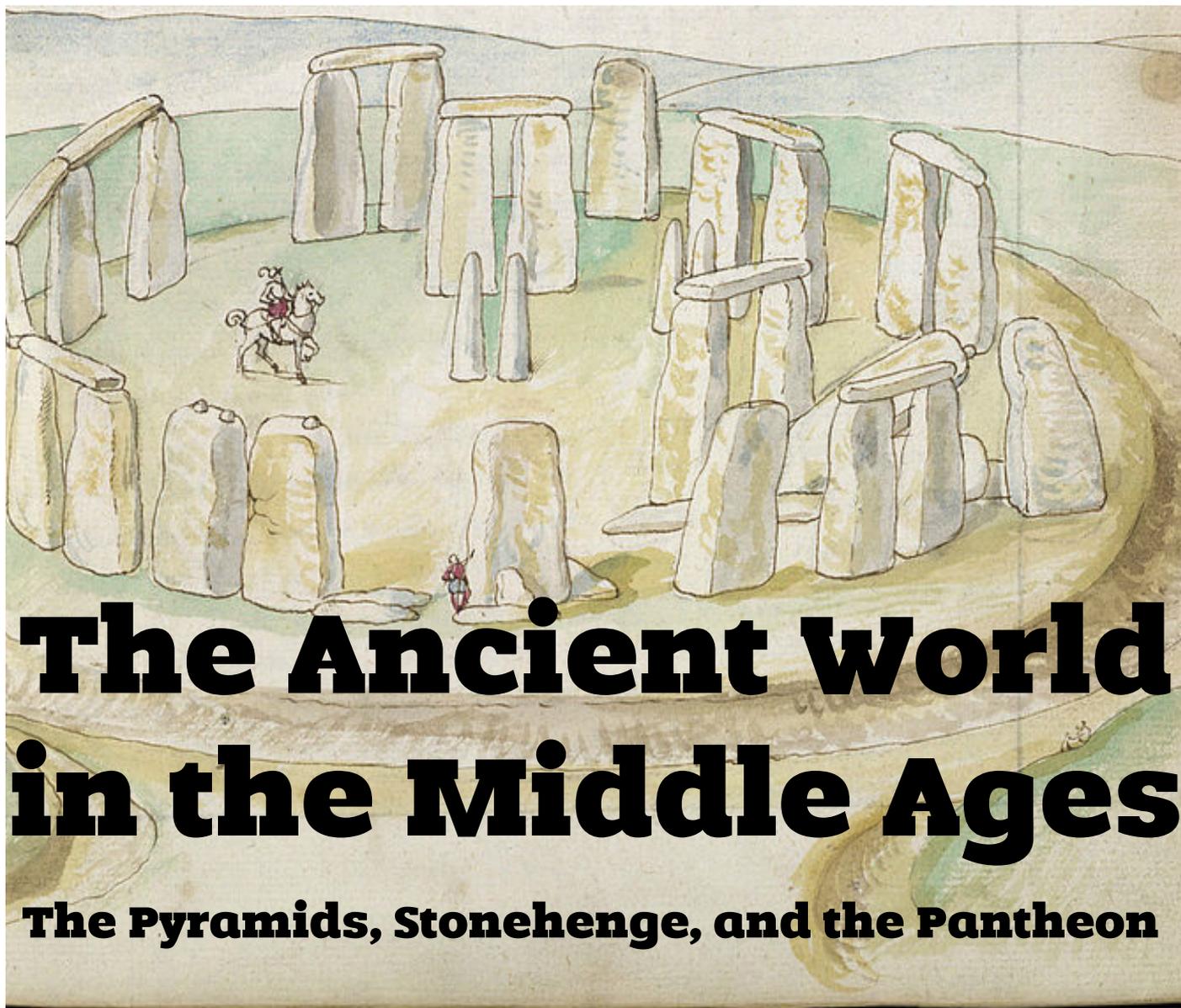


The Medieval Magazine

Number 50

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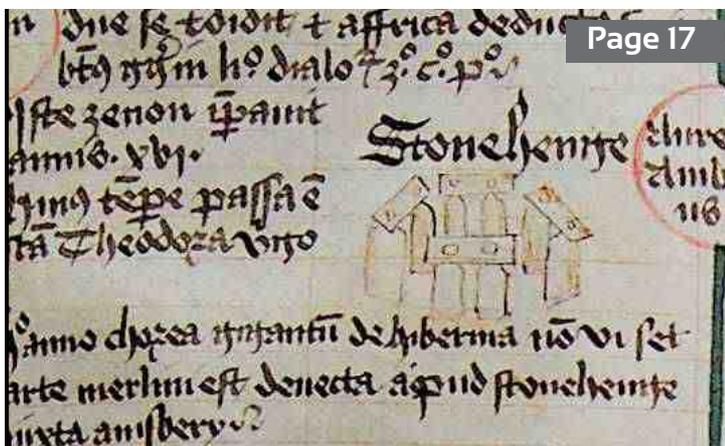
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The Pyramids of Egypt

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The Pantheon

The medieval life of a Roman temple turned Christian church.



Five (In)famous Medieval Break-Ups

Medieval marriages that did not end in love and bliss!

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Cover Photo: Lucas de Heere's painting
of Stonehenge from the 16th century



Medieval News

CSI Medieval: researchers to uncover forensic secrets of Britain's historic wax seals

By Cerri Evans, University of Lincoln



**Wax Seal - photo
courtesy University
of Lincoln**

Modern forensic analysis will be paired with detailed historical research to reveal new insights into medieval British society hidden within the wax seals of thousands of historic documents.

The unique research project, called Imprint, will examine fingerprints and palm prints left behind on the wax seals of documents dating from the 12th to the 14th centuries. These seals, attached to documents such as land transactions, business contracts, and financial exchanges were the medieval equivalents of modern-day signatures and credit cards.

The three-year study is funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and led by Professor Philippa Hoskin from the University of Lincoln, UK, and co-investigator Dr Elizabeth New from Aberystwyth University. They will work with historical materials in the cathedrals of Exeter, Hereford and Lincoln, the National Library of Wales and Westminster Abbey.

The aim is to reveal more about medieval social structures, networks of authority, and the bureaucracies and protocols behind the authentication and security of documents in medieval England and Wales. The results will also help to answer questions about administrative and legal changes, including how the identification of the sealer with their seal changed over time – a practice known as the 'performative act of sealing'.

Fingerprints retrieved during the archival research will be compared with modern prints stored on automated fingerprint identification systems (AFIS) to see if close matches can be found across such distant periods. This will contribute to understanding of the uniqueness of prints, advancing the science of hand mark identification.

That same analysis will also cross-reference all the medieval prints recorded by the

project. This has the potential to solve medieval crimes of fraud – for example, if prints found on suspected forgeries can be identified with prints on genuine documents. Imprint's forensic advisers, Forensic Focus, will present the data gathered at conferences and workshops for professional investigators.

Professor Hoskin, Professor of Medieval Studies at the University of Lincoln, said: "By the 12th century almost all administrative documents were sealed with wax, impressing a seal matrix to leave a distinctive impression. Some were bespoke and some bought off the shelf – but all were necessary to validate any legal document with which the seal's owner was connected.

"These wax seals have the potential to give us so much information about medieval people, but they are often set aside as less important than the document itself. This will be the first time that the information the handprints found on those seals will be examined, and it could really offer historians new understanding of the period.

"The study will also contribute important information to current debates in forensics on the uniqueness of fingerprints, and not only that, but potentially uncover medieval crime."

The prints will be collated into an online archive alongside detailed information about the seal impressions and documents. This resource will be made available to researchers, archivists, and the general public.

As the study progresses there will also be workshops for heritage professionals and specialist classes for students, to share knowledge with current curators and the next generation of those caring for sealed documents.

Example stories from the project's work will



be showcased through the website being developed by the Humanities Research Institute at University of Sheffield. There will also be workshops for members of the public, offering a vivid insight into medieval life.

Dr Elizabeth New, Senior Lecturer in Medieval History at Aberystwyth University, comments that: "Hand prints on wax seals bring us close to medieval people in a very tangible way. It is important to remember that seals were not just the preserve of kings and great nobles: men and women from all levels of society also set their seals on documents.

"Medieval seals contained a variety of images and words, providing strong statements of identity and very valuable sources of information about people, culture and society. The images can tell us what things actually looked like, and provide glimpses of humour, piety and family pride. They also enabled otherwise illiterate men and women the means to 'write' their name.

"These small objects have always had great significance, and are rich time-capsules that can open exciting windows into past lives.

Examining the hand prints left – both accidentally and deliberately – in the wax along with impressions of seal matrices provides further important opportunities to deepen our understanding of our medieval ancestors."

[Click here to learn more about Imprint. A Forensic and Historical Investigation of Fingerprints on Medieval Seals](#)

10 Free Online Medieval Studies Courses you can take in 2016

Looking to learn about the Middle Ages? Here are ten free MOOCs (Massive open online courses) that you can enroll in during the first three months of 2016:

Discovering Ashkenaz: Jewish Life in Eastern Europe

YIVO Institute for Jewish Research
Beginning January 11th
6 weeks

Join us on a 6-week adventure into the history and culture of the Jews of Poland, Russia, and Lithuania, from medieval times through the Communist era. We will explore Jewish relations with peasants and nobility, the rise of Hasidism and Haskalah, Yiddish and Hebrew modernism, revolution, spiritual resistance during the Holocaust, and postwar continuities with the past. This course is an intensive, college-level survey, equivalent to two 2-hour sessions per week over six weeks. Work at your own pace, following the course videos and interactive quizzes and activities, explore YIVO's unique archive and library collections, and join our discussion forum to meet up with students and faculty. Those who complete the whole course will get a special YIVO certificate and gift!

The Mediterranean, a Space of Exchange (from the Renaissance to Enlightenment)

Coursera
Beginning January 14th
9 weeks

The course *The Mediterranean, a Space of Exchange (from Renaissance to Enlightenment)* aims to explain the Mediterranean, using history and the analysis of the past, as a space generated by routes and circulation. We consider it crucial to disclose mobility as a historical factor: a mobility comprised of four major elements, namely people, objects, ideas and practices. In our analysis of Mediterranean reality between the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, from the Renaissance to the Enlightenment, we will pay particular attention to its western shores, an area seething with transfers and exchanges, in the social and economic spheres as well as the political and cultural, with the Iberian Peninsula, the various islands and the Italian Peninsula, all spaces of great dynamism.

Deciphering Secrets: Unlocking the Manuscripts of Medieval Spain

Coursera

Beginning January 21st

12 weeks

In this course students will explore the history of Jews, Christians, and Muslims in late medieval, fifteenth century Spain. Serving as citizen-scholars, students will learn about the positive and negative elements of inter-religious co-existence in Plasencia, Spain, and more importantly, contribute to an international scholarly effort by helping transcribe manuscripts.

Shipwrecks and Submerged Worlds: Maritime Archaeology

FutureLearn

Beginning February 1st

4 weeks

People have explored and depended on the oceans of our planet for millennia. During that time the geography of our world has changed radically as coastal regions have flooded and islands have risen up, or been lost beneath the waves. With 70% of the world's surface covered by water, an unparalleled, yet largely untouched record of human life has been left beneath the sea for us to discover, from our earliest ancestors right through to present day. Over the length of this Shipwrecks and Submerged Worlds course we will learn about maritime archaeology together – exploring underwater landscapes from the ancient Mediterranean to the prehistoric North Sea, and consider Shipwrecks from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific coast of the Americas.

Agincourt 1415: Myth and Reality

FutureLearn

Beginning February 22nd

3 weeks

The Battle of Agincourt, in 1415, is one of the most famous battles in the history of warfare, and one of the most important and memorable English victories. It still captures the imagination today, but why are stories still told about Agincourt? And do these stories represent what really happened on the battlefield? This free online course will explore the myths and realities about the battle, which marked its 600th anniversary on 25 October 2015. The three weeks will be led by the foremost academic expert on the battle, Professor Anne Curry.

Microbes Rule the World: Effects of Disease on History

Canvas Network

Beginning March 7th

6 weeks

While biologists have long understood the power of disease to shape events in world

the depth of that power has rarely emerged in history books. This course seeks to redress that imbalance through historical anecdote and scientific explanation as it investigates the ways in which diseases have affected dramatically the course of history across several topics, including religion, war, and migration. Participants will experience video lectures and vignettes with accompanying essays and learning exercises that will introduce them to the startling influence of microbes in the course of human events. Sharing good humor and a combined seven decades of teaching and friendship, the two professors from the fields of microbiology and history have designed tiered learning materials that allow students to venture as deeply as they desire into the links between disease and history. Participants may also choose which topics interest them the most and devote their energies accordingly.

England in the Time of King Richard III

FutureLearn

Beginning March 7th

6 weeks

The discovery of the skeleton of Richard III in a Leicester car park – and the recent revelation of an infidelity within his family's bloodline – have made headline news around the world. In this free online course, a team of scholars from the University of Leicester address a broad set of themes about the England Richard would have inhabited in the 15th century and look back at his rediscovery and reinterment.

Western Civilization: Ancient and Medieval Europe

edX

Beginning March 14th

8 weeks

This course will provide a general outline of European history from Ancient times through 1500 AD, covering a variety of European historical periods and cultures, including Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Celtic, Frankish and others. This course satisfies the Social-Behavioral Sciences (SB) and Historical Awareness (H) general studies requirements at Arizona State University. This course may satisfy a general education requirement at other institutions; however, it is strongly encouraged that you consult with your institution of choice to determine how these credits will be applied to their degree requirements prior to transferring the credit.

The Book: Scrolls in the Age of the Book

edX

Self-paced

6 weeks

This course is an introduction to the making and use of scrolls in the European Middle Ages. The codex, with its portability and instant access to any place in the text, became the dominant container for writing after the 4th century BCE, but scrolls continued to be made. Why and how did the scroll format remain popular and relevant in the age of the codex?

This course proposes four main reasons, which account for essentially every kind of scroll that still exists today. We will see and examine in detail a number of beautiful objects, and come to understand the thinking of those who chose the scroll format for their texts.

The Book: Making and Meaning in the Medieval Manuscript

edX

Self-paced

8 weeks

As books “go digital,” we can appreciate what is gained in terms of convenience, accessibility and interconnectedness. However, we should also consider what is lost as texts transition to a digital sphere. This module of *The Book: Histories Across Time and Space* seeks to reintroduce learners to the codex – a handwritten and hand-constructed book – as a three-dimensional object whose characteristics produce meaning in the experience of the reader. This module is designed to walk you through the process of making a medieval manuscript. Using a wide variety of examples from the collections of Harvard’s Houghton Library, it will familiarize you with basic terms and concepts and give you a “feel” for the shapes, sizes, formats, materials and considerations of craft that went into the making of the book as we know it.

Throughout the Middle Ages there existed an intimate relationship between making and meaning. Codices were tactile as well as visual objects designed to engage multiple senses. In the illuminated manuscript, it is often impossible to distinguish neatly between text and image; rather, letters assume imagistic forms and images take the form of letters.

Bookmakers were sensitive to the interplay of materials, from the parchment of the pages to the wooden boards, designed to protect the contents. Each of these elements conditioned a reader’s interaction with the book. Bookmaking required a significant material investment. The production process was laborious and lengthy, involving many separate stages and craftsmen.

How the Byzantines dealt with werewolves

Byzantine doctors treated people those suffering from lycanthropy, a mental disorder where a patient believes he or she is, or has transformed into, a wolf and behaves like one. This disease is the basis for the legendary werewolves.



Detail of wolves and a man stripping out of his clothes and striking rocks together; from the Rochester Bestiary, England, c. 1230, British Library Royal MS 12 F. xiii, f. 29r

In the article "Lycanthropy in Byzantine times (AD 330–1453)," four scholars from the University of Athens examine the writings of six Byzantine physicians to see what they believed lycanthropy was and how it should be treated.

Oribasius, a 4th century physician to the Emperor Julian the Apostate, described lycanthropy in his work *Synagoga Medicae*:

On Lycanthropy. Persons affected by lycanthropy go out at night time and wander among the tombs. You can recognize them from the following signs: they are pale with dry, dull and hollow eyes, without tears, the tongue extremely dry and without saliva. They are very thirsty and their legs are covered with scars from frequent stumbling. You must know that lycanthropy is a type of melancholy that must be treated by bloodletting until fainting, and offering an appropriate diet and baths with sweet water. Purgation by the hiera of colocynth must be applied twice or three times, and then use the viper theriaca and the other healing methods for melancholy. When the disease is approaching, you must sedate the patient by the use of wet compresses and administration of opium, rubbing the ears and the nostrils, a somniferous method.

Other medical writers also give similar symptoms to this disorder. Michael Psellus, an important 11th century Byzantine philosopher and historian, briefly describes the illness in verse in his work *Carmen de Re Medica*:

*Lycanthropy is a status of melancholy
Meaning at the same time misanthropy.
You recognize the affected man
Running around the tombs at night time
Pale, dry, sad and careless of his appearance.*

Even the 14th century writer, Johannes Actuarius, has a similar description of the disease:

Lycanthropy is a kind of melancholy making the affected persons wander at night-time,

visiting the tombs and the deserts like wolves, and come back in the morning as their human figure and stay at home. In any case, they have ulcerated legs and feet because of falls on stones and thorns; they have dry eyes and tongue and feeble vision. Some patients fear death while others desire it. Some patients avoid speaking and remain silent and sad while others try to converse with people.

The writers of the article note that these Byzantine physicians saw lycanthropy as a type of melancholy or mania, and that change into an animal was the patient's delusional fantasy. Byzantine medical writers often dealt with mental disorders in their works, including epilepsy, frenzy, dementia, melancholy, mania, lethargy, insomnia, depression and paranoia.

The article also compared these views with those from Western Europe during the Middle Ages and Early Modern periods, where it was seen as some kind of divine curse or demonic possession, and reacted by killing people who acted like wolves. Others believed they were heretics like witches, leading some authorities to go on campaigns to arrest and execute them. One 16th century French judge was responsible for burning over 600 witches and werewolves.

The article notes that a Byzantine emperor, Justin II (AD 565–578) may have suffered from this mental disorder. From the first years of his reign, Justin showed signs of a severe psychiatric illness, which included walking around the palace barking or mewing, and imitating dogs' and cats' behaviour. The emperor also threw objects out of the palace windows during his explosions of wrath and on one occasion demanded that Orthodox Patriarch wear a woman's hat.

The article "Lycanthropy in Byzantine times (AD 330–1453)", by E. Poulakou-Rebelakou, C. Tsiamis, G. Panteleakosi and D. Ploumpidis, is found in Volume 20, Issue 4 of the journal *History of Psychiatry* (2009).

The Pyramids of Egypt



The pyramids at Giza - photo by Ricardo Liberato / Flickr

The first pyramids were constructed in Egypt over 4600 years ago. Over a hundred were built in ancient times, and as the era of the Pharaohs disappeared from that country, knowledge about them and why they were built began to fade.

The fascination with the pyramids can be seen in the Middle Ages, as many Islamic and European authors mention these wonders and sometimes give explanations of why they think they were built. One of the most comprehensive accounts about the pyramids comes from the Egyptian writer Taqi al-Din al-Maqrizi (1364–1442). In one of his works on the history and topography of Egypt, he offers various stories and legends about the pyramids. Here are some excerpts from his work.

The pyramids were once very numerous in Egypt; there were many in the district of the Nile: some large, others small, each silt and brick, but the greater part of stone, some in steps and others smooth. At Giza, opposite the town of Masr, there were many pyramids, all small, which were destroyed at the time of Sultan ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub (Saladin), by Karakush, who used materials thus obtained to build the Citadel of the Mountain, the walls of Masr and Cairo, and the bridges of Giza. The three largest are those remaining in front of Masr. There is no agreement on the time of their construction, the names of those who have raised them, or the cause of their erection. Many conflicting and unfounded legends have been told of them. I will tell you about their history and of things that will satisfy you and only you, if it pleases God.



These pyramids were the tombs of kings. Formerly, when a king died, his body was placed in a basin of stone, called by the Egyptians and the Syrians geroun, and which was closed up. Then they laid out the base of a pyramid based on the dimensions established according to the desired height, and they placed the sarcophagus in the middle of the pyramid. They built over it an arch, and then the construction was determined according to the size, placing the entrance to the pyramid below the pyramid itself. The door led to one underground stone archway whose length was 100 cubits at most. Each of these pyramids has a door that leads inward, as we have said. They built some of these pyramids with edges like the steps of stairs, and when the building was complete, they flattened the steps from top to bottom. That was their method of construction, and for this they needed exceeding strength, patience, and obedience.



Abu Abdallah Muhammed bin Abd ar-Rahim al Kaisi, in his book *The Present of Hearts*, reports that the pyramids are square at the base with triangular faces, and that they number eighteen. In front of Fustat there are three, the principal one of which has a perimeter of 2,000 cubits, each side being 500 cubits, and its height is 500 cubits also. Each of the stones that compose it has a thickness of 30 cubits wide by 10 cubits. The layout and size of these stones are perfect. Near the city of the Pharaoh of the time of Joseph is another pyramid even bigger; its perimeter is 3,000 cubits and its height 750; the stones from which it is built each measure 50 cubits. In the vicinity of the city of the Pharaoh from the time of Moses is a pyramid even greater and more extraordinary. And finally another pyramid, known as the pyramid of Madoum (Meidum), is similar to a mountain and consists of five terraces. Al-Ma'mun opened the largest of the pyramids located in Fustat, entered the corridor of the building and went into a chamber square at the base and arched at the top, very large, and in the middle of which was dug a well 10 cubits deep. This well was square and the men found on each side a door leading down to a large room filled with dead bodies, each of which was wrapped in a shroud longer than one hundred dresses sewn end to end. Time has altered these bodies, and they have become black; these bodies, which are not larger than ours, have lost nothing of their tissue or their hair. There are no bodies of old men with white hair. These bodies were still solid, and nobody could detach even one member.

member. However, they were extremely light, for time had made them as heavy as some dry straw. In this well were four rooms filled with corpses and huge bats. The ancients buried animals in the sand, and as for me, I found a roll of fabric forming a large volume more than a cubit thick. The fabric was worn by time, but having held it, I found it to be a piece of linen as intact as a turban, white with traces of red silk, and finally, in the interior, a dead bird. It lacked neither feathers nor any part of its body, as if it had died recently. In the inside of the pyramid is another door that leads to the top of the monument. The corridor has no stairs and is almost five spans wide. It is said that a man who entered in Al-Ma'mun's time discovered a small room therein where there was a statue of a man in stone green as dahang. This statue was brought to Al-Ma'mun. It had a lid that could be removed, and within they found the body of a man wearing a gold breastplate encrusted with all kinds of jewels. On his chest lay a sword of inestimable price, and near the head was a red ruby the size of a hen's egg which shone like a flame, which Al-Ma'mun took for himself. The statue within which this dead man was encased was put up near the door of the king's palace in Cairo where I saw it in the year 511 (1138 CE).



Some believe that the first Hermes, whom they call the Thrice Great because of the three gifts he possessed: prophecy, kingship and wisdom, is the same as him the Hebrews call Enoch ben Jared ben Mahalalel ben Fatian (Kenan) ben Enos ben Seth ben Adam, who is also the same as Idris. He foresaw, from the position of the planets, the arrival of a Flood that would submerge the whole earth; therefore he built a large number of pyramids in which were deposited treasures, science books, and everything he feared would be destroyed and disappear from view. He wanted to ensure their safety from destruction. It is also said that the builder was a king named Surid bin Shaluq bin Siriaq. According to others, the character who raised the pyramids located facing Fustat was Shaddad bin 'Ad who built them following a dream. The Copts, who contest the invasion of Egypt by the Amalekites, attribute the construction of these monuments to Surid, also following a dream telling him that a calamity would descend from heaven. This was the Flood. Surid, say the Copts, raised the two pyramids in the space of six months, covered them with multicolored silk and engraved upon them this inscription: "I have built these in six months: tell those who come after me to try to destroy them in 600 years, for it is easier to destroy than to build. I covered them in colored silk. Let my successors try to cover them with mats, for braids are more common than brocade." In looking at the faces of these pyramids, one can see that longitudinal lines are cut forming narrow parallel strips all filled with visible writing, but no one is able to read it or to understand the letters' meaning.



In his book entitled *Kitab al-Aswa*, Abul-Hasan Ali Al-Masu'di says that the Caliph Abdallah Al-Ma'mun ibn Harun al-Rashid, on his trip in Egypt, having gone to visit the pyramids, had the desire to demolish one to know what it contained. "It is impossible," he was told. "It is imperative to open one," he said. And his workmen created the breach which is still gaping in the pyramid. For this, he used fire, vinegar, and levers; blacksmiths worked there, and he spent considerable sums of money. The thickness of the wall was approximately 20 cubits; reaching the end of the wall, they found at the bottom of the hole a green basin filled with gold bullion. It contained 1,000 dinars, each dinar weighing an ounce. Al-Ma'mun, admiring

the purity of the gold, and considering the expenditures needed to make the breach in the pyramid, discovered the gold was the absolute equivalent of this sum. The Caliph was filled with astonishment in seeing that the ancients were able to know precisely the amount that would be spent and the specific location where the basin of coins would have to be. This basin, we are told, was made of emerald; Al-Ma'mun displayed this treasure, and it was one of the most amazing wonders ever in Egypt.

For many years, they made use of the breach made by Al-Ma'mun and many people entered and followed the entrance thus formed. Some returned unharmed; others perished. One day, twenty young people gathered and prepared to enter. For this purpose they brought all that was needed: food, beverages, ropes, candles, etc. They turned into the corridor and saw bats as big as vultures who beat against their faces. Then one of the young people climbed down into the pyramid with ropes, but the corridor's mouth closed over him. His companions made every effort to rescue him until they were exhausted. They then heard a terrible voice that made them faint. When they returned to their senses, they left the pyramid. While they sat, amazed at what had happened to them, behold, their companion came out of the earth before them, began to say things they could not understand, and then fell down dead. They took him and carried him away, but the guards seized them and took them back to prove what that they told of their adventure. Then the young people sought an explanation of the words that their companion had spoken before dying, and this is how they translated them: "Thus shall be punished anyone who seeks what should not be known."



A lawyer named Amarat al-Yenini also offered this poem about the pyramids:

O, my friends, there is not, under the sky, a construction
Which equals the perfection of the two pyramids of Egypt;
It is a building that time itself fears, and yet everything
On the surface of the earth fears time.
The eye is delighted by the beauty of their arrangement,
And the mind cannot grasp the purpose of their construction.



These selections were translated by historian Jason Colavito on his website - you can read **more of al-Maqrizi's work**, as well as other writings about the pyramids from **medieval authors**.

Stonehenge



Lucas de Heere's watercolour of Stonehenge, created between 1573 and 1575

Stonehenge today is known as a prehistoric site and often associated with the druids, and the ancient Celts. It was used for religious rituals and believed to be a place of worship for the cult of the dead. How was it perceived in the Middle Ages? Was it simply abandoned to the passage of time? This doesn't appear to be the case. Much like today, medieval people were fascinated by the monument and wondered what it signified. Stories cropped up in the Middle Ages about the origins of this strange site, and several medieval artists left behind depictions of it so that we have a first hand view of how they viewed the monument.

The recent discovery of chapels, shrines and burial mounds demonstrate the monument was used for much more long after it was thought to have stopped being used for religious purposes. It was suggested that the bluestones which make up some of Stonehenge may have had healing properties. Geoffrey Wainwright, the president of the London Society of Antiquaries believes that the monument was used by ancient pilgrims for healing. This view, however, may have been transposed from Early Medieval stories about healing stones and healing water that were popular at the time.

The famous Arthurian author Geoffrey of Monmouth (1100-1155) wrote his account of Stonehenge in 1136. He claimed that it was commissioned by a mythical Briton king, Aurelius Ambrosias, while he was in exile in Brittany. It was built as a memorial to the 460 slain British lords who were betrayed by Vortigern and the Saxons. The men were tricked into believing they were meeting at the site to broker a peace treaty, but were slaughtered instead. When Aurelius returned, he gave Merlin the task of creating a memorial to his men. Merlin is said to have brought the stones from Ireland using his magic. Eventually, Aurelius and King Arthur's father, Uther Pendragon, were supposedly buried there. This is one of the most popular medieval foundation stories surrounding the monument and firmly cemented Stonehenge's association with a mythical Arthurian past.

Henry of Huntingdon (1088-1157) also wrote about Stonehenge in his *Historia Anglorum*, an account of the history of England up to 1154. In a section about the marvels of Britain Henry writes:

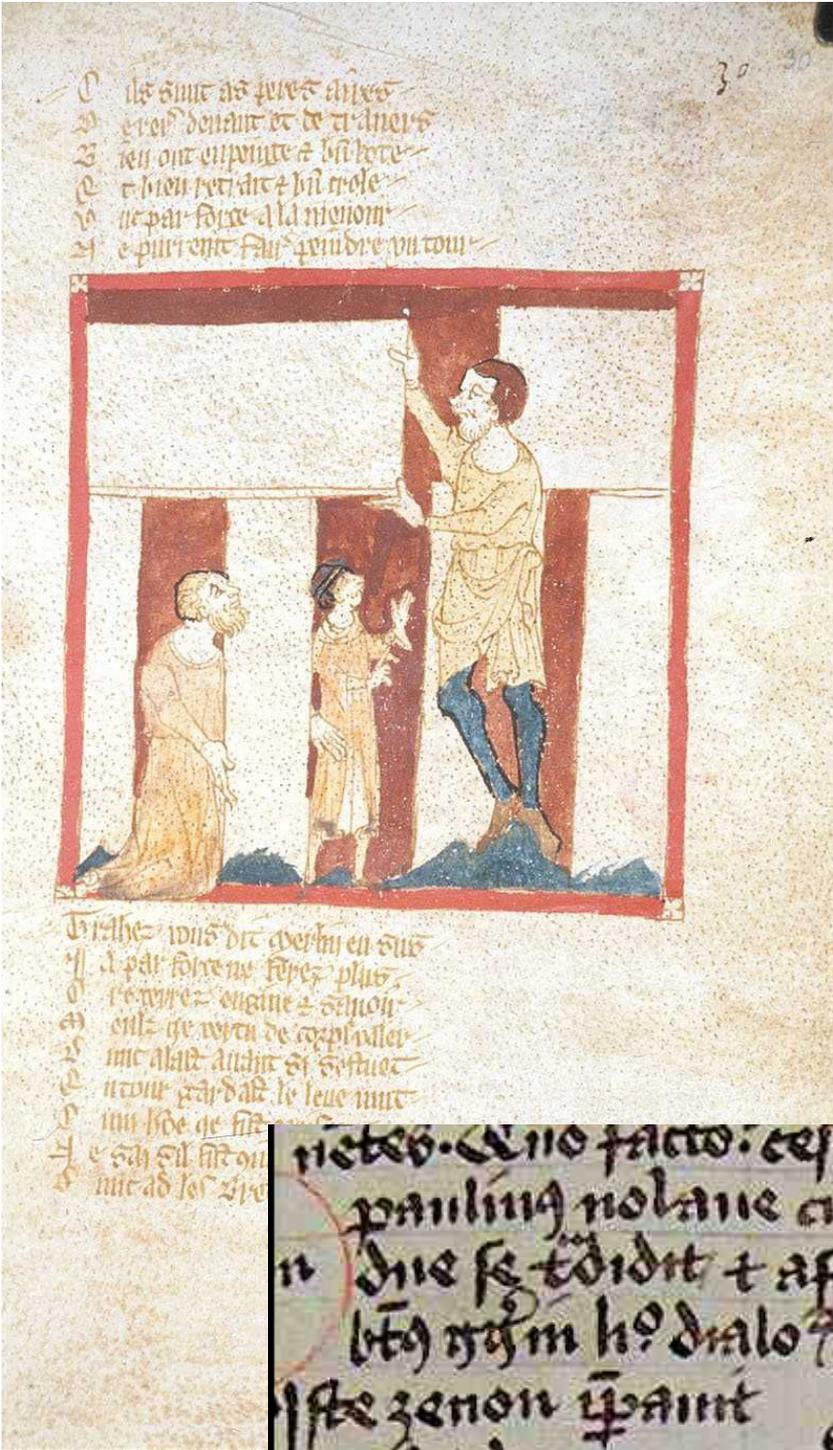
The second marvel is Stonehenge, where stones of amazing bigness are raised in manner of gateways; nor can any one find out by what contrivance stones so great have been raised to such a height, or for what reason they have been erected in that place.

Stonehenge was also depicted by another twelfth century author, the Norman poet, Wace (1110-1174) in his work, the *Roman de Brut*. Wace penned his literary history based on Geoffrey of Monmouth's *Historia Regum Britannia*. There is a picture of Stonehenge and Merlin; one of the earliest illustrations of the monument in the Middle Ages.

For one of the earliest known accurate depictions of Stonehenge, we turn to Flemish portrait painter, Lucas de Heere (1534-1584). De Heere fled to England after Philip of Spain II (1527-1598) tried to suppress Protestantism. De Heere lived in England as a religious exile and became popular in the Tudor court. He trained other Flemish painters, and while he was in exile, also compiled a book about his time in England which contained everything from history, to fashion to English customs. In this guidebook, his painting of Stonehenge is important because of its detail. It was painted around 1570 and is currently at the British Library in London.

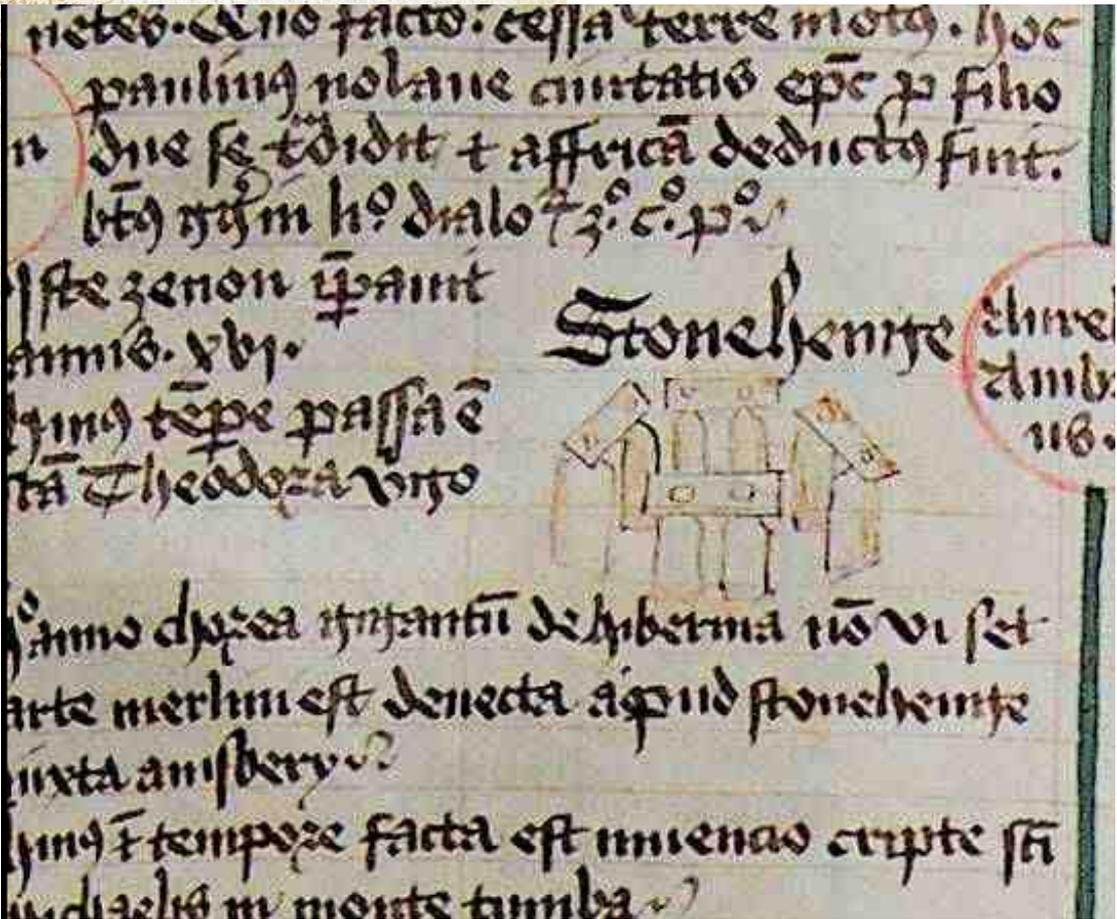
In 2007, a third medieval depiction of Stonehenge was discovered, one drawn in the 1440s. Historian Christian Heck made the discovery while in Lille spending a year at the Douai library looking at the medieval illuminated manuscripts. The manuscripts were part of a cataloguing programme of Institut de Recherché et d'Histoire des Textes. He discovered the drawing in Folio 55R, sheet 55, in the *Scala Mundi* text, which appears to have been last copied after 1441. Written above the drawing is Latin text that reads: "That year Merlin, not by force but by art, brought and erected the giants' round from Ireland, at Stonehenge near Amesbury".

Stonehenge fascinated medieval writers who used it in their pseudo histories of England and saw it as a link to a national, Arthurian past. Stonehenge continues to fascinate modern scholars who debate about its meaning and how it arrived to its current location.



Left: Folio 30r of British Library, Egerton 3028, a manuscript of English chronicles including an abrevitated version the Brut by Wace. This illustration shows the construction of Stonehenge with the assistance of Merlin and is the oldest known illustration of Stonehenge.

Below: 15th century depiction found in Lille, France



The Pantheon

Around the year 126 AD the Pantheon was completed by the Emperor Hadrian - it is now regarded as one of the great landmarks of ancient Rome. When it was first built, the Pantheon served as a temple to all gods. However, in the Early Middle Ages the building would be repurposed.



The Pantheon in Rome - photo by Jun / Flickr

This story is told in the recently published article "The Pantheon in the Middle Ages," by Erik Thuno. He notes that often records about the Pantheon are scarce in this period, particular before the seventh-century, when the city of Rome was in decline and partially abandoned.

Thuno writes: *The long history of the Pantheon in the Middle Ages is inextricably bound up with the decision made during the pontificate*

of Boniface IV (608-615) to transform the ancient building into a Christian church. Because Rome was under Byzantine control during this period, the pope had asked the emperor under Phocas (602-610) in Constantinople for permission to appropriate the building for the Church. The contemporary account of the life and donations of Pope Boniface (in the Liber Pontificalis) mentions briefly that "he [Boniface] asked the emperor Phocas for the temple called the Pantheon, and

and in it he made the church of the ever-virgin St Mary and all the martyrs; in this church the emperor presented many gifts."

Thuno believes that the consecration of the Pantheon took place in the year 609. He also dismisses a story that states Pope Boniface brought 28 cartloads of martyrs' bones to the site, as this tale was probably invented in the 16th century.

Despite its new status, the Pantheon was still vulnerable to be plundered for its pieces. Paul the Deacon reports that when Emperor Constans II visited Rome in 663 he took a liking to the old Roman temple:

Remaining at Rome twelve days he pulled down everything that in ancient times had been made of metal for the ornament of the city, to such an extent that he even stripped off the roof of the church [of the blessed Mary], which at one time was called the Pantheon, and had been founded in honour of all the gods and was now by the consent of the former rulers the place of all the martyrs; and he took away from there the bronze tiles and sent them with all the other ornaments to Constantinople.

While the new church was dedicated to both to the Virgin Mary and the martyrs of the Catholic church, it soon began to be identified more exclusively with the former. By the second half of the eighth-century it gained an unofficial nickname: Sanctae Mariae Rotundae. It was also probably around this period that an icon of the Virgin and Child was placed inside the Pantheon - it can still be seen there today.

Thuno does note that besides the addition of an altar, little was changed on the interior of the Pantheon. The exterior, on the other hand, had several changes over the centuries, including the addition of a cross and the removal of some of its marble and architectural features.

Another interesting note about the Pantheon was that it served as the prototype for a number of medieval churches that were built around

Europe and dedicated to Mary - architectural historians have noticed that elements from the ancient structure were replicated in medieval buildings, although never as grand as the original.

As this was happening, the Pantheon continued to find use as a church, although it was usually only used for special occasions. The Pope himself would hold special services there on January 1st, Easter Friday, and May 13th (the day honour its original consecration). Around the year 1100, the New Year's Day ceremony was moved to another church, and the service known as Dominica de Rosa was hosted at the Pantheon - during this mass, roses would be dropped into the church through its cupola, symbolizing the return of the Holy Spirit.

Thuno explains that it made good sense for the Popes to use the Pantheon only a few times per year - the building was located in a bustling part of the city, and if you wanted to hold a Papal mass you needed to have a large space to accommodate the many parishioners. Moreover, he writes:

the cupola's huge open eye would have made regular service rather uncomfortable at times; aside from rain that kept the faithful from standing in the center of the church, the opening in the dome would have rendered the space both damp and chilly during the winter season. Clearly, as long as the open eye was not closed - which it never was - the Pantheon was not really a suitable building for daily services. Quite simply, it did not work as an ordinary church. But precisely because of this shortcomings entailed by its unique architectural form, Santa Maria Rotunda was all the more magnificent as a setting for the pope's occasional appearances in the centre of medieval Rome.

Erik Thuno's article, "The Pantheon in the Middle Ages," appears in the book ***The Pantheon: From Antiquity to the Present***, edited by Tod A. Marder and Mark Wilson Jones.

Five (In)famous Medieval Break-Ups

By Danièle Cybulskie



Effigies of Eleanor of Aquitaine and Henry II of England in the church of Fontevraud Abbey - photo by Adam Bishop / Wikimedia Commons

The other day, a friend put me on to the very funny *It Ended Badly: Thirteen of the Worst Break-Ups in History* by Jennifer Wright, a modern and cheeky look at some truly awful splits from Emperor Nero to Debbie Reynolds and Eddie Fisher (and Elizabeth Taylor). Wright looks at two pretty nasty medieval break-ups, and I thought I'd expand on her idea a bit to include even more nasty break-ups, because – after all – who doesn't love a good train wreck as long as you're not on board? Without further ado, here are five infamous break-ups from the Middle Ages, starting with Wright's top picks.

1. Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine

Whatever these two were doing at any given time, you can bet that it was supercharged, from begetting heirs (they had eight children), to fighting. Wright chose Henry and Eleanor because when things went south for these two, they got medieval. Like, imprison-your-wife-in-a-tower medieval. Whether for political reasons – namely, Eleanor wanted to have more charge of her own hereditary lands – or because of Henry’s longstanding mistress, Rosamund de Clifford (as Wright suspects), Eleanor urged her sons into open war against their father more than once, which landed her under house arrest for fifteen years. While Wright sees Henry’s imprisoning Eleanor instead of killing her as partial proof of their love, it’s more likely that Henry could never have seriously considered killing her, given that most of Europe – and his own sons – had too much respect for Eleanor for execution to have been an option. Although Henry was too smart to have destabilized his rule by killing his troublemaking wife, I have no doubt both of them wanted to strangle the other many times.

* Bonus break-up: Henry’s infidelities caused more than one relationship issue, as he allegedly slept with his son Richard’s (that’s the Lionheart) fiancée, Alys, seriously straining relations between himself and Richard, as well as between himself and the king of France, her father.

2. Lucrezia Borgia and Giovanni Sforza

Wright’s second choice for a bad medieval break-up is that of the marriage between two powerful Italian families that, well, were always out to get each other, which just goes to show that the whole woman-as-peaceweaver thing wasn’t always a great idea. Lucrezia Borgia and Giovanni Sforza broke up shortly after their marriage in 1493, and her father (Pope Alexander VI) tried to persuade Giovanni to annul the marriage on

the grounds of his impotence. Giovanni pointed to much evidence (namely illegitimate children) of this blatant untruth, and refused to lie. “And then,” as Wright says, “the mudslinging started” (p.53). Giovanni spread rumours claiming Lucrezia was sleeping with her father and brothers, papacy notwithstanding; rumours so nasty and unshakable that they still haunt the Borgias’ memory today. Finally, under intense pressure (i.e. death threats), Giovanni caved and agreed to lie. The trouble was, Lucrezia was now in the difficult position of having to swear to being a virgin while very, very pregnant. “The Borgia family,” says Wright, “just decided to proceed as though she wasn’t pregnant, and essentially dared anyone to bring it up. And it totally worked” (p. 54). The marriage was annulled on the grounds that Giovanni was impotent and Lucrezia was a virgin. “There’s nothing noble about this break-up,” Wright concludes, “but it does seem like proof that if you do things with conviction you can get away with just about anything” (p.55). Just don’t try this at home.

3. Pedro the Cruel and Blanche of Bourbon

In this break-up, the name of the man involved is kind of a spoiler in itself: no one gets a nickname like Pedro the Cruel by being nice to people. Pedro was a Castilian king, who loved his mistress and hated lots of other people. Being king, though, Pedro was obligated to marry someone suitable, so he was pressured into marrying sixteen-year-old French princess Blanche of Bourbon after dragging his feet for as long as possible. The two were wed with great pomp and ceremony, and enjoyed spectacular wedding celebrations for two days. On the third day, the groom promptly dumped his bride flat and returned to his mistress. Despite the horror and outrage this caused to the pope, the French, and the Castilians, Pedro never had much to do with his lawfully married wife after that, except possibly to kill her when she was twenty-five. As far as break-ups go, Pedro’s was pretty darned cruel.

she was twenty-five. As far as break-ups go, Pedro's was pretty darned cruel.

4. Peter Abelard and Heloise

So, this one may be a bit of a cheat because Abelard and Heloise didn't break up as much as they were split up by her relatives, but in terms of bad endings, their relationship deserves to be on every top five list. Heloise was a brilliant noblewoman who fell hard for her dashing tutor, the great thinker Peter Abelard, and the two began passionately sharing more than just intellectual ideas. Unsurprisingly, their secret love affair led to Heloise's pregnancy and the birth of their son, embarrassingly named Astrolabe. Abelard and Heloise married in secret, but their marriage vows were not enough to keep them safe from the wrath of her family: Heloise's uncle had men break into Abelard's room, where they castrated him. After his ordeal, both Abelard and Heloise joined monastic communities, quickly rising to the top by virtue of their brilliance. They never stopped writing love letters to each other, but their marital relationship in the conventional sense was definitely over.

5. Isabella of France and Edward II

Although Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine's marriage certainly contained more passion, Isabella and Edward II's had a much worse ending. Historians have long speculated that Edward II was possibly homosexual, which could explain his coldness towards his French wife, although she did bear him children. Nevertheless, it's very likely that Isabella outright hated her husband for his casual neglect, his foolish favouritism among his courtiers, or his disastrous ruling style – probably all three, and more besides. Like Eleanor, Isabella led her son into open war with his father, although this time, the people were on her side, and she conquered, placing her teenage son on his father's throne. The new Edward III, under the advice of his mother and her new lover (Roger Mortimer), had his

father imprisoned, where he likely met his death. Whether Edward II was killed via a hot poker (which is extremely unlikely), by starvation (much more likely), or escaped to live out his life in hiding (**as Ian Mortimer suggests**), his marriage to Isabella was an utter disaster by anyone's standards, and theirs was an unequivocally awful break-up.

For a great, fun read and more crazy historical break-ups, including Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn's, do check out Jennifer Wright's *It Ended Badly*. For more on Pedro the Cruel, check out **this article by Medievalists.net** or **this book by Clara Estow**. For more on Abelard and Heloise, here's a **great New York Times article**, and for more on Isabella of France and Edward II, check out Alison Weir's *Isabella: She-Wolf of France*.

**You can follow Danièle
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Interview with Nicole Evelina, author of *Daughter of Destiny*

Before queenship and Camelot, Guinevere was a priestess of Avalon. She loved another before Arthur, a warrior who would one day betray her.

Daughter of Destiny, by Nicole Evelina, is the first book in her *Guinevere's Tale* trilogy, and has just been released by Lawson Gartner Publishing. We had a chance to interview Nicole to talk more about the book and being a novelist.

Where did you get the idea for this book?

When I was in college, a friend of mine gave me a copy of *The Mists of Avalon* for Christmas. I LOVED it, but I hated the author's portrayal of Guinevere as meek and well, boring. That made me seek out other books about Guinevere and I read Parke Godwin's *Beloved Exile*, which tells the story of what happened to Guinevere after the fall of Camelot. That made me wonder what happened to her before and after Arthur, which is something you don't hear much about. Then Guinevere came into my head, telling me she wanted me to write her story (which I thought at the time would be all one book). The rest, as they say, is history.

How long did it take you to write *Daughter of Destiny*?

All told, about 15 years. I started it in

September of 1999 while I was in college. It was a hobby, something I did when I got bored. I had no plans of publication. Then in 2008 when I read *Twilight* (go ahead and laugh), I thought "hey, if she can do it, so can I" and I started taking my writing much more seriously. I think I finished the first draft in December 2009. After that there was a lot of editing and some significant re-writing. That was when I realized it was long enough to be the first of three books and I started researching the publishing industry. I had an agent for two years and this book went to acquisitions three times, but with no offer. Then when my agent and I parted ways and I decided to go indie, I knew it would be the first book I'd publish.

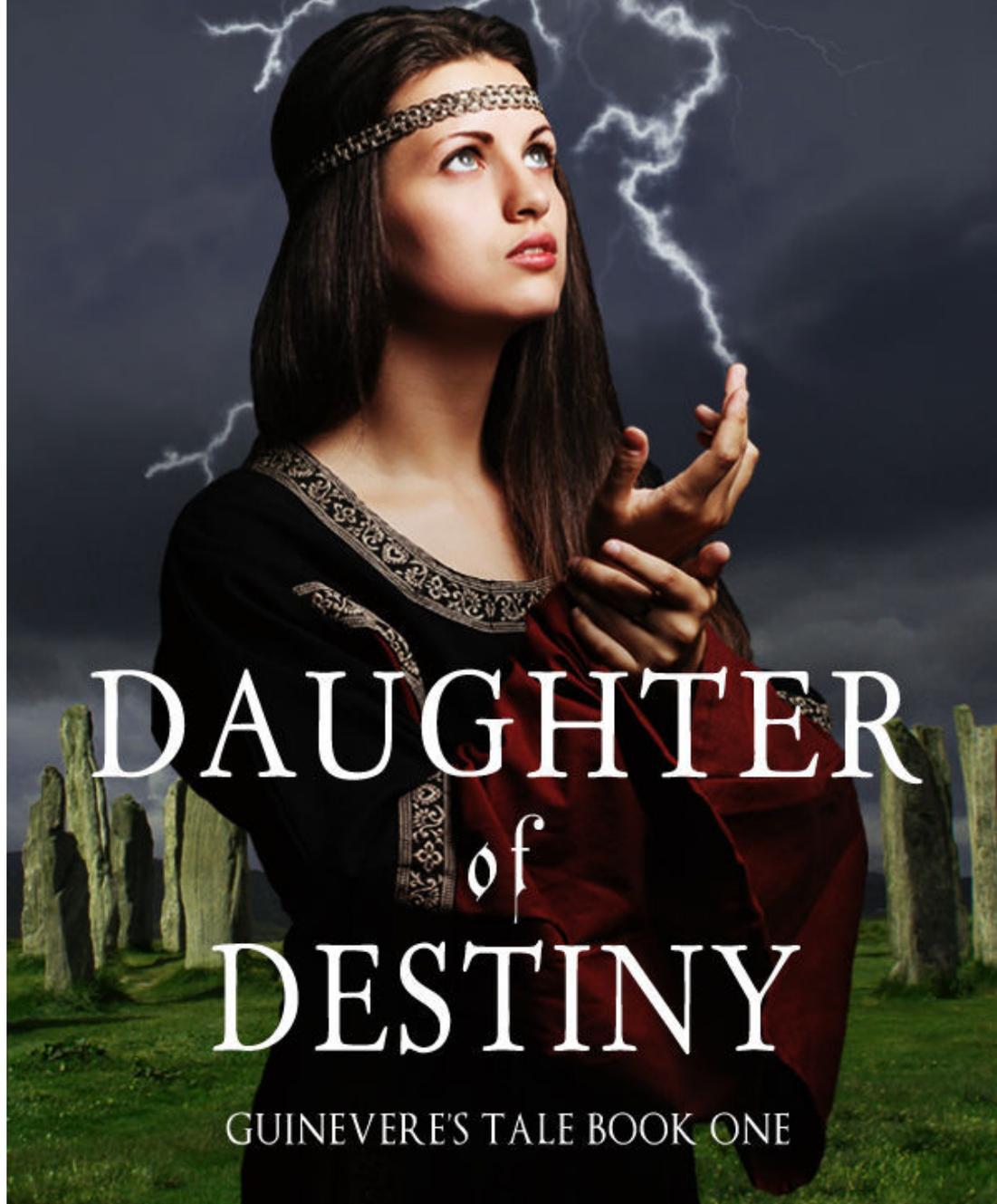
What traits and other tidbits do you share with your main character?

Guinevere is interesting. On one hand, she's

NICOLE EVELINA

Colorful and exciting...You will have a ball with this book.

-Serena Scott Thomas, actress and audio book narrator



independent and driven, but she can also be very naive and judgmental. I share all of those traits with her, plus her tenacity. Neither of us will let go of something we want until we get it or are forced to give up, but only if there is no other alternative.

I think we are different in that she is very duty-driven and that's not really part of my

life. I have to go to work, pay my bills and obey the law, of course, but I don't have that sense of expectation dogging my every move. I actually really admire her for ability to submit when she needs to.

As far as other characters, Isolde is a bit of wish fulfillment in that she's the type of carefree woman I wish I was and Elaine's

darkness is partially based on me. Morgan and Father Marius have no relation to me, but they are the kind of evil characters I love to hate. And of course, Aggravane is my fantasy man.

Did any of your inspiration for this book originate in your real life experiences?

Some of the character dynamics and relationships are based in real relationships. For example, I was able to draw upon my four years at an all-girls high school to create the bond of sisterhood among the girls and women of Avalon. Likewise, Guinevere's close relationship with her mother is modeled on my own (but thankfully mine is still alive). The interplay between Lyonesse and Pellinor and Guinevere and Elaine are based in reality, but I won't say who.

Are there any specific authors whose writing styles or subject matter inspired your book?

Well, I mentioned Marion Zimmer Bradley above. I was fortunate to get to spend two weeks in England on an Arthurian Legend tour with Jamie George, one of the people who helped Ms. Bradley research her novel. Her epic style was certainly influential, as was that of Jacqueline Carey.

I've been told I have a writing style reminiscent of Stephen King, which is weird because I've never read any of his books (other than the non-fiction, *On Writing*). I've also been compared to Elizabeth Chadwick and Susanna Kearsley by agents and editors. I am fascinated by religion and spirituality, especially the mystical side. I think that comes through clearly in this book and likely will in everything I write. I have a strong background in Catholic and Wiccan/neo-pagan studies (especially the mystical) due to years of personal research.

My fascination with the Celts came from a 1993 TV show that almost no one saw called *Roar*. The premise was about the conflict between an Irish community and the

invading/ruling Romans. I quickly found out how historically inaccurate that was (the Romans never made it to Ireland), but the research bug had bitten me and I spent roughly the next 15 or so years absorbing everything I could about the historical and mythological Celts.

What's the strangest or most interesting thing you researched for this project?

Oh gosh, there are a lot of things. You know how they say most authors' search engine histories could get them locked up? Well, it's true. For this book, I think the most interesting thing was trying to find out about the beliefs of the Druids, which is really hard because there's not a lot of concrete evidence. The strangest thing was probably Celtic burial practices and their views on death and dying.

Why do you write?

Because I have to. I know that's a clichéd answer, but it's true. For me, writing is like breathing. I have these characters in my head who talk and demand their stories be told and I think if I didn't write, I'd be crazy. I know when I don't, I get cranky and irritable. Even if only my friends and family ever read my books, I'll be happy because I'm doing what I was put on this earth to do.

Do you have another project in the works? If so, what is it?

Ha! That's like asking the ocean if it has water. I've got about 20 plots in my head. Right now two are at the forefront, the final book in the Guinevere's Tale trilogy, and a historical fiction set in the mid-1800s (I don't want to say anything more than that at the moment). Also, top of mind are telling Morgan's side of the story (which will be best read after all three Guinevere books to avoid spoilers) and that of Tristan and Isolde (which Isolde all those years ago). That one is actually partly started.

Later this year, I will publish three additional

started.

Later this year, I will publish three additional books:

Camelot's Queen (April – The second book in the Guinevere's Tale trilogy)

Been Searching for You (May 10 – an award-winning contemporary romantic comedy.)

Madame Presidentess (July 25 – Historical fiction about 19th century American Presidential candidate Victoria Woodhull, the first American woman to run for President)

Beyond those, I have stories ranging from early Roman Britain to Saxon and Tudor/Elizabethan England, 19th century France and WWII on the docket for the future.

What made you decide to be an indie author?

It was a combination of things, and a decision that I took a long time in coming to. One of the main factors was that it was time for me to get my work out there. It had been four and a half years – and six books – since I started querying agents. My work was just stacking up with no place to go, even though I had people telling me through my blog and social media that they wanted to read it. I wanted to be able to learn from it, which I can't do unless others can read it. That, combined with wanting to have *Madame Presidentess* published before the November 2016 Presidential election (which was by then impossible to do traditionally because of the time it takes to produce a book), and a desire to have more control over my career, led me to start my own publishing company. However, I am open the possibility of traditional publishing in the future. I haven't ruled anything out.

Who is part of your publishing team?

I have a fabulous editor in Cassie Cox, who runs her own freelance company. She is constantly

pushing me to dig deeper into the why behind what I write, which makes the books so much stronger.

I use Jenny Quinlan of Historical Editorial as my cover and social media designer. I love working with her. She has great vision (pardon the pun) and can manage to summarize the entire book in single image.

Liz and Morganna at The Editorial Department handle my interior layout, for which I am immensely grateful. Not only do they make the books look eloquent, they have a strong attention to detail and have saved me from making mistakes on more than one occasion.

And there's also my audio book narrator, Serena Scott Thomas. She is signed on to record all three of the Guinevere books, and I hope she'll be available for Morgan and Isolde's stories in the future. She has an uncanny knack to breathe life into these characters exactly (if not better) than they sound in head. And she's fun!

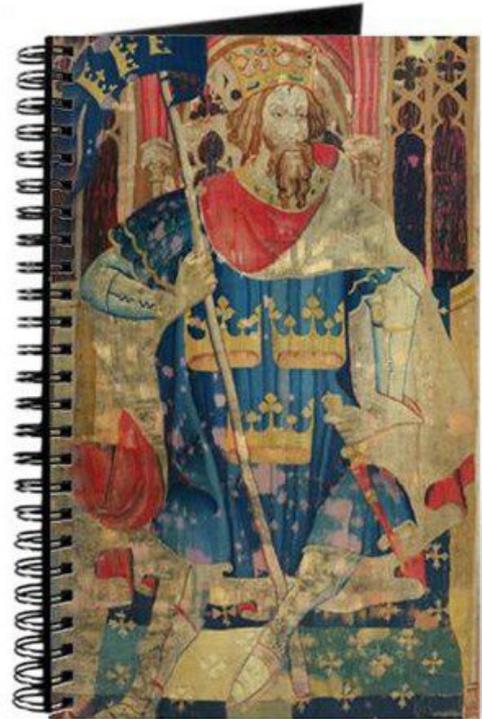
Why historical fantasy?

Believe it or not, I originally set out to strip Arthurian legend of all of its magic and tell the historical story of Arthur and Guinevere. It didn't take me long to realize that without some magic, the story loses some of its appeal, its life-spark, if you will. So I decided to take a studied approach to the magic my characters use. The Celts believed in magic as part of their everyday lives, so I was careful to make it subtler than you see in high fantasy stories. I also wanted it to reflect the Celts' deep reverence for and connection to nature, so I chose to have my priestesses perform elemental magic. Between that and The Sight, which is also part of Celtic belief, I felt like I had enough fantasy to do that part of the story justice without making it so historically impossible as to overshadow that aspect of the story. Historical fantasy is a nice balance of two genres that I love.

[Click here to visit the author's website to learn more about this novel](#)

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