NEW

ALL ABOUT

HISTORY

ANNUAL

The events, people & discoveries that changed the world

Digital Edition
We are delighted to present to you another All About History annual to offer some of the best history writing, shocking tales and in-depth insight from All About History magazine. Within these pages you will be able to explore the secrets of the ancient world, discover heroic tales of war and luxuriate in the lifestyles of the rich and powerful. For instance, you won’t want to miss the story of Lola Montez, the dancer who managed to bring down a king thanks to their love affair. Nor will you want to miss out on reading about the life of Frederick Douglass, born into slavery, who became one of the leading figures of the American abolitionist movement and was even appointed as US ambassador. We also look to answer some of the burning questions of history in this annual, such as where is the Nazi gold, who were the lady samurai and did the Romans wear underwear? The only way to find out is to begin turning the page. Throw in the WWII school for escape artists, Sweden’s diva queen and some of the wonders of ancient medicine and we hope you’ll agree, there’s much to get your teeth into.
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Written by Garry Shaw

Three-thousand three-hundred years ago, just to the west of the fortified city of Qadesh in Syria, King Ramesses II stared at the chaos unfolding around him. The fence of shields that formed a rectangular barrier around his camp had been flattened by an onslaught of Hittite chariots. All around, Egyptians were in danger of being slaughtered, crushed under horses’ hooves, pierced by arrows, or slashed by sickle-swords. Many troops fled. Egypt’s other army divisions were either too far away to help or had already been scattered by Hittite warriors en route. Ramesses was alone, riding on his chariot, his scale-armor gleaming in the sunlight. He’d been abandoned. Worse, he’d failed at one of the fundamental roles of a pharaoh - keeping his Egyptian subjects safe.

Taking Qadesh was meant to be easy. Intelligence provided by two local Bedouin suggested that the Hittite army was in Aleppo, 190km away, so Ramesses had pushed ahead to Qadesh with the army’s Amun Division, leaving his other divisions far behind. It was only when his soldiers captured two Hittite scouts that the truth was revealed: his enemy had actually gathered on the eastern side of Qadesh. There were thousands of...
troops and chariots. Now they were on the move. After a hasty council meeting, the vizier ran to warn one of Egypt’s nearby divisions, but it was too late. Ramesses’ camp would soon be overwhelmed by the Hittites – his Anatolian rivals.

That moment had now arrived. Amid the chaos, as his enemy circled, Ramesses did what many find themselves doing in desperate times: he appealed to the divine. He prayed to the god Amun, his father, asserting his devotion and listing the great deeds he’d accomplished for him. Surely the god wouldn’t abandon his son? Like in a movie, when all seemed lost, Amun heard the pharaoh’s call and joined him on the battlefield – just in the nick of time. Within moments, thousands of Hittite chariots lay smashed and broken. Guarded by Amun, Ramesses slaughtered his enemies with ease.

When the battle ended, Egypt’s soldiers and charioteers returned to camp to face a verbal assault from the pharaoh. Did they forget their training? Ramesses asked. Had he done nothing for them? How could they abandon him? What will people say? The next morning, the Egyptian army once again faced the Hittites. This time, the battle ended with an agreement; the two sides were to return home and there would be peace – for now. But Qadesh would remain in Hittite hands. It was a stalemate.

So goes Ramesses’ account of his exploits at Qadesh. If the king is to be believed, it was only Amun’s intervention that saved his life. He was alone who defeated Egypt’s enemies – his troops merely cowered in fear. The reality of how events actually played out at Qadesh that day around 1274 BCE is hard to say. One suggestion is that a specially formed Egyptian army division, the Nearin – which took a different route to Qadesh from the others – arrived at Ramesses’ camp just in time to surprise the Hittites and pushed them into retreat. If so, perhaps Ramesses did say a prayer to Amun in his moment of need. And perhaps he truly regarded the Nearin’s arrival as Amun’s response – after all, a true king had the ear of the gods.

**The Cosmic Significance of Warfare**

When crowned pharaoh, Ramesses II inherited a divine role, already more than a millennia old, that held cosmic significance. He had a duty to protect Egypt’s population and expand the country’s borders for the gods. Whenever an enemy destabilised Egypt’s interests abroad – most often by interrupting trade routes or entering Egyptian-controlled territory – it represented a loss of divine order and balance, a concept that the Egyptians called maat. It was the king’s job to fix this. Foreigners weren’t simply non-Egyptians causing trouble, but embodiments of disorder threatening the stability of the world. This is why, in state-produced texts and in sacred locations like temples and tombs, foreigners are typically presented in a negative light. They are smited by the king, bitten by animals, and bound in painful positions. This symbolism was so key to Egyptian ideology that the ‘nine bows’ – symbols representing the totality of Egypt’s enemies – were painted on palace floors and woven into royal sandals so that the king crushed his foes underfoot with every step. Give it a try the next time someone puts you in a bad mood.

That the king had this role is not surprising; he was part divine, and Egyptian mythology is filled with warfare and violence. Every day and every night since the beginning of time, the sun god and his followers had fought the enemies of order, represented by the chaos snake Apophis, whose sole aim was to destabilise the cosmos. There are myths describing Horus and Seth’s dispute over who should become king of Egypt, after Seth had murdered Osiris, Horus’ father. The gods Geb and Shu, father and grandfather of Osiris respectively, also both faced rebels during their mythological reigns.

Clearly, the gods knew a thing or two about warfare. Perhaps this is why the king had to seek their approval before marching abroad on campaign. In war scenes, often carved on temple walls, divine endorsement of a campaign is symbolised by a god handing the king a weapon. After the war, the king is shown executing foreign prisoners before the gods. Normally, he holds his terrified...
enemies by the hair, about to bring his mace down into their skulls. Such smiting scenes are often found at the entrance to temples, intended to magically prevent the disruptive forces of disorder from entering the sacred space.

**THE FIRST EGYPTIAN ARMIES**

For much of early Pharaonic history, the Egyptian army was non-professional. With little danger from outside forces, there was no need for a standing army, so whenever the king or local leaders needed a fighting force, they simply gathered up men from Egypt’s provinces, handed them weapons, and ordered them to march into enemy territory. Mercenaries and prisoners of war, often brought from Nubia and Libya, swelled the numbers. Army leaders were typically chosen because of their loyalty to the king, and so weren’t trained warriors. One such individual, a man named Weni, had been a master of the royal robing room and a judge before the king sent him to lead thousands of troops into the Levant. He clearly had a knack for the job because he returned a hero, and was sent out five more times to fight Egypt’s enemies.

The army’s main battle tactic was to overwhelm the enemy, then decimate their land and resources, removing the

**KEY BATTLES**

Important clashes that defined the Egyptian Empire

**BATTLE OF QADESH**

(1275 BCE)

This historic battle was notable for two reasons. First, it was the largest chariot battle in history with around 5,000 chariots clashing between the Egyptians, under Ramesses II, and the Hittites, under Muwatalli. Second, with the battle ending in a stalemate, it was the cause of the first recorded parity peace treaty.

**BATTLE OF THE DELTA**

(1178 BCE)

In 1178 the mysterious Sea Peoples looked to challenge Egyptian power in the region and took their experienced, heavy navy to challenge the lighter and less experienced Egyptians at sea. However, the larger ships of the Sea People proved ineffective when drawn into the Nile Delta, where the Egyptians decimated their forces.

**BATTLE OF MEGIDDO**

(1458 BCE)

The city from which the word armageddon was derived by the Greeks, Megiddo hosted many important conflicts. In 1458 it was the site for a battle between the rebellious kings of Canaan and Syria against Tuthmosis III. The pharaoh outsmarted his enemies in approaching the city and forced their surrender after an eight-month siege.

**BATTLE OF PELUSIUM**

(525 BCE)

Often cited as one of the earliest examples of psychological warfare, the Achaemenid ruler Cambyses II used animals sacred to the Egyptians to deter them from attacking, with some images depicting his men throwing cats over the city walls. Eventually the Egyptians were routed by the invading army.
possibility of any future threat. Their weapons were as straightforward as their military organisation and tactics. Archers were armed with simple bows, their arrows tipped with stone or bone arrowheads. Everyone else had axes with stone blades, daggers, or spears. Cowhide shields and leather straps, wrapped around the torso, were the troops’ only protection.

There’s frustratingly little detail in the early written accounts of Egyptian warfare, which tends to be described in the idealised funerary biographies of courtiers, inscribed in their tombs. These aren’t generally found in the early evidence, there are paintings of sieges, which show Egyptians climbing ladders to reach their enemies high on the walls of fortified Levantine cities. Meanwhile, around 2380 BCE, King Sahure had a scene of defeated Libyan enemies, along with their names, carved into a wall at his pyramid complex in Abu Sir, not far from modern Cairo. This might have been regarded as a true event from the king’s reign, if not for the fact that other kings included the exact same scene on their own monuments - even with the same Libyan names. So did Sahure fight this campaign, or did he too copy it from a previous ruler? We may never know.

**NEW KINGDOM, NEW INNOVATIONS, NEW ARMY**

A major shift in Egyptian warfare occurred as a reaction to the Second Intermediate Period (1781-1549 BCE), a phase of political breakdown. When central power collapsed and the country fragmented, an independent kingdom emerged in Egypt’s north-east, centred on a town today called Tell el-Daba. During the Middle Kingdom (2066-1781 BCE), immigrants from the Levant had moved to this region, and the Egyptians settled Levantine prisoners of war there too. Over time, these individuals became Egyptianised. Some even gained positions of power in the local government. With the loss of royal control, these individuals formed a new ruling dynasty. Slowly, they expanded their influence across the Delta and then south, until a plague devastated the population - including the rulers at Tell el-Daba. Their vacant position was either filled by another group of Egyptianised people of Levantine
origin, or by the arrival of new immigrants from the Levant. Whatever the case, they called themselves heka khasut, ‘the rulers of foreign lands’, a phrase that reaches us today as the word Hyksos.

After bloody campaigns led by three successive kings, the Egyptians succeeded in expelling the Hyksos from the country. This triggered a new phase in Egyptian history: The New Kingdom, a time of wealth and empire that lasted from around 1549 BCE to 1069 BCE. To Egypt’s elite, the Hyksos episode highlighted the urgent need for greater control over the regions bordering the country and to modernise their military and its technology. In the Near East, the chariot and the more powerful composite bow had been used for centuries. With the Hyksos gone, the Egyptians swiftly adopted both.

Chariots now became popular among pharaohs and the nobility as symbols of power and prestige, used for hunting and combat, as well as for getting around (elite villas even had entrances wide enough for chariots to enter the grounds). They also made innovations, designing their chariots to be lighter faster than those ridden by their enemies such as the Hittites. During battle, each chariot had one man steering a pair of horses and another shooting arrows, though other weapons, such as axes and daggers, were always close at hand. A third man, armed with a javelin, ran alongside the chariot, fending off any enemies that posed a danger to the horses. And unlike other soldiers, charioteers were protected by leather or bronze scale armour, and bronze helmets.

ABOVE King Tutankhamun rides on his chariot against his enemies, shooting arrows as his horses trample them. From a chest found in Tutankhamun’s tomb in the Valley of the Kings, Luxor.
As part of this professionalisation drive, the Egyptians broke with the past and created a standing army, though mercenaries and prisoners of war continued to play a major role. The army was now split into four divisions (at least, it was during the reign of Ramesses II), each named after a god: Amun, Re, Ptah and Seth. Each division had 5,000 men, commanded by the great overseer of the division, with various sub-divisions below. Becoming a soldier was now a career option, and provided a way for people of humble backgrounds to be noticed by the highest elite - even the king. If a soldier could read and write, or was willing to learn, a future in the government might be a possibility. Indeed, those who achieved this did quite well for themselves. A soldier named Ahmose Pennekabut, who fought in the wars against the Hyksos and then in multiple campaigns under successive kings, rose to become a treasurer and royal tutor - an unimaginable career for earlier generations of Egyptians.

**The Pharaoh as a War Leader**

Using this professional army, the pharaohs expanded their influence south into Nubia, which they violently annexed, and into the Levant. This brought them into contact with powerful Near Eastern empires - in particular the Mitanni of Syria and Anatolia, and after their collapse, the Hittites of Anatolia. Campaigning, either to extend or regain territory, claim tribute, or show power, became an annual activity. And as kings tend to do in these situations, the pharaohs promoted themselves everywhere as great warriors. Of the most famous, Thutmose III, proclaimed his victory over a Mitanni coalition at Megiddo, which ended in a seven month-long siege. Ramesses II promoted Amun’s favour at Qadesh and Ramesses III defeated the mysterious Sea Peoples on land and sea, and quashed two Libyan incursions.

As well as promoting their strength in combat, the New Kingdom pharaohs presented themselves as excellent decision-makers and strategists. During his empire-expanding campaigns in the Levant, Thutmose III met with his commanders at a small Levantine town called Yeherm to discuss the best road to take to Megiddo. Against their advice, he chose the most dangerous route, marching his troops in single file through the narrow Aruna Pass that led to the city. Naturally, this turned out to be the best strategy and his campaign ended in success. Similarly, Ramesses II was closely involved in all the decisions taken during his march to Qadesh - including the bad ones. He personally spoke to the two Bedouin who led him to believe that the Hittites were nowhere nearby, prompting his Amun Division’s rushed march to Qadesh. Later, once he’d interrogated the two Hittite scouts, he had to summon his officers to explain that he’d been misled – though here he blames his administration in the Levant for failing to keep track of the Hittites’ movements rather than himself. The royal texts describing these events appear to have been based on administrative documents, so no doubt reflect some level of reality, despite becoming idealised when describing the king on the battlefield.

Indeed, it’s hard to say whether New Kingdom pharaohs actually fought on the front line with their troops. In our sources, the king kills all enemies, zapping...

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**STEPPING ON THE ENEMY**

**What were the ‘nine bows’?**

A common hieroglyph you’ll find on depictions of pharaohs, on their tombs and often at the base of statues is something called the ‘nine bows’. Typically, they are nine bow shapes shown together and they represented the nine enemies of Egypt. Who these enemies might have changed over time and the number nine was used by Egyptian to mean the total of, so it was a phrase meant to mean any and all outside enemies.

Where and how it was used is perhaps more interesting than what it actually meant. Often when you see the nine bows they are seen under the feet of a pharaoh, meaning they were metaphorically crushing the enemies of Egypt under foot. Another great example is a pair of sandals believed to have belonged to Tutankhamun, which are decorated by the nine bows so that he would be treading in his enemies with every step.
ABOVE Ramesses II fighting in a battle with his famous lion by his side.

BELOW A Hittite copy of the peace treaty established between King Ramesses II of the Egyptians and King Hattusilis of the Hittites. It was discovered at the Hittite capital Hattusa (Bogazköy).
FIGHT LIKE AN EGYPTIAN
The weapons and tactics that powered the empire

**SPEAR AND SHIELD**
The combination of a spear and a shield on the Egyptian battlefield was very common. The spear would be bronze-tipped, meaning it could penetrate most armour that the Egyptians faced, while the shield allowed a great deal of protection, especially when troops locked together. The bronze tips were actually an innovation learned from the Assyrians.

**BATTLE AXE**
The original Egyptian axe of the Old Kingdom (2700-2200 BCE) was rounder and made of stone or copper before this crescent design made of bronze was adopted in the First Intermediate Period (2181-2055 BCE). This gave the axe a much longer cutting edge, making it much more lethal on the battlefield.

**KHOPESH**
A uniquely shaped sword, the khopesh is a curved sword that resembles a sickle. It’s only sharp on its outer edge, meaning it is more of a slashing sword, but could also be used for stabbing and can be safely braced along the back edge. The design actually originated in Mesopotamia.

**COMPOSITE BOW**
At 1.5m long and capable of hitting targets from 250 metres away, the composite bow was made from a number of materials and likely imported to Egypt from Assyria or the Hittite Empire. Bronze-tipped arrows combined with this powerful bow to make Egyptian archers (often positioned in chariots) a fearsome threat on the battlefield.

**CHARIOT**
When Egypt was at the peak of its powers during the New Kingdom era (1539-1292 BCE), it was in large part thanks to its utilising chariots on the battlefield. Heavily armed and mobile, they allowed Egypt to go on the offensive against its enemies, earning them important victories in the expansion of its empire under Ramesses II and Tuthmosis III.
around the battlefield like a shooting star, destroying them in an instant. He is likened to an iron wall, keeping his troops safe. Soldiers never said that they killed enemy fighters; instead, they took prisoners or collected hands from their bodies – a way for Egypt’s scribes to tally the number of enemy dead. The New Kingdom royal mummies, meanwhile, bear little evidence that the pharaohs lived lives of danger and combat. There are no healed bones or wounds that could be attributed to them putting themselves in harm’s way.

To find a king who died violently on campaign, we need to look a little earlier than the New Kingdom, to Seqenenre Tao II of the Second Intermediate Period.

“SEQenenre’s Killers Hacked at His Face with Axes and Smashed His Nose with a Mace or Axe”

Around 1533 BCE, Seqenenre’s killers hacked at his face with axes and smashed his nose with a mace or the haft of an axe. Because all the blows were inflicted against his head, and involved different weapons, it’s probable that Seqenenre was killed during a ceremonial execution, rather than fighting on the battlefield. King Senebkay of the Abydos Dynasty - a line of rulers at Abydos during the Second Intermediate Period - was also killed at the hands of enemies. But unlike Seqenenre, the unfortunate Senebkay is riddled with deep wounds, from his head to his feet, perhaps reflecting death during combat against a number of foes. As far as we can tell, no New Kingdom pharaoh bears any such wounds or scars. This doesn’t necessarily mean that they didn’t fight, just that they weren’t perhaps as active on the battlefield as they liked to present themselves.

**War and Peace**

Just as important as fighting in battle or deciding on a war strategy is knowing when to establish peace - a decision that was also in the pharaohs’ hands. Under King Amenhotep II, the Egyptians may have established treaties with the Babylonians, Mitanni and Hittites, as gifts were sent from their kings to the royal court. Afterwards, correspondence in the world’s first known parity peace treaty – one between equals.

After the treaty was established, correspondence travelled between the two courts (including two letters containing disagreements about Ramesses’ recollection of events at the Battle of Qadesh). Ramesses married two Hittite princesses, and the Hittite crown prince visited Egypt. Ramesses also invited Hattusilis to come to Egypt, though the Hittite king seems not to have accepted the offer. Due to this newfound cooperation, life improved, and people could travel in safety, particularly in the Levant, which was no longer caught up in the wars between two powerful empires. The pharaoh may have officially regarded all foreigners as embodiments of disorder, and warfare may have been key to royal presentation and ideology, but in the end the reality is that cooperation and peace are always the more sensible and prosperous options. Even for a warrior pharaoh like Ramesses II.
Have you ever wondered whether the Romans wore pants? If there were pets in the ancient world? If people believed in ghosts or aliens? From Cleopatra to the Colosseum, from Augustus Caesar to Alexandria, many ancient histories tend to focus on people and events that remain popular due to films, television and video games. Yet this approach can mean that the details of daily life often go unnoticed.

Enter historian Garrett Ryan, who has made it his mission to answer the niche and obscure questions surrounding Ancient Greece and Rome by heading online and offering his expertise to public forums like Reddit. We spoke to him about his new book *Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants* which, through a series of short and humorous essays, seeks to answer these questions and many more.

*Can you tell us a little about yourself and your interest in the ancient world?*

For as long as I can remember, I've been interested in history, and especially in the Ancient Greeks and Romans. This eventually led me to earn a PhD in Greek and Roman history at the University of Michigan. After teaching at a few universities, I left academia to start toldinstone.com, a website that explores ancient history. While promoting my site, I discovered online history forums - especially AskHistorians on Reddit - where tens of thousands of people were asking questions about the Greeks and Romans. I became active on these sites, and began to think about writing a book that would answer some of the most frequently asked questions in a way that was both informative and humorous. The end result was *Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, And War Elephants.*

*What is the most common question about the Greeks and Romans you see asked online?*

There’s no single question, but certain topics come up again and again. I see a lot of questions about the classical world’s most famous figures - Cleopatra, Caesar, Alexander the Great. Other favourite topics include the fall of the Roman Empire, the Roman army and gladiators. In general, most people know Ancient Greece and Rome through mass media - movies, television, video games - and their questions reflect that.
Have you ever been stumped by a question? And if so, can you tell us what it was?
I'm stumped routinely, and that's half the fun! When you aren't sure about a topic you have to dive into the sources, and frequently end up discovering things you never suspected. Once, for example, a student in a class I was teaching at the University of Michigan asked me whether the tomb of any Roman emperor or empress had ever been discovered intact. With all the confidence of a newly minted PhD, I answered: "No, they were looted in the Middle Ages." But later I began to doubt my answer, did some reading, and discovered that the tombs of two Roman empresses had been uncovered during the demolition of old St Peter's in the Renaissance. The question about imperial tombs was eventually included in my book.

In your experience, what do people find the most surprising about the ancient world?
We know the Greeks and Romans - or at least we like to think we do - in a way we know no other ancient civilisation. This leads to all sorts of misconceptions. People who are familiar with Classical history primarily through movies or video games, for example, often imagine the Greeks and Romans in lurid colours - all bloodshed and debauchery, impossible virtue and improbable vice. That is misleading, of course. The Greeks and Romans, after all, were just people, not all that different from us in the basic concerns of making a living or raising a family. But it is equally misleading to think that the Greeks and Romans were just like us. For most of us, it's hard to even imagine living in a world in which virtually every meal consists of bread or porridge, life expectancy hovers in the twenties, and slavery is a casually accepted fact. Yet that was the world in which the Greeks and Romans lived.

Why do you think that aspects of daily life and many of the other topics covered in your book seldom appear in popular histories?
While there's always demand for another biography of Caesar or Cleopatra, it can be hard to convince a publisher that the public is clamouring to learn more about some niche topic like ancient barbers or birth control. There are, of course, books that cover daily life in antiquity, but most of these are either academic monographs or student handbooks. What sets my book apart, for better or worse, is its variety. To the best of my knowledge, no other book on ancient history tries to meet popular interest by addressing questions on a wide range of topics, familiar and otherwise.

Is there anything you've discovered when answering questions that surprised you?
All sorts of things. To give just one instance, the first question in my book is: "Why didn't the Greeks or Romans wear pants?" While researching the answer I discovered - among many other things - that the Athenians often kept small coins in their mouths (since their clothes didn't have pockets), that pants were repeatedly outlawed in the city of Rome, and that Caligula liked to dress up as Zeus at parties.

We'd hate to spoil the book's surprises, but did the Greeks or Romans wear underwear?
As far as we can tell, not often, at least not in the modern sense. Women wore breast bands (a sort of proto-bra), but otherwise there's almost no evidence for people wearing what we would consider underwear. The Greeks and Romans generally preferred light under-tunics.

Have you ever been asked a question that particularly amused you?
Two spring to mind. The first one was: "Did anyone ever streak in the Colosseum?" The answer, unfortunately, is no. Or at least no written source mentions it, and it would have been very difficult. The arena of the Colosseum was separated from the first row of seats by a steep drop and an elaborate fence. Archers were stationed along the barrier to maintain order in the arena, so even if someone managed to scramble over the fence he would have been pincushioned with arrows before he got far. The other question that made me laugh was: "Were aqueducts ever used as water slides?" Here again, though we have no textual evidence one way or the other, the answer is almost certainly no. Almost all Roman aqueducts have a very slight gradient - sometimes only a few inches per mile - so any attempt to slide inside one would have only produced bruises.
Could you tell us more about these fat gladiators?

About 15 years ago, archaeologists working at Ephesus in Turkey discovered a gladiator cemetery. The bones were analysed by forensic anthropologists, who announced that gladiators had lived on a fattening vegetarian diet. We already knew this from textual sources - the Romans used to call gladiators “barley boys” because they lived on bean and barley gruel - but the Ephesians were the first to suggest that the gladiators’ diet was intended to fatten them up. Layers of fat, they pointed out, would have helped to protect a gladiator’s vital organs. This led to a series of popular articles about fat gladiators. But there’s no good evidence that gladiators were actually overweight. They were probably fed beans and barley simply because they were nutritious and cheap. The masters of gladiator schools, after all, didn’t want sluggish fighters. Since gladiators trained hard, they would have burned their bean and barley calories pretty efficiently. They may not have been as trim as modern athletes, but to judge from our textual and artistic sources the average gladiator was far from overweight.

“They may not have been as trim as modern athletes, but the average gladiator was far from overweight.”

Were the answers in your book difficult to research?

For every page I wrote, I probably read three or four hundred. This was time-consuming, particularly since the pandemic limited my access to research libraries. Reading so broadly was a new experience for me. When you earn a PhD in the classics you focus on your thesis topic - in my case, the political dimensions of monumental building in the eastern Roman provinces - to the virtual exclusion of everything else. For this book, on the other hand, I had to research a huge range of topics, which was both fascinating and exhausting.

We imagine that you can’t just go into a library and look up something like “did the Romans wear underwear”?

I usually began with a general topic and worked back to the sources. For the underwear question, I started by looking up articles on Greek and Roman clothing in classical dictionaries. I used the bibliographies of these articles to find books on related topics, and then read those books to find the primary sources that actually answered the question.

There’s one we’ve always wanted to know: what were the Romans’ drinking habits?

One of the questions in my book is: “How much wine did the Greeks and Romans drink?” So hopefully I can satisfy your thirst for knowledge. Drinking habits varied from person to person, of course, but it’s been estimated that the average Roman man drank about a litre of wine per day - roughly one-and-a-third modern bottles. This might sound like a lot, but it was taken with meals and mixed with water, so we shouldn’t imagine the Romans staggering about during their daily routines. The really heavy drinking took place at banquetes. Tales of debauchery abound. There was one Roman, for example, who was nicknamed trigonius - “the three gallon guy” - for his ability to drink three Roman gallons of wine (more than ten litres) at a single swig.

Wow... and was this wine as we understand it?

More or less, although it wouldn’t have seemed very savoury to us. As I mentioned, wine was almost always mixed with water, and although it was strained before it was poured it still contained plenty of stray seeds and bits of grape skin. And all sorts of things were added to it - from marble dust to perfume and even salt water.

So when can we learn more about these fascinating aspects of the ancient world?

Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, and War Elephants will be published at the start of September, and is now available for pre-order on Amazon and the Foyles website. In the meantime, I’d encourage readers to visit toldstone.com, which explores many more aspects of the ancient world. 

Naked Statues, Fat Gladiators, and War Elephants by Garrett Ryan is available from 1 Sept 2021 from Prometheus Books.
The history of Ancient Greece is full of incredible stories, whether historically true or turned into the myths of the age. One such tale that is only infrequently discussed, but is getting more and more attention, is a group called the Sacred Band. Like Sparta’s royal guard who became known as the 300, the Sacred Band was an elite fighting force created by the city of Thebes made of 300 men around 379 BCE. What was unique about this group, not only in Greece but in all of history, is that the 300 soldiers were all selected as pairs of gay lovers.

The theory behind this arrangement, as best we can tell from the records available, is that these 150 couples would fight harder and more passionately when the man they loved stood at their side. The records of their formation, management, training, and inspiration are sketchy, but their involvement in some of the most pivotal battles of Ancient Greece is well documented, ending with the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 BCE. To learn more about the Sacred Band we spoke with Professor Paul Cartledge, who has a new book on the history of Thebes coming out later this year.

**What was the Sacred Band and how was it formed?**
Its title, the ‘Sacred’ bit, is not attested until 324 BCE by an Athenian orator, a man named Dinarchus. We had known that there was a Band formed or reformed (scholars differ on whether there had been an elite 300 before or not), a new elite 300 certainly from 378 BCE, and Plutarch tells us that the founder of it was not Pelopidas, who is going to be the most famous commander of it, but a man named Gorgidas. But he is almost unknown to us.

All sources agree that what is unique about it, unprecedented – and no other state follows Thebans’ lead – is that it was composed of 150 pairs of an older and a younger lover. So why is this odd? It’s odd because in the formally recognised institution that the Greeks called pederasty or paiderastia, the ‘paid’ bit means boy or youth, as in not yet adult. In a typical pederastic relationship the older partner was an adult over 20-years-old – he might even be married. The younger partner was no older than 18 or 19 at the most, and because he wasn’t yet an adult he was still a paiderastes, which means a boy or a child. So what’s odd about the Thebans is that they not
only continued such pairing relationships, which may not have been sexual, but very likely were, beyond adolescence, but based a military unit on an erotic relationship in which both partners were adults. In that sense it wasn't a pederastic relationship because the younger partner was not a paider, he was an aner, which means a man.

How were they recruited? God knows. Did people apply as a pair? Did they apply as individuals as they did in Sparta for the elite 300 royal bodyguard? Did members leave at the age of 30, and the places that freed up were then applied for and fought for on an individual basis? Is that how the Thebans did it? And then did people pair off afterwards? Or did people have pederastic relationships of the normal Greek kind made up of one adult of about 22 to 24 and an adolescent, who then carry on together until the younger one is 20, so they can apply as a pair to join? Who knows? Then, of course, they could be lost in battle. If one is killed, does that mean the other one has to leave the Sacred Band to make way for another pair? We're just not told any of these details whatsoever. It's an absolutely fascinating subject.

_was there any precedent for a military unit using pairs of lovers as a motivation for them to fight?_
Absolutely not. It's both unprecedented and unexampled. No other Greek city followed them in this way, and I think that the reason for that is that it's extremely difficult to manage. You have to have lots and lots of homosexual couples or people willing to enter into a pairing relationship who are extremely good fighters. You've got to have both. I think it must have been very difficult.

_we understand that members were chosen based on their merit rather than social class. Was this unusual?_
There is one source that makes that point. Social class can have several significations. One is about hoplites as opposed to people who are sub-hoplites, but that's a wealth distinction. There is also an aristocracy - that is a distinction of birth. In Ancient Greece if you considered yourself to be an aristocrat - one of the 'best' men, as they called themselves - typically you found that claim on descent, tracing your family line back to what you and I would call a mythic hero or even a god. In Sparta, for example, there was such an elite social group and they called themselves The Descendants of Heracles. They claimed that, if you went far enough back, eventually you get to Heracles, who was both a hero and a god. The Thebans had their equivalent aristocratic family lines, but I don't think there would have been enough aristocrats to fill this number of spots on a regular, year-on-year basis.

_when was the Sacred Band first deployed?_
We think it would have been formed around the time of emergence of Thebes from Spartan domination, when it acquires a new constitution and it reestablishes the federal state of Boeotia, in 378 BCE. Then one of the first things you would do is think about how you're going to reconstitute your army. It was in 378 BCE that Gorgidas proposed forming what gets called the Sacred Band. It might well have been in action before, but its first success comes in 375 BCE at the Battle of Tegyra. This was a battle fought between this new-model Theban regiment and a detachment from a Spartan occupying garrison. When Thebes acquired its independence from Sparta, the Spartans' garrison was booted out of Thebes, but they retained one garrison at a place called Thespiae, which was very convenient for keeping an eye on both Athens and Thebes. It was a detachment from there on manoeuvres that this Theban Sacred Band set upon and defeated very seriously in 375 BCE. The Spartans had not suffered any major military disaster like that for about 15 years.

_sparta was built around the military training of its men, so do we know how the Sacred Band training compared?_
We know absolutely nothing about its training, but we also know very little about how precisely the Spartans were trained. There is one rather interesting change going on, which is that at the end of the 5th century, about 400 BCE, the Spartan citizen body was about 3,000 people. By 371 BCE it's only just over 1,000. I'm not

“Epaminondas puts his best troops, which includes the Sacred Band, on the left-hand front directly opposite the Spartans”
going to go into why this is happening, but the Spartans internally are suffering from some sort of socioeconomic transformation that is having a major impact on the number of men they have available for frontline military service. My point is that for the Thebans or any other enemies of Sparta, the Spartans in the 370s BCE are no longer as powerful as they may appear to be. But the Spartans’ reputation, their myth, was undiminished. If I were Theban and I wanted to work out how best to get my men trained, I would try to find out as much as I could about the Spartan system. The problem is that Spartans are very, very secretive, and they admitted into Sparta only those people who they thought were basically sympathetic to them to actually see what was going on there. The fact of the matter is that we are not told by any source what exactly the training consisted of.

**How much of a threat was Thebes now to the other powers of Greece?**

The Thebans used their increased position of domination within Boeotia to be quite unpleasant to other cities within Boeotia. One in particular, called Plataea, had been an ally of Athens for many, many years (since 519 BCE), and the Thebans always felt that by allying with Athens the Plataeans had in a way been traitors to the Boeotians, because Plataea is Boeotian. In 373 BCE, which is a couple of years after Tegyra, the Thebans actually went to Plataea and inflicted severe damage. Not total destruction, but quite a lot of damage upon the town. Sparta is still thinking about what it can do to knock these Thebans off their perch. Thebes is allied with Athens, and Athens is prepared if need be to send troops to defend the Thebans if Sparta attacks. As it turns out, skipping forward a little, we’re now heading towards the crunch, which is the Battle of Leuctra in 371 BCE.

Our evidence for the battle and how it was fought comes from Xenophon and Diodorus, but they’re lousy; they’re not good military historians. You don’t get a real sense of why the battle took the form it did. What we are very struck by is that the Thebans had virtually no allies. The Spartans were clever enough that they attacked the Thebans before the Athenians could come.

**Who Were The Sacred Band?**

**The Trouble with Sources**

Pinning down the details of the Sacred Band is nearly impossible.

As we found in our research and conversation with Professor Paul Cartledge, getting into the fine detail of who and what the Sacred Band was becomes very challenging. “There is no Thucydides of Thebes, just to give an illustration,” Cartledge explains. “Therefore we’re dependent upon a very much later source, Plutarch, who was a local (not a Theban, but from that region) and he was operating around 100 CE. So we’re talking about 400-500 years later. He’s therefore dependent on such contemporary resources as there were and there’s one who’s mentioned who is not immediately contemporary, but he was the historian of Alexander called Callisthenes.”

Unfortunately Callisthenes’ work has not survived so all we have is Plutarch’s interpretation. Meanwhile we could look to Xenophon, but his biases get in the way. “Xenophon hated the way Thebes rose during the period that we’re looking at, from about 400 BCE to 338 BCE. Xenophon wrote the history of Greece from 411 BCE to 362 BCE, so covering the first half of what we’re interested in, but he managed to suppress the role played by the two leading Theban politicians Epaminondas and Pelopidas,” says Cartledge.

And even with Plutarch there are barriers to what we can learn. “Plutarch wrote biographies of both of those men. Epaminondas was the more important of the two, but because of a manuscript copying blip, his life hasn’t survived, but the life of Pelopidas has.” Thankfully he was the commander of the Sacred Band at the Battle of Leuctra so his story gives us a great deal of what we know.
and help. It was at this battle that the Sacred Band was absolutely key to the victory of the Theban side.

**What was the Sacred Band’s role at the Battle of Leuctra?**

Epaminondas was the general in charge, and what was unusual about Theban armies (and this is not just at this particular battle, as it goes back 50 or 60 years to the 420s BCE) was the depth of lines of hoplites. Normally a Greek army would have something of the order of eight ranks, one behind the other. Depending on how many men they had altogether, that would determine the width of the battle line, but the depth was typically eight ranks. The Thebans going back to the late 5th century BCE had already started going up to three-times as deep as that, so 25 ranks deep (Battle of Delium). At the Battle of Leuctra, they were arrayed 50 ranks deep. Why this battle is so revelatory and so original is that typically your best troops would be put on your right, your second best troops on the far left and then the not-so-good troops in between them. With Sparta, for example, you’ve got the king and his elite bodyguards at the right-hand end of any battle line. Well, what Epaminondas does is put his best troops, which includes the 300 of the Sacred Band as a unit, on the left-hand front, directly opposite the Spartans. So the Spartans come along with their allies, the Spartans are on the right traditionally, eight ranks deep, and the Thebans including the Sacred Band are 50 ranks deep and directly opposite the Spartans. Later sources talk about it as trying to crush the head of the snake.

Epaminondas is going to just take out the Spartans, and he will then count on the allies of the Spartans not being very keen to continue the fighting. But that’s not all. He has cavalry as well as infantry and he uses the cavalry to cause a bit of confusion in the Spartan ranks before the two infantry sides meet each other. Next, he doesn’t advance his army directly, head-on, but he advances it at an angle in what’s called ‘refusing’, and the

"**FOR A CONQUERING, ARROGANT BASTARD TO SAY THAT ABOUT YOUR ENEMY IS A REALLY BIG COMPLIMENT**"

**How much autonomy would the Sacred Band have had within the Theban military?**

I would say none. A hoplite phalanx by definition has its strength from its unity. The Sacred Band’s form, its ethos, like the marines, is unique. They’re the elite of the infantry, but they have to fit into the phalanx.

**Ultimately they were defeated by Philip II at Chaeronea. Had they become more vulnerable?**

No, what’s changed is the rise of Philip in 359 BCE and before that the death of Epaminondas in 362 BCE, and even before that the death of Pelopidas in 364 BCE. Thebes in 362 BCE is still the dominant single power. It fights yet another battle, the Battle of Mantinea, in which Athens has now become so frightened of the Thebes it joined with Sparta (a very much weaker Sparta) and they are defeated by the Thebans. But Epaminondas dies at the Battle of Mantinea, so that’s sort of the end of Thebes’ glory
Who Were The Sacred Band?

Pelopidas was killed in battle in 364 BCE during the transition of power from Thebes to Athens when Athens was still powerful.

Below Pelopidas was a pivotal figure in the overthrow of Spartan control in Thebes having lived in exile for some years. He would then go on to command the Sacred Band.

The essence of it is that, instead of having hoplites, that is heavy infantrymen with pikes about nine feet or ten feet long, Philip replaces them with what are called Sarissae-bearers. These are men who carry two-handed an 18-foot spear, doubling the average length, and as you’re approaching the Macedonians that makes it virtually impossible to get near them before you’re hit by their nasty pikes. He then has very mobile and powerful cavalry, which is a Macedonian speciality for a long period of time.

By this time there have been several Sacred Bands and it’s possible that the one fighting in 338 BCE or the commander of the one fighting at Chaeronea just wasn’t as good as the Band that had been led by Pelopidas and founded by Gorgidas. What’s heroic about them – and I think this is where the Spartan Thermopylae precedent comes in – is that they agree that ‘We’re not going to run away. We’re not going to make terms with the Macedonians. We’re going to bloody well die.’ And they do. It’s partly for this reason that I think we care about the Sacred Band in a way that we don’t care about, for example, the Argive 300 special elite force. I think it’s because of the way they die at Chaeronea. Philip was actually commanding in person, and he is said to have come over to where they died and said something like, ‘These men died bravely.’ For a conquering, arrogant bastard to say that is a really big compliment.

Did the Sacred Band have any lasting influence on Ancient Greece?

Not in Ancient Greece, as there are no other examples of that sort of homosexual, paired elite force. There are elite forces, but not of that nature. But with the modern recuperation of the very notion of homosexuality (and in a way the invention of the word in the 19th century) people have wanted to write back homosexuality into the history of Ancient Greece in a positive way. If you think you can make both love and war very effectively as a gay person, then this is a wonderful shining example for you to hold up.

The Theban System

How was the city different to Athens and Sparta?

For much of the 4th century BCE Thebes was a major power in Ancient Greece, often standing against or above Athens and Sparta. It was, however, a very different city to those two. For a start, Thebes wasn’t a city state in the way its rivals were, but rather the chief city in a federated state called Boeotia. It was also run on a different political framework, being neither a democracy nor a monarchy. Instead it was an oligarchy with the elite class running the state.

In the previous century, during the Peloponnesian War, Thebes had sided with Sparta since Athens had long been its natural rival in central Greece. However the aftermath saw Thebes disaffected with Spartan influence to the point it allied with Athens, Corinth and Argos in a Quadruple Alliance in 395 BCE to stand against Sparta. Thanks to Persian support, Sparta emerged victorious and the Boeotian Federation was dismantled. Prominent Thebans including crucial future leaders Pelopidas and Epaminondas played a part in liberating Thebes and kicking out the Spartan garrison in 379 BCE, and in the years that followed a new government was established. This may have included a little more democracy in its political organisation than before and it also included a reorganisation of the military, including the formation of the Sacred Band by Gorgidas. It was from this point that Thebes became a major power in Ancient Greece for the next 40 years.
A spoonful of sugar helps the medicine go down, and you’d probably need it with these ancient remedies

Written by Kate Marsh
For as long as there have been humans, there has been disease and illness. And for as long as there has been disease, there have been remedies. Some have been so effective that they have remained in use for hundreds, if not thousands, of years, others... less so. It stands to reason that different cultures and civilisations have had their own medicines and supposed cures. People used what they had available to them, especially in antiquity when trade wasn’t what it is today. But while their methods may have seemed successful, there are some that fell out of use over time. And with some of these ‘cures’, it’s easy to see why. Hindsight is 20/20, after all.

Here, we examine ten ancient remedies for all manner of ailments. Some may surprise you, some may shock you, and some will definitely seem a little bit macabre.

**SKULLS STOP TEETH GRINDING**
The Babylonians meddled with necromancy

**BABYLONIA**

Ill in Babylonia? The most probable reason was straightforward enough: you were being punished by a god or demonic forces. If your problem was that a deceased family member was trying to get in touch, it presented as grinding your teeth while you slept - and that had a very particular cure.

The best way to exorcise the spirit, Babylonian doctors believed, was to sleep with a skull by your side for a week. That wasn’t all - the skull needed to be kissed and/or licked seven times during each night. It’s safe to say that it probably didn’t work.

**GLADIATOR BLOOD CURES EPILEPSY**
Enabling Romans to fight illness since the 1st century CE

**ROME**

Epileptics in the Roman Empire didn’t need to worry, there was a cure on hand. The blood of fallen gladiators (or sometimes their livers) apparently held the properties needed to rid sufferers of their ailment. It didn’t just happen once, either; multiple ancient historians reported this working. But why?

It most definitely didn’t work - it’s much more likely that a series of spontaneous recoveries made the Romans believe it was successful. But what the Romans themselves saw was a religious experience. Gladiator bouts had started as Etruscan funeral games and their religious significance continued into the Roman period. As a result, the fighters’ blood was thought to have near-magical properties.

Of course, all good things must come to an end, and when gladiator fighting went out of style around 400 CE, executed individuals took their place and the ‘cure’ carried on.

**ELEPHANT BILE FRESHENS BREATH**
One civilisation’s answer to mouthwash

**CHINA**

Biles have always been used in traditional Chinese medicine, but in antiquity it was the elephants’ turn. Mentioned in Lei Xiao’s *Treatise on Preparation of Drugs*, dating back to the 5th century, it was used to treat halitosis, or bad breath. While it seems a little counterintuitive, ancient Chinese doctors swore by it, diluting it with water and ordering their patients to gargle the mixture.

That wasn’t the only use for elephant bile, though. It could also be dried and ground into pills with galbladder biles of the common carp, bear, ox and musk. Taken with green tea, these pills could apparently cure blindness from optic atrophy and glaucoma.
PREGNANCY STOPS WANDERING WOMBS

Carrying a child will cure you, even if childbirth kills you

GREECE

In Ancient Greece, one of the most dangerous things facing women was a ‘wandering womb’. According to Greek doctors like Hippocrates, a woman’s womb could move up in the body, causing sluggishness. If it moved too far down, it could cause death.

Aretaeus of Cappadocia famously said that it “moved of itself hither and thither in the flanks”. So what was the cure? The most well known was simple: getting pregnant as often as possible. It was thought that this would keep the womb occupied so it would cease its wandering around the body.

BLOODLETTING FOR BALANCE

This gruesome practice was around before the Middle Ages

GREECE

Although it’s thought to have originated in Ancient Egypt, the Greeks were always fond of bloodletting as a medical cure. They believed that some diseases were caused by an overabundance of blood, and doctors like Erasistratus in the 4th century BCE were keen advocates of this theory. That meant some blood needed to be let out of the body to bring everything back into balance.

This idea of balance was furthered a few hundred years later by the Greco-Roman doctor Galen, who encouraged the widespread use of the practice throughout the Roman Empire. In fact, it was so popular that it persisted into the Middle Ages and beyond – George Washington had five to seven pints drained from him in just 16 hours in a bid to cure a bad illness. Alas, it didn’t work and he died soon after.
ANIMAL DUNG: WONDER DRUG
Ancient Egypt's cure-all was less than pleasant

EGYPT

From a civilisation that was almost spot on with much of its understanding of the human body and that boasted a great medical system comes a perhaps slightly surprising remedy: animal dung. And it was used a lot.

Crocodile dung was used as birth control in women, and the excrement of other animals apparently had its own healing properties and was able to ward off evil spirits. It turns out there was some method in the madness, though. Research has shown that the microflora in some types of animal faeces does contain some antibiotic substances.

RAW VEAL CURES RABIES
The odd remedy for the viral disease

ROME

Being bitten by a wild animal in Ancient Rome wasn’t the end of the world according to Pliny the Elder. There were three simple steps you needed to follow. First and foremost, cut the wound open and put raw veal on it. Next, switch to a diet of lime and bog’s fat - not the tastiest, but what doesn’t kill you makes you stronger, right? Finally, you needed to drink a mixture of wine and boiled badger dung. Somehow, the practice didn’t catch on.

POISONS USED AS CURES?
Mercury and arsenic were supposed to make you better

MESOPOTAMIA

Medicine in ancient Mesopotamia was, in some ways, light years ahead of its time. Doctors had their own offices, patients had beds, and medicinal doctors worked alongside religious healers. But there are some aspects of the practice that were questionable. Mercury and arsenic, both known today to be the causes of death in relatively small doses, were mainstream medicines. They were prescribed as drugs, and the same took place in Babylonia and elsewhere, too.
LIVES OF ROYALS
Winners and losers in the game of thrones

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Has the toppled king been remembered by history as fairly as he deserves?

046 **Royal trend setters**
Some of the amazing fashions that were started by members of royal families

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He took on the crusaders and won, but how did he rise to unite the Islamic world?

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Discover the rule-breaking, convention-defying Christina of Sweden
His reign tore apart a nation, but how much blood is on his hands?

Written by Jessica Leggett
On 30 January 1649, as King Charles I was escorted through the Banqueting House to the scaffold outside, he walked under the magnificent ceiling painting by Peter Paul Rubens that he had commissioned 13 years earlier. A tribute to his father, King James VI & I, it glorified the monarchy and symbolised the divine right of kings - a belief that led Charles to the executioner's block.

Derided as a tyrant by some and celebrated as a martyr by others, Charles was a divisive king who continues to ignite debate almost four centuries after his death. As James' second son, Charles spent the first 12 years of his life as the spare to the heir until the death of his elder brother, Henry Frederick, Prince of Wales, in 1612. He succeeded his father in 1625 and initially there was excitement for a new, young king.

Less than two months into his reign, Charles married Princess Henrietta Maria of France, a Catholic. The marriage worried Parliament, who feared that she would influence him to reintroduce Catholic practices and steer the Church of England towards Catholicism.

Regardless, Charles saw introducing religious reforms as his right. He also inherited his father's unwavering belief in the divine right of kings, that a monarch was appointed by and only answerable to God. Consequently, Charles expected his wishes to be carried out without question and saw any criticism of him as a sign of disloyalty. James had understood the need to compromise with Parliament when necessary but Charles - who lacked political skill - did not. Instead, he wanted to rule on his terms, leading to more and more clashes with Parliament.

Attempting to control the king's royal prerogative, Parliament broke with

“CHARLES SUCCEEDED HIS FATHER IN 1625 AND INITIALLY THERE WAS EXCITEMENT FOR A NEW, YOUNG KING”

There was a growing distrust in Charles' religious policies. Like his father, he wanted to create a religious uniformity across England, Scotland and Ireland. But some of his beliefs, for example that there should be a hierarchy within the church and that the heads of the church should be treated with deference, were far too Catholic for the Puritans in Parliament.

ABOVE
King Charles trying to arrest the Five Members of Parliament
precedent by refusing to grant him the lifetime right to collect custom duties, known as tonnage and poundage. Instead, it decided he would only be able to do this for one year, infuriating Charles.

The antagonism worsened when Parliament refused to grant the funds Charles needed to continue his expensive wars with Spain and France, encouraged by his despised favourite, the Duke of Buckingham. When Parliament demanded that the king remove Buckingham he refused, choosing to dissolve Parliament instead. In fact, Charles would dissolve Parliament three times in the first four years of his reign.

Without Parliament, Charles resorted to raising taxes through a forced loan between 1626-27, which required the wealthy to give him money. He did this without the consent of Parliament, causing anger and discontent, especially when he imprisoned without trial five knights who refused to pay it.

In May 1628, Charles had to turn to Parliament again to raise more money. Parliament responded by presenting him with the Petition of Right, a statement of civil liberties. The Petition asked the king to recognise that he could not raise taxes without parliamentary consent, not imprison people without cause, not quarter soldiers on subjects nor impose martial law on them.

Charles reluctantly assented to the Petition but shortly afterwards he made it clear that it was “not to grant any new privilege”. He also reasserted his right to collect tonnage and poundage even though Parliament had not agreed. Buckingham’s assassination in August led to hopes that tensions between Charles and Parliament would ease, but it was in vain.

When Charles recalled Parliament in January 1629, they stated their opposition to him collecting tonnage and poundage without approval. In March, Charles tried to adjourn Parliament but the speaker, Sir John Finch, was held down in his chair by three members as the Commons passed several motions that criticised Charles’ actions, including the appointment of bishops who appeared to be undermining the Calvinist doctrines of the church. Angered, the king dissolved Parliament and he did not recall it for the next 11 years, a period that became known as Charles’ Personal Rule.

To his critics, Charles’ Personal Rule was called ‘the 11 years’ tyranny’. Yet it’s worth remembering that it was not unusual to rule without Parliament for extended periods. Both James and Elizabeth I...
had avoided dealing with Parliament as much as possible, as Parliament was not necessary for the day-to-day running of the country.

Since he was unwilling to deal with Parliament, Charles sought peace with France and Spain that was welcomed in England, but he had not given up hope of continuing his wars overseas. To raise the money he resorted to increasingly unpopular methods such as granting monopolies on commodities like soap, which drove up prices.

His most hated tax, however, was his attempt to levy ship money from 1634 onwards as a permanent form of taxation across the country, even though previously it only applied to coastal communities at times of war. As Charles had done this without Parliament’s consent, many considered it illegal and refused to pay.

His decision to levy taxes without Parliament’s approval was deemed by some as evidence that he was a tyrannical ruler who envisioned an absolute monarchy. By not calling Parliament for over a decade, Charles and his advisors also became out of touch with the concerns and opinions of his people, isolating himself further.

Tensions reached boiling point when Charles attempted to implement the religious reforms of William Laud, the Archbishop of Canterbury appointed in 1633. These Arminian reforms, emphasising ritual and ceremony, leaned too close to Catholicism for the Puritans in Parliament. And when Charles tried to introduce a new Book of Common Prayer in Scotland without consulting the Kirk or Scottish Parliament, a rebellion broke out that triggered the Bishops’ Wars between 1639 and 1640.

Lacking the funds to raise an army meant that Charles resummoned Parliament, which sat in April 1640. Immediately, the members criticised him for refusing to call them for over a decade, stating that they would not grant his demand for money. One MP, John Pym, complained about the royal abuses that had taken place against the liberties of Parliament, law and religion during Charles’ Personal Rule. Once again, a furious Charles dissolved Parliament after just three weeks.

He resummoned Parliament again that November when his men were defeated by the Scottish rebels. Known as the Long Parliament because it would sit for the next eight years, it promptly scrutinised Charles’ actions. At the same time, a Catholic rebellion broke out in Ireland, with both Charles and Parliament agreeing

The King’s Spy

Jane Whorwood was one of Charles’ most loyal secret agents

The daughter of a Scottish courtier and later a stepdaughter of James Maxwell, a gentleman of Charles’ bedchamber, Jane Whorwood was a faithful spy and close confidant of the king during the civil war. Unsurprisingly, there are barely any records of her clandestine activities - we don’t even have a portrait of her - and her story remained largely forgotten for hundreds of years.

Whorwood became involved with the Royalist cause when Charles moved his court to Oxford at the beginning of the civil war. An extremely resourceful woman, she smuggled various items to the king in Oxford, including gold in barrels of soap. Thanks to a surviving ledger, we know that she was responsible for at least £85,000 worth of gold being smuggled into the city, mostly from Sir Paul Pindar, a Royalist. Whorwood also helped establish and run Royalist intelligence networks in London and Edinburgh, as well as raising funds for the king.

She also organised several escape attempts for Charles when he was imprisoned by Parliament. In November 1647, Whorwood consulted the famed astrologer William Lilly about where the king could escape to if he managed to flee Hampton Court, where he had been held since August. Unbeknown to her, Charles successfully escaped from the palace while she was consulting Lilly.

The following year, Whorwood sought Lilly’s advice again about how to help Charles escape from his imprisonment at Carisbrooke. That May, after providing the king with acid to weaken the window bar of his room, she arranged for a ship to wait at Queensborough on the Medway Estuary to ferry Charles to the Netherlands. However, the king failed to escape the castle, leaving Whorwood to wait aboard the ship for five weeks. Afterwards, the Marquis of Hertford wrote to Earl Lanark, Jane’s brother-in-law: “Had the rest done their parts as carefully as Whorwood, the king would have been at large.”

She corresponded with the king frequently and the few surviving letters are written largely in cypher. She even visited Charles during his imprisonment and it’s possible that they had an intimate relationship, something which is still debated today.

Even though Jane was committed to the king’s cause, her efforts were soon forgotten in the wake of his death and she remained unrewarded after the Restoration in 1660. She died in poverty in 1684.
to send an army to deal with it. However, the MPs did not trust him to command it, fearing that a Catholic plot was underway.

Parliament subsequently passed the Grand Remonstrance in November 1641, a list of grievances about Charles' Personal Rule, written by Pym and his supporters. Incensed, Charles rejected the Remonstrance and in January 1642 tried to arrest five of his biggest critics. The speaker, William Lenthall, refused to tell him where they were and the MPs managed to escape. The humiliated king left London five days later as opinion turned against him.

It was clear that war could no longer be avoided and on 22 August 1642, Charles raised the royal standard in Nottingham, marking the start of the English Civil War. What followed was the bloodiest conflict to ever occur in England as Royalists and Parliamentarians went into battle. For the first two years, the Royalists had the upper hand and peace talks failed because Parliament's proposals would have reduced the king's power.

If Charles had been willing to compromise it may have saved his life and the monarchy. Instead, the situation for the king quickly soured thanks to the Parliamentary victories at the Battle of Marston Moor in 1644 and the Battle of Naseby in June 1645, under the leadership of Oliver Cromwell. It was at Naseby that Parliament's New Model Army, created in 1645 and packed full of Puritans, went into action for the first time.

Charles was eventually captured in 1646 and handed over to Parliament in January 1647. Placed under house arrest, the king was moved around before he was taken to Hampton Court Palace, where both Parliament and the New Model Army again tried to negotiate with him. Refusing to accept a constitutional monarchy, Charles escaped Hampton Court in November, however he was soon rearrested and imprisoned in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight.

While he was outwardly negotiating with Parliament, Charles was secretly plotting and exploring any option he could. This included arranging for the Scottish to invade on his behalf in return for the establishment of Presbyterianism - a form of Protestantism - in England, as well as encouraging Royalist uprisings in England and Wales. This led to the outbreak of the Second Civil War in May 1648, which ended in a Parliamentary victory that August.

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Who Killed the King?
The mystery behind the executioner's identity

There has been speculation about who chopped off the king's head ever since Charles' execution almost four centuries ago. The executioner and his assistant both wore mask, fake hair and beards to conceal their identity from those present at the execution, perhaps fearing that there would be repercussions for their part in Charles' death. It has even been suggested that the executioner's failure to call out "Behold the head of a traitor!" when he lifted Charles' decapitated head was because he did not want his voice to be recognised.

In hindsight, the executioner and his assistant were wise to disguise themselves, considering the reprisals that occurred when Charles II returned to assume his late father's throne in 1660. Following the Restoration, the Indemnity and Oblivion Act granted amnesty to those who had supported the Parliamentarians, aside from 104 people - 49 of whom were named, plus the two executioners.

The man who is often cited as the most likely to be the king's executioner was Richard Brandon, who was the common hangman of London from 1639 to 1649. A pamphlet titled The Confession of Richard Brandon was published shortly after his death in June 1649, just five months after the execution. Although he always denied being the man who killed the king, the pamphlet reportedly recorded Brandon's deathbed confession - but it is widely considered to be a forgery.

Other candidates have been suggested over time but none of them have been confirmed as the executioner. Although we will likely never know who the executioner was, we do know that they must have been a professional, as they managed to sever the king's head in one go.
Parliament voted to continue its negotiations but Charles’ machinations had alienated Cromwell and the New Model Army, who refused to negotiate with a man they considered to be nothing more than a tyrant. Someone had to pay the price for the bloodshed of the conflict, and for the Army that responsibility lay at Charles’ feet – it was time to put the king on trial.

**“IF CHARLES HAD BEEN WILLING TO COMPROMISE, IT MAY HAVE SAVED HIS LIFE AND THE MONARCHY”**

The Long Parliament was subsequently purged on 6 December 1648 by Colonel Pride, a friend of Cromwell, whose men prevented any MPs who could be sympathetic to the king’s cause and disagree with the Army from taking their seats. This included many of the moderate Puritans who had been heavily involved in the early years of the war, with the remaining MPs becoming known as the Rump Parliament.

Charles’ trial began on 20 January 1649 at Westminster Hall led by the president of the court, John Bradshaw.

He faced charges of treason and tyranny against his people, but the king refused to acknowledge the legitimacy of the court. When the solicitor general John Cook began reading the indictment, Charles tapped him on the shoulder with his cane to tell him to stop. Cook continued and so the king struck him with his cane, causing the silver tip to fall off. As king, Charles expected somebody to pick it up for him.

Remaining firm in his belief in the divine right of kings and his appointment by God, Charles was convinced that the court had no power to convict him, especially as the trial did not follow the procedures established by law – after all, there were no guidelines on how to put a king on trial.

After a week, the court proceeded with the sentencing even though Charles had refused to plead. The judges declared that he was guilty, pronouncing that: “He is a tyrant, traitor, murderer and public enemy to the good people of this nation, [and]

but when nobody did, he was forced to retrieve it himself.

Charles refused to cooperate and enter a plea that was required to start the trial, stating defiantly:

“I would know by what power I am called hither... I would know by what authority, I mean lawful... Remember, I am your king, your lawful king, and what sins you bring upon your heads, and the judgement of God upon this land. Think well upon it, I say, think well upon it, before you go further from one sin to a greater...”
Lives of Royals

**Sign of Defiance**
King Charles wears his hat in the portrait, just like he wore it throughout his trial. The king refused to remove his hat, a gesture that would have been a sign of respect towards the judges, because he did not recognise the legitimacy of the court.

**Assassination Fears**
In this portrait, Charles sports a longer and fuller beard than usual. Parliament had dismissed his barber and he refused to let anybody shave his beard in the weeks leading up to his trial, as he was afraid that his throat would be slit with the razor.

**Symbol of Kingship**
Around his neck Charles wears a blue sash complete with a sash badge, known as the Lesser George, which is part of the insignia of the prestigious Order of the Garter. By wearing this, the king is emphasising his regality as well as his belief in the divine right of kings.

**The King's Seat**
We know that for the king's trial at Westminster Hall he sat on a crimson velvet chair that matches the one shown in this portrait. The chair was placed in front of the judges on the orders of John Bradshaw, president of the court.

**The Fallen Monarch**
Analysing the last portrait of King Charles I

Artist Edward Bower, whose main patrons were Parliamentarians, was commissioned to create this portrait of King Charles I. It is likely that he made drawings of the king inside Westminster Hall before producing several portraits in his studio. A sympathetic portrait, many people chose to see it as representing Charles' martyrdom rather than the culmination of the legal process which led to his execution. Interestingly, when Charles II made his entry into London after the Restoration in 1660, Bower was appointed to ride in attendance.

**Dignified Appearance**
Despite his trial and the dire circumstances that he found himself in, the king appears to be calm in this sombre portrait. This is surprising as it is believed that this portrait was probably commissioned by one of Charles' opponents.

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**Order of Chivalry**
The Order of the Garter insignia can be seen here on the left side of Charles' mantle. He actually introduced this particular design, an eight-pointed star, in 1627, to be worn by Knights of the Garter on the left part of their cloaks, coats and riding cassocks when they were not wearing their robes.

**Slight Differences**
There are three versions of this portrait and this particular one is currently held in the Royal Collection. The two other versions show the king holding this piece of paper as well as his silver-headed cane, with which Charles struck solicitor general John Cook.
shall be put to death, by the severing of his head from his body.” After hearing his death sentence Charles asked to speak but his request was refused.

Just three days later, he found himself on the scaffold at the Banqueting House in Whitehall. He wore two shirts because he was concerned that the cold would make him shiver and that the crowd would mistake it for fear. Only those around him were able to hear his last speech, with his final words reportedly being: “I go from a corruptible to an incorruptible crown; where no disturbance can be, no disturbance in the world.”

The crowd was silent as Charles laid his head on the executioner’s block until the axe rose and fell, severing his head from his body in one clean blow. One eyewitness, a young Royalist called Philip Henry, later wrote in his diary that there was “such a Groan by the Thousands present, as I never heard before and desire I may never hear again.”

The moment Charles was executed, he became a martyr for many. As his head was lifted up for those present to see, members of the crowd approached the scaffold and dipped their handkerchiefs into his blood. It was not long before reports started spreading that these handkerchiefs were supposedly curing scrofula and that other relics of the execution were responsible for miracles.

The concern about Charles becoming a martyr is clear from the decision not to bury him at Westminster Abbey, where his father and many other monarchs were laid to rest. There were fears that his grave would become a pilgrimage site and instead he was quietly buried in St George’s Chapel at Windsor Castle.

Being denied a funeral worthy of a king further cemented the indignity of Charles’ death among his supporters. It is said that as his coffin was carried to the chapel the velvet pall was covered in white snow from a sudden snowstorm, evoking an image of an innocent martyr king.

Meanwhile, Eikon Basilike: The Portraiture Of His Sacred Majesty In His Solitudes And Sufferings, an autobiography supposedly featuring the king’s last prayers, was published just ten days after the execution. Although claims that Charles was the author were disputed, it quickly became a best-seller.

Medals were also struck in his honour, people were collecting commemorative jewellery and images, and secret services were being held in his memory. The writer John Evelyn notably wrote that the
execution "struck me with such horror that I kept the day of his martyrdom a fast."
So if Charles was the tyrant that he had been convicted of being, where did this martyrdom come from? The truth is, there wasn't overwhelming support for the king's trial, let alone his execution. There were so many factions across the country that it can't be said for certain whether the will of the people was for or against, but the reported reaction of the crowd certainly does not indicate a general feeling that justice had been served.

In October 1649, the poet John Milton published *Eikonoklastes* to defend the killing of the king, describing him as a "tyrant of a nation", in the hope of ending the martyr image that became increasingly prevalent after *Eikon Basilike*. Charles' well-known personal piety and his religious patronage during his reign furthered this martyr narrative.

It's worth remembering that even the men who condemned the king to death were unsure that they were doing the right thing. This is evident from the fact that they interviewed Elizabeth Poole, a 'prophetess' who claimed that she had received a revelation from God, to reassure themselves - although she claimed that God had told her it was their right to put Charles on trial but they should not hurt him.

By putting their king on trial, the Rump Parliament had broken the fundamental beliefs of their society. Still, they believed that they were following God's wishes and that He had declared His support for them because they were victorious on the battlefield while Charles had lost, twice. However, Charles also claimed that he was the one who was representing God's will on Earth, resulting in these two Gods essentially clashing.

When his son, King Charles II, returned amid the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 Charles was declared a martyr and the date of his execution was made an annual fast-day. Transforming Charles into a martyr also helped to strengthen the
restored monarchy. While the new king promised to show mercy, the regicides were hunted down - some were executed and some were tried, although some managed to flee.

Meanwhile, the bodies of those who had already died were dug up and posthumously beheaded and dismembered on the 12th anniversary of the execution. The bodies of Cromwell, John Bradshaw and Henry Ireton (Cromwell’s son-in-law) were strung up at Tyburn and their heads were placed on spikes outside Westminster Hall, facing the Banqueting House. Cromwell’s head remained on display for over two decades.

In 1678, Parliament did agree to arrange for “The Sum of seventy thousand Pounds for a solemn Funeral of his late Majesty King Charles the First, and to erect a Monument for the said Prince of glorious Memory”; although these plans were later suspended. Two years later, the book *Patriarcha* by Sir Robert Filmer was posthumously published in which he defended the divine right of kings, thereby increasing the view that Charles’ execution had been treasonous.

By focusing on the rights and wrongs of his reign, it can be forgotten that Charles was a loving father, husband and friend. A prolific patron of the arts, he built the beginnings of the royal collection - which was sold off and scattered throughout Europe following his execution - and he developed a refined court.

He had hoped to transform England into a great European power and create a religious uniformity after over a century of division since the reign of King Henry VIII. Charles had his principles and he stuck to them, believing that he was doing the right thing despite the tensions that were emerging in the country.

Ultimately, he never understood the importance of Parliament for the English and refused to compromise, especially if he felt that concessions would infringe his God-given authority as king. Nor was he ever willing to admit when he was wrong. Unlike his father, Charles did not realise the limitations of the monarchy or that some envisioned an England without a king. He remained resolute in his belief in the divine right of kings, which became the driving force behind his downfall.

So was Charles a tyrant or a martyr? This is a question that has been asked for almost four centuries and there are arguments both for and against - at this point, it is down to each person to decide what to believe. What is certain, however, is that even though he was a king, Charles was just like everyone else - a flawed human being.
20 ROYAL FASHION TRENDS

The sartorial crazes that swept around the world and the royal figures who helped to make them a sensation

Written by Jonathan Gordon
Before the age of style magazines and entire industries dedicated to clothing trends, many ambitious people looked to the world’s most powerful figures and emulated their clothing decisions to curry favour. As mass media opened up these styles to wider public consumption, so the importance of royal fashion became of as much interest to the average person on the street as it had once been to courtiers. To this day, perhaps more as celebrities than as royals, those with a connection to the great dynasties of the world have huge sway over what clothes and looks are hot in the moment. Here, we’ll take a look back at 20 examples of fashion trends kick-started by royal association.

**WHITE WEDDING DRESS**
Queen Victoria

**When:** 1840  **Where:** UK

The white wedding dress has become so traditional as to seem practically timeless, but prior to the marriage of Queen Victoria to Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, wedding dresses were not quite so uniform as they are today. A white dress, while not unheard of, was a rather impractical choice for most brides since the dress was likely to be worn more than once and keeping it pristine would be very challenging for all but the very rich. Queen Victoria wearing a white dress was therefore both a display of her wealth as well as helping her stand out at her ceremony. Paintings of the event spread around the globe, making the choice popular everywhere. It’s worth noting that Victoria also chose a white dress to show off the Honiton lace work from Devon, an ailing industry in the region that suddenly exploded thanks to her patronage.

**LONG WIGS**
Louis XIII

**When:** 1624  **Where:** France

While his son would go down in history as the bigger fashion-icon, Louis XIII had a pretty significant contribution to make to the sartorial norms of the 17th century when he began to wear a wig. It all started with the king having long, natural hair in his youth, of which he was very proud. But as he began to go bald in his early 20s he turned to wearing a wig to maintain his image, and the court wasn’t far behind him. In the years that followed, men wearing long wigs became the fashion in French high society and gradually began to disseminate through the lower strata of the kingdom. The wearing of a wig began to infer social status and authority, in emulation of the king, and even merchants and street vendors might be expected to don a wig when dealing with the public.

**PIE-CRUST COLLAR**
Diana, Princess of Wales

**When:** 1980s  **Where:** UK

Princess Diana’s place as a style icon was more or less secured the moment she became a public figure, as is true of most royal women, but she had a fair few more fashion moments than most. From the ‘revenge dress’ to being the first royal woman to wear trousers to an official event, Diana was groundbreaking. Perhaps it will be surprising to learn, then, that probably her biggest fashion contribution was the humble pie-crust collar. A style that came out of the 1970s, but a favourite blouse style of Diana’s in the early 80s, the pie-crust collar has more than a little of the classic ruff about it, evoking royal portraits of the 16th and 17th century. Thanks to the princess the collar became very popular, and is a style that keeps coming back into vogue to this day.
**Lives of Royals**

**ROCOCO PIONEER**
Madame de Pompadour

**When:** 1745  **Where:** France

As the mistress to Louis XIV, Madame de Pompadour (birth name Jeanne-Antoinette Poisson) sits slightly on the outskirts of royal acclaim, but her position made her just as influential as any blue-blooded princess. In particular her taste in floral, pastel dresses helped to push the Rococo style throughout the French court and to the wider European gentry in the mid-18th century.

**CAT-EYE SUNGLASSES**
Princess Margaret

**When:** 1950s  **Where:** UK

An unquestionable fashion icon of her era, Princess Margaret was a pioneer among royal women with her sense of style that was more in keeping with a Hollywood star than a Windsor. And much like Audrey Hepburn and Elizabeth Taylor, her adoption of cat-eye sunglasses helped to propel the style into an international trend.

**TARTAN**
Queen Victoria

**When:** 1852  **Where:** UK

When King George IV crossed into Scotland in 1822 he was the first British king to do so since Charles II, starting a close bond between the royals and Scotland. Victoria and Albert’s love of the country was exemplified by their adoption of tartan in clothing, even creating their own Balmoral Tartan that’s still worn by British royals.

**KID’S SAILOR SUIT**
Edward VII

**When:** 1846  **Where:** UK

When Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, stepped aboard the royal yacht in 1846 aged only four or five, he’s unlikely to have expected his clothing would start a trend that stretches the world over even now. In actuality, while the future Edward VII was wearing the sailor suit that would become a phenomenon, it was Queen Victoria who made the choice for her son. She had commissioned the uniform from a navy tailor in the hopes of surprising her husband, Prince Albert, who loved it so much he had a painting ordered. Images of Edward in his outfit became incredibly popular, as did dressing up children in sailor outfits. In turn, the style started to be adopted as official school uniforms in some schools and began spreading across the empire. To this day, some schools in Japan still use a sailor outfit style for their uniforms.
THE REBIRTH OF HAUTE COUTURE
Empress Eugenie of France

When: 1858  Where: France

While Marie Antoinette was pretty unpopular with the masses in her time (and for decades afterwards) there can be no denying her impact on French fashion, but the French Revolution put something of a pause on the excesses of the wealthy in France. By the mid-19th century tempers had cooled enough for Empress Eugenie, wife of Emperor Napoleon III, to pick up where her forebear had left off. Her right-hand man in this effort was Charles Frederick Worth, a designer from Lincolnshire, who worked with Eugenie to push daring new trends. First came massive skirts held up with crinoline, inspired by Marie Antoinette, then snug dresses with bustles. Each item was bespoke and handmade, helping to relaunch the French fashion industry and reignite the opulent haute couture styles that had fallen out of favour. In many ways high fashion has continued to ride this wave ever since.

A TINY WAIST
Empress Elisabeth of Austria

When: 1865  Where: Austria

Empress Sisi was one of the great royal celebrities of her time, renowned for her stunning dresses, very long hair and a stringent exercise and dieting regime. In actuality, it’s believed she suffered from anorexia, which would account for her tiny 50cm waist, made smaller still in a corset that set off a trend for extreme waistslines across Europe.

CHIN SCARF
Queen Louise of Prussia

When: 1797  Where: Prussia

While Louise of Mecklenburg-Strelitz died tragically young at the age of 34, she managed to start the rather remarkable fashion trend of wearing scarves under the chin. It appears to have started with various portraits and a statue by Johann Gottfried Schadow where she wore a scarf to cover a swelling. The unusual look caught on for a short time.

WIDE DRESSES
Elizabeth I

When: 1574  Where: England

In passing the Sumptuary Statutes Elizabeth set some curbs on the dress of various strata of society, at court in particular, but she still led the way for major trends. Her red hair and stark makeup became popular, but one particular trend was the ever-widening skirts on her dresses, made possible by hip bolsters.
NO CORSET
Marie Antoinette

When: 1783  Where: France
It says something about the relationship that Marie Antoinette had with the people of France that in moments of both extravagance and humility she managed to outrage the populace. The Austrian princess was well known for her lavish fashions and expensive tastes, much of which was likely exaggerated by a growing republican movement to turn the people against the monarchy. However, it was a painting of Marie wearing a simple cotton dress that caused a sensation. Forgoing a corset that was common at the time, many took the image to be of her in her underwear, leading to it being called a chemise à la reine. In using cotton rather than silk, she was also accused of damaging the French fabric industry. It was scandalous at the time, but would usher in a new trend not long after her death as the Georgian and Victorian eras saw the rise of chemise dresses.

DOUBLE-BREASTED SUIT
Charles, Prince of Wales

When: 1980s  Where: UK
Perhaps enjoying some of the limelight that marriage to Diana gave him, Prince Charles' fashion choices were often influential in their own right. A notable example is his preference for double-breasted blazers, which massively increased in popularity at the height of his and Diana’s popularity together.

KELLY BAG
Grace Kelly

When: 1956  Where: Monaco
While Princess Grace of Monaco, aka Grace Kelly, should take most of the credit for the popularity of the 'Kelly Bag', some credit ought to be handed to Alfred Hitchcock and the costume designer Edith Head as well. The celebrated film director gave approval for Head to purchase accessories from Hermès of Paris for the film To Catch A Thief, and one of the items she bought was a Hâut à Courroies bag costing over £3,000. Kelly not only loved the bag on set, she started using it all the time. She made the bag famous when she used it to screen herself against photographers after her marriage to Rainier III, Prince of Monaco. The bag's popularity exploded to such an extent that Hermès renamed it the Kelly Bag in her honour.

RED HIGH HEELS
Louis XIV

When: 1660s  Where: France
When Louis XIV ascended the throne in 1643 it was not uncommon for men to wear shoes with very large heels. Charles II, for instance, was known to wear them, making his 1.85-metre stature all the more impressive. For Louis, however, the heel was a little more important to him. Standing 1.63-metres tall, he was sensitive about his height and wanted to appear more imposing by wearing a 10cm heel. To accentuate the point, he would have the heel and sole dyed red, which was an expensive colour to use in the 1660s. A king’s fashions tend to cause a trend, but Louis made red heels even more exclusive when he passed an edict limiting their use to members of the court. Now, the red heel for men was not only fashionable but also a great status symbol.
EMPEROR STYLE
Catherine The Great

When: 1762 Where: Russia

As the soon-to-be Catherine the Great prepared to instigate the overthrow of her husband Peter III, she put on the uniform of Captain Alexander Talyzin, a member of the Life Guards Semionovsky Regiment. This was the old uniform that had existed since Peter the Great and had been replaced by Peter III for something more Prussian in style. It was a signal to the military that she was with them in their distaste for Peter’s Prussian leanings, despite being from Prussia herself. The coup was a success, she became empress of Russia, and from then on would incorporate elements of traditional Russian dress and uniform dresses into her wardrobe to reaffirm her dedication to her adopted land.

FRENCH HOOD
Anne Boleyn

When: 1520s Where: England

Prior to Anne Boleyn’s arrival in Henry VIII’s court, the fashion for women had been to wear a gable hood (early portraits even depict her wearing one). But as her influence grew she brought the French Hood into vogue, with its rounder, softer design. Interestingly, upon her death the gable began to be used again.

UNBUTTONED WAISTCOAT
Edward VII

When: 1901 Where: UK

While sometimes challenged as an apocryphal story, fashion historians seem to agree that the custom of leaving the bottom button of a waistcoat undone, which exists to this day, was started by Edward VII. Fond of a waistcoat, his increasing waistline is supposed to have influenced his choice, which quickly caught on as a trend.

LEISURE WEAR
Edward VIII

When: 1920s Where: UK

Few royal men have had as much of an impact on national fashions as the then-Prince of Wales did during the 1920s. From early on he advocated for what he called “dress soft” clothing, putting comfort ahead of the more formal attire usually favoured by members of the royal family. What this meant in reality was that he adopted the era’s move towards leisure wear, or sports casual, such as heavily patterned sports coats. The prince’s enthusiasm for these more informal fashions had a massive impact on the nation. While the prince himself was not always well liked by the people (less so after his abdication from the throne in 1936), his sense of style was always closely followed and imitated by those who could access the same Savile Row tailors as he could. Edward essentially established the place of ‘smart casual’ in every man’s wardrobe from then on.

THREE-PIECE SUIT
Charles II

When: 1666 Where: England

Abandoning French fashion, Charles II declared that his court would be adopting what was known as the Persian vest, a long waistcoat, from around 1666 onwards. This essentially began the trend of a coat or jacket over a waistcoat with some form of leg covering, which we would today consider a three-piece suit.
THE FIRST SULTAN

Saladin

How did he unify the Islamic world to reclaim the Holy Land from the Crusaders?

Written by John Man

Ask anyone in the eastern Mediterranean to name their greatest hero and the answer will almost certainly be Saladin. All across Europe and America, if you ask for one Arabic hero, the answer will probably be the same. His achievements alone explain why. Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub - known as Saladin - united most of the divided Muslim world against the Crusaders, who had seized what they called the Holy Land and its religious heart, Jerusalem. In 1187, after 20 years of campaigning, he recaptured Jerusalem and set about driving the Crusaders into the sea. But he was more than a brilliant general. It was his personality that made him a hero for both sides.

Although a leader of the Arabs, he was technically Kurdish, born in Tikrit, Iraq, some time in 1137-8. His father, Ayyub, took him to Baalbek in today’s Lebanon to escape a family feud. This was the first of many strokes of good luck that shaped his life. Baalbek - ancient, with crisp air smelling of orchards and gardens - was at the centre of the Muslim world, which reached from Spain to India and inspired glorious buildings, rich literature and first-rate science. Baalbek was also on the frontier between two rival empires, the Abbasids ruling in Baghdad and the Fatimids in Cairo. The two had inherited the great split in the Muslim world between Sunnis - those guided by the sunnah, the sayings of the Prophet Mohammed which they traced back to the Prophet’s uncle Abbas - and the Shia (Shiat Ali, the Party of Ali), who looked back to the Prophet’s son-in-law Ali and his wife, the Prophet’s daughter, Fatima. Abbasids and Fatimids, Sunni and Shia: their rivalry defined Islam, with the regions of the rival sects further divided by sub-sects and ambitious rulers. To unify such a mix was a challenge for any leader wishing to face the greatest challenge of all - the Crusaders.

They were there because in 1095 the pope, Urban II, urged them to go. He did so because the so-called Holy Land was mostly in Muslim hands and was also threatened by “barbarians” from Central Asia, the Turks, on their slow migration into the country now named after them. Along the way, they had taken Jerusalem, the heart of Christianity. In addition, Christendom - most of the former Roman Empire - was divided against itself. The western...
“HE WAS MORE THAN A BRILLIANT GENERAL. IT WAS HIS PERSONALITY THAT MADE HIM A HERO FOR BOTH SIDES.”

Saladin: The Life, the Legend and the Islamic Empire
by John Man is available now from Transworld Publishers
part (Europe, headed by the pope) was rivalled by the eastern part (ruled by a patriarch from Constantinople, formerly Byzantium and now Istanbul). Urban wished to unite Christendom with a supposedly noble cause - to regain the Holy Land. Addressing a vast crowd in Clermont, south-west France, he urged war against the 'infidels'. The crowd roared approval, and the word spread. In the first of many crusades, hundreds of knights led a rabble eager for loot, certain that they were doing God's work. In 1099, the Franks - as Muslims called these French invaders - took Jerusalem with extreme brutality. The coast, from the border of Turkey to the edge of Sinai, became four Christian states, defended by 36 formidable castles. Muslims were outraged. Leaders demanded jihad, holy war. But Muslim leaders, it seemed, were better at fighting each other than fighting the Crusaders. Over the next 40 years, both sides learned to live together. On the Muslim side, anger gave way to resignation.

Yet there was a possible leader. His name was Nur al-Din, ruler of northern Syria. Through his father, he had longstanding connections with Saladin's father, who became Nur al-Din's top aide. From boyhood, Saladin knew Nur al-Din well. He was a man of fine qualities - austere, generous, pious, charitable, charming and handsome, "with beautiful, melting eyes" in the words of the chronicler Ali ibn al-Athir. His senior general was Saladin's uncle, Shirkuh, burly, quick-tempered and beloved by his men. All three - Saladin's father, Nur al-Din, Shirkuh - made fine role models for the young Saladin.

Saladin's first break came in the south, in Egypt. Egyptians were Shi'ite, their rulers Fatimids, and their realm was in decline, beset by violence. Of 15 viziers, who held the real power under the caliph, an impotent figurehead, 14 had been murdered. In 1163, the current one, Shawar, escaped an assassination attempt, fled to Syria and begged Nur al-Din for help. Nur al-Din agreed in exchange for one-third of Egypt's grain revenues. The two set out with 10,000 cavalry, bringing Saladin, now 24, with them on a long hard march across the gravel plains of Sinai to Cairo. There Shawar, reinstated, turned on Nur al-Din and sought help from, of all people, Amalric, the Christian king of Jerusalem. The ensuing battles were inconclusive but Saladin proved himself a competent leader, before returning to Syria.

Under Amalric and Shawar, Egypt descended into more violence and chaos. In late 1168, Nur al-Din took advantage by sending Shirkuh to seize control, with Saladin as his aide. They were welcomed as liberators. Shawar was captured, and executed, while Shirkuh was made vizier by the 19-year-old caliph, al-Adid. At his side was his executive officer, Saladin.

One evening three months later, Shirkuh ate an over-hearty meal, suffered a seizure and died. The obvious successor was Saladin. In a lavish ceremony, Caliph al-Adid confirmed him in office, spelling out in flowery words Saladin's duty to wage holy war: "As for the jihad, thou art the nursing of its milk... Gird up therefore the shanks of spears to meet it." Saladin, his modesty unaffected by power and splendour, committed himself not just to jihad but also to good government and service to the Sunni caliph in Baghdad.

These were hard tasks. He was serving two versions of Islam with two caliphs, in
Saladin

KEY BATTLES

The conflicts that shaped Saladin’s rise

**BATTLE OF MARJ AYYUN**
(10 June 1179)
During a period of drought, Saladin offered a truce and end to raids in return for the Crusaders abandoning nearby strongholds. The offer was refused and raids continued, including crop burning. The Crusaders sent out a force to the Litani River and attacked Saladin’s advance guard thinking it was his main force. Saladin arrived quickly with the rest of his army to devastate the Christian forces.

**BATTLE OF HATTIN**
(3-4 July 1187)
20,000 Crusaders went to the aid of Tiberias only to be worn out by hot and dry conditions. Saladin met this depleted force with his 30,000 men at Hattin and decimated them. While he allowed the lords to leave, including new king of Jerusalem Guy de Lusignan, captured templars and hospitaliers were killed, and he personally executed Reynald de Chatillon.

**SIEGE OF JACOB’S FORD**
(23-30 August 1179)
With a fortress at Jacob’s Ford just a day’s march from Damascus and a possible staging ground for Crusader incursions into Egypt, Saladin set about destroying it in a siege. With Baldwin IV’s forces close, the siege needed to be swift and ruthless. Siege mines around the walls were used to collapse them and the Crusader forces inside were mercilessly slaughtered.

**BATTLE OF AL-FULE**
(30 September – 6 October 1183)
With raids continuing and having achieved greater control of Syria, the Crusaders looked to confront Saladin to bring his incursions to an end. Guy de Lusignan looked to engage in close-quarters fighting to stifle Saladin’s army, which ended in a stalemate between the two armies.

**BATTLE OF MONTGISARD**
(25 November 1177)
Looking to take advantage of uncertainty in Jerusalem, Saladin marched 27,000 men from Egypt. However, his army became dispersed thanks to raids on their journey. The Crusaders, led by Baldwin IV and Reynald de Chatillon intercepted Saladin at Montgisard, catching him off guard and his army out of formation. Tired from their march and looting, Saladin’s forces were routed.

**SIEGE OF KERAK**
(November – 4 December 1183)
As the castle from which Reynald de Chatillon struck out at Muslim caravans on their way to Mecca, Kerak was a regular target for attack by Saladin. On this occasion Baldwin IV personally led his army to relieve the siege, even though he was now confined to a stretcher. Seeing he was pincered between this new force and the walls of Kerak, Saladin ended the siege.

Cairo and in Baghdad, and he still owed allegiance to Nur al-Din in Damascus. He also faced opposition from locals who resented the influx of Syrians, from a 50,000-strong army of black Nubians in the south, and from a sea-borne invasion sent by Christian Byzantium. In response, he built a ruthless secret service, put his father in charge of Alexandria and his elder brother in charge of the south, built up the navy and replaced Shi’ite officials with Sunnis. On the first day of the Muslim new year (10 September 1171), in the Friday prayers, he had the name of the local caliph replaced by that of the Baghdad caliph - the start of Saladin’s Ayubid Dynasty (1171-1260). Good luck helped. The young caliph, still only 20, died, possibly of poison. Saladin proved a master of PR, accompanying the caliph’s body at his funeral and providing for his family. Saladin, in his early 30s, was Egypt’s supreme ruler.

Under his firm leadership and a display of Islamic virtues, Egypt thrived. Saladin taxed the rich, enforced the giving of alms to the poor (a prime Muslim virtue) and encouraged trade by all nationalities - Italians, Christians, Jews - tolerance being another Islamic virtue. Indeed, his own doctor was a Jew, Maimonides, the greatest intellectual of the age.

Again, luck favoured him. In May 1174 Nur al-Din collapsed during a game of
polo. He died a few days later, universally admired for his many virtues. Saladin saw he could fill the void by pursuing a grand vision: to unite Egypt and Syria, and on this foundation retake Jerusalem and drive out the Crusaders. To do this, he had to get back to Syria.

By chance, the governor of Damascus asked him to take over the city. Leaving Egypt with huge sums of cash, he entered Damascus in November 1174. The money helped, but once again he increased his popularity by downplaying his personal ambition, insisting that he was preparing for jihad.

Damascus, however, was not all Syria. Mosul, Edessa, Aleppo, Hama, Baalbek and Homs were all semi-independent, with their own prickly leaders. It took two years to beat or cajole them into allegiance. Twice he survived attempts on his life by the most violent of the Shia subsects, the Assassins. Again, he proved adept at leadership. Future unity meant that current enemies would one day be allies, so he was magnanimous, banning indiscriminate slaughter and releasing captives. By 1176, when he returned to Cairo, he was master of Syria, Egypt, and much of north Africa and the west of Arabia. He became known as Sultan Salâh al-Dîn (Righteousness of the Faith) - Saladin to Europeans. Only Aleppo and Mosul remained independent. Jerusalem was almost within his grasp.

It was not to be, not yet, partly because of one man. If Saladin is our story's hero, there is also a villain. His name was Reynald de Châtillon, reviled by Muslims (and many Christians) as a brutal, deceitful, vengeful thug. Perhaps he also had rakish charm, because having arrived with the Second Crusade in 1147, he married Constance, the 26-year-old princess of Antioch, the Holy Land's second-holiest city. After several years of raiding, he spent 16 years in a Muslim prison, until he was ransomed. By then, Constance had died. With a new wife, he acquired her castle, Kerak, an immense pile on a crag on the road between the Dead Sea and the Gulf of Aqaba. Here he acted as a warlord, harrying Muslim traders and pilgrims. In 1177, he was part of a Christian force that caught Saladin's army unaware at Montgisard, an unidentified place in what is now southern Israel. In this unique catastrophe, Saladin lost 2,000 men and almost his life.

This was a low-point for Saladin. His authority remained tenuous in a region seething with unstable elements. It suited both sides to agree a truce. It would take several years for the tide to turn in Saladin's favour as the contestants jockeyed for advantage.

One of them was Reynald, who had the astonishing idea of striking at the heart of Islam. The best approach was by boat, down the Red Sea, an Islamic preserve, never before penetrated by Crusaders. Reynald didn't participate directly, but in 1183 150 of his men in three ships raided and pillaged on both sides of the Red Sea, until either killed or captured. Muslims said Reynald's men were on their way to Mecca (the Prophet's birthplace) or to Medina to dig up Mohammed's grave - a ludicrous claim, given the distance and the impossibility of staying hidden. But the idea was enough to super-charge Saladin's determination to retake Jerusalem.

He had to wait. Jerusalem was in the hands of a 23-year-old, Baldwin, a surprisingly effective leader despite being incapacitated by leprosy. The stalemate
lasted two more years until, in 1185, Baldwin died and the Christians squabbled over an heir. In a dramatic conspiracy, the Leper King’s sister Sybilla, having been proclaimed queen, crowned her own husband Guy de Lusignan as king. Still Saladin could not take advantage, because that winter he developed a high fever, recovering only in early 1186.

It was Reynald who inspired Saladin to act. Nominally, Christians and Muslims were bound by a truce, always ignored by Reynald. Now he went beyond the pale. Saladin’s secretary al-Adin recorded what happened: “The most perfidious, the most evil of Franks” seized a caravan of 400 camels carrying Muslim pilgrims to Mecca. Saladin was furious. As he wrote to the caliph, “Thy servant has sworn to shed the blood of the tyrant of Kerak.” Jihad was now personal.

Messages went out across Saladin’s empire, summoning leaders to a war of vengeance, liberation and annihilation. Around 30,000 came, and camped 10km west of the freshwater Lake Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee). A Christian army of 20,000 gathered near Sephoris, a village near Nazareth, under Jerusalem’s king, Guy de Lusignan. Though fewer, they were supremely confident that their heavy cavalry would prevail. Besides, they had with them their greatest talisman, a piece of jewelled wood that they believed was a fragment of the True Cross. With God on their side, how could they fail?

Guy de Lusignan made a move early on Friday, 3 July. Under a merciless sun, everything depended on access to water. Where Saladin had teams of camels bringing skins of water from Lake Tiberias, Lusignan planned on using several wells.
along the way. To their left rose two low hills, the Horns of Hattin, and to the north, 18km from the Christian army, was the village of Hattin, which had a well. At midday, already desperate for water, that was where they headed, with Muslim horse-back archers probing their flanks.

Night fell, and the Christians were still 4km short of Hattin. The two armies camped so close that the demoralised Christians could hear Saladin’s men celebrating the coming victory with drums, prayers and singing.

Saturday, 4 July; dawn: the Christians had only one thought now - water. They set off along the valley floor, while Saladin’s men harried them, setting fires to add smoke to the insufferable heat. Ahead, Muslim cavalry blocked the way. A small gap led uphill towards a few shallow pools at an abandoned hamlet. The Christians retreated up the slope, a mêlée around the True Cross, only to find the pools dry. Fighting off a hopeless counter-attack, the Muslims moved in, killing at will and seized the True Cross. Survivors, exhausted and despairing, collapsed on the ground, awaiting death or capture.

Saladin prostrated himself in a prayer of thanks then, in his tent, sent for surviving Christian leaders. What followed was recorded in several sources. King Lusignan and Reynald were brought in and offered chairs. By tradition, prisoners offered refreshment were to be spared, but none was offered yet. Saladin looked at Reynald, whom he had sworn to kill. “How many times have you sworn an oath and then violated it?” he said through an interpreter. Reynald answered arrogantly: “Kings have always acted thus. I did nothing more.”

It sounded like a claim to be Saladin’s equal. Yet Saladin calmly ordered some iced water for Lusignan, a gesture of reassurance. He drank and handed the cup to Reynald, a move that should have been Saladin’s. He said to Lusignan ominously: “It is you who have given him to drink.”

The two were led out. Saladin took a break to review his troops. He returned, sent again for Reynald, told him of the oath to kill him and offered him a chance to convert. When he refused, Saladin “advanced towards him, sword in hand and struck him between the neck and shoulders”. Aides completed the beheading, and the head was later sent on a tour of Saladin’s main cities.

How many died that day? No one counted. Estimates say 30,000-40,000. Whatever the figure, little remained for the defence of Jerusalem.

First, Saladin sealed the coast to forestall possible reinforcements by Christians. That took two months. In September, he offered Jerusalem’s leaders generous terms if they surrendered. They refused. Both sides prepared for attack. Jerusalem was commanded by Baldwin of Ibelin, the head of an eminent Crusader family, who had been allowed briefly into the city to save his wife - a remarkable example of Saladin’s chivalry. Having discovered Jerusalem to be leaderless, he had stayed, sending Saladin an apology for breaking their agreement.

On 30 September, 40 mangonels began to bombard the western walls, to no avail. Inside, the city was in chaos, swollen with refugees, mainly women and children, and with very few warriors. After five days, Saladin shifted his focus to the north, and the bombardment continued with crossbowmen keeping the battlements clear and sappers digging into the foundations. After three more days, the walls were finally breached. Clearly, the city was doomed.

Officials came to discuss terms. At first Saladin refused, setting chivalry aside. “I want to take Jerusalem the way the Christians took it from the Muslims 91 years ago,” he said, according to Imad al-Din, “The men I will slaughter and the women I will make slaves.” In response Baldwin threatened to raze the city, leaving Saladin nothing: “We shall throw ourselves into the flames rather than accept destruction and shame.” So Saladin abandoned violence for mercy.
Saladin watches as Christians leave Jerusalem after his conquest of the kingdom.
THE MYTH AND THE MAN

Dr Suleiman Mourad, Professor of Religion at Smith College, offers an alternative view on the legend of Saladin

What sources do we have to tell us who Saladin was, and how reliable are they?
Many contemporary sources about Saladin exist. Authors, including close confidants of his, projected onto him their desires and expectations. It is difficult to distinguish between the real Saladin and the image they wanted him to have. For instance, Sultanic Marvels And Josephian Charms by Saladin’s advisor Ibn Shaddad (d.1234) conjures and equates the sultan (whose first name was Joseph) with biblical Joseph. Similarly, poets compared Saladin’s conquest of Jerusalem on 2 October 1187 to the Prophet Muhammad’s legendary Night Journey. (Saladin chose to capture the sacred city on that day knowing it was the anniversary of the Prophet’s spiritual ride.) One sees, therefore, the effort in the Muslim sources to put Saladin on par with prophets rather than with comparable rulers.

What do we know about Saladin’s beliefs and what motivated him?
Saladin was a shrewd politician. He spent his career contesting Muslim rivals and non-Muslim foes. He waged many wars, but was inclined to avoid battle whenever possible. He was merciful in some situations and ruthless in others. He was not exceptionally gifted as army commander but he was remarkably generous and spent lavishly, which made him very popular but caused regular headaches for his administration.

How do you think Saladin compared to other rulers of his era?
Saladin was of the same stock like many rulers in his day: coming to power through intrigues and assassinations, and having to spend his tenure fending off former comrades and family members. More importantly, Saladin existed in the shadow of his predecessor Sultan Nūr al-Dīn (d.1174), so much so that some historians thought of the two as constituting one epoch. Even when we talk about Saladin’s main accomplishment (the liberation of Jerusalem), they believed Nūr al-Dīn laid down the groundwork and Saladin reaped the benefits.

Have attitudes and opinions of Saladin fluctuated in the many generations since his reign?
Saladin became the hero for many Sunnis who lived during his time in Egypt and greater Syria. By the second half of the 13th century, his legacy was outshone by the Mamluk sultan Baybars (r. 1260-1277), whose accomplishments include major victories against the Crusaders and the defeat of the Mongols. Until the 20th century, it was Baybars who were the better of the two. But the European fascination with Saladin won the day, and many Muslims pivoted back to him.

What would you say is the greatest misconception about Saladin?
The greatest misconception about Saladin is that he was a philosophical and highly cultured man whose humanism towered above the Muslim and Crusader barbarians around him. This image was fashioned by European romanticists determined to condemn their own medieval history. They propagated the myth of Saladin to present him as a model for the new Europe.

The other misconception is about Saladin’s military prowess. His major achievement – victory at Hattin in 1187 – was an anomaly. The Crusaders choose to camp in a barren spot with no access to water, exposed to the excessive heat of the July sun, which was a tragic miscalculation. Their utter defeat meant that there were few troops remaining to protect the Kingdom of Jerusalem, especially the Holy City. Saladin took advantage of that, yet most of his achievements were reversed when the army of the Third Crusade arrived in 1189.

What do you think Saladin means to people in today’s world?
Saladin means different things to different groups. For white supremacists, Saladin embodies the clash of civilisations and symbolises the inherent animosity of Islam towards Christians and Christianity. For some Muslims and Arabs, Saladin is a symbol of resistance against Western hegemony (or Israeli occupation). Others, especially those interested in dialogue and inclusiveness, adore his European myth.

Read an extended interview at: bit.ly/AAHSaladin

Right: A grand statue of Saladin that now stands in Damascus
The Christians would have to ransom themselves - 10 dinars for a man, five for a woman, one for a child - and hand over all their horses and weapons. What of those who could not pay, asked Balian, the aged and destitute? He offered a lump sum of 30,000 dinars of his own money. Saladin accepted.

Utter chaos followed as refugees streamed out of the city. Cash flowed into the hands of Saladin’s officials and no one kept accounts. Inside and outside the city, desperate citizens sold their goods for almost nothing. Saladin, chivalrous again, let widows leave without payment and handed out ransom money to the poor and destitute. When officials remonstrated with him, he said Christians everywhere “will speak of the blessings we have showered upon them”. Muslim jihad and Christian fervour could have led to appalling bloodshed but thanks to Saladin it didn’t. And he was right - the retaking of Jerusalem sealed his reputation.

That was the highpoint of his career. Christian leaders appealed for help from all Europe, and Europe responded. Richard I of England (Lionheart, as he was known), Philip of France, and the German emperor Frederick I (known as Barbarossa, Red Beard) were the main leaders of the Third Crusade – three years (1189-92) of massacres, sieges, truces, victories and defeats. It almost all took place on the coast. True, Saladin preserved Jerusalem. But when war-weariness ended the Crusade, the peace allowed Christian enclaves to survive. In his long-term objective - to drive out the Crusaders - Saladin failed.

In late 1192, Saladin, now 54 years old, was tired and sick. Back in his home in Damascus, his health continued to decline. After 12 days of illness, on 4 March 1193, a sheikh was reading to him from the Qur’an when Saladin died. Carried through wailing crowds, he was buried nearby, leaving a unique reputation. Muslims adored him - mainly Sunnis, for Shias bore the brunt of his ruthlessness. Christians admired him because he exemplified so-called Christian virtues, in contrast to the behaviour of their own leaders.

His charisma was rooted in his character and leadership skills, many of which define good leadership today. A loving family, strong mentors and firm beliefs underpinned Saladin’s self-confidence, and his ego was put in the service of his cause. He could be ruthless but was always ready to be generous. He had the curiosity of a scholar, the empathy of a parent, and absolutely no interest in self-enrichment (he left hardly any possessions). He willingly risked his life and accepted suffering. He kept his promises. He cared for his fighting men and the women in his life. Perhaps his greatest quality was his acceptance that even his enemies (except Reynald) had causes, emotions and opinions that deserved respect. There have been few to match him.
A n unconventional queen with a fiery temper, Christina of Sweden is undoubtedly one of history’s most enigmatic figures. The last member of the Vasa dynasty to rule Sweden, she was born in the Tre Kronor castle in 1626, the only surviving child of King Gustavus Adolphus and Maria Eleonora of Brandenburg. A strong and hairy baby with a loud cry, it was mistakenly announced at first that Christina was a boy. When the error was realised a few hours later, nobody was brave enough to tell the king, forcing Christina’s aunt to gather her up and place her in front of Gustavus so he could see the truth for himself. However, it’s often said that Gustavus was not upset that he’d had a daughter, apparently declaring, “She will be clever, for she has deceived us all!” As king, Gustavus had transformed Sweden into one of the greatest powers in Europe. He was also a major leader during the Thirty Years’ War, a conflict that originally broke out between Catholics and Protestants across the Holy Roman Empire, which ultimately changed the balance of power in Europe. Hailed as the protector of Protestantism, Gustavus was killed at the Battle of Lützen in 1632, leaving Christina as Sweden’s new monarch just one month shy of her sixth birthday. Anticipating his death, Gustavus had already arranged for parliament to swear an oath to his daughter and secure her right to inherit the throne. He had also left instructions for a regency council to be formed for Christina, led by his trusted and experienced Lord High Chancellor Axel Oxenstierna, who was widely revered by his contemporaries for his wise counsel. This was a smart move, especially as Christina’s mother, who had struggled with her mental health for some time, became increasingly erratic. After her husband’s death, Maria Eleonora had Gustavus’ heart embalmed and placed in a gold casket that she had hung over her bed, which she forced her daughter to sleep in with her. In the end, Oxenstierna arranged for Maria Eleonora to be moved to Gripsholm Castle and away from the young queen. The late king had arranged tutors to ensure that Christina would receive the same education as a prince. She was taught fencing, horse-riding, languages,
philosophy, religion, classics and even how to hunt bears. With her voracious appetite for knowledge and her habit of studying for several hours a day, it is unsurprising that Christina became one of the most learned women in Europe. When she was a teenager, Oxenstierna proudly declared: “She is not at all like a female.”

From a young age, Christina developed a passionate interest in the arts and sciences. Sweden was considered cold and unsophisticated in comparison to the renowned cultured courts found in Rome and Paris, and the queen dreamed of transforming Stockholm into the cultural capital of Northern Europe.

After reaching her majority in 1644, Christina made a name for herself as a dedicated collector by spending lavishly on scientific instruments, drama, music and art, while also sending her agents out to purchase the finest items from across Europe. The queen also cultivated one of the greatest libraries on the Continent and over the next few years several leading scholars, theologians, scientists, authors and philosophers were enticed to visit.

In 1649, she famously invited the French philosopher René Descartes to her court to establish a new scientific academy and become her private tutor. However, when Descartes finally arrived in Sweden in the dead of winter he discovered that the queen could only meet with him three times a week at 5am.

The pair clashed in the few sessions that they had together, with Descartes left frustrated by the queen’s fascination with Ancient Greek, while she disliked his mechanical philosophy. Unused to Sweden’s cold and bitter climate Descartes died, supposedly from pneumonia, in Stockholm in February 1650, just a few months after his arrival.

Christina was known for her high-handedness and her determination to get her own way. As queen regnant, she was expected to compromise – something she hated – with her government. Having been raised as queen since she was six, Christina wanted to command, not govern, her realm and any time she felt that her authority or opinion was being questioned, she lashed out angrily.

She quickly clashed with Oxenstierna after reaching her majority and actively tried to push him aside. In 1645 the leading players involved in the Thirty Years’ War agreed to meet for negotiations. Oxenstierna wished to continue the conflict, which had seen Sweden make significant territorial gains, and sent his son to negotiate. However, Christina disagreed and sent her own delegate with instructions to conclude peace by any means necessary.

The Peace of Westphalia was eventually agreed in 1648 and Oxenstierna was disappointed, believing that he could have negotiated a better deal for Sweden. Meanwhile, as a result of the negotiations, Christina gained hundreds of paintings, manuscripts, books, statues and other items that had belonged to the collection of Rudolf II, the late Holy Roman Emperor.

In 1649 the queen frustrated her advisers by steadfastly refusing to marry. Repulsed by the idea of childbirth, she had no intention of producing a successor for the throne and instead named her first cousin Charles as her heir presumptive. This, combined with her masculine behaviour, posture, unruly hair, crude sense of humour and preference for wearing male clothing, quickly led to rumours regarding her sexuality.

Many believed Christina had an affair with Countess Ebba Sparre, her close friend and lady-in-waiting. But Christina also had close relationships with several male favourites and she enjoyed shocking people with her scandalous, affectionate - and at times erotic - behaviour.

Even so, by the beginning of the 1650s Christina had become disillusioned with her role as queen and she had no desire to rule. Although the artistic culture in Sweden had improved during her reign, it was still nowhere near the high standard of that in Rome, which she deeply admired.

Another reason for her disillusionment was her wish to convert to Roman Catholicism, which she had been attracted to since her youth, particularly for its support of celibacy. An avid reader and free-thinker, Christina had developed doubts about Lutheran teachings and was frustrated when the conservative clergy of Sweden refused to consider reform.

Of course, as the head of the Swedish Lutheran Church, Christina’s hope to convert was in direct conflict with her responsibilities as ruler. The fact that Gustavus had fought and died for his Protestant beliefs made the queen’s desire even more troubling. As his daughter and successor, she should have been championing her father’s sacrifice and religious devotion.

In 1651, Christina suffered a nervous breakdown after years of spending several hours a day working and studying. That year her popularity in Sweden took a hit when, in a fit of fury, she had Arnold Johan Messenius, her royal historiographer, and his 17-year-old son executed after Messenius openly objected to her policies and accused her of being a ‘Jezebel’.

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Tired of ruling, Christina attempted to abdicate her throne but relented when her council pleaded with her to stay, with the promise that she would not be pressured to marry. Nevertheless, in 1654 the queen again stated her intention to give up her crown, much to the distress of her advisers, with Oxenstierna asserting that she would regret her decision.

Negotiations were held with the Riksdag regarding the queen’s future financial security, with Christina being granted a pension and revenues from certain Swedish dominions. Having thought about her abdication for some time, Christina had secretly arranged for several of her valuables, including books, statues, paintings and manuscripts, to be sent to Antwerp in 1653.

Christina’s abdication ceremony was held on 6 June 1654 at Uppsala Castle. The queen wore all of her royal regalia, which was ceremonially removed from her to symbolise her abdication. Count Per Brahe the Younger had been tasked left Sweden days after her abdication, embarking on her journey to her new home in Rome. After reaching the border between Sweden and Denmark, Christina cut her hair and changed into male attire, partly to disguise herself as she travelled.

Catholicism, which was a contentious issue in Sweden and would have put her revenues at risk. Nevertheless, she was always one to splurge and quickly found herself running out of money.

Christina eventually converted to Catholicism on Christmas Eve during a private ceremony in Brussels. The conversion was initially kept quiet to avoid controversy back in Sweden, but Christina publicly acknowledged that she had converted in November 1655, while she was in Innsbruck, Austria.

That December, 18 months after leaving Sweden, Christina finally arrived

“Christina was known for her high-handedness and her determination to get her own way”

with removing Christina’s crown but he refused, leaving Christina to remove it herself. It was a fitting moment for a queen who had always played by her own rules.

With Charles ascending the throne as King Charles X Gustav, Christina but also because it was her preferred way to dress.

Christina did not immediately head to Rome but instead stopped off in the Spanish Netherlands. It’s thought this was to hide her intention to convert to Catholicism.

A Scandalous Relationship

Was the queen really in love with her lady-in-waiting?

Without a doubt, Queen Christina’s most famous same-sex relationship was her rumoured affair with Countess Ebba Sparre. Sparre was frequently described as a traditional, feminine beauty, a direct contrast to Christina, whose masculine appearance and mannerisms increased assumptions that she was homosexual – especially when she made it clear that she had no intention of ever marrying or having children in her future.

The women were known to share a bed together, which was not an uncommon practice at the time, but the queen enjoyed shocking those around her. Christina relished the opportunity to provoke others about her relationship with Sparre and what they got up to together when they were alone and in private. Nevertheless, the queen was also responsible for arranging Sparre’s marriage to Count Jakob Kasimir de la Gardie, the younger brother of one of her male favourites.

Christina and Sparre frequently wrote letters to one another and they continued this practice even after the queen had abdicated and settled in Rome. Christina’s letters to Sparre were often full of passionate language, with the queen giving her the nickname Belle. But she also wrote similar, emotional letters to other women too, including those that she had never met.

Although there has been much emphasis placed on their relationship by historians, we don’t know for certain what the true nature of Christina and Sparre’s relationship was. Even so, there is no denying that the speculation around the supposed love affair has continued to play a major role in the narratives that are written about Christina today.
in Rome to great fanfare. Her entrance into the city was arranged by Pope Alexander VII himself, who saw the conversion of a Protestant, former queen regnant as positive propaganda for the Catholic Church. There were fireworks, banquets, operas, jousting and various other celebrations held in her honour for over a month and Christina even attended Mass with the Pope himself, where she received the Holy Sacrament.

Christina’s new home in Rome was the Palazzo Farnese, where she quickly began building upon her artistic patronage, supporting scholars and artists and founding Rome’s first public theatre. She also started a literary circle focused on theatre, music, debate, poetry and literature, which ultimately developed into the Pontifical Academy of Arcadia in 1690. All the while, the former queen was running up large debts, worsened by the fact that Sweden had stopped paying her revenue after her conversion to Catholicism was announced.

Never one to shy away from a scandal, Christina continued her habit of forming close relationships with men, which sent gossip swirling around. Her close relationship with Cardinal Azzolino, who served as her representative in the Catholic Church, and his repeated visits to her palace led to widespread speculation that they were lovers.

Christina’s scandalous behaviour in Rome caused problems just as it had done in Sweden and led to a strain on her relationship with the Vatican. Despite giving up her throne to convert, she was no more devout to Catholicism than she had been to Protestant Lutheranism.

In her new home, Christina had the independence and freedom that she had always craved. But, as she settled into her life in Rome, she soon understood that she no longer held that much importance without her crown. This must have been a sobering realisation for a woman who had been treated with deference her whole life and still saw herself as a queen - the Pope himself would famously describe Christina as “a queen without a realm”.

It wasn’t long before the former queen set her sights on gaining a new throne. In 1656, she opened negotiations with Cardinal Mazarin, the chief minister of France, suggesting that she should become the queen of Naples if France successfully conquered the kingdom from the Spanish. Not only would this restore her ability to rule, but it would have allowed her to become financially independent from Sweden.

However, her hopes for the crown were soon dashed. While staying at the Palace of Fontainebleau during a visit to France in October 1657 to discuss the plan, Christina controversially ordered the execution of her equerry Gian Monaldeschi. Although an angry Christina claimed that he had betrayed her, she failed to explain how and instead insisted it was within her royal authority to have him killed.

This incident greatly impacted her popularity. After the death of her cousin King Charles in 1660, she returned to Sweden and declared her intention to resume the throne if Charles’ son and successor, a young five-year-old boy, died. However, now that Christina was a Catholic, the mere thought of her returning to govern a Protestant realm was impossible. She would later set her sights on becoming queen of Poland after her cousin, John II Casimir Vasa, abdicated the throne, but this also came to nothing. Christina returned to Rome for the last time in 1668 and she remained there for the rest of her life, continuing her artistic patronage and even producing an unfinished autobiography. She died at the Palazzo Corsini in April 1689 and although she had requested a simple burial, she was given a huge ceremony to emphasise her decision to sacrifice her throne for Catholicism. She was laid to rest within St Peter’s Basilica, where she remains one of only three women to be buried there.

Free-spirited, unapologetic and courageous, Christina was a queen who did what she wanted, even if her behaviour at times was reckless. She never once bent to the expectation of others and lived by her own code of conduct, regardless of criticism - and her extraordinary life continues to fascinate us all over three centuries later.
THE QUEEN'S LEGACY
How do fictional portrayals of Christina match up to reality?

The various depictions of Queen Christina on screen and stage have played an important part in her legacy and how we see her today. To a varying extent there is always a focus on her sexuality, relationships, masculine attitude and clothing, combined with her disillusionment for ruling Sweden.

Arguably the most iconic movie based on Christina's life is the 1933 film Queen Christina, starring Greta Garbo (right) as the enigmatic monarch. Facing huge pressure to marry and produce an heir, Garbo's Christina argues with her councillors and firmly states that she will die "a bachelor and not an old maid". Although Christina is shown to have a close relationship with Ebba Sparre, her sexuality is not explicitly explored, which is unsurprising considering that homosexuality was still illegal in the 1930s.

Instead, the queen falls in love with a male Spanish ambassador - a more 'acceptable' love interest - and it's implied that her inability to pursue this relationship is a major driving force behind her decision to abdicate. The film provides a more romantic depiction of Christina's life, as the screenwriters believed that the real reasons for her abdication were not interesting enough for a Hollywood film.

Meanwhile 2015's The Girl King, starring Malin Buska as Christina, is the first film to address the queen's sexuality and show her pursing a romance with Sparre despite the possible consequences. Wearing male attire and rejecting religious, political and gender norms, Christina builds a cultured court while grappling with her lesbian affair and attraction to Catholicism, all while surrounded by enemy plots.

The differences between these two films demonstrate how Christina's story, like so many other historical figures, has been altered over time to suit particular audiences - creating a tangled narrative that often leaves us searching for the truth underneath.
070 **Battle of Britain**
We celebrate the men and women, in the air and on the ground, that defending Britain from Nazi invasion

082 **School for escape artists**
Uncover the mysterious world of MI9, the agency responsible for training Allies to escape POW camps

086 **Hunting Nazi gold**
The origins, purpose and ultimate resting place of the ill-gotten wealth of the Third Reich explained
A group of German Heinkel He 111 bombers, a poor match for the Hurricane and Spitfire.

A young RAF gunner trains in an Avro Anson reconnaissance aircraft over Oxfordshire in 1940.

Sir Keith Park, one of the key coordinators of the battle.
By the summer of 1940, the German war machine appeared invincible. Britain had suffered a humiliating defeat in northern France, and although the evacuation of over 338,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk in May and June was a massive achievement, a huge amount of equipment had been lost. Germany had yet to suffer a major defeat at this point.

"The Germans had been, to put it mildly, in a good run of form," says Craig Murray, a curator at the Imperial War Museum’s RAF Duxford site. "They’d quickly destroyed Poland’s obsolete airforce and had managed to beat both France and Britain in a matter of weeks. Even to the German High Command this was probably beyond their wildest dreams. However, now they were left with a quandary. Hitler had wanted to negotiate peace with the British. He’d never seen Britain as a natural enemy, more as an ally and not a substantial threat, and he switched regularly between invasion and negotiation."

Yet, despite these negotiation attempts, there was an invasion plan in place and ready to be implemented. "This is Operation Sea Lion," says Murray. "For a long period Hitler sits on this and attempts to bring Britain to an agreement. Sea Lion is a massive gamble. It requires all three aspects of the German armed services to work well together, which they don’t. The army thinks it’s a relatively easy job to have troops shipped over in barges across 20-odd miles of water. The Kriegsmarine (the German navy), however, are a little bit more hesitant and see the disparity in strength between themselves and the Royal Navy: they’re not really in that league. The plan also relies heavily on the Luftwaffe achieving air superiority. The problem for the Luftwaffe, however, is in winning the battle with Britain for France they’ve lost about half their operational strength, so it hasn’t been an easy victory. It’s a very difficult plan to pull off. As Moltke, the Prussian field marshal, said, ‘No plan survives initial contact with the enemy.’ It’s not a great plan and eventually they abandon it altogether."

Despite these initial concerns, however, the German High Command decided to implement Sea Lion, which raises the question: how ready were the RAF for a large-scale attack? The answer is, of course, extremely ready. Fighter Command had been preparing for a considerable amount of time and despite defeat in the Battle of France, in the Battle of Britain they were able to utilise an ingenious new system organised by Commander-in-Chief Hugh Dowding. "He comes up with an integrated battle management system which utilises radar," Murray explains. "He’s seen the advantage of radar early on. He’s got no scientific or technological background but he intuitively understands good
technology and what he’s going to do with it. This gives the initial warning when the Germans are at Calais and as soon as they take off the British know about it. He integrates this with the Observer Corps, who are essentially volunteers that sit in small posts in the countryside and on top of high buildings in towns, using binoculars etc to view aircraft overland. At this point radar can only really track across the Channel, so they are the eyes once the aircraft cross the coast. This information will be filtered and processed before reaching group headquarters, who then decide which fighters are going to go up and how many aircraft they need.

“The real genius is it allows you to have a proportional tactical response to any raid. You don’t have to wait in patrols, the aircraft hanging about and waiting for things to happen, wasting fuel. You only use what you need. Integrally it looks after the most important asset the RAF has – its pilots. There’s a chronic shortage of pilots and the fact they don’t waste more pilots than they need to does help.

“It’s generally broken up into several phases,” says Murray. “It begins in June when the Germans start probing the defences of Britain in what could best be described as nuisance attacks, sending over a few bombers. This then moves into another phase called the Kanalkampf, when the Luftwaffe is tasked with bombing Channel shipping to destroy supplies and drag the RAF away to defend ships. There’s one attack in July which leads to the biggest dogfight over the Channel so far, which is why the British tend to date the start as 11 July. However, German historians look more to the next phase and 13 August, when the Luftwaffe began the Eagle attack, which is the main month-long attack in which the Luftwaffe tries to destroy the RAF, bombing industrial cities and airfields. They switch again in September when they move into the Blitz phase when they have day and night attacks on London, and then after that period they’re still bombing London and the occasional daylight attack. So it runs through these various phases in which the Germans try different things and invariably fail.”

Following the main phase of the battle and the failure of the Eagle attack, the Germans would change tactics significantly and the period known as the Blitz would begin. Starting on 7 September, German planes attacked London every night but one until mid-November, with Birmingham and Bristol following suit in mid-October. But how did the Battle of Britain lead to this next phase, the systematic bombing of the British capital and other major cities?

“They’ve been trying to knock out the RAF for a month,” Murray explains. “They’ve done damage and stretched the RAF but they’ve never beaten them. They’re forced to chop and change so often that they begin to concentrate their attacks on cities. The principle is to try to bomb the civilian population into submission and hopelessness, forcing it to collapse. However, strategic bombing in Vietnam and other conflicts has since shown that this as a policy doesn’t really work and neither does the Blitz. There’s a huge loss of life, there’s no denying that, and it’s not underplaying what the Blitz did, but for the Luftwaffe it’s just another failed attempt to win.”

The Blitz was not the only way the German military was forced to rethink its tactics. The Battle of Britain had shown that total domination of Europe was not going to be possible. If they were going to continue to face Britain it would have to occur in a different setting.

Murray explains: “Importantly, the Germans now obviously shift their attention to the invasion of Russia. This has been on the cards before, but
now they begin to seriously focus on opening an Eastern Front. It also means that the Germans have suffered their first military setback and defeat since they started the Blitzkrieg."

But what was the immediate effect for the British? After five long months of defending that ended in a crucial victory, where would they take the fight next? And what about the future of the Allies?

"The RAF haven't destroyed the Luftwaffe outright but they have been beaten and it means that Operation Sea Lion is essentially off," says Murray. "As a result things in Britain essentially carry on as before, except now they start to open up a front in North Africa. It also fundamentally changes the American view and proves that Britain can survive and has survived. Before there was certainly some feeling that Britain was going to fall, but this proves otherwise and shows Britain is an ideal place to launch the invasion of Europe in 1944. An island base where you can land your troops and equipment."

However, for some of the key players within Britain's defence, not all of the results were positive. "One unfortunate consequence is that Park and Dowding lose their jobs," Murray explains. "It comes down to something called the 'Big Wing' (a formation of five squadrons) under 12 Group's command. The principle behind the use of the Big Wing was essentially the idea that it didn't matter if the Germans had already bombed the towns and cities, you strike with this mass force when they began to return home, whereas the Dowding system works on the principle that you attack before. Additionally, getting five squadrons in the air is very cumbersome. So basically Park wanted them to come down and defend 11 Group's airfield while they engaged the enemy. Often the Big Wing didn't turn up, were late or decided to go off and do their own thing, which would leave airfields unprotected. This increased tension between the two groups to the point where Park would not speak to them. However, pro-Big Wing thinking reaches high office and although Dowding would have been retired soon anyway, Park is seen as being difficult (due to his opposition to the Big Wing) and as a result he's replaced." But this was not the end of Park. "Park goes to North Africa and Malta, where he wins and ends up in Italy and the Far East, winning wherever he goes," Murray states, laughing, before solemnly concluding: "That's one of the negatives: the architects of victory lose their jobs over it."

When discussing the war and Britain's role, emphasis is more often than not placed on offensive campaigns launched towards the end of the war rather than this earlier defensive struggle. Yet Murray is very clear on the Battle of Britain's significance: "It's important for the world. It shows that the Nazis can be stopped because before then it didn't look like they could. It's an important point - a marker has been laid down. They haven't won here, they've been defeated. It's extremely important for the Allied victory because it means we're still in the game and we're not going to be invaded."

IWM Duxford's new exhibition, The Ops Block: The Battle of Britain, explores the experience of being inside an operations room the day the battle ended. The exhibition will be open to the public from 15 September and grants visitors access to previously unseen and newly transformed World War II rooms. Further information can be found at iwm.org.uk/visits/iwm-duxford.
Thousands of brave individuals worked tirelessly on the ground in a massive effort to coordinate, defend and assist the aces in the sky.

**WAFF Sector Station Operation Rooms**

The successor to the Women’s Royal Air Force (1918-1920), the Women’s Auxiliary Air Force was founded at the outbreak of war in 1939. Its duties during the Battle of Britain primarily involved working as filterers and plotters, turning raw data from radar into usable material and passing it on to the relevant parties.

One of the most famous stories of the bravery shown by members of the WAFF involves three young women located at Biggin Hill. Corporal Elspeth Henderson was operating the special telephone and Sergeant Helen Turner was switchboard operator on the night of 10 September. Despite constant attack from German bombers, the two women continued gallantly with their work. When the roof of the building suffered a direct hit they remained at their posts as flames tore through the structure. When they were ordered to leave they were forced to climb through the wreckage of the collapsing building. Several nights earlier on 1 September, Sergeant Joan Mortimer was manning the switchboard telephone as the Luftwaffe dropped several tons of high explosive. As the air raid siren sounded she continued working, before venturing out before the ‘All Clear’ had been sounded to mark unexploded bombs with red flags. Even as one went off, she continued with her work. All three women were awarded the Military Medal.
OPERATIONS STAFF

Usually, the information gathered by the WAAF plotters was then directed by a group of eight senior staff. All male, these were headed by the senior controller, who was responsible for the squadrons at his station; the assistant controller, who would communicate with other squadrons; and two deputy controllers, one of which would keep up communications with other sectors while the other would be coordinating air-sea rescue. Alongside this group there were also liaison officers, who would communicate with the Observer Corps, and Anti-Aircraft Command and Operations A and B, who would keep up communications with the Sector Stations Group and scramble the fighter aircraft respectively.

GROUND CREW

Whilst the battle raged above, on the ground it was the job of talented engineers, fitters and riggers to make sure that the planes kept flying and the airfield was ready to receive any which came in to land. Engineers maintained the aircraft, repairing any battle damage and carrying out vital maintenance. The armourers’ job was somewhat self-explanatory and they were given the responsibility of loading the ammunition and weapons, as well as making sure distressed flares were on board. The fitters’ and riggers’ role was to prepare the aircraft for take off, wheeling them into position, starting the engines and strapping the pilot into his parachute.

ANTI-AIRCRAFT COMMAND

Another form of defence were the large anti-aircraft guns, whose purpose was to target enemy aircraft and blast them out of the sky, thus providing further support. Throughout the battle there were some 1,000 heavy and 700 light anti-aircraft guns. Together they shot down some 300 enemy aircraft, waiting for the searchlight to find their target and then striking. These searchlights had a secondary purpose, assisting damaged Allied bombers find their way home. Upon hearing a codeword, every searchlight in the area would shine its beam vertically and then horizontally towards the nearest airfield. It’s estimated that some 3,000 bombers were helped to safety through the use of these searchlights.

BALLOON COMMAND

One defence placed around potential target areas were huge barrage balloons, the sight of which also helped to boost civilian morale. These devices helped to tether the German bombers higher, at which point they could be engaged by anti-aircraft guns and fighter aircraft. Tethered roughly 100 yards apart, they provided a formidable blockade. During the battle, members of the WAAF worked alongside male staff in order to man and operate the balloons. Following the battle, a shortage of men meant that many Balloon Command crews were operated entirely by women, whose responsibility it was to inflate, raise or lower, and maintain the position of the balloons.

PILOTS AND POOCHES

As well as helping hands there was always a helping paw in the RAF. During the war many pilots of the Royal Air Force kept dogs as pets, and the four-legged friends were a regular sight, greeting their masters on the airfield. One of the most famous of these was fighter pilot George Unwin’s dog, Flash, an Alsatian based with his owner at RAF Duxford. Such was the popularity of this particular pooch that the Imperial War Museum’s shop now sells cuddly versions of Flash! Other notable mascots include Sally, the Labrador of Wing Commander ‘Johnny’ Johnson, one of the Canadian squadrons. Sally reportedly became jealous of Johnson’s horse Hans and whenever he rode it, would lie down in front and pretend to be asleep. Polish Squadron 303 was also known to keep a puppy as a mascot, but it wasn’t just the RAF who had an affinity for four-legged friends. Perhaps one of the most famous stories of a pilot and his dog concerns a Czechoslovakian pilot in the French air force, Robert Bozdzech, and his dog Ant. Having crashed in occupied territory in 1940, Bozdzech was taking shelter in a French farmhouse when he heard a noise. Shouting out and threatening what he took to be the enemy, he discovered in fact a small German Shepherd puppy. Taking the puppy with him, a lifelong bond formed between the two and the puppy was even named after a Czech aircraft nicknamed the Ant. After a particularly close call involving the German bombing of an airfield, Bozdzech couldn’t bring himself to leave Ant behind while he flew on his missions. As a result, Ant flew with him on all succeeding operations.
INSIDE THE HAWKER HURRICANE

Exploring the aircraft that held the front line in the Battle of Britain
Written by Mike Haskew

ENGINE
The Rolls-Royce Merlin was a liquid-cooled, 12-cylinder inline aircraft engine developed in the early 1930s. The versatile Merlin was one of the most successful aircraft engines of World War II, also powering the Avro Lancaster bomber, Supermarine Spitfire fighter, and improving the performance of the North American P-51 Mustang fighter.

ARMAMENT
The early production Mk. I Hurricane was armed with eight wing-mounted Browning .303-calibre machine guns, while later versions mounted a variety of weapons. The IIb, for example, was upgunned with 12 .303-calibre machine guns and racks for a pair of 133kg or 227kg bombs. Later variants proved to be extremely effective tank-busting aircraft.

While the Supermarine Spitfire cut a dashing figure over Britain, the Hawker Hurricane might best be described as its not-so-comely stepsister. Nevertheless, the Hurricane held the line during the dark days of the Battle of Britain, shooting down more German aircraft than any other plane in Royal Air Force service. Hurricanes of No. 615 Squadron alone claimed nearly 100 enemy planes. Although less manoeuvrable than the German Me 109 fighter and considerably slower, the Hurricane could take severe punishment. Superior range also allowed it to remain airborne longer than its adversary. Compensating for the Hurricane’s shortcomings as a dogfighter, RAF pilots developed effective tactics: the Hurricanes attacked German bombers, while the more nimble Spitzfire tangled with enemy fighters. On 17 August 1940, Flight Lieutenant JB Nicolson of No. 249 Squadron earned the Victoria Cross, shooting down an Me 110 fighter despite grievous wounds and flames streaking from his damaged Hurricane. Wing Commander Robert Stanhope Tuck of No. 257 Squadron and Sergeant Josef Frantisek of No. 303 Squadron were leading Hurricane Aces during the Battle of Britain. The highest-scoring Hurricane Ace of World War II was Squadron
DESIGN

The low-wing cantilever Hawker Hurricane was designed by Sir Sydney Camm. Early production aircraft wings were covered in fabric and later replaced with stressed-skin metal wings, while the fuselage was of tubular duralum in and wood construction covered with fabric. The result was that the Hurricane was relatively heavy - a sturdy and stable gun platform but slower than the Spitfire and the German Messerschmitt Me 109.

Leader Marmaduke 'Pat' Pattle with 35 victories in the Mediterranean. Despite its shortcomings, pilots praised the Hurricane. "It became a good friend right from the start," one related, "and I loved it more and more." In 1941 RAF Squadrons No. 81 and No. 134 flew with the Soviet Red Air Force on the Eastern Front. In the China-Burma-India theatre, Hurricanes of No. 20 Squadron destroyed 13 Japanese tanks in a memorable mission. Hurricanes were outfitted as night fighters and were also catapulted from merchant ships, providing air cover for trans-Atlantic convoys. The Hurricane's service life stretched into the 1950s with the air forces of at least 25 countries. From 1945 to 1959, a single Hurricane led the annual RAF fly-past over London to commemorate the Battle of Britain.
INTERNATIONAL HEROES

Exploring the contribution made by international pilots during the battle

Throughout the Battle of Britain Fighter Command, under the leadership of Hugh Dowding, was suffering from a chronic shortage of fighter pilots. This was due to a variety of factors, some reaching back to the earliest phase of the war. During the initial few months, a more rapid expansion of air strength had been required than initially expected. As a result, the training programme that had been designed to keep up a steady output of pilots had already been required to produce more than expected. Secondly, as the result of a particularly bad winter in the months prior to the battle, further training had been severely affected. Finally, nearly 300 fighter pilots had perished in the skies over France.

Because of this, Fighter Command found itself in a constant struggle to provide enough pilots to defend Britain against the Luftwaffe. By early September, each squadron had on average 16 pilots operational out of a full contingent of 26. Many measures were taken to try and combat this problem. It was only due to

the invasion of Poland and then the fall of France, some 30,000 Polish personnel made their way across the Channel. Around 8,500 of these were pilots, and as a result Squadrons 302 (Poznan) and 303 (Kosciuszko) were founded.

Initially a long-standing belief that a lack of skills or significant training on the part of the Polish pilots had led to the Luftwaffe’s swift victory caused some tension. Additionally, the language barrier (requiring them to communicate in broken French) and having to be trained on a completely new type of aircraft caused further issues. As a result the squadrons were given tricycles fitted with speedometers, radios and compasses and ordered to ride in formation around the airfield. This caused disquiet, with Pilot Officer Jan Zumbach noting: “The British wasted much of our time with these childish exercises.”

On the 12 August, 302 became the first Polish unit cleared for action. Despite initially being part of 12 Group, whose function was to work as relief for 11
Group when necessary, the squadron engaged enemy aircraft on the 20th and distinguished itself. However, despite 302's success, 303 was still engaged exclusively in training manoeuvres and not cleared for action. On 30 August, Squadron 303 was engaged in training manoeuvres when Pilot Ludwik Paszkiewics spotted some enemy aircraft. Contacting his squadron leader but not receiving a response, Paszkiewics broke formation and engaged an enemy plane, shooting it down. Despite the Polish contribution to the battle by acknowledging the gallantry, skill and bravery of the pilots. "Had it not been for the magnificent work of the Polish squadrons and their unsurpassed gallantry, I doubt the outcome of the battle would have been the same," he said.

However, Polish pilots were not the only non-British nationals to fly alongside the RAF and contribute to victory in the Battle of Britain. Crucially, pilots from many Commonwealth countries also participated. Most notably, 135 New Zealanders joined the fight. Among this number was Colin Gray, who destroyed 14 planes during the battle and would finish the war with 27 confirmed hits and 22 probables. Indeed, Keith Park, the commander of 11 Group Fighter Command and responsible for some of the hour-by-hour conduct of the battle, was himself a New Zealander.

One incredibly lucky New Zealand pilot was Alan Deere, an Ace who had already scored five hits while flying in France. Entitling his autobiography Nine Lives, Deere was known for his incredible fortune in cheating death on numerous occasions. In July, he crashed into a cornfield following a collision with an enemy aircraft, walking away with only minor cuts and injuries. A few weeks later he was shot down, but when attempting to bail out he became caught on the burning aircraft and could not free himself as it hurtled to the ground. Miraculously, and with moments to spare, he was blown clear and was able to open his parachute just in time.

Many other Commonwealth countries had pilots take part in the battle. Among them some 98 Canadians, 33 Australians and 25 South Africans participated. Alongside these, three Rhodesians, a Newfoundland, a Barbadian and a Jamaican were also among the many air crew. There was also a variety of exiles from other parts of Europe: 88 Czechoslovakians, 13 Frenchmen and 29 Belgians. In fact, the most successful RAF pilot was Sergeant Josef František - a Czechoslovakian flying with 303 Squadron who achieved 17 hits, the highest of the battle.

"HAD IT NOT BEEN FOR THE POLISH SQUADRONS, I DOUBT THE OUTCOME OF THE BATTLE WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME"
PAUL FARNES: FIGHTER ACE

Having sadly passed away in January 2020, we take a look back at our last interview with one of the Battle of Britain’s great pilots

Interview by Tom Garner

Paul Farnes was one of the last survivors of The Few and his death in January, followed in May by Terry Clark, leaves John ‘Paddy’ Hemingway as the final survivor. We spoke to Farnes in 2017 and he shared his experiences of what it was like to participate in that fateful battle.

Born on 16 July 1918, Farnes joined the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve aged 19 in April 1938. It was fortuitous timing: “Germany was becoming a bit of a nuisance and I think everyone was getting a bit jittery, so I was glad to be in the services.” At this time the British government decided that VRs could do six months in the regular RAF and Farnes went to south Wales in July 1939. “It was great fun but before I’d finished my six months, war had broken out. I found myself in the air force and ready for war.”

During the Battle of Britain, Farnes was part of 11 Group and on the front line defending London and south-east England. His airborne drill was well rehearsed: “You were given instructions as a squadron by controllers as to whether we were at ‘Readiness’, ‘Availability’ or ‘Standby’ and we had various conditions. With ‘Available’, we had to be able to get airborne in 15-20 minutes. Then you had ‘Readiness’, where you had to be up within a few minutes, or there was ‘Standby’, where you’d be strapped in the cockpit ready to take off.”

Compared to the efficiency on the ground, aerial combat was anarchy. “You took off as a squadron but if you met the enemy you broke up. Once you found the enemy and got stuck into him, you were trying to shoot at the bombers and probably trying to keep an eye open to see where the 109s were coming down, which they usually were. It was a free for all. There wasn’t a regimented thing when you got in a certain position. You just broke up and whipped into the aircraft, trying to find something to shoot at. You’d give them a burst and then break away and you’d be constantly looking.”

The average age of an RAF pilot during the Battle of Britain was just 20. At 21, Farnes was slightly more experienced, and this contributed to his survival. “I was fairly experienced compared to a lot of the chaps. I’d had good training and had flown the Hurricane for quite a few hours before the battle, whereas a lot of the new young pilots had only got about two or three hours. It was useless, you really had to have flown a Hurricane for a few hours to get used to it.”

Farnes would occasionally encounter German pilots in remarkable circumstances. He remembers: “My RT or oxygen didn’t work properly once, so I had to return to base. I lost height, came down to about 450 metres and headed back towards Kenley. I was flying along a railway line and suddenly coming towards me was a Ju 88 German aircraft. I thought ‘Good God!’ so I whipped out, repositioned myself and managed to get behind him. I gave him a couple of bursts and he crashed at Gatwick, just on the point between the airport and the racecourse.” Farnes landed and came face to face with the enemy.

“The station commander took me over to meet the pilot. I went to shake hands with him but he wouldn’t shake hands. It was a natural thing to do as far as I was concerned but he wasn’t interested. One of the gunners was alright but the other was killed. It was particularly poignant for me because I did all my training at Gatwick so it was quite a thing to feel that I shot down an aircraft that crashed there.”
On another occasion, Farnes had an encounter with a German pilot in mid-air. "I'd shot down a 109 and the pilot bailed out. I watched him coming down and the parachute opened. I waved to him and got a wave back!"

As for his own aircraft, Farnes highly regards the Hurricane. "It was marvellous. It's a pity that the Spitfire always gets all the credit, although I can understand it to some extent. People will ask, 'What did you fly?' and you say 'a Hurricane' and they will reply, 'Oh... did you fly Spitfires?' I did fly Spitfires, but not during the Battle of Britain." Although it's less famous than the Spitfire, Farnes knew the Hurricane's virtues: "The Hurricane did camaraderie between everybody. We were all helping each other."

Farnes often stated that he "enjoyed" the battle. "It's difficult to describe. Everywhere in the Battle of Britain we had marvellous airplanes, wonderful aircraft; you flew several times a day and that's what you wanted to do. You were doing it for a reason too; you were doing it to protect your country. I knew that there was a chance that I was going to get shot down but chaps like myself had got quite a lot of experience because we'd been in France and knew what the form was. Flying with a bit of excitement thrown in, that's how I found it. Altogether I thought it was quite enjoyable."

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"I NEVER REMEMBER ANYONE THINKING THAT WE WERE GOING TO LOSE"

all the work and it shot down far more aircraft than the Spitfires. It was a very good aircraft and would take an awful lot more punishment. It was a wooden aircraft really: the framework was wood and canvas whereas the Spitfire was all-metal. I can understand that the Spitfire got a name: it was faster, probably a more beautiful aircraft and wonderful for aerobatics, but if you flew Hurricanes you were happy."

Farnes and his fellow pilots were also given support from the WAAFs, even outside their regular duties: "There were two sergeant WAAs who used to come in and they'd make us hot tea with sugar, and they'd also give us toast with beef dripping. That was lovely and it was completely voluntary. They just did it out of the goodness of their hearts; they didn't have to. That's sort of the thing that went on, that despite the odds stacked against the RAF, defeat never crossed Farnes' mind: "I never remember anyone thinking that we were going to lose, I don't think it ever occurred to us. People will ask you about what your view was of the battle but as sergeant pilots we probably weren't 'in the know' as much as the officers. The senior officers were in the officers' mess and things were possibly said that never reached our ears. People ask me, 'What did you think about the future?' but I had no idea. That type of thing didn't occur to me, but then I'm probably a bit dim!"
THE WWII SCHOOL FOR ESCAPE ARTISTS

Historian and author Dr Helen Fry reveals the story of MI9, one of Britain’s most secretive special agencies

Written by Jonathan Gordon
Long before Winston Churchill called for the newly formed Special Operations Executive (SOE) to "set Europe ablaze" with its sabotage campaign, Britain was already conducting secret missions behind enemy lines through agencies like MI6. Lesser known, though, is the work of MI9, established to aid British personnel in evading and escaping capture. This specialist agency trained soldiers, set up escape networks to harbour escapees and created tools to aid POWs to escape in the first place. Historian Dr Helen Fry has delved into newly declassified files and documents to lift the lid on one of World War II's most secretive agencies, and we were delighted to learn more about it from her.

**What was the primary mission of MI9?**
The primary purpose of MI9 - which was not dissimilar to MI5 and MI6, the organisations we're more familiar with - was actually to facilitate escape and evasion during World War II. It was established in December 1939, quite early in the war, with a view to bring airmen, soldiers and Allied personnel back from behind enemy lines to fight again.

**The activities of MI9 were highly secretive, so when did the organisation first become publicly acknowledged?**
In the first 50 or 60 years after the war ended, not much was known about MI9 and the first books about it were written by those who had served with MI9: MRD Foot, James Langley and Airrey Neave. These became the classic histories of MI9, which would be pretty hard to beat, really, but they didn't have access to the declassified files when they were writing. My book, which is the first history of MI9 for 40 years (and I was astonished when I discovered that was the case) actually uses, for the very first time, those declassified files at the National Archives in London.

**How close was MI9 related to the SOE and the mission to 'set Europe ablaze'?**
MI9 was very separate from SOE. Both organisations had means of escape and evasion, of course. There was a very conscious effort on the part of Claude Dansey, the deputy head of MI6, to keep the MI6, MI9 and SOE escape lines separate from each other, so there was no blurring of the boundaries. He oversaw the escape lines for both MI9 and MI6 to make sure of this. MI6 wanted to do its top secret work behind enemy lines and didn't want evaders and escapers coming too close to its work, nor the SOE agents and saboteurs. Dansey began to separate them as much as possible and keep things apart, but he became very concerned about SOE because it was blowing things up noisily behind enemy lines. Meanwhile MI9 as well as MI6 were also doing intelligence operations, secret stuff behind enemy lines. There was a lot of bitter rivalry between Dansey and SOE - he hated SOE. So it was quite a fractured relationship.

“The whole training process and the mindset of what he termed ‘escape-mindedness’ was developed”
**War Stories**

**MI9 was obviously a highly clandestine organisation. What do we have in terms of records and official history that we can draw on for information about it?**

I discovered in my research that there were thousands upon thousands of declassified files. It became a choice in the research of managing the sheer volume of files on MI9, which operated not just in Western Europe but in the Far East, the Middle East and Balkans, Italy and Greece. So for me, that was a challenge. What we have in the declassified files are largely the escape reports from escapers and evaders from when they were debriefed by MI9; we also have some of the MI9 administrative files, which are very interesting to see how it was set up. There are MI9 training manuals and the bulletins (newsletters), which personnel could read, particularly before going into action, which might give them lots of new ideas about how to evade capture in the fast-changing situation behind enemy lines. What we don’t have are the declassified files of the helpers, so it’s not possible to know the precise number who aided MI9 and the escape lines. But it is certainly thousands of men and women, from as young as 16 and up to people in their 80s, and from diverse backgrounds. To protect them and their families, their files have never been released by the British government or War Office. MI9 was also involved in a very top-secret part of British Intelligence known as ‘Room 900’, or ‘Intelligence School 9’. This section dropped agents behind enemy lines, very similar to SOE, but they were not blowing stuff up or engaged in other acts of sabotage. We don’t have the operational mission files for them, we just have a couple of declassified examples of what they did, so there is some secrecy and mystery still surrounding these operations.

**Who were some of the key figures involved in MI9?**

When we think about MI9, we think about the commanding officer Brigadier Norman Crookatt. A very proud Scot, and no lover of red tape, he liked to think outside the box and was ideal as MI9’s commander in chief, and he was largely responsible for the philosophy behind MI9. The whole training process and the mindset of what he termed “escape-mindedness” was developed. It was a whole philosophy and proved terribly important to prepare personnel going into action. We also have two other giants of MI9, Jimmy Langley, (an escaper after Dunkirk in 1940 and wounded) and Airey Neave, who of course famously became the first British officer to successfully escape from Colditz Castle near Leipzig in Germany and make it back to Britain. His successful escape was a huge boost at MI9 headquarters and out came the pink gin in celebration because it was believed that Colditz Castle was impenetrable.

**How did MI9 assist POWs in making their escapes?**

There were a number of techniques, not only escape lines, which were of course essential for getting POWs out of Western Europe. From MI9 headquarters at Wilton Park, which is in Buckinghamshire (not to be confused with the Wilson Park in Sussex) they coordinated this incredible programme, which included the escape devices that became legendary in Ian Fleming’s James Bond novels. Fleming didn’t invent the idea of the ‘Q’ gadgets, it originally came from MI9, although of course Fleming developed them much, much further. These gadgets became very important in MI9’s wartime operations. The key figure in the escape gadgets was Christopher Clayton Hutton, who was what we might call an eccentric inventor who loved to tinker with things to try and solve problems. His task, to give you one example, was to find ways to hide things like miniature compasses inside ordinary objects. So you get the famous ‘button compass’, where the compass is hidden behind a button, usually the first button on the uniform. Wherever personnel were in action, if they needed it, they could unscrew the button and would always have an escape compass with them. Astonishingly, we’ve got something like 1.3 million of these that were produced in wartime. And then you have escape maps, which were equally significant and useful. This was the skulduggery, or the cleverness, of MI9 in terms of thinking of ways to send this stuff into the POW camps. And that was a huge help to the prisoners, who did things like smuggling in fake parcels inside games.

**How much work did MI9 do by way of training people in evasion and escape tactics ahead of deployment?**

This is one of the areas that people don’t often know about but all of our personnel going into action - whether they were army, air, navy or commandos - they all actually went through a three-week MI9 training programme. MI9 had a secret site to start with in Harrow just outside London, and then in North London in Highgate, where MI9 requisitioned a house called Caen Wood Towers, known today as Athlone House. It’s a very famous house in North London, right there on the edge of Hampstead Heath. And again it goes back to Crockatt and his whole philosophy of escape-mindedness, which he said was not
necessarily natural if you're disorientated after capture, when you're not necessarily going to think logically about escape. So he believed that training in evasion and escape prepared the personnel in an escape-mindedness. It could be very tiny things that could give you away, and one example I like to give of that is the instruction in the training manual: “Do not walk in a British way.” Apparently they could give themselves away, even if they were in civilian clothes with French labels, just by the way they walked. That kind of stuff was part of their training. Another tip was don’t cycle round a roundabout the wrong way. That’s how one of the prisoners actually got recaptured. He’s not named, but he was given as an example in the training manuals. He was recaptured and sent back to a prisoner of war camp.

**Do we have a sense of how successful M19 was or became during the course of WWII?**

In terms of escape and evasion, it’s a huge legacy. Over 35,000 Allied and Commonwealth personnel were saved as a result of M19. They were brought out to be able to fight another day and the Germans didn’t have anything equivalent to that. But I believe the legacy goes beyond that.

What I discovered, which I wasn’t expecting to discover, is that M19 was this huge intelligence gathering organisation. As well as the rescue missions of Allied personnel, it was the belief that your personnel are valuable sources of intelligence in their own right. So when they came back they had a debrief - ‘interrogated’, as it was called - by M19 interrogators. They were interrogated not only about their escape (which potentially gave information and advice for future escapes) and the conditions behind enemy lines, they were also asked about what they had seen on the ground in terms of military installations, movement of troops, etc. What had they seen as they travelled? From curfews to fences around ports, absolutely anything. I was astonished by the thick volumes of files full of this kind of intelligence. I also discovered (and this for me is really revelatory about M19) that its top-secret section Room 900 was involved in counter espionage and intelligence collecting. This is separate from what we’ve just talked about, on a par with MI6, and I really wasn’t expecting to uncover this. It’s a very exciting development and I’d like to see M19 recognised and studied more for the intelligence impact that it had, because you look at the volumes of this material and you think this has to have had an impact. It feeds very importantly into the wider intelligence picture and all those deception operations of World War II.

**M19 seems to have concocted all sorts of curious escape aids hidden away inside everyday items. What are some of your favourites?**

For me, it has been a Monopoly board. We all grew up as children playing Monopoly, depending on the era we were in, but it’s a household game and cross-generational. Games would be played for hours at Christmas when I was young, and at that time I didn’t know the history of M19 and Monopoly. But I loved that part of M19’s history when I first read about it, how ingenious it was. It was exciting to discover that M19 was actually able to smuggle stuff in the board itself, as it did with other games like chess and ludo.
HUNTING NAZI GOLD

Throughout World War II, the German army looted millions in gold bullion from occupied countries, but where exactly did that treasure go?

Written by Callum Mc Kelvie
Famous American stockbroker Gerald M Loeb once stated that, "The desire for gold is the most universal and deeply rooted commercial instinct of the human race." Since the substance was first smelted by the ancient Egyptians around 3,600 BCE, this most precious of metals has become a symbol of wealth and power. The establishment of the Gold Standard in 1717, which allowed currency to be linked to gold at a fixed rate, further increased its importance. During World War II, the Nazi war machine was a hungry beast, requiring a consistent supply of funds to purchase materials, feed troops and ensure that the assult across Europe, and the world, continued. As a result, Nazi policy was to systematically loot all countries, and their populations, who were unfortunate enough to fall under their occupation. Indeed, in 1943 the British Ministry of Economic Warfare estimated that some $550 million-worth of gold had been looted by the Nazis from numerous occupied countries. However, the exact amount of gold stolen by the Nazis remains unknown, particularly as the location for much of the plundered loot remains a mystery.

First and foremost it's important to assess the nature of the looted gold. While a large amount was taken in the form of bars stolen directly from banks, which were then melted and rebranded with Reichsbank insignia, some was obtained by much more distressing means. The first evidence of this was uncovered in 1943. As well as looting from banks and state institutions, the Nazis also took directly from individuals, including the victims of the Holocaust. While this involved seizing victims' bank accounts, housing and investments, gold bars were discovered that were entirely new and from a disturbing source: gold watches, jewellery and even teeth fillings pulled from the mouths of victims had been melted down and crafted into Reichsbank bars. Between 1946 and 1948 the Hamburg Ravensbruck trials saw officials from the concentration camp of the same name investigated for their part in this gruesome practice, among many other atrocities.

One of these individuals was Martin Hellinger, whose primary duty as 'camp dentist' was to remove gold from the mouths of victims. Hellinger was not alone, and this was discovered to be standard practice in the Nazi death camps. As early as 1940 Heinrich Himmler gave the command that dental gold was to be collected from the mouths of the dead, and in 1942 this order was implemented into the organisation of the Holocaust. Due to this, numerous bars stamped with Nazi insignia were melted down by their purchasers and restamped to conceal their sinister origin. This became particularly apparent in Portugal in 1943, where dealers had accumulated 123 tons of Reichsbank gold through trading with Nazi Germany. When the Allies warned the Portuguese government that all this gold was to be considered stolen property, dealers in Lisbon desperately attempted to exchange German gold for 'clean' gold. When this was refused, a majority was melted down and moved to international banks.

These events in Portugal raise an interesting point for historians attempting to trace the whereabouts of stolen Nazi gold. Throughout the war Portugal, along with other countries such as Spain, Estonia, Switzerland and Sweden, remained neutral. This meant that trade could be conducted with the Axis powers, despite warnings as to the nature of the goods they were purchasing. As a result several of these countries acquired stolen Nazi gold, a fact that remains controversial and raises questions over how 'neutral' these countries actually were. For example,
Sweden's steel industry would provide important materials for the German war machine, paid for in stolen gold. In 1997 declassified reports caused something of a stir as the extent of knowledge both Sweden and Switzerland had concerning the nature of the gold they were purchasing was revealed. Switzerland’s Bergier commission uncovered and assessed a great deal of information concerning the country’s own role in the war, especially as the finances obtained from direct gold sales allowed Germany to purchase materials from other neutral countries and further their war effort. Estimates of the amount of gold obtained by Sweden during the war range from 20,000kg to 34,000kg.

Following the documents released in 1997, many countries began to assess the concept of neutrality in regard to war and particularly in regard to World War II. The scandal that resulted in the late-nineties revealed that, to an extent, many ‘neutral’ countries’ economies had grown from interaction with Nazi Germany and from the purchase of the stolen gold. In a US State Department briefing by Stuart Eizenstat (the under secretary of state for economic, business and agricultural affairs) regarding the reports he stated: “These dispel any sense that there was a monolithic concept of neutrality during World War II. The wartime neutrals often faced similar pressures and counterpressures, but reacted to them in varied ways, reflecting their specific wartime circumstances, the attitudes of their leaders and the more enduring features of their economies and geography. There was, in short, no such thing as uniform or absolute neutrality during World War II.”

As always when there is a missing fortune or a large amount of wealth, stories and legends appear concerning its whereabouts. Similar to stories of 17th and 18th century pirates who buried their treasure on desert islands until they could return to collect it, tales abound of fleeing Nazis hiding their stolen loot at the end of the war. While many can be considered apocryphal and perhaps nothing more than contemporary myth and legend, the frequency with which some of these tales recur raises the eyebrows of eager treasure seekers.

One of the most persistent and historically documented surrounds ‘Rommel’s Gold’, named after General Erwin Rommel (nicknamed the ‘Desert Fox’) who served as the Nazi commander on the North African front. The gold itself was originally the property of the Jewish community in Tunisia, which was occupied by Nazi forces during the war. In January 1943 SS Colonel Walter Rauff summoned a collection of rabbis and religious leaders and offered to spare their communities for “60 hundredweight of gold”, to be delivered in 48 hours. Despite the magnitude of the task, it was achieved and the gold arrived five days later. The treasure was taken safely to Naples but due to heavy Allied bombing and political instability in Italy it was unable to continue its journey to Berlin. Instead, an ingenious plan was hatched. On the Corsican coast, a diver named Peter Fleig was hired and instructed to dive down to a particularly unusual rock formation. He was instructed to secure crates under water and mark their position with four weighted buoys. Following the end of the war, Fleig would return and make several dives for the lost loot - all to no avail.

James Bond creator Ian Fleming would become interested in the mystery during his time working in naval intelligence in World War II. Towards the end of the conflict, a raid was conducted on Tambach Castle in Bavaria by Allied commandos, organised by Fleming. Inside, German troops were in the process of burning the entirety of their naval archives, dating back to 1870. Such was the extent of the material Fleming’s agents discovered that a fishing boat was chartered in order to deliver the papers safely to his London office. Working his way through the vast collection of documentation, Fleming discovered details of a vast quantity of stolen gold that was due to have been shipped to Berlin, but it had never arrived. The story would inspire an anecdote in the novel On Her Majesty’s Secret Service and Fleming’s interest in Nazi gold would crop up again the short story Octopussy and, of course, Goldfinger. While Fleming would attempt to generate funds to finance an expedition to recover the gold, he was ultimately unsuccessful. If the gold still rests at the bottom of the sea, then its exact location remains a mystery.

However, Corsica isn’t the only supposed location of sunken Nazi gold. Lake Toplitz high in the Austrian Alps is rumoured to be the site of a horde of some $5.6 billion in gold bullion. During the course of the war the lake itself was used as a naval testing site, where scientists experimented with depth charges - some 4,000 are said to have been detonated at various depths. Early
one morning in May of 1945, the lake was also the site of some particularly strange goings on. Farm girl Ida Weisenbacher, 21, was awakened by a knock at the door and greeted by the intimidating form of an SS officer. Weisenbacher was instructed to bring a wagon and assist in moving a large amount of wooden boxes stamped with Nazi insignia. She then witnessed the boxes being placed into a rowboat, taken to the middle of the lake and unceremoniously thrown into the murky water.

In 1959, a diving expedition revealed the boxes to have contained counterfeit bank notes – counterfeit British bank notes. Over successive decades, more and more of the money has been recovered along with Nazi documents detailing the Bank of England monitoring system, all believed to have been part of Operation Bernhard. Named after Bernhard Krüger, its intention was to cripple the British economy using counterfeit notes produced by inmates at concentration camps. Some of the notes were detected by the Bank of England in 1943 and they continued to turn up in circulation right into the 1950s, however it’s believed that the majority ended up at the bottom of Lake Toplitz. The diving operation in 1959 uncovered some £700 million worth of counterfeit currency and further expeditions continued to unveil more horde, with the latest dive into Tropitz’s waters in 2000 uncovering further examples. However, as of yet none of the expeditions have ever uncovered any gold, and whether there is a secret horde hidden beneath the lake’s murky waters remains to be seen.

Perhaps one of the most recurrent myths and legends surrounding the whereabouts of Nazi gold is that of the so-called ‘Nazi gold train’. Trains were used by the Nazis to transport

“ESTIMATES OF THE AMOUNT OF GOLD OBTAINED BY SWEDEN DURING THE WAR RANGE FROM 20,000 TO 34,000KG”

stolen goods to the capital in Berlin, a number of which are said to have vanished in the final days of the war. One particular legend surrounding Nazi loot and locomotives, which seems remarkably persistent, is that of a train buried within a mountain somewhere in Poland. The apocryphal story states that it was loaded with priceless art, jewels and up to 300 tons of gold. In 2018, Andreas Richter and Piotr Koper, a pair of treasure hunters, made international headlines when they announced they had found the train’s location. In return for 10% of the combined wealth of the goods on board (should a discovery be made), they revealed the location as a network of tunnels beneath the city of Walbrzych. Using ground-penetrating radar, experts were able to unveil images of the tunnels that caused Piotr Zuchowski (Poland’s deputy minister for culture at the time) to comment that he was “99% percent convinced”. Unfortunately, when a team of scientists descended on the area they found further evidence of tunnels, but no train. Whether there is any such hidden gold train remains a mystery and treasure hunters still eagerly search for it. After Richter and Koper parted ways, Richter said of the train that he was still “95% sure that it exists”.

Of course not all of the Nazi gold was hidden during the final days of the war and some was recovered. On 3 February 1945 an Allied bombardment of Berlin destroyed the Reichsbank and caused its president Walther Funk to have the majority of the gold reserves (some $238 million) secreted in Merkers Mine, about 200 miles southwest of Berlin. It was not just gold that was sent to the
MAKING AND REMAKING GOLD

THE PRODUCTION LINE

MINING
Naturally occurring gold is located as deposits or veins in the earth, or spread through sand and gravel. The former requires mining while the latter can be extracted through panning.

REFINING
Gold from ore might be microscopic or in sheets, but needs separating from surrounding materials in either case through refining. It takes around 100,000 ounces of ore to get one ounce of gold.

BULLION
The refined gold is now melted down so that it can be formed into ingots and bullion for transportation. From here it can be sent to banks or directly to fabricators, who use the gold for jewellery or industrial purposes.

MELTED
Gold of similar purity is melted at over 1,060°C into ingots or full bullion bricks, depending on the quantity, and then marked with the relative carat value. The gold may also be smelted, a process that removes impurities and increases its value.

GOLD LAUNDERING

STOLEN
The Nazi regime steals gold from its victims as they are being rounded up. This is mostly jewellery, but might also include gold ornaments or privately held ingots and bullion.

MIXED
All of the obtained gold is then categorised and collated into its different types and carats. This makes reconnecting the items with their original owners practically impossible.

TRADED
Now in ingot and bullion form, the gold is either sent to German banks or shipped for trading through international banks. Since gold is traded everywhere, it is an ideal commodity for raising cash.

RECYCLING
While gold in the form of bullion will likely be traded indefinitely, consumer products can be sold to pawnbrokers and scrap dealers and sent back to refiners to be repurposed. Leftover materials from production might also take this route.
mine either, but numerous stolen art treasures and currency reserves. On 7 April, during the Allied assault on Germany, the American military entered the mine and the following day blew a hole into the sealed vault where the bullion was hidden. Following this discovery the gold was turned over in 1946 to an organisation called the Tripartite Commission for the Restitution of Monetary Gold, whose intention was to redistribute the wealth among the economies of the various countries that laid claim to it. In 1997, 5.5 metric tons (around $60 million) was still held by the Tripartite. Some 15 countries laid claim to this remaining amount, but all instead chose to donate their share of it to the Nazi Persecution Relief Fund, which had been set up to assist Holocaust survivors. For a fortune that originated from so much greed, bloodshed and human misery, its donation to such a noble cause seems a pleasing and just end.

**“THE DIVING OPERATION UNCOVERED SOME £700 MILLION OF COUNTERFEIT CURRENCY, AND FURTHER EXPEDITIONS CONTINUED TO UNVEIL MORE HORDES”**

Despite the continuing distance from the war, rumours of hidden Nazi loot still excite treasure hunters the world over. As recently as December 2020, the authorities in charge of the memorial museum at Buchenwald concentration camp were forced to issue a statement asking hunters to stay away after a documentary stated treasure could be buried in a tunnel at the site. Director of the Camp Memorial, Jens-Christian Wagner, stated in an interview with The Times newspaper that: “For many years we had considerable problems with illegal visits to the tunnel [beneath the camp]. Sometimes we also find people with metal detectors.” This of course raises obvious ethical questions concerning the hunt for Nazi gold. While stories of buried treasure and hidden loot excite the child in all of us, the nature of where much of this gold originated from (either stolen property or blood money paid to avoid certain death) leaves a decidedly unpleasant taste in the mouth. Such tales of treasure and unsolved mysteries hold an irresistible allure, and the hunt to locate much of the property stolen by the Nazi forces during the war is sure to continue. As more and more information comes to light (after all, it is only just over 20 years since Switzerland and Sweden declassified those important documents from WWII) the hope remains that further hordes will be recovered and returned to their rightful owners.
094 Frederick Douglass
How did this famed abolitionist go from enslavement to US diplomat?

100 Who were the Black Tudors?
Discover the people of African origin and descent who lived in the age of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I

106 Black Spartacus
The hero of the Haitian Revolution who inspired a nation of slaves to create their own country

112 The Tulsa Race Massacre
How did the district known as Black Wall Street get burned to the ground in a single night? Uncover the true story
Frederick Bailey was most likely born in February 1818 (although there are no records to prove the exact date) in his grandmother’s slave cabin in Talbot County, Maryland. He was probably mixed race: African, Native American and European, as it’s likely that his father was also his master. His mother was sent away to another plantation when he was a baby, and he saw her only a handful of times in the dark of night when she would walk 12 miles to see him. She died when he was seven.

Frederick was moved around and loaned out to different families and households throughout his childhood. He spent time on plantations and in the city of Baltimore, a place he described as much more benevolent towards enslaved people, where they had more freedom and better treatment than on plantations. Indeed, Baltimore was one of the most bustling harbour cities in America, a meeting place of people and ideas of all kinds from all around the world; a place in which dreams and visions of freedom could easily be fostered.

One mistress, Sophia Auld, took a great interest in the 12-year-old, teaching him the alphabet. But her husband Hugh greatly disapproved of teaching slaves to read and write, believing it would equip them to access ideas and aspirations beyond their station. It would make them rebellious. Eventually, Sophia came to agree with Hugh’s disapproval and herself believe that teaching slaves to read was wrong. She ceased her lessons and hid his reading materials, snatching newspapers and books from the enslaved boy’s hands when he was caught with them.
But Frederick was shrewd and continued to find ways to learn, trading bread with street children for reading lessons. He learnt to buy knowledge and words from a young age. The more he read, the more he gained the language and tools to question and condemn slavery, developing his sense of Black identity and personhood for himself. When he was hired back out to a plantation owned by William Freeland, Frederick set up a secret Sunday school where around 40 slaves would gather and learn to read the New Testament. Surrounding plantation owners gradually came to know of these clandestine meetings and one day descended on the group armed with stones and clubs, permanently dispersing the school.

Not long after, Frederick was sent to work for Edward Covey, a poor farmer with a dreadful reputation as a 'slave breaker'. He was sent to be broken, to have his rebellious spirit crushed and be transformed into a docile, obedient worker. He faced frequent whippings, and at just 16 he resolved to fight back, physically asserting his strength over Covey. Frederick tried to escape once but failed.

That was before he met Anna Murray in 1837. Anna was a free Black woman in Baltimore who was five years older than him. The pair quickly fell in love and she encouraged him continuously to escape and find freedom, helping him to realise that freedom was truly within his grasp.

The following year, in 1838, aged 20, Frederick made his break from the shackles of slavery.

He made the passage from slave state to free state in under 24 hours, boarding northbound trains, ferries and steamboats until he made it to Philadelphia in Pennsylvania, then a Quaker city with a strong anti-slavery sentiment. He then travelled to New York disguised in a sailor's uniform. He faced many close shaves, even catching the eye of a worker whom he knew, and who mercifully remained silent about seeing him. On setting foot in the north, Frederick was a new man, master of his own destiny. He was free to decide the direction of his own life for the first time, a thrilling and overwhelming prospect. Murray joined him up north, where they were quickly married and could now decide on their own name. They tried out Johnson, but eventually decided on Douglass. Settling in abolitionist stronghold towns in Massachusetts, they played active roles in a church community populated by many prominent former slaves, including Sojourner Truth and later Harriet Tubman.

By 1839 Douglass was a licensed preacher, a role in which he honed his speaking skills. He was also an active attendee of abolitionist meetings and developed strong friendships with campaigners like William Lloyd Garrison, who wrote the weekly newspaper The Liberator. Aged 23, Douglass gave his first
CONSTITUTIONAL
CONTESTATIONS

A deep split in the abolitionist
movement reveals the complexity
of Douglass’ vision and ideology

Historian David Blight refers to Frederick Douglass as
one of the most critical readers, as well as speakers and
writers, of the time. This is in reference to
Douglass’ radical reading of the US Constitution and
the conflict it caused between himself and fellow
abolitionist William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison believed
that the US Constitution was an exclusive, elitist text
that did not hold a place for the abolition of slavery
or provide a legal or moral precedent for abolition. In
this sense, the US was constitutionally, fundamentally,
intrinsically pro-slavery, a bleak thought for
abolitionists to accept. In demonstration of his disgust
at this, Garrison burned a copy of the Constitution.

At first, Douglass agreed with Garrison’s reasoning.
However, he later became influenced by Lysander
Spooner’s publication of The Unconstitutionality of
Slavery in 1846. This bolstered Douglass’ idea that
the Constitution did not support slavery, and slavery
was not enshrined in the very idea of America’s
nationhood. The Constitution could and should be
utilised as a tool to justify abolishing slavery, and
was a document with good intentions that had been
corrupted and misused. This caused Douglass and
Garrison to break apart their partnership in 1847.
It was the greatest notable split in the American
abolition movement.

Douglass’ understanding of how slavery was or was
not bound up with the concept of the nation is seen
by many historians as significant for its sophistication.
Later, at the dawn of the Civil War, Douglass held great
appreciation for Abraham Lincoln’s insight that slavery
could only be abolished if the nation – the Union – was
violently fought over and won on the premise of being
a free, non-slaveholding country, creating a fresh start.
Douglass was both radical and conservative, imagining
the violent upheaval of his world to make space for a
new reality, but in which the tools of the current world
could be invaluable.

He knew that America could only exist free of
slavery if it underwent a major transformation, yet he
also campaigned fervently against the popular idea
of ‘colonisation’, which suggested that slaves should
be freed and sent to the Caribbean or back to Africa.
Douglass saw that African-Americans had to have
a stake in building this new nation and deserved
to fight and defend their freedom, and he convinced
Lincoln to allow African-Americans to serve in the
Union Army. Though the US denied the humanity of
slaves, Douglass did not seek to deny the US as his
nation, nor see it as necessary to remove Black people
in order to achieve freedom. Instead, Black people
must themselves have a hand in building it. He
was American and believed that America could be
fundamentally redesigned to include and accept him.

anti-slavery speech at the Massachusetts
Anti-Slavery Society Convention in
Nantucket, and began touring across the
country with fellow abolitionists. His rapid
ascent from slave to celebrity took place
over little more than one year.

As one of the few men to have escaped
slavery with a willingness and ability to
be so eloquent about his experiences,
Douglass became a living embodiment
of the impacts of slavery and an image of
Black stature and intellect; a vision of what
African-American people could become.
He was used by White abolitionists to
oppose general stereotypes of African-
Americans as ignorant or lazy. In some
ways, Douglass became like a zoo animal
on display, a success story trophy, and he
knew it. This strained his relationships
with some other major abolitionists, like
Garrison. Nevertheless, Douglass also
recognised the power of challenging and
reshaping harmful caricatures of Black
people and began to take hold of and
manipulate his own representation in
speeches, writing and images.

Douglass spent two years touring
Ireland and Britain between 1845 and
1847, lecturing and meeting with the last
remaining abolitionists from Britain’s
abolition movement of the early 19th
century, such as Thomas Clarkson. It was
during this time that Douglass finally
gained legal freedom and protection from
recapture, with English acquaintances
raising the funds to officially buy his
freedom from his master Thomas Auld.
The public endorsement Douglass received
from influential figures in Europe only
increased his credibility in the States. He
returned with £500 donated by English
supporters and used it to set up his first
abolitionist newspaper, The North Star.
Alongside this, he and his wife were active
in the Underground Railroad, taking
over 400 escaped slaves into their home,
offering them rest and safety on their
journey to freedom.

“DOUGLASS BECAME AN EXAMPLE, A LIVING
EMBODIMENT OF THE IMPACTS OF SLAVERY, AND
AN IMAGE OF BLACK STATURE AND INTELLECT”

BELOW
Douglass appealing to
President Lincoln and
his cabinet to enlist
Black men
A PHOTOGRAPHIC PIONEER
Photography was a major part of Frederick Douglass’ belief system and his efforts to defeat slavery and racism

At a time of great social change in the 19th century, photography was quickly growing as a new art form. With the invention of daguerreotypes, it was increasingly cheap and accessible, and Douglass saw it as democratic medium that could serve the needs of the people. He considered that whereas politicians could lie, peddling false images and caricatures of slaves to justify slavery’s continuation, the camera would tell the truth. Nuanced, serious, sophisticated images of Black people portrayed as human beings rather than property could challenge negative images, particularly blackface and minstrelsy.

Douglass was the most photographed American of the 19th century (even more than Abraham Lincoln), a remarkable record for a Black man and ex-slave. Around 160 images of him have been found, taken over many years. He stared directly into the camera, confronting the viewer, and never smiled. Typically, the sitter would be asked to stare softly into the distance or look beyond the camera, and to smile. But Douglass’ stare holds a challenge to be taken seriously – he did not want to present himself as a smiling, happy, obedient slave. Simultaneously, he played into other trends recognisable to the eyes of White viewers as dignified, educated, wealthy and accomplished; his formal dress and swept-back hair took on the attributes of a classical hero.

His portraits were reproduced as lithographs and engravings and distributed to promote his talks. His use of photography was subversive and highly political, reflecting his sophisticated political philosophy, his understanding of how public opinion was formed and influenced by the media, and his belief in the social power of art.

Douglass was an advocate for dialogue and alliances across ideological divides. Notably, he was a supporter of women’s suffrage campaigns and attended many events in favour of the cause, such as the Seneca Falls Convention, at which he was the only African-American present. Though he faced a backlash for his contribution, it was only after Douglass’ speech that a resolution was passed in favour of female suffrage, indicating his power as an orator. But his interaction with the cause was controversial, because not everyone was in favour of women’s rights. Many believed African-American freedom, equality and suffrage was the far more pressing and urgent issue, and that Douglass’ endorsement only gave more power to White female voters, who would vote against Black people’s interests.

But Douglass was more astute than this. Indeed, Richard Bradbury argues that, bolstered by his tours through Ireland and Britain, he connected the struggle against slavery with many other issues: poverty in newly industrialised London, Irish famine and Home Rule, and women’s rights. In his later years as a statesman, Douglass even engaged with Caribbean and Latin American ideas about multiculturalism and democracy in challenging White supremacy. And he was interested in issues affecting Native Americans and recent immigrants. He was American, through and through, but he also looked beyond the nation that had enslaved him and legally rejected him as a fellow man and citizen, towards the international stage. This gave him a space to construct and consider what he stood for and enter into dialogue with those in a like-minded pursuit of change. This global, cross-struggle outlook has helped to make Douglass such a modern, sympathetic figure, with communities across the world claiming him for their own. He created a greater sense of a united class of downtrodden people who could together overthrow their common oppressor through coordinated efforts.

One of Douglass’ chief arguments, as illustrated in his famous What to the Slave is the Fourth of July? speech of 1852, was the importance of education in improving the lives and opportunities for African-Americans. He was an early advocate of school desegregation, building upon his early experiences teaching at his Sunday school as a slave. He was also a deeply religious and spiritual man and believed that Christianity did not endorse slavery. Douglass chose to abstain from alcohol, tobacco and other ‘corrupting’ substances to keep his body ‘pure’. Like many involved in struggles against oppression who took divine inspiration, from Thomas Paine to Nat Turner to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, he saw himself as a prophet heeding God’s will.

Douglass published three versions of his life story, in 1845, 1855 and 1881 (with a revised edition in 1892). Each
state. Later, in 1889, President Harrison appointed him as the US minister resident and consul-general to Haiti, and the chargé d'affaires to Santo Domingo. So popular and influential did Douglass become in the top echelons of American politics that he became the first African-American to be nominated for vice president of the United States (though without his knowledge or approval) in 1872.

This latter part of Douglass’ life was turbulent. Though he was highly revered and favoured, there were, of course, critics and he was often in danger. His home was at one point burned down in an arson attack, causing him to move to Washington DC with his family. A disagreement with radical abolitionists caused him to flee into exile abroad. His family life also became a focus of gossip and scandal: he had two affairs with White women while his wife Anna was alive. She died in 1880, and Douglass remarried two years later to a White suffragist and abolitionist 20 years his junior, Helen Pitts.

His affairs and controversial second marriage tainted Douglass’ reputation. Indeed, later accounts written by his children (Douglass had five) indicate that the real saint may have been their mother, who remained Douglass’ most ardent supporter, protecting his name and retaining the dignity and respectability required of women at the time, despite her husband’s affairs and absences. Shockingly, despite Douglass being one of America’s most revered writers and intellectuals, his first wife remained illiterate all her life.

“HE CREATED A GREATER SENSE OF A UNITED CLASS OF DOWNTRODDEN PEOPLE WHO COULD TOGETHER OVERTHROW THEIR COMMON OPPRESSOR THROUGH COORDINATED EFFORTS”

such as becoming the President of the Freedman’s Savings Bank.

During a violent period of backlash against newly emancipated slaves, and the rise of the Ku Klux Klan, Douglass supported Ulysses S Grant in his 1868 presidential campaign to combat segregation and violence. Grant sent Douglass on a mission to the West Indies and Haiti, leading him to work with the US government on issues related to the Caribbean and its potential. Grant wanted to see if Santo Domingo could be a good sight for the US to annex as an additional state to relieve racial tensions by providing African-Americans with their own

Douglass continued touring and travelling, speaking and campaigning into his final days - literally to his very last moments. After receiving a standing ovation for a speech on women’s suffrage in 1895, the 77-year-old Douglass collapsed with a heart attack. Thousands passed by his coffin to pay their respects, and he continues to be honoured by countless statues, remembrances and plaques across the globe. He is remembered for his understanding that agitation, education, work and reform were the crucial areas in which change could transform the lives of African-Americans, and America as a whole.
Dr Miranda Kaufmann discusses her book
Black Tudors: The Untold Story and uncovering the lost stories of black people in Tudor England

Interview by Jessica Leggett

Undoubtedly one of the most popular periods of English history, the Tudor era has been dramatised in various books, television dramas and films, while countless scholars have explored every inch of its history - or so we thought. In her book Black Tudors: The Untold Story, Dr Miranda Kaufmann investigates a part of Tudor history that has been forgotten, exploring the lives of African men and women who lived in Tudor and early Stuart England.

Challenging people’s preconceptions of black Tudors, their day-to-day lives, their careers and even their freedom, Kaufmann’s illuminating research provides a vital reassessment of English history that changes our understanding of the Tudors as we know them.

What triggered your interest in black Tudors and why did you decide to write your book?

In my final year as an undergrad at Oxford, I was in a lecture about early modern trade and they mentioned that the Tudors had started trading to Africa in the middle of the 16th century, which was surprising because I had only learnt about the 18th-century trade of enslaved Africans. I found a couple of references in the library to Africans in Elizabethan England and I was inspired to find out more, so that became the subject of my doctorate. I eventually found archival references to over 360 individuals living in Tudor and early Stuart Britain between 1500 and 1640. I wrote the book because I wanted to share what I’d found with the world and change people’s
EXPERT BIO

Dr Miranda Kaufmann is a senior research fellow at the Institute Of Commonwealth Studies. To find out more, visit mirandakaufmann.com
perception of British history. The black presence in Tudor England is an important corrective to the false narrative that black people first arrived in Britain on the Empire Windrush in 1948. This can feed into a negative perspective on the immigration debate, suggesting that as black people have only recently arrived here, there is an option for them to 'go home'. Also, the stories were individually fascinating.

*How did you piece together the lives of the black men and women that you wrote about? What sources did you use?*

With difficulty! Although other scholars have since published on the topic, those books by Imtiaz Habib and Onyeka Nubia weren’t around when I began my research in 2004. Marika Sherwood of the Black and Asian Studies Association was a great help in pointing me towards the primary sources. Parish registers, which record baptisms, marriages and burials, provide information about where and how many people were in the country, but they don’t often give a huge amount of biographical information. They might say something like ‘John, a blackamoor, was buried on the 3rd of December,’ and that’s about it, although there is an unusually detailed account of Mary Filis being baptised at St Botolph’s, Aldgate, in 1597. There’s a small amount of visual evidence, such as the two images of John Blanke in the Westminster Tournament Roll, or the portrait of Anne of Denmark with an African attendant. I also used royal and aristocratic household accounts, letters, diaries and state papers. For the book, I often got the most out of legal records that had more detail about people’s lives. For example, most of what we know about Jacques Francs, the salvage diver, and Edward Swarthye, comes from the High Court of Admiralty or Star Chamber cases.

Unfortunately, there aren’t any primary accounts by the black Tudors themselves, so you have to read the sources written by white men backwards and try to grasp the black experience. A lot of historians looking at black history encounter this problem. When I couldn’t find a huge amount of biographical information about the black people then I researched the white people in the story and that often led to more insights. When I looked into Sir Edward Wynter’s life, I found out how Edward Swarthye likely came to England - Wynter had sailed to the Caribbean with Francis Drake. With John Anthony, who was a sailor in Dover, I did more digging into the ship that he worked on, the Silver Falcon, and learned of her ill-fated voyage to Virginia.

*How and when did black Tudors first arrive in England?*

Although an African man named Pero Alvarez from Portugal visited the court of Henry VII in the late-1480s John Blanke, the Tudor court trumpeter, was the earliest person I found living here for a significant period of time. Our first record of Blanke is from 1507 but he probably came with Catherine of Aragon in 1501. Around the same time, there were several Africans at the court of James IV of Scotland.

I identified that Africans arrived in Britain in three main ways. Some came from Southern Europe, like Blanke. There was a much higher black population in Spain, Portugal and to some extent Italy in this period, because those countries were already engaged in enslavement and contact with Africa and had colonies in the Americas. Africans came to England as a side effect of that, with royals like Catherine and Philip II of Spain; with English aristocrats or merchants who travelled in Europe; or with the Sephardic Jews who were expelled from Portugal and Spain. The second way was through direct trade with Africa. For example, Prince Dederi Jagoa and those before him who came to England learnt English and then went back as traders and interpreters. The final way is through privateering, so when Francis Drake or other privateers captured Africans when they raided Spanish ports or captured Spanish or Portuguese ships.
**Sanctuary State**

How Africans found freedom in Tudor England

It’s frequently assumed that black people who lived in England prior to the Slavery Abolition Act of 1833 must have been enslaved. However, among the numerous discoveries to come to light in Kaufmann’s research for *Black Tudors* is the fact that there were no enslavement laws in Tudor England. This will come as surprise to many, especially considering that the future British Empire would become one of the major slave-trading nations of the transatlantic slave trade.

While Portugal, the Netherlands, France and, indeed, the English colonies in America all introduced law codes on slavery between the 15th and 17th centuries, Parliament never passed any legislation regarding the status of slaves in England. In fact, Pero Alvaris, an African slave who arrived in England from Portugal, was set free by King Henry VII himself.

As the concept of slavery was not recognised by English law, Africans who settled in England were deemed to be free. In his *Description Of England*, first published in 1577, English priest William Harrison wrote: “As for slaves and bondmen we have none... if any come hither from other realms, so soon as they set foot on land they become as free in condition as their masters.”

Indeed, African men and women who lived in England were paid wages, baptised by the Church of England, allowed to intermarry and even testify in court, suggesting that not only were they free, but they were also accepted by English society.

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Blackman the silk-weaver or John Blanke the musician, then you were respected and remunerated for your work.

Those who had been previously enslaved by the Spaniards and Portuguese and had arrived without a penny to their name were more likely to be treated - not necessarily worse than an impoverished white Englishman - but according to the perception of their social status, and they might end up working as a servant. I think people sometimes see black people in domestic service and assume it was akin to enslavement because now domestic service isn't really seen as a career path. Africans were paid wages, just like their white counterparts, which makes it clear they were not enslaved.

In *Black Tudors*, you include a quote from 1569 that states that England had “too pure an Air for Slaves to breathe in”. Did the belief that black labourers in England were ‘free’ during this period encourage them to move there?

I argue that the Africans were free in England not only because of the idea that setting foot on English soil conferred freedom, but also because there wasn’t any legislation passed delineating enslavement in England in this period, compared to the codes in Portugal or later in France and English colonies like Virginia and Barbados. The evidence of Africans being paid wages, testifying in court and intermarrying all suggests a level of civic freedom. Across the Atlantic world, people were aware that Africans weren't enslaved in England and someone like Diego [a circumnavigator] might have heard that and taken the risk to get on Drake's ship rather than stay enslaved in Panama. However, the Africans who arrived in England in this period didn't always come here of their own volition so were not necessarily ‘voting with their feet’.

**Did African women have different experiences compared to African men in Tudor England?**

The short answer is yes. Roughly half of the records I found were of women and the original draft of my book had five chapters on women. One was about Maria, who was abandoned on an island in Indonesia by Drake, but as she never actually came to England I couldn't justify a whole chapter on her, and instead told her story in the Diego chapter. There was another woman called Helen Jeronimo, who was described as a ‘moor’ but I couldn’t be sure if she was of African origin or whether she was from the East Indies because she was the wife of an East India Company sailor. I ended
“It’s assumed Africans were living lives of drudgery and pain and people don’t expect them to have skills like salvage diving or silk-weaving.”
up with chapters on Mary Fillis, Anne Cobbe and Catelena of Almondsbury, who had an interesting range of experiences.

Fillis shows that you could develop a skill like being a seamstress that might allow you at least some level of financial independence, and Catelena of Almondsbury is independent and able to make a small living for herself, with the help of her cow.

I would rather not have included Cobbe because although there’s a preconception that if there were African women in Tudor London then they were probably prostitutes, there’s very little evidence of that. In fact, there’s more evidence of African men visiting English sex workers than the other way around.

**What preconceptions do we have today about black Tudors in England?**

Well, the main preconceptions are that there weren’t any, or if there were that they were enslaved and that there weren’t many women. Often people know a bit more about the black presence in the 18th century and read stuff backwards, reaching false conclusions. It is assumed Africans were living lives of drudgery and pain and people don’t expect them to have skills like salvage diving or silk-weaving. They might think of musicians because of the long-held association of Africans with music, and perhaps of Africans in royal or aristocratic households, partly because they might have seen portraits from a later period or other countries showing royals and aristocrats with black attendants. However, my research shows that a lot of black Tudors were working in much more humble households like that of a London beer brewer or a seamstress; or that in a few cases they were independent, living their own lives.

**Your book focuses on ten black men and women from the Tudor and Stuart periods. Whose story fascinated or surprised you the most?**

I think I was always most engaged with whoever I was writing about at the time. Diego’s story is brilliant because it’s an exciting global adventure, with the Maroon alliance and his untimely death from an arrow wound sustained off the coast of Chile. Scharthy’s story is the most surprising: an African man whipping an Englishman. The testimony in which he describes the event was very bad handwriting (of a court scribe, not Scharthy himself) and I couldn’t make it out at first. The first word that I identified was ‘whip’ with a double ‘p’, and I assumed that the black man was being whipped by the white man, as was the case for so much of our later history. It was only when I deciphered the whole document that I realised it was the other way around.

The fact that John Anthony, a free waged sailor, was bound for Virginia in 1619, the inaugural year of African American history, was a striking contrast to the experience of the 20 or so Africans who actually became the first to arrive in Jamestown that summer.

**What do you hope readers will take away from Black Tudors?**

It depends who the reader is! The first thing that I wanted to put across was simply that black Tudors were here. To give people a different perspective by showing that British history is a lot more diverse than they think and also raise questions, like was it inevitable that white people would enslave black people in our history? What changed in the 17th century that created all the pain and misery of enslavement and racism that followed afterwards? I want teachers to teach it in schools and I’m working with a group of secondary school teachers now on a project called #TeachingBlackTudors [mirandakaufmann.com/blog/teaching-black-tudors], creating black Tudors teaching resources with a major educational publisher. I want it in museums and I want to change the traditional narrative of British history. This is beginning to happen. Francis now features at the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth; Diego’s story is now told at the National Maritime Museum and the National Trust’s Buckland Abbey (Drake’s former home near Plymouth), as part of the Colonial Countryside project [www2.le.ac.uk/departments/english/creativewriting/centre/colonial-countryside-project]. I would like the next generation of historians to build on my work, do some more digging and find out more. I hope it’s a starting point that brings people to black British history and takes them on different journeys.
HERO OF THE
HATIAN SLAVE
REBELLION

Dr Sudhir Hazareesingh, author of *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture*, on the remarkable revolutionary leader

Written by Jessica Leggett

Revolutionary hero and military genius Toussaint Louverture led the successful slave revolt in the French colony of Saint-Domingue, resulting in the abolition of slavery and ultimately the founding of Haiti, the world’s first independent Black republic. A former slave, Louverture became a symbol of Black liberation who continues to inspire the global fight against racial injustice today, over two centuries after his death. In his book *Black Spartacus: The Epic Life of Toussaint Louverture*, Dr Sudhir Hazareesingh charts Louverture’s extraordinary story, his rise as a leader of the Haitian Revolution and the enduring significance of his complex legacy.

Firstly, could you sum up for our readers who Toussaint Louverture was?
He was born into enslavement - his parents were captured as slaves and forcibly transported to the then-French colony of Saint-Domingue in the Caribbean sometime in the early 18th century. He grew up on a plantation, and Saint-Domingue was the wealthiest French colony in the 18th century, but it had a huge number of slaves - half a million. All of this wealth was dependent on slavery. In 1791, two years after the French Revolution, the enslaved people revolted and overthrew the system of plantation slavery, and Louverture was the man who led this slave revolution.

It’s a revolution that unfolded in a number of different stages. First of all, it forced the French - who were still the colonial masters - to abolish slavery, which they do in 1794. Then Louverture becomes the effective political leader of the colony while it's still under French rule. He develops an original political system, where people's equality and basic democratic rights are recognised, so he becomes one of the most remarkable political figures of his time.

Unfortunately for him, in the late 18th to early 19th century, Napoleon takes over as French ruler and he doesn’t like people who are independent, strong-minded, and particularly people who are Black, of course, like Louverture. So he sends an army to get rid of Louverture and the regime that he has created, and he manages to capture Louverture in 1802. But his lieutenants continue the fight against the French, and in 1804 they defeat the French, and that’s how the state of Haiti is born - the world’s first Black independent post-colonial state. Louverture is
a remarkable figure, because he can be regarded as the founding father of modern Black post-colonial independence.

**Why did you choose the title 'Black Spartacus' for your book?**

Well, for two reasons. One is that Louverture until recently was relatively unknown in Britain; he is a bit better known in France and America. I wanted a title that would immediately explain to the potential reader who this person was, and I think 'Black Spartacus' does that because you immediately appreciate that this is going to be about a slave revolt, and the leadership of that slave revolt is by a Black person. I also chose this title because it was bestowed upon him by his many admirers, and in particular by one of the local French republican governors, Etienne Laveaux, who was a great admirer of Louverture. So this was a name that

Louverture himself was given, and quite readily accepted. For that reason, I thought it would be very appropriate to use it as the title.

**How did you conduct the research for your book?**

That was a big task, because all the historical material about the Haitian Revolution and Louverture is outside Haiti. There's very little material that was left there - the bulk of the archives, letters, manuscripts, publications of various kinds were all in France in the National Archives in Paris and the colonial archives in Aix-en-Provence. I used those extensively, and read everything that I could on the period in the French colonial archives.

One of the characteristics of the Haitian Revolution is that it also involves all the great powers of the time: the British are involved - they tried to capture Saint-Domingue in the late 1790s - the Spaniards are also there, as are the Americans. So I also wanted to be sure that I was looking for material there too, and I found some interesting stuff in British, Spanish and American archives. It was quite a comprehensive bit of archival research that was needed, but it yielded a lot of original material.

**Was there anything you found particularly challenging when trying to piece together Louverture's life?**

Various things, one is that the amount of source material is very unevenly distributed. We have a lot of documents about his life from the mid-1790s up to 1802, the time of his death; but for the first 50 years of his life, during most of which he was an enslaved

**“LOUVERTURE IS A REMARKABLE FIGURE BECAUSE HE CAN BE REGARDED AS THE FOUNDING FATHER OF MODERN BLACK POST-COLONIAL INDEPENDENCE”**

person, we have very little because slaves were not expected to know how to read and write, although we think Louverture probably did become literate (he was probably taught by the Jesuits). He didn't leave many records, so there were decades of his life where there's little direct material. The other big challenge is the difficulty in interpreting the material at times. Louverture, because he is such a clever, sophisticated person, sometimes keeps you guessing in terms of what his real intentions were. So that was quite challenging, but in a positive way.

**Louverture was a former slave - how did he rise to become one of the leaders of the Haitian Revolution?**

That's what's so remarkable about him. He was already recognised as a man with great leadership potential, even as a young boy and as a young man, because his exceptional talents are noticed by the people on the Bédou plantation. The plantation manager Bayon de Libertat eventually hires him as his coachman, and the coachman was in effect, the assistant manager. So, from early on, his skills as a leader were recognised. I think it was his personal qualities - his intelligence, his strategic thinking, his organisational capacity and his intellectual abilities in general - that allowed him to emerge at the time of the revolution.

The other thing is that he was in tune with the wishes of the people. What I try and do in the book is to emphasise the extent to which Louverture isn't an isolated figure. What makes him so special is that he understands what his people want and works hard to try and make that possible. What they seek is to be free, to be united, not to be exploited by imperial and colonial powers,
Hero of the Haitian Slave Rebellion

and to be given back the dignity that they have as their right. I think Louverture's capacity to understand these aspirations and express them made him the great leader that he became.

Louverture was not born with the name Louverture, so how did he end up with it?
That's a very nice story, because slaves were not born with names of their own - insofar as they have names; sometimes they're not given any names at all - but they are names that are associated with their plantation. For a long time, Louverture was called Toussaint Brèda, because Brèda was the name of the plantation where he was born, and where he spent the first 50 years of his life. At the time of the revolution, he chose a political name, and this was the first time that as a former enslaved person he was able to make this choice. He chose a name that would resonate with his people, and Louverture means 'opening' in French, so what he's trying to do there is signal his capacity to do new things. It's also a nod to the French Enlightenment and the ideals of education and learning.

What I also came to understand is that Louverture was someone who was connected to the spirituality of the people of Saint-Domingue. Caribbean and African spirituality, particularly the people who followed the Vodou religion. In the Vodou religion, you have various spirits, or loas, as they call them, who guide people through their lives. One of these spirits is called Papa Legba, and Legba is the person who opens the gates of destiny. Louverture choosing the name Louverture is a very good example of his leadership - he is speaking both to the French, who think of him as one of their disciples, but he's also speaking to the African-born and Caribbean-born formerly enslaved population, who will see in his name a reference to Vodou culture.

Louverture did not live to see the founding of Haiti, because he died in captivity. What was Louverture's relationship with Napoleon Bonaparte like?
Louverture initially hadn't learned much about Napoleon, but when he realised that this general was a rising star he did whatever he could to be on good terms with him. For example, the family of Napoleon's then-wife, Joséphine, had land in Saint-Domingue, and the estate had fallen into disuse. Joséphine wrote to Louverture, and he helped restore the plantations and enable her family to earn substantial income from that plantation. So he tried to help and be supportive of Bonaparte as far as he could.
Napoleon, unfortunately, was very racially prejudiced against Black people in general. While he would have been happy to accept someone like Louverture, if he was completely subservient, he wasn’t willing to work with someone who wanted to be treated as an equal. The relationship breaks down in 1800-01 because Napoleon simply won’t allow any kind of autonomy to the colony, or even any equality for the Black people. That’s why he sends an invading army to overthrow the regime.

**Is it right to say that Louverture was not looking for independence, but rather autonomy?**

I think this is one of many big questions that Louverture’s life throws up. Was he someone who, as his enemies and critics said, was after independence, and so wanted to break away from France? Or was he someone who was just trying to remain within the French family? In a way, he has been criticised for both things. People who thought independence was the right move thought that Louverture was too timid, and people who were supportive of the French government at the time thought that Louverture was behaving too impatiently even in asking for autonomy.

But I think autonomy is exactly what he wanted, he wanted Saint-Domingue to remain within the French Republic but to be given the right to govern itself, in a limited way, according to the interests of the colony. This is what his 1801 Constitution proclaims. I don’t think he made any secret of the fact that he welcomed French settlers there - he wanted them to take part and help build the economy. There was an element of self-interest. He was aware that the Black people at the time did not have the sort of technical know-how to manage these big plantations, so he thought this was a sort of partnership that could work. Unfortunately, the French government at the time didn’t feel the same and they ended up paying a very heavy price as a result.

**Did Louverture and the success of the Haitian Revolution inspire subsequent liberation movements across the globe?**

Yes, absolutely. That story is one that I pick up with a lot of relish towards the end of the book, because when you look at the history of the 19th and 20th century you see that Louverture himself and the Haitian revolutionaries inspire a string of revolts from enslaved people in the Caribbean, South America and, of course, in the United States. The whole abolitionist movement up to 1865 is a movement in America, which has Louverture and the Haitian people as their heroes and their models.

The story continues through the 20th century, and you see it in the emergence of anti-colonial movements. Many of them, whether they’re in the English- or French-speaking world, continue to talk about Louverture as a hero and model. So his story, his afterlife continues through until the present. People are still talking about him as an iconic figure, a symbol of Black liberation and Black dignity. People who are struggling in America today to have Black people respected and treated in a dignified way are still talking about Louverture.

**Would you say that Louverture’s story and the Haitian Revolution remain relevant to the world today? Especially in light of movements such as Black Lives Matter?**

Yes, this is very much a contemporaneous story. I think the echoes are, on the one hand, that he is someone who inspires people to fight for their rights and particularly for the rights of people fighting racial injustice. I think it’s also an interesting story at a time when we’re rightly being encouraged to discuss the ongoing impacts of slavery and empire on modern and contemporary societies. Louverture is a great reminder that emancipation from slavery was achieved as a result of heroic actions by enslaved people in the colonies.

Far too often, when we talk about abolitionism or the emancipation of slavery, we think of European or North American figures. It’s quite right - we should celebrate people like William Wilberforce, Victor Schoelcher and Abraham Lincoln - but I think they sometimes lead us to forget that the larger work was actually done by Black people themselves fighting for their own emancipation. That’s the story of Louverture, that’s the story of the Haitian Revolution and that’s why I think it’s a really important story for the present moment as well.

**What would you like readers to take away from your book about Louverture?**

That it’s an uplifting story and one that shows that the human spirit can never really be defeated. Whatever the indignities and the cruelties that they face, human beings will continue to fight for freedom and justice. That, I think, is an absolutely timeless lesson for us all.
LOUVERTURE IN CAPTIVITY
The famed leader spent the final months of his life imprisoned

In 1801, Louverture issued a new constitution that proclaimed him as Governor-General of Saint-Domingue for life. This angered Napoleon, who sent an army led by his brother-in-law, General Charles Emmanuel Leclerc, to invade Saint-Domingue and restore French control in January 1802, despite Louverture’s insistence that he remained loyal to France.

Fighting broke out between Louverture’s men and the French, with both sides experiencing heavy losses. To bring an end to hostilities, Louverture negotiated amnesty for himself and his generals, acknowledged Leclerc’s authority, then retired to his own plantation in May. However, shortly afterwards, Louverture was invited to a parley, where he was arrested and deported to France.

Imprisoned and interrogated repeatedly at the Fort de Joux, Louverture wrote a memoir defending his actions and denouncing his treatment by the French. He died just under a year later in April 1803 after months of ill health, with his death possibly caused by malnutrition and pneumonia. Although Louverture did not live to see the success of the revolution he had spearheaded, he is still remembered and celebrated in Haiti and around the world today.

“PEOPLE WHO ARE STRUGGLING IN AMERICA TODAY TO HAVE BLACK PEOPLE RESPECTED AND TREATED IN A DIGNIFIED WAY ARE STILL TALKING ABOUT TOUSSAINT LOUVERTURE”
AMERICA’S WORST RACE CRIME

Written by Jonathan Gordon
On the night of 31 May, 1921, a prosperous Black community in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was attacked by an armed white mob bent on murder and destruction. The ensuing massacre claimed over 300 lives and is among the most horrific events in U.S. history - so why has it remained buried for 100 years?

It came to be known as 'Black Wall Street' - a 35-block district called Greenwood neatly segmented from the neighbouring areas of Tulsa by a rail line - and it was a beacon of African American entrepreneurship and culture. In the era of Jim Crow laws and segregation, Greenwood had thrived. It had its own schools, hospital, stores (that served Black customers, unlike the ones across the tracks), two newspapers and two movie theatres. Of the 10,000 or so African Americans who lived in Tulsa (out of a population of around 100,000), about 80 per cent of them lived in Greenwood.

But by early morning on 1 June 1921 Greenwood had been razed to the ground. Over 1,400 homes had been destroyed, businesses had been looted and as many as 300 people had been killed. Thousands of white invaders had stormed the district, armed with machine guns and even using a plane to firebomb the town. While at the time it was referred to as a riot, the word massacre seems far more appropriate and is more commonly used today. It was a horrific crime, yet not a single person was convicted. How did it happen? And why?

First, we need to understand a little more about Greenwood, the wider experience of African Americans in this era and
why Black Wall Street was so important. “The community began in about 1906,” Hannibal B Johnson, attorney and author of Black Wall Street 100, explains. “Established by wealthy Black businessmen OW Gurley, a migrant from Arkansas, the area blossomed into the most enterprising and successful Black business community in the nation in the early 20th century, a period marked by legal segregation of the races in virtually all aspects of life.” But while it was successful, it was not immune to those forces. “The Greenwood district was unique only in terms of the development and sophistication of its business community. Black Tulsans felt the sting of racial oppression in a segregated society like their brothers and sisters in many other parts of the country. The size and strength of the Black Wall Street economic engine provided some buffer and solace against the systemic racism of the day.”

Tulsa and Oklahoma more broadly had drawn masses of newly liberated enslaved people to its lands in the years since the end of the Civil War. “Even though Oklahoma was a slave territory, after the Civil War ended it was opened up in two different chunks to freed slaves and white settlers, and it was very, very cheap,” explains Bethany Rains, who is currently living in Oklahoma and researching the Tulsa Massacre for her thesis. “Their goal was to have reliable income, to have land, to have everything, so that their freedom couldn’t be taken away.” There was, however, a ceiling to success for Black communities in segregated states. While money could be focused on their own community since it couldn’t be spent elsewhere, new technology and training was being kept out of reach.

Acute racial tensions remained in many regions of America. Sixty-one lynchings and 25 race riots were recorded in America in 1919, 61 lynchings in 1920, and 57 in 1921. A bill had been proposed in 1918 to make lynching a federal crime, and while it passed the House of Representatives it died in the Senate after three failed attempts to get enough support. Meanwhile, white supremacist group the Ku Klux Klan had returned in a new form in 1915, starting in Georgia. By 1921 it had around 2,500 members in Oklahoma, with doctors, lawyers, judges, sheriffs, ministers, bankers, city employees and more among its members. In Tulsa vigilantism had also been on the rise as various corruption scandals and political issues had seen the police force weaken. One group calling itself the Knights of Liberty attacked unionists such as the Industrial Workers of the World (or Wobblies), with one incident involving members being whipped, tarred and feathered. Only a few months before the massacre of 31 May, a white 18-year-old named Roy Belton was lynched in Tulsa after he was accused of killing a taxi driver named Homer Nida. While the mob hanged him, the police were said to have directed traffic around the spectacle.

All of this was the backdrop to the events that unfolded in Tulsa in 1921, and tensions were further increased by local animosities towards the growing influence of the Greenwood community and jealousy over its success. “Tulsa was a tinderbox - a powder keg - in 1921,” says Johnson. “It took only a single spark - an igniter, a catalyst - to set the town alight. That trigger was an elevator incident in downtown Tulsa on 30 May 1921 involving two teenagers - a Black boy and a white girl. In this America, Black male/white female relationships were presumptively suspect, and in many places taboo. The boy apparently bumped into the girl. She overreacted, the police were called, and the Tulsa Tribune reported the incident the next day as an attempted rape.”

The exact details of what happened became fuzzier and more exaggerated as the day passed, but testimonies and police records paint a clearer picture. Dick Rowland, a teenage shoe shine, had entered the Drexler building to use the restroom (in the segregated Tulsa, his employer had negotiated permission for

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**TIMELINE OF EVENTS**

What we understand happened on the 31 May and 1 June 2021

**AFTERNOON, 31 MAY**

The Tulsa Tribune publishes an afternoon edition claiming that Black 19-year-old Dick Rowland had been arrested for assaulting 17-year-old Sarah Page, a white elevator operator in Tulsa. The newspaper’s story is untrue but word spreads that a lynching of Rowland is being planned for that evening.

**19:30**

Hundreds of white Tulsa residents gather outside the Tulsa County Courthouse in which Rowland is being held and demand that he be handed over to them, but the sheriff refuses. The top floor is barricaded in an attempt to protect Rowland.

**21:00**

The African American community in Greenwood hears about what’s happening and organises a party of about 25 armed men, many of them WWI veterans who still have their guns, to offer aid to the sheriff in defending the courthouse. The sheriff turns down their help. Meanwhile, an attempt is being made to break into the local National Guard armoury, but the white mob is turned away by the guardsmen.

**22:00**

False rumours spread to Greenwood that the mob is storming the courthouse and so a second group is formed, now estimated to be about 75 Black men, to again offer help to the authorities. The white mob now numbers between 1,500 and 2,000 people. At some point, possibly as the Greenwood residents are leaving, someone tries to disarm one of the Black men and the gun goes off. Rioting outside the courthouse ensues.
America’s Worst Race Crime

as having premeditated his assault and even scratching Page and tearing her clothes, neither of which appear to be true. As it happens, Rowland was picked up by police and booked into custody at the County Courthouse not long after the Tribune hit the streets. Anticipating trouble, the police barricaded the floor where the cells were located. As 31 May progressed, a lynching mob of a few hundred men, women and children gathered in front of the courthouse.

“The Black community knew the courthouse wasn’t going to be protected,” says Rains. “If it hadn’t been able to hold off a mob trying to kill a white man, there was no way at this point to do so for a Black man.” On two occasions a small group of armed Black men from Greenwood (many of them WWI veterans and still carrying their military-issue firearms) offered to help the sheriff protect Rowland and the courthouse, but they were declined. As darkness fell the mob grew to number a few thousand (by some estimates) and tensions flared, resulting in someone trying to disarm one of the Black men. “At some point, and nobody knows why, there’s gunfire,” says Rains. “And immediately when this shot went off the white mob started shooting.”

“TULSA WAS A TINDERBOX A POWDER KEG - IN 1921”

A full-blown race riot ensued as around 75 men from Greenwood began to retreat and Lynchers began taking out their vengeance on any Black person they saw. Car-loads of armed white men drove around downtown Tulsa, firing at people as they went, and one unarmed man was shot dead in a movie theatre. According to witnesses, the police were deporting members of the white mob, giving them authority to kill African Americans as they saw fit in the name of putting down an ‘uprising’. But this was just the beginning and by midnight fires were started on the outskirts of the Greenwood district, before a quiet finally descended on the city.

The peace didn’t last long, though, and a second, more coordinated phase developed. “A lot of people, when they talk about it, act as if the entire thing was this kind of chaotic mob,” says Rains. “There’s a chase and then they just kind of lost their minds and destroyed Greenwood, but that’s not true. You can almost divide the massacre into two parts: a battle and then a pogrom, just an absolute catastrophe.”

Barney Cleaver was a Black deputy sheriff and had been at the courthouse for most of the day. Returning home to Greenwood, he sent his wife and sister-in-law to safety somewhere further out of town. As he sat in a building near the train tracks on the edge

Black employees to use it). Rowland entered the elevator operated by white teenager Sarah Page, and when the elevator lurched Rowland fell into her. It seems he stepped on her foot, at which point Page slapped him. He grabbed her arm to stop her from doing so again, and she screamed. A clerk working at the nearby Renberg’s store ran to her aid and Rowland fled, fearing the potentially catastrophic repercussions for a Black man grabbing the arm of a white woman.

Not only did the Tulsa Tribune claim Rowland had assaulted Page in its afternoon edition the next day, it also included an editorial titled ‘To Lynch Negro Tonight’, suggesting Rowland would be attacked in retaliation. A few hundred copies of this edition were already distributed before some of the paper’s editors convinced publisher Richard Lloyd Jones to retract the piece. As it happens, no copies with this editorial have been found, as the only known surviving copy has the offending article torn out. But the surviving report on the incident itself paints Rowland

BEFORE MIDNIGHT
The white mob is now attacking Black Tulsa residents throughout the city. One Black man is killed in a movie theatre. There are also reports of cars full of white men shooting Black people indiscriminately. Some buildings on the outskirts of Greenwood are attacked. The Tulsa police deputise some of the white mob and, according to witnesses, authorises them to kill any African Americans they see. Meanwhile, the National Guard is mobilised but spends most of the night protecting white neighbourhoods in fear of a retaliatory attack, which never happens.

BEFORE DAWN, 1 JUNE
During the night plans are made to invade the Greenwood district. Groups of white men numbering in the thousands, line up to surround the district on three sides.

DAWN
As dawn breaks, whistles are blown and the rioters invade en masse. They begin looting and firebombing homes and businesses, attacking and killing residents as they go. At least one machine gun is used by the mob and eye-witnesses claim that a plane is employed to drop incendiary devices onto buildings. An area of around 35 blocks is destroyed.

09:15
National Guard troops arrive at Greenwood, by which time most of the district is either burned down or still on fire. Martial law is declared as authorities look to reclaim control. Over 6,000 Black residents are held at the Convention Hall and Fairgrounds by police and Guardsman.
of Greenwood at around 5am he heard a whistle, followed by relentless gunfire. Thousands of armed white people had surrounded the district and were now invading.

"The white mob that invaded the Greenwood district looted pawn shops and sporting goods shops downtown for weapons," says Johnson. "Many were depurised by local law enforcement. The mob prevented firefighters from putting out fires and there's also evidence of some organization and coordination among these criminal elements."

As the mob went door to door, ransacking homes and businesses, the residents of Greenwood attempted to flee or fight back. The unlucky ones were shot in their homes or in the street, while the more fortunate were arrested by the police and National Guard. Over 6,000 people from Greenwood were held at the Convention Hall and Fairgrounds in the days that followed. Meanwhile on Standpipe Hill a small group attempted to defend their homes and fierce fighting took place, but ultimately the people of Greenwood were outgunned and outnumbered.

"Most historians now assume that it was fully preorganised and preplanned," says Rains. "But there's still the question of who did that? Who organised this invasion? Probably city officials were involved, and the police. However, it does remain unclear. One of the arguments that some greater level of local authority was involved is the use of at least one plane to drop incendiary devices on Greenwood, which would go some way to explain how quickly it was destroyed. Several eye-witnesses claimed planes were involved.

"They dropped some kind of incendiary devices. There are enough sources that refer to it, including [local Greenwood attorney] BC Franklin's that was discovered in the last five years," Rains explains. Even the Tulsa Tribune agreed that planes were involved, although it claimed they were doing reconnaissance, finding residents who were shooting at the white crowd. The final death toll is believed to be around 300, although early estimates originally put it at only 30. On 1 June the Tulsa Tribune claimed 68 African Americans and nine white people had died in the 'Race War' overnight. The property damage was easier to quantify. "There were five structures left, and none of them were undamaged," says Rains.
While martial law was declared later in the morning of 1 June and the killing finally stopped, the cruelty and injustice hadn’t ended. Those residents detained by the police and National Guard had to be vouched for by a white employer before they were released. What’s more, the city authorities blocked anyone rebuilding in the Greenwood district unless they could prove the materials being used would not be flammable. Segregation meant that access to such materials was incredibly hard without aid. Meanwhile, donations of money from outside areas were blocked, meaning churches and groups like the NAACP (The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) couldn’t help. But the people of Greenwood didn’t back down.

“BC Franklin worked from a white tent because everything had been burned to the ground,” says Rains. “He said to fellow Greenwood residents, ‘You rebuild, I will represent you for free if they arrest you.’ He appealed a ruling against one of the people who’d rebuilt their property all the way to the Oklahoma Supreme Court. The Tulsa municipal government’s policy was ruled unconstitutional and Greenwood residents were able to rebuild. But if that hadn’t happened they would have entirely lost their property as well.”

Greenwood was rebuilt, although many families never recovered from their losses. Rowland was exonerated and all charges against him were dropped, and while a grand jury was assembled to investigate the massacre, no convictions were ever made. The Tulsa Tribune headline summarising the judgement read: ‘Grand Jury Blames Negroes for Inciting Race Rioting; Whites Clearly Exonerated.’ It wasn’t until 1997 and the Tulsa Race Riot Commission that the state of Oklahoma properly investigated what had happened, even using radar to look for potential mass graves. The commission proposed that the state should pay $33 million in restitution to the 121 victims who were still alive at that time, but no action was taken on that recommendation. Finally, though, 100 years later, the magnitude and horror of the Tulsa Race Massacre seems clear and its victims are getting the recognition they deserve.

WHO WAS BC FRANKLIN?

An eyewitness account of the massacre in Tulsa was discovered in 2015 and donated to the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History and Culture. The ten-page manuscript—written by Buck Colbert Franklin, an attorney in Tulsa at the time of the unrest—shed new light on the terrible events of 1921.

BC Franklin was born in the Chickasaw Nation, a Native American territory before it became part of Oklahoma, and went on to become a lawyer. Having experienced racial prejudice within the American judicial system early in his career, he committed himself to defending his fellow African Americans in Oklahoma. After surviving the massacre in 1921 he represented the survivors when the city council attempted to block Black residents from rebuilding the Greenwood district.

The case went to the Oklahoma Supreme Court, where Franklin won.

He began to write an autobiography, but died in 1960 before it was published. His son John Hope Franklin, a prominent civil rights advocate who was involved in the Brown versus Board of Education case, had the book published posthumously.

However, his father’s ten-page account of the massacre did not surface until after John had also passed, in 2009. Within it BC Franklin describes the growing anger and violence of the day, and confirms the use of turpentine balls dropped from the air to set buildings on fire. It’s a powerful first-hand account by a gifted writer of a truly harrowing event in which BC Franklin manages to convey the heroism and defiant spirit of the community that he committed himself to serving.

ABOVE BC Franklin (right) working out of a tent after the Tulsa Massacre
REMARKABLE WOMEN
Breaking the rules

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Learn how the mathematician and philosopher Hypatia put her life on the line for her beliefs

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It wasn’t just men who picked up a sword to live the way of the warrior, as you’ll discover

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The incredible tale of Lola Montez, the dancer whose love affair brought down one of the biggest rulers in Europe

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How an artistic Mecca, beloved of Picasso and Hemingway, was created in Paris
Hypatia of Alexandria was a Neoplatonist philosopher, astronomer and mathematician who is hailed as the first female mathematician whose life is reasonably well-recorded. She was beloved by the people of Alexandria and she advised and taught the city’s elite, earning a reputation unheard of for women at the time. Yet this popular and intelligent philosopher would lose her life at the hands of a bloodthirsty mob, and her horrific death has continued to fascinate the world ever since.

It has been estimated that Hypatia was born around 350-370 CE (although recent scholars have typically settled on the year 355 CE) in Alexandria, Egypt, in the Eastern Roman Empire. While we do not know who Hypatia’s mother was, we know that her father was Theon of Alexandria, an accomplished mathematician and astronomer who was the last attested member of the Alexandrian Museum.

Theon gave his daughter an education that was usually reserved for sons, teaching Hypatia all about philosophy, mathematics and astronomy — in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Greek historian Philostorgius said that Hypatia “was so well educated in mathematics by her father that she far surpassed her teacher, and especially in astronomy”.

Considering this, it’s hardly a surprise that Hypatia rose to become the city’s foremost scholar, delivering lectures in both her home and in public lecture halls, with listeners travelling from all over the eastern Mediterranean to hear her speak. Like Theon, Hypatia was a Neoplatonist who drew from the teachings of Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus. According to the philosopher Damascius, Hypatia would wear a scholar’s cloak (traditionally worn by men) and stop in the middle of the street to explain about philosophers to anyone who asked her.

Thanks to Socrates, who wrote about Hypatia in his *Historia Ecclesiastica*, we also know that she held political influence and frequently addressed assemblies of men who sought her guidance. Writing around 25 years after her death, sometime between 439-450 CE, Socrates states “she not infrequently appeared in public in the presence of the magistrates, without ever losing... that dignified modesty of deportment for which she was conspicuous, and which gained for her universal respect and admiration”.

Even though Hypatia was frequently in the company of men, she never married and likely remained celibate, choosing to dedicate herself to her studies. When one of her students became enamoured with her and refused to be dissuaded, Hypatia resorted to throwing her menstrual rags at him, supposedly declaring, “This is what you love, young man, and it isn’t beautiful.”

Hypatia also collaborated with her father and provided a commentary on the third book of Ptolemy’s *Almagest*, in which Theon wrote the following inscription: “The edition having been prepared by the philosopher, my daughter Hypatia.” (Although what she did specifically remains unknown.) According
Remarkable Women

This portrait supposedly depicts Charles Kingsley's version of Hypatia from his novel

to the Suda Lexicon, a 10th-century Byzantine encyclopedia, she also wrote commentaries on Diophantus' *Arithmetica*, the *Astronomical Canon* and on the *Conics* of Apollonius.

Sadly, none of Hypatia's own writings have survived and we cannot be sure which contributions to mathematics or astronomy were definitely hers, but recent research has suggested that extant versions of these works possibly reflect the commentaries she made. However, the accounts of her life and work that we do have, written by her students and contemporaries, all highlight just how widely respected she was in Alexandria.

Her most famous and faithful student was Synesius of Cyrene, the future bishop of Ptolemais, who described his tutor as "the legitimate mistress of the mysteries of philosophy".

In fact, it is thanks to Synesius' surviving letters that we have some insight into Hypatia and her teachings. His letters prove that he was well-versed in the works of Plato and Aristotle, evidently because he learnt about them from Hypatia, but unfortunately he pays more attention to Hypatia's philosophy than her mathematical contributions.

However, we have learnt from Synesius that he asked her to build a horoscope, a device that allows you to see objects below the water surface, and he also sought her contribution for an astrolabe, a two-dimensional model of the celestial sphere that he sent as a gift to an official named Paenius. It's not specified what Hypatia did but it has been assumed that she at least helped to refine or improve these scientific instruments.

The letters have also shed light on Hypatia and her religious tolerance because although she was a pagan, she's known to have taught Christian and Jewish students. Born into a pagan family, Synesius eventually converted to Christianity but remained close with Hypatia, to the point where he describes her as his "mother, sister, teacher, and withal benefactress" in one of his letters.

As a result, it is often assumed that Hypatia fostered an accepting and open learning environment.

Hypatia's ability to carve out a space of openness was even more remarkable considering the political and religious turmoil that engulfed Alexandria at the time. In 313 CE Roman emperor Constantine the Great named Christianity as the new official state religion, and consequently tensions between pagans and Christians in the city increased, with progressively violent riots taking place by Hypatia's lifetime.

Despite being a pagan, Hypatia had been relatively safe while Theophilus was the archbishop of Alexandria, even though he disliked pagans and suppressed their practices. A pagan riot against Theophilus led to the Serapeum, a pagan temple, being destroyed in 391 CE and the subsequent destruction of all pagan imagery. Nevertheless, he understood that Hypatia was popular and so he tolerated her and her teachings, which never openly clashed with Christianity, a testament to her reputation as a respected figure of the city.

However, this safety net was ripped away when Theophilus died in 412 CE and he was succeeded by his nephew, Cyril, who envied Hypatia's popularity and influence. As the new archbishop, Cyril wasted no time in asserting his newly inherited power, commanding his militia of Christian monks to destroy pagan temples and harass the Novatians (a Christian sect) and the Jewish population, eventually leading to their expulsion.

"Hypatia rose to become Alexandria's foremost scholar, delivering lectures in both her home and in public lecture halls"
from the city. In doing so, Cyril angered Orestes, the Roman prefect of Alexandria, who believed that the archbishop was encroaching on his civil authority. Orestes was friends with Hypatia and he sought her counsel as his political feud with Cyril worsened. Nevertheless, the situation quickly took a turn for the worse when hundreds of zealous monks from Nitria, loyal to Cyril, arrived in Alexandria and started a riot. They confronted Orestes, who was driving in his chariot, throwing stones at him and accusing him of being a pagan, despite his protestations that he was a Christian and had been baptised by the bishop of Constantinople himself.

During the assault, a monk named Ammonius managed to strike Orestes on the head, leaving the prefect covered in blood. He was soon rescued from the attack and as punishment Orestes had Ammonius tortured and put to death, enraging the monks. In response, Cyril had Ammonius' body lie in state, honouring him as a Christian martyr.

Soon enough, rumours began to circulate that Hypatia was preventing the two men from reconciling and the monks accused her of using witchcraft to turn Orestes against Christianity. In March 415 CE, Hypatia was travelling through the city on her way home when her carriage was attacked by a Christian mob led by Peter the Lector. She was dragged into a nearby church, stripped of her clothing and beaten to death, before her body was dismembered - either with roof tiles or oyster shells - and then burnt.

Renowned for her wisdom and her efforts to better the lives of those in Alexandria, Hypatia's brutal murder sent shock waves across the empire and instantly transformed her into a martyr for philosophy. Even so, there is no evidence to suggest that there was ever any retribution for her death and it appears that Orestes left the city soon afterwards. As for Cyril, he continued to suppress and destroy the remnants of paganism in
Alexandria, and for his efforts he was later named a saint by the church.

Nevertheless, the blame for Hypatia’s death has often been placed squarely at Cyril’s feet by her nearest contemporaries. In his Life Of Isidore – which has been reproduced in the Suda Lexicon – Damascius portrayed Cyril as jealous of Hypatia, claiming that “he was so struck with envy that he immediately began plotting her murder, and the most heinous form of murder at that”. For Damascius, Hypatia’s death had ultimately turned her into a martyr for Hellenism (the term for ancient Greek culture).

Likewise, in his aforementioned Historia Ecclesiastica, Socrates discusses the growing mob violence and volatile atmosphere in Alexandria, inflamed by the rift between Cyril and Orestes, claiming that Hypatia “fell a victim to the political jealousy which at that time prevailed”. The extent of Cyril’s involvement with Hypatia’s killing, or whether he was involved at all, still remains unclear to this day but regardless, Socrates commented that “an act so inhuman could not fail to bring the greatest opprobrium, not only upon Cyril, but also upon the whole Alexandrian church”.

Then again, not everybody blamed Cyril for Hypatia’s gruesome death. John, Bishop of Nikiu in Lower Egypt, attempted to divert the negativity that surrounded Cyril by depicting Hypatia as a pagan philosopher who used occult practices. He stated that Hypatia “was devoted at all times to magic, astrolabes and instruments of music, and she beguiled many people through her Satanic wiles. And the governor of the city honoured her exceedingly, for she had beguiled him through her magic”.

Astonishingly, John continues his defence of the archbishop with a bold statement declaring that with Hypatia’s death, Cyril “had destroyed the last remains of idolatry in the city”.

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**The Power of Knowledge**

**Plato**

_c.428-c.348 BCE_

Plato was an Athenian philosopher whose theory of Forms, the belief that the physical world is just a shadow of a pure, spiritual world (the realm of Forms), influenced Hypatia’s Neoplatonism. He produced numerous works including *The Republic* and also founded a school of philosophy, the Academy.

**Aristotle**

_385-323 BCE_

A student of Plato and a tutor and advisor to Alexander the Great, Aristotle is widely considered to be one of the greatest philosophers in history. He contributed to various fields including metaphysics, politics, logic and ethics, and Hypatia delivered many lectures on his teachings, often in the city centre.
As horrific as Hypatia's death was, a question that has often been asked is 'would we know about her if it wasn't for her murder?' With no extant sources from Hypatia herself - we don't even have a contemporary image of her - the details of her life have been heavily disputed and twisted to suit the agendas of others. Therefore, we have instead been left with an idealised image of Hypatia, a woman essentially of legend, rather than the real person that she was.

Even the accounts of Damascius and Socrates, two of the major contemporary sources that we have about Hypatia, fail to do her extraordinary life justice, concentrating instead on her tragic ending. While Damascius focuses on her murder as a means to criticise the church, Socrates only mentions her life briefly, choosing to present her death as the climax of the religious and political struggle in Alexandria.

This utilising of Hypatia and her murder as a symbol for other causes has continued for centuries, notably in the midst of the Enlightenment. At a time when the leading thinkers of the movement were criticising the Catholic Church, Hypatia was transformed into a figure of opposition against Catholicism, a beautiful and wise philosopher who met an untimely death at the hands of fervent Christians.

English historian Edward Gibbon vilified Cyril in his work The Decline And Fall Of The Roman Empire, arguing that "the murder of Hypatia has imprinted an indelible stain on the character and religion of Cyril of Alexandria". His contemporary, French writer Voltaire, depicted Hypatia's death as the moment when rational thinking in the ancient world was extinguished as a result of ignorance and religious intolerance at the hands of the clergy.

The anti-Catholic rhetoric continued with Charles Kingsley, an English clergyman, historian and novelist. In his romantic novel, Hypatia Or New Foes With An Old Face, which was published in 1853, Kingsley depicts Cyril and the church as corrupt, mirroring his views on the Catholic church in his own time while providing a rather erotic version of Hypatia, emphasising her beauty, helplessness and youth - Kingsley's Hypatia is only in her twenties when in reality she was at least in her forties when she died. Her death in the novel comes at the hands of a fanatical and ignorant Christian mob, and for Kingsley it signals the end of Hellenism.

As an intellectual woman who lived in a patriarchal society, from the 20th century onwards Hypatia became an icon for the women's rights movement and a martyr for feminism. She is depicted in various pieces of art, she is the heroine of numerous novels and plays, and the academic journal, Hypatia: A Journal Of Feminist Philosophy, was named after her. There's even a lunar crater that bears her name. A biopic of Hypatia's life, Agora, starring Rachel Weisz as the philosopher, was released in 2009 but is full of historical inaccuracies, further perpetuating incorrect details about her extraordinary life.

With all these different depictions of Hypatia, it's no wonder that we find it difficult to know who she really was. A lack of reliable evidence has meant that many people, such as Socrates, Gibbon and Kingsley, have spoken for her rather than attempting to offer us the true Hypatia. Her intelligence, reputation and gender not only made Hypatia vulnerable in her own lifetime, but they have also been used to turn her into a martyr for philosophy, paganism, Hellenism, feminism and rational thinking, just to name a few. But she deserves to be more than a symbol and there is one thing that we know for sure - if Cyril did plot her murder then his effort was in vain because Hypatia has completely eclipsed him in history.
WHO WERE JAPAN’S LADY SAMURAI?

We delve into Japanese history to reveal the so-called onna bugeisha - fearsome, skilled female warriors who took to the battlefield

Written by Dr Nyri A Bakkalian
War and combat is not the province of men alone. Throughout history, regardless of gender, women have survived war and been combatants. And while many of the household names in Japanese military history are male, women have always been part of Japanese warfare, despite their frequent erasure from popular history. The common term one often encounters today for women combatants in Japanese history is onna bugeisha, which we’ll translate here as ‘women martial artists’.

Who were these women, and how do their stories fit into the broader story of pre-modern Japanese military history? If we’re to seek out these stories, we need to be mindful of where and how to search. And we need to seek out women’s stories on their own terms, rather than as an extension of the men. In the opening words of the first issue of early feminist magazine *Setto (Bluestocking)* in 1911, author and activist Hiratsuka Raicho (1886-1971) famously wrote, “In the beginning, woman was the sun.” She was evoking the image of the sun goddess Amaterasu as she explained the magazine’s aims of helping reclaim the inner ‘light’ of women’s independence in an era that was seeking to force women into the role of “good wife, wise mother”. Seeking the story of women at war in pre-modern Japanese history is, to this writer, one way of seeking out that light.

The first thing to bear in mind with the term onna bugeisha is that it’s a modern day catch-all term used more in non-Japanese writing than in Japanese writing. Martial arts, as they exist today as systematised schools of practice in which one can become licensed, have not always existed. If you search for ‘onna bugeisha’ online you’ll certainly find modern writing on some women, especially those in the Edo period who were notable practitioners of their martial arts. Chiba Sanako (1838-96), part of the famed Chiba family of instructors in Hokushin Itto-ryu, is a good example of this. But to apply ‘bugeisha’ to people in Heian or Sengoku era warfare is a bit of a stretch.

The term, as it tends to be used particularly in English, is looking not only at skill in systematised martial arts but more broadly at the histories of women at war. So where are these women ‘hiding’? We must try to think more broadly, to find more of their stories. Rather than bugeisha (martial artist), where there may or may not have been practical application, we
think it's worth approaching the subject of women combatants more broadly, whatever form that may take.

Some women combatants in Japanese history are particularly well known, even in English-language writing - they're likely to be the first ones you encounter if you do a little searching even in English. Tomoe Gozen (c.1157-c.1247) is at or near the top of that list. She was a combatant in her marriage to Minamoto no Yoritomo, the first Kamakura shogun, she also ensured her birth family's continued political influence in the shogunate for the rest of its existence. Several decades after her death, it was a Hojo regent Hojo Tokimune (1251-84) under whose leadership the Kamakura Shogunate rallied Japanese forces in their defence against the Mongol Empire's two attempted invasions of Kyushu.

But of course, Tomoe Gozen and Hojo Masako are far from the only women in Japanese military history. This writer's research into women at war in Japanese history only made headway because of a focus on, and drawing from sources in, local history. Bear in mind, the perspective of Japanese-language scholarship by Japanese scholars is going to be different from the work of a non-Japanese scholar using Japanese and English sources and writing in English. With that caveat, here is just a bit of what we have learned.

Some women combatants we learned about were at the top of the samurai caste - women who came from the families of daimyo and their highest retainers. Occasionally, especially when there were no other heirs to inherit a lineage, there were some among them who were, in effect, daimyo themselves, a position typically the preserve of men.

Two examples worth considering are Date Onami (1541-1602) who became castellan of Sukagawa after the death of her husband Nikaido Moriyoshi (1544-81), while Tachibana Ginchyo (1569-1602)
inherited the leadership of the house of Tachibana in Kyushu after her father Tachibana Dosetsu (1513-85) died without a male heir. Not all of those women went into battle themselves, but there were plenty of (male) daimyo who did not personally take to the field either. Being a regional governor of this sort did not require your engagement in battle.

Others were skilled politicians and teachers of men who have become household names. Katakura Kita (1538-1610), whose male relatives were senior vassals to the house of Date, was a well-read, well-trained, well-connected person, arguably better educated and prepared for leadership than many of the men she knew. She helped guide the clan’s policy and outside relations at Toyotomi Hideyoshi’s court in Kyoto, and ensured that the clan stayed on Hideyoshi’s good side amid the politicking and wars of the 1590s. Kita was also a wet nurse and first teacher in both literature and fighting arts to Date Masamune (1567-1636), the famed one-eyed xenophile warlord who founded the modern city of Sendai (now Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture). Kita thus had a critical role in building not only the clan’s future but also, by extension, the future of northern Honshu. There are many more women like her in the histories of any major clan of that era, with or without skill in handling deadly weapons.

Other women in premodern Japanese military history were not quite so high in the samurai caste, but nonetheless established reputations for themselves as skilled practitioners of the martial arts as well as combatants. In some parts of Japan in the Edo period, basic proficiency in the martial arts was expected from women born to the warrior caste. This is not something separate from the world that the samurai caste built and inhabited, but rather was part and parcel of it. Even in domains like the northern Aizu domain (modern Fukushima Prefecture), where women’s participation in politics was prohibited by law, women still pursued training in the martial arts. This was at the very least perfunctory, and for some, in greater depth. In times of emergency, they were some of the first on the scene in the castle town to ensure the protection of their community.

The Aizu women were another excellent example as they also famously put their training to practical application in the Boshin War of 1868-69. Nakano Takeko (1847-68), who like Chiba Sanako was a skilled and certified martial artist in peacetime, is Aizu’s most famous woman combatant. Her affiliation to the Aizu domain was by proxy, as she was from a family of Aizu vassals permanently assigned to the domain’s estates in Edo (now Tokyo). She joined the fighting outside the castle walls during the siege in 1868, dying in combat there. Yamamoto Yae (1845-1932) came from a family of gunnery instructors and was a skilled sharpshooter and artilleryman renowned for her physical strength even at a young age. She too took part in the fighting at the Aizu siege and was noted for her use of the Spencer cavalry carbine, a surplus weapon imported from the recently ended American Civil War. After the war, she went to Kyoto and devoted herself to the cause of women’s education. Later, Yae married Niihama Jo, an American-educated pastor, and together with him was a co-founder of Doshisha University, which still stands in Kyoto today.

Finally, there are those women about whom our historical picture is the most incomplete. One of them was a female

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**A WARRIOR’S WEAPON**

A closer look at the naginata

The naginata is believed to have been the preferred melee weapon for female warriors as it allowed them to use their centrifugal force to equalise any fight against stronger opponents.

The blade of a naginata could be up to one metre long and could also be mounted on a shorter handle to be used like a more traditional sword.

While this blade looks similar to that of a sword, the blade could also be much wider and curved, ideal as a cutting weapon to be swung around and used for middle-distance combat.
warrior in Kokura domain. We don't know her name for sure, nor do we know whether she was of samurai birth and what, if any, training she'd accrued in the martial arts. What we do know is that when Choshu troops took the northern Kyushu castle town of Kokura during the Second Choshu War in 1865, she was the only person the Choshu men found in the evacuated and torched town. This Shisetsu (1824-78). Again, our picture is incomplete, but in this case it was because she lived a wandering life. She was born in Kaga (modern-day Ishikawa Prefecture) and was actually an artist by training, specialising in a Chinese-influenced style of ink painting called nanga. Perhaps even more interestingly is our discovery that, in modern terms, she might be considered a member the Aizu, a place with which she had no prior affiliation? What prior experience did she have in handling a weapon, if any? These are worthy questions, and since she's never had more than a brief biography in various biographical dictionaries, Shisetsu is one historical figure whose story remains fascinating, and for which we will need to continue to search for further clues.

In short, the historicity of the term onna bugeisha notwithstanding, women combatants have always been part of military history, be it in Japan or anywhere in the world. Their place in the world of the samurai caste, in peacetime as well as at war, was integral. Their stories are there for the finding, if only we do due diligence in searching for them, especially in rich local histories and abundant local records. And in our search for these stories, it behooves us to ask why these tales seem to have been buried and why there are biases in both the source material as well as in modern interpretations of that source material. This, too, will help guide our further study and return these brave warriors to the place in history that they so clearly deserve.

She was the only person the Choshu men found in an evacuated and torched castle town”

A woman, who waited in the estate of a senior Kokura clan retainer, was armed with a sword. A Choshu rifle squad raked the building with gunfire before entering, and she killed at least one before being mortally wounded. One story has it that she looked the men in the eye before ending her life with her sword, denouncing them for their cowardice.

Another woman who took part in the battles of 1860s Japan was Koike LGBTQ community. But when the civil war of 1868 broke out, Shisetsu went north, taking part in the defence of Aizu alongside women like Nakano Takeko. Captured by the imperial army, she was released when it was discovered that she was not otherwise affiliated with the Aizu domain. Shisetsu went to Toyohashi, part of modern Aichi prefecture, and lived there for the rest of her life, continuing her work as an artist. Why did she go to

Above Tomoe Gozen depicted taking on military commander Wada Yoshimori

Above Tomoe Gozen defeats a Taira warrior during the Yoshinaka campaign

Above The legend of Empress Jingu tells the story of a warrior queen
The Dancer Who Toppled A King

Shocking audiences around the world with her provocative performances, Lola Montez and her lies caused chaos wherever she went

Written by Jessica Leggett

Beautiful. Manipulative. Salacious. These are just a handful of the words used to describe Lola Montez, the Irish woman who achieved international fame and notoriety thanks to her sensual performances and her fake identity as 'the Spanish dancer'.

Continuing her deception, she managed to become the mistress of King Ludwig I of Bavaria, an illicit relationship that helped trigger the downfall of his reign. So who exactly was the real Lola Montez and how did she bring down a king?

Born as Eliza Rosanna Gilbert in Ireland, 1821, she was the daughter of Edward Gilbert, a British army officer and Eliza Oliver, a milliner's assistant and the illegitimate daughter of Charles Silver Oliver, an MP and the former high sheriff of Cork. The family moved to India in 1823 but Edward succumbed to cholera shortly after their arrival, leaving behind his young wife and daughter.
The following year, the elder Eliza remarried and sent her daughter back to Britain to attend school and stay with relatives. When she was 16, the young Eliza defied her mother’s wishes for her to marry Sir Abraham Lumly, later described by Lola in her autobiography as “a rich and gouty rascal of 60 years”, instead eloping in Ireland with a young lieutenant named Thomas James. They moved to Calcutta, India, but the marriage disintegrated after five years - Lola would later comment that “runaway matches, like runaway horses, are almost sure to end in a smash-up”. When the divorce was granted, both parties were banned from remarrying while their former spouse was living.

Divorced and disowned by her family, Eliza seized the opportunity to reinvent herself and travelled to Spain to train as a dancer, assuming the guise of a widow of a Spanish nobleman. Adopting the stage name Lola Montez, she made her London debut at Her Majesty’s Theatre, Haymarket, in 1843, earning rapturous applause with her Spider Dance, swivelling her hips and lifting her skirts while stomping on plastic spiders. However, she was quickly recognised as ‘Mrs James’ and the story spread in the papers, causing a backlash. Lola wrote to the press to defend her ‘Spanish’ identity - which was, of course, a lie - but it was clear that her London career was over just as it was beginning.

Despite this setback, Lola built upon the scandal of her London appearance and went on tour the following year, performing in Munich, Warsaw, St Petersburg and Paris – where she apparently hurled her slipper at the audience from the stage after being booed by hecklers. Lola was not a talented dancer but she made up for it with her unshakable confidence and irrepressible sex appeal.

Making a name for herself as a dancer on the Continent, Lola came into contact with distinguished figures such as Tsar Nicholas I of Russia and George Sand, becoming well-known for her love of smoking and drinking and her fiery temper. She also had numerous affairs with notable men such as composer Franz Liszt and writer Alexandre Dumas, quickly gaining a reputation as a coquette.

Lola briefly became engaged to journalist Alexandre Dujarier, but he was killed one fateful night in a duel against another journalist, Jean-Baptiste Rosemond de Beauvalon. Just hours before, Lola and Dujarier had argued over her attendance at a party to which Dujarier subsequently arrived drunk, offending Beauvalon and sparking the duel. At the inquest into his death, Lola reportedly told the court that she was a better shot than her slain fiancé – in fact, she was said to have been good with a pistol, a whip and even a dagger.

Moving to Munich, Bavaria, in October 1846, Lola wanted to perform at the Stage Theatre but her request was declined by the director, who knew that his deeply Catholic Bavarian audience would not accept her. Angered by the rejection, Lola brazenly went to Residenz Palace, King Ludwig’s residence, and demanded an audience with him. Ludwig, who despite his marriage to Queen Therese was well known for his wandering eye, was instantly captivated by Lola - at 60 years old, he was almost four decades her senior. It’s rumoured that when they first met he asked Lola if her bosom was real, and in response she tore off her clothing to prove that it was.

Infatuated with her, Ludwig arranged for Lola’s debut at the Munich theatre as she wished, but it was a disaster as her provocative dancing outraged the Catholic audience - just as the director had predicted. Nonetheless, Ludwig’s obsession with the Spanish dancer had only just
The Dancer Who Toppled A King

Dance Like Everyone’s Watching

Travelling the world with her Spider Dance, Lola Montez’s provocative routine caused uproar.

After a scandalous marriage that ended in her husband’s mysterious death in 1851, Lola travelled to the US to start afresh. Here she performed on stage, starring in plays that depicted her controversial life in Bavaria and later introducing audiences to her dance that flirted with controversy: the Spider Dance.

Donning flesh-coloured tights, a short dress with multicoloured petticoats and with spiders made of cork dangling from her skirts, Lola danced, spun, writhed and stamped in an attempt to ‘throw off’ the spiders. It was a ridiculous sight, yet the show was a sell-out. Night after night, Lola performed her Spider Dance, her contortions appalling the prim ladies and tantalising the men. On 28 May 1853 the Daily Alta California wrote of Lola’s performance: “The Spider Dance is a very remarkable affair. It is thoroughly Spanish, certainly, and it cannot be denied that it is a most attractive performance. As a danseuse, Madame Lola is above mediocrity. Indeed, some parts of her execution were truly admirable.”

The inspiration behind Lola’s dance remains elusive – some believe the routine was inspired by the Italian tarantella, a dance that finds its roots in tarantism, an incurable dancing mania that was thought to be caused by the bite of a spider. Growing increasingly manic as the dance progresses, the victims would only recover after this long bout of frenzied dancing.

After appalling and entralling American audiences, in 1859 Lola took her dance to Australia to entertain workers from the gold mines. It proved unsuccessful and one year later she returned to the US, apparently opening her arms to God in her final days.

begun and they spent increasing amounts of time together, with the king writing passionate letters to her every day. The problem with this affair, however, was that it wasn’t just Lola’s beauty and sensuality that enchanted Ludwig. In The American Law Journal of 1848, it was reported that the king “became enamoured of her originality of character, her mental powers and those bold and novel political views which she fearlessly and frankly laid before him”. It was clear that the dancer wielded a lot of influence over her lover and his willingness to discuss state affairs with her, a liberal, was seen as a threat by his conservative government.

Not only did Lola’s political views clash with the conservative Bavarian court, but her arrogance and temper made her extremely unpopular across the country – it’s even said that she would use her whip on people in the streets. Lola was openly shunned in public as a disreputable woman and the growing disdain for her was blatant, although she did have some support from a group of university students who supported her liberalism.

Before long, Lola had earned herself the moniker ‘the uncrowned queen of Bavaria’ and Ludwig – who refused to hear any complaint against his mistress – gifted her with jewels, a monthly stipend and a mansion in Barenstraße. He even commissioned a portrait of her for his Gallery of Beauties. Meanwhile, when a story emerged in London’s The Pictorial Times about Lola’s true identity as an Irish divorcée, she denied it and sent letters to the major newspapers of London, Paris and parts of Germany with her ‘true’ biography. This included the following excerpt: "Sir, In consequence of the numerous reports circulated in various papers regarding myself and my family utterly void of foundation or truth... I was born at Seville in the year 1823. My father was a Spanish officer in the service of Don Carlos..."

It was completely fabricated, but Lola couldn’t risk the king discovering her deception and she argued that the stories in the press were part of a Jesuit conspiracy against her. The tense situation surrounding her relationship with the king worsened when it became clear that Lola not only wanted to become a naturalised Bavarian citizen, but she also wanted to be elevated to the nobility.

BELOW Lola’s outrageous dancing enthralled and shocked audiences.
In 1847 Ludwig announced his intention to name Lola as the Countess of Landsfeld, much to the horror of his government, who believed that the king's illicit relationship would destabilise the state. When Prime Minister Karl von Abel objected to Lola being made a countess, the king responded by firing him and his administration. Proceeding with the appointment, Ludwig also gave Lola an estate; feudal privileges and an annuity of 20,000 marks - roughly £5,000 - as well as making her a member of Queen Therese's personal order.

A blind eye had been turned to the king's infidelities over the years, but elevating his mistress to a noble rank was a step too far. When the professors of the university voiced their displeasure, Ludwig promptly dismissed them in February 1848. The students, now finding their loyalties increasingly divided as they watched the plight of their teachers, decided to protest outside Lola's mansion. Approaching her window to view the protesters, Lola raised a glass of champagne to them while eating a box of chocolates, which she then chucked at the mob below. After this incident, she encouraged the king to shut the university altogether - an ill-advised decision if ever there was one.

Infuriated, the students rioted in the streets and were quickly joined by other citizens who were sick of the king's unruly mistress. When Lola decided to venture out of the mansion, she was forced to take cover when she was attacked by the waiting protesters, with the king sending the police to rescue her - although, true to form, she managed to fire a few shots from her pistol over the demonstrators. Even the king's new government, which had been selected with Lola's help, resigned when he refused point-blank to renounce his mistress.

It wasn't until thousands of enraged protesters stood outside his palace that the king finally agreed to reopen the university and, reluctantly, give up his beloved Lola. She was whisked away to Switzerland in the middle of the night, but too much damage had been done to the king's reputation. The unrest in Bavaria coincided with the republican revolutions that were sweeping through Europe that year and soon a revolt had gripped the country. This unrest worsened when it
was discovered that Lola had returned to Munich uninvited shortly after she had been expelled. Backed into a corner, Ludwig was forced to abdicate his throne in favour of his son, Maximilian, on 20 March 1848.

Despite losing his throne Ludwig remained hopeless besotted with Lola and continued to support her financially - until he heard that she'd taken other lovers while abroad. In one of his final letters to her, he said, “It is not your enemies who have made me change my feelings for you but your conduct. You always look outside for motives for what happens to you, but you must look inside.” Lola was furious about the end of their relationship and threatened to publish the intimate letters he'd written to her, although she never did.

 Forced to start over, Lola travelled first to France and then to London in late-1848, where she quickly married George Trafford Heald, a young, wealthy English cavalry officer. But their newly wedded bliss soon encountered trouble when Heald's relatives uncovered Lola's true identity and had her charged with bigamy, since her first husband, Thomas James, was still alive. Lola and Heald fled Spain, but their tumultuous relationship came to an abrupt end when Heald allegedly drowned just two years later.

Sailing to New York in 1851, Lola started afresh in the United States, performing in Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans and San Francisco over the next two years. She also embarked on an acting career and starred in a play written specifically for her. Lola

Montez In Bavaria, which was both a humorous but censored version of what had really occurred. Nonetheless, Lola proved a hit with audiences.

In July 1853 she married her third husband, newspaperman Patrick Hull, and they moved to Grass Valley, California - but once again her marriage quickly fell apart. According to one story, the doctor who was named by Hull as a co-respondent in the divorce suit was found shot dead shortly after. Remaining in Grass Valley for the next two years, Lola hired a young actor, Noel Follin, as her manager before embarking on a tour of Australia, where she found herself entertaining miners during the height of the gold rush.

After her first performance Lola received some positive reviews, with the critic for Bell's Life In Sydney And Sporting Reviewer stating, “Her entrée was modest and elegant, and throughout the long performance she played with a mingled fervour, grace, playfulness and pathos that fully gained the favour of all.” However, the criticisms quickly returned when she performed her Spider Dance at the Theatre Royal, Melbourne, in September 1855, lifting her skirts so high that the audience could see that she had no underwear on. A critic at The Argus newspaper described her performance as “utterly subversive to all ideas of public morality.”

Her notoriety deepened in February 1856 when she attacked the editor of The Ballarat Times, Henry Seekamp, with her whip after reading a bad review of her performance. He retaliated and sued her for assault, while she sued him for slander. Both cases failed but Lola's solicitor then successfully sued him for libel, and he eventually sold the newspaper and left. Just two months later, she was asked to perform an encore after her Spider Dance at Castlemaine in front of 400 miners, but she aggravated the audience when she insulted them after some mild heckling.

Lola returned to the United States that May but on the way, Follin was mysteriously lost overboard - just another unexplained death associated with her.

“The Lola was openly shunned in public as a disreputable woman and the growing disdain for her was blatant”

After failing in her attempts to revive her career, Lola started delivering moral lectures written by Reverend Charles Chauncy Burr. She also published several texts including her autobiography, which unsurprisingly painted her in a favourable light. By 1860 syphilis had ravaged her body, and as her health declined it was said she repented the transgressions of her life. When she died aged 39 on 17 January 1861, the Sacramento Daily Union wrote that she'd spent her last days taking “refuge in the consolation of the Christian faith”. Her headstone bore the name ‘Mrs Eliza Gilbert’.

Becoming one of the most famous women of the 19th century, Lola was the embodiment of a ‘bad woman’ who young Victorian girls were warned never aspire to. Throughout her life Lola had both scandalised and delighted audiences around the world, contributed to the fall of a king and peddled so many myths about herself that it’s impossible to know the whole truth about her - and so remains just as fascinating and mystifying in death as she was in life.
Gertnude Stein
Queen of the Salon

Having moved to Paris in 1903, Stein’s home became a Mecca for aspiring artists and intellectuals in the early 20th century, helping to guide some of the most influential innovators of the era.

Written by Roy Morris Jr
n the decades bracketing World War I, Paris was the centre of the literary/artistic world, and the epicentre of that world was a two-storey apartment on the city’s Left Bank near the Luxembourg Gardens. There, at 27 rue de Fleurus, American expatriate Gertrude Stein reigned supreme, assisted by her longtime companion Alice Toklas. The two physically mismatched women made a formidable team. Logcious, heavyset Stein held forth from her favoured chair beside the fireplace, while watchful, diminutive Toklas controlled access to Stein and made conversation at the opposite end of the room with the wives and girlfriends of the various artists and writers who flocked to the couple’s Saturday night salons. For more than two decades, chez Stein was the place to be.

Part of the attraction, besides the good food and lively conversation, was the remarkable collection of Modernist paintings that Gertrude and her brother Leo had acquired during a decade of living together in Paris. Leo had arrived first, in 1902, intent on becoming a painter himself. Gertrude followed a year later after dropping out of Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore in the wake of an unrequited love affair with a beautiful young woman. On the short, winding rue de Fleurus the siblings shared a four-room apartment, two rooms above, two below, with a detached courtyard studio for Leo. They began scouring Paris for painters to champion.

With the help of an $8,000 windfall from their late father’s estate they purchased a few small paintings by Paul Cézanne at art dealer Ambroise Vollard’s gallery on the rue Laffitte. Then, at a show introducing the Fauves, the revolutionary “wild beasts” of French painting, they came across Henri Matisse’s much-derided portrait of his wife, Amelie, Woman with a Hat. Leo considered the portrait “the nastiest smear of paint I have ever seen”, but Gertrude pools of eyes” attracted their particular attention. His name was Pablo Picasso. Leo had discovered the 24-year-old Picasso’s work at a gallery on the rue Laffitte. He and Gertrude disagreed about Picasso’s merits, if not his burning black eyes, which Leo called “extraordinary seeing... I used to say that when Picasso had looked at a drawing or a print, I was surprised that anything was left on the paper, so absorbing was his gaze”. Leo was drawn to Picasso’s painting of a nude, barely pubescent young girl holding a bouquet of red flowers. Gertrude, for her part, found the painting “rather appalling”. She said the girl’s feet reminded her of a monkey’s. Gallery owner Clowis Saget, a former circus clown, jokingly suggested that “if you do not like the legs and feet it is very easy to guillotine her and only keep the head”. Fortunately, Leo ignored the suggestion and took the intact painting home.

The Steins began hosting regular Saturday night dinners to show off their finds. All sorts of people came: artists, writers, composers, photographers, journalists, art dealers, collectors, students – even minor European royalty. “The Steins,” said Ambroise Vollard, “were the most hospitable people in the world.” Dinners were prepared by a succession of cooks, including Gertrude’s favourite, a stolid, good-natured Norman named Helene. Leo

“All sorts of people came: artists, writers, composers, photographers, journalists, art dealers, collectors, students – even minor European royalty”

An up-and-coming young Spanish painter described by Gertrude as “a good-looking bootblack with big pools of eyes” attracted their particular attention. His name was Pablo Picasso. Leo had discovered the 24-year-old Picasso’s work at a gallery on the rue Laffitte. He and Gertrude disagreed about Picasso’s merits, if not his burning black eyes, which Leo called “extraordinary seeing... I used to say that when Picasso had looked at a drawing or a print, I was surprised that anything was left on the paper, so absorbing was his gaze”. Leo was drawn to Picasso’s painting of a nude, barely pubescent young girl holding a bouquet of red flowers. Gertrude, for her part, found the painting “rather appalling”. She said the girl’s feet reminded her of a monkey’s. Gallery owner Clowis Saget, a former circus clown, jokingly led the after-dinner discussions, which could grow quite heated. He was a persuasive speaker – he called himself “an explainer” – and a gifted mimic. His imitation of famed dancer Isadora Duncan, a childhood neighbour in Oakland, California, was a particular showstopper. Gertrude at first was content to listen, tucking her legs under her chair while Leo paced about holding forth. She looked, someone said, like Buddha, hands folded quietly in her lap. In time, their roles would change.

Leo’s initial enthusiasm for Picasso ebbed, to the point that the painter demanded to know, “Why don’t you like my painting?” On another occasion, the Spaniard fired back at the overly critical Leo: “You have no right to judge. I’m an artist and you are not.” Gertrude, who had grown fond of Picasso as both a person and an artist, defended his work. She found his painting similar to what she was trying to achieve with her writing: a piling on of unexpected effects to evoke complex emotions. Picasso showed his appreciation by painting Gertrude’s portrait in 1906. The portrait, done mostly in browns, gave her mismatched eyes, an elongated nose and a severe slash of a mouth that scarcely resembled her rosebud-shaped lips. Leo deemed the painting “as a whole incoherent”, but Gertrude loved it. “For me,” she wrote, “it is I, and it is the only reproduction of me which is always, I.” When visitors remarked to Picasso that Gertrude did not look much like his portrait of her, he simply shrugged and said, “She will.”

Increasingly Gertrude and Leo quarrelled, and in April 1914 he moved out of their Paris apartment and decamped to Florence, Italy, with his mistress. He fired a parting shot at Gertrude and Picasso, saying they were “turning out the most Godalmighty rubbish that is to be found”. He and Gertrude would never speak again. Gertrude wasn’t bothered by Leo’s departure. She was the true genius in the family, she said, not him. Besides, she had Leo’s replacement already on hand in the person of tiny, indefatigable Toklas. Toklas was a native of San Francisco - her
The Court of Queen Gertrude

Some of the famous faces that passed through Stein's salon

NAME: Pablo Picasso
DATES: 25 Oct 1881 - 8 April 1973
PROFESSION: Artist, poet, playwright
The Stein family were early supporters of Picasso's work and he painted a portrait of Gertrude in 1906 that would hang in her salon in Paris years later. He co-founded the Cubist movement and is one of the most famous painters of the 20th century.

NAME: Ernest Hemingway
DATES: 21 July 1899 - 2 July 1961
PROFESSION: Author, journalist
Stein was Hemingway's mentor when he lived in Paris, helping the ambitious young author to meet other like-minded writers and artists. She was even made godmother to Hemingway's son Jack. However, they fell out in later years.

NAME: F Scott Fitzgerald
DATES: 24 Sep 1896 - 21 Dec 1940
PROFESSION: Author
One of the great writers of the Lost Generation (a term Stein helped coin) of the 1920s, Fitzgerald is best known for his book The Great Gatsby, which Stein expressed her appreciation of in letters to Fitzgerald in 1925. He was also close friends with Hemingway.

NAME: Sinclair Lewis
DATES: 7 Feb 1885 - 10 Jan 1951
PROFESSION: Author, playwright
The author of dozens of novels and short stories, his greatest claim to fame is as the first writer from the United States to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, which he was handed in 1930 with special mention for his satire Babbitt.

NAME: Élisabeth de Gramont
DATES: 23 April 1875 - 6 Dec 1954
PROFESSION: Author
A staunch supporter of socialism and feminism, De Gramont had grown up a wealthy aristocrat. As well as her several books written between 1930 and 1940, De Gramont is known for her ground-breaking ‘marriage contract’ with her partner, playwright Natalie Barney.

NAME: Henri Matisse
DATES: 31 Dec 1869 - 3 Nov 1954
PROFESSION: Artist
Having been critically panned, it was the support of the Steins (who bought Woman with a Hat) that encouraged Matisse to push forward with his revolutionary style. Likewise, it was the Matisse works hanging in the salon that drew new visitors to the residence.
grandfather was an original Forty-Niner - and she had met Gertrude's younger brother Michael and his wife, Sarah, when they visited the city in 1906. On a courtesy call to the Steins' Paris home on September 8, 1907, her first day in Paris, Toklas met Gertrude. Bells went off inside her head. "Only three times in my life have I met a genius," Toklas would recall, "and each time a bell within me rang." (The other two geniuses she cited were Picasso and English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead.) At her first dinner party at the rue de Fleurus, Toklas met Picasso and Matisse. Picasso asked her, in all seriousness, if she thought he looked like Abraham Lincoln. She did not.

Toklas diligently assumed a variety of roles: hostess, housekeeper, gardener, cook, typist, editor, publisher, manager, accountant, nursemaid, travelling companion, debate partner and friend. It would be a lifelong commitment. With Leo gone, Gertrude focused increasingly on her writing. She had published the more or less conventional Three Stories in 1909 and a radically experimental book of poetry, Tender Buttons, five years later. She was currently working on a 1,000-page novel, The Making of Americans. With Toklas’s help, Gertrude maintained a regular, if chaotic, writing schedule. She liked to write late at night, after the day's distractions had ended. She wrote by hand, four or five lines per page in a blue French student notebook. She would drop the pages on the floor, and Toklas would tiptoe in and retrieve them the next morning while Gertrude slept. When the author arose - never before noon - she would read over the typescript Alice had prepared of "the daily miracle". She was routinely surprised by what she had written the night before. For Toklas it was heavenly, "like living history - I hoped it would go on forever."

The outbreak of World War I interrupted both the Saturday night salons and the late-night writing sessions. Stein and Toklas volunteered as drivers for the American Fund for French Wounded, delivering supplies to military hospitals throughout western France. They were later decorated by the French government for their service. After the war they returned to Paris and resumed their dinners. Anglo-American writers, many recruited through fellow American Sylvia Beach's Left Bank bookstore, Shakespeare and Company, increasingly replaced French and Spanish painters at their salons. Among those who came to call were such famous or soon-to-be-famous authors as Ernest Hemingway, F Scott Fitzgerald, TS Eliot, Ezra Pound, Sherwood Anderson, Sinclair Lewis, William Carlos Williams, Djuna Barnes, Edith Sitwell and Ford Madox Ford.

Hemingway began dropping by regularly to see Stein. She thought he showed promise but deemed one of his early short stories inaccrachable, a painting term meaning that a work is too salacious to be displayed in public. She also dismissed his inevitable coming-of-age novel as pedestrian. "There is a great deal of description in this, and not particularly good description," she instructed. "Begin over again and concentrate." Her most salient piece of advice was that Hemingway quit working as a journalist and focus on his fiction writing. He listened closely to her advice.

"Without question, the writer Stein liked best was F Scott Fitzgerald."

He and his wife, Hadley, first called on Stein and Toklas in the spring of 1922. He was European correspondent for the Toronto Star, but was eager to discuss fiction writing with Stein and look at her collection of paintings (he was particularly drawn to Cézanne’s works). Stein liked the handsome Hemingway at once. But Toklas did not. She spent most of her time talking to Hadley, who like many of Stein’s Baltimore friends had attended Bryn Mawr (Stein had attended Radcliffe).
Themes of the Lost Generation
What did these artists have in common?

EXISTENTIALISM
After WWII, young thinkers reexamined the philosophies and values that seemed to have lead to the conflict. This in turn lead to a great deal of self-examination and reflection on personal identity, as explored by writers like Hemingway.

SURREALISM
Explored mostly through art, a more fluid sense of self and lack of grounding in a common world view helped inspire artists to represent the absurdity of the world in new and creative ways, such as Picasso’s Cubism.

DISILLUSSIONMENT

LOST GENERATION

LOSS OF IDENTITY

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT FUTURE

ANTI-MATERIALISM
While the Lost Generation was seen as somewhat nihilistic and driven by the pursuit of pleasure, it was also quite dismissive of wealth and material gain. Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby is a good example of this.

but did not find him amusing. She said he was a village explainer, excellent if you were a village, but if you were not, not.” Hemingway, too, fell out of favour after he cruelly mocked Stein and their mutual friend Anderson in his first novel, The Torrents of Spring, a blatant parody of Anderson’s Dark Laughter intended to get Hemingway out of his contract with his publisher, Boni & Liveright. Stein was furious on Anderson’s behalf and Hemingway, perhaps embarrassed, stopped visiting. It would be years before they spoke again.

To escape the Paris heat and literary infighting, in 1928 Stein and Toklas rented a farmhouse in the southeastern French village of Bilignin. There, in the autumn of 1932, on a whim, Stein dashed off a fictionalised memoir allegedly written by Toklas, The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas. The uncharacteristically lucid and accessible book was filled with reminiscences about their time in Paris. Most of the memories were warm ones, but Stein took Hemingway to task for his apostasy, calling him “yellow” and claiming that she and Anderson were both “a little proud and a little ashamed” of their former pupil, “who does it without understanding it”. Toklas wouldn’t go that far: Hemingway, she said, was “a rotten pupil”.

As the Twenties gave way to the Thirties, Stein and Toklas began spending more and more time at their country home. Toklas concentrated on the gardens and kitchen and Stein oversaw things from her second-floor balcony. People still came to see them, but now it was singly, not in a crowd. In the wake of the surprise runaway success of The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, they toured the United States for six months in 1934-35, enjoying a homecoming after 30 years abroad. Three years later they were forced to move out of their Paris apartment to make way for the landlord’s recently married son. They found a new apartment at 5 rue Christine, but it was not the same. The magic of 27 rue de Fleurus could not be recreated.

After weathering World War II in the French village of Culoz, Stein and Toklas returned to Paris in late 1945. They hoped to pay a return visit to the United States, but it was not to be. Stein died in Paris on July 27, 1946, following a failed operation for stomach cancer. Her final words, like much she said or wrote during her life, entered into legend. “What is the answer?” she murmured while going under anaesthesia. Getting no reply, she demanded, “In that case, what is the question?” Toklas, sitting at her bedside, made no response.

Today, no one can think of Paris in the Twenties without thinking of Stein, Toklas and their legendary salon at 27 rue de Fleurus. “Paris,” wrote Stein, “was where the 20th century was.” It was certainly where many of the most famous writers and artists of that century came to break bread, argue over style and exchange gossip with their voluble hostess and her ever-restrained companion. In a way, Toklas got her long-ago wish: entrenched in the sepia-tinted legend of Paris and the Lost Generation, she and Stein show every sign of going on forever.
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