

G U R P S<sup>®</sup>

# WHO'S WHO 1

52 OF HISTORY'S MOST INTRIGUING CHARACTERS



COMPILED BY PHIL MASTERS

STEVE JACKSON GAMES

# REAL CHARACTERS

Only a few individuals really stand out in all of history. People who ruled the known world. People who changed the known. People you would like to have known. People you'd pray to avoid.

*GURPS Who's Who 1* makes it easy to introduce dozens of these stand-outs into your campaign. Match tactics with Julius Caesar, cross blades with Harald Hardradi, or share dance moves with Mata Hari. This collection of descriptions and statistics for 52 of history's most intriguing people allows players to benchmark their characters against the best the real world had to offer.

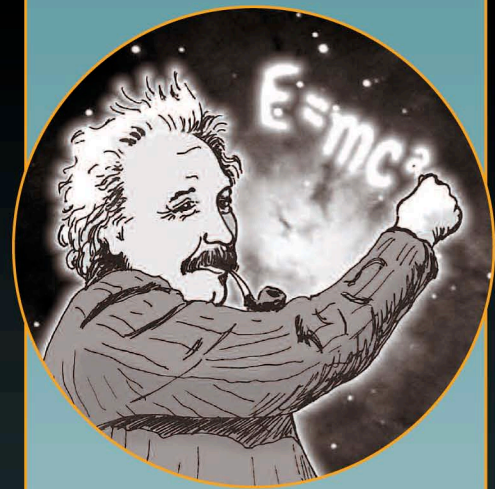
It also provides a cornucopia of adventure seeds that are stranger than fiction. From the *real* Dread Pirate Roberts to a roistering aristocratic astronomer sporting a silver nose, from a doctor so brilliant that his foes ran him out of town to a king with 1,200 wives but no heir – every writeup offers enough inspiration to launch its own campaign. Each one also offers alternative “What If?” scenarios for time-traveling or fantastic settings.

Drawn from every continent and 3,500 years of history, the figures in *GURPS Who's Who 1* offer something for every area of interest. You also get notes on using historical figures in games, and on converting your own research into a *GURPS* character sheet.

**Make History!**



**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**  
www.sjgames.com



*GURPS Basic Set* and *Compendium I: Character Creation* are required to interpret the character statistics in this book. *GURPS* GMs may wish to use this supplement in conjunction with *GURPS Time Travel*, but the biographical information in this book is not tied to a specific setting or set of rules, and can be used to enhance any campaign.

## WHO'S WHO WHO'S WHO:

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**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**

# CONTENTS

**INTRODUCTION..... 3**  
 About the Compiler..... 3  
*About GURPS*..... 3

**1. BIRTH, LUCK, AND GENIUS ... 4**

**Kings, Saints, Generals, and Poets..... 5**  
 Historical Impact..... 5  
*Selection Criteria*..... 5  
 Great Men as NPCs..... 6  
*104 Most Important People in History*..... 6  
 Great Men as PCs..... 7  
**Playing Variations: Changing History**..... 9  
 Assassination..... 9  
*Malleability Rating and the Great*..... 9  
*Great Men or Irresistible Forces*..... 10  
 Saving Lives and Extending Lifespans..... 10  
 Diversions and Distractions..... 10  
 Dropping Hints..... 11

**2. THE ANCIENT WORLD AND DARK AGES..... 12**

Who Might Have Been?..... 13  
**Akhenaten** (c.1388 B.C.-1362 B.C.)  
 Heretic pharaoh, dedicated monotheist..... 14  
**David ben-Jesse** (c.1040 B.C.-968 B.C.)  
 Shepherd, warrior, bandit, king, and psalmist..... 16  
**Cyrus the Great** (6th century B.C.)  
 Founder of Persia, dedicated unifier..... 18  
**Xenophon** (431 B.C.-c.351 B.C.)  
 Soldier, writer, and leader of the Ten Thousand..... 20  
**Aristotle** (384 B.C.-322 B.C.)  
 “The master of those who know”..... 22  
**Alexander the Great** (356 B.C.-323 B.C.)  
 Empire-builder and greatest of generals..... 24  
**Ch'in Shih Huang Ti** (259 B.C.-210 B.C.)  
 Paranoid book-burner, and unifier of China..... 26  
**Julius Caesar** (102 B.C.-44 B.C.)  
 First of the Caesars, conqueror and politician..... 28  
**Boudica** (c. A.D. 25-60)  
 Warrior-queen, leader of the British revolt against Rome..... 30  
**Constantine the Great** (c.274-337)  
 First Christian Roman Emperor..... 32  
**Justinian I** (482-565)  
 Law-giving emperor, shaper of Byzantium..... 34  
**Theodora** (497-548)  
 Actress risen to empress, and Justinian’s formidable wife..... 36

**3. THE MIDDLE AGES ..... 38**

Who Might Have Been?.....39  
**Sei Shonagon** (966-1013)  
 Courtly Japanese writer of exquisite sensitivity.....40

**Leif Eriksson** (970-1020)  
 “Leif the Lucky,” Norse discoverer of America.....42  
**Harald Hardradi** (1015-1066)  
 Mercenary, wanderer, poet, king – the last Viking.....44  
**Alexius I** (1056-1118)  
 The Byzantine emperor who started the Crusades.....46  
**William Marshal** (1144-1219)  
 Knight, tournament champion, regent of England.....48  
**Ibn Battuta** (1304-1368)  
 75,000 miles traveled – in the Middle Ages.....50  
**Geoffrey Chaucer** (c.1342-1400)  
 Courtier, poet, and observer of his world...52  
**Joan of Arc** (1412-1431)  
 The teen-age saint and martyr.....54  
**Vlad Tepes** (1431-1476)  
 The original Dracula – more terrifying than any vampire.....56

**4. THE HIGH RENAISSANCE.....58**

Who Might Have Been?.....59  
**Leonardo Da Vinci** (1452-1519)  
 Renaissance genius.....60  
**Hernán Cortés** (1485-1547)  
 Conqueror of Mexico.....62  
**Paracelsus** (1493-1541)  
 Doctor, alchemist, and larger-than-life..... 64  
**Catherine di Medici** (1519-1589)  
 Consummate politician and power behind the French throne..... 66  
**John Dee** (1527-1608)  
 Scholar, Magus, Con-Man, Victim..... 68  
**Elizabeth I** (1533-1603)  
 The Queen who gave England greatness... 70  
**Tokugawa Ieyasu** (1543-1616)  
 Unifier of Japan..... 72  
**Tycho Brahe** (1546-1601)  
 Genius astronomer, noble, and eccentric... 74  
**William Shakespeare** (1564-1616)  
 The greatest playwright in history?..... 76  
**Cardinal Richelieu** (1585-1642)  
 The ultimate manipulator, true ruler of France..... 78  
**Oliver Cromwell** (1599-1658)  
 Puritan revolutionary, Lord Protector of England..... 80  
**Peter the Great** (1672-1725)  
 The unstoppable Tsar who turned Russia westwards..... 82  
**Bartholomew Roberts** (c.1682-1722)  
 The *real* Dread Pirate Roberts..... 84

**5. FROM ENLIGHTENMENT TO MODERNITY.....86**

Who Might Have Been?.....87  
**Benjamin Franklin** (1706-1790)  
 Scientist, writer, and emissary of the American Revolution..... 88



**Robert Clive (Clive of India)** (1725-1774)  
 Founder of British ascendancy in India..... 90  
**Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart** (1756-1791)  
 Possibly the greatest composer in history..... 92  
**Aaron Burr, Jr.** (1756-1836)  
 Politician, duelist – and plotter..... 94  
**Shaka Zulu** (c.1787-1828)  
 Conquering Zulu king..... 96  
**Lord Byron** (1788-1824)  
 A poet dangerous – but irresistible – to know..... 98  
**Charles Darwin** (1809-1882)  
 Brilliant naturalist and Theorist of Evolution..... 100  
**Emperor Norton** (1818-1880)  
 The first and last Emperor of the United States..... 102  
**Lola Montez** (1820-1861)  
 Dancer, courtesan, and professional celebrity..... 104  
**Harriet Tubman** (c.1820-1913)  
 “Moses of her people,” slave, slave-rescuer, and spy..... 106  
**Sir Richard Burton** (1821-1890)  
 Traveler, linguist, soldier, spy, writer..... 108  
**Nikola Tesla** (1856-1943)  
 Inventor-scientist with his own unique vision..... 110  
**Rudyard Kipling** (1865-1936)  
 The voice of the British Empire..... 112  
**Alberto Santos Dumont** (1873-1932)  
 A pioneer aviator from Brazil..... 114  
**Mata Hari** (1876-1917)  
 Lived by her looks, died as a spy, left her name to the world..... 116  
**Albert Einstein** (1879-1955)  
 The famed father of relativity..... 118  
**“Two-Gun” Cohen** (1887-1970)  
 London street-kid turned bodyguard-fixer – in China..... 120  
**Howard Phillips Lovecraft** (1890-1937)  
 Visionary teller of Weird Tales.....122

**APPENDICES..... 124**

**A: Other Significant Figures**..... 124  
**B: Games Mechanics & the Great**..... 125  
 Attributes and Aptitudes.....125  
 Other Features.....125

**INDEX.....128**

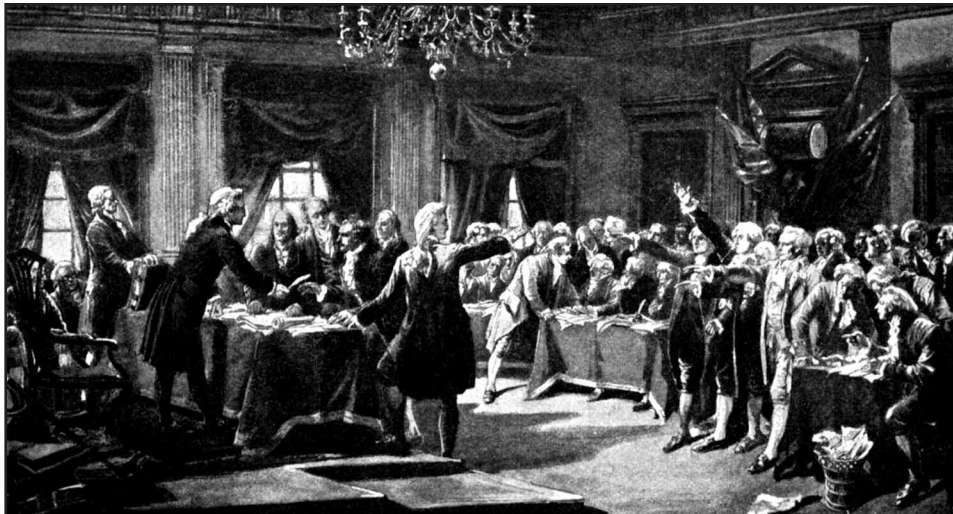
# INTRODUCTION

## ABOUT GURPS

Welcome to what we intend to be the first in a series of books presenting noteworthy historical figures in *GURPS* terms, for use in games.

Historical and time-travel fiction often include appearances by historical figures, in anything from cameo appearances to starring roles, and it is therefore logical for these kinds of RPGs to do the same. Historical figures can also make interesting role-models. However, working such ideas into games requires a certain amount of information, and ideally a prepared character sheet, which can represent a lot of work for a GM. This book reduces that work, and introduces some fascinating real-world figures for game use.

A single writer would face a titanic task in preparing these 50-odd character sheets and biographies. Fortunately, however, we had a lot of keen and scholarly *GURPS* fans, and the Internet. The figures presented here are the work of a number of contributors. These folks worked for the love of *GURPS* and of history, and only rather limited reward. The book is therefore dedicated, unusually but appropriately, to its own creators.



## ABOUT THE COMPILER

Phil Masters was born into a middle-class British family in 1959. His education included a degree in economics from Trinity College, Cambridge – the same institution previously attended by Sir Isaac Newton and, closer to Masters' time, by Prince Charles. While still at university, Masters produced his first professional work in the roleplaying industry – an article which appeared in *White Dwarf* magazine in 1980. Over the next few years, he developed a dual career as a seemingly unremarkable computer programmer and as an RPG writer. He also married (his wife worked as an engineer in the aerospace industry) and settled in a small town in south-east England.

In 1993, it emerged that Masters had forged links with Steve Jackson Games, who published his *GURPS Arabian Nights*. Masters went on to claim joint credit for *GURPS Places of Mystery* and *GURPS Discworld* before taking a supervisory role on *GURPS Who's Who*; he also freelanced for other companies including White Wolf and Hero Games.

Time travelers will find Masters mostly typical of his period and cultural background, if slightly eccentric; photographs show him to be a little under six feet tall, clean-shaven, and wearing glasses. In the event of combat or other violent excitement, he will probably freeze up or run away.

Steve Jackson Games is committed to full support of the *GURPS* system. Our address is SJ Games, Box 18957, Austin, TX 78760. Please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope (SASE) any time you write us! Resources now available include:

*Pyramid* ([www.sjgames.com/pyramid](http://www.sjgames.com/pyramid)). Our online magazine includes new rules and articles for *GURPS*. It also covers the hobby's top games – *AD&D*, *Traveller*, *World of Darkness*, *Call of Cthulhu*, *Shadowrun*, and many more – and other SJ Games releases like *In Nomine*, *INWO*, *Car Wars*, *Toon*, *Ogre Miniatures*, and more. And *Pyramid* subscribers also have access to playtest files online, to see (and comment on) new books before they're released.

*New supplements and adventures.* *GURPS* continues to grow, and we'll be happy to let you know what's new. A current catalog is available for an SASE. Or check out our Web site (below).

*Errata.* Everyone makes mistakes, including us – but we do our best to fix our errors. Up-to-date errata sheets for all *GURPS* releases, including this book, are always available from SJ Games; be sure to include an SASE with your request. Or download them from the Web – see below.

*Q&A.* We do our best to answer any game question accompanied by an SASE.

*Gamer input.* We value your comments. We will consider them, not only for new products, but also when we update this book on later printings!

*Internet.* Visit us on the World Wide Web at [www.sjgames.com](http://www.sjgames.com) for an online catalog, errata, and updates, and hundreds of pages of information. We also have conferences on CompuServe and AOL. *GURPS* has its own Usenet group, too: [rec.games.frp.gurps](mailto:rec.games.frp.gurps).

*GURPSnet.* Much of the online discussion of *GURPS* happens on this e-mail list. To join, send mail to [majordomo@io.com](mailto:majordomo@io.com) with "subscribe GURPSnet-L" in the body, or point your World Wide Web browser to: [www.io.com/GURPSnet/www](http://www.io.com/GURPSnet/www).

The *GURPS Who's Who 1* web page is at [www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/whoswho1](http://www.sjgames.com/gurps/books/whoswho1)

## PAGE REFERENCES

See *GURPS Compendium I*, p. 181, for a full list of abbreviations for *GURPS* titles. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to *GURPS Basic Set, Third Edition Revised*; e.g., p. B144 refers to page 144 of *Basic Set*. CI refers to *Compendium I*, CII to *Compendium II*, AN to *Arabian Nights*, and TT to *Time Travel*.

## WHAT IF?

If Alexander had never been born, it is quite possible that Philip would not have been assassinated; without an heir to protect, Olympias would have had no leverage at court. Philip's invasion of Persia would have been longer and less dramatic, but Macedonian military superiority would surely still prevail; by 323 B.C., Macedon might have controlled Anatolia and Syria, allied with an independent Egypt against the Persian Empire. Such a powerful Macedon might have held off Rome, or the struggle of three great powers might have devastated Hellenistic civilization.

## MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Alexander's career can be cut short at any time if one of the wounds or illnesses he sustained kills him. Time travelers might also wish to extend Alexander's empire, most likely by curing his fatal illness in Babylon and lengthening his life until Alexander IV (his son by Roxane) can succeed him. Depending on the drama of the intervention, time travelers could also persuade Alexander to turn west rather than continue to India; Livy to the contrary, Rome would have fallen to Alexander's genius. Somehow preventing the mutiny on the Beas would allow Alexander to conquer northern India, bringing Buddhism and higher mathematics into the heart of Western civilization. Toynbee even suggested that a longer-lived Alexander might have marched up the Silk Road, intervened in the conquests of Ch'in, and added China to an empire reaching from Peking to the Pillars of Heracles.

A more subtle way of preserving Alexander's empire is ensuring that Alexander marries and produces an heir before leaving Macedon. Assisted by the greatest general staff until Napoleon, even an average king could surely hold on to Alexander's conquests, cementing the empire and dynasty for generations.

## GODS AND MONSTERS

Elements of the supernatural and the uncanny followed Alexander all his life, from his mother's snake-worship rituals to his death in the month of Tammuz the Dying God, ringed around with omens from Chaldean sorcerers and Greek seers. Later romance held that Alexander had harnessed gryphons to his chariot, penned up the evil giants Gog and Magog behind a mighty brazen wall, and sought the Fountain of Youth. More prosaically, there is good reason to suspect that Alexander was poisoned by a conspiracy headed by his childhood tutor Aristotle. Whether Aristotle was a patsy for the Nine Unknown Masters fearful of Alexander's intentions against their Indian stronghold, or whether he served some other power, is up to the GM.

with Olympias) assassinated Philip in 336 B.C.. After putting down revolts among the mountain tribes and leveling the rebel city of Thebes, Alexander invaded Asia, defeating the Persians at Granicus in 334 and the Great King Darius III himself at Issus in 333. Moving down the coast, he sacked Tyre and Gaza, entering Egypt in 332 as a liberator. While there, Alexander visited the Oracle of Ammon-Ra at Siweh, which proclaimed him the son of Zeus-Ammon.

Emerging from Egypt, he decisively crushed Darius again at Gaugamela despite being outnumbered five to one. He followed Darius into Asia, burning the Persian capital, Persepolis, in 330. After the general Bessus murdered Darius, Alexander pursued Bessus into mountainous Central Asia. He spent the next three years defeating rebel Persian generals and conquering the tribes of Bactria (modern Afghanistan) and Sogdiana. While in Sogdiana, he drunkenly murdered a Macedonian nobleman, Cleitus the Black, who had saved his life at Granicus. He also married Roxane, daughter of a Sogdian monarch; by this (and by founding at least five garrison cities, all named Alexandria) he gained Sogdian allegiance and was able to turn his attention to India.

He crossed the Hindu Kush in 327, and allied himself with King Ambhi of Taxila. At the Jhelum River, he defeated Ambhi's rival Porus, making himself the master of the Punjab. However, on the banks of the Beas River, his army mutinied, refusing to march any further. This forced Alexander to turn back, marching down the Indus (where he nearly died during the siege of Mallia) and across the deadly Gedrosian Desert. His wounds, the desert and his near-constant drinking weakened him; he died of a fever in Babylon in 323 B.C.. His last words left his empire "to the greatest," and he predicted "great funeral games" upon his death. His generals divided up Alexander's empire in civil war, fulfilling this prophecy.

## Alexander in History

Bizarrely enough, the greatest impact of Alexander the half-barbarian conqueror was cultural. The collapse of his empire saw his successors turning Alexandrian tactics on each other, but the fusion of Greek, Persian, (and to a lesser extent) Jewish and Indian elements into one "Hellenistic" society reshaped everything from sculpture to mathematics. Although Greek culture already permeated the eastern Mediterranean, Alexander's conquests took Hellenism farther east and gave it a distinctively urban and mercantile character (Alexandria-in-Egypt being only the most famous and successful of the 30 cities Alexander founded), while his inheritors brought Persian divine kingship into the West to replace moribund Greek democracy. Even now, Alexander is both folk-hero and folk-demon in lands from Iceland to China; this heroic myth inspired Caesar, Napoleon and others.

## Encountered

Alexander's force of personality, energy, and vast personal magnetism appear in the most sober histories and bitter attacks. His characteristic posture (head cocked slightly upward and to the left with a half-smile) set fads in art (and probably court society) for centuries. Whether it was due to a childhood deformity or injury, bouts of epilepsy, or simple affectation, is impossible to say. Alexander's high-pitched voice carried a tune reasonably well, and must have been distinctive on the battlefield.

Educated by Aristotle (see the previous entry), Alexander will react with analytical curiosity to anything new or different. He craves information about the countries ahead of him, and respects men of learning as long as they show him deference. Nonetheless, he remains a mountain nobleman, superstitious and mercurially quick to anger and grandiosity.

— Kenneth Hite

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### Further Reading:

Bosworth, A.B.: *Conquest and Empire*.

Green, Peter: *Alexander of Macedon, 356-323 B.C.*

Renault, Mary: *The Nature of Alexander*.

Caesar returned to Rome in 78 B.C. after Sulla's death. He set about prosecuting legal cases, to demonstrate his oratory and acquire funds. He also became very active politically, backing Pompeius Magnus, virtual head of the popular party. Caesar established a reputation for adultery as well as pragmatism, but when Clodius, a senator, was caught trying to sneak into a women-only festival held by Caesar's second wife, Caesar divorced her. Shortly afterward, Caesar recruited Clodius to organize street thugs for him.

About this time, Caesar began to associate with Crassus, a financier with incredible wealth. Crassus bankrolled Caesar's extravagant expenses and bribes, in return for helpful legislation. Caesar also pushed for land reform and debt law changes, which made him popular with the masses and unpopular with the senate. In 60 B.C., he, Crassus, and Pompeius (Pompey) formed the Triumvirate, to support one another's political ambitions. After a governorship in Spain, where he conquered most of the peninsula, Caesar was due a Triumph. Denied the right to stand for office *in absentia*, he declined it. In 59 B.C. he was made a Consul. He ignored his conservative colleagues' interference and often the law as well, thus opening himself up to prosecution if he ever left office.

Caesar was given the consulship for Near Gaul and Illyricum, as well as three legions and approval to raise another. To ensure he had enough troops, Caesar gave full Roman citizenship to several Italian towns and all who enrolled in his legions. This was illegal, but ensured that his troops would be loyal only to him. Seizing on a request from Gallic tribesmen to help against a migratory tribe, Caesar went to war. He quickly expanded his expedition into a full-fledged invasion. He spent eight years ruthlessly consolidating his conquest. He imposed a huge indemnity on Gaul, enriching himself and his soldiers. He also briefly invaded the nearly legendary Britain, and crossed the Rhine to defeat a German tribe. His campaign journals were published and widely read.

Meanwhile, the Triumvirate had broken up; Crassus had been killed invading Parthia in 53 B.C., and Pompeius recognized Caesar as his main rival. Returning in 49 B.C., Caesar was ordered to disband his legions and present himself to the Senate. Instead, he invaded Rome and had himself made dictator. Pompeius fled East to build an army.

After years of civil war, Caesar defeated Pompeius' superior force at Pharsalus. Pompeius fled to Egypt, where he was killed. Caesar followed, installed Cleopatra as the sole ruler, and left after consolidating his control. For the next several years, Caesar campaigned to finish off his enemies. He declared himself dictator and consul for life in 44 B.C., but on March 15th, three days before he was to depart to war against Parthia, he was assassinated. At the senate, a group of senators stabbed him to death. He fought back with his metal stylus, and took 23 wounds before dying. He had dismissed his bodyguards, believing that the knowledge that his death would plunge Rome into civil war would discourage any assassins.

His adopted son Octavius and his friend Marcus Antonius first allied, then fought. Octavius defeated Marcus Antonius and his lover Cleopatra. With the civil war ended, Octavius took the title Augustus. Rome was now an empire.

## Encountered

Caesar is the quintessential power-hungry politician. He always keeps his eye on the main chance, often making powerful enemies or seemingly unsupportable choices. His decisions are always aimed at advancing himself and Rome. While exceptionally cruel to non-Romans, Caesar is merciful to Roman enemies. He is not superstitious; faced with the unusual, he would probably be pragmatic. He adapts well to circumstances, so weird powers should not leave him off-balance for long.

— Peter V. Dell'Orto

### Further Reading:

Grant, Michael. *Julius Caesar*.  
Caesar, Julius. *The Gallic Wars*.  
Caesar, Julius. *The Civil Wars*.

## MOMENTS OF TRUTH

Caesar took several large gambles in his life, any of which could have ruined him. He paupered himself laying out bribes for various offices, opened himself up for a treason trial, and even (at both Alexandria and Alesia) let himself be besieged by a superior force, using himself as bait to ensure a decisive victory.

The biggest moment of truth was not centered on Julius, but instead on Pompeius – had the senate not alienated him, he would not have needed to join the first Triumvirate. Caesar's route to power would have been greatly impeded. What would he have had to do to reach the top with Pompeius and the Senate working together?

## THE IDES OF MARCH

Stopping the Ides of March assassination of Caesar would have a number of historical effects. Had Caesar been able to invade and conquer Parthia (quite likely, given that the general who won Carrhae had been killed by the jealous king), Rome's eastern border would have been secure. Octavius might not have had to fight for his throne, in which case the Second Civil War would not have occurred, and the whole pattern of Roman imperial politics – a sequence of power struggles and assassinations – might have been improved. Warning Caesar about the plot might not work – some historians believe he was aware of it and did nothing, sure it would not come to pass. The assassins – important senators – could not simply be killed with impunity. High-tech body armor might stop the blades . . .



## THE DIVINE JULIUS

From Caesar onwards, Roman emperors were likely to be deified – after death, and sometimes in life. Other empires worshipped their rulers as gods, but the Romans were typically systematic about it. If supernatural powers oversee the lives of men, Caesar's career was surely the result of manipulation – to grant him or his heirs apotheosis, or to bring it into disrepute. And that assassination had something of a ritual about it . . .

## WHAT IF?

Chaucer also studied law and business at the Inns of Court, and was transferred to the royal household. In 1366, he married Philippa Roet; her position in the duchess of Lancaster's retinue and his at court were to keep them apart most of the time, but they had three children, Elizabeth, Thomas, and Lewis. He was also sent on a secret mission to Spain, and over the next 10 years he spent much of his time abroad as a courier or diplomat.

In 1372-73, he went to Genoa and Florence and successfully negotiated a large loan to King Edward from the Bardi bankers. This gave his career a boost; on his return, he was granted a pitcher of wine a day for life by the king, an unusually large gift, and made Controller of the Wool Subsidy. The trips to Italy also exposed him to the work of Dante, Petrarch, and Boccaccio; subsequently he began establishing himself as a grand poet. His first important work – written for John of Gaunt's late wife and titled *The Book of the Duchess* – was well-received, and he began working on *The House of Fame*, based in part on his impressions of Italian culture.

Chaucer's success continued. He produced *The Parliament of Fowls* to celebrate King Richard's marriage, was appointed Controller of the Petty Customs, and then became a justice of the peace in Kent, with a deputy assigned to perform most of his Customs work.

The year 1386 was a turning point. *Troilus and Criseyde* was a great success, the queen asked him to write *The Legend of Good Women*, and with the king's support he became a member of Parliament; however, the Duke of Gloucester then gained control of the king, and Chaucer was forced to resign from the Customs and sell his annuities or lose them.

The next few years were hard; he had a much-reduced income, his wife died, and some of his friends were executed. He started work on what would become his most widely read masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. (While many consider *Troilus and Criseyde* his *magnum opus*, the two poems are too dissimilar to fruitfully compare, and Chaucer can be happily viewed as having produced two "best" works.) *The Canterbury Tales*, the story of a storytelling contest among 30 pilgrims, was to occupy Chaucer for the rest of his life.

King Richard took charge again in 1389, and Chaucer was appointed Clerk of the King's Works, an important and well-paid post that left him little time for writing; he resigned two years later, after being robbed twice in one day.

The rest of Chaucer's life was spent relatively quietly, though he was in financial difficulties for much of it. He weathered the change of government in 1399 well, even persuading the new king to double his annuities, but died a year later. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, an uncommon honor for a commoner.

### ***A Bleaker View?***

Additional information may reveal a different Chaucer. As a student, he was fined for assaulting a friar, and in 1380, he settled out of court with Cecily Champaign over a charge of raptus (rape, or possibly abduction) – Lewis may have been their son. Combine this with the speculation that John of Gaunt was the real father of Elizabeth and Thomas and you get a grimmer, more complicated picture . . .

### ***Encountered***

Chaucer's talent with words was not limited to his writing – he was a successful minor diplomat and able to converse well, giving the impression of a likeable, knowledgeable man. He was good at making friends, but somewhat detached, and he liked to mimic regional and individual accents. The dry wit which comes through in his writing might make him an entertaining conversationalist, but a formidable verbal opponent; an initial impression of a plump, cheerful bureaucrat could be terribly deceptive. He was also always on the lookout for political or financial gain.

– John G. Wood

#### ***Further Reading:***

Brewer, Derek: *Chaucer and his World*.

Howard, Donald R.: *Chaucer and the Medieval World*.

English was growing in popularity in the 14th century; other writers were also experimenting with the language. Chaucer, however, was unique in his use of French forms and Italian ideas. He had immense impact as a poet. Without him, English literature would have stayed in its traditional forms for much longer, significantly restricting its readership. Its development was bound up with the cultural confidence of the emerging English nation; delaying one would have held back the other.

*The Canterbury Tales*, a poetic story-cycle, is perhaps the single most comprehensive, varied picture of medieval European society, and a keystone of English literature. It is also incomplete; there should logically be many more tales. Chaucer probably simply didn't get around to writing them, but many time-traveling scholars would be prepared to bend a lot of rules to find out.

### **THE TRIP TO FLORENCE**

Chaucer's trip to Italy in 1372-73 introduced him to Italian humanism; if someone else had been sent, Chaucer would probably have continued producing poetry in the old French courtly style. And if he had gone on the mission and *failed*, the English would have had trouble financing the war against France and Castile, and Chaucer's position at court would have been very different.

### **AGENT OF THE CONSPIRACY?**

Almost no reliable records of Chaucer have been found for 1361-66; even the report of his punishment for assault is second-hand. He then turns up on a secret diplomatic mission to Navarre (on the Spanish/French border) with three unnamed companions. Was he being trained in more than law by the Cathars or the *Prieuré de Sion*, who both had bases in Southern France? Chaucer the writer had the ear of three successive kings of England; Chaucer the diplomat went to the continent many times. He would have been a very useful tool.

This might explain one puzzling aspect of the Florentine mission: how he persuaded the Bardi to lend Edward III such vast sums, when the king had previously defaulted on a loans worth £230,000, helping to bankrupt them. It was this which brought Chaucer close to the king; arranging it may have been a good *investment*.

Finally, during the Peasants' Revolt, Chaucer was living in a house above one of London's main gates, the Aldgate – which was opened to let in the rioters. One William Tonge was blamed, but maybe Chaucer actually did the deed under orders from the Secret Masters.



brother, Radu, were taken as hostages by the Turkish ruler Sultan Murad. He was educated in the Turkish court in the style of a Muslim prince, but under the constant threat of death, mutilation, or torture.

In 1448, he began to serve in the Turkish army. In 1449, however, he went into exile in Moldavia. From there he went on to involve himself in Wallachian politics, and in 1456 he was made prince of Wallachia by Matthias I of Hungary.

As prince, he became widely known for his harsh punishments and cruel jokes – for example, when two Italian envoys failed to take off their skullcaps before him, he had the caps nailed to their heads to assist them in keeping them on. His preferred method of execution was impalement, or having a stake driven through a victim's body; this was the practice that gained him the epithet *Tepes*, “the Impaler.”

He played on this reputation in the ensuing battles with the Turks. Mehmed II, with whom he had been educated, succeeded his father in 1451 and went on to conquer Constantinople in 1452. There followed a long series of battles between Christians and Muslims in eastern Europe. Vlad confronted Mehmed II with “the forest of the impaled,” thousands of Turkish captives on stakes along the main invasion route. Mehmed sent Vlad's own brother Radu to combat him, and the country went over to Radu, terrified of Vlad's harshness. Vlad fled to Hungary, but King Matthias made him a prisoner, showing him off to Turkish delegations, and recognizing Radu as ruler of Wallachia.

Vlad regained his freedom when Radu died in 1475 and was sent back to battle his cousin, Stephen of Moldavia. He converted to Roman Catholicism and married a Hungarian princess. Hied shortly afterward, in 1476, under mysterious circumstances; two monks found his headless body in a marsh after a battle.

## *Vlad Tepes in History*

Vlad was the basis for Bram Stoker's classic horror novel “*Dracula*,” but the real Vlad was much more terrifying than the fictitious vampire. He governed Wallachia by terror, killing a significant percentage of its total population in response to various offenses. Among these deaths were many of the old boyars, whom he replaced with newly ennobled peasants. Despite this, or because of it, he is admired in Rumania as a national hero, a leader of the war against the Turks, rather as Stalin is still admired in Georgia. Among his other deeds, he built the first fortification in Bucharest and thus set it on the path toward becoming Rumania's capital.

## *Encountered*

Meeting Vlad is an experience best avoided, if possible. Any hint of disrespect or criticism will bring a swift threat of an ugly death. A player character who can speak cleverly, and above all one who shows no fear, may gain Vlad's respect and escape with his life. Even so, Vlad will be glad to tell him what fate he so narrowly escaped.

– William H. Stoddard

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### *Further Reading:*

Florescu, Radu R., and Raymond T. McNally: *Dracula: Prince of Many Faces*.

## WHAT IF?

Vlad could easily be eliminated from history – perhaps most easily during his stay as a hostage in the court of Sultan Murad. When his father, Vlad Dracul, cooperated in military actions against the Turks in 1444 and 1445, putting Vlad and Radu to death would have been a very natural response for Murad.

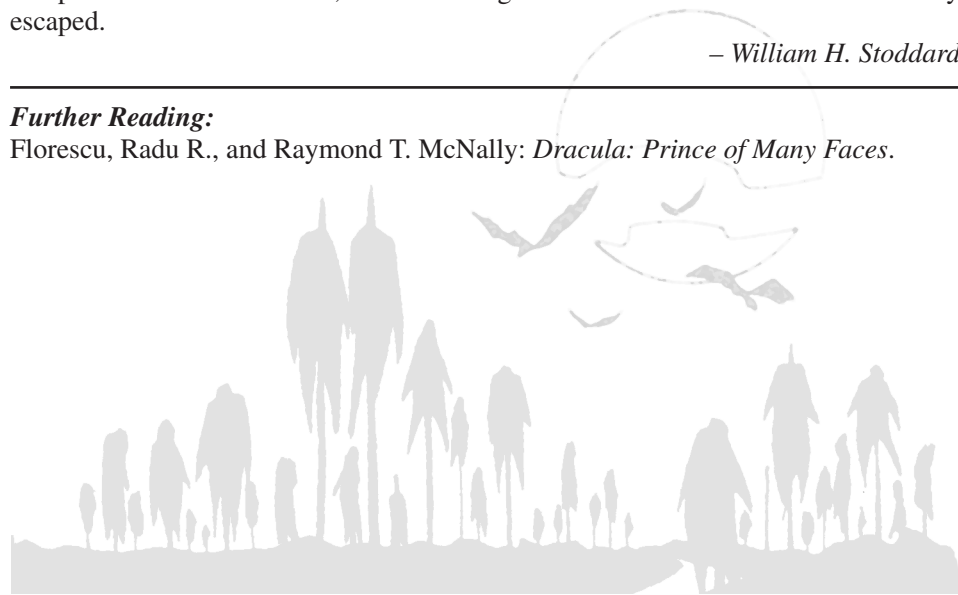
Without Vlad, the Wallachian resistance to the Turks would have gotten a slower start, and the Turkish boundaries might have been pushed further north, even into Hungary; Austria might have been weaker in the centuries to come. Also, since the fortification of Bucharest began with Vlad, a different city might have become the future capital of Rumania – perhaps Tirgoviste, his father's capital. Finally, Vlad's extermination of the established boyars would not have taken place, and a number of older families might survive in Wallachia.

## VLAD THE ILLUMINATED

In the 15th century, the Turkish court was one of the world's great centers of conspiracy and intrigue. Vlad's education might have included initiation into one or more secret cabals – even into heirs of the Order of Assassins. And once back in Wallachia, he might have come into closer contact with the Order of the Dragon, into which his father had been initiated, and which was sworn to defend Christian Europe against the Turks. Vlad's ruthless pursuit of power and imposition of harsh laws could have reflected indoctrination into an “illuminated” sense of being above ordinary morality. For that matter, the final discovery of his headless corpse hidden in a swamp could indicate that some occult conspiracy had decided it was time to end his membership in a very permanent way.

## DRACULA

Vlad's cruelties have so terrorized the people of Wallachia that they have begun to suspect a more than natural origin for them. “*Dracula*,” they whisper, does not mean “son of the dragon” (from his father's membership in the Order of the Dragon) but “son of the devil.” If the PCs investigate (perhaps sent by King Matthias or the pope), they discover disturbing evidence that this is true. Vlad really is a monstrous being with supernatural powers: he steals out of his fortress by night and prowls the land in the guise of a huge wolf. But learning that this is true is one thing and living to make it known is another, in a land where the werewolf is the absolute monarch.



Born 1527; died 1608.

Age 56; 6', 150 lbs.; handsome, with rosy cheeks, and a reddish-blond beard turning white.

<b>ST:</b> 10 [-]	<b>DX:</b> 11 [10]	<b>Speed:</b> 5.25
<b>IQ:</b> 13 [30]	<b>HT:</b> 10 [-]	<b>Move:</b> 5
<b>Dodge:</b> 5		

## Advantages

Comfortable Wealth [10], Language Talent +2 [4], Literacy [5], Patron (The Court, 9-) [15], Reputation +3 (Among European academics) [5], Status 2 [10].

## Disadvantages

Age [-18], Dependent (Wife or children, 6-) [-12], Gullibility [-10], Reputation -4 (Among the superstitious, as a sorcerer and necromancer; 10-) [-5], Truthfulness [-5].

## Quirks

Believes in destiny of Britain; Believes in possibility of reuniting Christendom; Devout Christian and Hermeticist; Peacemaker; Vain, flamboyant dresser. [-5]

## Skills

Alchemy-10 [1], Area Knowledge (England)-13 [1], Area Knowledge (Europe)-13 [1], Architecture-11 [½], Artist-10 [½], Astrology-15 [8], Calligraphy-12 [4], Cartography-13 [2], Cryptography-14 [6], Diplomacy-13 [4], Heraldry-13 [2], History-13 [4], Law-10 [½], Literature-13 [4], Mathematics-16 [10], Mechanic ("Classical" devices)-12 [1], Navigation-13 [3½], Occultism-14 [4], Philosophy-14 [6], Physician-14 [6], Physics-10 [½], Politics-14 [4], Research-16 [8], Savoir-Faire-15 [0], Teaching-14 [4], Theology-14 [6], Writing-15 [6].

(All skills TL4 where applicable.)

## Languages

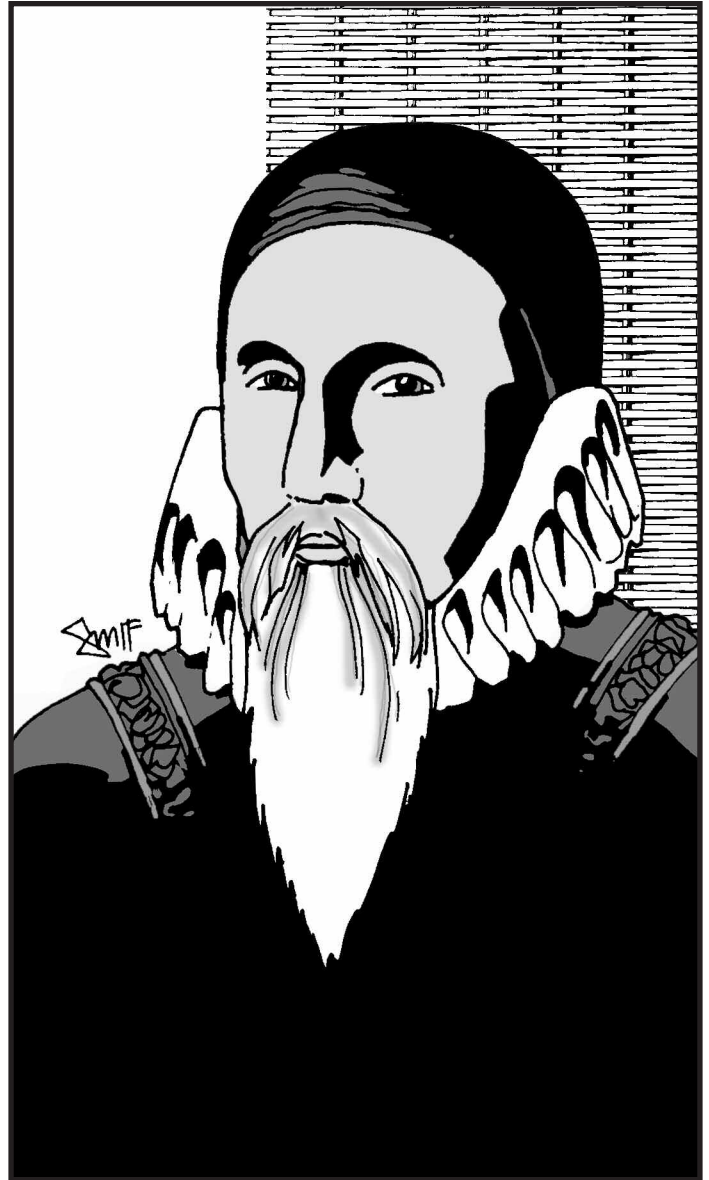
English (native)-15 [0], Aramaic-13 [½], Anglo-Saxon-13 [½], Classical Greek-14 [1], "Enochian" (M/H)-12 [½], Flemish-13 [½], French-14 [1], German-13 [½], Hebrew-13 [½], Italian-13 [½], Latin-14 [1], Polish-13 [½], Welsh-13 [½].

## Equipment

Dee's house has an extensive library (4,000+ titles). He also owns various items of ritual equipment.

## Notes

Dee is here at the height of his career, just before his disastrous journey to the Continent. Later, he will lose the Patron, a level of Status, and his wealth. If the GM wishes to treat him simply as a conman, his academic skills can be



reduced, and Sleight of Hand and Fast-Talk added; he might also have Greed, a worse Reputation, or even Glory Hound.

In youth, or even at this date, Dee might rate as Attractive or even Handsome.

## BIOGRAPHY

At the height of the Renaissance stand a handful of men who were part of both the medieval world of magic and the emerging world of reason. They were magicians and scientists, mystics and engineers. John Dee was perhaps the greatest, a man with a continent-spanning reputation during his own lifetime. History sees him as a gullible enthusiast for mystical nonsense, or a conman. Perhaps he was all of these things.

At the age of 15, he went to St. John's College, Cambridge. He soaked up learning as most young men soak

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**“To many who sailed with him during the incandescent months of his career, Roberts seemed touched with with some strange and splendid madness that transformed him into a Demonic Prince who rode the wind seeking vengeance and his own destruction.”**

– Frank Sherry, from his book *Raiders and Rebels*

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## BIOGRAPHY

Bartholomew Roberts was born around 1682 in Wales. It is likely that he saw active service in the War of the Spanish Succession, like the vast majority of his seagoing contemporaries. By 1717, he was a mate aboard a Barbados trading sloop and a master mariner, expert in shiphandling, navigation, and naval tactics. By 1719, he was third mate aboard an English slaver, the *Princess*.

On June 5, 1719, Welsh pirate captain Howell Davis of the *Royal Rover* raided Anamaboe in Guinea. The *Princess* was seized, and Roberts and others of the crew were pressed into service. Six weeks later, Davis was killed in an ambush at Princess Island. Roberts was elected captain by his shipmates. While he may have been forced into piracy initially, he had no problems with it once he was in command. He started his three-year rampage on the West Coast of Africa, first getting revenge by sacking Princess Island. After seizing a few prizes, the crew voted to sail for Brazil.

Roberts guided the ship to a small volcanic island 2,300 miles away in only 28 days – an impressive feat of navigation. Off Brazil, Roberts sailed into a 42-ship Portuguese convoy and looted the best prize, then sailed away before the escorting warships could react. He then sailed first to the Caribbean, then to Newfoundland. After sailing into, and seizing, Trepassi, he went south, taking prizes all the way down the American coast. Bad winds caused a trip to Africa to fail, so Roberts cruised the Caribbean despite strong Royal Navy and privateer opposition. Often, those forces actually sailed away rather than face him. In 1721, the Caribbean began to get too dangerous, and he needed to dispose of loot and refurbish his ships. He set sail for Africa with three ships. The Royal Navy sent two ships, each with 60 guns (as many as Roberts’ whole fleet) to catch him. After six months of plundering (and cleverly timing his movements to avoid pursuit), Roberts missed the remote island of Annabon and instead ended up at Cape Lopez. He stayed, not knowing his enemies had been delayed nearby. The Navy caught Roberts by surprise; he fought back, but his throat was torn out by grapeshot in the first salvo. Without his personality, his crew fell apart. They threw incriminating documents and the Jolly Roger overboard and surrendered after a desultory resistance. Many were subsequently hanged after a surprisingly fair trial.

### *Encountered*

Roberts dresses like a gentleman, with fine clothes, and drinks tea, as a gentleman would. He has been described as slight and a dandy, but at the same time his personal magnetism and bravery are emphatic. He is the antithesis of the hard-drinking, devil-may-care pirate (e.g. Blackbeard). He is also vindictive, and retaliates violently against anyone or anything that stands in his way.

He is quick to anger if insulted or threatened, but just as quick to take advantage of circumstances. It’s likely that he would analyze the value or threat of any strange powers or problems. Once he makes his decision, he will quickly either take advantage of or act to eliminate them. GMs should remember the loyalty he inspires in his crew; most were willing to die for him, or suffer extreme hardship without a hint of mutiny. They would back him in even in the face of crushing odds.

– Peter V. Dell’Orto

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### *Further Reading:*

Daniels, George D. (ed.): *The Pirates*.

Johnson, Charles: *A General History of Pirates*.

## ROBERTS IN HISTORY

Bartholomew Roberts was, in his time, *the* pirate. He epitomizes the pirate career; short, violent, and spectacular. In three years, he took over 400 prizes, crossed and recrossed the Atlantic, and brought Caribbean traffic to a dead halt. He terrorized shipping from Brazil to Newfoundland, the Caribbean to the west coast of Africa. He even fought a brief war with river tribesmen of the Calabar river – a war so fierce that it was remembered in oral histories in the 20th century!

### HISTORY WITHOUT ROBERTS

Roberts could probably be eliminated from history without too many repercussions. Without him, pirate legends might be a little less fierce – many of his exploits have been popularly associated with Blackbeard, Henry Morgan, or William Kidd. Killing Roberts, or killing Howell Davis before Roberts was forced into piracy, *would* make the oceans rather safer during this period (which might have subtle consequences).

### WHAT IF?

Roberts was caught off Africa by the Royal Navy mostly due to bad luck; what if he had escaped? He could have continued on his piratical career – his navigation skill and leadership would allow him to go almost anywhere. Perhaps the close encounter with his pursuers would have encouraged him to sail the Indian Ocean. Or even the Sea of Japan . . .

Alternatively, he might have turned, vengefully, against English colonies – perhaps in North America. Could he have done enough damage to set the development of Virginia back significantly (and maybe even give the French a subsequent lead)?

### SKULL AND BONES

Once dead, Roberts would make an excellent ghost or revenant (see *GURPS Undead*). His propensity for vengeance makes for a fearsome and ruthless opponent while alive; dead, he (and his crew?) could be even worse. A ghostly *Royal Fortune*, heaving into view off the coast of Africa, would be a chilling start to a *GURPS Horror* adventure.

Roberts can also make an excellent foe in a swashbuckling *GURPS Voodoo* campaign, especially as the ally of choice of the dark powers. Perhaps some of his wide swings – such as north to Newfoundland – were at the directive of some evil power. Possession by an evil spirit could explain his sudden swing from ordinary seaman to pirate legend.

French governor-general the most powerful man in southern India.

During these conflicts, Clive had led a prickly existence, with at least one duel and a suicide attempt. The ongoing hostilities finally led him to volunteer for military duties. In 1751 Captain Clive offered to attack Arcot, the base of a French ally. Leading a force of 500, he was so magnificently successful that France and its allies were set back badly. Clive scored further successes, and within a short time the French army was broken and, with an English ally on the Carnatic throne, French influence in southern India was irrevocably damaged.

Accompanied by his wife, Margaret Maskelyne, Clive returned to England in 1753, with a tidy fortune amassed while in charge of troop supplies. After standing for Parliament without success, he was enticed back to Madras as a deputy governor and lieutenant colonel in 1755. On the way he assaulted a pirate stronghold at Gheriah on the western coast.

In 1756, the Nawab of Bengal captured Calcutta, and dozens of Englishmen died in the infamous “Black Hole.” Clive was given command of the 2,400-man force sent to liberate the city. After doing so, he campaigned against the Nawab with the support of a conspiracy of local lords and businessmen. The Nawab was defeated at Plassay in 1757, and Clive’s puppet replaced him, putting the wealthiest province of India in English hands.

From the new Nawab, Clive received a huge monetary reward and the title of mansab. (This example – while enriching Clive personally – set a horrible precedent, leading to rampant corruption that would threaten Bengal, the Company, and ultimately Clive himself.) The Company appointed Clive Governor of Bengal from 1758 to 1760.

He spent the rest of his life in politics as the MP for Shrewsbury. He returned to India only once more, in 1765, to reform an administration that had become unworkably corrupt. He was made a Baron and a Knight of the Bath.

In 1773, however, he was subjected to an inquiry into possible corruption. Defending himself in Parliament, he complained of being treated like a sheep stealer with his usual conviction and energy. Though he was vindicated, the charges damaged his career.

In 1774, suffering from nervous tension and poor health, Robert Clive took his own life.

## *Clive’s Achievements*

Clive’s contribution to history was to lay the foundations for the British Empire in India. When he arrived, the British possessions were only a handful of wealthy but vulnerable trading colonies. When he left, Britain, rather than France or the Marathas, was the major power, set to inherit India from the Moghuls.

He was able to achieve so much because of his fearsome determination. When he was inspired, nothing could withstand him. His success on the battlefield demonstrated his character. So, unfortunately, did his frequent depressions – so intense was his energy that he suffered when it wasn’t provided an outlet of suitable proportions.

## *Encountered*

The person one meets when encountering Clive will depend on the circumstances. Socially, one is likely to find him dour and repressed. He is not unfriendly, but he is withdrawn. Professionally, one might find him difficult; he is extremely determined, and this is coupled with a temper. Even as an ally, his overbearing manner can be tiresome. He is always convinced he is right, and because he can sometimes be inconsistent, he occasionally seems hypocritical.

– *Benedict Chapman*

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### *Further Reading:*

Keay, John: *The Honourable Company: A History of The English East India Company.*

Spear, Percival: *Master of Bengal: Clive and his India.*

## WHAT IF?

Fate itself might easily have ended Clive’s life early. He attempted to kill himself while working as a Company man in Madras, but twice the gun did not fire. On several occasions, he cheated death on the battlefield – on one famous occasion, two men supporting him were shot dead by a single bullet that missed him entirely.

If he had died early in his career, there might have still been a European empire in India, but it would probably have been French. By the time Clive entered the war in the Carnatic, the French were already enormously powerful in India. Clive’s efforts deprived them of much of their influence and, furthermore, ruined their prestige. After their defeat in the Carnatic, they were no longer the formidable force they were once taken to be; instead, it was the British who were seen to be made for victory.

If Clive had not lived until Plassay, there might never have been a British Empire in India. For India, this might have meant eventual unification under a native Maratha empire, or more likely dissolution into independent principalities. For Britain, without the “jewel in the crown,” the Victorian age would not have been as wealthy, and without the captive Indian market, the industrial revolution might have been jeopardized.

## KEY MOMENTS

The two standout moments of Clive’s life were his capture and defense of Arcot and his defeat of the Nawab of Bengal at Plassay. Observers at these moments would see Clive at his most glorious.

Approaching Arcot, he showed the intensity of his determination by marching his army through a thunderstorm and thus so terrifying his enemies that he arrived to find the place deserted. In defending it, he was outnumbered ten to one and had no great advantages, the fort being short on defenses; experienced commanders would have retired from such a hopeless position. He won through his determination and personal courage, which inspired his men. He repaired the defenses and harried the enemy with guerilla raids. After 53 days of siege, his opponents retired in the face of approaching reinforcements, leaving Clive the unlikely victor.

Plassay was a less impressive battle but more important overall. Of more interest are Clive’s machinations in obtaining allies in the conspiracy against the Nawab, including his use of treachery. (He had the signature of a British admiral forged on a deceitful treaty.)

# BIOGRAPHY

Sir Richard Francis Burton is one of history's most dashing adventurers (so much so that many have cast doubts on his story). Born in 1821 to an English ex-soldier's family, Burton relocated frequently between France, Italy and England as a child, leaving him with an intense wanderlust. There was a rumor that his family had Gypsy blood, as evidenced by his dark features and "Gypsy stare"; coincidentally, he was one of the first to note the resemblance of the Romany to the Indian races.

Attending Oxford at the age of 19, Burton worked overtime to be expelled by the end of his second year, finding academia dull. Shortly thereafter, he joined the East India Company as a soldier, rising quickly in the ranks. It's a sign of his abilities that the British continued to trust him with assignments despite his outspokenness over the treatment of natives and of women at home. Burton was involved with the British invasion of Afghanistan and the aborted invasion of Iran.

Also during this period, Burton reportedly fell in love with a Persian woman. Whatever the nature of their affair, the woman was punished by her family – murdered by poison. Burton became despondent, and intensified his beliefs in women's rights. His many opinions made enemies, resulting in the failure of his military career.

In 1852, Burton traveled to the Middle East. He spent the better part of three years there, most often in disguise, and became one of the first Westerners to enter the sacred city of Mecca, as well as the *first* to enter Harrar, in Ethiopia. In 1855 he was involved in the Crimean War, but in 1857, he returned to Africa in an unsuccessful attempt to discover the source of the Nile. He *did* discover Lake Tanganyika.

In 1860, he set out for Salt Lake City to write a biography of Brigham Young. After visiting South America, he returned to England and married Isabel Arundell, who was strangely convinced he was Catholic. (His sister thought him Anglican; he himself had taken to Islam and embraced Sufism early on, although he wrestled frequently with atheism.) He served as British Consul in Fernando Po, off West Africa, from 1861-1864, then transferred to Santos, Brazil until 1868; Damascus, Syria until 1871; and Trieste, Italy until his death in 1890.

## *Burton in History*

Aside from his adventuring, Burton was an author, translator, and pioneering anthropologist. He published 43 volumes about his travels and 30 volumes of translations. While his reputation was immense, he sold very few books during his life and was widely scorned. Many problems came from his challenges to traditional Victorian morals (he translated a fair amount of erotica); his eccentric approach to style and vocabulary in translations didn't help, neither did his criticisms of rivals. Oddly, there were remarkably few questions as to where his loyalties lay; despite everything, he remained a staunch supporter of British imperialism.

## *Encountered*

Burton's reaction to others will depend on circumstances. There are some who believe that he killed wantonly in the Middle East to protect his disguises, while others (including Burton himself) claim he never actually killed a man in his life. He is certainly determined, tough, and charismatic. No stranger to the unexpected, Burton will likely take almost any strangeness in his stride. Although he does not believe in the occult, he studies paranormal phenomena (he coined the phrase ESP) and would leap at any opportunity for an unusual adventure.

– Victor D. Infante

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### *Further Reading:*

Brodie, Fawn M.: *The Devil Drives: A Life of Sir Richard Burton*.  
Burton, Isabel: *The Life of Captain Sir Richard F. Burton, 2 vol.*  
Kipling, Rudyard: *Kim* (a novel based partly on Burton's career).  
Rice, Edward: *Captain Sir Richard Francis Burton*.  
Stisted, Georgiana: *The True Life of Capt. Sir Richard F. Burton*.

## WHAT IF?

Burton holds the peculiar distinction of both opening up Eastern culture to Europe and aiding and abetting the British Empire in its conquests. A less successful Burton could easily have fallen at Mecca or Harrar, possibly costing Britain valuable information it needed to hold parts of the Middle East until the mid-20th century. Without adequate intelligence, would British troops have lasted as long as they did against Arab and Persian forces? What impact would a different Middle East have had on later conflicts? Likewise, a more successful Burton could have actually helped hold Iran, hastening British domination in the area.

Beyond his impact on political history, though, Burton's career spans the Victorian era, and his widespread travels make him potentially useful in nearly any Victorian campaign, from a journey through darkest Africa to an older Burton squaring off against Dracula or Jack the Ripper. Even toward the end of his life, he was a man of action – and it's doubtful he'd pass up any chance at adventure or esoteric knowledge.

Incidentally, Burton's wife burned a huge selection of his journals and papers after his death in an attempt to sanitize his reputation. Scholars (including time travelers) and students of many strange fields might have an interest in what was (apparently) lost . . .

## MOMENTS OF TRUTH

There was always an undercurrent of rebelliousness in Burton, and it's a credit to his will that he didn't simply cast off Britain entirely and throw his lot in with either Persian or Arab factions. There were several points where he might have been sorely tempted, most notably a battle in Punjab where he implied that his commanding officer, Sir William Napier, led a massacre of native troops. Also, while attempting to incite an invasion of Iran, Burton made no secret of the fact that he was enamored of Persian culture. How much (if anything) did Burton have to do with Britain's not invading?

## A FOE OF THE CONSPIRACY?

During the Afghanistan and Iran campaigns, Burton worked closely with members of the Isma'ilis – a Persian group descended from the Assassins of legend. In an Illuminated campaign, it is obvious that a man of Burton's skills would be of great interest to a global conspiracy – and that a man of his temperament wouldn't stand for it for a second.

# INDEX

- Abducting historical figures, 9-10.  
 Advantages, 125-126.  
 Afghanistan, 109; *see also* *Bactria*.  
 Akhenaten (Egyptian pharaoh), 14-15.  
 Akhetaten, 15.  
 Alexander the Great, 11, 24-25, 39; *learned from past events*, 21. *taught by Aristotle*, 23.  
 Alexandria (cities), 25, 36, 50.  
 Alexius I (Alexius Comnenus, Byzantine emperor), 46-47.  
 Aristotle, 11, 22-23; *teacher of Alexander the Great*, 25.  
 Ashoka, 124.  
 Asia Minor, 46-47, 50.  
 Assassinating historical figures, 9.  
 Atenism, 14-15.  
 Athens, 20-21, 23.  
 Attributes, 125.  
 Austen, Jane, 124.  
 Austria, 57, 65, 93.  
 Aztecs, 62-63.  
 Babylon, 18-19, 25.  
 Baconians, 5, 77.  
 Bactria, 25; *see also* *Afghanistan*.  
 Balkans, 56-57.  
 Basel, 64-65.  
 Battuta, *see Ibn Battuta*.  
 Bavaria, 65, 105.  
 Beijing, 51; *see also* *Peking*.  
 Belisarius, 34-35.  
 ben-Jesse, *see David ben-Jesse*.  
 Bethlehem, 16-17.  
 Bible, 15, 16-17.  
 Boudica, 6, 7, 30-31.  
 Brahe, Tycho, 7, 11, 74-75.  
 Brazil, 85, 101, 109, 114-115.  
 Britain, 7, 29, 30-31, 39, 65, 69, 87, 95, 97, 122, 125; *see also* *England*, *Scotland*.  
 British East India Company, 90-91, 109.  
 British Empire, 69, 91, 99, 109, 112-113, 125.  
 Britons, *see* *Britain*.  
 Buddhism, 25, 27, 113, 124.  
 Burr, Aaron, 94-95.  
 Burton, Sir Richard Francis, 87, 108-109.  
 Byron (George Gordon, 6th. Lord Byron), 7, 87, 98-99.  
 Byzantine Empire, 39, 44-45, 46-47.  
 Caesar, Julius, 10, 25, 28-29, 126.  
 California, 63, 103, 105.  
 Cambridge, 3, 68, 80-81, 99, 100.  
 Canada, 95, 107, 120-121.  
 Cathars, 53.  
 Catherine di Medici, *see* *Medici*.  
 Catholicism, *see* *Christianity*.  
 Celtic church, *see* *Christianity*.  
 Chaldeans, 19, 25.  
 Chaucer, Geoffrey, 52-53.  
 Cheng, *see* *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.  
 Ch'in Shih Huang Ti, 6, 26-27.  
 China, 13, 25, 26-27, 40-41, 50-51, 59, 120-121, 124.  
 Christianity, 32-33, 35, 37, 39, 46-47, 113; *Anglican*, 109; *Catholic*, 46, 57, 67, 109; *Celtic*, 39; *Monophysite*, 36-37; *Orthodox*, 36, 46-47; *Protestant*, 59, 67.  
 Clive, Robert ("Clive of India"), 87, 90-91.  
 Cohen, Morris "Two-Gun," 87, 120-121.  
 Columbus, Christopher, 11, 43.  
 Comnenus, *Alexius*, *Anna*, *Family*; *see* *Alexius I*.  
 Confucianism, 27.  
 Constantine the Great (Roman emperor), 32-33.  
 Constantinople, 33-37, 45, 47, 50, 57; *see also* *Byzantine Empire*.  
 Cortés, Hernán, 59, 62-63.  
 Cosimo di Medici, *see* *Medici*.  
 Cromwell, Oliver, 59, 80-81.  
 Crusaders, 10, 11, 46-47, 49.  
 Cthulhu Mythos, 69, 122-123.  
 Cyrus the Great (emperor of Persia), 18-19.  
 da Vinci, *see* *Leonardo*.  
 Darwin, Charles, 11, 87, 100-101.  
 David ben-Jesse, (king of Israel), 16-17.  
 Dee, John, 59, 68-69, 70.  
 dei Medici, *see* *Medici*.  
 de Medicis, *see* *Medicis*.  
 Denmark, 44-45, 64-65, 74-75, 79, 83.  
 di Medici, *see* *Medici*.  
 Disadvantages, 126-127.  
 Dracul, *see* *Vlad Dracul*.  
 "Dracula," 56-57, 109.  
 Dudley, Robert, *see* *Leicester, Earl of*.  
 Dumont, Alberto Santos, 87, 114-115.  
 East India Company, *see* *British East India Company*.  
 Edison, Thomas, 6, 110-111, 115.  
 Egypt, 14-15, 17, 19, 25, 32, 39, 50, 65.  
 Einstein, Albert, 87, 103, 118-119.  
 Elizabeth I (queen of England), 59, 68-69, 70-71.  
 England, 45, 49, 68-71, 76-77, 81, 90-91, 93, 99, 101, 105, 112-113, 124; *see also* *Britain*.  
 English language, 53, 77, 113, 124; *see also* *England*.  
 Erik the Red, 42-43.  
 Eriksson, Leif, 39, 42-43.  
 Evolution, Theory of, 11, 100-101.  
 Fixed Time, 9.  
 Flavius Petros Sabbatios, *see* *Justinian I*.  
 Flavius Valerius Constantinus, *see* *Constantine the Great*.  
 Florence, 53, 60-61, 66-67.  
 France, 39, 52-53, 54-55, 61, 64-65, 66-67, 78-79, 87, 91, 95, 115, 117.  
 Franklin, Benjamin, 59, 88-89.  
 Franks, 32, 39.  
 Freemasons, 88-89, 93, 103.  
 Galileo, 11, 61.  
 Game Mechanics, 5, 125-127.  
 Gaul, 29; *see also* *France*.  
 Gaza, 17, 25.  
 Germany, 29, 31, 64-65, 87, 117, 118-119, 122.  
 Gilbert, Eliza, *see* *Montez, Lola*.  
 Gilgamesh, 124.  
 Great Britain, *see* *Britain*.  
 "Great Pirate Roberts," *see* *Roberts, Bartholomew*.  
 Greece, 13, 19, 20-21, 24-25, 99.  
 Greenland, 42-43.  
 "Greys," 15.  
 GURPS *Alternate Earths*, 111.  
 GURPS *Basic Set*, 3, 125.  
 GURPS *Goblins*, 120.  
 GURPS *Horror*, 85.  
 GURPS *Mage*, 69.  
 GURPS *Riverworld*, 7.  
 GURPS *Robin Hood*, 49.  
 GURPS *Scarlet Pimpernel*, 93.  
 GURPS *Time Travel*, 9.  
 GURPS *Traveller*, 21.  
 GURPS *Undead*, 85.  
 GURPS *Voodoo*, 69, 85.  
 Hagia Sophia, 34-35.  
 Hapsburgs, 79, 93.  
 Harald Hardradi, 44-45.  
 Hardradi, *see* *Harald*.  
 Hebrews, 13, 15; *see also* *Israel*, *Jews*.  
 Hitler, Adolf, 9, 87, 103.  
 Hittites, 15, 17.  
 Holland, 64-65.  
 Holy Roman Empire, 69, 75.  
 Hoplites (troops and weapons), 21, 22.  
 Huang Ti, *see* *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.  
 Huguenots, 67.  
 Hungary, 57.  
 Huxley, T.H., 100-101.  
 Ibn Battuta, 39, 50-51.  
 Iceland, 25, 39.  
 Icen, 30-31.  
 Ieyasu, Tokugawa, 59, 72-73.  
 India, 11, 13, 23, 25, 39, 50-51, 65, 90-91.  
 Iran, 109; *see also* *Persia*.  
 Ireland, 81, 104-105.  
 Islam, 13, 23, 35, 39, 46-47, 50-51, 57, 109, 113.  
 Isma'ilis, 109.  
 Israel, 16-17 *see also* *Hebrews*.  
 Italians, *see* *Italy*.  
 Italy, 13, 35, 39, 53, 60-61, 64-65, 66-67, 99, 109.  
 James I (king of England and Scotland), 69, 71, 77.  
 Japan, 40-41, 59, 72-73, 87, 121.  
 Java, 116-117.  
 Jerubim, 16-17.  
 Jerusalem, 17, 35, 46-47.  
 Jesse, *see* *David ben-Jesse*.  
 Jesuits, 104-105.  
 Jews, 17, 19, 25; *see also* *Hebrews*, *Israel*.  
 Joan of Arc, 54-55.  
 Judaism, 17, 37, 39; *see also* *Hebrews*, *Israel*, *Jews*.  
 Julius Caesar, *see* *Caesar*.  
 Justinian I (Byzantine emperor), 13, 34-37.  
 Kelley, Edmund, 69.  
 Kipling, Rudyard, 87, 112-113.  
 Knights Templar, 49.  
 Kurush, *see* *Cyrus the Great*.  
 Legalism, 26-27.  
 Leicester, Earl of, 68, 70-71.  
 Leo X (pope), 60-61.  
 Leonardo da Vinci, 5, 11, 59, 60-61.  
 Lesbos, 23, 28.  
 Li Ssu, 26-27.  
 Libya, 36.  
 Lincoln, Abraham, 10, 95.  
 London, 52-53, 76-77, 89, 93, 98-99, 102, 124; *as Londinium*, 31.  
 Londinium, *see* *London*.  
 Lorenzo di Medici, *see* *Medici*.  
 Louis XIII, 78-79.  
 Lovcraft, Howard Phillips, 87, 122-123.  
 Macedonia, 23-25, 36.  
 Maldives, 50-51.  
 Mallability Ratings (time travel), 9.  
 Mao Tse-tung, 27, 121, 124.  
 Marco Polo, 50-51.  
 Marshal, *see* *William Marshal*.  
 Marx, Karl, 7, 101.  
 Mary (queen of England), 69, 71.  
 Mary Queen of Scots, 70-71.  
 Masons, *see* *Freemasons*.  
 Masters, Phil, 3.  
 Mata Hari, 116-117.  
 Matsudaira, *see* *Ieyasu*.  
 Mecca, 50-51, 109.  
 Medes, 19.  
 Median Empire, 18.  
 Medici, Catherine di, 6, 66-67; Cosimo di, 67; Giuliano dei, 61; Lorenzo di, 67; *see also* *Leo X*.  
 Medicis, Marie de, 78.  
 Mesopotamia, 17, 19, 21, 124.  
 Mexico, 62-63, 94-95, 103.  
 "Mitochondrial Eve," 124.  
 Moctezuma, 62-63.  
 Mongols, 51, 59.  
 Monophysites, *see* *Christianity*.  
 Montez, Lola, 7, 87, 104-105.  
 Morocco, 50-51.  
 Mozart, Wolfgang Amadeus, 92-93.  
 Muslims, *see* *Islam*.  
 Nabonidus (Babylonian emperor), 18-19.  
 Nabu Naid, *see* *Nabonidus*.  
 Nagiko, *see* *Sei Shonagon*.  
 Napoleon, 11, 25, 79, 95.  
 Nazis, 87, 118-119, 122.  
 Nefertiti, 14-15.  
 Netherlands, *see* *Holland*.  
 New York, 7, 95, 110-111, 122-123.  
 Newfoundland, 43, 85.  
 Newton, Sir Isaac, 3, 10, 69, 75.  
 "Nika" Riots, 34, 37.  
 Nile (river), 50, 109.  
 Nine Unknown Masters, 25.  
 Nobunaga, Oda, 72-73.  
 Normandy, 45, 49.  
 Norse, 11, 39, 44-45; *see also* *Denmark*, *Scandinavia*, *Sweden*.  
 Norton, "Emperor" Joshua, 87, 102-103.  
 Northumbria, 39, 45.  
 Norway, 42-43, 44-45; *see also* *Norse*, *Scandinavia*.  
 "Observer Effect," 5.  
 Oda, *see* *Nobunaga*.  
 Olaf the Stout (Olaf II, king of Norway), 45.  
 Olaf Tryggvason (Olaf I, king of Norway), 43.  
 Olympias of Epiros (queen of Macedonia), 24-25.  
 Orthodox Christianity, *see* *Christianity*.  
 Ottoman Empire, *see* *Turks*.  
 Oxford, 109.  
 Paracelsus, 7, 59, 64-65, 75.  
 Paradox-proof time, 9.  
 Paris, 55, 67, 68, 78-79, 87, 93, 115, 116-117.  
 Paullinus Suetonius, 30-31.  
 Peking, 25; *see also* *Beijing*.  
 Persia, 13, 18-21, 24-25, 32, 35, 50, 83, 109; *see also* *Iran*.  
 Persians, *see* *Persia*.  
 Peter the Great (Tsar of Russia), 6, 59, 82-83.  
 Philip (II, king of Macedon), 23, 24-25.  
 Philistines, 16-17.  
 Phoenicia, 19.  
 Phoenicians, 17.  
 Plastic Time, 9.  
 Plato, 22-23.  
 Platonism, 23.  
 Poland, 69, 83, 120.  
 Polo, *see* *Marco Polo*.  
 Portugal, 59, 115.  
 Portuguese, *see* *Portugal*.  
 Prague, 75, 111.  
 Prastagus, 30-31.  
 Prieuré de Sion, 53.  
 Protestantism, *see* *Christianity*.  
 Prussia, 87, 105.  
 Punjab, 25, 109.  
 Pu-wei, *see* *Lu Pu-wei*.  
 Quirks, 126-127.  
 Relativity, Theory of, 118-119.  
 Renaissance, 47, 59, 61, 126.  
 Richelieu, Cardinal, 6, 78-79.  
 Roberts, Bartholomew, 59, 84-85.  
 Roman Empire, *see* *Rome*.  
 Romans, *see* *Rome*.  
 Rome, 11, 13, 17, 32-33, 36, 93; *ruling class*, 21, *and* *Britain*, 28-31.  
 Roosevelt, Theodore, 87, 115.  
 Rosicrucians, 15.  
 Ross, Araminta, *see* *Tubman, Harriet*.  
 Russia, 50, 64-65, 82-83, 87, 117, 119.  
 St. Bartholomew's Day Massacre, 67.  
 Saladin, 6, 10, 11.  
 San Francisco, 102-103.  
 Santos Dumont, *see* *Dumont*.  
 Scandinavia, 39; *see also* *Sweden*, *Norse*, *Norway*.  
 Scotland, 70-71, 81, 98-99; *see also* *Britain*.  
 Sei Shonagon, 7, 40-41.  
 Selection criteria (for this book), 5.  
 Shaka Zulu, 87, 96-97.  
 Shakespeare, William, 5, 6, 7, 59, 69, 70, 76-77, 113, 120.  
 Shih Huang Ti, *see* *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.  
 Shonagon, *see* *Sei Shonagon*.  
 Shroud of Turin, 61.  
 Sidney, Sir Phillip, 68, 71.  
 Sigurdarson, *see* *Harald Hadradi*.  
 Skills, 5, 127.  
 Socrates, 20-21; *Aristotle not wishing to emulate*, 23.  
 Solomon (king of Israel), 17, 35.  
 Spain, 35, 51, 53, 62-63, 71, 79, 95, 105.  
 Sparta, 20-21.  
 Ssu, *see* *Li Ssu*.  
 Stalin, Joseph, 9, 57.  
 Stamford Bridge (battle), 45.  
 Suetonius, *see* *Paullinus Suetonius*.  
 Sufism, 50-51, 109.  
 Sun Tzu, 124.  
 Sun Yat-sen, 120-121.  
 Svein II (Ulfsson, king of Denmark), 44-45.  
 Sweden, 64-65, 83.  
 Switzerland, 98-99, 118-119.  
 Syria, 25, 109.  
 Takechiyo, *see* *Ieyasu*.  
 Taoism, 27, 59.  
 Tepes, *see* *Vlad Tepes*.  
 Tesla, 87, 110-111.  
 Theodora (Byzantine empress), 13, 34-37.  
 Theory of Evolution, *see* *Evolution*.  
 Theory of Relativity, *see* *Relativity*.  
 Tokugawa, *see* *Ieyasu*.  
 Tryggvason, *see* *Olaf Tryggvason*.  
 Tubman, Harriet, 87, 106-107.  
 Turkey, *see* *Turks*.  
 Turks, 33, 46-47, 57, 64-65, 83, 99.  
 Tuscany, 60, 67.  
 Tycho Brahe, *see* *Brahe*.  
 Tyre, 17, 25.  
 UFOs, 15.  
 Ulfsson, *see* *Svein II*.  
 USA, 88-89, 94-95, 103, 106-107, 113, 114-115, 117, 118-119.  
 "Underground Railroad," 106-107.  
 Verne, Jules, 101, 114-115.  
 Victoria (Queen of England), 107, 112, 125.  
 Vikings, *see* *Norse*.  
 Vinci, *see* *Leonardo*.  
 Vinland, 39, 43.  
 Vlad Dracul, 57.  
 Vlad Tepes, 56-57.  
 Wallachia, 57.  
 Walsingham, 70, 77.  
 William Marshal, 39, 48-49.  
 Wright Brothers, 114-115.  
 Xenophon, 20-21; *describing* *Cyrus the Great*, 18-19.  
 Ying Cheng, *see* *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.  
 Yugoslavia, 111.  
 Zelle, Margaretha Geertruida, *see* *Mata Hari*.  
 Zulu, *see* *Shaka*.  
 Zulus, 96-97.  
 ivity, *see* *Relativity*.  
 Tokugawa, *see* *Ieyasu*.  
 Tryggvason, *see* *Olaf Tryggvason*.  
 Tubman, Harriet, 87, 106-107.  
 Tudor dynasty, 5.  
 Turkey, *see* *Turks*.  
 Turks (and Turkey), 33, 46-47, 57, 64-65, 83, 99.  
 Tuscany, 60, 67.  
 Tycho Brahe, *see* *Brahe*.  
 Tyre, 17, 25.  
 UFOs, 15.  
 Ulfsson, *see* *Svein II*.  
 USA, 88-89, 94-95, 103, 106-107, 113, 114-115, 117, 118-119.  
 "Underground Railroad," 106-107.  
 Verne, Jules, 101, 114-115.  
 Victoria (Queen of England), 107, 112, 125.  
 Vienna, 93.  
 Vikings, *see* *Norse*.  
 Vinci, *see* *Leonardo*.  
 Vinland, 39, 43.  
 Vlad Dracul, 57.  
 Vlad Tepes, 56-57.  
 Wales, 85; *see also* *Britain*.  
 Wallachia, 57.  
 Walsingham, 70, 77.  
 William Marshal, 39, 48-49.  
 Wright Brothers, 114-115.  
 Xenophon, 20-21; *describing* *Cyrus the Great*, 18-19.  
 Ying Cheng, *see* *Ch'in Shih Huang Ti*.  
 Yugoslavia, 111.  
 Zelle, Margaretha Geertruida Zelle, *see* *Mata Hari*.  
 Zulu, *see* *Shaka*.  
 Zulus, 96-97.

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