NAPOLEON’S WATERLOO

From prison break to war with Wellington, inside the exiled emperor’s last stand
1:72

**WWII TROOPS**

**OPPOSING FORCES**

- German Infantry
- British 8th Army
- Afrika Korps
- U.S. Marines
- U.S. Paratroopers
- British Infantry

**A00705**

- German Infantry

**A00709**

- British 8th Army

**A00711**

- Afrika Korps

**A00716**

- U.S. Paratroopers

**A00751**

- British Infantry

**A00763**

- U.S. Marines

Welcome

“He is a bad general and the English are breakfast!”

Napoleon is supposed to have proclaimed of the duke of Wellington’s chances on the morning of Waterloo while eating off silver plates and studying his battle plans. In just a few hours he would be eating his words.

With hindsight, Napoleon’s desire to come out of exile and reclaim his throne might seem like madness but you have to remember that he had beaten worse odds. He successfully rose from the rank of corporal to become ruler of France’s first empire. He lost to Nelson at Trafalgar in 1805 but still went on to conquer most of Europe. His failed invasion of Russia in 1812 may have led to his downfall but it took the combined efforts of 13 nations - commanding an army of over 1 million men – another two years to make him surrender.

With that in mind, you can see why the so-called ‘Nightmare of Europe’ might have perhaps overestimated his abilities.

This issue, historian Charles J Esdaile (author of Napoleon’s Wars) reveals how Boney escaped from the island of Elba, marched on Paris and returned to power for just over 100 days. Explore how the erstwhile emperor convinced the French to take him back and where he went wrong at Waterloo from page 30 onwards.

**Editor’s picks**

- Barbary Coast pirates: Discover the truth about the infamous corsairs that terrorised the High Seas not to steal booty, but to feed the Ottoman Empire’s slave trade.
- Trailblazing women: Jason Porath, creator of the popular Rejected Princesses blog and books, reveals some of the women too awesome or awful for the Disney movie treatment.
- ‘Project China’: Discover 16th-century Spain’s secret plan to conquer Ming Dynasty China and whether or not the conquistadors could have pulled it off in this month’s What If.

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The dazzling interior of a space shuttle’s external tank could almost look like a glowing star were it not for the two NASA technicians inspecting it. A masterpiece of engineering from 33 years ago, this fuel tank would carry over 1,800,000 litres of propellant needed to get the shuttle off the ground before being jettisoned once the astronauts were approximately 113 kilometres (70 miles) above the Earth. 1985
Police keep back a crowd of young fans outside Buckingham Palace as the Beatles receive their Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) medals from the Queen. Not everyone thought that they deserved the accolades and several previous honorees returned their decorations in protest. For example, Colonel Frederick Weig sent back 12 medals he had earned fighting in both World Wars and resigned from the governing Labour Party in disgust. 1965
EVERYTHING IS ILLUMINATED

Pablo Picasso experiments with a light pen at his home in Vallauris, France, drawing the outlines of centaurs, Greek profiles, his signature and more. The shimmering figures would have only lasted a few seconds but this shot was captured forever by photographer Gjon Mili. Picasso is best known as a Cubist painter but the creative genius also turned his hands to many other mediums, including sculpture, printmaking and even poetry.
While people had enjoyed watching silent open-air movies before, it took an auto-parts salesman, Richard Hollingshead, to realise that Americans would enjoy watching them in the comfort of their cars. Hollingshead opened the first drive-in in 1933 but it didn't really take off until the advent of in-car speakers in the 1940s. At its peak in 1958, there were 4,063 drive-ins in the US and there are still 324 operating today.
“There was a laughing Devil in his sneer. That raised emotions both of rage and fear”

The Corsair, Byron

THE BARBARY COAST

Explore North Africa’s notorious den of pirates that terrorised the high seas raiding ships and taking slaves

Explore a Barbary galiot

Cross swords with a corsair

How to raid a ship

Pirate kings and queens

Written by David Crookes, Jessica Leggett, Jack Purser

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THE BARBARY COAST — Rise and fall of the Barbary Coast

Discover how the corsairs came to rule the waves - but only with the support of the Ottoman Empire.

RALLY AGAINST THE RECONQUISTA
Ottoanian sultan Bayezid II encourages Kemal Reis and other privateers to establish themselves in the Barbary ports, so they can support the Iberian Moors being forced out by Christian forces.

BARBAROSSA BEGINS
Oruc Barbarossa captures two papal warships off the coast of Tuscany, establishing the Barbary pirates as a serious threat and shocking Christendom.

CAPTURE OF ALGIERS
Oruc and his brother Hayreddin liberate Algiers from Spain, killing the local ruler Saim al-Tuni for conspiring on behalf of Holy Roman Emperor Charles V. As well, Oruc rules Algiers until his death in 1518.

MAN THE BARRICADES
Franco-Ottoman Alliance
King Francis I allies with Suleiman the Magnificent against the Holy Roman Empire. Charles V.

RECONQUISTA
Oruc Barbarossa rules Algiers until his death in 1518. Hayreddin rules Algiers and other privateers to establish themselves in the Barbary ports.

THE SLAVE'S LOT
Europeans are enslaved by Barbary pirates from 1500 to 1700.

WESTERN EUROPE ATTACKED
Partly due to the coastal populations of the Mediterranean being greatly depleted and the rise of the 'Salé Rovers' on the Atlantic, England, Ireland and even Iceland are targeted by Barbary pirates.

THE EXPULSION OF THE MORISCOS
Philip III expels the Moriscos from Spain. Many settle in the Barbary ports, so they can support the Iberian Moors being forced out by Christian forces.

TURNING TURK
After making peace with the Spanish, James I of England bans privateering, prompting many English sailors to turn to outright piracy operating out of the Barbary ports.

RENEGADE PIRATES
A list of 35 privateer captains operating out of the Algiers shows how varied their nationalities are.

TAKING BACK TUNIS
Alex, the US Navy to from the Turkish empire. Ending 313 years of Barbary Wars unfeel.

BATTLE OF PREVEZA
Despite being heavily outnumbered, Hayreddin defeats Ottoman-occupied Turkish forces. The Ottoman Navy is crushed by the combined power of British, French and Russian fleets. France invades Algiers to 'protect' President Algerian leader.

ENGLAND STRIKES BACK
Oliver Cromwell’s ‘General at Sea’ Robert Blake is sent the Mediterranean to get compensation from the Barbary states. When Tunis refuses, Blake destroys their squadron off the coast of Porto Farina.

US PAYS PROTECTION
The amount the United States pays to Morocco and Algiers in 1833. 130 US warships are captured by Barbary pirates.

BARBARY WARS
Unwilling to pay further tributes, Thomas Jefferson sends the US Navy to war against Tunis, Algiers and Tripoli, which ultimately secures fair passage for American vessels.

BOMBARDMENT OF ALGIERS
An Anglo-Dutch fleet lays siege to Algiers until the Algerian leader signs a treaty agreeing to no longer enslave Europeans. 1,200 slaves are freed but the corsairs remain a menace.

BATTLE OF NAVARINO
The Ottoman Navy is crushed by the combined power of British, French and Russian fleets. Greece during its war of independence against the Ottoman empire.

ALGIERS CONQUERED
France invades Algiers before formally annexing it, ending 133 years of Ottoman rule in the territory. Slavery continues in the Ottoman Empire until 1832, but declines on the Barbary Coast.
The Barbary Coast

Barbary Corsairs

Barbary corsairs used a variety of ships to prey on enemy vessels sailing across the Mediterranean. One of the most popular was the galiot, a small galley boat that was primarily propelled by oars but also had a sail. It could be rowed with great speed, which allowed the pirates to get in and out quickly during raids as well as easily chase enemy vessels sailing across the Mediterranean. Of summer as they sat quite low, making them susceptible to taking in water in rough seas.

Great numbers
As a hugely popular ship, the Barbary pirates had many galiots. According to sources, as many as 50 galiots - and several other larger galleys - were based in Algiers during the mid-16th century. From there, they would travel towards the Baisic Islands or the Strait of Gibraltar in search of vessels to prey on.

Single mast
The Barbary galiots had a single mast and these were fitted at an angle with a large triangular sail set on a long yard. The benefit of such a lateen rig was to allow the craft to sail at speed close into the wind but they were never used in combat. Nearly all vessels were lashed rigged after 1500 as Ottoman shipbuilders adopted the design and construction methods of the Portuguese.

Serious firepower
A large gun was mounted at the centre of the ship’s bow and it would have fired cannonballs of between 3.4 and 11.8 kilograms. These would typically have been blasted at the hull of the enemy craft, causing extreme damage. The pirates would then be in a position to seize the ship, its crew and any loot on board.

Swivel shooters
The Barbary galiots had a platform at their bow on which swivel-mounted shooters were placed. Ranging from two to ten per ship and firing either 450-gram balls or bags of shrapnel, these guns were for targeting enemy personnel on the deck of an opposing ship, clearing the way for the pirates to board.

Slave-powered rowing
To operate the galiot, the ‘alla scaloccio’ system was used. It meant that two powers were placed on each oar and it came with the benefit of not needing to find lots of well-trained oarsmen. That’s because only the inbound oarsmen - the ones who guided the stroke - needed to be skilled. The others, who would have been slaves, only had to be strong and provide extra power.

Keeping it clean
The pirates would ensure their vessel was well maintained by clearing the lower hulls of barnacles and weeds and coating the body of the ship with a wax. This allowed it to better reach speeds of up to 15 kilometres an hour under sail and up to 22.5 kilometres an hour rowing.

Short length
There are no records of the exact size of a Barbary galiot, but Venetian shipbuilding sources suggest they were three metres wide and 27 metres in length, including the spur at the bow. As such, they were one-and-a-half times as long as a British double-decker bus (and roughly the same width). The vertical distance between the waterline and the bottom of the hull - the draft of the ship - was two metres.

Vital supplies
Given that the pirates would have been at sea for weeks, it was important that there were sufficient supplies on board, especially given the scorching hot weather. Barbary corsairs carried up to 1,800 gallons of water were taken on board and this would have lasted a crew of around 140 roughly 30 days. The pirates would have bases where they could gain extra refreshments, however.

Sitting low
The distance from the waterline to the upper deck of the ship was short, which meant the galiot was able to sit low in the water. This reduced the drag and weight of the craft, allowing it to move more quickly through the sea, but it also meant that Barbary galiots were not suitable for lengthy voyages in open water and the hull was rather cramped.

Numerous oars
Galiots were historically small galley ships - the type that are propelled mainly by rowing. To that end, they needed to have sets of oars and this particular type of ship had between 16 and 20 oars (although typically they had 18), all neatly lined up on both sides of the boat.

Inside History
Barbary Galiot

High-speed slave ship, 15th-17th century

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THE BARBARY COAST

TURBAN
MARK OF DISTINCTION

The corsairs wore turbans not only as a symbol of their religion, but also as a mark of distinction from the Christians. In particular, European renegades wore white turbans that indicated they were Muslim converts.

CURVED SWORD
CUTTING DOWN THE ENEMY

The most popular sword used by the Barbary corsairs was a type of scimitar called a kilij - a short sword with an acutely curved, single-edged blade. Its fixed blade was called a yatagan and significantly added to the sword's cutting power. The kilij also had a distinct T-shaped cross-section to the back of the blade, which added to the weapon's effectiveness without adding unwanted weight.

HIDDEN ARMOUR
JUST IN CASE

Depending on their rank or perhaps how cautious they were, a corsair might also have worn protective armour. This would have most likely have been a composite of mail with small plates covering the torso, which was frequently worn either under or sandwiched between layers of fabric.

OTTOMAN DRESS
TRADITIONAL CLOTHING

The corsairs had no formal uniform but would have worn the everyday apparel of the Maghreb, such as a collared vest or jacket, possibly with baggy salvar trousers. Due to the nature of their work, they would have likely tucked a weapon in their kusaksash and worn sturdy basmark boots rather than Ottoman slippers.

Where do you think you come from?

43% Europe West
31% Great Britain
12% Scandinavia
8% Iberian Peninsula
4% Italy/Greece

With one simple test, uncover the different places from your past, discover unknown relatives and find new details about your unique story.

Know your story. Buy now at Ancestrydna.co.uk
Barbary pirates were principally slave hunters and their aim was to kidnap people they could sell into the Ottoman slave trade. This gave them two targets: the coastline of Christian countries and unsuspecting ships. But as the 16th century went on, coastal towns around the Mediterranean became less populated and villages moved inland or highly fortified their homes to better defend themselves. This sent some pirates further afield, raiding Britain, Ireland and even Iceland. However, most privateers focused on raiding vessels at sea, where scarcity of victims was less of a problem as shipping continued to be big business.

### Easy targets

While the corsairs preferred to target merchant ships with large crews and lots of booty on board, they were not above capturing slave vessels. Some attacks were made on coastal villages, while others targeted the coastline of Christian countries and unsuspecting ships.

### Fighting for freedom

Many attack strategies were employed by the corsairs, and some fought back, hoping that the pirates would go in search of easier prey. However, most crews preferred to work alone or in small squadrons, as working together was a logistical challenge due to the need for food and water, which was often scarce.

### Mixed crew

A Barbary ship would be staffed by a combination of experienced seamen, janissaries supplied from a sultan’s own army and slaves to pull the oars. This mixed crew allowed the corsairs to be flexible in their tactics and adapt to different situations.

### Fire power

Galleys offered a speed advantage over lumbering merchant ships but they could only carry limited cannon power. Fortunately, janissaries came armed with weapons that worked just as well when fighting in close quarters.

### Seasonal work

During the winter months the Mediterranean is prone to storms, so Barbary corsairs only operated from mid-spring to late autumn, usually making their first forays in April. This was less of a problem as shipping continued to be big business.

### How to RAID A SHIP

#### BARBARY BATTLE TACTICS TO MAKE YOUR FORTUNE

**THE BARBARY COAST**

**MEDITERRANEAN, 15TH-19TH CENTURY**

#### WHAT YOU’LL NEED...

- **GALLEY**
- **CREW**
- **CANNONS**
- **SHACKLES**

#### HEAD TO THE HUNTING GROUNDS

The best place to find a merchant ship is on a trade route between the Mediterranean’s bustling ports. However, rather than target a vessel in open water, find a bottleneck where it can’t easily escape, such as the Strait of Messina. Tuck your galiot behind a headland so you can ambush the ship.

#### KEEP A LOOKOUT

Once you’re in position, you just need to wait for a potential victim to appear. This could be done by either posting a lookout to watch the horizon from the masthead or else from the high ground of an island lair. In 1544, when the Barbarossa brothers captured two papal galleys, they posted lookouts on the island of Elba.

#### FIRE A WARNING SHOT

Once a target is in your sights, you could fly false colours and dress as Christian seamen to get close to it. But once you’re in range the aim is to intimidate your victim so that they surrender without putting up a fight. Fire a warning shot across their decks with your guns while your crew yell abuse and bang drums.

#### BOARD THE SHIP

Once you’re alongside the vessel, send over a boarding party. Your janissaries should go across first as few seamen will be willing to battle these elite Ottoman soldiers hand-to-hand. While English and Dutch sailors are known to put up more of a fight, most boarding actions end quickly with the defenders throwing down their weapons.

#### CELEBRATE YOUR VICTORY

Depending on the value or size of your loot, you can either scuttle the captured ship or sail it back to port. In either case, make sure your return to Algiers or Tripoli is a triumphant affair. It’s tradition for successful raiders to fly flags and the guns in celebration when they return home, both to show off and to let slave traders know you’re looking to sell

#### KEEP A LOOKOUT

When you return to Algiers or Tripoli, be on the lookout for other corsair ships and prepare for conflict. The corsairs were fierce and ruthless, and they would not hesitate to attack other ships to gain their loot and slaves.

### 4 FAMOUS COASTAL ATTACKS

#### INVASION OF GOZO

Turgut Reis attacked Malta and Gozo, temporarily seizing the latter for himself before leaving with most of its population.

#### CORSICA

Napoleon’s birthplace was often raided by Barbary pirates like Turgut Reis, while his navigator nephew charted the island’s coastline.

#### ICELANDIC RAID

A series of raids led by European renegados including Murat Reis abducted over 400 Icelanders to sell in Salé and Algiers.

#### SACK OF BALTIMORE

Pirates returned to Ireland.
The US went to war with the Barbary States from 1801 to 1805 and then again in 1815 in an effort to curtail corsair attacks. The Battle of Derna was the decisive skirmish of the First Barbary War, led by Lieutenant William Eaton and Presley O'Bannon. Tasked with restoring a deposed pasha of Tripoli, Hamet Caramelli, in the belief that he would be more favourable to American ships, they trekked from Alexandria, Egypt, to Derna, in modern-day Libya. Though their success was undermined when the US signed a peace treaty that saw Caramelli removed again in return for hostages, the battle led to the line ‘To the shores of Tripoli’ being added to the Marine’s Hymn as well as the adoption of the Mameluke sword by the Corps.

Setting Up
On the day of the battle, the US warships Argus, Nautilus and Hornet all converged ready to launch the attack on Derna, with Nautilus anchoring close to the shore. Eaton had led his troops 800 kilometres through the North African desert to Derna, only to be refused entry by the governor—who tauntingly challenged Eaton to attack.

Communication
The ships opened up communication with each other to discuss their plan of attack. The night before, Eaton told Nautilus that he wanted to launch an offensive as soon as possible once the field artillery had been landed. Cover provided by the ships would be crucial to the success of the assault as the US Marines were outnumbered.

Logistical Problems
Eaton sent a message to the Marines on board Argus requesting that they land their field artillery as soon as possible, so that he could begin his march on the city. However, Argus struggled to land its guns on the shore and in the end only one arrived. To avoid wasting time, Eaton decided to continue with the assault regardless.

Begin the Attack
Once the field artillery was ready, Eaton ordered the start of the land offensive. In the meantime, the three ships took up their positions along the shore and began to fire heavily on the city. While all of this was happening, enemy fire rained down from the fort for around an hour, making it difficult for the United States to advance.

Taking Control
Using the ships’ heavy fire as cover, the American soldiers bravely charged towards the Berber fort. As the enemy fired in terror, members of Argus, including Lieutenant O’Bannon, ran inside and removed the native flag. In its place, they raised the Stars and Stripes and took control of the fort’s guns, which were primed and ready for immediate use thanks to the vacated Berbers who had been firing them beforehand.

Secure the Victory
The US forces managed to successfully capture both the city and the fort. They then sent in boats to deliver ammunition for the soldiers as well as to recover those Marines who were wounded and needed medical attention. Eaton left orders with the fort and he personally made his way to Derna in order to make sure that everything was organised, and that security had been arranged for the evening.

A War Hero
After ensuring that the city was secure, Eaton returned to one of the ships in order to receive medical attention himself. During the battle, he had been seriously injured when he was hit in the left wrist by a musket ball while leading the charge. Nevertheless, Eaton survived and he returned to his home country a hero along with O’Bannon and the rest of the troops.

Rest and Recuperate
With Derna firmly under the control of the United States after two hours of bloody fighting, it was time for the troops to rest and savour their victory. While the American forces ultimately suffered minimal losses, approximately 800 Tripolitans were killed by the end of the skirmish and 1,200 were wounded, with many more forcibly driven out of the city.
PIRATE KINGS AND QUEENS

The notorious corsairs who ruled the Barbary Coast's seas

HAYREDDIN BARBAROSSA

Along with his younger brother Hayreddin, Oruç was one of the founding fathers of the Barbary Coast. They captured the city of Algiers in 1516, executed its ruler, Selim bei Tumi, and expelled the Spanish. While the brothers received support from the Ottomans, after becoming the new governor of Algiers, Oruç was determined to remain independent of the sultan. In the following year, he destroyed a Spanish fleet of 20,000 soldiers but failed to capture the Spanish tributary cities in North Africa. He was killed at the hands of the Spanish in 1538 while fighting them at the city of Tlemcen.

Sayyida Al-Hurra

Nobody had more reason to despise the Spanish than the pirate queen of the Barbary Coast, Sayyida Al-Hurra. Originally from Granada, Sayyida and her family were forced to flee following the Reconquista in 1492. She married the governor of Tetouan, a family friend, and through him assumed a position of power. After his death, Sayyida inherited the position of governor and allied with Oruç Barbarossa to attack the Spanish and Portuguese—collectively they controlled the Mediterranean Sea. Sayyida remarried to the sultan of Morocco, Ahmad al-Wattasi, but famously refused to travel to Fez to marry him, instead insisting he come to her.

MURAT REIS THE ELDER

Murat Reis was one of the greatest captains of the Ottoman Navy. Having played a role in the fleets of Hayreddin Barbarossa and Dragut, he made a name for himself after he captured two treasure-filled galleys, along the shores of Tuscany in 1500. Five years later, he led the first expedition by Barbary pirates into the Atlantic Ocean, where he successfully肆tomed some of the Canary Islands, and he achieved the same again in 1507.

JOHN WARD

Captain John Ward was one of the most notorious pirates to have ever lived. Originally a fisherman, he became a privateer for Queen Elizabeth I, raiding Spanish ships. Losing his privateer’s license after the accession of King James I, John briefly returned to the fishing industry before turning to a life of piracy. Acquiring a ship with his men, many of whom were English or Dutch, he set up a base in Tunis and proceeded to capture and plunder merchant ships. He eventually converted from Christianity to Islam, adopting the name ‘Yusuf Rais,’ and he eventually enjoyed a wealthy retirement.

MULAI AHMED ER RAISUN

Mulai Ahmed er Raisuni is often referred to as ‘the black shadow’ because of his mysterious nature and his ability to evade capture. Born Jan Janszoon van Haarlem, Murat was a Dutch privateer like Murat Reis the Elder. He eventually abandoned piracy and settled in Marseilles, France, where he helped the French work against his former comrades. He is said to have been captured in Tunis and beheaded.

ORUC BARBAROSSA

Renowned as a military genius, Hayreddin forged a deeper relationship with the sultanate in return for men and equipment. After becoming the new governor of Algiers, he was determined to remain independent of the empire. The following year, he destroyed a Spanish fleet of 7000 soldiers but failed to capture the Spanish tributary cities in North Africa. He was killed at the hands of the Spanish in 1538 while fighting them at the city of Tlemcen.

DANZIGER

Despite the fact that piracy along the Barbary Coast ended during the 19th century, Mulai Ahmed er Raisuni is often referred to as the last corsair. Embracing knavery, he was both loved and feared in Morocco as he opposed the government and the sultan. He conducted a series of kidnappings, including the abduction of Queen Elizabeth I, raiding Spanish ships. Losing his privateer’s license after the accession of King James I, John briefly returned to the fishing industry before turning to a life of piracy. Acquiring a ship with his men, many of whom were English or Dutch, he set up a base in Tunis and proceeded to capture and plunder merchant ships. He eventually converted from Christianity to Islam, adopting the name ‘Yusuf Rais,’ and he eventually enjoyed a wealthy retirement.
The Barony Coast

HISTORY ANSWERS

What does 'Barbary' mean? Hannah Dielhof

While some people think that 'Barbary' refers to barbarians, it actually comes from the name of the Berber people. Imperial Berber dynasties like the Almoravids and Almohads ruled North Africa and much of Spain throughout the Middle Ages. However, after the confederation of Berber tribes splintered into separate nations, they increasingly relied on Ottoman support to fend off European attacks. Unfortunately for the Berbers, this assistance came at a cost and in just a few decades, the Ottoman Empire had annexed all of their states except Morocco.

Tariq ibn Ziyad, who conquered much of 8th-century Spain, may have been a Berber.

Barbary pirates

There were strict rules regarding how the profits from the sale of slaves, ships and cargo were distributed. Up to one-fifth went to the state, then fees were paid to custom officials, slave merchants and the upkeep of the port the pirates used. Half of what was left was then paid to the shipowner (who may well be the state again). The remainder was divided into several hundred shares, with 40 going to the captain, 10-20 to each officer, 3 per sailor and 1.5 per janissary. Bonuses were also paid to the sailor who first spotted the prize.

Did the pirates only trade in white slaves? James Luca

Ottoman slaves captured by Barbary corsairs could be black, brown or white, Catholic, Protestant, Orthodox, Jewish or Muslim. In fact, Turks were prized as oarsmen and rarely ransomed. There are many accounts of Christian captives converting to Islam but this did not mean they were free; only that they might be treated to manage other slaves. Many women held in harems would convert to the same religion and be freed to stay with their children, who were raised as Muslims.

How did Barbary pirates divide up their spoils? Megan Lowry

There were strict rules regarding how the profits from the sale of slaves, ships and cargo were distributed. Up to one-fifth went to the state, then fees were paid to custom officials, slave merchants and the upkeep of the port the pirates used. Half of what was left was then paid to the shipowner (who may well be the state again). The remainder was divided into several hundred shares, with 40 going to the captain, 10-20 to each officer, 3 per sailor and 1.5 per janissary. Bonuses were also paid to the sailor who first spotted the prize.

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Napoleon Bonaparte was a man whose vaulting ambition saw him conquer Europe - but it would also be his downfall. In just over 100 days, the 'Nightmare of Europe' would escape from prison with a small band of brothers and conquer France, prompting all the great powers of Europe to unite together to bring him down once and for all. Lasting from 1804 to 1814, Napoleon built an empire that covered vast swathes of the continent and by 1810 it was easier to list the regions he didn't dominate - Portugal, Sicily, Sardinia, and the British, Russian and Ottoman Empires. This was not bad for the 'Petit Corporal' from Corsica, who only secured a commission in the French artillery in 1787. Gifted with extraordinary tactical genius, he won a string of great victories that knocked both Austria and Piedmont out of the War of the First Coalition, Sunnijs success in Cairo fighting the Battle of the Pyramids in 1798, during a doomed attempt to conquer Egypt, cemented his reputation as one of Revolutionary France's greatest heroes. However, while Napoleon was enjoying these personal victories, France as a whole was struggling.
HIGHLIGHTS OF NAPOLEON’S RETURN TO POWER

**Battle of Waterloo**

While he was off gallivanting in Egypt, Austria and Russia had joined the War of the Seventh Coalition and had retaken Italy. It was clear that France needed a much stronger government than the one that had emerged from the bloody chaos of the Revolution. Seeking to fill the void, Napoleon, an extremely determined young man who had been dreaming of taking power for some time, set himself up as de facto dictator in November 1799. Over the next year, he remodelled France and forced all of its opponents to make peace. Through hostilities with Britain would resume in 1803, the next year he was rewarded by the tame political system he had created with the help of Emperor of the French.

Over the next few years, the French armies secured unprecedented success and the result was that France remained complicit. With their social position both respected and protected by the state, the privileged classes had no reason to oppose Napoleon, while the populace as a whole were mollified by a measure of economic prosperity. Additionally, though levels of conscription were still relatively low, they were not unreasonable. By 1807, the French Empire was greatly expanded. This included annexed to France and ruled directly from Paris, and satellite states that were often ruled by one of the emperor’s many relatives, such as Spain under his brother Joseph.

However, victory turned Napoleon’s head and he increasingly began to overhaul himself. As his desire for power changed, so did his demands for men and money. Meanwhile, all the powers of Europe were driven into a position in which they had no option but to fight him. The wars dragged on interminably with little sign of any sort of lasting peace. The elites and populace alike became increasingly unhappy with their emperor - and all the more so when a series of mistakes on the part of Napoleon precipitated a general economic crisis, which had terrible effects on living standards for ordinary people.

Beaten first in Russia in 1812 and then in Germany in 1813, the French were facing invasion by 1814. With his back to the wall, Napoleon fought bravely but the odds against him were just too high, while the system of conscription broke down in the face of a wholesale refusal to obey the regime or to implement its policies. Within weeks, it was all over. Napoleon was finally forced to surrender to his enemies on 6 April 1814.

In theory, this should have been the end of the story. Napoleon was exiled to the tiny Mediterranean island of Elba and given a position as its king, and the Bourbon monarchy was restored to France in the person of Louis XVIII. Meanwhile, the powers of Europe met at a great congress at Vienna in which they attempted not to man the clock back to 1789, but to build a new system of international relations instead. On the one hand, it would ensure that France couldn’t embark on any more acts of aggression and, on the other, it would make sure that Europe didn’t slide back into the endless dynastic conflicts that had plagued the 18th century.

Watching from afar, the fallen Napoleon was not treated especially harshly in the wake of his defeat. With him went roughly 600 soldiers drawn from the Imperial Guard, and he was given complete freedom of movement as he was left almost entirely unsupervised on the peaceful and picturesque Italian island.

For Napoleon, however, confinement to so small a sphere was torture. The French government also afforded him a legitimate grievance by failing to pay the pension that had been granted to him. Many stories reached him of massive public discontent with the new regime so at the end of February 1815, he decided to return to France and restore himself to glory.

His prison break was somewhat anticlimactic as there was not a single guard to stop him. Though there was normally a British agent - Sir Neil Campbell - assigned to watch over Napoleon, he had left Elba to travel to Florence on 6 February, allegedly to visit his mistress. Ten days later, Napoleon set sail on a small brig called L’Inconstant along with his imperial guard.

Thus followed the so-called ‘flight of the eagle’. According to legend, the exiled emperor returned to a hero’s welcome in France but the truth may actually have been a little less romantic. When he landed on the French coast on 1 March, he was initially denied entrance to the town of Auteuil and could supposedly only find two people to volunteer for his cause.

However, in a somewhat famous episode where Napoleon dazed a man blocking the road to his carriage, the gendarmerie actually decided to join him. On 18 March, the city of Lyons - a place that the emperor had always favoured when in power - also welcomed his arrival with great excitement just five days later.
**VIVE LA CONSTITUTION!**

To win French support, Napoleon proposed revolutionary reform.

In early 1814, as the empire was crumbling, French political writer Benjamin Constant published a scathing attack on Napoleon, painting him as a tyrant obsessed with conquest. A year later, however, Constant could not resist the returned emperor’s invitation to draw up a new French constitution. Napoleon knew that to rally support after returning from Elba, he needed to embrace France’s revolutionary heritage and pose as the defender of liberty against the Bourbons.

Constant’s document, although described as a simple ‘addition’ to the earlier imperial French constitutions, was more like a suggestion for a liberal constitutional monarchy. Called the Acte Additional, it gave real power to the House of Representatives, which was elected by the electoral college of the empire and allowed for the extension of franchise to a greater number of people. It also explicitly guaranteed both press and religious freedom, as well as ruling out any repetition of revolutionary land reform.

Napoleon signed the Acte Additional on 22 April 1815 and submitted the constitution, quickly nicknamed ‘La Benjamine’, after its author, to a plebiscite. Scarcely 20 per cent of those eligible actually voted, but it still received 1.3 million yes votes versus 1.8 million no votes, so the government held its approval on 6 June. The re-restored Louis XVIII abolished it after the Battle of Waterloo but it went on to serve as an inspiration for later French constitutions, especially that of 1830.

**Napoleon’s Last Stand**

Battle of Waterloo

![Panoramic view of Waterloo](image1)

**Battle of Waterloo**

The emperor strikes back

Napoleon puts the offensive with roughly 200,000 men. He plans to drive a wedge between the British and Prussians to defeat them separately.

15 JUNE 1815

Bliicher takes a beating

Napoleon strikes, but does not destroy. Prussian Field Marshal Blücher at Ligny allowing him to escape to Wavre where he agrees to support Wellington at Waterloo.

18 JUNE 1815

Napoleon abdicates again

After Waterloo, the French political elite call for Napoleon to stand down. The emperor accepts defeat and abdicates in favor of his four-year-old son.

22 JUNE 1815

Quitting Paris

Napoleon knows the capital with a small military escort is an effort to escape Blücher’s large approaching cavalry, which has been told to capture him dead or alive.

28 JUNE 1815

Louis XVIII restored

Louis returns to Paris and provides a constitutional monarchy. Wellington remains in France with the allied occupation army until 1818.

8 JULY 1815

**Napoleon’s Last Stand**

A marching drum calls by the French 10th Infantry Regiment

**Napoleon’s Last Stand**

Panoramic view of Waterloo can be found near to the Lion’s Mound memorial at the battlefield on to Brussels
**Battle of Waterloo**

**The Final Showdown**

Discover where it all went wrong for Napoleon at Waterloo.

---

**01 First Foyer**

Between 9am and 11.30am on 18 June, the Battle of Waterloo began with a French attack on a Coalition position at Hougoumont, a large farmhouse that served as a tactical outpost. This fighting was low key at first with few troops from each side engaged but by the early afternoon, it had become a bloody epicentre for much of the fighting with the Coalition forces holding out against numerous French assaults.

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**02 Grande Batterie**

At around midday, Napoleon ordered his Grande Batterie of 80 cannons to open fire upon Wellington's position. The cannons caused many casualties in Wellington's cavalry, opening a potential weak point in the defending lines.

---

**03 French Infantry attack**

After the Coalition lines had been weakened, Napoleon began his attack proper with numerous infantry corps advancing. The initial fighting went the way of the French with the left's elements pushing Wellington's forces back. However, just when it looked like Napoleon would make a decisive break, he was informed that Prussian troops were fast approaching. He tried to send word to Marshal Grouchy to engage with them but his commander was in Wavre.

---

**04 British heavy cavalry attack**

Seeing their infantry was about to buckle, Wellington's First and Second Brigades of heavy cavalry charged and smashed into the French infantry. By the time they reached the bottom of the hill, they had completely halted the infantry's advance. In doing so, however, they left themselves exposed and without backup.

---

**05 Napoleon counters**

With the Coalition's heavy cavalry now facing square of French infantry to the front and with no support, Napoleon ordered a counterattack, dismounting his cuirassiers and sending them into the French cavalry division. A massive caracole battle ensued, with cavalry, infantry and artillery all involved. While Napoleon's cuirassiers took out much of the Coalition's heavy cavalry, they could not wipe them out. Napoleon also dispatched troops to intercept the Prussians.

---

**06 Stalemate**

At the heart of the battle, Coalition and French squares then undertook a series of back-and-forth exchanges. All the while cannon and musket fire continued to rain down from all sides and, aside from one more combined arms assault by the French on the centre-right of Wellington's lines, a general melee ensued. Each side saw their numbers steadily chipped away.

---

**07 Prussians arrive**

Wellington had been exchanging communications with General Blücher, commander of the Prussian army, since 10am and knew he was approaching from the east. The Prussians arrived at roughly 4.30pm and, noting the village of Plancenoit on Napoleon's right flank was a tactically important position, began to attack the French forces there. However, after initially taking the village, French forces reclaimed it.

---

**08 Imperial guard attacks Wellington**

With the forces temporarily halting off the Prussian attack, Napoleon went on one last major offensive. He sent the supposedly undefeatable Imperial Guard into Wellington's army's centre in an attempt to break through and attack his flanks from within. While the guard had some success breaching multiple lines of the Coalition force, it was eventually overrun by Wellington's numerically superior infantry and wiped out.

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**09 Plancenoit recaptured**

The Prussian army retook Plancenoit and targeted Napoleon's right flank, giving Wellington the upper hand. The Old Guard that had been supporting the French position at Plancenoit beat a hasty retreat.

---

**10 French army retreats**

With the French left and centre now disintegrating, the only cohesive forces left available to Napoleon were two battalions of his Old Guard. Despite hoping to rally his remaining troops behind them, the strength of the Coalition's army left this untenable and all Napoleon could do was order a retreat. The retreating French army was covered by the Old Guard, many of whom died holding back the Coalition's advance.

---

**Battle by Numbers**

- **Napoleon**
  - Duke of Wellington
  - Blücher
  - Waterloo
  - 15 kilometres from Brussels
  - 11 Hours
  - Length of battle
  - 90 Casualties per minute
  - 2,000 Emergency amputations (without anaesthesia)
  - 25,000 Dead and wounded
  - 8,000 Prisoners
  - Coalition losses
  - 23,000 Dead and wounded
“A man whose ambition and lust for glory had made the entire continent run with blood”

In this situation, his only option was to strike a rapid blow against the nearest enemy. In the hope that a great victory would be obtained that would tighten his grip on making peace. In truth, this was a slim hope. On 15 June 1815, he invaded Belgium with the idea of catching the forces there unawares, as these troops were the most vulnerable to attack.

In the firing line were two separate armies, namely the Duke of Wellington's Army of the Netherlands – a polyglot collection of troops from Britain, Holland and various minor German states – and Germain Bonaparte's French Army of the Low Countries. Neither force was of particularly good quality and individually they were both smaller than Napoleon's 135,000 strong Army of the North. In consequence, the emperor planned to defeat them separately by getting between them and hitting each one before they could unite to defeat them separately by getting between them and hitting each one before they could unite and hitting each one before they could unite. Wellington was at a ball hosted by the duchess of Richmond where he and many other key officers enjoyed the free-flowing wine. That night, Wellington was at a ball hosted by the duchess of Richmond where he and many other key officers enjoyed the free-flowing wine. He soon realised that Wellington had chosen a very strong position in the form of a long ridge studded with many of stoutly built farms. Every attempt at attack was soundly defeated.

At this time, exactly as he had promised, Blücher's army had been marching to the sound of the guns and at around 4.30pm, large numbers of Prussian soldiers started pouring onto the field on the emperor's right flank. From then on, increasing numbers of French troops had to be diverted to hold off Blücher. Success against Wellington became even harder to attain. One last attack by the Imperial Guard having been beaten off, the onset of evening saw the Prussian pressure simply become too great. The defensive line that had been established to hold them back was not just breached, but swept away.

This was the end - within a matter of minutes, the whole French army had collapsed. The only troops who put up any sort of fight were a few battalions of the Imperial Guard that had remained in reserve. Indeed, such was the disorder that it was only with the greatest difficulty that Wellington evaded capture at the hands of the Prussians in particular was squandered, and Wellington and Blücher managed to suitably safety a few kilometres south of Brussels - close enough to support one another with ease. Napoleon's master plan had failed.

The climax of the campaign came on the morning of Sunday 16 June. Having followed Wellington with the bulk of his forces, Napoleon needed to crush him before the Prussians arrived to help him but heavy rainfall the day before meant that much of his army had not yet arrived. It was nearly midday before his forces finally got into action and even when they did, they found that Wellington had chosen a very strong position in the form of a long ridge studded with a number of stoutly built farms. Every attempt at attack was soundly defeated.

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Such was the battle of Waterloo. Deposed by the government he had left behind in Paris, Napoleon eventually surrendered to the British on 15 July, who promptly sent him into perpetual exile on the distant island of St Helena. He spent the rest of his life blaming Marshal Emmanuel Grouchy, who had blundered on the battlefield, for his defeat at Waterloo. Napoleon refused to realise that Grouchy, who had ended the day fighting the Prussian rearguard at Wavre, could not have reached him in time to make any real difference even had he tried to do so. Behind him, meanwhile, the emperor left a battlefield strewn with tens of thousands of casualties. Even in the two World Wars, such a scene of horror was rarely equalled but some might argue that it was a price worth paying for ridding Europe of a man whose ambition and lust for glory had made the entire continent run with blood.

In the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, Napoleon found himself imprisoned in far worse conditions than he had ever endured on Elba - his house, for example, was damp and overrun with rats. Even France suffered much harder treatment than it had been subjected to in 1814, having both to pay a large indemnity and to endure three years of military occupation. What is more, Louis XVIII was restored to the throne and was succeeded by his far less politically savvy brother, Charles X, in 1824. Even so, it was not until 1830 that the House of Bourbon was removed from the French throne for good. Perhaps this was proof of just how unpalatable the French found Napoleon.

For the revolutionaries in Europe

While Europe was in no mood to welcome back Napoleon in 1815, within five years there were revolutions in Italy, Portugal and Spain. One Realist plan was to return Napoleon to power. A letter intercepted by Napoleon's Saint Helene gaoler, Barbara Low, said that if Napoleon secured Spain,

"France must surrender, for both nations and people long for the restored Bourbon - you will have a greater fleet and armies than ever!" While we could chalk this assessment up to revolutionary zeal, Napoleon was considered a significant enough threat at this time that rumors he he had been produced "a fall of half his peril in France and Europe."

WHERE ELSE COULD NAPOLEON HAVE FLED?

If he hadn't surrendered, the ruler could have had his pick of destinations.

Live in exile in the United States

Napoleon seriously considered trying to escape to the United States after the Battle of Waterloo. While he ultimately surrendered to a British warship at Rochefort, he also had a vessel waiting for him at the port laden with furniture, books and maps of the US so that he could start a new life in the New World. When he was on St Helena, Napoleon often speculated about what might have been, from being in New Jersey with his brother Joseph, to retiring on the banks of the Mississippi or even running west to 'found a new homeland.' He said, "I would have loved to realise this dream, it would have brought me new glory."

Forge a new empire in South America

When Napoleon learned that his brother Joseph had sailed with the United States in 1807, he said, "If I were in his place, I would build a great empire in all of Spanish America." If he had, he would have had the support of hundreds of Bonapartists that had enlisted in the Patriot armies fighting for independence from Spain. This included General Michael Brown, who had a brilliant career in Napoleon's Grande Armée before briefly commanding the pro-independence Chilean cavalry, while his imperial officer Louis Lions rose to the rank of Major General fighting in Guatemala. Several more successful expeditions to rescue Napoleon from St Helena came out of Buenos Aires.
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The capital of Africa’s Benin Empire astonished Europeans with its beauty, so why is there nothing left?

Neat Benin, where the king resides, is larger than Lisbon. All the streets run straight and as far as the eye can see,” wrote Portuguese sea captain Lourenço Pinto in 1609. He added, “The houses are large, especially that of the king, which is richly decorated and has fine columns. The city is wealthy and industrious. It is so well governed that theft is unknown and the people live in such security that they have no doors seemingly trying to find a way around the traditional Saharan trade routes. Dutch merchants arrived 300 years later and, over next 200 years, more traders came from England, France, Germany and Spain. They all returned home with amazing stories to rival what happened upon it while THE LOST CITY OF

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The Lost City of Benin

The capital of Africa’s Benin Empire astonished Europeans with its beauty, so why is there nothing left?

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Located in the depths of the jungle but connected to other African kingdoms and the Atlantic Ocean by the Niger River, Great Benin City was the imperial capital of an empire that, at its peak, stretched from Lagos in the west to beyond the Niger in the east — an area that equates to approximately one-fifth of modern-day Nigeria.

Benin made contact with Europeans in the 1480s when Portuguese traders happened upon it while seemingly trying to find a way around the traditional Saharan trade routes. Dutch merchants arrived 300 years later and, over next 200 years, more traders came from England, France, Germany and Spain. They all returned home with amazing stories to rival what happened upon it while

Benin's political, military and religious leader was an autocratic king

The beginnings of Benin

According to the oral history of the Edo people, Benin was originally called Igordomigodo, named after Igodo, founder of the Ogoni meaning 'turtles of the sky') dynasty. Although Igordomigodo would go on to have around 30 Ochake (chieftains of the same name) that changed the name from lle Ibinu to Ubini and it was later contact with the Portuguese that changed the name again to Bini, from which we get the name Benin.

With the Oba established, the social hierarchy of the Benin Empire began to take form. Apart from the king, the political elite consisted of the titled chiefs — the Uzama (ruler of the land). They were protected by royal guards, who would be armed with swords, spears and, in later years firearms. The leopard was a most iconic symbol of royal power in Benin.

SHELTERED LIFE

The Oba rarely appeared in public but when he did an attendant who would shield him from the sun. No one else was allowed to be shaded in the same way within the city.

The Oba was a beaconhead and he wore a crown of red coral beads. While only the king and his closest companions were allowed to wear the beads, they were so rare and valuable — traded from as far away as the Mediterranean — that few others could have afforded them anyway.

CORONAL CROWN

The Oba was a beaconhead and he wore a crown of red coral beads. While only the king and his closest companions were allowed to wear the beads, they were so rare and valuable — traded from as far away as the Mediterranean — that few others could have afforded them anyway.

GOLD-LIKE STATUS

As well as being the highest political authority, the Oba was the spiritual leader of his people. Religion (lots would often develop around them and many would now claim to have supernatural powers.)

PENDANT MASK

One of the most iconic symbols of the Benin Empire is the finely carved ivory mask depicting Queen Idia, created for her son, Oba Esigie. However, rather than being worn over the face, these were worn at the waist or around the neck.

ROYAL GUARD

The original guards wore ceremonial weapons such as a decorated sword called an ase or a switch instead, they were protected by royal guards, who would be armed with swords, spears and, in later years firearms.

King of the Jungle

The tiger was a symbol of royal power in Benin. As well as wearing a silver tiara, the king used to keep several of the big cats as pets, which were paraded on important occasions like monarchs.

Standing Army

Baboons and other small monkeys and vultures. Dutch sources claimed that the Oba could mobilise 80,000 warriors to a battle and later an army of 80,000 to 80,000 soldiers.

Written by Toyin Falola

Adjunct Professor of African Studies, Toyin Falola holds the chair in African History in the Humanities at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of many books in African history. A Reference Guide.
European travellers often wrote home about the wonders they'd seen in the Medieval metropolis.

African history

Wish you were here...

The Mercantile Guild

Marcelle du Relier

Lizbon

Portugal

Discover the other great wall

Huge walls, which The Guinness Book of World Records describes as the world's second largest man-made structure after the Great Wall of China, protected Benin City. The defensive fortifications included over 10,000 kilometres of earthen ramparts, some of which were over nine metres tall. As if that wasn't enough, the walls were also encumbered by a moat.

Mind-boggling mathematical design

While 16th-century visitors often described Benin City's layout as disorganised, American mathematician Ron Eglash has suggested that the city's architecture - from the arrangement of its districts, to the design of its houses, and even individual rooms in those houses - carefully repeated the same symmetrical patterns.

Royal palace

The grounds of the royal palace made up a great part of the whole city, with Dutch writer Olfert Dapper claiming it was the size of the Dutch town of Haarlem. It included the royal residence of the Oba, various reception rooms, quarters for his courtiers and the royal harem. The main palace was square-shaped with a wood shingled roof, and from the 17th century it was decorated inside with bronze plaques.

Shop in the artisan markets

Many of the city's inhabitants were craftspeople who were organised into guilds. While the all-important brass casters' guild held an exclusive contract with the Oba, five-yearly purchased goods from the wood carvers, ivory carvers, leather workers, blacksmiths and weavers.

Visit the Benin broadway

According to Dapper, the first thing you saw on entering Benin was a mile-long towering thoroughfare: "a great broad street, which is not paved and seems to be wide or eight times greater than Warmoesstraat in Amsterdam. The street is straight and does not bend at any point." Each of the city's nine gates led to broad streets like this, which crisscrossed the city.

Visit the lost city of Benin

The Lost City of Benin

The rainforest villages

Beyond the city limits, many people lived in villages in clearings in the jungle. Farming yams, peppers and other vegetables as well as cotton. The French explorer Reynaud des Marchais noted how carefully the fields were cultivated in the 1720s, producing three to four harvests a year. In imitation of the city's defences, many of these villages were ringed with protective moats.

Cruise to Timbuktu

Benin City lay deep inside the jungle but it was not cut off from other places. The River Niger connected it to Timbuktu, the capital of the wealthy Mali Empire, and other African kingdoms in the north. The river also flowed south to the Atlantic Ocean, which is how Europeans sailed to the city.

The light fantastic

One of the first cities to have a semblance of street lighting, huge metal lamps fuelled by oil were placed all around the city, especially near the royal residence, to illuminate traffic.

The Great Wall of Benin

The defensive fortifications were over nine metres tall. As if that wasn't enough, the walls were also encumbered by a moat.
African history

Imperial golden age

Between the late 13th century and the 16th century, Benin’s empire grew rapidly under the expansionist wars of conquerors. The fascination with and the accessibility of the empire were built around various historical artefacts such as the impressive range of terracotta, their advanced ruling networks and the military strategies by which the western kings expanded and defended Benin. Benin had a large army of well-trained and disciplined soldiers, and the king was the supreme ruling authority over them.

Oba Esẹrẹ I, who reigned between about 1440 and 1483, is largely credited with the transformation of the kingdom into a modern-state structure. He reorganised the political structures through reforms that minimised the uneasy relationship between the Oba and the lords, and it established to monopolise military power with the latter factor being responsible for his imperialistic expansion. He is also noted for promoting art and artistic production—namely the bronze casting, ivory and wood that Benin would be known for around the same period.

The craftsmen produced a distinct style of art that included heads, figurines, torso pieces and other items of royal adornment. Artistry was used to celebrate royal omnipotence and to legitimise the king’s power and glory. As the Oba was believed to embody the country and its continuity, art was used to communicate his divinity and possibly to also subject his people to a way of life and access to his as he was believed to be a divine being. Oba Esẹrẹ was also associated with architectural innovation, city planning, grand festivals and the introduction of royal beads. He built on the effects of Oba Ogunjẹ and completed the first and second museums, a network of ramparts that walled the city against external aggressors. The museum was an impressive part of national defence covering roughly 46,000 kilometres and enclosing 6,500 square kilometres of community land. It was built over the course of six centuries and it was a work of pre-mechanical engineering marvel.

In 1974, the Gunners Bank Art and World described the Benin Box as the largest earthenware in the world prior to mechanical inventions and it is considered to be the largest man-made invention since the invention, second only to the Great Wall of China. Oba Odogba was also believed to be the one who first sent the craftman, Ighars, to the skill to learn the art of bronze casting.

Ifon s art

Of all the arts and activities from the Benin Empire, two of them are iconic: The Bronze Head of Queen Idia and the Benin Ivory mask. The Bronze Head is a dedicated peace in honour of Queen Idia, the mother of Oba Esẹrẹ II, the king who reigned in the early 15th century. Queen Idia was the first Iyoba or Queen Mother, and she played a hugely significant role in her king’s reign. As Iyoba, Idia was a trusted chief in her own right and she had a district, Ugboko, where she resided. She could raise the fees necessary to fund the army she oversaw. Although women were typically banned from certain professions—the army included—they went to war and recorded numerous victories. She was described as both possessing military acumen and sorcery with which she helped her son Esẹrẹ II to defeat his brother Ajasan, a contender for the throne.

As she was the king’s mother, she defied all the conventions. But Iyoba revolutionised the position, allowing future Iyobas to become actual political actors. The position demanded, among other qualities, the holder to possess metaphorical power to help her son overcome other contenders to the throne. Queen Idia was said to have magical healing powers, and was depicted in many sculptures and art works commissioned in her honour, such as the Benin ivory mask. This was a small-scale ivory sculpture, made in honour of Idia. The mask was worn as a pendant by Esẹrẹ.

Today, the mask is a stark reminder of the unvarying cultures in which artworks left the shores of Africa. The mask was made as an enantiomorph of FESTAC ’77, a festival that took place in Nigeria and drew people from every part of Africa to celebrate black culture. The Nigerian government tried to secure the mask on a loan from the British Museum, which refused claims that it was too fragile to transport. The Museum also required a hefty $1 million as an indemnity. A sign that things might be improving, last year the British Museum held talks to discuss the return of the Benin Bronzes.

Bloodthirstily demise

Barthélemy Louis Antoine d’Argenson, the French ambassador to Benin, met a similar fate 180 years later. In 1897, as the British were marching towards Benin, the French envoy was killed. After the disaster, the British moved in to occupy the city. The British forces, under the command of General Saussey, looted the city and executed the Iyoba. The British loot included the Oba’s throne and his regalia, which is today displayed in the British Museum. The Benin City was destroyed, and the British continued their campaign to conquer the rest of Nigeria. The British authorities established a colonial administration on Benin.

The Lost City of Benin

She was described as both possessing a military acumen and sorcery of leadership, internal fractures and indiscipline among members of the ruling class. When the slave trade was abolished and the price of ivory fell, it hit Benin hard. In the mid-18th century, the empire got a boost under Oba Esẹrẹ II but it was not to last. The kingdom was starting to shrink as former territories began to move away from the old empire to towards the British both for trade and protection. In the mid-19th century, Benin began to trade in palm oil and as a product became more important to the British, they sought to make Benin a protectorate. The Oba took refuge in succession and since Benin’s political power had declined, the king took to making human sacrifices to regain his sacred authority. In 1892, vice-consul H. Callaway pushed Oba Ovonramwen to sign his new diminished empire to the British as a protectorate. There was some doubt about whether the Oba indeed agreed to the treaty as he was unsure if the British had good intentions. By making Benin a British protectorate, the treaty would have facilitated commerce, ceased slave trading and ended human sacrifice.

Benin eventually fell during the punitive expedition of 1897. The Oba sensed that the British intended to deport him to his chiefs, against his knowledge, ordered a pre-emptive attack on a canoe carrying unarmed British officers. Two of the officers managed to escape but that incident sealed Oba Ovonramwen’s fate. Realising that his kingdom would be invaded, he took up the rate of human sacrifices to appease his ancestors. The news of the Oba’s increasing bloodthirstiness coupled with the deaths of the British officials, became a justification for the invasion of 1897 and Britain annexed its territory to become Benin.

In 1914, the Oba’s chiefs and their followers fled, but they came back and eventually surrendered. The Oba apparently approached the British with the pomp and pageantry of his position but he was humiliated and despised. He was eventually sent to exile in Calabar, in the southeastern region of Nigeria, where he died in 1944.

Setting out to destroy what remained, the British set Benin on fire—thus moved the royal treasures to a safe place first. They told some of the priceless artefacts in Lagos and transferred others to Europe, where they made their ways into private collections and museums. The sales were meant to cover the cost of the expeditions. In 1914, the throne was restored to Eweka II, Onowarn’s son, after all the British colonial officers. What was left of Benin was nothing but a shadow of its former glory and today no signs remain of its mighty walls or masts.
Among the dead were nobility, military and wellwishers who had come to take part in the biggest royal wedding Madrid had seen in decades.

It was the recipe for a perfect royal wedding. The groom was a young king who had fallen head over heels for his new wife. The bride was a pretty princess who had been called Queen Victoria grandmamma. Their romance caught the imagination of people around Europe and tens of thousands of wellwishers lined the streets of Madrid on 31 May 1906 to see Alfonso XIII of Spain and his new queen, Princess Victoria Eugenie of Battenberg, ride in triumph from their glittering marriage ceremony to the illustrious wedding reception that was to take place at the Royal Palace of Madrid.

The crowds cheered and jostled for the best positions while some threw flowers and confetti to celebrate. But among the petals was a deadly wedding gift. As the king and queen of Spain approached the heart of the city, a hoarder containing a bomb was launched at their carriage.

The moment of the explosion was captured forever by a spectator, Eugenio Mesonero Romanos, whose famous photo of the bomb going off appeared in papers around the world in the following days. It showed the beginnings of the terrifying bloodbath that would claim dozens of lives and leave over 100 people injured. Among the dead were nobility, military and wellwishers who had come to take part in the biggest royal wedding Madrid had seen for decades.

While the city began to count the cost of the bomb, King Alfonso XIII and Queen Victoria Eugenie were expected to carry on with their royal duties. They appeared to the public at the Royal Palace and then walked into their wedding reception, attended by royalty from around Europe, with the queen still in her bridal gown, now spattered with blood.
Kings and queens

Benjamin Disraeli, the English statesman, once said, “To be king is to be the most dangerous man in the country.” It was a terrifying introduction for the queen but her husband was already used to attempting on his life, despite having only just turned 20. Just a year before, Morial may have tried to kill him in Paris by throwing a bomb at his car as he left the opera. In 1901, a gunman had taken aim at him as he returned home from church. Alfonso remained as calm during these two attacks as he did during the wedding day bombing but this king had known plenty of turbulence in his two decades. After all, his whole life had been an unusual mix of tragedy and drama.

Alfonso had been king of Spain from the moment of his birth on 17 May 1886. His father, Alfonso XIII, had died in November 1885 aged just 27 following a short reign that Ena, as the young princess was just 27 following a short reign that Ena, as the young princess was

When he was just 16, Alfonso XIII took the reins of power and seemed to relish his position from the moment of his ascent to the throne. His father had introduced a system for political stability following decades of turmoil and became popular for his common touch and willingness to engage with his people.

Following the birth of Alfonso XIII’s son six months after his death, his widow, Queen Maria Christina, ruled as regent with the aim of solidifying the throne for the new king. Alfonso XIII attempted to introduce political stability following decades of turmoil and became popular for his common touch and willingness to engage with his people.

As marriage preparations got under way, Royal Palace to a rapturous reception. She converted on 7 March 1906 and the couple were set for the altar.

A new beginning

Alfonso and Ena were determined to marry but their marriage would turn sour. They married on 5 May 1906 and accompanied her to Madrid, where they were met with huge crowds. He showed his queen-to-be with pride and appeared hand in hand with her on the balcony of the Royal Palace to a rapturous reception. Just a year after meeting, the young couple were set for the altar.

A formal beginning

Alfonso XIII and Victoria Eugenie were both still teenagers when they fell for one another during the Spanish king’s state visit to England in 1895. Alfonso was on the hunt for a bride and Ena’s cousin, Princess Patricia of Connaught, was lined up as a potential bride to San Sebastian to meet his future husband’s family. In the space of a few months her future had changed from one of editing her grandmother’s diaries to a world of new experiences with the promise of a crown at the end of it all.

Published soon after their wedding, this French paper depicts the unity between British and Spanish crowns.

RoyalWeddingBloodbath

“His royal brows noire enthusiasm for excitement blinded her to any potential dangers.”

The bomb was thrown at the carriage as the procession reached its triumphant high point with a crown at the end of it all.
The quiet princess was suddenly important. Ena reportedly spent time in France preparing to convert to Roman Catholicism, as the terms of her marriage dictated. The wedding was sealed with international treaties while Alfonso prepared a jewellery collection worth hundreds of thousands of pounds for his wedding bride.

Ena arrived in Spain shortly before her wedding day and travelled to Madrid through apparently noise-ending crowds of cheering Spaniards. Days before their marriage, Alfonso led her out onto the balcony of his palace where thousands celebrated and shouted their approval as the young couple held hands. But then Mateo Morral was making his plans to end this royal fairytale before it even had a chance to begin.

Morral was the son of a factory owner from Barcelona and had been educated abroad as well as at home. His increasing interest in the anarchist movement and hatred for Spain’s ruling class seemed to take hold during a stay in Germany and when he returned home in 1899, he showed fanatical support for women’s rights and the intervention strikes that were taking place at the time in Catalonia. His supposed failed assassination attempt on Alfonso XIII in 1905 only further fuelled his anger at the monarchy. Days before the royal wedding was due to take place, he was seen carving a message into a tree in the Retiro Park in Madrid which warned that Alfonso would die on the day of his marriage.

“They were just minutes into their route, with church bells still ringing.”

By then, Morral was in possession of the bomb with which he intended to kill the king and queen. It was an Orsini device, reportedly made in France, designed to explode on impact. On the morning of 31 May 1906, while Alfonso XIII collected his bride from the Royal Palace of El Pardo so they could attend Mass together ahead of their marriage, Alfonso led her out onto the balcony of his palace for the occasion. The church had been forgotten by history.

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From experiments to inquisition, discover the Renaissance scientist's iconic clash with the pope and how he proved that the Earth goes around the Sun.

Galileo Galilei was never destined for a life as an astronomer and physicist. Ironically, he attended school at the local monastery and after this had been well on his way for a future as a doctor. His father, Vincenzo, had high hopes for his son and arranged for him to study medicine at the University of Pisa from 1581. In spite of this, Galileo never cared for biology, developing a far greater interest in philosophy and mathematics. Against the protestations of his father, he promptly switched subjects and never looked back.

Studying hard for four years, Galileo left university without a degree and turned his hand to private tutoring. During this time he wrote his short treatise, Cosmography, which he used to teach his students about the mysterious celestial bodies. Cosmography adhered to the widely accepted, traditional geocentric philosophies of Aristotle and Ptolemy, which placed the Earth at the centre of the universe.

He soon moved on from his tutoring career and returned to the University of Pisa in 1589, where he spent the next three years as the professor of mathematics. It is likely that this is when he succeeded in disproving Aristotle's theory that objects of different mass fall at different speeds, though whether Galileo actually tested this by dropping balls of the Leaning Tower of Pisa is disputed as the only record we have of it is a biography written by his pupil Vincenzo Viviani in 1717.

Unfortunately, his unconventional beliefs made Galileo unpopular so his contract at the university was not renewed. He moved once again in 1592 and travelled north to Padua, where he assumed a new, higher paid position as a professor of mathematics at the city's university. Here, Galileo really began to hone his research. He conducted a number of experiments, many of which were in the field of mechanics.

Starting in 1602, he made some of the first scientific observations regarding pendulums. He also uncovered the principle of isochronism, where a pendulum would take the same time to complete a swing regardless of how big that swing was. Ultimately, this led to the invention of the accurate mechanical clock in 1656 - a device humanity had come to rely on.

After a few years of dedicating his time to his experiments, everything changed. In 1609, Galileo heard rumours that a device that could make distant objects appear close had been invented in the Netherlands: the telescope. Once he learned that it had been simply made with just a tube and a lens on both ends, he immediately set out to re-create one for himself. His initial versions ranged in magnifying power, up to eight times, but by 1610, he had developed a telescope that could be magnified 20 times - far more powerful than the original, rudimentary invention.

Armed with his telescope, the possibilities open to Galileo were endless. Just between 1609 and 1610 alone, he discovered mountains on the Moon, the four satellites of Jupiter and numerous stars in the Milky Way. He observed the different phases of Venus and, mistakenly, believed that he had found two 'ears' that accompanied Saturn. Although he did not realise it, Galileo had actually observed Saturn's iconic ring, which would first be confirmed in 1656.

“ARMED WITH HIS TELESCOPE, THE POSSIBILITIES OPEN TO GALILEO WERE ENDLESS”
HELI-O-WHAT?!

Astrophysicist Dr Gemma Lavender from All About Space magazine explains the science behind Galileo’s discoveries.

WHAT WAS GEOCENTRISM?
This was a belief, as early as the 5th century BC, that the Earth was at the centre of the Universe. The Sun, Moon and planets all revolved around the Earth. This theory remained the cornerstone of science until the 16th century.

WHERE DID THIS THEORY ORIGINATE FROM?
The idea came about from observations of the movements of the Sun during the day and the stars and planets at night. If you watch these celestial bodies making their way across the sky, it appears as if they are spinning on an axis. We also know that our planet is spinning on its axis, facing the Sun to make it appear as if the Moon is rising and setting.

HOW DOES HELIOCENTRISM WORK?
Heliocentrism is the model that we use today and explains how Earth and other planets in our Solar System orbit the Sun. The theory was initially proposed by Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, who believed that the universe was not static and that Earth orbited around the Sun. Standing on our planet, we are able to observe our planet to be spinning on its axis and making its way around the Sun on its orbit, standing on its surface, through and from our Earth bound perspective - it feels like’s it’s stationary. That’s how ancient Greek, Roman and Medieval philosophers, led by Aristotle and Plato, saw our place in the universe. At the time of their studies of the geocentric model, Aristotle and Plato had also worked out that the Earth is a sphere.

GEOCENTRISM?
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WHY WAS THIS IDEA SO CONTROVERSIAL AT THE TIME?
Bymoving the Sun to the centre of the model, displacing the Earth, we - God’s creations - were no longer at the centre of the universe. Copernicus knew that this would greatly upset the Church and so he didn’t publish his theory until near the end of his life.

CENTRE OF ATTENTION
People assumed that the Earth was at the centre of the universe because this is how the Catholic Church interpreted the Biblical Scriptures. Supporters of Copernicus tried to prove this theory was incorrect.

MOONS OF JUPITER
The arrival of the telescope in 1609 allowed scientists to observe the Solar System much closer than they were previously able to. As Galileo observed moons orbiting Jupiter, it disproved the idea that all celestial bodies revolved around Earth.

WRITTEN IN THE STARS
Copernicus believed that the stars were fixed. In fact, in the rotation of the Earth on its axis and the Sun moving around Earth.

“GALILEO REFUSED TO BACK DOWN”

Galileo's celestial discoveries, coupled with his mathematical genius, placed him ten years ahead of his contemporaries. His sudden fame came at a time when the Copernican Revolution was already well underway. Back in 1543, Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus published On the Revolution of Heavenly Spheres, which argued that the Sun, not the Earth, was at the centre of the universe.

Galileo decided to share his new discoveries, starting with his book Sidereus Nuncius in 1610. Also known by the English name, Starry Messenger, it drew a lot of interest and raised his celebrity profile to new heights. That same year, he was appointed to the prestigious position of court mathematician to Cosimo II de’ Medici, Grand Duke of Tuscany, one of his former pupils. However, Starry Messenger also attracted a lot of criticism. Galileo’s conclusion that it was the Sun that moved, not Earth, was not accepted by the Catholic Church, the most powerful institution in Italy, and he was called before the Inquisition to explain himself.

Inquisition investigators asked Galileo to swear an oath that he did not believe that the Earth moved. He was accused of heresy. A group of theologians were asked to assess the theory of heliocentrism that Galileo had so defiantly promoted. They were instructed to find a flaw in his theory. Of course, the theologians’ primary task was the defence of the Catholic Church and the Bible and less than a week later, Galileo was found guilty of heresy. He admitted to the oath, and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Galileo was also ordered to stop his support for the theory and His cell was placed under guard, and he was forbidden to publicly discuss Copernicus’ theories.

GALILEO VERSUS THE CHURCH
Galileo was a strong advocate of Copernicus’ heliocentric model. He was the most momentous works to ever grace the world of science, but his research was about to prove that Copernicanism was not just a hypothesis - it was reality.

Supporters of Copernicus tried to prove his theory was incorrect. Galileo observed moons orbiting Jupiter, it disproved the idea that all celestial bodies revolved around Earth.

GALILEO REFUSED TO BACK DOWN

Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo’s drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo's drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo’s drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo’s drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo’s drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from Galileo’s drawings of the phases and surface of the Moon from
THE CATHOLIC CHURCH GRIPPED ONTO TRADITION MUCH TIGHTER

This was not a clear-cut case of science versus religion. Of late the right wing and who was wrong. The public confrontation of Galileo’s conclusions were being directed to the Catholic Church. The Protestant Reformation had dominated Europe throughout the 16th century, shaking Western Christianity to its core. In order to maintain its authority during a time of great instability, the Catholic Church gripped onto tradition much tighter than ever before.

The last thing the church needed was Galileo advocating for Copernicus, which not only threatened the traditional interpretation of the Holy Scriptures, but also the authority of the Church itself. This was a dangerous and sensitive time to go up against Catholicism, as Galileo had discovered. However, despite the ban, he was still allowed to discuss Copernicus’ theories on the condition that he treated them in a purely hypothetical sense.

Quietly waiting for the whole debate to subside, Galileo continued his work. Despite the controversy, he had not wavered from his support for heliocentrism but by this point he was in his 50s and suffering from recurring periods of ill health, which made his research slow down significantly.

Then in 1623, seven years after his condemnation, it appeared that Galileo’s luck was finally about to change. His long-time friend and supporter Cardinal Barberini – who had valiantly defended him during the Inquisition – was elected to the head of the Catholic Church as Pope Urban Vll. Galileo was ecstatic. Although he was still banned from openly advocating heliocentrism, he believed that with his friend as the head of the Catholic Church, the opportunity to have his research accepted was now within his grasp.

With renewed vigour, Galileo started to work on a new book, which compared the Copernican and Ptolemaic systems. He received permission from the pope to do so during a visit to Rome in 1624, under the condition that Copernicusism would be treated purely as a theoretical hypothesis. After receiving approval from the powerful Vatican councils in 1629, Galileo finally published his Dialogue on the Two Chief World Systems two years later in 1632.

Dialogue consisted of a series of conversations between three characters, Salviati, Sagredo and Simplicio. Salviati, a Copernican scientist, argued in favour of Galileo’s theory, while Sagredo acts as an impartial scholar. Simplicio supports geocentrism and is depicted by Galileo as an idiot, emphasised by Simplicio’s derogatory name, which translates to ‘simpleton’ in Italian.

After years of struggle, Galileo’s ambition had finally been achieved. His defense of Copernicus was printed in black and white for the world to see. He had decisively changed the situation that heliocentrism must be portrayed as mere theory – and he had been able to do just that with the Church’s approval. Galileo basked in the success, unaware that his downfall was right around the corner.

Galileo had taken on the Catholic Church at all those years ago, but now the battlefield was completely different. Copernicanism had not actually been banned until the Inquisition in 1616 and the issue had not been about Galileo himself, rather the threat heliocentrism posed to the power of the papacy. Now Galileo had crossed a line by publicly promoting a theory that had been officially condemned by the Church.

To make matters worse, he had offended his powerful one-time ally, the Pope – one man who could have really made his observations without a telescope.

ABOVE: Galileo Versus the Church — The other Renaissance hellenists who put the Sun at the heart of the solar system

NICOLAIUS COPERNICUS 1473-1543

It was his support for Copernicus’ theories that caused so much controversy for Galileo. Copernicus’ model of the universe placed the Sun at the centre rather than Earth and it was therefore at odds with geocentrism. He did not publish his findings, On the Revolution of Heavenly Spheres, until the last year of his life, but the criticism and religious objections he would face judging from the punishment Galileo faced decades later, Copernicus was right to be concerned.

TYCHO BRAHE 1546-1601

Brahe’s model of the universe was a balancing affair. Combining the mathematical aspects of the Copernican model with the philosophical aspects of Ptolemy, Brahe created the Tychonic system. While he agreed that the Moon and Sun orbited the Earth, he model persisted with the theory that the Earth remained in the center. It was an acceptable system during the Galilean affair as it explained Galileo’s observations of Venus while supporting geocentrism. However, Brahe was one of the few astronomers to make his observations without a telescope.

Johannes Kepler 1571-1630

In 1596, Kepler created an outstanding defence of Copernicus with his astronomical book, Mysterium Cosmographicum. A spiritual man, he attempted to show that the Scriptures could support heliocentrism rather than geocentrism – and he tried to use the Copernican model to demonstrate this. Kepler became Tycho Brahe’s assistant, with the influence of his work and his heliocentric laws of planetary motion. With the publication of his book, Mars Alle, Kepler supported his findings and much of his own telescopic observations with the Copernican telescope, which he invented in 1591.

Sir Isaac Newton 1642-1727

Using Kepler’s laws of planetary motion, Sir Isaac Newton developed his laws of motion and law of universal gravitation in his work, Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica, published in 1687. This finally confirmed that heliocentrism, not geocentrism, was the right way to understand the universe – eight decades after Galileo’s death. Newton may have read Galileo’s work as a student at Cambridge University, supplementing the teachings of Aristotle, which were still being taught largely as fact. But like Galileo and Brahe, Newton built his own telescopes, creating the world’s first reflecting telescopes.
It is likely that Galileo conducted his experiment between 1589 and 1592 as he was a professor of mathematics at the University of Pisa during this time.

To achieve the height he needed for the experiment, Galileo climbed the Leaning Tower of Pisa.

To test his theory, Galileo dropped cannonballs of various different sizes and materials off the tower.

When he dropped cannonballs of different masses, they hit the ground at the same time, proving his hypothesis.

Try Galileo's ground-breaking gravity test for yourself!

1. **FIND HIGH GROUND**
   - Galileo climbed the Leaning Tower of Pisa because he needed height for his experiment. The second floor of a modern building should work but make sure that no one is standing underneath the window!

2. **HEADS UP!**
   - While you ready yourself to drop the water balloons from the window, someone else needs to be on the ground - out of the splash zone and harm's way - to observe the results.

3. **COMPARE YOUR RESULTS**
   - Record the results to see if they hit the ground at the same time, just like in Galileo's experiment. Try repeating the experiment with some heavier and lighter water balloons so that you can compare the outcomes.

When he arrived, he was confined and interrogated as his imprisonment, his sentence was commuted to house arrest and he spent the rest of his life cooped up in a Florentine villa.

As for the Catholic Church, it would take them over three centuries to admit that Galileo had been right all along. Despite the obstacles he faced, there is no doubt that Galileo helped to establish science in the intellectual world, even if this was not achieved during his lifetime. It is a testament to the man's tenacity that 80 years after his death, his heliocentric theories were eventually vindicated by another great scientific mind, Isaac Newton. Galileo continues to be a scientific inspiration to this day. In 1989, an unmanned spacecraft sent to study Jupiter and its moons was named after the Italian scientist, so his legacy lives on - even in the stars.

Available in all good bookshops. Also available in Kindle, Kobo and iBook.
Don’t call me PRINCESS

The creator of the internet sensation Rejected Princesses shares ten unsung heroines and hellions that Disney would never touch

Writers by Jason Porath

Out of the way, Ariel! Take a seat, Snow White! There’s a new group of princesses in town but they are nothing like the Disney damsels. The blog-turned-book series Rejected Princesses, celebrating women too awesome, awful or offbeat for kids movies, has become hugely popular. Its writer and illustrator, Jason Porath, reveals some of his favourites.

Gracia Mendes Nasi
The Oskar Schindler of the Inquisition
1500-69

Targeted by the brutal Spanish, Portuguese and Italian Inquisitions, non-Catholics living in southern Europe were subject to torture by mob, ransacking, and ultimately expulsion from their home countries. However, the Jews of this period had a guardian angel looking over them - wealthy shipping magnate (and smuggler) Gracia Mendes Nasi. Born Beatriz de Luna, she had, like many others, to keep her religion a secret. But as she got more involved with the running of her merchant husband’s business, she grew emboldened to do exactly what she wanted - Inquisitors be damned. When the Inquisition began, she established a massive network of safe houses, spies, and messengers to shuttle refugees from as far away as Lisbon to Jew-friendly Constantinople. She eventually moved to Constantinople herself and began living openly as a Jew, using her Jewish name of Gracia. She even tried establishing a fledgling Jewish state in what is modern-day Tiberias, Israel. She helped so many hundreds of people and did so much good, that several people thought she might be the Jewish messiah. Much of the Sephardic Jewish population of today owes its continued existence to her exhaustive work.

Nzinga Mbende
The mother of Angola
1583-1663

Here’s how the legend goes: the Portuguese had invaded the African nation of Ndongo (present-day Angola) and taken its king prisoner. The king’s sister, Nzinga, approached them for negotiations but when she arrived, they didn’t offer her a chair. Unperturbed, she ordered a servant to get on all fours and sat on their back, like a stool. After the meeting, she slit the servant’s throat in full view of everyone, declaring that “the queen of Ndongo does not use the same chair twice”. She then moved south, conquered a tribe of cannibals and waged war on the Portuguese for 35 years. While some details of her story are definitely sketchy - she almost certainly didn’t slit anyone’s throat - it’s a testament to her formidable reputation that those are the rumours that got四处传播. There are statues of her all over Angola to this day.

Masako Hojo
The nun who became shogun
1156-1225

From early on, Masako Hojo made sure to let everyone know she was not a woman to be trifled with. When her shogun husband cheated on her, she raised an army and destroyed the other woman’s house in a move referred to as sword-swinging - literally translated as strikes of the after-wife. She was so respected and feared that when her husband died, rumours spread that her detached spirit had somehow returned him to death. Though in truth, she appears to have loved him rather intensely to the end of her days. After her husband died, she entered a monastery. But when her son proved himself an incompetent tyrant self-destructed, she took the country and property load off assassins, she did what any good mother would do - she exposed him and took the reins herself, becoming the first and only man to rule Japan.

“She did what any good mother would do - she deposed him and took the reins herself”
Western Europe

Nevis thin - nee Reportedly her last word, shouted at her executors, let alone claim to be my equal!" If you're thinking at this point that you taught Sufism in was "Liberté". She was 30 years old. want to be best friends with her, well, get in line.

Fought on, likely using some terrifying tactics: other Kushite

Amanirenas

The one-eyed queen who fought Rome tooth and nail. c.60-c.10 BCE

In the early 1990s, archaeologists in Sudan uncovered a temple

The story of this decapitated head dates back to the time

Roman factions set their aims south of Egypt. Countering

The name 'Candace' comes

Three things: they have to have agency, personality and conflict. If they lack agency, it's a tragic, if they lack conflict, it's a fable. I'm looking beyond that, I look for people from cultures I don't know much about because it's a great way to learn about other societies and periods of history. I find out about their greatest heroes (or villains), I search for women worthy of admiration or derision, see if someone I know for people who have interesting stories.

Noor Inayat Khan

The Indian princess who became a British spy 1944-44

There were few people less likely to become a British spy. Noor Inayat Khan was an honorary godmother to Princess Elizabeth's children, a Society's book author and a Sufi Muslim mystic; why meant she was a strict pacifist who couldn't lie. But when the Nazis took Paris, she gave everything up and joined the war effort as a spy. Assigned to be a radio operator in occupied Paris, she was thought of as basically cannon fodder: the average lifespan for that job was six weeks and her instructions doubled she'd ever last that. Making things worse, the entire Persian operation was arrested on her second day in Paris – leaving her alone. But she refused orders of extradition and proceeded to crash it at her job. Changing roles, appearances and everything about herself, she lasted five months before being betrayed and arrested. She went down kicking, punching and screaming, despite being a history student. She had cut her wrists, despite being a Sufi mystic, forbidden to lie. She rented rooms across roofs in escape attempts, despite being a Kurr. She gave the Nazis absolutely nothing. She died before a firing squad weeks before her concentration camp was liberated. Respectfully her last word, shouted at her executives, was "Libera!" She was 20 years old.

Don't Call Me Princess

"THEY HAVE TO HAVE AGENCY"

Former DreamWorks animator Jason Porath reveals how he picks the fascinating women for his hit series

When I was working at DreamWorks, an article was about talking

I'll often start on Wikipedia and Google Books

I usually don't cover modern-day figures because

I try not to cover modern-day figures because

I'm constantly limited by the number of languages

I'm often limited by the number of languages

I'm a historian and the kind of scholarship

I'm a historian and the kind of scholarship

I'm a historian and the kind of scholarship

I thought the social construct of motherhood is

Women with fierce maternal instincts. The book is

Warrior poet of early Islam 7th century

The rider in black had surprised everyone. The forces of early Islam were on a mission to rescue their comrade Dirar from the Christian Byzantines, when a mysterious soldier clad in black and green rushed forth, mowing down Romans like grass. When the commander finally

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Khutulun
The undefeated wrestler princess c.1250-c.1306

Genghis Khan’s great-great-granddaughter had one rule: if you wanted to marry her, you had to beat her in wrestling and if you lost, you owed her 100 horses. She ended up with 10,000 horses and her husband. An expert equestrian, archer and athlete, Khutulun was famous for splitting off from the Mongol forces and quietly zoning off enemies, just to intimidate them. She left quite the impression on historical authors. Her Marco Polo and historian Al-Idrissi. She even shows up in the Netflix series Marco Polo, although her character there is an utter betrayal of her story, and later opera, Turandot. In that European retelling of her life, she becomes a woman who challenges her suitors with riddles instead of wrestling, killing them if they lose. The opera is about her finally giving in to love. While the West may continue mangling her story, the Mongolians of today still find ways to subtly revere her. Notably, traditional Mongolian wrestler outfits are open-chested to show that the wrestler is not a woman, in reference to the undefeated Khutulun.

Julie d’Aubigny
The sword-slinger who burnt down a convent to seduce a nun 1670-1707

Julie d’Aubigny — known better in her time as La Maupin — was the closest thing humanity’s ever come to producing a real-life Bugs Bunny. This bisexual opera singer flirted and fought her way across Europe, dressing in men’s clothes and seducing men and women with abandon. When one of her female lovers was spirited off to a nunnery by her overprotective father, Maupin entered the convent to seduce a nun.1670-1707 When one of her female lovers was spirited off to a nunnery by her overprotective father, Maupin entered the convent to seduce a nun. She went on to get into so many duels she had to twice set her lover back off with her father and run off into the country. The Red Shirts, an opera inspired by her story, was banned from their design from perpetually moving.

Anita Garibaldi
The mum who fought in three revolutionary wars 1821-49

It’s a rare thing to find a woman who fights in a revolutionary war, and it’s even rarer to find one who fights in two. Rarest of all, one who fights in three. Yet Anita Garibaldi did just that — while pregnant. A Brazilian woman married to an alcoholic soldier, she had few prospects until Italian revolutionary Giuseppe Garibaldi came to town. The two immediately caught each other’s eyes and before long, Anita had left her husband and joined Garibaldi’s crew. Not content to merely be a historical plus one, she manned the cannons, fought raiders, protected the horses, stole arms and marched through rain and snow, often while carrying their children. She fought in wars to free Uruguay and Italy but the Italian revolutionaries didn’t want it. To that end, they tried to hire as many violent hombres as they could, which was just one in the end. Anita Garibaldi. She’d grown up in cities and didn’t have any of the seeing or trapping skills they needed, because she’d never done any. The expedition went horribly, with the team stranded there for two years instead of the one they’d planned for. As the team split up, Anita was left to care for one member who was dying of scurvy. She fought herself to shoot, trap and improvise, and kept him alive for longer than anyone could have expected. When the rescue ship finally came, she was the only survivor — but her lands didn’t end there. The Red Shirts began spreading rumors that she was a prostitute and had let the men die while eating their food. Despite her hatred of the spotlight, she travelled from Alaska to Los Angeles to give an on-the-record interview destroying the captain’s story, and then disappeared back north, living an anonymous life into her 90s.

Ada Blackjack
The sole survivor of an ill-fated expedition to the Arctic 1898-1983

It was a dumb, dumb plan. A bunch of overconfident explorers were going to claim Wrangel Island, a desolate wasteland 300 kilometers northeast of Siberia — for Britain, although the country didn’t want it. To that end, they tried to hire as many violent hombres as they could, which was just one in the end. Ada Blackjack. She’d grown up in cities and didn’t have any of the seeing or trapping skills they needed, because she’d never done any. The expedition went horribly, with the team stranded there for two years instead of the one they’d planned for. As the team split up, Anita was left to care for one member who was dying of scurvy. She fought herself to shoot, trap and improvise, and kept him alive for longer than anyone could have expected. When the rescue ship finally came, she was the only survivor — but her lands didn’t end there. The Red Shirts began spreading rumors that she was a prostitute and had let the men die while eating their food. Despite her hatred of the spotlight, she travelled from Alaska to Los Angeles to give an on-the-record interview destroying the captain’s story, and then disappeared back north, living an anonymous life into her 90s.

"While the West may continue mangling her legacy, the Mongolians of today still find ways to subtly revere her"
World War II

TO HELL AND BACK AGAIN

During World War II, Corporal Roy Pagani dodged almost certain death in Dunkirk, Singapore and on the horrific Burma Railway

Written by Philip Davies

My father was a remarkable man. Having escaped alone from Dunkirk, and again from Singapore, he was the only European to escape successfully from the appalling Burma Railway. Most people think that no one ever did, but my dad managed it. Over 1,000 Allied prisoners of war died building the railway - 90 men for every mile of track laid. My dad was determined not to be one of them. I am so proud of him.

Not surprisingly, Cheb Campbell becomes very emotional when she recalls her father, Corporal Roy Pagani, and his exploits as a British soldier during World War II. The war cast a long shadow and left a lasting legacy for her and her family.

"What sustained my Dad and enabled him to endure so much was the promise he made to my mum. He vowed that whatever happened, and no matter what befell him, or however long it took, he would find his way back to her." Little did he realise then that he would have to endure hair-raising escapes, guerrilla fighting, incarceration, agonising torture and an appalling death march to make good his promise - a promise that was to save his life when he despaired of survival.

"Dad was incredibly tough and self-confident. He was forced to learn this from a very early age. Abandoned by his father in the south of France at the age of seven, he was rescued by a nun and he spent his childhood in a boy's convent near Toulon. They taught him to be resourceful and self-reliant - all the things that would stand him in good stead later on in life. He always said that these were the most wonderful days of his life.

"After returning to England as a teenager, he joined the East Surrey Regiment. Just a week before the outbreak of war, he married my mum, Thelma, who everyone called Pip."

In May 1940, Pagani was part of the fighting retreat of the British Expeditionary Force to Bray Dunes, near Dunkirk, where he booby-trapped his lorry with a grenade. Being a loner at heart, he refused to join everyone else and head for Dunkirk but struck out alone looking for a boat. He found one, sailed it to England single-handed and four days later he reached the little east coast village of Shingle Street. After hitching a lift to Ipswich, he took a train to Colchester and then walked to his mother-in-law's house. "When she opened the door to him, she fainted," says Cheb.

Determined to get back into action, he eventually joined the newly formed 18th Reconnaissance Regiment. In late October 1941, he set sail for the Far East on the ill-fated Empress of Asia, which was dive-bombed with its precious cargo of arms and equipment within sight of Singapore. As the ship blazed and listed, Pagani leapt back on board to retrieve his rifle and pack in which he kept his treasured photos of his wife and young son. Just two weeks after arriving, the British surrendered. But once again, Pagani decided to break away from the herd and resolved to escape.

At the docks, he found a sampan full of fish manure, invited four others to join him, and set sail as the city was consumed by fire and explosions. After island hopping, their frail craft was hit by a massive tropical cyclone. Hanging on for dear life, they were inundated by the full force of the storm. They were lucky to survive and they reached Sumatra and what they believed was safety - but their hopes were short-lived. The Japanese were close behind and after attempting to hijack an old steam tug, Pagani was seized by the Japanese and drafted into a labour battalion. It was a grim awakening to what lay ahead. Death was an everyday occurrence and Cheb recalls how "he never got over having to sit with the dying, and then having to wash the dead body, plug the orifices, and then carry the corpse sewn into a rucksack slung between two poles to the burial site."

Pagani was taken by ship to Thanbyuzayat, the base camp for the infamous Burma Railway.

"HOWEVER LONG IT TOOK, HE WOULD FIND HIS WAY BACK TO HER"
**World War II**

He was determined to escape. Short and stocky, he calculated that he could disguise himself as a local and practised walking barefoot for miles to harden his feet. The camp was unguarded, as the Japanese believed that the prospects of any European escaping across an Asiatic country crowded in dense jungle were minimal. Cheb explains, "One day in mid-November 1942, he simply said to his mates, 'Well, so long then, I'm off', before melting into the trees." Feigning sickness that day, he was able to join the daily working party late and, crucially, without an escort, and he disappeared into the jungle. After several close shaves - including walking barefoot for miles to harden his feet - he was thrown into the back of a lorry to what he believed was his execution. Believing them to be Japanese, Allied planes mistakenly strafed the site ahead. He was taken to Rangoon and handed over to the Japanese military police - the dreaded kempeitai. For months he was beaten, tortured and abused, but he never broke. One day, without warning, he was thrown into the back of a lorry to what he believed was his execution before being dumped at Rangoon City Jail. Here he slowly recovered, helping his fellow prisoners of war by stealing food from the Japanese.

As the war turned its end, yet another ordeal lay ahead. In April 1945, over 400 of the fittest prisoners, including Pagani, were forced to march east on a grueling death march. Stragglers were shot by the war’s end, with the intention of joining up at a midpoint along the planned route. The two sets of railway lines met up just north of the Three Pagodas Pass, a gap in the Tenasserim Hills, marking the modern-day border between Thailand and Myanmar. Today there is a memorial to the thousands of Australian and other Allied prisoners who died building the railway, and the original section can still be seen.

End of the Line

Just 72 kilometres from Thailand’s capital, Bangkok, the railway’s other end was on the banks of the Mekong river at the town of Ban Pong. Today a small carved stone is the only monument that marks the start of this once awful journey. From Ban Pong, you can take a taxi following the tracks of the original railway for 130 kilometres, which will get you almost to Hellfire Pass.

There were no obelisks. Long since forgotten, Roy Pagani was a man of unimpeachable courage who deserves to stand in the front rank of Britain’s war heroes. His stoicism and self-belief in the face of unspeakable suffering testify to the triumph of the human spirit in the face of impossible odds.

-PHILIP DAVIES

**The deadly Burma Railway**

A torturous project that killed thousands of POWs

**The way ahead**

Although only around 112 kilometres long, the so-called Death Railway actually runs through Burma. It had a lasting legacy on the region - Japan needed to keep railway lines running so it dug up Bangkok and Yangon (now known as Rangoon), but the approximately 3,200-kilometre route was filled with enemy snipers and the mountainous region separating Burma and Thailand. Cheb explains how, to be too dangerous to build a railway, as steep drops and rapid rivers stood in the way. The project began at Thayetmyo, connecting to an existing line.

**Meet in the middle**

Construction started at both ends, with the intention of joining up at a midpoint along the planned route. The two sets of railway lines met up just north of the Three Pagodas Pass, a gap in the Tenasserim Hills, marking the modern-day border between Thailand and Myanmar. Today there is a memorial to the thousands of Australian and other Allied prisoners who died building the railway, and the original section can still be seen.

**HE ... PRACTISED WALKING BAREFOOT FOR MILES TO HARDEN HIS FEET**

A train crosses the infamous Bridge Over The River Kwai, built by prisoners of war.

**To Hell and Back Again**

This section of railway was particularly notorious. Aside from the fact the prospects of war had been through the rook using only rudimentary tools, they suffered incredibly harsh treatment at the hands of their Japanese captors. Forced to work up to 18 hours a day, the sight of sick and dying workers under twilight was said to resemble something in hell. As well as prisoners of war, many Thai labourers came to fear the Japanese on the false promise of good jobs. Their deaths often went unrecorded.

**To Hell and Back Again**

Philosophers constructed a bridge over the Mekong river at the town of Kanchanaburi. Building this was a nearly impossible feat and it’s made all the more impressive by the fact it was completed in just two years from October 1942 to 1943. The cost was high, though, and locals believe more than 20,000 soldiers died on every single railway sleeper crossing the bridge. The story of the bridge was later dramatized in a 1957 film, The Bridge on the River Kwai.
This Ancient Greek state is a world where discipline rules. In a society that prides itself on its warriors, boys as young as seven are already undergoing the agoge, a strict education and training regime that is compulsory for all male Spartans except the king's firstborn son.

WHERE TO STAY

Unfortunately, Spartans don't put a lot of emphasis on luxury hotels and mod cons, so why not join the locals and stay in a Spartan barracks? These quarters are the home of Spartan men, busy training and fighting, cannot. This is a state that expects loyalty from every citizen. Built on war, its enemies are many and its appetite for conquering is undiminished. Tread carefully here.

**Dos & don'ts**

- **Grow your hair long**
  Spartan men grow their hair long and style it before battle. It's a cheap and eye-catching way of adding flair to your fearsome look!

- **Cut down on clothes**
  To look like a warrior, throw off your clothes and don the obligatory scarlet cape.

- **Laugh along with the locals**
  Don't miss the rituals and cultural events during your stay. With a rigidly structured personal training programme compulsory for every resident, you'll never be at a loss for how to spend your time.

- **Expect to see your spouse**
  Husbands have to sneak out of their homes at night to visit their wives! You don't get much privacy in the communal barracks but there's plenty to do during your stay. With a rigidly structured personal training programme compulsory for every resident, you'll never be at a loss for how to spend your time.

- **Admit you're foreign**
  While foreigners can live in Sparta, they can't hold official positions. They don't have any rights and are subject to expulsion at any time.

- **Surrender in battle**
  A Spartan who surrenders is expected to do his bit. The notoriously ruthless Spartan warriors trim. Whatever you do, don't put on any weight or you'll be at a loss for how to spend your time.

**WHO TO BEFRIEND**

Leonidas

Leonidas I is the king and warlord of Sparta. Although the king's firstborn son was exempt from the agoge as third son, Leonidas didn't train - he excelled. The notoriously strict regime forged him into a fearsome warrior and a leader with a talent for diplomacy as well as war. Leonidas led the combined Greek armies against Persia's attempted invasion in 480 BCE and became a hero to his people when he died surrounded by the enemy at the Battle of Thermopylae. Fearsome, loyal and a born strategist, you can expect him to lay down his life for his land.

Extra tip: Don't mention sibling rivalry if you want to stay on Leonidas' good side. His older brothers, Cleomenes and Dorieus, were born to different mothers and fought bitterly over who should succeed to the throne. When Cleomenes was proclaimed king, the furious Dorieus left Sparta for good.

**WHO TO AVOID**

Nabis

Nabis seized power in 207 BCE by executing his two fellow claimants to the Spartan throne. Though Nabis likes to think of himself as a king, not everyone looks on him so kindly. On the one hand he freed a lot of slaves and made them Spartan citizens, but on the other he exacted the rich and claimed their estates for the nation. If you find yourself on a visit to the region of Laconia, you might want to think about making it a day trip - Nabis will see Sparta this important territory by entering a dispute with the Romans that will end in war.

**Helpful skills**

- **Religious ritual**
  The Spartans honour the god Zeus with Games, a national harvest festival and suspension of military operations. The festival begins with an athletic display and culminates with the sacrifice of a ram.

- **Metal work**
  While you won't enjoy the same rights as other Sparta citizens, you can still develop your skills. The penoikoi smiths, your fellow smiths, will be happy to teach you the art of forging weaponry.

- **Military training**
  Warrior training favours the tough and underfed. Regular and non-stop, Spartans are taught to live off the land and become masters of hand-to-hand and armed combat.
What if...

Spain conquered China?

In the late 16th century, Spain had made significant inroads in Asia - but a new generation of conquistadors thought Philip II should take on the Ming dynasty.

INTERVIEW WITH... SAMUEL HAWLEY

A former associate professor at Yonsei University in South Korea, Samuel Hawley is the author of The Imjin War: Japan's Sixteenth-Century Invasion of Korea and Attempt to Conquer China, the most comprehensive English account of the war.

How did Spain come to consider invading China in the 16th century?
The Spanish were moving into Asia. After their conquest of the New World, they had established themselves in the Philippines. So in the 1560s, they were seriously looking to conquer China. You had these two forces - one from Japan, and the other from Europe - and they were both off the shores of China, looking to possibly conquer it.

Why did they want to conquer China?
They saw it as easy pickings. The Ming dynasty was huge and China was vastly wealthy but the Spanish felt that the Ming were not that strong. They looked big on paper but militarily they were really clumsy. If there was an external threat, it took them a long time to get their armies together and actually respond. So the Spanish saw this as something they could do, just like the Japanese felt they could conquer China. Two different entities saw China as weak and ripe for the picking.

What was there to gain by invading China?
There was so much wealth in China - it was the centre of the world. Spain would have been a huge player in Asia, the same as they were in the New World. But in Asia there would have been more forces to rise against them, whereas they completely dominated the New World. The Spanish would have been in for a long, hard fight to keep hold of what they had conquered.

So who were the main players on the Spanish side?
This was a new generation of conquistadors [like Martin de Rada and Diego de Amor]. The Spanish had already swept up the New World. They went to Asia, because the Americas had been cut up into encomiendas [giving Spanish settlers the rights to an area, while forcing indigenous peoples to work for settlers]. They all wanted a big chunk of land entirely for themselves.

What was their plan for the invasion?
A surprisingly small force [a few hundred to a few thousand men]. They were looking to head up to the Northern Luzon in the Philippines, build some ships up there, and sail across the sea to the southeastern coast of China. They would establish a beachhead there, and then start working their way inland to see how far they could get. It was astonishing when you read about some of their early plans. They just wanted a few hundred men - that's all they needed. It sounds crazy but that's what Hernan Cortés did in the Americas. The Spanish had nothing if not hutzpah.

Was it quite meticulously planned out?
Yes, they went through more than one plan - and these were serious plans. One of the interesting things was they weren't even going to make their own cannonballs; they were going to buy them from the Chinese because they could get them so much cheaper. So they were going to use Chinese cannonballs to conquer the Chinese, which was ironic. As the 1570s gave way to the 1580s, they saw the difficulties becoming greater, so they needed to act now - or at least that's what they kept saying to King Philip II in Madrid.

Were they looking to conquer the whole of China, or just some coastal regions?
They were probably looking to carve out a coastal province and see where it went from there. China is so vastly big that one province on the coast of China would be practically as big as all of Mexico, so there would have been so much land for them
to divide up. They were looking for their own fortunes, conquering land to make themselves rich.

There seems to have been a meeting in 1586 to go ahead with the plan—why did it not happen?

They could not get the approval of King Philip II. The lines of communications from Manila (the capital of the Philippines) to Madrid were so long that it took two years for a message to go one way. So for King Philip in Madrid to know anything, and to control anything on the other side of the world, it took four years, and he didn't want to be giving these people who were operating in his name so far away from him this carte blanche approval to launch this invasion.

If he had given his approval, how do you think it might have played out?

Realistically, if they had managed to ferry 1,000 men, it would have been a case of Spanish plus Chinese mercenaries and Japanese pirates along with some Filipinos mercenaries. So it would have been kind of a mixed bag of fighters and they would land on the coast. The Chinese military would not have been able to stop them, as it was far too slow. The Spaniards would have established themselves on the coast and no doubt have given a long war inland. Who knows— they might have conquered an entire province. It would have probably taken the better part of half a year, at least, for the Ming military to mount some kind of offense against them, so who can say how much of an enclave the Spanish could have created in that time?

Were there any other major factors at play?

If the Spanish had invaded Korea and were trying to conquer China in 1592. But later that year, the Chinese started marshalling their forces, stripping China of a lot of the troops and sending them to Korea to defend against this Japanese invasion. If the Spanish had launched their invasion against the south coast of China at the same time, China would have been virtually denuded of troops. That would have created a very interesting scenario where they could have marched a long, long way. They might even have got all the way to Beijing.

Could they have gone even further and conquered the whole of China?

I don't think the Spanish could have replaced the emperor and made the whole of China Spanish. But I suspect they could have gone a very long way because these guys were gutsy, they had tremendous hutzpah, and they moved fast. The Chinese moved slowly. If the conquistadors had marched to Nanjing, the old capital, they could have taken it. They could have taken a huge chunk of the country. It would have been kind of a mixed bag of fighters and they might have conquered an entire province. It would have probably taken the better part of half a year, at least, for the Ming military to mount some kind of offense against them, so who can say how much of an enclave the Spanish could have created in that time?

How would the conquest of China have improved Spain's position back in Europe?

The Thirty Years' War was just around the corner [from 1618 to 1648]. A warmer Spain arguably would have been stronger and the lay of the land when the fighting was over might have been very different. Spain, enriched by its Chinese possessions, might also have been better able to hold onto its most rebellious territory—Portugal's emergence as a sovereign nation in the mid-16th century could have been put off for 100 or more years.

What if... Spain conquered China?
BURIAL PRACTICES

From mummies to sky burials, the way we dispose of our dead has varied down the ages.
Nestled in the picturesque Austrian Alps, the fortress of Schloss Itter had been requisitioned into a satellite facility of the dreaded Dachau concentration camp since 1943. In May 1945, the castle held a number of French VIPs under the watchful eye of their SS guards. Once it became clear that the war was lost, the guards abandoned their posts, leaving the prisoners in control of the castle - but at the mercy of roving bands of SS hellbent on executing any enemies of the Third Reich.

Not wanting to meet this grizzly fate, the castle’s handyman, Zvonimir Cucović was sent to find the advancing Allied forces and return with reinforcements. But the first soldiers he ran into were German, led by the pragmatic Major Josef ‘Sepp’ Gangl. Sensing the war was lost, Gangl decided to throw his lot in with the French trapped in the castle. These were not men who blindly followed the party line, and the fact that they were not targeted by anti-Nazi partisans operating in the area could show as much.

After securing the help of the Germans, the US army was located and a strong relief force was quickly put together. However, they were turned back by a fierce artillery barrage. Meanwhile, a few kilometres away, word of the situation had reached tank commander Captain Jack Lee. Not knowing that the other relief force had been turned back, he quickly gathered an impromptu force, including Gangl’s men, and raced to the castle’s rescue.

On approach to Schloss Itter, Lee had only around 20 Germans, seven Americans and one Sherman tank under his command. After a brief skirmish they reached the fortress and it wasn’t long before SS units on the mountain opened fire. Lighting up the night with machine gun and small arms fire, they continued the barrage until the early morning. After dawn, the boom of artillery signalled the beginning of the attack. An artillery shell tore into the Sherman guarding the gate, causing the tank to erupt in a ball of flame. At this signal, the SS started racing towards the castle. Lee immediately ordered his men to pour round after round into the attacking force, keeping them at bay and preventing them entering the castle grounds. As supplies began to run low, the Allies readied themselves for the final push. Just then, the sound of cannon fire echoed around the castle. The American relief force had finally arrived and broken through, easily driving off the remaining SS forces.

As Gangl was killed during the battle, we cannot know what kind of pardon or punishment he would have received. His men, while they fought bravely alongside the Allies, were immediately sent to a prisoner of war camp and they then faded into obscurity. A day of fighting for the Allies had not undone years of fighting for the Nazi regime. Lee received the Distinguished Service Cross in honour of actions. His brash and uncouth manner offended the French politicians sensibilities but his leadership saw his tiny unit holdout and beat a much larger and better equipped force. Only a few men lost their lives - Major Gangl and a couple of Wehrmacht defenders. The SS losses are not known but must have been in the dozens. The remainder of the unit dissolved into the mountains after the attack, their strength crushed and will broken.
**WEHRMACHT INFANTRY**

**KEY UNIT**

The German soldiers who threw their lot in with the Allies to save civilians from further bloodshed. In front of the main gate to perpetrators of German war crimes.

**Strengths:** They were tired and the French POWs are less than attack against the odds.

**Weaknesses:** They could have no bargained for American tanks.

**M4 'EASY EIGHT' SHERMAN**

**KEY WEAPON**

A versatile carriage for a lost cause.

**Strengths:** Its impervious to small arms fire.

**Weaknesses:** Wimmer was fighting a lost cause.

**CAPTAIN JACK LEE**

**LEADER**

A great cavalry leader, Lee was an alchemist who possessed a keen tactical mind. Strengths: He inspired his soldiers to fight against the odds.

**Weaknesses:** He inspired his soldiers to fight against the odds.

**SEBASTIAN WIMMER**

**LEADER**

A devout Nazi. Winner and his men trained the Austrian countryside hunting down perceived traitors of the Third Reich.

**Strengths:** His fanatical bravery and his men trained the Austrian countryside hunting down perceived traitors of the Third Reich.

**Weaknesses:** Winner was fighting a lost cause.

**Artillery to the rescue**

With several of the Wehrmacht soldiers down and Major Gargioli having caught a sniper's bullet, the situation is looking grim for the LEADER of the US reinforcements the Third Reich.

**Run, Jean, run!**

Tennis star Jean Borotra volunteers to run through the SS gauntlet to update the Allied forces on the situation. In heroic fashion, he evades the soldiers of the desperate situation to near the US forces.

**Overwhelming odds**

With the SS relentlessly pressing the attack, Lee realized his men will soon run out of ammunition.

**Man the walls**

Destroying the Sherman is the signal for the SS to begin their main assault. Small teams race towards the walls with grappling hooks, looking to scale them and overhaul the defenders. Methodical fire from the walls keeps the attackers at bay and the heavy fighting rages along the castle walls as lift for lift is thrown from the woods.

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**Victory**

With the full might of the US army brought down on them, the remaining SS units scatter onto the mountains and melt away, no longer is it a threat as the war or the local population. While their losses are not recorded, they must be high compared to the three-dual Wehrmacht soldiers. The SS are whisked away for debriefing while the Wehrmacht soldiers are immediately packed away to a prisoner of war camp.
Elizabeth Lamb
Viscountess Melbourne

Labelled ‘the cleverest of women’ by Byron, this Georgian socialite rose to the pinnacle of high society while flouting all of its rules.

Elizabeth, Lady Melbourne, was the mother of William Lamb, Queen Victoria’s first prime minister. While he was seen as the very essence of patrician Victorian respectability, his mother was notorious. A lady who refused to conform to today’s standards of a ‘good woman’ of the time, she did what she had to do to get ahead in suffocating Georgian high society.

During her lifetime, Lady Melbourne was compared to the scheming Marquise de Merteuil, the siren in Pierre Choderlos de Laclos’ novel Dangerous Liaisons, who used seduction as a social weapon. It was said by her circle of female Georgian friends that she could never look at a marriage without trying to wreck it.

Together with society celebrity Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire, and artist Anne Damer, she was portrayed as one of the three witches from Shakespeare’s Macbeth. In the portrait, the women float around a cauldron mixing spells to cast on their society friends. Disapproving society diarist Lady Mary Coke noted: “They have chosen the Scene where they compose their Cauldron but instead of finger of Birth-strangled babe etc their Cauldron is composed of roses and carnations and I daresay they think their charm more irresistible than all the magic of the Witches.”

But Elizabeth’s spells were far more dangerous than those Shakespearean sorceries. She seemed to live by an unwritten rule that she encouraged the duchess of Devonshire to follow – that a lady had to be loyal to her husband until she proved him with an affair. After that, women were free to follow their own interests – just as their husbands did. Georgiana, under her influence, embarked on a disastrous love affair with the young Charles Grey; later Earl Grey, and the even secretly gave birth to his daughter while in exile on the Continent.

Elizabeth no doubt felt free to have affairs of her own as a result of her own experience. Her husband, Sir Peniston Lamb, began an affair with celebrated courtesan and actress Sophia Baddeley, while Elizabeth was pregnant with her first son. It was said by her circle of female Georgian friends that she could never look at a marriage without trying to wreck it. After that, women were to follow Elizabeth quickly. She seemed to be free of the constraints of society, in which the witty young Georgiana was composed of roses, and her husband, Sir Peniston Lamb, began an affair with celebrated courtesan and actress Sophia Baddeley, while Elizabeth was pregnant with her first son.
It was a marriage of convenience—a deal that Etelka Langrath calls in Richard Friend’s (Sheridan) face: The Brisk a "smirched maiden". Sheridan was one of the shining circle of Georgian figures with the Whig leader Charles James Fox, who entertained their friends with their biting wit at Lady Melbourne’s salon at Melbourne House, which she had built off Piccadilly with over £60,000 of her husband’s fortune.

In May 1777, Melbourne and the bon ton turned out to see the first night of Sheridan’s play The School for Scandal, which satisfied his friends in the audience. They roared with laughter at Lady Tattie—thought by many to represent Elizabeth’s friend Georgiana—being brought by her husband for a sending forth, Lady Snevill captured Lady Melbourne’s acid tongue. "Pitiful, there’s no possibility of being sorry without a little ill nature: the malice of a good thing is the barb that makes it stick." In this play, Lady Snevill reproaches the attempts of Joseph Surface to seduce her but in real life, Elizabeth was soon pregnant by her long-term love. George Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, owner of Petworth house in West Sussex and patron of artists including JMW Turner. Elizabeth had twice by him but they died shortly after their birth. In the summer of 1778, Lady Melbourne became pregnant again by Lord Egremont. Elizabeth was part of the female army of visitors attracted to the vast military encampment of accommodating 15,000 soldiers and militiamen on the North Downs of Kent at the tiny hamlet of Coxheath. The soldiers were there to repel a threatened French invasion but it quickly became notorious for the officers’ nocturnal sexual manoeuvres. While she was at the camp that long, hot summer, Lady Melbourne and the Earl of Egremont allegedly participated in similar night-time meetings. William Lamb was born on 15 March 1779 at Melbourne House, so the future prime minister may have been conceived in a marquee in the camp at Coxheath. William grew up as the second son with no prospect of a private fortune until Lord Melbourne’s will, Fermont died childless in 1805.

That Gaussen Williams’s prospects and he proposed to Lady Caroline Ponsonby, the bountifull and wifely daughter of Georgiana’s sister Henrietta, Countess of Bessborough. However, their marriage was quickly shattered when Caroline had a very public affair with a well-known rake, Godfrey Webster, which brought a constricting rebuke in a letter from her mother-in-law: ‘‘When any one knows the opinion of the World, sooner or later they will feel the consequences of it...’’ Unhappily, Caroline fell hopelessly in love with the poet Lord Byron in 1812 when he burst onto the scene with the publication of his epic poem Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage. But when Byron quickly tired of Caroline, Lady Melbourne used all of her charm, wit and influence to persuade him to marry her niece Annabella Milbanke instead. Elizabeth was 62 but she became close to Byron who was 24, so close that they were accused of becoming lovers. Lady Melbourne succeeded in destroying Caroline’s affair with Byron to rescue her young reputation but it was at the cost of Annabella’s happiness. She accused Lady Melbourne of counselling Lord Byron’s low affair with his own half sister and the scandal of a divorce forced Byron to flee to the Continent for good. Some sources even go so far as to say that he was an abusive husband to Annabella. It has been said by some that Lady Melbourne climbed the social ladder on her back. She certainly traded sexual favours in a small circle of male friends for privilege and power but Elizabeth did show more maturity and better judgment than most of the men of her acquaintance.

In an age when women were barred from any official role in politics, Elizabeth was instrumental in making sure the Whigs retained some influence over Prince George when he became ruler in 1811. On a more personal level, she helped her husband achieve success and saved her son’s career. William went on to become prime minister and mentor to a young Queen Victoria, who in turn went on to name a city after him—Melbourne, Australia.

Elizabeth’s son William, who would later become prime minister,

Sir Peniston’s hapless pursuit of Sophia— and the fortune he spent on her — was exposé in a scandalous Georgian kiss-and-tell memoir penned by Richard Friend, Elizabeth Steele. Elizabeth did not get mad — she got even. Her son’s birth was the trigger for Elizabeth to embark on a marriage in the camp at Coxheath. William grew up as the second son with no prospect of a private fortune until Lord Melbourne’s will, Fermont died childless in 1805. That Gaussen Williams’s prospects and he proposed to Lady Caroline Ponsonby, the bountiful and wifely daughter of Georgiana’s sister Henrietta, Countess of Bessborough. However, their marriage was quickly shattered when Caroline had a very public affair with a well-known rake, Godfrey Webster, which brought a constricting rebuke in a letter from her mother-in-law: ‘‘When any one knows the opinion of the World, sooner or later they will feel the consequences of it...’’ Unhappily, Caroline fell hopelessly in love with the poet Lord Byron in 1812 when he burst onto the scene with the publication of his epic poem Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage. But when Byron quickly tired of Caroline, Lady Melbourne used all of her charm, wit and influence to persuade him to marry her niece Annabella Milbanke instead. Elizabeth was 62 but she became close to Byron who was 24, so close that they were accused of becoming lovers. Lady Melbourne succeeded in destroying Caroline’s affair with Byron to rescue her young reputation but it was at the cost of Annabella’s happiness. She accused Lady Melbourne of counselling Lord Byron’s low affair with his own half sister and the scandal of a divorce forced Byron to flee to the Continent for good. Some sources even go so far as to say that he was an abusive husband to Annabella. It has been said by some that Lady Melbourne climbed the social ladder on her back. She certainly traded sexual favours in a small circle of male friends for privilege and power but Elizabeth did show more maturity and better judgment than most of the men of her acquaintance.

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Bluffer’s Guide

The Assassination of Martin Luther King

**What was it?**

Martin Luther King Jr arrived in Memphis, Tennessee, to support the sanitation workers who were striking in the city over poor work conditions. His flight had been delayed following a bomb scare but he eventually arrived in Memphis and checked into the Lorraine Motel. He complained to his aides that he was suffering from a migraine and initially decided that he would not make his planned appearance at the Mason Temple. However, King recovered and delivered his famous “I’ve Been to the Mountaintop” speech to the crowd.

The next day, King was getting ready to attend a dinner at a local minister’s home. At 6.01pm, he was shot while he stood on his motel balcony and he was declared dead an hour later. He was 39 years old.

After his tragic death, many people have seen King’s last public speech as a premonition as he discussed the possibility that he may not live much longer: “I’ve seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you. But I want you to know tonight, that we, as a people, will get to the Promised Land.”

**What were the consequences?**

James Earl Ray, an escaped convict and white supremacist, was seen fleeing the crime scene and his fingerprints were found on the gun. After a two-month manhunt, he was captured at Heathrow Airport, having travelled to the UK with a fake Canadian passport.

Ray pleaded guilty in March 1969 and was sentenced to 99 years in prison. But three days later, he claimed that he was a victim of a conspiracy and tried to withdraw his plea. The motion was denied, as were his dozens of other requests for a trial during the next 29 years.

In the days immediately following King’s assassination, outrage spread across the United States and riots broke out in over 100 cities, causing damage worth an estimated $65 million. In the coming years, civil rights activists increasingly embraced the militancy of the Black Panther movement - already in ascendency in King’s final days - over nonviolent protest.

**Who was involved?**

**Martin Luther King Jr** (1929-68)

As leader of the Civil Rights Movement, he advocated nonviolence to tackle inequality and received the Noble Peace Prize.

**James Earl Ray** (1928-98)

Criminal and white supremacist. James Earl Ray pleaded guilty to murder to avoid a jury trial but he later recanted his confession.

**Ralph Abernathy** (1926-90)

A fellow leader of the Civil Rights Movement and a close friend of King’s. Abernathy succeeded him as president of the SCLC.

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**Presidential Proclamation**

President Lyndon B Johnson proclaimed Sunday 7 April 1968 as a national day of mourning for the civil rights leader’s death.
Did you know?

Moussaka is perhaps best described as a meat and vegetable stew made with alternating layers of sliced aubergines and minced beef or lamb. Today, it is considered to be Greece’s national dish and this is in part due to master chef Nikolaos Tselementes, who radically rewrote the recipe in the 1920s. He added a béchamel sauce out of the mistaken belief that all European cooking - in this case, French cuisine - ultimately had its roots in Ancient Greece. However, while Tselementes’ recipe sought to excise an Eastern influence that he thought was introduced during Ottoman rule in Greece, the earliest recorded recipe for moussaka has actually been found in a 13th-century Arabic text known as the Baghdad Cookbook. The following recipe takes inspiration from the Baghdad Cookbook version but as the original text is quite vague, we’ve had to improvise. Before starting, it is important to remember that a great moussaka is a labour of love! It is time-consuming but the end result is definitely worth it.

Have you made it? Let us know!

## Ingredients

**FOR THE VEGETABLE LAYERS**
- 3 aubergines, cut lengthways into 1cm slices
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp allspice
- 8 medium tomatoes, peeled and sliced
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 2 bell peppers, chopped
- 5 tsp fresh basil
- 40ml olive oil
- Salt and pepper
- 400ml water

**FOR THE MEAT FILLING**
- 500g minced beef or lamb
- 500g onions, finely chopped
- 2 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 4 eggs
- 120g grated graviera cheese or cheddar
- 90ml dry red wine
- Salt and pepper
- 400g natural yoghurt
- 700g natural yoghurt
- 4 eggs
- 100g grated gouda cheese or cheddar
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tsp of blackberry

**FOR THE YOGHURT CREAM**
- 250g onions, finely chopped
- 2 eggs
- 120g grated graviera cheese or cheddar
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tsp of blackberry

## Method

1. Place the aubergines at the bottom of a dish, sprinkle them with salt and cover with cold water. Move to the side and leave for 1 hour, then remove them and give them a rinse. Drain them and pat them dry with kitchen towel.
2. Preheat the oven to 120°C. Sprinkle your tomato slices with salt and olive oil, place them in the oven for 1 hour, remove and allow them to cool.
3. Meanwhile, add oil to a saucepan and fry the meat mixture. Repeat this so that you have two layers of each.
4. Add the mince, onion, garlic and spices to the bowl and whisk until a smooth cream is formed. Add the cheese and mix so that it is dispersed evenly. Then, top your moussaka with a generous layer of the mixture.
5. Pour in the wine, stirring for two to three minutes while the alcohol evaporates. Next, add the tomato, bay leaf, parsley, salt and pepper with caraway, Cinnamon and ginger are all suggested, so feel free to use these if you wish.
6. Pour in the wine, stirring for two to three minutes while the alcohol evaporates. Next, add the tomato, bay leaf, parsley, salt and pepper with caraway, Cinnamon and ginger are all suggested, so feel free to use these if you wish.
7. Create a layer on top with half of the tomato slices and peppers, and then top this with a layer of the meat mixture. Repeat this so that you have two layers of each.
8. Pour the yoghurt, eggs, salt and pepper into a bowl and whisk until a smooth cream is formed. Add the cheese and mix so that it is dispersed evenly. Then, top your moussaka with a generous layer of the mixture.
9. Scatter a little bit of blackberry on the top if you wish, or spare tomato slices. Bake your moussaka for about 45-50 minutes until it is browned on the surface and then leave it to stand for 20 minutes before serving.
DAUGHTERS OF THE WINTER QUEEN

The tale of five women and their determination to survive in a chaotic world

Author Nancy Goldstone Publisher Weidenfeld & Nicolson Price £20 Released Out now

The story of the Winter Queen, Elizabeth Stuart, is sadly one that remains largely the stories of her formidable daughters. The book, Daughters of the Winter Queen, beautifully one chapter to the next, making it difficult to put down. Goldstone’s immersive style of writing is also a winner, especially in the heartrending moments of the deaths of Elizabeth’s brothers, Henry and Charles.

The transition is the easiest, evident with the Gunpowder Plot conspirators hoping to replace James with the princess. A quest to find her suitable, Protestant husband leads to Elizabeth’s betrothal to Frederick, Elector Palatine, an ambitious man far below her rank. Their marriage comes with the promise that King James will support Frederick in his quest to become the king of Bohemia.

But political intrigue, coupled with her father’s failure to uphold his end of the bargain, results in Frederick and Elizabeth resigning for a single winter (hence their shared souvenirs, the Winter King and Queen). The pair took refuge in the Netherlands. Just over a decade later, Elizabeth is widowed but she remains determined to survive nonetheless. She seeks advantageous marriages for her children. One of the most striking aspects of this book from the outset is just how easily it is to read - quite often, well-researched works like this can be bogged down by academic language that fails to resonate with the everyday reader. However, Daughters of the Winter Queen flows beautifully from one chapter to the next, making it difficult to put down. Goldstone’s immersive style of writing is also a winner, especially in the heartrending moments of the deaths of Elizabeth’s brothers, Henry and Charles.

The book is remarkably balanced considering Goldstone had five intelligent women to discuss, with each given her own chapter for each section. It was enjoyable to learn about the artistic talents of Elizabeth’s daughters as well as the respective paths they took. Of course, out of the four it is Sophia’s winter (hence their shared souvenirs, the Winter King and Queen). The pair took refuge in the Netherlands. Just over a decade later, Elizabeth is widowed but she remains determined to survive nonetheless. She seeks advantageous marriages for her children. One of the most striking aspects of this book from the outset is just how easily it is to read - quite often, well-researched works like this can be bogged down by academic language that fails to resonate with the everyday reader. However, Daughters of the Winter Queen flows beautifully from one chapter to the next, making it difficult to put down. Goldstone’s immersive style of writing is also a winner, especially in the heartrending moments of the deaths of Elizabeth’s brothers, Henry and Charles.

Additional Note: "The book is remarkably balanced considering Goldstone had five intelligent women to discuss, with each given her own chapter for each section. It was enjoyable to learn about the artistic talents of Elizabeth’s daughters as well as the respective paths they took. Of course, out of the four it is Sophia’s winter (hence their shared souvenirs, the Winter King and Queen)."
SWEET COUNTRY
A provocative Western challenging Australia's past

Certificate 15 Director Warwick Thornton Cast Hamilton Morris, Bryan Brown, Sam Neil Released Out now

In Sweet Country, director Warwick Thornton (The Dry, winner of the prestigious Camera O’Or for Samson and Delilah in 2009) changes the long-standing tendency of reducing Aboriginal viewpoints to the fringes of Australian films in an important piece of contemporary cinema and one that necessitates today's escalating racial tensions.

Loosely based on a true story of an Aboriginal man named as Wibartba Jack in 1926, Sweet Country follows Sam Kelly, a middle-aged farmhand on preacher Fred Smith's Outback farm. Sam goes on the run with his wife Lasse after he kills violent racist Harry March in a confrontation at Sam's home. Pursued by hardened Seguatt Fletcher (Bryan Brown in his finest form), the community's evolving knowledge of the confrontation starts to cast doubt on Sam's supposed savagery, culminating in a trial filed with prejudice and emotion while fighting for the truth and the letter of the law.

As a definitive historical document, Sweet Country is unsustainable, not only for its loose connection to the real events inspiring the film, but also the way Thornton constructs the film. While the narrative seems mostly linear, it's laid out at an almost meditative pace and completely stripped of any musical score. It's dotted with clever little time jumps, which not only serve to break up the story and keep the viewer guessing as to their meaning and significance, but also reflect upon how Indigenous Australians view the concept of time itself. Touches like that, the deeply empathetic portrait of Sam and the archetypes projected across the screen make Sweet Country a spiritually truthful fable of life in the volatile outback, and one that moves as much as it informs.

LETTERS FROM BAGHDAD
Fascinating insight into Iraq's so-called 'female Laureate of Arabia'

Certificate PG Directors Sabine Krayenbühl and Zewa Odellbaum Cast Tilda Swinton, Rose Leslie, Rachel Stirling, Paul McGann, Helen Ryan, Christopher Villiers, Lucy Robinson Released Out now

Fe so long, Gertrude Bell's fascinating story has been criminally overlooked. As a hugely influential British traveler, political officer and archaeologist, she fell in love with the Middle East, overcame setbacks and helped塑造 its destiny in such a shame, then, that she has so often been dubbed the 'female Lawrence of Arabia', for her efforts more than earned her a place away from the shadow of the diplomat and military officer TE Lawrence.

Laurence of Arabia, for her efforts more than earned her a place away from the shadow of the diplomat and military officer TE Lawrence.

Letters from Baghdad is an engrossing documentary that puts Bell firmly in the spotlight. In doing so, it makes up for 2015's much-maligned epic Biographical drama Queen of the Desert. That movie saw Nicole Kidman portraying Bell, the woman who had travelled widely in Arabia and was so instrumental in helping draw the borders of Iraq after World War I. This time, Tilda Swinton portrays the role, although you never actually see the acclaimed actress on screen.

Instead, Swinton explains Bell's extraordinary journey by reading extracts from the unexpectedly insightful letters the charismatic explorer penned throughout her time in the Middle East. Directors Sabine Krayenbühl and Zewa Odellbaum accompany the audio with previously unseen footage and photographs from Bell's own collection, supplemented with documents from the Iraq National Library and Archive. Such ingredients lend the documentary an emotional depth and sense of place.

It brings the likes of TE Lawrence, Vita Sackville-West and Arab reformer Salmoni Fardal to life, their largely positive recollections act as a restraint. There is too much emphasis on fact in this case and a frustrating lack of reflection. It's been 40 years since Edward Said's book Orientalism seduced our understanding of colonialism and empire but you would not know it from this film.

Even so, it succeeds on other levels. The letters get under Bell's skin and show the warmth she had with her family. The film also highlights her dedication and intelligence as she travelled to the Ottoman Empire, defied her government and became respected in an area of the world where women needed not to exert influence. “In the desert, every newcomer is an enemy til you know him to be a friend,” she wrote. She made many friends.

Bell also learned Farsi, Arabic and Turkish and became a recognised Western expert on Eastern culture. Yet we learn that she "never mastered the art of spelling" and we get an insight into the men she loved. Still, it's not perfect. Sometimes the documentary's in-depth exploration of Bell's perspective feels like an important point – most starkly her later, negative thoughts on the Sunni prince Faisal's reign. At other times, the chronology feels out of sync. But watching Bell's rise and seeing her create a lasting legacy in the Baghdad Archaeological Museum (which, the filmmakers point out, was founded during the US invasion of 2003) is a sheer delight. The documentary also rattles with you feel you know enough about her to feel deep sadness at her untimely death, aged 58 of an apparent overdose of sleeping pills. Unfortunately, you just wish it had told you a little bit more.

Impeccably researched and packed with primary sources, it brings the history of Bell and Iraq to life.

ENGLAND'S FORGOTTEN PAST
Exploring the overlooked episodes of English history

Author Richard Tames Publisher Thames & Hudson Price £15 Released Out now

It's no secret that England is a country steeped in dramatic history. From bloody struggles for royal supremacy to the Industrial Revolution, the land of the Angles has witnessed more than enough to fill countless history books, not to mention a list of the most interesting moments seem to have been completely forgotten. Try forward Richard Tames. Divided into sections and adorned with images, Tames' work is the very definition of an engaging coffee-table read - but putting this book down for a moment proved rather difficult. A relentless stream of event listing facts and dates amasses to an immersive construction. Beginning with such early nuggets as the first written record of the British Isles, penned by the Gild of Poets of Monmouth in the 4th century BCE, who described its inhabitants as "painted people," Tames takes the reader on a campaign across the nation, examining the truth behind some supposed facts while revealing a host of entirely ignored figures and events.

Tales, for example, Daniel Boone, England's undisputed boxing champion from 1792 to 1796, archer of connecting a range of punchers in a combination and the country's first sporting superstar. Then there Alexia Soley, the founder of army catering and the 175th anniversary's answer to Jane Oliver. There are also the Berams on-Ditc From 1566 on which England found itself the subject of an invasion, from Henry of Aragon underwriting raids in 1500 to the thwarted efforts of 15 French soldiers in 757 - they failed to take Britain on a shooting spree in sampling England's aesthetic offerings.

It matters not whether you are a historical amateur or academic. This enlightening heritage of timeless truths is sure to both challenge preconceived ideas and reinforce a love of England's gripping journey to date.
WAS NAPOLEON'S DEFEAT DECIDED AT HOUGOUMONT?

“A Utter of Fleet Air Arm’s Secret Be, Planes”

—

“BEING CAPTURED WAS NOT AN OPTION”

“UNGLERB SURVIVAL BEHIND...

“ENDGAME AT YORKTOWN”

“BLOODSHED ON THE BOYNE”

Available from all good newsagents and supermarkets

Gates to Victory: Waterloo > The Kaiser’s final offensive > Yorktown > Battle of the Boyne > The Panzer’s first strike

Country: United Kingdom, Botswana

Released: 2016

GREAT BATTLES _ MILITARY MACHINES _ HEROES OF WAR _ SECRETS & INSIGHT _ INCREDIBLE PHOTOS

In the film, the future king Seretse Khama and Ruth Williams enjoy a whirlwind romance. However, in real life, Ruth was a lot more hesitant about getting together. The couple did not initially get on until they bonded over a shared love for jazz music.

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“FACT VERSUS FICTION ON THE SILVER SCREEN”

HISTORY @ HOLLYWOOD

Director: Amma Asante
Starring: David Oyelowo, Rosamund Pike, Terry Pheto, Jack Davenport, Tom Felton
Country: United Kingdom, Botswana
 Released: 2016

The epic love story of an African king and an ordinary English woman that sent shockwaves around the world - but how true is it?

VERDICT The film provides an accurate and nuanced portrayal of the controversial true story.

01 While the British did trick Seretse into leaving Bechaunaland by recalling him to London only to ban him from returning, the film includes a forced separation between the pair. In real life, Ruth followed Seretse and they lived together in London from 1951.

02 In the film, the future king Seretse Khama and Ruth Williams enjoy a whirlwind romance. However, in real life, Ruth was a lot more hesitant about getting together. The couple did not initially get on until they bonded over a shared love for jazz music.

03 While the British did trick Seretse into leaving Bechaunaland by recalling him to London only to ban him from returning, the film includes a forced separation between the pair. In real life, Ruth followed Seretse and they lived together in London from 1951.

04 Sir Alastair Canning and Rufus Lancaster are entirely fictional characters, personifying the British government’s opposition to Seretse and Ruth’s marriage. Colonial Secretary Patrick Gordon Walker was roughly equivalent to Davenport’s character in real life.

05 Winston Churchill did promise to lift Seretse’s exile if he won the 1951 general election and promptly turned it into a lifelong ban following his victory. Seretse was eventually allowed to return home, where he became prime minister in 1965.
Discover the dark charisma of Matthew Hopkins, the man who led England's war on witches.

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