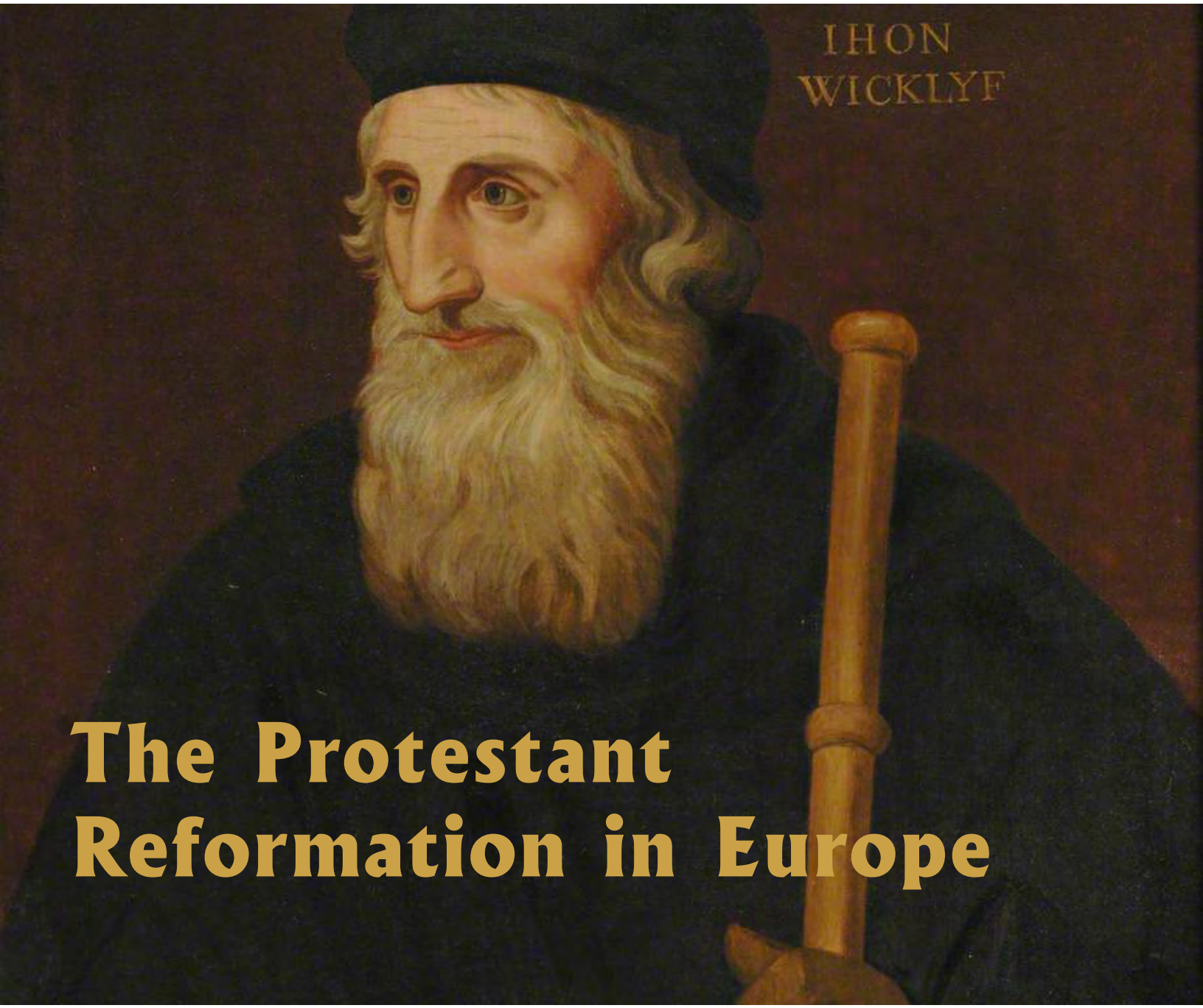
WORLD HISTORY ENCYCLOPEDIA

Members' Newsletter

November 2021

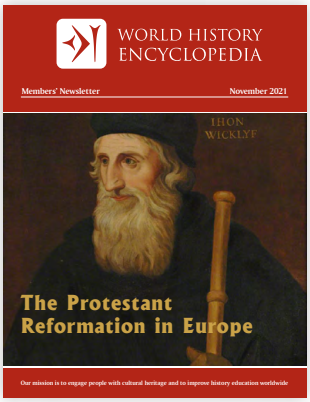


The Protestant Reformation in Europe

Our mission is to engage people with cultural heritage and to improve history education worldwide

Welcome

November 2021



I always feel that November is an interesting month of melancholia; we've got Halloween, the switch to winter time resulting in early darkness and a distinct "Winter is Coming" vibe with moody weather and the cold moving in. But wait; that's only true in the northern hemisphere! We now have three team members in the southern hemisphere: Agustina (Spanish Editor, Uruguay), Kelly (Video Editor, Australia), Liana (Social Media Manager, Australia). For them, November is the beginning of summer, warm weather, sunshine and going to the beach. Christmas is always in summer there and the Christmas depicted in movies simply doesn't match their experience at all. Working in such an international team gives us perspective, not only into other cultures but also into other ways of seeing the world.

I just met up with Joshua in person (that doesn't happen often in our global team) and we talked about how easy it is for us humans to assume that our point of view is universal, that how we see and experience the world must be true for everyone else, which of course is not the case.

We also talked about how historical documents and myths reflect this. For example, it is easy to imagine that if we lived in ancient Mesopotamia and our village, our neighbouring village, the nearby cities and all the land that we knew and could see were flooded by a particularly bad flood of the Euphrates and Tigris, we would have assumed that this was a global flood. Maybe this is how the Flood Myth found in Gilgamesh and Noah was born?

It is impossible to gain a true global understanding of how humanity views the world; it's too varied and human experiences are too divergent. However, we can take it upon ourselves to try! It sounds cliché, but one person's terrorists are indeed another person's freedom fighters. I've spoken to many Middle Easterners who had very different but well-reasoned views on global politics and found that such opposing perspectives are often based on divergent interpretations of history; and unless we understand these histories, we have no chance of achieving peace and collaboration.



Jan van der Crabben
CEO, World History Encyclopedia

In October we had 2.9 million unique readers

Why WHE Matters

"It is the past that tells us who we are. Without it, we lose our identity." - Stephen Hawking

News in Brief

We have now published more articles and definitions than we did in 2021, which was 400. We're essentially one month ahead this year, and we're going to set a new annual publication record this year, which we're very happy about!

The most-read article of November so far with over 24,000 readers was the European Discovery & Conquest of the Spice Islands.

Josh is taking a short break from early US history and is covering the Protestant Reformation in Europe, which is an important subject to truly understand the push towards the New World. Mark has completed writing about pirates and is starting to research and write about the English Civil War.

On our social media this month we have been promoting Native American Heritage Month and World Philosophy Day (18th November). We're also helping to the fundraiser for Nick Barksdale and his family. We have started a new Facebook page since our last/original one was broken.

Our Youtube channel has seen tremendous growth in the last month, reaching 26,000 subscribers and surpassing 1.5 million views! We'd also like to draw your attention to the community tab on our channel, where Kelly has started posting quizzes, which are popular with our viewers.

Our new Experts in History podcast is getting popular. With only five episodes published, we've reached 3600 downloads already! There are three more episodes to go to complete season one.

The translation department has now grown; we welcome Agustina Cardozo Sandes to the team as our new Spanish editor and translator. Spanish is still the dominant non-English language as our non-English content has now grown to make up 11% of total readership. We also added a new language to our list: Ukrainian, which now already has over 30 articles.
We also thank all the readers who are supporting our translation fundraiser, which is still ongoing!

Oxford University Press has sponsored the creation of several video interviews with the authors of some of their upcoming history books, which will hit our Youtube channel shortly, as well as several book excerpts filled with juicy bits from the latest historical research.

Unfortunately, our membership numbers are trending down. It appears that with schools having returned to in-classroom teaching, fewer parents and teachers feel the need to support our organization. We thank you, our loyal supporters, for sticking with us!

Please note that the team will go on a break between Christmas and New Year's. The final video will go out on 17 December.

2,082
definitions

1017
articles

13,070
illustrations

1,961
videos

408
3D images

2.9 million
unique readers in October

22,225
registered users

Object in Focus

Female Statue from Magna Graecia



Female terracotta statue from Magna Graecia, made in Medma (modern-day Italy), 480-460 BCE.

From the 8th century BCE, the Greeks settled southern Italy (Magna Graecia) and Sicily. Over time, the colonies became independent from their mother cities and developed their own economy and art styles. Medma and Gela's local art style used clay and bronze, as there was no marble nearby.

In the ancient world, terracotta sculpture was plentiful. Unlike carving stone, clay was available and cheap, it allowed artists to craft a variety of objects of remarkable expressiveness.

Workshops from South Italy and Sicily supplied sacred and decorative objects for diverse use in sanctuaries, settlements, and cemeteries.

Louvre Museum, Paris.

Two Minutes with...

Agustina Cardozo, Translator

She is from Uruguay, a Sworn Translator, history enthusiast and passionate about learning. She is also the Spanish Editor in World History Encyclopedia. Agustina holds a Bachelor's Degree in English/Spanish Sworn Translation and is currently pursuing a degree in Linguistics.

Are you a:



Tea/ coffee person? Coffee

Dog/cat person? Dog

Sweet/savory? Sweet

What is the first thing on your bucket list?
I would really like to spend some time living near the mountains. I adore the view and unfortunately, there are none of them in my country (Uruguay is mostly a large plain).

If you could go back in time, what period/ date would you choose? Why?
I would say the Age of the Enlightenment, because of the thrilling experience it must have been to witness the challenge of fixed dogmas and dare to think and embrace new horizons.

Where is your favourite place to do your WHE work?
Well… One of the things I like the most about my WHE work is that I can do it anywhere. Regularly, I do it at home, by the window, but where I enjoy the most is in my parent's beach house, while I hear the birds singing.

If you could meet anyone (today or from the past), who would it be? Virginia Woolf. I truly admire her work for her appreciation of life, the passage of time, and women's condition.

What is your favourite season?
Winter. I am kind of a stay-at-home person who loves cozy reading and hot coffee.

What is your favourite film?
Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind. A hopeless romantic over here!

What do you dislike most?
Dishonesty. I believe that even the worst mistake with good intentions is better than the tiniest act of dishonesty.

If you could be anything you wanted, what would it be?
A novelist, to experience limitless freedom and play with language. For me, being a translator feels like words and ideas are running all over the place, and I have to grab them, combine them, squeeze them, and make them listen to the author. Being a novelist would involve all of that, but listening to whomever I want!

Upcoming Podcast

Experts on History



Our Experts in History podcast has surpassed 3600 downloads with five episodes published. So far, we've got:



S1E1 1:00:30 October 25th 2021
EXCAVATING ARMAGEDDON
with Eric Cline



S1E2 55:19 November 1st 2021
EARLY CHRISTIANITY
with Rebecca Denova



S1E3 49:15 November 8th 2021
ALEXANDER THE GREAT & PHILIP II
with Ian Worthington



S1E4 40:59 November 15th 2021
MESOPOTAMIAN RELIGION
with Louise Pryke



S1E5 50:55 November 22nd 2021
ANCIENT PERSIA
with John Tidmarsh

The final three episodes are coming on Mondays in December, so make sure to subscribe!



General v. Academic Readers

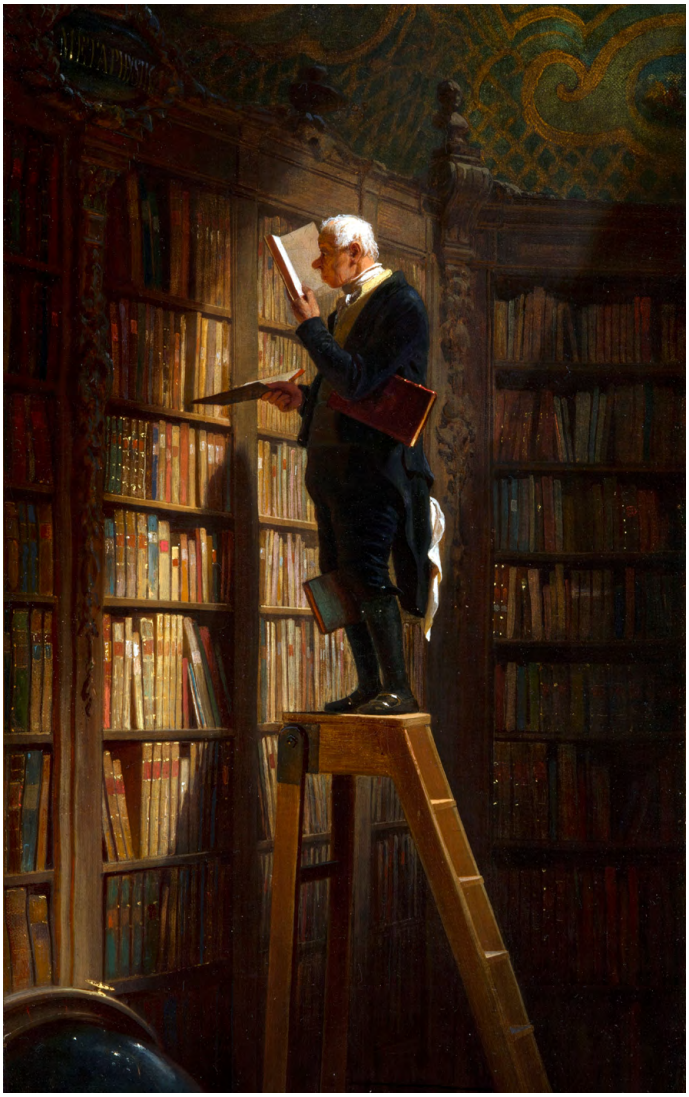
At WHE we try to strike a balance in the content we publish so that it appeals both to general and academic readers. Telling the story of history is important to us and we do not want to clutter up texts with endless references, for example. We've found that general readers prefer longer articles and the focus is on readability and finding out the really interesting or unusual aspects of a certain topic. On the other hand, WHE is read by a lot of students, teachers, and educators and we want to be useful to them, too.

The academic reader often prefers shorter articles and may be interested in a slightly different focus. If you take, for example, a specific civilization or empire, those in education are very often interested in things like why this culture prospered where it did, what were the geographical positives of the region? Things like climate, rich soil for agriculture, and proximity to waterways. A more general reader might well be interested in those things but probably wants to know more about the mythology, art, and warfare of the culture, which students also need to consider, too, of course. General readers often want confirmation that what they think they know about a topic (from other reading, watching films etc.) is accurate or not.

Another way we try to appeal to both the general and academic reader is in the way we present information. The titles of our articles are carefully chosen to make them brief and easy to see at a glance what the article is about; each article tends to have a tight focus. We don't have in-text references such as one would see in an academic paper with lots of author names and page numbers in brackets after every fact. Neither do we allow footnotes. Essentially, we want the reader to be able to read through a text and focus on the meaningful content, not necessarily where it all came from. At the same time, we want to demonstrate to readers that our writers are not just inventing facts and so we insist on a full bibliography with each article. The bibliography is an important part of our submission process and is checked by or editors for scope and reliability, and if the sources are mostly print ones and up-to-date.

Finally, I think WHE appeals to both the general and academic reader because we have writers from different backgrounds. We have working and retired university professors, post-graduates, and sometimes undergraduates writing for us on a volunteer basis. We also have general history writers, often with experience of writing in different fields and genres. Then, our editorial team, which also has many years of experience working with academic and non-academic texts, checks all articles for accuracy and edits them to ensure readability is high. It is true that sometimes a general history writer can be a bit vague or make sweeping statements without proper qualification. On the other side, academic writers can sometimes be too precise and detailed with too many caveats to each point made. In these cases, our editors step in and help the writer achieve the right balance for our readers.

These factors combined, ensure, I think, that WHE can find a happy compromise between a general and academic-like presentation, thus ensuring we can appeal to the widest possible audience. At least, that is our aim!



The Bookworm (fragment), *Carl Spitzweg, c.1851*

Content Highlights



Meeting of Governor Carver and Massasoit, *H.L. Stevens, Engraving, c. 1870*

Thanksgiving Day: A Brief History

The United States holiday of Thanksgiving is generally understood to be inspired by the harvest feast celebrated by the citizens of Plymouth Colony (later known as pilgrims) and the Native Americans of the Wampanoag Confederacy in the fall of 1621 CE. Although there is evidence of earlier thanksgiving celebrations in the Americas by the Spanish in the 16th century CE and at the Jamestown Colony of Virginia in 1610 CE, following what is known as the "starving times" of 1609 CE, these are not recognized as the "First Thanksgiving", a term coined by the editor Alexander Young in 1841 CE referring specifically to the account of the 1621 CE event as given by the Plymouth Colony's chroniclers William Bradford and Edward Winslow in Mourt's Relation (published 1622 CE), the earliest work on the first year of the establishment of Plymouth Colony. read more>

Ten Notorious French Pirates

Piracy has involved many nationalities over the centuries, but one of the prominent groups in the medieval and early modern periods was the French pirates, who terrorised the Atlantic, the Caribbean, and the Indian Ocean. French writers often preferred to use the term filibuster and corsair for pirates who operated as privateers.

At one point or another during the golden age of piracy France held valuable territories in the Carribean like Haiti, Grenada, and Tobago, as well as a lot of land in North America. It comes to no surprise that many of the pirates operating there were themselves French and here are presented ten such figures who have made their mark in the annals of crimes at sea. read more>



French corsairs of Saint Malo, *Les Français Illustres, by Gustave Demoulin, 1898*



Hus at the Council of Constance 1415, *Karl Friedrich Lessing, 1842*

Hussite Wars

The Hussite Wars (1419 to c. 1434) were a series of conflicts fought in Bohemia (modern-day Czech Republic) between followers of the reformer Jan Hus and Catholic loyalists toward the end of the Bohemian Reformation (c. 1380 to c. 1436). Although the Catholics won, the Hussites were granted the freedom of religion they had fought for.

Although the Hussite Wars were sparked by the execution of Hus, the Bohemian Reformation had been underway for decades, and calls for reform, as well as antagonism toward the Roman Catholic Church, were nothing new. Priests and theologians in Bohemia had been advocating for reform since before 1380. The Church had split into the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Eastern Orthodox Church in 1054 (the Great Schism) which, to many reformers, suggested serious problems in its vision and policies. read more>

by Ibolya Horvath, Editor



_Editing

Editing is a lot like doing household chores. It is time-consuming, fundamental to daily life (at a publisher), and yet it is often taken for granted and likely to go completely unnoticed. If the person you live with takes the garbage out while you are away, there is a good chance you will not notice it when you come home, while an overflowing garbage can is immediately visible and can be a source of conflict. It is the same with editing; the reader will only notice the mistakes, the lack of editing. If the job is properly done, the editor should be completely invisible to the outside world. This process that the reader is not supposed to see takes several hours per article, depending on the author, the topic, and the length of the text.

The first test every submission must pass is the plagiarism check. We use an online tool to make sure the article is the author's original work. Plagiarising authors are instantly rejected and are not allowed to submit articles anymore. This may seem harsh, but while the tool we use is fairly reliable, it can only compare texts that are available in digital form. If an author plagiarises a text that is only available in print, it may slip through and so it becomes a matter of trust.

Next we check the bibliography. At least half of the sources must be print material: books or academic journals. Only reputable online sources (e.g. museum websites) are allowed. The use of dubious source material such as Wikipedia, personal blogs, or books of bad reputation (i.e. pseudoscience) also leads to instant rejection.

Only if the article passes these two basic tests do we start reading. Unfortunately, we don't have the editorial capacity to extensively rework articles and so any piece that would require significant changes is rejected. The three main reasons for rejection at this stage are bias, inaccuracy, and poor style. Unfortunately, history is often used to push a nationalist or religious agenda. While there is some inherent bias in all of us, we strive to be as neutral as possible. Offending pieces are simply rejected because bias is very difficult to remove from an article and the author may not even be aware of it.

Style is just as important as neutrality. While some parts of history are undeniably more interesting than others, bad writing can turn any subject into a dull, difficult-to-read article. Perhaps surprisingly, style has very little to do with the author's competence. A PhD does not necessarily make a person a good writer, and we sometimes receive very detailed, in-depth articles that are simply too academic for a general audience. On the other end of the scale, we see very well-written, pleasure-to-read pieces that are superficial and/or full of errors and inaccuracies. And of course, there is the worst type: the combination of incompetence and bad writing. This usually takes the form of university or even high school papers, or articles written with the sole purpose of putting a link into them. Needless to say, all of these are rejected.



A Girl Writing; The Pet Goldfinch, *Henriette Browne, ca. 1870*

Now that we have separated the wheat from the chaff, the actual work can begin. This includes fact-checking, correcting typos, grammar, and spelling, adding subheadings and making structural changes, taking out irrelevant parts, adding dates and other essential details, making the text visually appealing by adding images and videos, tagging, and making the text both reader- and search engine-friendly by using the most important keywords and ensuring the text links to other related definitions and articles. And of course, the final step, pushing the green 'Publish' button.

On average, every sentence undergoes at least one small change. Some might consider this tedious work, but it is incredibly rewarding to be part of an author's success. Not everyone wants to be in the limelight; what happens off-stage may only be appreciated by the stars of the show, but the editor is happy to be invisible to the public.

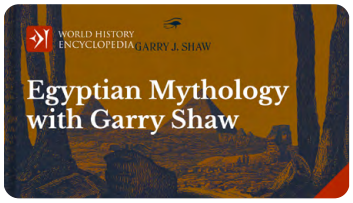
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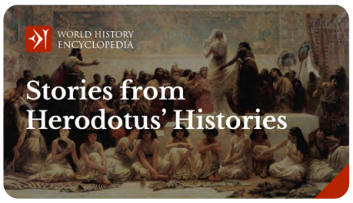




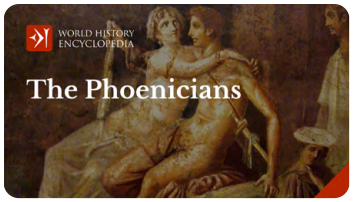
















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From the cartographer's desk



A map illustrating the flows of trade, the routes of the Spanish Treasure Fleets as well as the shifting balance of colonial power between the Spanish, English, and French Empires in the 1700s Spanish Main and the West Indies.

by Joshua J. Mark

4 November 1922: Discovery of the Tomb of Tutankhamun

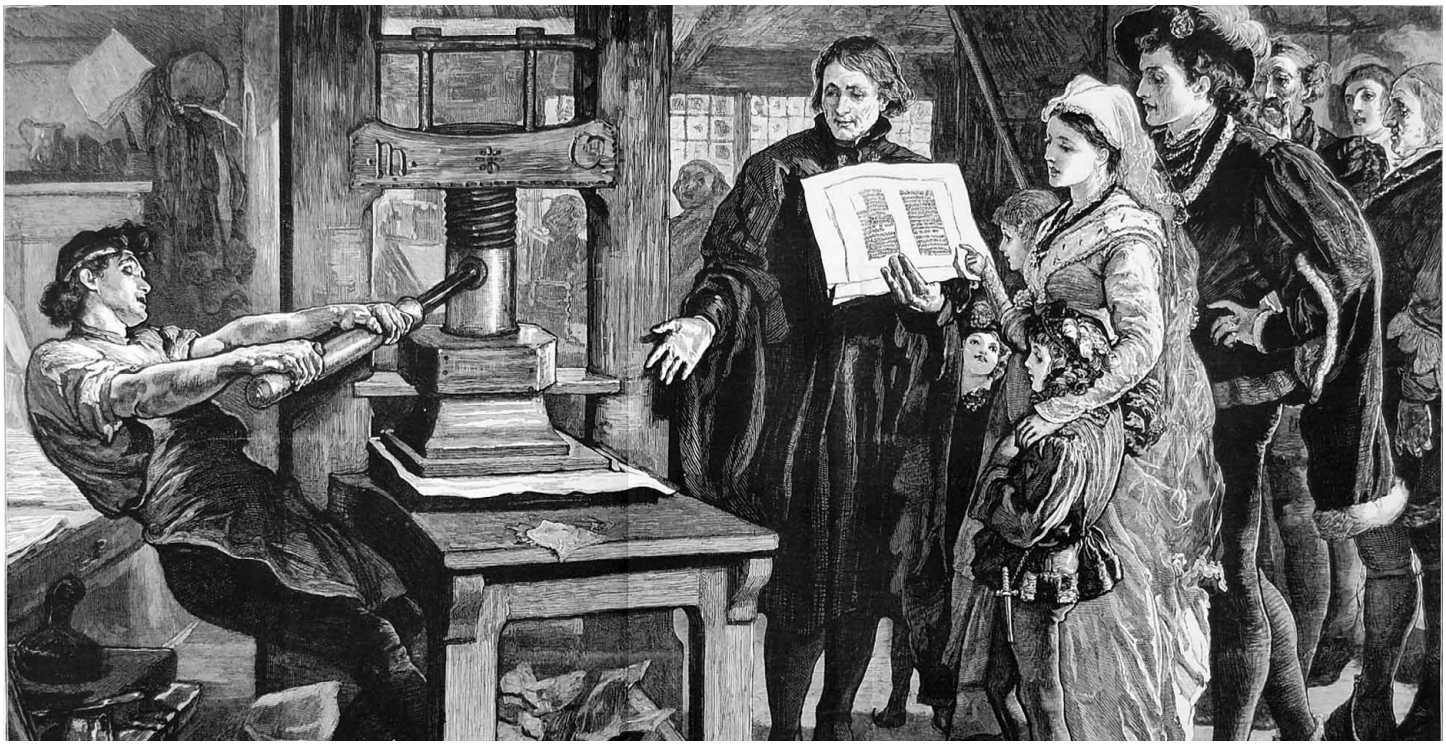
On 4 November 1922 Archaeologist Howard Carter discovered the tomb of the Egyptian pharaoh Tutankhamun (r. c. 1336 – c. 1327 BCE) intact, the most famous archaeological discovery of the 20th century. Carter had to wait to open the tomb until his financial backer, Lord Carnavon, arrived on 26 November, bringing a large contingent of the world press with him. Afterwards, reporters and the general public continually interrupted Carter's work on the tomb. When Carnavon died unexpectedly on 5 April 1923, the media publicized the event as evidence of the Curse of the Pharaohs which was said to kill anyone who disturbed the tomb. Carter knew this was nonsense – Carnavon had died of blood poisoning – but allowed the story to spread because it scared people away and he was able to work in peace.



The Moment Carter Opens the Tomb, *photo by Harry Burton, New York Times, 1922*

18 November 1477: The Wrong Date of the First Book Printed in English

November 18, 1477 is the date most frequently given for the first book printed in the English language, the Dictes and Sayenges of the Phylosophers (The Sayings of the Philosophers), but this work was actually the third work in English William Caxton printed. The first book printed in English was The Recuyell of the Histories of Troye (A Collection of the History of Troy) by the French writer Raoul LeFevre. Caxton translated the work into English and printed it in 1473 with the help of his associate Colard Mansion in Belgium. After he returned to England, and set up his press at Westminster, Caxton printed Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, undated, and then the Dictes and Sayenges of the Phylosophers on 18 November 1477, clearly dated, which is how this book has come to be known as the first work printed in English.



William Caxton showing specimens of his printing to King Edward IV and his Queen, *The Graphic, 1877*

DID YOU KNOW?

by Joshua J. Mark

November was the ninth month of the Roman calendar until the 8th century BCE when January and February were added and it became the 11th month. It kept its old name, however, from the Latin novem meaning “nine”. The Roman festival of Brumalia was held around the 24th of November honoring the deities Saturn and Ceres and thanking them for an abundant harvest. This celebration ushered in Saturnalia in December, one of the greatest, if not the greatest, of the Roman festivals.

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