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With many thanks to Johan Orly and Willem de mol van Otterloo

Professor Rosamond McKitterick, Perspectives on the past: the obelisks of Rome

From September to November 2020, I was working in Rome at the British School at Rome, one of Britain's Research Institutes. The BSR has a residential programme of Awards for artists, architect and post-doctoral scholars. As part of the Welcome Week at the end of September, and in the interests of staying out of doors in the context of Covid-19 restrictions, the entire group of this term's Award holders went on a long introductory walk around the city of Rome. It took us from the Villa Borghese gardens and Pincio via the Spanish Steps, the Piazza della Rotonda in front of the Pantheon, Piazza Minerva and Piazza Navona to St Peter's basilica and then back via the Piazza del Popolo to the BSR. What each of these places have in common is an Egyptian obelisk, remounted in ornamental and monumental settings at various stages in Roman history, most often at the instigation of the papacy. Some were brought from Egypt by Roman emperors from Augustus onwards, and installed in the city. Some were first placed as the centre point for circuses; others marked ceremonial entrances for temples and mausolea. Most were subsequently moved to the places where they can now be seen, and no doubt simply form part of the scenery for many visitors to Rome.

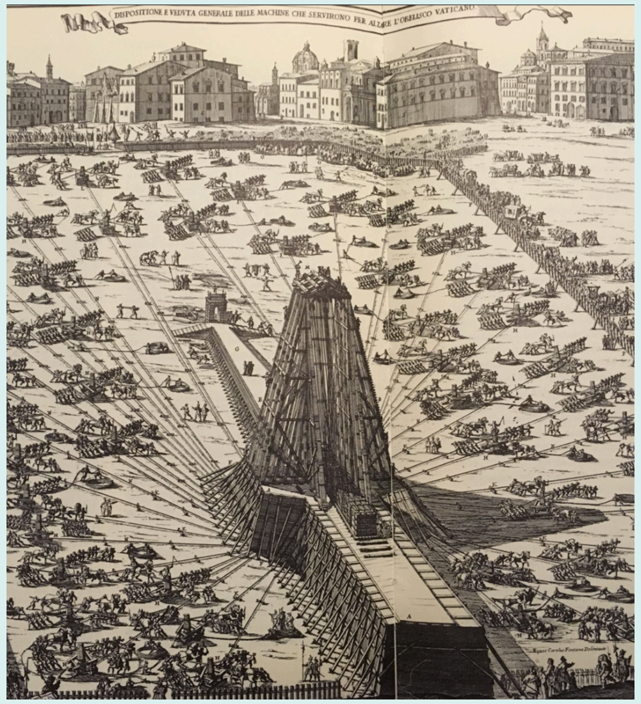
Yet these enormous single pieces of granite, mostly from the quarries of Aswan in upper Egypt, and carved with Roman inscriptions as well the original Egyptian hieroglyphs, are multilayered historical artefacts in their own right. As the collaborative volume by B.A. Curran, A. Grafton, P.O. Long and B. Weiss, *Obelisk: a History*, (Cambridge Mass., 2009), makes clear, obelisks not only 'connote some special form of power' but meant different things to the Egyptians and the other cultures that have appropriated and provided new settings for them over the succeeding centuries.

To modern observers, moreover, not least the authors of this book, the new contexts of these ancient monoliths and their interpretation have provided fresh symbolic significance, so that they are presented as at once 'the embodiment of Rome's coming of age as an empire', a symbol of Christianity's triumph over paganism, and markers in the scholarly development of Egyptology. The efforts to move the stones and erect them in new locations itself often became landmarks of engineering and technical ingenuity. Such efforts were not confined to Rome, for obelisks were also taken to London, Paris and New York in the nineteenth century. 'Cleopatra's needle' on the Thames Embankment, for example, was originally one of a pair erected by the Pharaoh Thutmose at Heliopolis, moved by the Roman Emperor Augustus to Alexandria, and brought on its final journey from Alexandria to London by Sir James Alexander and Sir Erasmus Wilson.

The authors of the book summarize their enterprise as follows: The history of obelisks is 'a history of technical achievement, imperial conquest, Christian piety and triumphalism, egotism, scholarly brilliance, political hubris, bigoted nationalism, democratic self-assurance, Modernist austerity and Hollywood kitsch'. They chart the initial production and erection of the obelisks as well as scholarship about them. An unfinished obelisk excavated at Aswan enabled scholars to calculate that it had been carved with tools made of a hard green and black stone called dolerite. A document surviving from the reign of Rameses IV about the erection of another obelisk says that 8362 men were involved altogether, and 900 workmen died.

The statistics for the removal of the obelisk now in front of St Peter's basilica in Rome are less grim, and we know far more about the circumstances, thanks to a full account published by the architect responsible in 1586. This obelisk was originally erected near Alexandria by Gallus, the first prefect of newly conquered Roman Egypt after the defeat of Mark Antony and Cleopatra by Octavian (later the Emperor Augustus). It was brought to Rome and became the centre of the circus of Nero on the Vatican hill, described by the classical historian Tacitus as the scene of executions. Indeed, it is understood to be the place where St Peter himself had been executed. In time an imperial mausoleum was built on the site behind the obelisk, and the old basilica of St Peter's built next door in the fourth century. Due to a misunderstanding, moreover, the obelisk itself was thought to be the tomb of Julius Caesar. A thirteenth-century visitor to Rome called Master Gregory said of it 'at the top is a bronze sphere in which the ashes and bones of Julius Caesar are deposited'.

With the construction of the new basilica of St Peter's in the sixteenth century, the decision was made in the 1580s to move the obelisk to its present position in front of St Peters basilica. Pope Sixtus V commissioned the architect Domenico Fontana to move the obelisk 283 feet. The work required an elaborate crane, 40 windlasses, 907 men and 75 horses. The transport of the Vatican obelisk was both a 'stunning piece of engineering' and a public and religious ritual. The stone was actually exorcized; spectators of the ceremony on 26th September 1586 received fifteen years indulgence and those who passed by but took their hats off or prayed received up to five years. Fontana also organised the removal of the colossal obelisk now in front of the Lateran basilica from the Circus Maximus, and it too was exorcised and consecrated, on August 10th 1588. In the light of the way obelisks were used to restate and proclaim political power in Rome, it is no surprise that Mussolini chose to mark his Fascist campaign in Rome with the Carrara monolith in front of the Foro Italico on the banks of the Tiber in 1932.


DISPOSITIONE E VEDVTA GENERALE DELLE MACHINE CHE SERVIRONO PER ALZARE L'OBELISCO VATICANO

Obelisks as presented in this engaging book certainly offer an enlightening perspective on the past, but study of the obelisks in Rome proves to be a particularly instructive panorama of displays of power in the city over the past two thousand years.

Johan Orly on 'The Real Thick of It: *The End of the Party: the Rise and Fall of New Labour*', by Andrew Rawnsley

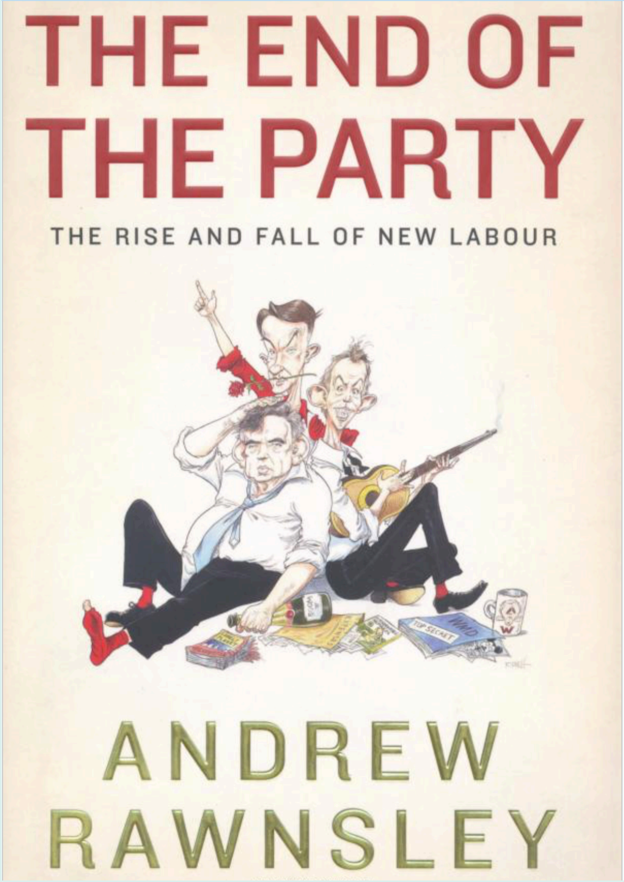
The Observer's Chief Political Commentator Andrew Rawnsley combines remarkably thorough research with page-turning drama in the definitive account of the last two terms of New Labour in government.

Rawnsley will be familiar to many readers for his incisive Observer columns, and it will come as no surprise that his published work is even more superb. 'The End of the Party' charts the last two terms of New Labour in government, from 2001-2010: the response to 9/11, Afghanistan and Iraq, 7/7, public sector reform, Cash for Honours, boom and bust, the expenses scandal, and, raging in the middle, the denouement of the Blair-Brown saga which had begun when they seized the reins of power in 1994. This central clash of personalities forms the heart of the book, certainly fitting when tackling the age of 'sofa government'. The portraits are remarkably even-handed, backed up by a wealth of nuance and evidence. Of all of them, Brown's, a sort of miniature psychological study in itself, is most damning: selfish, volatile and stubborn, with a legendary temper, surrounded by half-eaten bananas and brutish attack-dog aides, and petty enough to withhold the contents of the budgets from Blair until hours before they were announced; nevertheless, he is shown to be immensely able when he found his footing during the financial crisis, and remains undoubtedly, relentlessly human throughout; it is hard to not feel sorry for Brown, blighted by near-blindness, who waited for so long only to get the short end of the stick, just as it is hard to fully admire his irate, obstinate temperament, or to conclude that he was suited to the post.

Blair appears remarkably talented, and full of lofty ambitions, but painfully naïve when it came to dealing with the White House and, notably, far more constrained as PM than one might assume, given the criticism of New Labour's 'presidential' style; he seems under constant attack, variously from Brown, his backbenches, and the press, and the resultant sacrifice of Blairite ministers and thwarted policy initiatives are frequent. It is also, interestingly, a theme of Blair's that the man so famously capable as a public communicator was utterly inept at difficult personal conversations, often leaving ministers to believe they'd been shuffled when in fact he was trying to sack them. Peter Mandelson is Gove-like, so often the plotting, self-interested, Machiavellian 'Prince of Darkness' of his reputation, and yet his loyalty to Brown and pivotal role in government in the final years is as admirable as it is surprising.

There are some fantastic sketches – Clare Short, David Blunkett, John Prescott and Alistair Darling stand out (the latter has a particularly interesting dynamic with Brown, who, for someone who understood the difficulties of the No10-Treasury relationship, treats Darling with unbridled contempt) – though it is fair to say Rawnsley restricts the airtime given to most ministers in favour of examining the heart of government. My only qualm with the book, though one understandable in light of the already lengthy nature of the book, is Rawnsley's tendency to often present policy as a battleground for the Blair-Brown conflict instead of fully examining it in its own right; those hoping for a more detailed look at the work of individual ministers, particularly in public sector reforms (especially in education and health) in the period, may not be fully sated. However, the work on the run up to Iraq, and then the David Kelly era, stands out as a remarkable journalistic endeavour, detailed and insightful, both in the moment and detached, as is the coverage of the Brown and Darling's response to the financial crash. What emerges is a remarkable study of the personal dynamics between those in power.

Rawnsley's style complements his journalism in a hugely beneficial way. He is unapologetically detailed, giving line-by-line accounts of key meetings, and interviewing and quoting a comprehensive list of the key figures of the period, from ministers and SPADs to civil servants; the book's list of sources is a book in itself, though the number of anonymisations becomes notably pronounced in the later half. By interspersing the minutiae of the No10 operation with newspaper headlines and national and global events, however, Rawnsley avoids a claustrophobic narrative, and for all of its depth his prose is remarkably readable. Unlike many 'fly-on-the-wall'-type political books, the book retains a dramatic, almost soapy quality without compromising on the academic rigour of its journalism. Its 800 pages certainly did not feel that long. Rawnsley maintains a strong sense of seriousness in his account of events, but his vignettes sometimes add some levity alongside insight – a particularly memorable personal favourite pertains to Cabinet ministers suggesting alternative 'F-words' following Harriet Harman's proposal of 'Future Family Fairness' as a campaign strategy. Others are nothing short of jaw-dropping: Brown throwing a stapler was a popular headline during the book's serialisation, as was Bill Clinton telling Blair 'he's using you' in reference to George W. Bush. Overall, a salacious, informative, illuminating read – the definitive tome on post-millennium New Labour.



Claire Zhao reviews 'The White Ship', by Charles Spencer

In *The White Ship*, Charles Spencer provides us with a sweeping narrative of the Norman dynasty, from the beginning of William the Conqueror's claim to the throne to the establishment of the Plantagenet dynasty. He frames this narrative around the tragedy of the *White Ship*, which carried the only legitimate son of King Henry I of England, William Æthling, as well as many of his most trusted men, from Barfleur to Southampton on a cold November evening in 1120. The tragedy is magnified by its context: for the first time in his 20 years reign, Henry had been able to enjoy the prospect of peace after the defeat of his brother, Robert Curthose, and the security of his lineage through William Æthling. However, as Spencer describes the tragedy unfolding in vivid and poignant detail, we see the fruits of Henry's labour begin to unravel.

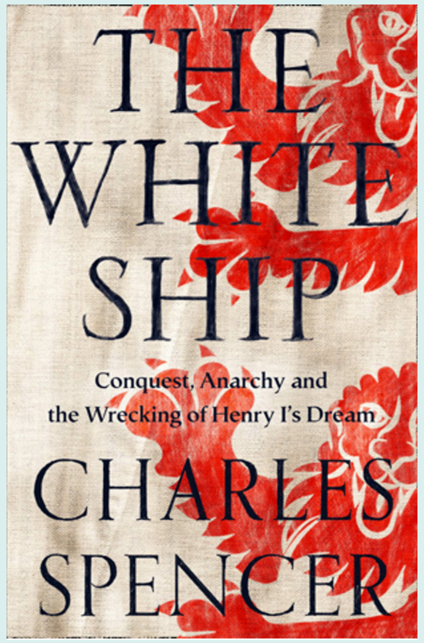
In this book, Spencer offers both a gripping narrative of the tragedy and a perceptive analysis of Medieval English and European societies. Particularly noteworthy is his focus on lineage and the focus of women in society. He skilfully navigates around the connections between kingship and the church, by examining the Investiture Contest, the Crusades and the general relationship between the Pope and rulers to establish religious tensions and the emphasis on legitimate succession at the time. Through his narrative of the civil war that followed the death of Henry I in 1135 between the Empress Matilda and her cousin Stephen, Spencer raises various questions of the relationship between women and power in such a patriarchal society. Firstly, he refutes the idea of women being entirely powerless by examining the iron grip with which Medieval consorts such as Matilda of Scotland (Henry I of England), Sibylla of Conversano (Robert Curthose of Normandy), and Empress Matilda (Henry V, Holy Roman Emperor) ruled as regents. However, he also establishes the limitations of female power through pointing out that female ruthlessness was only admired when she ruled in a man's absence, as he would have wished. More importantly, women in medieval society were limited by their lack of experience in warfare. Spencer makes it clear that a good monarch in the Middle Ages had to present themselves as the pinnacle of religious, military and political authority.

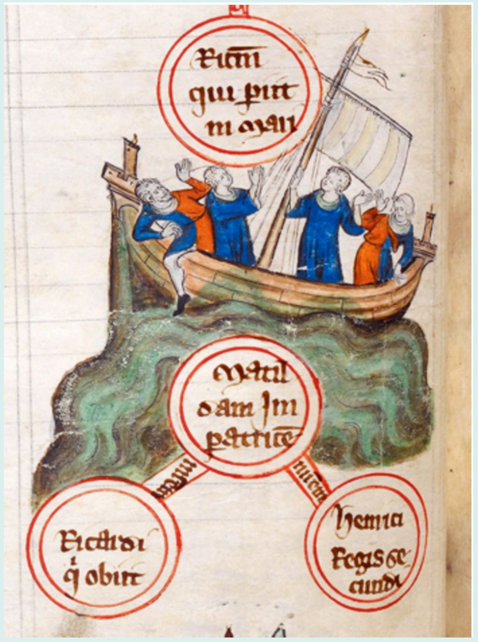
Spencer also examines the legacy of Henry I, particularly in terms of the institutions he established. Of particular fascination is his role in establishing the Exchequer. Through his establishment of an effective financial institution, Henry I was able to impose law and order throughout England. He expanded the traditional role of coinage and mints in Medieval England to exert power not only through power, but through knowledge inferred from the financial stability of his various sheriffs. He made it clear that his eyes and ears were everywhere, ruling through authority and fear. It is interesting to think about the various practical ways that rulers maintained control in medieval society before the advancement of transportation and technology, at a time when much was unknown.

Whilst he uses sources from many contemporary historians to back-up his narrative, Spencer could have been clearer in the dichotomy between what is established from his examination of primary sources and what is likely to be fabrication from artistic license. In writing Medieval History, it is easy to portray speculation as historical fact and Spencer falls into this trap, particularly in his detailed account of the sinking of the White Ship itself, when much of the events are supposedly derived from the account of one witness, a lowly butcher from Rouen named Berold. In addition, by only choosing to use written sources, Spencer limits the scope of *The White Ship*'s perspective, as the majority of chroniclers were either monks or aristocratic subjects. Therefore, Spencer could have used more material sources, such as archaeological and numismatic evidence, to give a more holistic account of this era.

Another danger of this book is that it may lead readers to fixate on the sensational sinking of the *White Ship* rather than the nature of medieval politics and society as the cause of the ensuing succession crisis and civil war. By vividly describing the grief of Henry I and the almost-survival of William Æthling, the book becomes caught up with the contemporary emotions of the event, prompting readers to lament over the loss and portray the ensuing civil war as 'avoidable'. However, it is not the *White Ship* that causes succession crises and anarchy in the medieval world. Had the *White Ship* not sunk, the high mortality rates and the selective criteria for an heir in England at that time would have led to a succession crisis at another time just as full of 'strife and rebellion, weeping and lamentation' as The Anarchy between 1135-1153. Whilst focusing on shipwreck as the cause of The Anarchy provides a riveting explanation in a narrative history, Spencer fails to explicitly acknowledge that broader trends and analyses play a more important role.

Nevertheless, the *White Ship* offers a thrilling account and a new angle into the world of 11th and 12th century England. Through his dramatic and moving storytelling, Charles Spencer successfully shines a fresh spotlight onto this 900-year-old tragedy.





Giorgio Acerbi reviews 'Frederick the Second', by Ernst Kantarowicz

"Just because Frederick II had so nearly been the Saviour (and indeed in the eyes of the faithful still was) he had the opportunity to be the very Antichrist."

This passing remark in final chapter, ominously titled the "Antichrist", of "Frederick the Second" gauges the exceptional tone characterising Ernst Kantorowicz's monumental biography of the Hohenstaufen emperor. Published in 1927 in Germany by a 31-year-old Kantorowicz, of Polish-Jewish origin turned German nationalist, "Frederick the Second" is as much a book about history as a piece of history itself; exchanged as gift between the fascist dictators of the period, controversial in its historical methodology, and startling in the style of its powerfully expressive, idiosyncratic, and unconventional prose, this biography of a titan the middle ages can however still offer a coruscating dive into 13th Europe. Frederick is himself, suitably enough, possibly the most controversial of all Holy Roman Emperors: lauded as the "Stupor Mundi" by the chronicler Matthew Paris and as "one of my nearest kin" by Nietzsche, while branded by the church as a mixture between the tyrant Nero and the apocalyptic antichrist, and variably judged by historians as everything between a multiculturalist and an ethnic cleanser. The Frederick in "Frederick the Second" is a mesmerising if idealised figure, and Kantorowicz's long exposition of his life is intertwined with intricate conceptual passages which represent the real vitality of this work.

"Frederick the Second" is thus a mixture of narrative and abstraction. Conceptually it is ambitious. Kantorowicz's style elevates the issues of medieval Christian theology and political philosophy to an extreme level of exaltation: the ideals, doctrines, and philosophies expounded are vividly rendered, and the axiomatic differences between modern thought and the medieval intellectual environment should not detract from the complexity of the latter. One can be pardoned of the suspicion that the clarity and definition with which concepts are by Kantorowicz weren't present with the minds of Frederick's coevals, or perhaps not even in the mind of the emperor himself, and exist thus only in Kantorowicz's explosive prose and conjectures. "Frederick the Second" remains nonetheless with few peers when it comes stimulating wonder and thought concerning this period, even if by presenting unrealistic adaptations of contemporary thought.

One of the most interesting and deeply explored is Frederick's conception of Justice. The relationship and intermediation between divine, or natural, and human, or positivist, law is a recurring medieval theme, but more singular is Kantorowicz's allocating Divine Law the role of religion of secular state; thus the secular state, with the emperor at its apex, is separate from, but with a function of equal and parallel spiritual significance to, the Church, whose religion is divine Grace. Both consequently possess essential and complementary functions in the governing of Christendom. This increasing theoretic separation of the State from the Church is seen by Kantorowicz as a portent of the renaissance, albeit embryonic as still seeped in a spiritual world-view, as are his Frederick's centralising and autocratic reforms in Sicily.

Equally captivating was the exploration of the nature and development of the medieval "Empire". Here there is too much to be said, as Kantorowicz starts with addressing the intertwined mesh of imperial and aristocratic prerogatives which characterised imperial governance in Germany on Frederick's elevation to kingship, constructs a half-historical half-intellectual narrative of the conflict between pope and emperor from Virgil to Dante, and ends extrapolating that the emperor's person and office was the linchpin through which the medieval political world was held in existence. Particularly captivating along this voyage was the role he gave Italy and Rome in imperial philosophy at Frederic's time: his Frederick is bent on establishing in this "province of provinces" a centralised autocracy on which to base his imperial power, as he already had in his natal Sicily. Kantorowicz thus develops the suggestive image of a "last Emperor [who] in his ascent to the dominion of the world drew his centripetal circles ever narrower and closer" to Rome, as while Frederick was ruler who had campaigned in Germany and Syria before turning 31, he was to concentrate his activities as his life progressed, and his power increased, in Italy alone. In this sense "Frederick II provides the only historical example of a World Ruler aiming not at expansion but at condensation".

A recurring theme throughout is Frederick's nature as the termination of an era; what may appear at first a due consideration of the eschatological imagery surrounding several medieval Christian emperors, and Frederick especially, is however developed by Kantorowicz in a historical and temporal sense: great lengths are taken to depict Frederick as a veritable, if final, Roman Emperor, direct successor of Caesars, and the culmination and end of a long millennium of imperial Rome. Likewise, he is often referred to as the "Last Hohenstaufen", king of a Germany approaching "complete internal disintegration", a "last Emperor [who] was not destined, like Caesar or like Charlemagne, to be the *heros eponymos* of a new epoch, which bore his stamp", but rather the apotheosis of a period of medieval history he was bringing to a close. All these abstractions, far from providing conclusive theses on any of these issues, present provocative visions and stimulus for further exploration.

Retracing ourselves back to the historical narrative from which these wondrous and perhaps speculative considerations arise, any habitual reader of history will encounter much to deter them. The style which so exalted Kantorowicz more abstract contemplations here smacks of excessive hyperbole, myth-like tales, panegyrics and hagiographies of the type one would expect from contemporary sources and not from a modern historian. Generally, Kantorowicz incorruptibly resists all temptation to address nuances or alternate explanations, and much of his description seems far too clearly defined when one considers the subject is a 13th century emperor shrouded in historical debate. One such example is his description of Frederick's crusade: Kantorowicz's declarations that "It was the Eastern triumph, not merely Eastern travel that won for Frederick the halo of the Caesars" and that "the triumph of Jerusalem had exalted the Hohenstaufen to be the Son of God" hardly resonate with Steven Runciman's conclusion, in "A history of the Crusades III: The Kingdom of Acre", that "of all the great Crusaders the Emperor Frederick II is the most disappointing". Similarly, the latter's trenchant analysis of Frederick's complex relationship with heretics and other religions, "To the average Westerner he [Frederick] was almost incomprehensible", is as effective as what Kantorowicz achieves in through many chapters. That is not to say that Kantorowicz's narrative doesn't possess qualities of its own: it is definitely, and predictably, an enjoyable read, as for example his depiction of the extinction of the Hohenstaufen dynasty after Frederick's death, consumed by the conflict Frederick had initiated in Italy attempting to turn it into the material foundations of his universal monarchy, strikes as profoundly tragic. Additionally, Kantorowicz's conveying of medieval warfare as a matter which was as much political as it was military, and which in absence of political solutions could transform into an attritional, unwinnable, and costly business is notably insightful; "none could be a good general or a bad general, because there was no art of war" seems once more somewhat exaggerated, but it appears within an otherwise perspicacious observation.

Furthermore, the historiographical reservations one may hold pale into irrelevance in front of some of the veritable oddities which lie in ambush throughout the text, ready to make you question the very nature of what one is reading. The most remarkable must be a lengthy treaties on the "prehistoric racial feud" between Waiblings and Welfs. Kantorowicz proceeds, in a mid-chapter interlude, to delineate European history as the relationship between the intellectual, heretic, free, "for ever Emperors" Waiblings and the mighty, lion-hearted, but "for ever vassal" Welfs, in whose ranks Kantorowicz even enrols "the lonely fallen vassal in the Saxon forest, Bismarck". Thus, a chapter which started with the conflict between a young Frederick II and his opponent emperor Otto IV, Waibling and Welf, with Kantorowicz seemingly recounting popular legends around at the time of this civil war, evolves into a historical tale spanning from the barbarian invasions to unified Germany, passing through Dante and Italian municipal factionalism in the later middle ages, additionally appropriating terms like "Welf" which have a different and historically specific meaning. Nor is it clear exactly what Kantorowicz means by "race" in this context, as the individuals cited on each side of the divide share neither familial relation or nationality, but rather intellectual disposition; in either case the fleeting mentions this issue receives elsewhere shine no further light on the matter.

To circle back to the author of this remarkable work, something more should probably be said about Kantorowicz himself. At the time of his publication of "Frederick the Second", Kantorowicz had fought the First World War as a German soldier, become affiliated to the nationalist poet Stefan George, fought with right-wing militias during the Spartacist rising, but had also become interested in Islamic studies and, rather than being a medievalist, had a degree in Islamic economic history. In later life, Kantorowicz, who fled to America after the Nazi rise to power, would produce other works, especially "The King's Two Bodies", which were to receive much more comprehensive acclaim than his controversial Frederick. The latter would eventually even be repudiated by Kantorowicz himself, as "the man wrote that book died many years ago". Therefore, it would be unjust to judge "Frederick the Second" by the same parameters as one would judge most works of historical scholarship; its appeal lies elsewhere, in its electrifying style, in its vertiginously ambitious theses concerning the medieval world, and in its nature as the creation of a remarkable man at a remarkable time.

Alexandre Guilloteau reviews ‘Geoffrey Howe, Conflict of Loyalty’

Geoffrey Howe was a singular man. Now largely forgotten, he walked the floors of government, both in Whitehall and international bodies, for over fifteen years in an unusually fruitful and interesting career. First a minister in the Heath government, he was responsible for the passage of possibly the most important change to our law that century, the European Communities Act, bringing us into the Common Market. After five years in opposition he rose in 1979 to become Chancellor of the Exchequer in likely our economy’s worst period that century. After overseeing the most dramatic change to our economic system since 1945, he moved across to the Foreign Office to be the second-longest-serving Foreign Secretary during the twentieth century during times of great upheaval: the Hong Kong Agreement; the Single European Act and Anglo-Irish Agreement; and the final peak in Cold War hostilities, the arrival of Gorbachev. Dismissed from the Foreign Office over mounting tension between him and Margaret Thatcher, he made a year later possibly the most dramatic and consequential speech in the Commons. But for this speech, his name might not be known anymore. Fortunately however, his autobiography chronicles, in seven hundred pages of great, often excessive, detail, the life of the only person to serve the whole eleven years of the Thatcher government; the person Thatcher’s biographer called ‘the one who did most to make her policies work’.

Richard Edward Geoffrey Howe was born in Port Talbot in 1926. His childhood does not seem to be remarkable, but Wales clearly remained in his mind: he regularly refers to himself as a Welshman, and mentioned this to Deng Xiaoping. His grandfather was a founder-member of the Tinplaters’ Union. His first memory is of the dole queue. Both these facts are notable given his support for anti-union legislation and a monetary policy which helped cause mass unemployment.

The book covers his early life and first period in Parliament and government. It is fascinating and he seems as proud of it as of his achievements in the Thatcher government. Here, though, I shall only talk of this latter period.

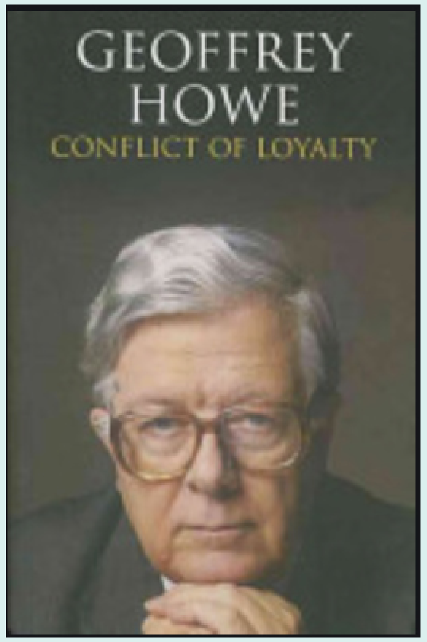
In 1975, after two election defeats, Conservative leader Edward Heath was deposed and a young Margaret Thatcher became leader of the Conservatives. With her came Geoffrey Howe as Shadow Chancellor. First and foremost in their formulation of policy during opposition was the *Stepping Stones* document. So radical and apocalyptic was it that the party chairman refused to let it be known outside the Shadow Cabinet. The cause of our ills, Howe believed, was entrenched in our political economy: there could be no end to decline without a ‘sea-change’. The trades unions in the end brought down two PMs, Heath and Callaghan, and were becoming steadily more powerful; they were strangling productivity and modernisation – so went the argument. The next Conservative government would have to lead the fight. It might as well not be in office if it didn’t: the aim was ‘power, not office’ for the Tories.

The Tories won the 1979 election on a wave of anti-union sentiment. Thus came to power the most radical Chancellor of the Exchequer since 1945. Britain was then, as Howe likes to say, ‘in the last-chance saloon’.. The Bank of England report in 1978 warned of the prospect of long-term falling living standards. The underlying problem was the undeniable unproductiveness of the economy, epitomised by British motor industry of the time. Howe and Hoskyns blamed this on unions, subsidy and collectivism. Keynesian economics dictated that when times were hard money needed to pumped into the economy to produce demand and kickstart employment and productivity. But since the economy was fundamentally unproductive, pumping money produced an increase in wages but not in goods. The rise in ‘money supply’ – the amount of money in the economy – caused inflation. The oil crisis did nothing to help. The solution, Howe believed, was ‘monetarism’. Simply put, this meant less credit and higher interest rates; the opposite of what had been believed for fifty years. It is difficult nowadays to understand just how radical Howe and the Thatcherites were. A testament to this is the abolition of exchange controls (sterling could not be taken in more than small quantities out of the country). There was another aspect to policy: the tax-switch. The former meant reducing income tax – ‘tax on investment, enterprise and success’ in favour of VAT. This, he thought, would attack Britain’s malaise and restore incentives. But the result of pushing up VAT was to push up prices. The rhetoric seems to be that no pain would be spared in reducing inflation (or its effects). The tax-switch shows this is not true; rather, ‘it was simply a nettle we had to grasp’, in spite of its impact on prices. So in his first budget, Howe reduced the top rate of income tax from a staggering 98% to 60% and the basic rate from 33% to 30% (it is now 20%).

To begin, progress was slow. Unemployment creeped up, sterling creeped up, inflation did not seem to be declining substantially. By 1981, the low-point of Britain’s morale and malaise, it was time for another dose of the monetarist medicine, in Howe’s infamous 1981 Budget.

The world was in deep, but inflationary, recession. The cost of oil, and thus manufacturing, had trebled in three years. Individuals, however, had not come off too badly: the strong pound was to their benefit, and real after-tax income had risen by a sixth in three years. But the high pound was unfavourable to business; rising costs (inflation, oil) were also unfavourable to industry; as a result their real disposable income had fallen by a quarter in three years. This imbalance meant that ‘people were becoming more expensive but producing no more’. The pressures of recession and inflation on industry pushed up unemployment.

All this meant the burden on the Treasury grew: recession reduced tax revenue ; climbing unemployment pushed up welfare costs. Rising government borrowing to pay for this meant rising interest rates to fund debt. But struggling business, the source of problems, badly needed a fall in interest rates – to invest and take risk, and to ease the upward pressure on the pound. This could only mean one thing: reducing the deficit. That would require the unthinkable: a Conservative government cutting spending *and* increasing taxes in a recession.



So Howe had shot himself in the foot with the tax cuts. He was unwilling to renege on a central campaign pledge: what he was envisaging, a deficit reduction of £4 billion, would be unpopular enough. This was eventually accomplished by increasing excise duties a windfall tax on banks and North Sea oil, an increase in National Insurance and freezing personal allowances in a time of strong inflation. The political impact of the above would be, to say the least, devastating. But it was not just the public reaction that went that way. For the next day, in *The Times*, 364 top economists signed a front-page letter attacking the government's policy and predicting economic disaster. It is difficult to imagine what must have been going through Howe's head at this time. I doubt a government in our spin-dominated times could hold fire when what was right (in their minds) was so clearly the opposite of any political considerations.

For the first time, as a result of the Budget, things began to improve. By 1982, interest rates were falling and the deficit was down. Victory was achieved in the South Atlantic. By 1983 inflation was at 4%, its lowest level since 1970. Tides were turning, and the government, having fallen to third in the polls only two years back, won a landslide re-election.

Howe's book is too long and too detailed. It is impossible to keep abreast of all the names, events and acronyms. Yet in seven hundred pages he claims not to be able to talk in all the detail he wished. The same goes for me, so I shall talk only of one aspect of his Foreign Secretaryship: Britain's relationship with Europe. The breadth of his role, nonetheless, should not be forgotten: 1983-1989 was a tumultuous period.

One of the first problems with which Howe had to deal was the American invasion of Grenada, a Commonwealth state, which owed allegiance to Her Majesty. The US State Department had been growing increasingly worried by the Marxist government in its 'backyard' which had taken power after in 1979. In 1983 there occurred a brief factional revolution. Various East Caribbean nations appealed on 22 October for help – perforce largely American. Most countries, including Britain, were opposed. Her Majesty's Government was told that it would be consulted by the US before any steps were taken. On the evening of 24 October, President Reagan informed Thatcher that he would 'welcome' her advice. She (with Howe's support) advised against invasion. Later that evening, another letter was received from the President, stating he would 'respond positively', in complete disregard of Britain's will, to the request. It later transpired that the decision had already been made two days before and Washington had decided to keep us in the dark until just before the invasion precisely because they assumed Thatcher would be opposed.

In the event, the invasion was smooth and successful. So it may seem that this is a rather trivial event in the grand scheme of things, and so it is. But it came to symbolise for Howe Britain's need of Europe. In his words, 'As the years went by Margaret and I were destined to react more and more differently… I had no doubt we should base [alliances] on the premise that Grenada offered the best evidence of American instincts.' For Britain's view and interests, even in territory headed by Her Majesty, were subordinate to America's. If it meant it, that involved purposefully misleading HMG about America's intentions. So much for the 'special relationship'.

By 1985, the Thatcher-Howe relationship began to decline. Howe attributes it to Thatcher closing in on the world; rising nationalism certainly, but also a tendency to see everything in terms of 'us' and them'; throwing collective discussion in to the wind in favour of her coterie of 'voices'; a willingness to appoint and dismiss colleagues based on loyalty, not ability . Thatcher attributes it to Howe's failure to 'take stock of our differences' and 'misty Europeanism'. Howe has a habit of giving his recollection of events and then quoting Thatcher on what she believed happened – in such a way as to make her sound deluded. Sometimes this is enlightening, but its frequency makes it seem excessively (and uncharacteristically) bitter. I have not read Thatcher's account, but what is clear is that it was Thatcher whose opinions began to change. This was most apparent in the now famous 1988 Bruges Speech. Here she announced that she would no longer tolerate European integration. Howe describes the contents of speech as flagrantly untrue. An indication of how Thatcher ran her government is the fact that she announced a momentous U-Turn of foreign policy – and thirty-year-old Conservative policy – without informing the Foreign Secretary. For Howe, this represented everything that was wrong about the new Thatcher: secretive, shrill, and deceptive. But it also represented the antithesis of his views on Europe.

Ever since the loss of empire, Britain had, in Dean Acheson's words, to find a new role in the world. It was self-evident, and confirmed by Suez, that Britain could not stand tall on her own (or with two other nations') two feet. America would be Britain's ally, no doubt, and there would always be a more than practical element to that relationship. But Britain could not rely on America alone. This was widely understood – evidenced in our 1961 application to the EEC. For one thing, this was not possible in practical terms – for trade and the like. Britain also needed to be in a relationship of equals. Emotional ties, as Grenada showed, were useful to pay lip service to, but not how foreign affairs are conducted by the Americans. To have any meaningful voice in the world, to 'punch above our weight', we needed to be part of a larger organisation. The organisation had to be one that could stand up to America or China, or one that made them take note of the European view. For it is only by 'pooling' sovereignty that we can have any influence in the world outside, and in diplomatic terms as well as practical and geographic ones we are most closely aligned with Europe. So we must be willing to subordinate national pride in favour of practical reason and be part of an united Europe – a Europe which can compare to the great powers of the world. And in shaping Europe, because of our size, we can play a leading role. This does not mean abandoning America – though if necessary it is much the easier – but rather, in Howe's words, 'strengthening the European pillar of the Western alliance'. This is ever more important with Messrs Trump and Xi – and no great common enemy in the USSR. It was perhaps Winston Churchill who best explained this view: 'It is…not less agreeable to see [this sacrifice of national sovereignty] as the gradual assumption by all nations involved of that greater sovereignty which can alone protect their diverse and distinctive customs'.
Howe is fond of quoting Archimedes to describe the EU: 'give me a place whereon to stand, and I shall move the world'. For Howe, that place to stand is a unified Europe. Britain can move the world – and it had a good stab at it within Europe under Thatcher – only by taking the lead in forging the Europe of tomorrow. That it had successfully done in the Single Market. But just as the EMU was taking shape, Thatcher was threatening to take us away from this role.

By June 1989, the rift between PM and Foreign Secretary had grown so wide that Thatcher felt she had no option but to dismiss Howe from the FCO after six years of service. His new position would be the humiliating demotion of Leader of the House. The rift widened yet further, and in November 1990, the last Cabinet member from the first dark years resigned. But Howe was not going to go without making himself heard.

Most of Geoffrey Howe's work was behind the scenes. This would be the occasion when he would be known up-front, in person to the country. History shows that he was not to be underestimated in this new arena. Determined not to have the narrative of his fall-out shaped by the No 10 press machine, he set forth explicitly to the House of Commons the reasons for his disillusionment. Several revelations were met with gasps from the House. In it he traced the length – and success – of his relationship with Margaret Thatcher. Soon, though, it took a more sombre turn. What took the attention of the House was his exposition of Thatcher's dictatorial style of government which was increasingly unpopular: most famously, 'it is rather like sending your opening batsmen [Cabinet] to the crease only for them to find…the bats have been broken before the game by the team captain'. He ended with probably the most civil call to arms: 'the time has come for others to consider their own response to the tragic conflict of loyalties with which I have myself wrestled for perhaps too long'. By the end of the month, Margaret Thatcher had resigned and was replaced by John Major. It is widely acknowledged the Conservatives would not have won the 1992 election with her as leader.

Reflecting on his life, the phrase sometimes used of Geoffrey Howe is 'quiet revolutionary'. In him, we have a remarkable character. He was unusually devoted to public service and was indeed radical. What makes it difficult to appreciate how radical he was is that his ideas are now the mainstream. Labour was only able to return to power by accepting the ideas first put into practice by Howe as Chancellor. A good deal of that can be attributed to his iron nerve. For his policies, now regarded as successful, were universally unpopular, and for the first two years, unsuccessful. In almost every instance, every economic argument was the opposite of the political argument. Had it not been for the Falklands War, the government may not have survived. The phrase reverberating around his account of the chancellorship is 'we needed to grasp this nettle'. The nettles were not attractive, but we can be grateful Howe (and Thatcher) grasped them. That his spell as Chancellor came with suffering for many no one can gainsay. But I think one would struggle to find many who would rather live in the 1970s than the happier period which followed as a result of his Chancellorship.

Certainly some of his free-market rhetoric now seems idealistic. But what sets him apart from fire-breathing Thatcherites is reflected in his voice. One commentator remarked that where Thatcher went about as if 'she were building a new Jerusalem', Howe presented Thatcherism as simply common sense. What also sets him apart is his continued support for European unity. Howe describes the Thatcher years as 'triumph and tragedy'. Much of the tragedy is the split between Thatcher and Howe, so effective in lockstep; but much of it is his resignation. For it would have had none of its effect, so dramatic, had he not been such a staunch ally in the darkest times.

Tarek Abu-Suud discusses Machiavelli, Humanism and 'The Prince'

In April 1498, the Dominican prior of San Marco, Girolamo Savonarola, was accused of heresy, signalling the end of his regime which had dominated the Republic of Florence for the past four years. Before long the city's ruling council began to dismiss Savonarola's supporters, one of whom was Alessandro Braccesi, the head of Second Chancery. With a position to fill and nobody in particular to fill it, the barely 29 year-old Niccolo Machiavelli was put forward and on the 19th of June 1498 was confirmed by the Great Council as Second Chancellor of the new, anti-Savonarola Florentine Republic. The question that arises however, is how the young, unknown and inexperienced Machiavelli gained such high office. The answer is almost entirely attributed to the ever influential humanist tradition embedded in Renaissance Florence.

The concept of *studia humanitatis* had been derived primarily from classical Roman sources like Cicero, whose ideas were adopted by the Italian humanists of the 14th century and progressively gained greater sway over the universities and the conduct of Italian public life. Classical and contemporary humanists emphasised the importance of a humanist education (Latin, rhetoric, ancient history and moral philosophy) in preparation for political life, with Cicero repeatedly maintaining that a humanist education nurtured values that were necessary for the effective governance of the state. As these ideas became more prevalent, humanists began to fill the most prestigious positions in the Florentine government, as seen following the 1498 coup, when the position of First Chancellor was occupied by the humanist academic Marcello Adriani, who transferred from a university position.

The importance of humanism in Florentine culture is relevant in explaining Machiavelli's rise to high office, as his father, Bernardo, had significant connections in humanist circles; as a result, Machiavelli received an extensive education in the school of thought. Most importantly, he received the best part of his classical training from Adriani, and therefore it can be assumed that he owed his office to Adriani's patronage and influence as First Chancellor.

Successful and enlightening, Machiavelli's career would nonetheless be cut short when Florence capitulated to the Spanish forces of the Holy League on the 1st of September 1512. This event saw the re-entry of the Medici and subsequent collapse of the Florentine Republic, which saw Machiavelli lose his position in the Chancery. To make matters worse, in February 1513 Machiavelli was falsely accused of being part of a conspiracy to overthrow the Medici, leading to his torture and imprisonment. In a stroke of good fortune though, the election of the first Medici pope, Leo X, saw a declaration of political amnesty in Florence, allowing Machiavelli to flee to his small provincial home in Sant'Andrea. It is here that Machiavelli would write his most significant treatise, *The Prince*, the purpose of which was to evidence his competence in order to be reinstated by the new Medici masters of Florence. Writing to a close friend Francesco Vettori, Machiavelli expressed his hope that the treatise would bring him to the notice of 'our Medici lords': even dedicating the book to Lorenzo de' Medici.

The Prince broadly concerns itself with the competent practice of government, a topic discussed countless times by both classical and contemporary humanists whose influence can undeniably be found throughout the work. More specifically, *The Prince* centres itself around the governance of newly acquired principalities, whose leaders face the daunting task of establishing a new regime while remaining in a constantly precarious situation. It is thus a response to the question of what policies, if implemented properly, will allow for the stability of a new principality, which *The Prince* hopes to provide.

Machiavelli defines the ultimate ends of a Prince as both stability and the attainment of worldly honour and glory, a sentiment found in the works of both classical (Livy and Cicero) and contemporary humanists (Bartolomeo Sacchi, Giovanni Patano and Francesco Parizi). Keeping in line with the humanist tradition, Machiavelli saw *virtù* as the key to Princely success.

These similarities are far from a one-time occurrence with Machiavelli constantly proving himself to be a disciple of humanism. His first and fundamental point being that 'the main foundations of all states' (stability) are 'good laws and good armies'- though good arms are more important than good laws since it is impossible to maintain good laws without good arms. Machiavelli goes onto discuss the two different types of armies, mercenary and civilian militia, and heartily denounces the former, claiming that mercenaries armies are naturally deceitful and unreliable. This hatred most likely finds its origins in Florence's use of mercenary armies against Pisa in 1505, which saw ten mercenary companies mutiny as soon as the assault began such that within a week the assault was abandoned. This sentiment is a popular one within humanism, emphasised by both Livy and Polybius and demanded by generations of Florentine humanists like Leonardo Bruni.

Despite these similarities, Machiavelli inevitably comes into conflict with the humanist tradition when he attacks one of its most basic assumptions, that being the definition of *virtù*. Traditionally, this involved the endowment of the four 'cardinal' virtues of wisdom, justice, courage and temperance, which in combination would allow a prince to achieve the ultimate ends (stability, honour and glory). The contention being that it is always rational to be moral sits at the heart of Cicero's *De Officiis*, and was repeated countless times by Machiavelli's contemporaries, nonetheless it is on this basic claim that Machiavelli sat widely opposed.
While at first Machiavelli concedes that it is 'most praiseworthy' for a Prince to act according to the cardinal virtues, he contends that no prince could hold or fully practice all the qualities usually held to be good. His reasoning behind this is that traditional *virtù* hugely restricts a Prince's ability to act, preventing him from doing what is necessary in order to maintain his state and achieve honour and glory. Thus Machiavelli's objection is simple yet devastating: it is *not* always rational to be moral, since a wise prince ought to be guided by the dictates of necessity, rather than the dictates of morality. With this Machiavelli created a new principal virtue at the heart of successful statecraft, the ability for one to recognise the force of circumstances, accept what necessity dictates and harmonize one's behaviour to the times. For Machiavelli, if one had the ability to be virtuous, he ought to be, but only in as far as circumstance allowed.

Machiavelli presents an example of this new *virtù* in *The Prince*, in the form of Cesare Borgia. He first argues that in order to maintain stability, a prince must always take the greatest care never to become an object of hatred for his people and thus must do whatever necessary in order to prevent such an outcome. Cesare Borgia recognised this fact and accordingly executed his loyal servant Remirro de Orco, the governor of Romagna, when he realised the people Romagna were beginning to feel contempt for his government. Thus in order to appease the anger of the mob and prevent contempt, Cesare had Orco executed and his body exhibited in the public square as a sacrifice to the people's rage.

As Machiavelli highlights, a wise prince must do whatever is necessary to maintain stability and gain honour and glory, though simultaneously his stability will be deterred if he gains the reputation of immorality. Thus the problem arises of how to avoid appearing wicked when one cannot avoid behaving wickedly. In response Machiavelli encourages a new virtue, that of cunning, or to be more specific the ability to switch between miraged virtues to confuse one's subjects and make them believe in his pretence. Machiavelli gives the example of when Pope Julius II tricked his old enemy Cesare Borgia into supporting his Papal campaign in the closing months of 1503, assuring him their issues were in the past. Though when Julius gained the pontificate, he instantly betrayed Cesare, thus employing deception to falsely maintain the princely virtue of magnanimity, ensuring the position and stability he required. In contrast, classical humanists had long denounced hypocrisy, with Cicero arguing that false pretence cannot lead to lasting glory, since 'all pretences soon fall to the ground like fragile flowers'. Machiavelli refutes this claim, simply arguing that the nature of the position of a monarch means that appearances are all your subjects can observe and thus a permanent façade is easy to maintain.

Machiavelli's most famous diversion from the humanist tradition is seen in his reply to the question 'is it better to be loved than to be feared?' For Cicero, fear was 'a poor safeguard to lasting power', and he consequently saw love as the superior method of maintaining stability. Machiavelli contends that since men are 'ungrateful, fickle, feigners and dissemblers, avoiders of danger and eager for gain', without the dread of punishment that comes with fear, one's subject will take every opportunity to deceive one for their own profit.

Despite its modern significance, *The Prince* was published posthumously in 1532, five years after Machiavelli's death; during his life it was circulated privately with minimal success. He first hoped to present it to the Medici Pope Leo X, but when he sent it to his good friend Francesco Vettori for approval, the latter swiftly and unceremoniously shifted the theme of their correspondence to his latest love affair. With no hope of regaining his once illustrious diplomatic career, Machiavelli slowly began to see himself as a man of letters joining the *Orti Oricellari* (a literary and political group) and writing plays like *Mandragola* in 1518 and other treatises such as *Discourses*.

Purav Menon reviews ‘Stalin: In the Court of the Red Tsar’, by Sebag Montefiore

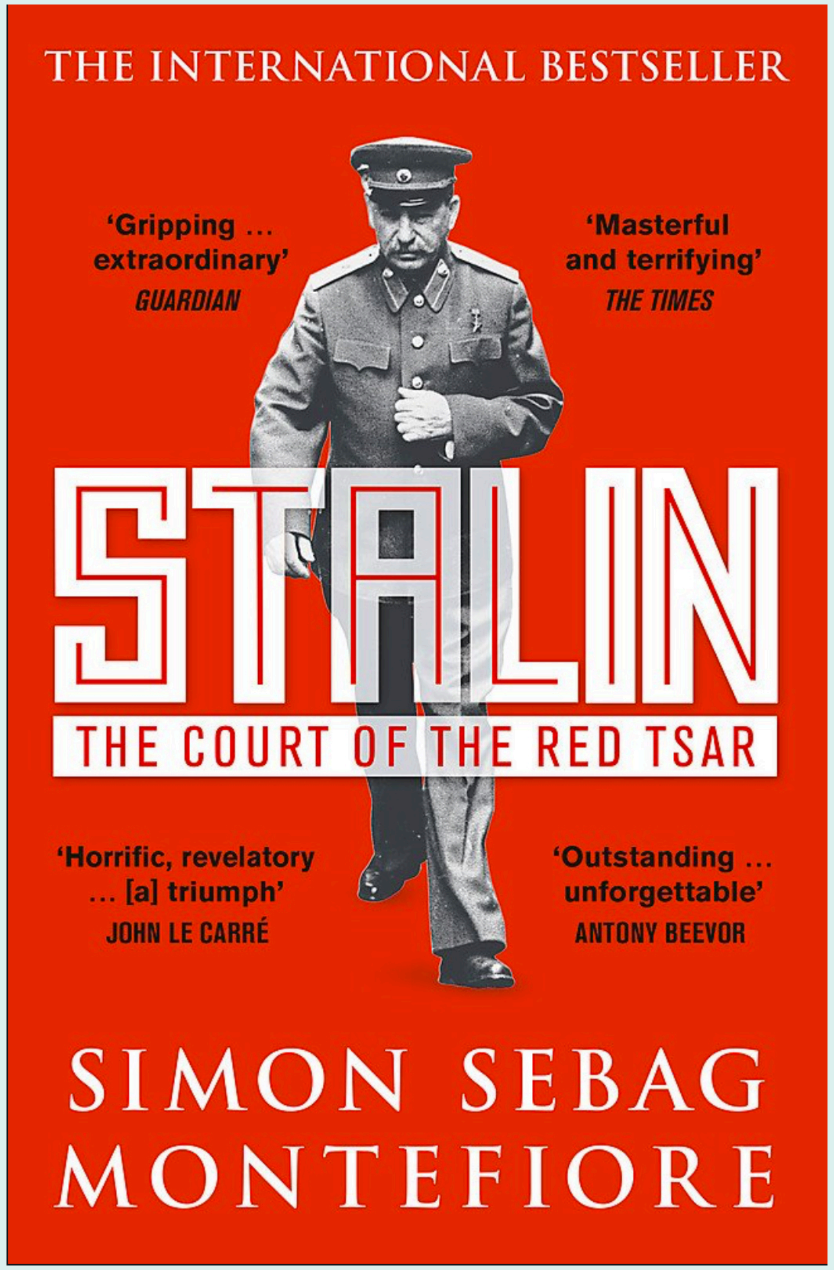
Simon Sebag Montefiore’s widely acclaimed biography effectively portrays the Soviet dictator’s human side, while highlighting his sheer brutality in a powerful yet accessible manner.

Chronicling much of the life of one of the most influential and well-known figures of the 20th century, it could have been all too easy for Simon Sebag Montefiore, a relative newcomer to biographies, to tread old ground with his research of Joseph Stalin. Yet Montefiore skilfully puts together an adept and extensive account that, despite being one of the longest biographies on the Soviet revolutionary, is a widely accessible and very gripping read, and it is definitely recommended for anyone seeking to dive deeper into the personal and political relationships that defined him and his rule of the USSR.

Skimming over the young Stalin in only 12 pages (later expanded on in his 2007 follow-up, appropriately titled *Young Stalin*), Montefiore goes on to present the totalitarian tyrant, not by summarising his vast achievements and failures, or treating him as the historical figure that he is, but instead like a character in a fictional story, delving into his mind, his decisions, and ultimately the humanity (and lack of it) which affected the political and military decisions he made. With Stalin’s humanity in the eyes of the general public being massively blurred, Montefiore’s use of anecdotes and stories illustrate Stalin’s unexpectedly human side – for example, his life being shattered by the suicide of his second wife Vasya, or his affection for his children - while highlighting the sheer ruthlessness in other aspects of his personality. Over the course of Stalin’s extensive life, we are also introduced to various other figures within his life as though they were supporting characters: for example, his troubled second wife Vasya, or his brutal and ruthless second-in-command Lavrentiy Beria, to name but two. Montefiore’s unique style of writing, framing the work as a style of fiction, allows the reader to gain an unprecedented glimpse into the mind of Stalin, but also means the book remains accessible and entertaining throughout, with never a dull or unimportant moment; quite a feat for a biography of such detail.

Yet while the style is quasi-fictional, the book is the furthest thing from historically inaccurate and is certainly not intended solely to entertain. Montefiore’s knowledge of Stalin’s influence on the Soviet Union was no doubt aided by formerly being a war correspondent covering its fall. Despite Stalin’s private life being closely guarded, Montefiore manages to conduct a staggeringly extensive amount of research in order to make every little detail as accurate as possible, making use of a vast number of new and old resources while also undertaking a great many interviews with people of all ages, from elderly men and women who were there to witness aspects of Stalin’s regime, to descendants of his political allies. As Marxism expert and journalist Anne Applebaum put it, “*he has managed to persuade a whole generation of little old ladies and elderly men – the wives, granddaughters, servants, nieces and nephews of Stalin’s henchmen – to give him a series of extraordinary interviews and, in some cases, lend him their hand-written memoirs.*”

Summarising such an extensive and effective biography into such a short review is almost doing it a disservice. The book is gruesome and cruel, yet fascinating and insightful. Montefiore’s masterful knowledge of the era, combined with the astonishing research undertaken and the uniquely accessible yet captivating style of writing, allows *In the Court of the Red Tsar* to be a staple piece of writing for both experts of the era and those with vague interest, standing out among the hundreds of biographies on Stalin. “I did not think I could learn anything new about Stalin,” said former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger of the book. “I was wrong.”


THE INTERNATIONAL BESTSELLER
‘Gripping … extraordinary’ GUARDIAN
‘Masterful and terrifying’ THE TIMES
STALIN
THE COURT OF THE RED TSAR
‘Horrific, revelatory … [a] triumph’ JOHN LE CARRÉ
‘Outstanding … unforgettable’ ANTONY BEEVOR
SIMON SEBAG MONTEFIORE

Anya Saund describes the untold lives of Jack the Ripper’s victims

The Five is a book about Polly, Annie, Elizabeth, Kate and Mary. Hallie Rubenhold’s bestseller is an important, yet rightfully so angry work of historical detection outlining the lives of the five women who were not just Jack the Ripper’s victims but mothers, daughters, sisters and lovers. Over 130 years after the Ripper’s vile frenzy, this is the first book to be published which tells the true story of these women’s lives and how they ended up alone, destitute, and sleeping rough in Whitechapel. Rubenhold challneges the misogyny which fed the Ripper myth after sensationalised newspaper reports labelled these women as “prostitutes”, solely because they were living on the streets.

Bravely, yet fruitfully Rubenhold embarked on the feat of fleshing out the lives of these five women who were so easy to lose track of in the East End in the 1880s. She used the scraps of information available to construct an image of their lives: coroner’s inquests, misheard and sensationalised newspaper reports, court registers, birth and marriage certificates as well as archives from London workhouses. In contrast with other historical books on this subject, Rubenhold skims over their deaths. It is not the author’s intent to describe the victims’ dying moments or to emphasise the gruesome state of their bodies, rather her purpose is to share the lives and stories of these women.

Instead, Rubenhold evocatively leads us through each of the women’s stories; from their childhood, to their downward spiral leading to them being homeless on the streets of the East End. All five of the women were migrants living in Whitechapel and they all had grimly similar lives: a fleeting childhood, alcohol addiction, poverty, emotional turmoil and destitution. Morbidly put, Hallie says the women “died in hell but they lived in hell too as their worth was compromised before they attempted to prove it”. Her criticism is centred on how Victorian society offered no support for single women.

The Five begins with the life of the Ripper’s first victim, Marry Anne “Polly” Nichols. Being the daughter of a blacksmith she spent her formative years in Dawes Court, something which Dickens would have taken inspiration from for his story of Oliver Twist. Polly had her chance to escape from her cycle of poverty when she and her husband, William, qualified for excitingly new accommodation in The Peabody Estate, a scheme by an American businessman to create better quality housing for London labouring families. This would have been a life changing chance to improve her lifestyle. However, after four years of fighting with her husband and his affair with their neighbour, Polly’s life began to spiral out of control when she left her home and her children, turning instead to the only option available to her - the workhouse. The law didn’t offer any real protection for working class women whose marriages broke down and she was now considered a fallen woman and an outcast from society. Once experiencing the horror of the workhouse, Polly most likely chose to spend her nights in the open air. After her death, the media were frenzied, and the coroner’s inquest was cruel. The accusations of prostitution sensationalised her murder, and the creation of this scandalous intrigue seemed to justify the murders of these women. Yet Rubenhold suggests that the women were targeted because they were drunk, homeless and easy victims. In no sense did the killer rid society of “immoral” prostitutes but of neglected women.

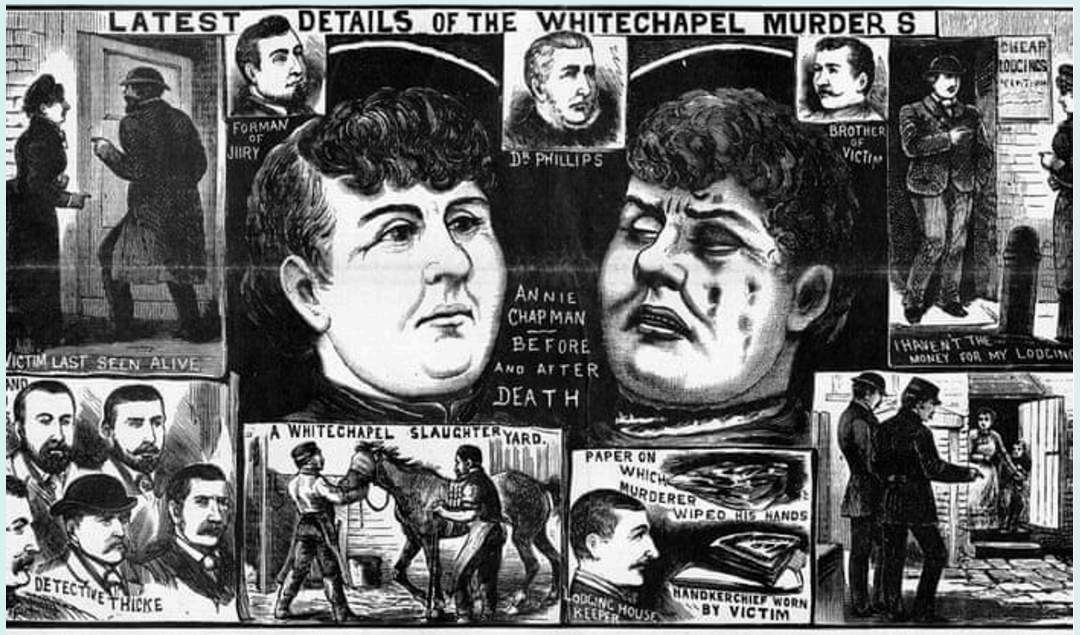
Annie Chapman was the second woman whose life was taken away by the Ripper. Middle-class and born the daughter of a soldier, she grew up near the Knightsbridge barracks. Similar to the final years of Annie’s life, the beginning was equally miserable. Six of her siblings died of scarlet fever in three weeks and her father, overcome with grief and depression, committed suicide shortly after. She was married to a gentleman’s coachman and they lived a pleasant lifestyle in a cottage in Berkshire Estate, however, her life was already starting to spiral towards alcohol dependency. Annie would go months sober and then be found drunk and disorderly on the street and after repetitions of this vicious cycle she decided to leave to an alcohol rehabilitation centre. But her stay was short and soon after her husband’s death she was sleeping on the streets of Whitechapel. Society felt no pity for her death as it conflated the broken woman with the fallen woman. Rubenhold remarked: “what the murder had claimed on that night was simply all that remained of what the drink had left behind”.

Elisabeth Gustafdotter, later known as Elizabeth Stride, a Swedish farmer’s daughter from Torslander was the third of the Ripper’s Victims. Elizabeth earned her big break when she scored a job in domestic service. However, she soon contracted syphilis and was rejected from society. Having been forced to strip naked to undergo inhumane bodily checks by the authorities, it was no surprise when she fled Sweden on a ship for the East End. She soon found an impressive job working for a house in Hyde Park, but soon left and married a carpenter, John Stride, who was two decades her senior. The two had a rocky relationship and suffered many hardships including the failure of their joint enterprise in setting up a coffeehouse and going bankrupt. Elizabeth was then destitute for the remaining years but supported herself by posing as a shipping disaster victim in order to extract money from charitable members of the middle class. Soon after this, she became homeless and struggled with her mental health and was arrested several times for being drunk and disorderly.

The Ripper took Catherine Eddows’ life within an hour of Elizabeth’s and they were known as “the double murder”. She was the only woman who received a primary school education, and she grew up in industrial, smog-filled Wolverhampton. Unsurprisingly, she ran away from her monotonous job in a factory to London where she fell in love with an Irish Rover called Thomas Conway. Sporting matching tattoos, they tramped the countryside singing ballads at executions and selling chapbooks, where Kate's literacy came into use. However, their romantic love story came to an end when their relationship became abusive in 1881, potentially because of her offensive drunkenness, and she began seeing another man. The pair were sporadically homeless which led investigators to assume, once again, that Eddows was a prostitute. Rubenhold writes that "prejudice of the era" held "homeless women and women who sold sex were one and the same" which explains society's cold-hearted attitude to the Ripper's victims. Nevertheless, Eddows wasn't like the other victims who were targeted because they "wouldn't be missed"; in fact, over five hundred members of her family and friends attended her funeral.

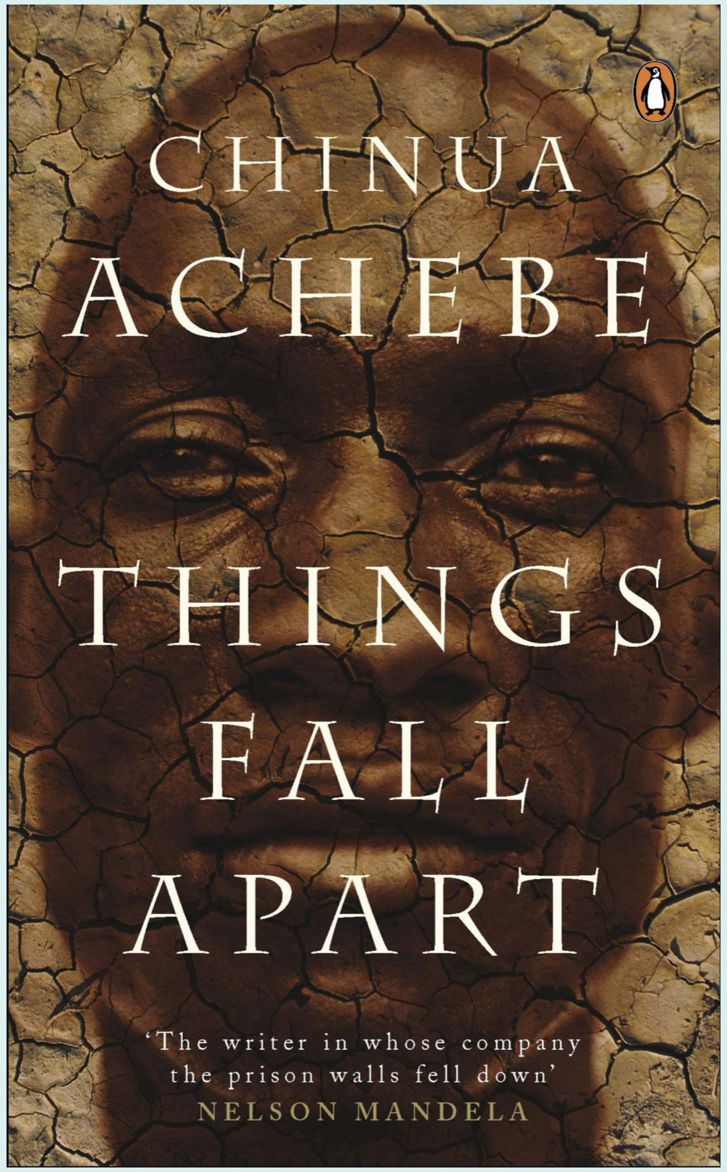
Mary Jane Kelly's story was the most enigmatic of them all. She twisted and turned in and out of different identities throughout her life to the extent that no one after her death claimed to know her. Rubenhold's investigations show that she probably came from a good family in Cardiff but somehow ended up working in the upper ranks of the sex trade and living in Knightsbridge. She lived a scandalous yet alluring life and attended private balls in central London between 1883 and 1884 which were a surreptitious way of connecting wealthy gentlemen with well-dressed prostitutes. However, she was kidnapped by sex traffickers and forced to work in a brothel in Paris. Upon her escape she was forced to relocate to the East End and moved between brothels and boarding houses in Whitechapel and Bethnal Green. Rubenhold turned to "My Secret Life", the memoir of the pseudonymous "Walter" for much of her research, indicating how hard it was to track Kelly down.

The Five by Hallie Rubenhold is a powerful book which is a must read for anyone interested in British History. It is not just about the women murdered by the Ripper, but it is for them. The real drive and purpose of the book is to try and return to them their dignity and identity, which had been mercilessly stolen by the callous media sensation, transforming their male serial killer into a fascinating monster and reducing his female victims to collateral damage. Shamefully, it critiques how history allowed these five women to be dismissed as just "prostitutes" for 130 years and it gives these women back their stories. Rubenhold concludes by saying that "only by bringing these women back to life can we silence the Ripper and what he represents."


LATEST DETAILS OF THE WHITECHAPEL MURDERS
FORMAN OF JURY
Dr PHILLIPS
BROTHER OF VICTIM
CHEAP LODGINGS
ANNIE CHAPMAN BEFORE AND AFTER DEATH
VICTIM LAST SEEN ALIVE
I HAVEN'T THE MONEY FOR MY LODGING
A WHITECHAPEL SLAUGHTER YARD.
PAPER ON WHICH MURDERER WIPED HIS HANDS
DETECTIVE THICKE
LODGING HOUSE KEEPER
HANDKERCHIEF WORN BY VICTIM

Vanessa Tantisunthorn reviews 'Things Fall Apart', by Chinua Achebe

Things Fall Apart is a powerful novel that depicts the disastrous effects of the British colonial presence in Africa. Although fictional, Achebe manages to vividly paint Okonkwo's struggle in facing the invasion of the religious and political forces of colonialism on African traditions, as well as the age-old struggle in balancing old customs with new ideas. The simple narrative style in which Achebe writes allows Okonkwo's story to be easily followed by the reader and therefore for the reader to experience first-hand both the highs of Okonkwo's personal successes as well as the tragedy of loss which he faces. *Things Fall Apart* manages to successfully do something that few other novels have ever done: to transport in its entirety an audience composed of people of completely different backgrounds, races, genders, and ethnicities, to a time and place they have never been to, and make them feel, live and understand the cataclysmic moments depicted within the novel. They say 'Show, don't tell' and Achebe has certainly shown the world the story of a warrior of honour, tradition and bravery, and his futile resistance to a colonial presence which devalues both his world and his identity


CHINUA ACHEBE
THINGS FALL APART
'The writer in whose company the prison walls fell down'
NELSON MANDELA