen Victoria herself. In *Cartomania*, Frecker presents a plethora of examples as he charts the rise, dominance and fall of the cartes de visite phenomenon, while examining its significance and place at the epicentre of Victorian culture. 

UNIDENTIFIED SITTERS

▼ This carte is significant as the man in the photograph is not connected to religious or missionary work in any way, as most Black people featured in Victorian cartes were. It is a rare example of a photograph of an ordinary Victorian man who just happens to be Black.



Henry Pointer

STRANGE POSES

▶ This carte shows two gentlemen standing with their backs to the camera. Though there are not many examples of this specific pose among surviving cartes de visite, there are enough to suggest that this particular stance was a "thing" – for what reason remains a mystery!

THE CONNOISSEUR

▲ One of over 100 cartes in the series called "Brighton Cats" by photographer Henry Pointer, this carte shows a cat perusing an album filled with other cartes de visite. It is titled "The Connoisseur". Each of the cartes showed cats engaged in various anthropomorphic activities.



Robert Freeman Baines of Lewisham High Street, New Cross, southeast London



PUBLISHED BY NEGRETTI AND ZAMBRA,
CRYSTAL PALACE.

THE SPIRAL ASCENSIONIST

Known as "the Spiral Ascensionist", Signor Ethardo was a performer whose act involved walking a ball (which he is photographed with here) up a narrow spiral track to the top of a 50-foot tall column. He appeared as the main attraction at the Crystal Palace in London.

SARAH FORBES BONETTA

The woman in this carte is Sarah Forbes Bonetta. She was presented to Queen Victoria in 1850 as a "gift" from the King of Dahomey. Victoria arranged for Sarah's education and overall wellbeing, and in 1862 Sarah married a merchant from Sierra Leone.



DISDERI & Co (Limited.)

Disdéri

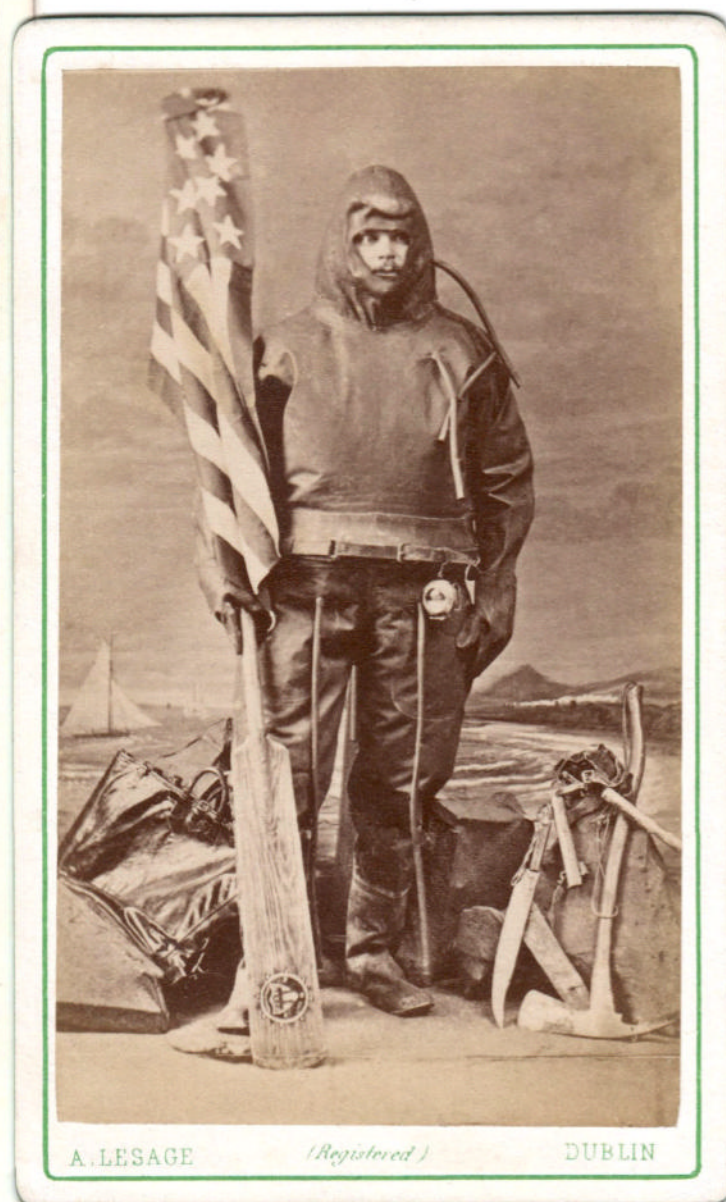
HUMAN MILESTONES

Many cartes de visite were created to mark significant personal events such as births, deaths and weddings. This photograph of the Honourable Mrs Robert Baillie Hamilton, pictured wearing her wedding dress, was taken a month after her marriage to commemorate the occasion.

THE FRENCH DANCER

Taken by Disdéri, the French photographer who popularised cartes de visite, this carte features a portrait of the French dancer Finette. Finette performed in London from 1867, first at the Lyceum and later at the Alhambra, and danced an early version of the iconic can-can.





Merrick of Brighton

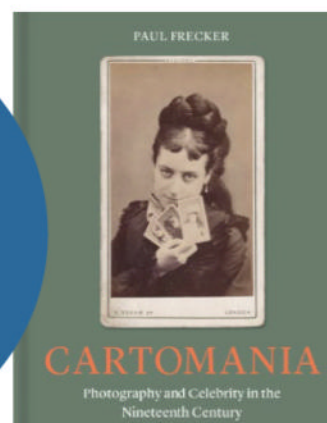
Lesage of Dublin

THE AQUATIC ENTERTAINER

▲ Here, Captain Paul Boyton is shown wearing his inflatable suit which enabled him to essentially become his own dinghy. Wearing this contraption, Boyton floated on his back and rowed himself down some of the world's major rivers. He wrote of his adventures in his autobiography.

***Cartomania:
Photography and
Celebrity in the
Nineteenth Century***

(September Publishing,
2024) by Paul Frecker is
available to buy now.



© Paul Frecker/September Publishing

REVIEWS

The books, TV shows and films causing a stir in the history world this month



THE MINISTRY OF UNGENTLEMANLY WARFARE

Guy Ritchie's entertaining WWII thriller throws light on Operation Postmaster

Cert: TBC **Director:** Guy Ritchie **Cast:** Henry Cavill, Eiza González, Alan Ritchson **Released:** Out now

History is written by the victors, the saying goes, and that's not incorrect. This is how historical narratives develop, and how myths (sometimes national ones) form in the cultural consciousness. In the realm of all things cinema, movies play a vital part in shaping and promoting national mythology. Screenwriters do tend to embellish, invent, condense and rewrite. As the famous quote, from John Ford's *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance* (1962) put it, they tend to "print the legend".

The complexities and nuances of how history *actually* happens can be too complex for a two-hour film. Instead, movies rely on the comfort of fact in victory. Britain stood up to Hitler against the odds and the Allied Forces ultimately prevailed. This is essentially what the WWII action genre entails, what makes it click, what makes it work, what makes it so, well, comforting. We won and have a whole raft of stories to tell and re-tell endlessly. It was indeed "our finest hour".

If historical complexities and nuances exist, then so does Guy Ritchie. He kickstarted his

career making films featuring cheeky Londoners up to no good in the world of crime. Part of the 1990s 'Cool Britannia' era, his aesthetic marked by a spring in its step, plenty of swagger, a twinkle in its eye, his WWII thriller - *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare* (2024), based on Damien Lewis' *Churchill's Secret Warriors: The Explosive True Story of the Special Forces Desperadoes of WWII* (2014) - possesses the same cocksure Britishness and insouciance bordering on outright arrogance. It transplants well.

What makes *The Ministry of Ungentlemanly Warfare* not just a thoroughly entertaining thrill ride, but informative, lies in its scenario: exploring the formation of what later became the SAS (Special Air Service) and its pivotal role in implementing (as the title suggests) underhand methods when called for in the national interest. For all the movie mayhem and bombast on show, the invented machine-gun battles and numerous explosions, the mission itself was unbelievably daring stuff (not to say controversial). It also helps promote such names as Gus March-

Phillips (played by Henry Cavill), Geoffrey Appleyard (Alex Pettyfer), and Anders Lassen (Alan Ritchson) into wider pop culture. All took key parts in executing what became known as Operation Postmaster. The grizzled patriots were charged with sailing a Brixham trawler to the west coast of central Africa into Spanish colonial territory (the controversial part being because Spain was officially neutral). There they would board - then steal - Italian boats used to refuel Nazi U-boats in the Atlantic. If caught, they'd be disavowed and left to face the music (meaning: a date with the firing squad or hangman's noose).

Sure, it's all ramped up for the sake of Hollywood spectacle, and plenty of liberties with the truth and reality are taken along the way, but Operation Postmaster was nevertheless a major gamble at a fraught time for Britain. Many historians will no doubt roll their eyes, but mainstream audiences will lap up Guy Ritchie's devil-may-care, men-on-a-mission actioner. **MC**



Reviews by

Martyn Conterio, Jonathan Gordon, Callum McKelvie, Emily Staniforth

ROAD TO SURRENDER

A thrilling and detailed account of how three men helped end the war in the Pacific

Author: Evan Thomas **Publisher:** Elliot & Thomas

Price: £10.99 **Released:** Out now

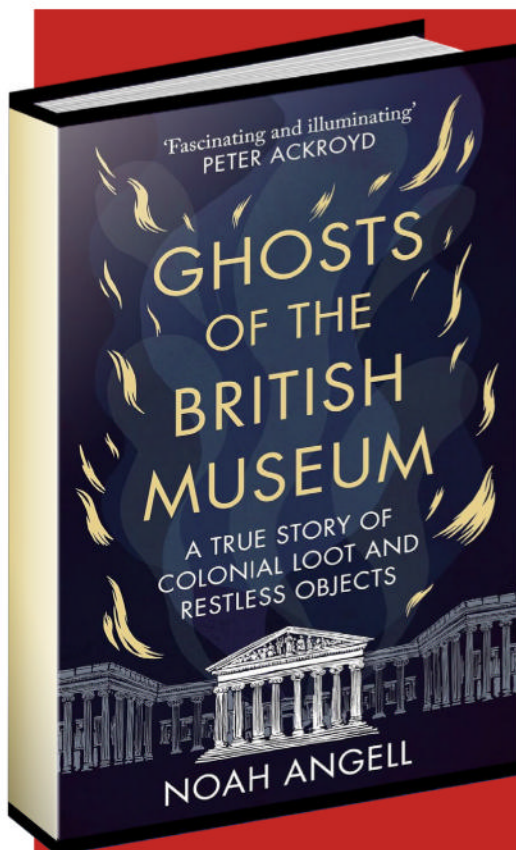
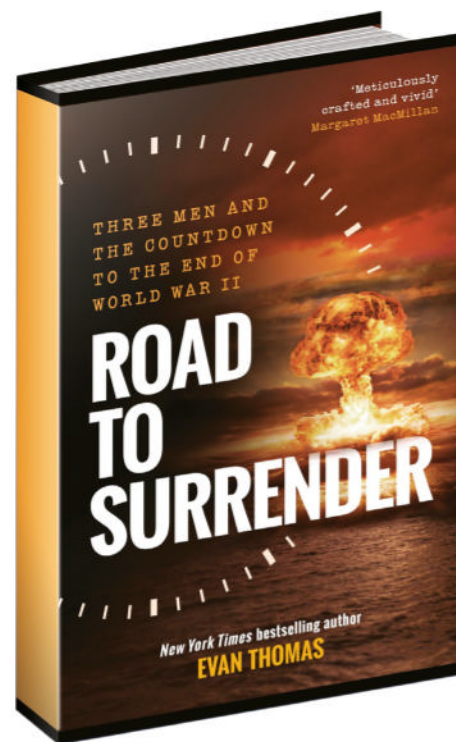
Following the release and subsequent success of Christopher Nolan's *Oppenheimer*, it feels like the atomic bomb is everywhere. Now, the journalist and historian Evan Thomas has penned a new book focusing partly on the birth of the bomb, but mostly on the crucial period leading up to the surrender of Japan. He explores the difficult decisions made and seeks to dispel some of the persistent myths.

Thomas's unique approach is to focus on individuals whose stories are rarely told, centring the narrative on names readers might not be as familiar with; American secretary of war Henry Stimson, head of strategic bombing General Carl Spaatz and Japanese foreign minister Shigenori Togo. All three make for fascinating subjects and Togo in particular gives the book a much-needed Japanese perspective. This allows Thomas to

explore the complexities of the Japanese wartime political system and the difficulties involved in arranging a surrender.

Another refreshing element is the immense sympathy with which Thomas approaches the various historical figures. For example, Thomas objectively explores Stimson's request that Kyoto be removed from the list of possible atomic bomb targets – a fact largely reduced to a joke in Christopher Nolan's film.

Thomas writes in the present tense, lending the book a sense of immediacy. This is a pacy book, in some ways more akin to a novel than non-fiction work. The central characters are fully rounded and Thomas's vibrant writing style makes it a hard book to put down. A true page-turner. **CM**



GHOSTS OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM

A haunting exploration of a controversial historic institution and its looted artefacts

Author: Noah Angell **Publisher:** Monoray **Price:** £20 **Released:** Out now

When first picking up *Ghosts of the British Museum: A True Story of Colonial Loot and Restless Objects*, we expected to be met with a litany of half-convincing ghost stories passed down through the years and all set within the walls of the Museum. But what we found was much more than that. Using the spooky tales of ghostly apparitions, uncomfortable feelings and strange happenings relayed by a number of museum staff members, past and present, Angell guides his readers through the complex, and often disturbing, history of a number of noteworthy artefacts taken from across the world: their origins and importance; their journey to Britain; their history as museum exhibits.

Each of the objects mentioned, including the Parthenon's lost caryatid and the Benin Bronzes

among many others, have at least one spine-tingling event linked to them, many of which Angell interprets as the objects fighting back against their captors. As discourses around the repatriation of artefacts stolen by colonial powers become more frequently reported in the news, Angell's explorations of supernatural occurrences linked with artefacts taken in traumatic and violent circumstances make a convincing case for returning these objects home. Regardless of whether you believe in ghosts, this collection of paranormal tales combined with compellingly written accounts of how the artefacts came into the institution's custody reveal the dark history of the British Museum, and the controversies the institution must face up to in the present day. **ES**





History of Art

In this brand-new bookazine, trace the incredible history of art, from the rivalry between Leonardo da Vinci and Michelangelo, to the sordid life of blood-thirsty Caravaggio. Explore the lasting legacy of the Renaissance on contemporary art, and find out how Dadaism rejected the status quo and shone a light on the absurdity of war.

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HISTORY WAR RECOMMENDS...



The Stalin Affair

Author Giles Milton **Price** £25 **Publisher** John Murray Press

This is a tour de force in wartime diplomacy – Milton is a historian who writes with the verve of a seasoned novelist gripping the reader from the very start. He charts with aplomb the forging of an unlikely Anglo-American-Soviet alliance during the Second World War and its subsequent collapse. Milton brings a fresh and all too human perspective to the desperate shuttle diplomacy designed to bring ideological enemies together.

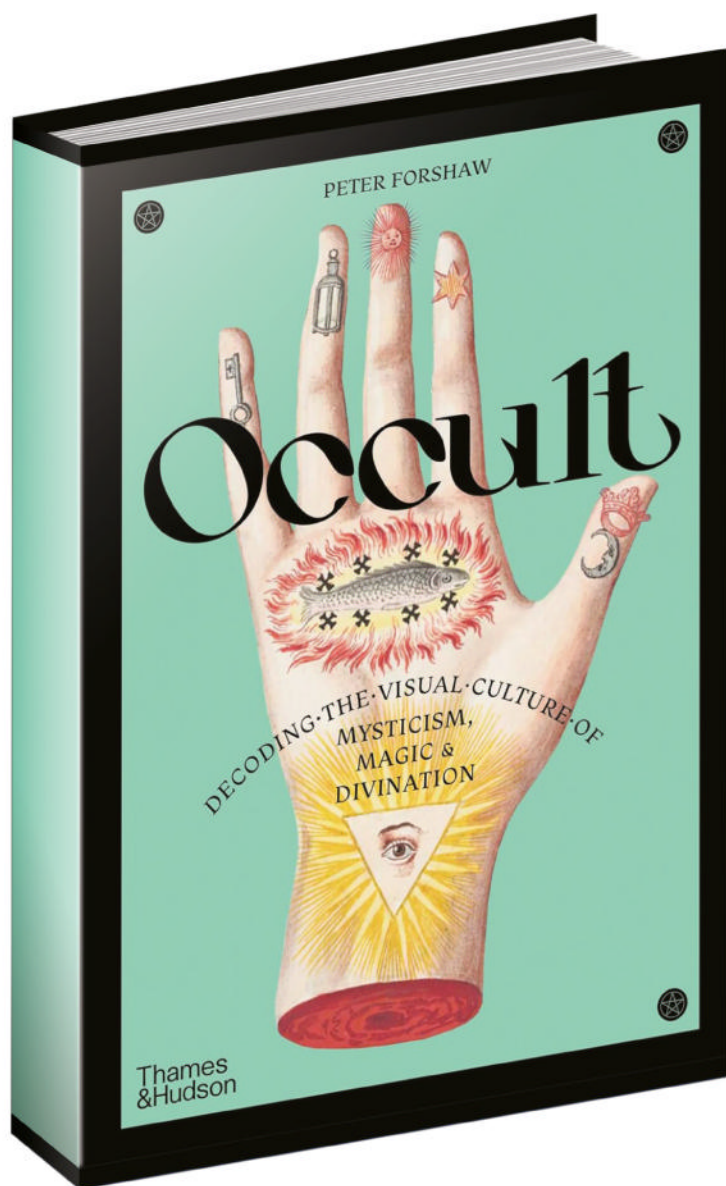
Out now!

OCCULT: DECODING THE VISUAL CULTURE OF MYSTICISM, MAGIC AND DIVINATION



A superb introduction to complex and storied ideas with massive influence to this day

Author: Peter Forshaw **Publisher:** Thames & Hudson **Price:** £25 **Released:** 29 August



"Fantastic use of illustrations and concise analysis"

If the history of the occult, stretching back to ancient Egypt up to modern times, is something that you have an interest in or have always wanted to learn more about, this new book from Dr Peter Forshaw is essential. Offering expert analysis of centuries of occult practices and artefacts, he condenses down a mass of material into incredibly engaging form.

Forshaw has a background in researching the history of alchemy, magic, Kabbalah, astrology, rituals and esotericism, all of which are brought to bear in this book. Tackling the topic of the occult in any form can be challenging thanks to its myriad forms and terminology, but it's all handled deftly here.

Forshaw begins with the foundations of occult practices, looking at astrology, alchemy and Kabbalah as the three ways in which early humanity sought to explain and examine the world around them. He then tackles the evolution of some of magical theory, through natural, astral and ritual magic and how those then fed into modern history as occultism, tarot and different 'new age' practices.

As is typical of these excellent coffee table releases from Thames & Hudson, *Occult* is packed with images (430 of them, to be precise), but even more important is how they are utilised. Throughout the book you'll find 'Decoding' pages that break down a key image. Focusing in on these constituent parts, Forshaw offers explanations for important elements. Diagrams

are minutely explained and their reasoning illuminated. If you ever wanted to know what all the lines on a hand are supposed to represent in palmistry, for instance, this book offers you that insight. This is a topic full of peculiar terms and ideas that in a more straightforwardly presented, academic text would be challenging to digest, but this bold, bright collection makes the content wonderfully accessible.

A second recurring element in the book are the 'Profiles' that tackle important concepts spanning different occult practices, such as the four elements or the signs of the zodiac. Again, we have fantastic use of illustrations and concise analysis to help guide you through.

From true believers to charlatans, we also get a gallery of various influential and important figures to learn about through the book, such as the hugely influential Hermes Trismegistus from the Hellenistic period up to The Beatles meeting the Maharishi, Mahesh Yogi, in 1968. As such we not only get to know more about the origins of these ideas, but also how they have gone on to influence and inspire the art we enjoy to this day.

Delving into this complex topic of history is rarely dull, but Forshaw's fantastic book is not only a great primer on the subject, but a detailed and engaging one. There are no shortage of suggestions for further reading for those who want to go deeper too. **JG**



HISTORY HOLLYWOOD

Fact versus fiction on the silver screen



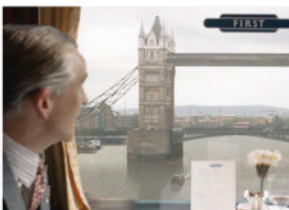
STAN & OLLIE

Director: Jon S Baird **Starring:** John C Reilly, Steve Coogan, Nina Arianda **Country:** UK **Year:** 2018

A bittersweet story of the twilight years of comedy duo Laurel & Hardy, but does it sacrifice the facts for the funnies?

VERDICT: A heartwarming story of two fading stars - just a mostly made-up one.

01 Ageing comedians Oliver Hardy and Stan Laurel venture to the UK for a final series of tours, intending to film a Robin Hood spoof. While the spoof was mentioned in a 1947 interview, the 1953/54 tour was not undertaken to facilitate the making of this.



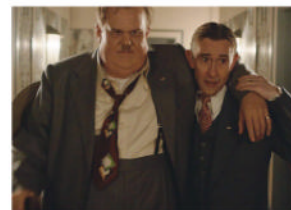
02 In an early flashback, much is made of the pair not owning the rights to their films due to the shrewd dealings of producer Hal Roach. He did indeed keep them on separate contracts, making it difficult for them to move studios or renegotiate.



03 A bone of contention is the solo film, *Zenobia*, Hardy made in 1939 after Laurel was fired from Hal Roach's studio. While we can never know the pair's true feelings, there doesn't seem to have been any sense of betrayal nor any arguments.



04 Towards the end of the film, Hardy suffers a massive heart attack but chooses to continue performing against his doctor's wishes. Not only did the attack actually occur in Plymouth, not London as depicted, but it did in fact bring the tour to an end.



05 The film depicts the tour as ending in Dublin, whereas it actually began there. Finally, no performance was cancelled because Laurel refused to continue with a new co-star because he never actually agreed to perform with one.



All images © Alamy



Ingredients

- 12 dried aubergine shells and 15 dried bell pepper shells
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 200g of long grain rice, well rinsed
- 400g of minced beef, lamb or turkey
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- Handful of flat leaf parsley
- 15ml red pepper paste
- 15ml tomato paste
- 30ml of pomegranate molasses (or high-quality balsamic vinegar)
- 15ml olive oil
- 5ml ground cumin
- 10ml dried mint
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 500ml of water for cooking
- Lemon wedges to serve

Did you know?

Fruit dolmas are also popular, such as stuffed quince or orange.

AUBERGINE & PEPPER DOLMA

STUFFED VEGETABLE TREATS, OTTOMAN EMPIRE, 15TH CENTURY – PRESENT

Taking its name from the Turkish verb 'dolmak', meaning 'to fill' or 'become full', the dolma's heritage reaches back further and wider than the Ottoman Empire from which we have some of the earliest recorded recipes. Covering everything from stuffed grape leaves to stuffed fruits, it's a pretty broad food type and its history appears to go back at least as far as ancient Knossos. The Ottoman Empire itself saw an explosion in cuisine diversity, drawing in influences from every corner of its territory and, likewise, spreading its culture far and wide. Variations of the dolma can still be found in Greek food, but also spread east to India and south into Africa.

Dolmas were thought to be particularly common among elite Ottomans, but are now enjoyed by all. In fact, dolma are regularly served to guests in Turkey where extending hospitality to visitors is considered to be very important. The dish remains very versatile, allowing for a range of ingredients. Here we'll look at using dried aubergine and pepper skins, which you may need to hunt around to find in specialist stores. ○

METHOD

- 01 Separate the dried vegetable shells and place in a large pan of boiling water, blanching for 3 minutes.
- 02 Remove the shells and place in a pan of cold water so they retain their colour and structure. Cool for 2 minutes and then drain in a colander, waiting to be stuffed.
- 03 Mix the onion, garlic, pepper paste, tomato paste, parsley, olive oil and spices in a large bowl, seasoning with salt and pepper. Knead the mixture for about 1 minute.
- 04 Add the minced meat, rice and pomegranate molasses and mix well.
- 05 Spoon the mixture into the shells, pressing it in gently and leaving at least 1cm of space at the top.
- 06 Pour some olive oil into a wide, heavy pan and then place the filled shells upright and side by side in a single layer. Add about 2 cups of water to the pan, to cover at least the bottom half of the shells.
- 07 Bring the pan to the boil and then reduce to simmer. Cover and cook for 30-35 minutes, or until the filling is fully cooked.
- 08 Serve with red pepper flakes and plain yoghurt with a little crushed garlic mixed through it.

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