

WordPress English 2024



Ukraine: Two Years of War

On February 24, 2022, Russia started the war of aggression against Ukraine. From the beginning, it was Putin's plan to wipe out the Ukrainian identity and to absorb all of her territory into Russia. The Russian military commits war crimes systematically - from targeting civilian infrastructure to mass murder and sexual violence.

This blog entry is, therefore, a call to continue the support of Ukraine against imperialism and authoritarianism. A Ukrainian victory is vital for a democratic future.

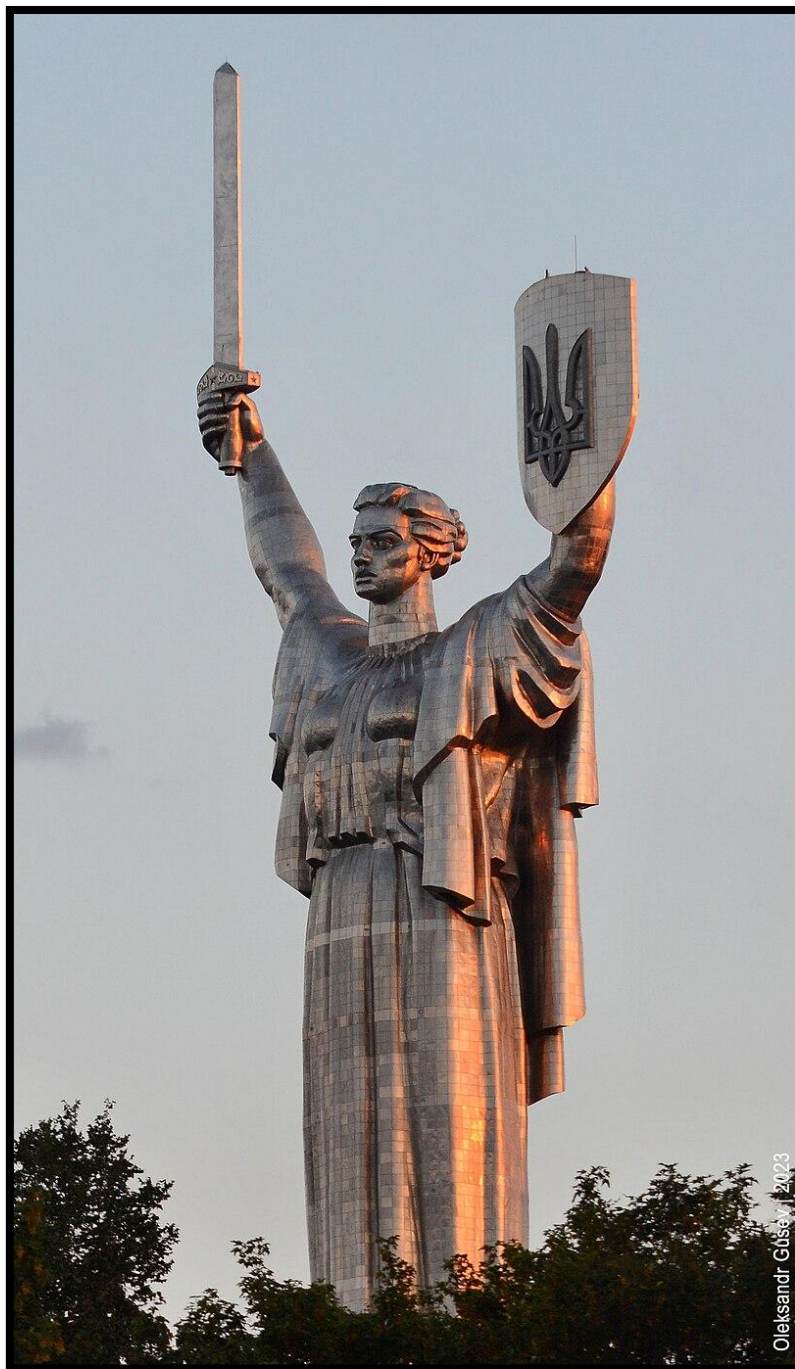


Figure 1 - "On August 24, 2023, the Coat of Arms of Ukraine on the shield of the Motherland Monument was unveiled in Kyiv, Ukraine. On August 24, Ukraine celebrates its 32nd Independence Day. A general view." (Image source: [Wikipedia](#))

The Frontlines of the War

On February 24, 2022 the Russian War of Aggression started at 04:00 am in the morning, first they managed to conquer vast swathes of Ukrainian territory from February to March 2022, from April to August the Russian forces were forced back from Kyiv and from September to November of the same year, the Ukrainian counter offensive reconquered further territory. Since then, progress has been very slow especially due to the lack of ammunition where Ukraine relies on supplies of Europe and the US especially.



Figure 2 - The Timeline of the war (source: Reuters)

The grey writing from Reuters may be difficult to see or tedious to read, so here's my revision:

February - March 2022

Russia invades Ukraine from the north and east, threatens to overrun Kyiv.

April - August 2022

Russia is forced back from Kyiv, withdraws from the north and consolidates forces in the east.

September - November 2022

Ukraine's autumn 2022 counteroffensive recaptures territory in the east and south.

December '22 - May 2023

Russia's winter-spring 2023 offensive kills many but yields few gains.

June 2023

Ukraine's much-anticipated summer 2023 counteroffensive begins in the centre of Russian lines.

December 2023

Ukraine's 2023 counteroffensive failed to achieve its main objectives; the front line remains

mostly unchanged. While the main objective wasn't achieved, there still was some success: *"Despite few breakthroughs along the front, Ukraine's counteroffensive can claim some modest success.*

The counteroffensive in Crimea, employing sea drones and targeted long-range missile strikes, forced Russia's navy on the backfoot in the Black Sea, and [a declassified U.S. intelligence report](#) pointed to a cost for Russia's armed forces of nearly 315,000 dead and wounded troops, or nearly 90% of the personnel it had when the conflict began." (Reuters)

The main objective of said counteroffensive, with preparations made from January to July 2023, was to sever the connection between Crimea and Russian mainland. It is a very important target as Russia relies on this route for supplies. However, the 7 months that were needed to prepare for this counteroffensive also gave Russia the time to fortify their positions with trenches, obstacles and land mines. We've also seen how drones became increasingly important for both sides: both for reconnaissance (surveillance drones) and attacks (bomber drones like the Iranian kamikaze drones). This combination of conventional warfare and new technology make it also very difficult to clear minefields:

"Ukraine employed Western mine-clearance vehicles and armoured columns of tanks and vehicles to traverse the hazardous terrain. But the army's movements to clear paths through the mines unfolded under the watchful eye of surveillance drones operated by Russia's new specialised drone units.

These drones meticulously observed the mine-clearance vehicles, feeding targeting information to artillery and attack helicopters. Evolving optical capabilities on the drones also meant they could see through traditional camouflage techniques such as smoke screens that would foil human observers." ([Reuters](#))

Given the asymmetry of the war, where Russia bombards Ukraine from East to West while Ukraine's allies do not want to or only very hesitantly give long-distance weapons which could reach Russian soil, it creates a strategic imbalance. For instance, if Ukraine were to be sent long-range weaponry, they'd be able to hit military targets and weapon factories within Russia - thus crippling the Russian war machinery and saving human lives in the process. Additionally, it'd put the Putin dictatorship even further under pressure with frequent targeting of military targets and the war industry.

Civilians Under Enemy Fire

The Russian military has repeatedly targeted civilian infrastructure, so much so that Ukrainian authorities had to announce in October 2022 that there will be power outages across the country after 40% of Ukraine's energy facilities were seriously damaged. The morale of a population **is not** a lawful target, **it is** a war crime.

"The strategy behind Russia's latest warfare tactics is unmistakable. In bombing Ukraine's critical civilian infrastructure, including energy facilities, the Russian army clearly intends to undermine industrial production, disrupt transportation, sow fear and despair and deprive civilians in Ukraine of heat, electricity and water as the cold grip of winter approaches."

- Marie Struthers, [Amnesty International](#)'s Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia

On March 4, 2022, the UN established the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine to *"to investigate all alleged violations and abuses of human rights, violations of international humanitarian law and related crimes in the context of the aggression against Ukraine by Russia"*. The three members are Chair Erik Møse, Pablo de Greiff and Vrinda Grover who are neither UN staff nor receive a salary for their work ([UN](#)).

In their [press release from October 20, 2023](#), they wrote that more evidence emerged that Russian authorities carried out indiscriminated attacks and have committed war crimes of torture, rape and other sexual violence, and deportation of children to the Russian Federation. In the **Cherkasy region**, for instance, a multistory residential apartment in Uman came under attack which caused the death of 24 civilians, mostly women and children, and part of the building becoming inhabitable. Russian authorities *"have used torture in a widespread and systematic way in various types of detention facilities"*, the new evidence was collected in the **Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions**: *"Witnesses reported situations in which torture had been committed with such brutality that the victim died. In a detention facility in a school in Biliayivka village, Kherson region, co-detainees requested medical care when a victim showed signs of respiratory distress immediately after being tortured. However, Russian armed forces refused, and the victim died within an hour."*

The investigations into these regions also showed the extent of rape and other sexual violence which were often committed together: *"A 75-year-old woman who stayed alone to protect her property, was attacked by a Russian soldier who hit her on her face, chest, and ribs, strangled her, as he was interrogating her. He ordered her to undress and when she refused, he ripped off her clothes, cut her abdomen with a small sharp object and raped her several times. In addition to the consequences of the rapes, the victim suffered several broken ribs and teeth. The Commission found that, in addition to rape, the war crime of torture was also committed against the victim."* The age from sexual assault victims ranged from 19 to 83 ([ABC News](#)).

In May 2022, it was documented that 31 Ukrainian children had been transferred to Russia. The commission concluded that it was an unlawful deportation and, therefore, a war crime. According to Ukrainian officials, at least 19,000 children are still gone with the actual number believed to be much higher.

"They're sent to Russian foster families, technical schools, military training and so-called summer camps with the intention of turning them into Russian citizens. Ukraine's prosecutor general, Andriy Kostin, testified via video recording to that same group of bipartisan lawmakers." ([NPR](#))

Lastly to the casualties of the war and other key facts, as summarized by the reliefweb:

- As of 22 February 2024 (the latest data available), **30,457 civilians were killed** and wounded, including 10,582 civilians killed in the conflict, including 587 children. A total of 9,241 people have been killed by explosive weapons with wide area effects, and mines and explosive remnants of war.
(Source: UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine)

- **14.6 million people**, including **more than 3 million children**, are **in need in Ukraine** this year. **80% of those** in need of aid also **require mental health support**. Approximately 4 million people are displaced within Ukraine. **Women make up 58% of the internally displaced**, and are more likely than men to experience unemployment and dependency on humanitarian aid. (Source: Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan 2024)
- Poverty level in Ukraine increased from 5.5% to 24% in 2022 alone. (Source: World Bank)
- 5.9 million Ukrainian people are refugees. (Source: UNHCR)
- 67% of internally displaced people say they want to return home one day. (Source: UNHCR)

(source: [Ukraine: 42 civilian casualties every day in two years of war, reliefweb](#))

The sources provided in the bullet point summary were added by the authors, I added the brackets because that's how I'm used to do it when I directly cite a source.

Broken Agreements

On December 4, 1994, the **Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances** were signed by Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Russia, the United States and the United Kingdom and prohibited the latter three from using military force or economic coercing against Ukraine, Belarus or Kazakhstan. In turn, Ukraine had to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory. Here's the content of the treaty in its entirety:

"Welcoming the accession of Ukraine to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State,

Taking into account the commitment of Ukraine to eliminate all nuclear weapons from its territory within a specified period of time,

Noting the changes in the world-wide security situation, including the end of the cold war, which have brought about conditions for deep reductions in nuclear forces,

Confirm the following:

1. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to respect the independence and sovereignty and the existing borders of Ukraine;
2. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their obligation to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or

political independence of Ukraine, and that none of their weapons will ever be used against Ukraine except in self-defence or otherwise in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations;

3. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to Ukraine, in accordance with the principles of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, to refrain from economic coercion designed to subordinate to their own interest the exercise by Ukraine of the rights inherent in its sovereignty and thus to secure advantages of any kind;

4. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm their commitment to seek immediate United Nations Security Council action to provide assistance to Ukraine, as a non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, if Ukraine should become a victim of an act of aggression or an object of a threat of aggression in which nuclear weapons are used;

5. The Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America reaffirm, in the case of Ukraine, their commitment not to use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapon State party to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons,

except in the case of an attack on themselves, their territories or dependent territories, their armed forces, or their allies, by such a State in association or alliance with a nuclear-weapon State;

6. Ukraine, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America will consult in the event a situation arises that raises a question concerning these commitments.

This Memorandum will become applicable upon signature.

Signed in four copies having equal validity in the Ukrainian, English and Russian languages.

For Ukraine:

(Signed) Leonid D. KUCHMA

For the Russian Federation:

(Signed) Boris N. YELTSIN

For the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland:

(Signed) John MAJOR

For the United States of America:

(Signed) William J. CLINTON"

(source: [Internet Archive -> Council on Foreign Relations](#))

With the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian Federation already broke the treaty. 8 years later, on February 24, 2022, the Russian Federation has shown the world - once and for all - that they couldn't care less about binding treaties. [Minsk II](#) was broken too when Vladimir Putin recognized the "People's Republics" of Donetsk and Luhansk.

In other words: if Putin somehow emerges victorious from this war, it will be pretty much impossible to provide legal certainty internationally when "might makes right" becomes the norm again.

What Needs to be Done

Some of the points I list here are already in the process of being done or continued, like the humanitarian and military aid provided by the EU and the USA.

- As stated above, it is of utmost importance to continue to support Ukraine by providing military and humanitarian aid - ammunition and weaponry has to arrive on time, delays help the enemy to prepare and recover; humanitarian aid is self-explanatory, from medicine to equipment to repairing damaged or destroyed infrastructure.
- Developing with Ukraine plans for psychological assistance for soldiers and civilians, for instance by planning on how to expand services that already exist like pastoral counseling.
- Continuing the investigation into war crimes and their documentation, naturally it includes the identification of perpetrators.
- Increasing the production capacity of military equipment and ammunition, this also includes illusionary equipment as it is already produced in Ukraine - meaning fake mortars, for example, that are attacked by kamikaze drones instead of the real ones. Thus saving human lives and forcing the enemy to waste resources.
- In order to not fall into the trap as Russia's economy did, where the major reason for economic growth - if the data can even be trusted, which I'm extremely skeptical of - is the military industrial complex combined with the logistics, a post-war plan needs to be developed on how to use the ramped up military industry for nonmilitary purposes (perhaps a way to turn into military production in emergency, if needed again).
- In the long-term, the United Nations must undergo reforms as Zelenskiy proposed them: *"The Ukrainian president argued that the war had demonstrated the need to limit veto power, give the UN general assembly the power to override vetoes, and expand the council's permanent members beyond the current five powers, who acquired their privileged position in the wake of the second world war. [...]"*

He laid out proposals for UN reform as part of his 10-point peace plan. He supported a suggestion, which has been championed by France in the past, that in case of "mass atrocities against human rights" the veto powers of the permanent members – Russia, the US, UK, China and France – should be voluntarily suspended." ([The Guardian](#))

- The International Criminal Court must be strengthened, it is unacceptable that the US hasn't joined it either - if the [Nuremberg Principles](#) mean anything to the international community, even big powers must be pressured (domestically and by partners) into signing and adhering to it. Without a doubt, it will be the legal project of the century.
- With the death of Alexei Navalny, which was more likely a political assassination, Putin eliminated a major Russian opposition leader - at this point in time probably the last major one for a long time. In case Russia collapses in itself entirely, as the Wagner coup has shown could be done rather easily with the barely to non-existing resistance, the international community should ensure that neighboring countries aren't destabilized by it - a contingency plan is necessary for this scenario, even if that sounds unlikely.

How to Support Ukraine

In case you want to know how you can support Ukraine, [visit this official website](#) of the European Union. You can directly donate to Ukraine using the following organizations (also listed on the website, of course):

- [Caritas Ukraine](#)
- [Razom](#)
- [Voices of Children](#)
- [Vostok SOS](#)
- [Warehouse Centre for Humanitarian and Medical Aid to Ukraine](#)

End

According to Zelenskiy, [31,000 Ukrainian soldiers](#) have died during the two years of war. They were normal men and women, like you and me, who died defending their country. My high regard also goes to all those men and women who have been injured and now recover in hospitals and sick bays. Ukrainians fight not only for their democracy and sovereignty, but also for the democracies in Europe and the US. In spirit, for all the democratic ideals shared by democracies around the world.

Sources

Mapping Ukraine's counteroffensive

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<https://news.un.org/en/story/2023/09/1141417>

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Zelenskiy says only way to ensure peace is fundamental UN reform

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Zelenskiy says 31,000 Ukrainian soldiers killed since Russia invaded

<https://www.reuters.com/world/zelenskiy-says-31000-ukrainian-soldiers-killed-during-russias-invasion-2024-02-25/>

(Released: 25th February 2024, 11:36 pm/23:36 Uhr)

Music Mosaics

| Another Idea of Mine |

Music has always fascinated me; how it can influence us emotionally, create a certain atmosphere or bring together people of various backgrounds. Whether it is classical music (which I enjoy very much), or modern music even in form of videogames (there's a great variety too, from Minecraft to Doom, Pokémon to Zelda, etc.). It is prevalent in countless cultures around the world and modern means make it easier to listen to almost all of them. Given these many facets of music and access to modern technology, we could perhaps do something new - or rather old-new, because this concept already exists virtually.



Figure 3 - 19th century [mosaic](#) from Braunschweig (Lower Saxony), Germany

Introduction

As stated above, it is not new in the sense that it is an innovation of my own after combining two separate things followed by an "Eureka!". It was less exciting: I was listening to music, or to be more precise: I listened to a city theme of Pokémon Black and White (not the [Driftveil City theme](#), but it is certainly my favourite) when this idea suddenly emerged.

Each city got their own unique tune and it plays as soon as you enter it. So I asked myself: could each village (or several who come together), city and region in our world adopt it too? Not blasting it 24/7, but on special events, public festivals or other events.

A theme that characterizes the chosen area, made by the people for the people. From the landscape to the people who live there (e.g. multi-cultural, multi-religious or emphasizing the sounds of the landscape throughout the seasons). Those who visit for the first time

would get an idea of the general atmosphere and those who made it could express themselves how they feel about their region, who lives there (by using different instruments, varying speed or lower and higher tunes) and so on. A major project where the local community gets together working towards this one goal.

Elaboration

Naturally, it is a big project for the community and it only increases with the size of the area (when it is several villagers or towns, for instance, combining their forces for this creative music project) or city. Before you start, remember that it requires close coordination (time for brainstorming, when to practice (meetings), deadlines if necessary, music/instruments/singers/choirs and recording equipment, etc.) and planning in advance (e.g. perhaps composing three songs/melodies which are then voted on, production of copies (CDs or sharing it digitally), a person or group that is responsible for social conflicts that may arise aka conflict management). Organizing is key!

If my idea finds any resonance, it is very likely that you'll work with people who have experience with organizing projects to some extent or another - perhaps you are already good at organizing, conflict management or something else.

Now to the musical instruments, both the conventional and unconventional ones. In case your community, or group when the tasks are separated and it is combined later in a final product, wants to do something new that better describes your area/place and the conventional ones such as the violine, piano, cello, flute or guitar are too familiar - possibly even boring to you or others -, then you should feel free to be [unconventional](#). The link leads you to an article of CMUSE to give you an idea of what I mean.



Figure 4 - One instrument that was mentioned is the Theremin, it is a musical instrument controlled without physical contact. It was invented by Léon Theremin who patented it in 1928.

It doesn't necessarily have to be instruments either. If you are surrounded by nature or nature is important to your community, then why not record the sounds and either have them as your background ambience, digitally altered to make it faster or slower to fit the melody you are creating or even recording it entirely in this surrounding. From mountains to canyons, the acoustics will give it an unique signature as well!

That's why brainstorming in the beginning, with this in mind, can always turn out to be quite helpful. Everyone contributes their ideas and later on you can still tweak this or that. It is team work through and through, won't be always easy but worthwhile in the long-term!

Some of you may live in multicultural or ethnically/religiously diverse areas, so communication is even more important (starting with being aware of their holidays for planning, if they differ from the majority for instance). It could be more difficult, depending on the degree of exchange that already exists (or doesn't exist), but at the same time it also allows for new experiences to be gathered (choirs, musical instruments, rhythms, etc.). Regular meetings come in handy to solve problems, it doesn't always have to be formal.

Back to musical instruments. Besides the conventional and unconventional ones, there's also the alternative of settling in a niche. It ranges from self-made musical instruments (to make a certain sound that couldn't be created otherwise) to using voice banks (e.g. Vocaloid, CeVio, Voiceroid, Utauloid) or settle on remixing composed pieces. So, there's plenty to choose from! It is likely that I have missed something, but I think you get a good impression of the variety that is available to us.



Figure 5 - Hatsune Miku V4X - She's my favourite Vocaloid, in case you want deeper voices you can choose Vocaloids like Megurine Luka, Meiko or Megpoid Gumi. Should you decide to use a Vocaloid, Voiceroid or else, you don't have to use their regular outfit either - especially if you prefer traditional clothes, casual wear or unique outfits like Lady Gaga (who also performed alongside Miku once). You need an artist of course to commission, but that goes without saying.

Now it is up to you and your community or group what to choose, how to compose it (there's always the option to make one general theme that describes the area or city/town/village and then themes for specific places, imagine it like having a microscope: first you see the cell itself and when you zoom in you see the cell organelles) and how you want to use and distribute it.

Online archivists and librarians could turn it, in consultation with those who made it or the creators allowing it through [Creative Commons](#), into a large virtual music library.

Concluding Sentence

Music has always brought people together - whether they are fans listening to the same band/singer/composer, a choir, the band itself or an orchestra. This power behind music, to unite and inspire and stimulating imagination, has great potential. It won't end conflicts in an instant or make problems disappear, but it is a bridge in an ever-polarizing world.

Sources

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Creative Commons

<https://creativecommons.org/share-your-work/cclicenses/>

Driftveily City Theme (Pokemon Black & White)

https://youtu.be/xc_0wfluuzw?si=DiWdgl7Cf7mXkS0-

(Released: 23rd March 2024, 1:25 pm/13:25 Uhr)

Science News #020

In Today's Science News, we learn about the discovery of the possibly earliest building blocks of our home galaxy and that while global groundwater depletion has been accelerating it is anything but inevitable. At the end of the second article a short commentary of mine regarding water scarcity and climate change.



Figure 6 - Today's cover image: a telescope, my love for astronomy is not the sole reason why I chose it, the main reason is the first article I discuss. (source: [Pixabay](#))

Article 1: Two of the Milky Way's earliest building blocks identified

SD-Date: March 21, 2024

Et-Date: March 25, 2024

ScienceDaily-Summary: *"Astronomers have identified what could be two of the Milky Way's earliest building blocks: Named 'Shakti' and 'Shiva', these appear to be the remnants of two galaxies that merged between 12 and 13 billion years ago with an early version of the Milky Way, contributing to our home galaxy's initial growth. The new find is the astronomical equivalent of archeologists identifying traces of an initial settlement that grew into a large present-day city."*

Open-Access: <https://iopscience.iop.org/article/10.3847/1538-4357/ad1885>

Method of Research

The research was conducted by Khyati Malhan and Hans-Walter Rix of the Max Planck Institute for Astronomy. It required combining the data for 6 million stars from ESA's Gaia mission which has, since it was launched in 2013, gathered data of the position and distance of 1.5 billion stars within our galaxy. The Sloan Digital Sky Survey (DR17) provided the information about the stars' chemical composition.

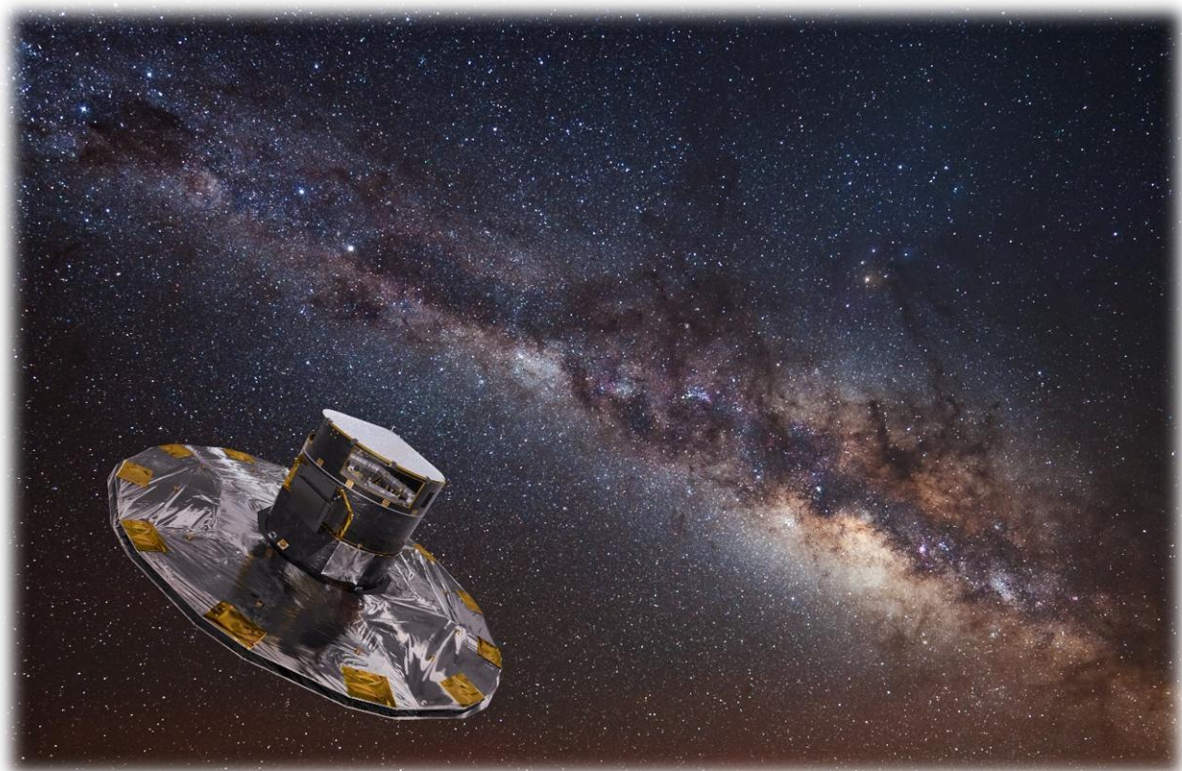


Figure 7 - This little fella is Gaia who's been providing us with data for about 11 years now.

Gaia's Mission
"Throughout the course of its mission, Gaia monitors each of its target stars about 14 times per year. It is precisely charting their positions, distances, movements, and changes in brightness. It is expected to discover hundreds of thousands of new celestial objects,

such as extra-solar planets and brown dwarfs, and observe hundreds of thousands of asteroids within our own Solar System. The mission is also studying more than 1 million distant quasars and providing stringent new tests of Albert Einstein's General Theory of Relativity."

(source: https://www.esa.int/Science_Exploration/Space_Science/Gaia_overview)

Findings

At first it seems impossible to identify stars that mingled with our galaxy (or rather an earlier version of it) 12 to 13 billion years ago, since the current Milky Way is 100,000 light years across (one light year is the distance light travels in one year) the furthest back we could see is [100,000 years](#). And that only accounts for those stars that are that far away.

Luckily, basic physics comes to the aid: *"When galaxies collide and their stellar populations mingle, most of the stars retain very basic properties, which are directly linked to the speed and direction of the galaxy in which they originated. Stars from the same pre-merger galaxy share similar values for both their energy and what physicists call angular momentum -- the momentum associated with orbital motion or rotation."* (Science Daily)

The energy and the angular momentum are conserved, now you have to look for large groups of stars with these unusual values. Moreover, older stars have a lower metal content (called metallicity) than stars that formed more recently so you know what you have to look for as well.

By combining the Gaia data with the detailed stellar spectra from the Sloan Digital Sky Survey, they observed that two groups of like-minded stars had comparatively large angular momentum which was consistent with groups of stars that had been part of different galaxies. Malhan named these two structures after Shiva, who is one of the principal deities of Hinduism, and Shakti, who is a female cosmic force that is often portrayed as Shiva's consort. Both had an overall low metallicity and their energy and angular momentum also point to them being good candidates for the earliest ancestors of our galaxy. Below you see a visualization of the two groups.

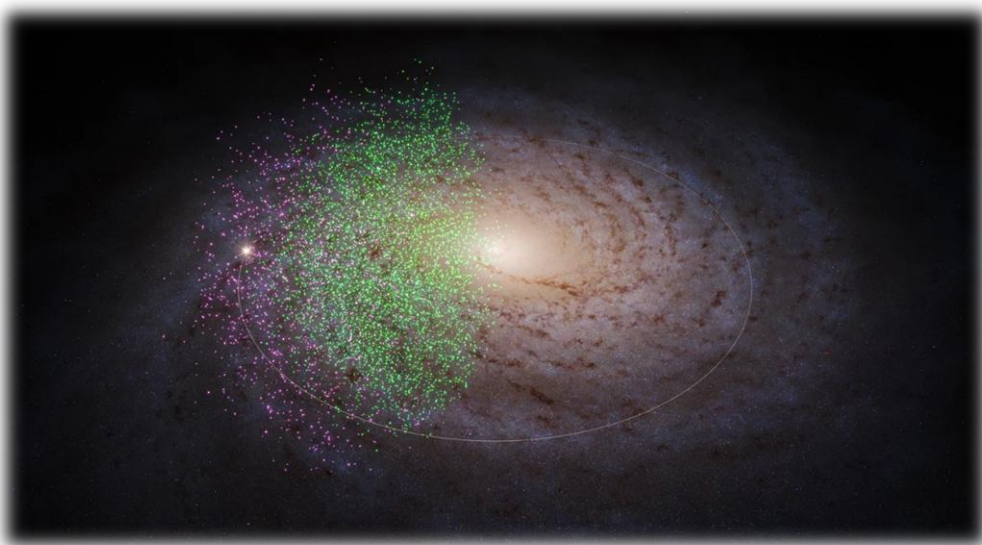


Figure 8 - Shiva stars are shown in green and Shakti stars in pink. The data used for this study only covers specific regions within our galaxy, hence there's complete absence in the other regions (source: [Max Planck Institute](#))

It is worth to keep an eye on this topic as there are ongoing or bound to start surveys which, thanks to additional information regarding spectra (SDSS-V, 4MOST) and precise distances (LSST/Rubin Observatory), will show whether Shakti and Shiva are indeed a glimpse into our galaxy's prehistoric past.

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Two of the Milky Way's earliest building blocks identified

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Our Milky Way Galaxy: How Big is Space?

<https://exoplanets.nasa.gov/blog/1563/our-milky-way-galaxy-how-big-is-space/>

Article 2: Global groundwater depletion is accelerating, but is not inevitable

SD-Date: January 24, 2024

Et-Date: March 26, 2024

ScienceDaily-Summary: *"Groundwater is rapidly declining across the globe, often at accelerating rates. Researchers now present the largest assessment of groundwater levels around the world, spanning nearly 1,700 aquifers. In addition to raising the alarm over declining water resources, the work offers instructive examples of where things are going well, and how groundwater depletion can be solved. The study is a boon for scientists, policy makers and resource managers working to understand global groundwater dynamics."*

Open-Access: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06879-8>

Method of Research

The research was conducted by the UC Santa Barbara researchers who assessed the groundwater levels of 1,700 aquifers over the past 100 years. Overall, it took three years for the study of which two years alone were spent on making sense of 300 million water level measurements from 1.5 million wells.

The next step was to translate the flood of data into actual insights about global groundwater trends. For that, the team analyzed over 1,200 publications *"to reconstruct aquifer boundaries in the regions of inquiry and evaluate groundwater level trends in 1,693 aquifers"*.

Finally, they were complemented by the data from the Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment (GRACE) - twin satellites that precisely measure the distance between them and the wells they monitor to detect small fluctuations in our planet's gravity.

It is useful for both understanding the dynamics of aquifers at large scales and helps in places where there's no locally available data.

"This local resolution is critical, as the authors found out, because adjacent aquifers can display different trends."

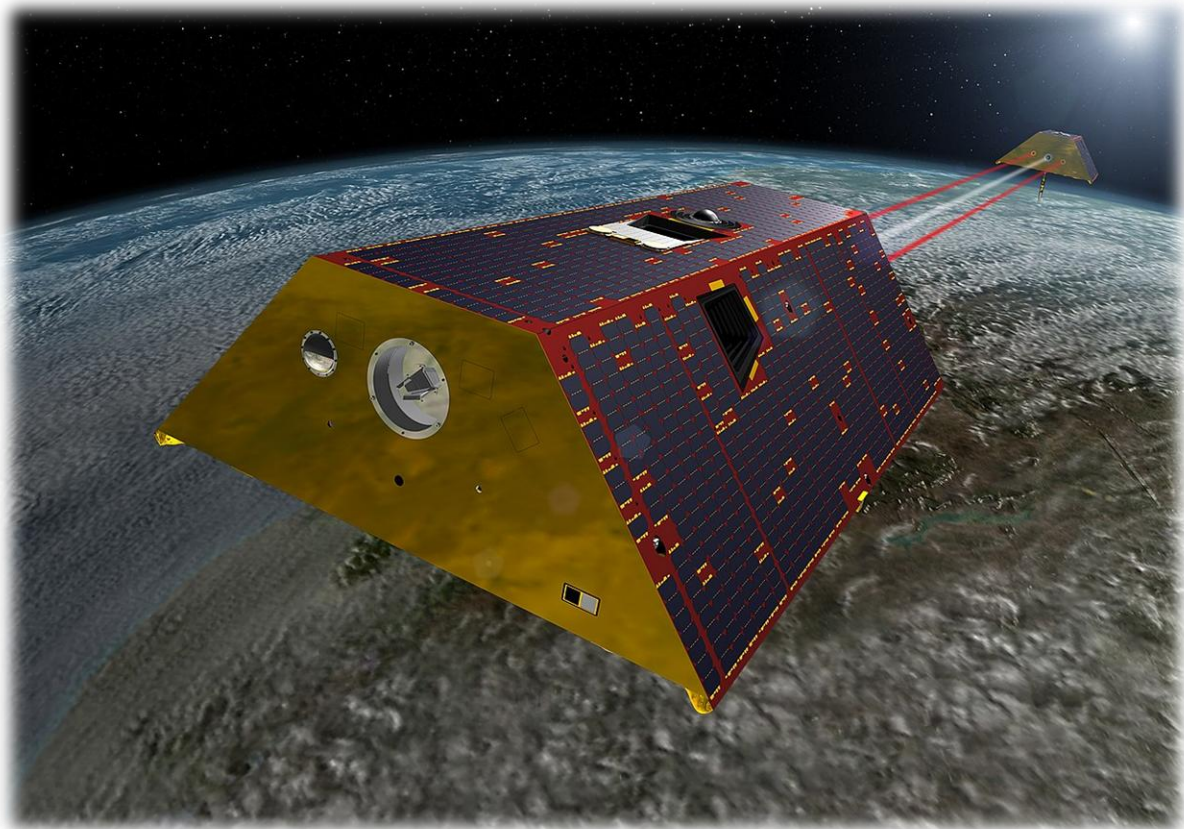


Figure 9 - Illustration of the twin GRACE-FO satellites (source: [Wikipedia](#))

GRACE Overview

"The GRACE twin satellites, launched 17 March 2002, are making detailed measurements of Earth's gravity field changes and revolutionizing investigations about Earth's water reservoirs over land, ice and oceans, as well as earthquakes and crustal deformations. The two GRACE satellites have completed more than 13 years of continuous measurements!"

(source: <https://grace.jpl.nasa.gov/mission/grace/>)

Findings

- **In 71% of the aquifers**, the groundwater has been dropping.
- **The rates of decline** in the 1980s and '90s sped up from 2000 to present.
- **In arid and semi-arid lands** under cultivation, groundwater deepening is more common and even shows accelerated decline (in three times as many places as it was expected by chance).

- **In 16% of the aquifers**, the groundwater decline since the 80s and 90s has been reversed (half as common as it was expected by chance).
- **Where groundwater remains stable**, it can still affect nearby streams and surface water to leak into the subsurface if withdrawn.
- **The precipitation variability** was also analyzed for 542 aquifers over the past 40 years. They found that 90% of aquifers where the decline were accelerating are in places where conditions have gotten drier. Climate variability, on the other hand, can also cause groundwater to rebound where conditions become wetter.

Measures

In the article, two measures were mentioned to combat this trend - one needs direct intervention into nature and the other is of regulatory nature of demand or supply.

- **Allocation of water: Take Tucson, Arizona**

In order to replenish the aquifer in the nearby Avra Valley, water from the Colorado River was allotted to store water for future use. One thing that made it easier for the Avra Valley was their geology which makes it easier to store vast quantities of water underground. It is less disruptive and dangerous than building infrastructure above ground and it can store sixfold more water per dollar than surface reservoirs.

However, the drawback of reallocating the water to the underground reservoir results in the river only rarely reaching its delta in the California Gulf.



Figure 10 - The Colorado River (source: [NRDC](#))

- **Reducing Demand**

Another way to combat it is the reduction of demand through regulations, permitting and fees for groundwater use. *"To this end, [Perrone] is currently examining water law in the western U.S. to understand these diverse interventions. Regardless of whether it comes from supply or demand, aquifer recovery seemed to require intervention, the study revealed."*

Commentary: Water Scarcity

Since we are already discussing groundwater in this scientific article, I'd like to add that we have to avoid resource wars - especially water wars - in the near and distant future. This can only be achieved through cooperation and compassion, it goes without saying that the population has priority over the industry meaning the latter needs to work more intensively on solutions how to reduce their water consumption.

Combatting climate change is as important as ever, because as we have seen: where it has gotten drier, the groundwater dwindles. So, regions where it is already a problem will only get worse if there's not an energetic and continuous effort to reduce our carbon emissions and reverse it through measures like reforestation or carbon capture and storage - if technologically possible, but we shouldn't put too much hope in a Wundertechnologie (miracle technology) and lose sight of what can already be done.

Even if we did reduce our carbon emissions to 0 in an instant, there's still the aftermath we have to deal with. Mitigation is therefore key and that means to let the poor countries and the minorities, the vulnerable groups and younger people in our own country have a say too. In Greece for instance, if I recall correctly, there were cool rooms in the hot Summer months made available for everyone as a safe haven. For younger generation, measures would include further expansion of renewable energies to end the dependency on fossil fuels for once and for all - if necessary, nuclear energy too as complementary energy.

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Thank you for reading! Next time, I'll write about three scientific articles again. Also, I finally rediscovered why I love writing about science, even if my summaries are rather mediocre and I still struggle a bit to not rephrase sentences. See you next time!

(Released: 26th March 2024, 10:45 pm/ 22:45 Uhr)

300th Anniversary of Immanuel Kant: What is Enlightenment?

In this blog entry I present to you Kant's definition of enlightenment. However, before we do that, I'll talk about some of the most important events of the 18th century until 1784 to get a better understanding. Then it is followed up by the structure of domination.



Figure 11 - During the Age of Enlightenment, the Philosophers and Enlightener illuminated the house of humanity like [kerosene lamps](#) did - and their works still contribute to our society and way of thinking to this day (image source: [pexels](#)).

Historical Context

In order to better understand a historical figure, it is always worthwhile to look at the historic events that took place (meaning: getting to know the period they grew up in).

Consequently, we begin with the important events that took place before we discuss Kant's definition. Since it is based [on the work](#) that someone else did (who compiled it), I'll keep the subdivision into decades. However, I did reexamine it to verify it did in fact happen - not to downplay the work of the author, merely a precaution in case errors snuck in (and to go into greater detail in some cases).

- **1700-1709**

The Great Northern War begins with the assault of Saxon groups on Riga.

One year later, the **War of the Spanish Succession** begins and ends in 1712.

Between 1706 and 1707, the **Acts of Union** were passed which leads to the formation of the United Kingdom.

- **1710-1719**

Germany, Sweden and Russia suffer from a plague epidemic at the beginning of the decade - more than over half a million Europeans lose their lives. However, at the same time it was the last plague epidemic to haunt Europe.

The Prussian **King Frederick I. founds the Berliner Charité** in response to the plague which took the lives of 1/3rd of East Prussia's population.

The **Third Ottoman-Russian War**: from 1710 until 1711, it ends in a defeat for Russia.

August II. the Strong (1694-1733), Elector of Saxony and King of Poland, contributes in Meißen to the foundation of the first porcelain factory in Europe.

(**Frederick II.** was born on January 24, 1712)

- **1720-1729**

The **Great Northern War** ends after 20 years with a peace agreement between Sweden and Prussia. Prussia was on its way to become a major power, however, it first had to pay two million Thaler for the territories of Stettin, Usedom, Wollin and Vorpommern. The Dano-Swedish war ended as well.

Meanwhile, the paper currency experienced failure in France. France returned to the coin standard and John Law, who was responsible for the paper currency, had to leave France for security reasons. Great Britain still suffered from the consequences of a recession. The **Chinese Empire absorbs Tibet**, officially it claims that the autonomy of Tibet will remain. Effectively, it was the exterior rule through the Manchu minority.

(**Immanuel Kant** was born on April 22, 1724 - 30 years after **Voltaire** was born)

- **1730-1739**

Frederick II. (later known as Frederick the Great), crown prince of Prussia, attempts to abscond from his father with his friend due to his known homosexuality. The attempted escape fails and Frederick II. was sentenced to fortress detention. His friend was executed in front of his eyes.

After the death of Frederick II. King of Denmark and Norway, Christian IV. succeeds.

- **1740-1749**

The Austrian Emperor Karl IV. dies, thus ending the Habsburger male line.

The heir to the throne went to his daughter instead: Maria Theresia.

As a consequence, European monarchs laid claim to the Habsburg Hereditary Lands which led to the **War of the Austrian Succession** (1740-1748). The war encompassed the two **Silesian Wars** too and grew to a global conflict. Frederick the Great opposed the

appointment of a female monarch and joined the war by occupying Silesia. Russia also experienced a succession to the throne. Ivan VI., a minor, succeeds the Tsar Anna Ioannovna (1693-1740) and while here unrest emerges as well Europe remains largely unaffected by it. Ivan VI. was proclaimed Tsar when he was just at the age of two months, his mother received the title of regent. One year later, the new Tsar and his mother were disposed of in a coup. The young Tsar, his mother and his siblings were jailed for the rest of their life.

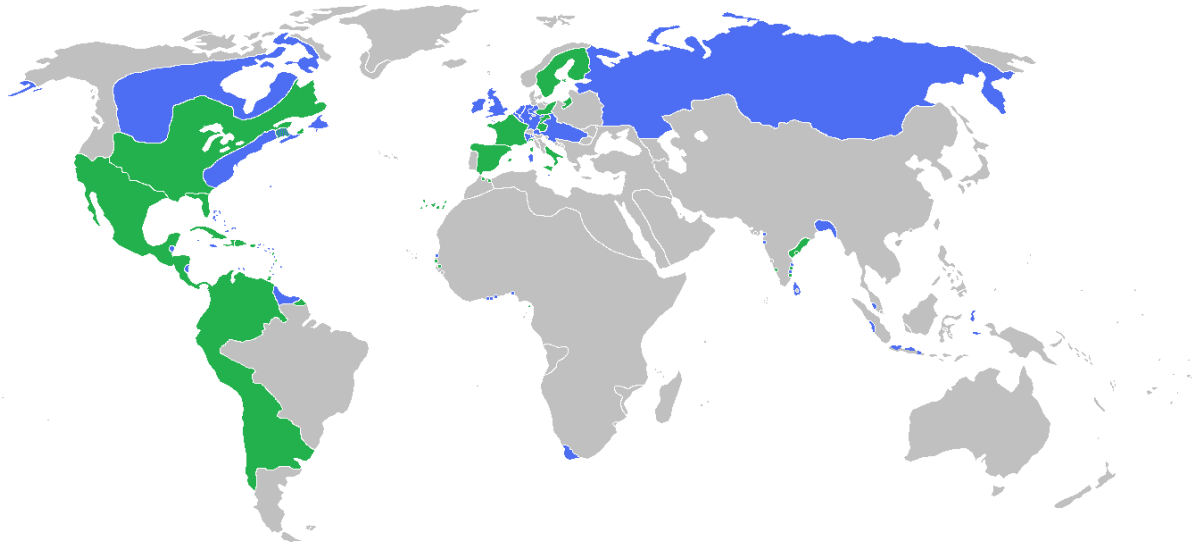


Figure 12 - The War of the Austrian Succession (the colours show whom was allied with whom)

- **1750-1759**

In January 1750, Portugal and Spain agree to the course of the borders of their colonies in South America. **The Treaty of Madrid** also included a binding border for Brazil.

The Italian-Austrian composer, Kapellmeister and music pedagogue **Antonio Salieri** (1750-1825) was born in Legnago (Republic of Venice).

On July 28, 1750, the German composer **Johann Sebastian Bach** died in Leipzig. To his most well-known works belong *Das wohltemperierte Klavier*, *die Matthäus-Passion* and *die Kunst der Fuge*.

The French philosopher and writer **Voltaire** (François-Marie Arouet, 1694-1778), who was one of the most read and influential authors of the Enlightenment, accepted the invitation of the Prussian King Frederick II. to his court. He remained there for three years until they parted in a dispute.

- **1760-1769**

The **French and Indian War** in North America (begin: 1754) between the French and British colonial powers ends in a victory for Britain in 1763. As a result, Louisiana only formally belongs to France.

Meanwhile, the **7-years war** in Europe continues (begin: 1756). While Frederick II. was able to emerge victorious from some battles, the Austrians and Russians drove him further into a corner. This all changed when Tsar Elisabeth died. She was succeeded by Peter III. - who was an admirer of Frederick II. - who left the anti-Prussian coalition. In 1763, the war came to an end.

The improved steam engine created by **James Watt** was patented in 1769 (Nr. 913).

- **1770-1779**

On April 20, 1770, Captain **James Cook** discovered Australia and claimed the eastern coast for the British Crown in August of the same year.

Due to a severe famine in Germany in 1771, potatoes were strongly promoted to prevent another crop failure with a subsequent famine.

In 1772, Prussia, Austria and Russia agreed on the partition of Poland in the **Treaties of Petersburg**. It took place in the same year. The fifth Turkish-Russian war ended in a victory for Russia under Tsar Catherine II. of Russia.

The **American Declaration of Independence** was signed on July 4, 1776.

Another war of succession, this time the **War of the Bavarian Succession** which was the result of Austria's refusal to accept Maximilian III. as heir. Due to the war, the Bavarian lineage had been completely wiped out.

- **1780-1789**

In a collaborative declaration (**First League of Armed Neutrality**), Russia, Prussia, Sweden, Denmark and Austria protest against British naval warfare.

On November 29, 1780, Empress **Maria-Theresa of Austria** died.

The capitulation of the British General Lord **Charles Cornwallis** in 1781 turns the tide of the War of Independence in favour of the Americans.

Austrian Emperor **Josef III.** implements reforms which abolish serfdom (not entirely) as well as significantly eased official censorship of books and the press.

In 1782, the first performance of Schiller's drama "*Der Räuber*" takes place in the Mannheimer national theater. Overnight, Schiller becomes famous and it is seen as the height of the **Sturm und Drang** period.

In 1783, the War of Independence ends with the **Treaty of Paris**. England's reputation and influence suffered as a result of the lost war. The Canadian ship "Empress of China" enters Chinese harbor.

Europe in the 18th Century – System of Governance

The 17th and 18th century is regarded as the transitional phase from the Renaissance to Modernity. It was the age of the Baroque, Absolutism and the Enlightenment.

At the beginning of the 18th century, Absolutism still played a central role; in countries like France, for instance, the royal family and the aristocratic elite lived a luxurious lifestyle while the people suffered from extreme poverty and dependency.

These horrid conditions were increasingly criticized by philosophers, writers and politicians who advocated for liberty, equality and overcoming the social deficiencies.

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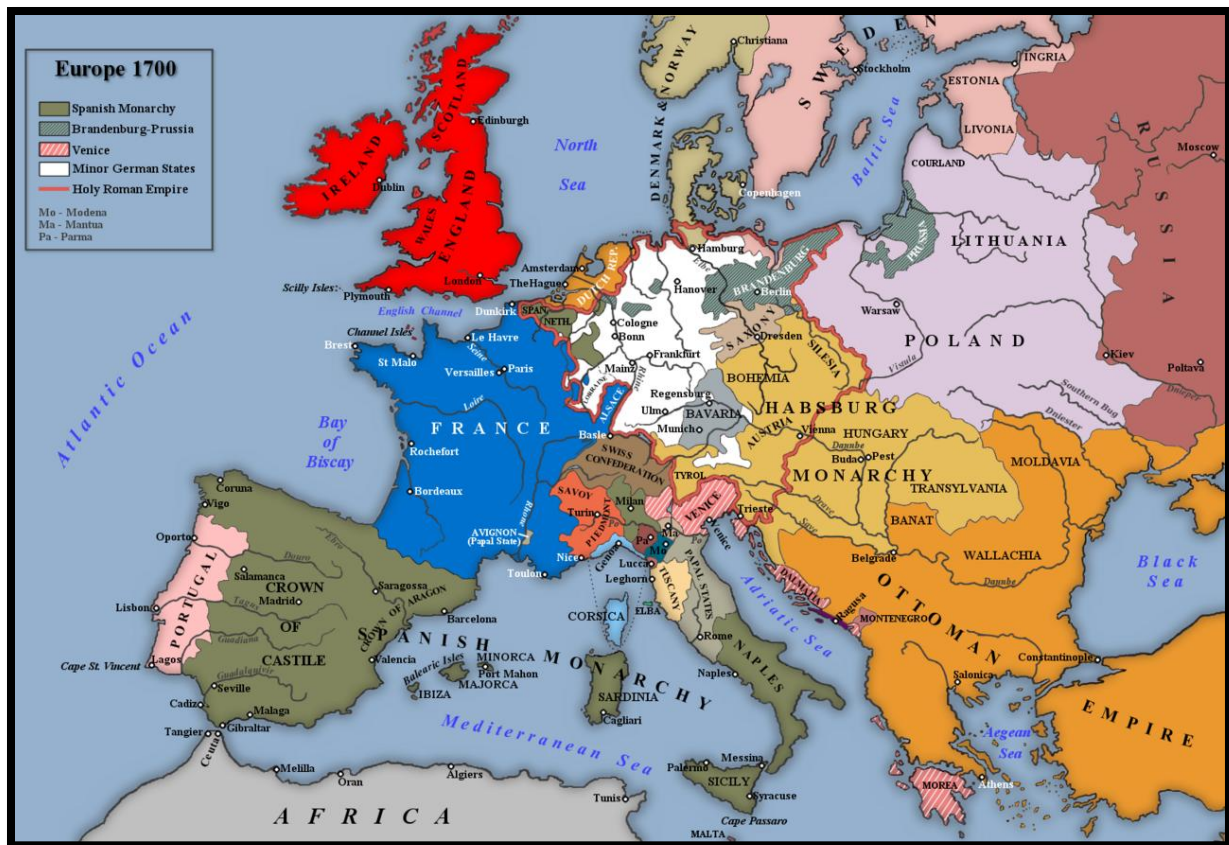


Figure 13 - Europe at the beginning of the 18th century (image source: [Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_Europe_1700.jpg))

The ascension of the bourgeoisie (Bürgertum) was a result of the closer examination of the current social structure, religion and absolutism which led, in turn, to the decline of the aristocracy. Through education and capital, the bourgeoisie was no longer dependent on the aristocratic class and could carry on commerce themselves. The height of this development was the French Revolution with its call for "*liberté, égalité, fraternité*" (= liberty, equality, fraternity).

Abolutism understood itself as a god-given system of governance, demanding serfdom and subordination from the people. By contrast, the thought of the Enlightenment questioned this basis of legitimacy. Thus, the Enlightenment is strongly interwoven with the French Revolution, but not solely responsible for it.

The Revolution itself happened over a time span of 10 years divided into 3 phases:

1. 1789-1791

The struggle for civic rights and the reform into a constitutional monarchy.

2. 1792-1794

Foundation of the Republic.

3. 1795-1799

Rule of the Directory (political leadership guided by the interests of the bourgeoisie), the interests of the property-owning bourgeoisie (social justice) clash with monarchist ambitions of restoration.

The Reign of Terror ("**La Terreur**") which lasted from September 5, 1793 to July 27, 1794, was therefore part of the second phase. It ended with the execution of **Maximilien de Robespierre** (May 6, 1758 - July 28, 1794).

Kant on the French Revolution

When it comes to the French Revolution, the political side of Immanuel Kant was an ardent supporter of it: *"The >>political<< - one could also say: the historico-philosophical - Kant remains an admirer of the new France. No Robespierre or Guillotine led him astray from his opinion that this is where the future dawned. Contemporary witnesses gave account to his blue-white-red passion. When the French Republic was proclaimed in 1792 he is said to have quoted the protestant Lukas, we learn from Karl August Varnhagen von Ense: "Herr! Nun lasse Deinen Diener in Frieden dahinfahren, denn ich habe das Heil der Welt gesehen!" (= "Lord! Now let your servant pass away in peace, for I have seen the salvation of this world!").*

[...] *"The ministry official Georg Heinrich Nicolovious quotes Kants view in 1794: "All of the atrocities occuring in France right now are insignificant compared to the ongoing wickedness of despotism which had previously been institutionalized in France."*

Internally, he wrestled with the jurisprudential Kant and was torn. In his writings, he's less clear about it - possibly restraining himself due to censorship. Especially since the death of Frederick the Great in 1786 he suffered from censorship apparatus, because the new king Frederick Wilhelm II. fancied himself as the '*oppressor of dissident opinions*'.

(source: ZeitGeschichte, 300 Jahre Kant, Nr 1/2024, p. 79)

Kant's Definition



Figure 14 - Immanuel Kant, 1791 (Painting by [Gottlieb Doebler](#), secon version for Johann Gottfried Kieseewetter, 1795)

Born on April 22, 1724, Immanuel Kant was the fourth of ten children. He grew up in Königsberg, East Prussia (present day Kaliningrad).
He died on February 12, 1804 in Königsberg at the age of 79 years.

He's one of the most influential philosophers and his writing "*Critique of Pure Reason*" (published in 1781) marked the beginning of modern philosophy.
His writings extend beyond epistemology as he also wrote foundational work in ethics called "*Critique of Practical Reason*" (published in 1788) and in aesthetics the "*Critique of Judgment*" (published in 1790). Next to these important writings he also wrote about religion, legal philosophy and philosophy of history.

In this blog entry, we'll discuss his writing "*An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?*" (1784). It is an excerpt from a book called "Texte zur Freiheit" which was published in the Reclam publishing company in 2014 (editor: Jonas Pfister).
I don't know if there's an English version available, though.

What is Enlightenment?

Kant begins his explanation by stating that the Enlightenment is humanity's emergence from its self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is described as the inability to "*use one's mind without the guidance of another's*". It becomes self-imposed when the reason for immaturity is not the lack of reason, but rather the "*resolution and courage to use one's reason without the guidance of another*".

"Sapere aude!" (Dare to know) is therefore, to him, the slogan of the Enlightenment.

He further criticizes that this immaturity is still widespread by giving an example: "*If I have a book for my intellect, a pastor for my conscience, a doctor who assesses my diet, etc., I myself have no need to put in any effort. I do not need to think if I can simply pay; there are others who will do this irksome business for me instead.*"

Thus, it also evolves into a critique of the current status - which, as we know, is the absolutist system which demands serfdom and subordination. This "*supervision*" let the people become ignorant on purpose and were raised to "*never make a step outside of the baby walker*". They were then shown the dangers they'd find themselves in if they dared to walk alone.

Kant believed that humanity would learn to walk after falling several times.
The dangers they are made to believe to exist, prevents them from even trying.
Consequently, it would be difficult for an individual to free themselves from the "*near inherently grown into immaturity*". They may even have grown fond of their immaturity and are incapable - for the time being - of using their own mind, because nobody let them try it before.

On the contrary, "*an audience*" (all people at a location) could enlighten themselves.
It'd even be inevitable, if they were given the freedom to do so. In the end there'd always be

independent-minded individuals, even among the former custodians, who spread this thought. The audience could only slowly reach Enlightenment: *"A revolution may get rid off personal despotism and profit- or power-seeking oppression, but a true reform of the mindset would never occur; instead, new prejudices will guide the thoughtless masses just as the old prejudices did."*

Furthermore, Immanuel Kant makes a distinction between two different limitations - one that is beneficial to the enlightenment, and the other that is not.

Usage	Limitation
Public Usage	This one must always be unobstructed and it alone can lead to enlightenment. Kant understands this public use as one's own reason, the scholar who puts it to use in front of the reading public.
Private Usage	This one is allowed to be more limited, without preventing the progress of enlightenment. Here, one can use one's own reason within the boundaries of a occupation or official position with which one has been entrusted.

An example given by Kant explains the difference between "Öffentlicher Gebrauch" (public usage) and "Privater Gebrauch" (private usage) better: *"For an officer it would be ruinous if he, in the line of duty, was loudly reasoning about the purposefulness or usefulness of an order; he has to follow orders. However, as a scholar he cannot be denied to make remarks about errors made during the military service and reveal it to the reading public so that they can issue their own judgement."* (the other two examples were about a citizen and a cleric, same structure)

As a scholar, you should therefore be able to enjoy unrestricted freedom to use your own mind and speak for yourself.

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(Published: 8th April 2024, 10:11 pm/22:11 Uhr)

The Archivist: Guatemala- The US' Inhumane Experiment (1946-1948)

Between 1946 and 1948, the US government conducted an unethical, immoral and inhumane experiment involving at least 5128 vulnerable people. In this blog entry, meant to shed light on this dark chapter of US history, I'll give a summary of what happened.



Note: In this new series, which I call "The Archivist", I'll talk about crimes like this and other events which received not much attention or may even have been forgotten. As it is meant to be a pamphlet as well, it is overall quite compact and aims to spark more interest in the topic. The article will also be available as a PDF-file - ready to be printed.

Between 1946 and 1948, the US government conducted an unethical, immoral and inhumane experiment in Guatemala. Originally, it started with prisoners at Terra Haute, Indiana. It was moved to Guatemala after the researchers were unable to consistently produce gonorrhea infections. However, first a few facts about the country we are talking about to get a better picture of it.

Guatemala – Facts and Figures

Official Name	Republic of Guatemala
Surface Area	108,889 km ² (42,041.9 mi ²)
Population	18.2 million
Capital	Guatemala-City

Official Language	Spanish
Currency	1 Quetzal = 100 Centavos
National Day	September 15 (1821)

From the 16th century (1500) until its independence in 1821, Guatemala was under Spanish colonial rule. Unlike Mexico or Peru, it didn't have large deposits of precious metals. The major economic activity revolved around the export of indigo and cacao cultivated by Indigenous or African slave labour.

1838-1865: Uprising led by Rafael Carrera led to the collapse of the United Provinces of Central America. The regime is described as being similar to colonial rule, Carrera had the support of indigenous people and conservative estate owners. [War of 1863](#) against El-Salvador.

1871-1944: Miguel García Granados and Justo Rufino Barrios led a revolution and successfully overthrew Gen. Vicente Cerna, Carrera's conservative successor in office. In 1931, a military coup installed Gen. Jorge Ubico as president without opposition – the fourth dictatorship.

1954-1996: Starting in 1954, Guatemala's government faced a guerilla opposition which sparked a civil war that would last for 36 years. The indigenous people in particular suffered during the civil war, a light was shed on their struggles by Rigoberta Menchú, a Quiché Maya and an advocate for indigenous communities. She received the Noble Peace Prize in 1992.

In case you want to learn more about the history of Guatemala, especially in greater detail, check out the Encyclopedia Britannica:
<https://www.britannica.com/place/Guatemala>

The US Sexually Transmitted Disease Experiments in Guatemala

As stated previously, the medical experiments were conducted [between 1946 and 1948](#) by Public Health Service investigators who were funded by the National Institutes of Health and cooperated with Guatemalan authorities. John C. Cutler (1915-2003), a scientist from the US Public Health Service, directed the research.

- 5,128 vulnerable people were involved in the study of whom 1,308 were infected by health officials with syphilis, gonorrhea, and chancroid while on others serology tests were conducted.
- Among these vulnerable people were children, orphans, child and adult prostitutes, Guatemalan Indians, leprosy patients, mental patients, prisoners, and soldiers.
- None of the participants were informed, neither did the experiments happen in a sterile clinical environment in which bacteria that caused Sexually Transmitted Disease (STD) were administered in the form of a pin prick vaccination or a pill taken orally.

The following example shows the scale of cruelty and suffering we deal with:

*“Berta was a female patient in the psychiatric hospital. Her age and the illness that brought her to the hospital are unknown. **In February 1948**, Berta was injected in her left arm with syphilis. **A month later**, she developed scabies (an itchy skin infection caused by a mite). Several weeks later, [lead investigator Dr. John] Cutler noted that she had also developed red bumps where he had injected her arm, lesions on her arms and legs, and her skin was beginning to waste away from her body. **Berta was not treated for syphilis until three months after her injection**. Soon after, on August 23, Dr. Cutler wrote that Berta appeared as if she was going to die, but he did not specify why. That same day he put gonorrheal pus from another male subject into both of Berta’s eyes, as well as in her urethra and rectum. He also re-infected her with syphilis. Several days later, Berta’s eyes were filled with pus from the gonorrhea, and she was bleeding from her urethra. **On August 27, Berta died.**”*

- 62 years later, in 2010, then-President Barack Obama apologized to Guatemalan President Alvaro Colom and the people affected.
- 2 reports have been issued since, the [*“Ethically Impossible” STD Research in Guatemala from 1946–1948*](#) and [*Moral Science: Protecting Participants in Human Subjects Research*](#) (2011). The first condemning the experiments as unethical under current standards and the other acknowledging that the US can’t confirm *“that all federally funded research provides optimal protections against avoidable harms and unethical treatment today”* as well as pushing for reforms which hadn’t been implemented by the time the article I cite was published (December 2013).
- A separate report was published by the Guatemalan government called *“Consentir el Daño: Experimentos Médicos de Estados Unidos en Guatemala (To Agree to the Harm: Medical Experiments by the United States in Guatemala)”*. However, unlike the US’ report it stated that the experiments were *“a crime against humanity”* and that racism and discrimination were present throughout the experiment – consciously and explicitly.

There was a class action lawsuit in Spring 2012 on behalf of the victims and their survivors, the facts were not disputed but the court rejected it on sovereign immunity.

The Department of Health and Human Services announced on January 10, 2012 a funding of approximately \$1.8 million for the improved treatment and prevention of STIs, further there was funding of global human research protection. The victims still received no compensation.

“The Guatemalan report called for reparation and compensation for the victims. In addition, 2 independent reports, written by the [United Nations](#) and the Catholic Church on human rights violations and genocide in Guatemala from the 1950s to the 1990s, bolster the Guatemalan commission’s declarations with respect to discrimination, reparations, and human rights and highlight weaknesses in the US reports. There is little evidence that the US government, the public health community, academic publications, or the media have acknowledged the Guatemalan report.”

These inhumane experiments we have discussed here may remind you of the [Tuskegee experiments](#) from 1932 to 1972.

400 African-American men were victim of this study and deceived into participating by

claiming that they'd receive treatment. Unlike in the Guatemalan study, they already were infected. For 40 years, the same principal investigators withheld effective therapy for this life-threatening illness. It was a long way before they received compensation for this cruel experiment:

"However, reparation in Tuskegee was made only after organizations championed the cause, made the wrongful acts known to the general public, sought access to justice through the courts, and applied pressure on the government to take action. This has not occurred in the context of the Guatemalan STD experiments."

The payment in Tuskegee had this structure:

\$37 500 for each living participant

\$15 000 for each surviving dependent

\$16 000 for each living control group participant

\$5000 to heirs of deceased members of the control group. **In Total:** \$10 million in 1974.

For further reading on the topic: *First, Do No Harm: The US Sexually Transmitted Disease Experiments in Guatemala* (source: NIH).

Sources

First, Do No Harm: The US Sexually Transmitted Disease Experiments in Guatemala

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Moral Science: Protecting Participants in Human Subjects Research

https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2457089

Guatemala: Memory of Silence (UN Report)

<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/357870-guatemala-memory-of-silence-the-commission-for.html>

Fiftieth Anniversary of Uncovering the Tuskegee Syphilis Study: The Story and Timeless Lessons

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9872801/>

Author's Note: In the future there'll be more articles like this, rather short and compact but still with all the research I also invest in longer articles. The longer articles won't disappear, that's for certain. Moreover, next to less known events it also allows for more flexibility as I

have many interests - especially in history, from prehistory and ancient times to recent history. Hopefully, you like this content too and look forward to more just as I do!

(Published: 30th April 2024, 8:52 pm/20:52 Uhr)

Science News #021

In Today's Science News, we'll learn about a gene editing trial on humans which may be the answer to improving the vision of those afflicted by Leber Congenital Amaurosis, that it is likely that there once was an earth-like environment on Mars and, finally, a novelty to this series where I'll cover topics from geology to astronomy.



Figure 15 - DNA image by geralt ([Pixabay](#))

Article 1: Participants of pioneering CRISPR gene editing trial see vision improve

SD-Date: May 6, 2024

Et-Date: May 9, 2024

Science-Daily Summary: *"About 79% of clinical trial participants experienced measurable improvement after receiving experimental, CRISPR-based gene editing that is designed to fix a rare form of blindness, according to a new article."*

Abstract of the Study: <https://www.nejm.org/doi/10.1056/NEJMoa2309915>

Method of Research

The study was conducted by the Oregon Health & Science University. 14 participants, 12 adults and two children, received the EDIT-101 treatment in one eye. The participants of the study were afflicted by the **Leber Congenital Amaurosis**, or LCA, which is commonly caused by mutations in the **CEP290**, **CRB1**, **GUCY2D** or **RPE65** genes which leads to severe visual impairment at birth or shortly afterward. In ca. 30% of the cases, the cause of the disorder is unknown yet.

This mutation occurs in **2 or 3 out of 100,000 newborn** and may worsen over time. The area

which is primarily affected by this condition is the **retina** at the back of the eye, where specialized tissue lies to detect light and colour.

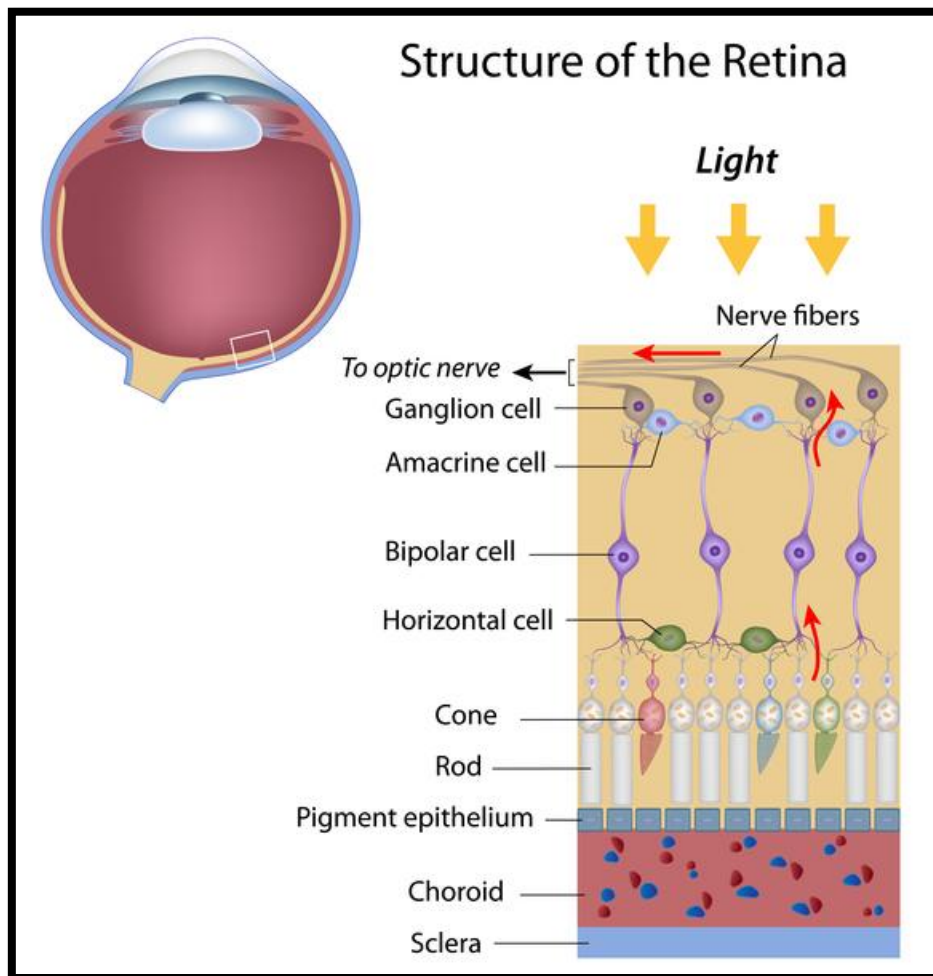


Figure 16 - Structure of the Retina (source: [Medline Plus](#))

The participants were recruited from five different clinical sites: The [OHSU](#) Casey Eye Institute in Portland, Oregon; Bascom Palmer Eye Institute in Miami, Florida; Mass Eye and Ear in Boston, Massachusetts; Scheie Eye Institute at the University of Pennsylvania and Children's Hospital of Philadelphia; and Kellogg Eye Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

In order to treat the patients, CRISPR was used for *in vivo* (Italian for "within the living", meaning it was tested on the whole organism opposed to a tissue extract) gene editing. In early 2020, the OHSU Casey Eye Institute treated its first patient.

To evaluate the effectiveness of the experimental treatment, four specific outcomes were used:

- Visual acuity
- How well participants saw colored points of light while looking into a specialized device, which scientists call a full-field test

- How well participants navigated a research maze with physical objects and varying amounts of light
- How much participants reported experiencing improved quality of life

Findings

The key results, as they are listed in bullet points in the ScienceDaily article, were as follows:

- 11 participants, about 79%, showed improvement in at least one of four measured outcomes.
- 6 participants, about 43%, showed improvement in two or more outcomes.
- 6 participants, about 43%, reported improved vision-related quality of life.
- 4 participants, about 29%, had clinically meaningful improvement in visual acuity, or how well they could identify objects or letters on a chart.
- There were no serious adverse events related to the treatment.
- Most adverse events were mild or moderate, and all have since been resolved.

"While more research is needed to determine who may benefit most, we consider the early results promising. To hear from several participants how thrilled they were that they could finally see the food on their plates -- that is a big deal. These were individuals who could not read any lines on an eye chart and who had no treatment options, which is the unfortunate reality for most people with inherited retinal disorders." - Eric Pierce, M.D., Ph.D

Sources

ScienceDaily Article

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/05/240506131535.htm>

Leber congenital amaurosis

<https://medlineplus.gov/genetics/condition/leber-congenital-amaurosis/>

Article 2: Earth-like environment likely on ancient Mars

SD-Date: May 1, 2024

Et-Date: May 9, 2024

ScienceDaily-Summary: *"A research team using the ChemCam instrument onboard NASA's Curiosity rover discovered higher-than-usual amounts of manganese in lakebed rocks within Gale Crater on Mars, which indicates that the sediments were formed in a river, delta, or near the shoreline of an ancient lake."*

Open-Access: <https://agupubs.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1029/2023JE007923>

Method of Research

We leave the earthly realms and take a trip to Mars where NASA's Curiosity rover explores our red neighbour. Launched in 2011, Curiosity seeks to answer the question whether Mars' ancient climate was suitable enough for microbial life by analyzing the rock record.



Figure 17 - In case you want to meet Curiosity, check out NASA's website: <https://science.nasa.gov/mission/msl-curiosity/>. It'll also show you the current location of the robot, as well as the planet's itself.

The research team used Curiosity's tool ChemCam, a laser that forms a plasma on the surface of the rock to quantify the elemental compositions by collecting light. It was developed at Los Alamos and CNES (the French space agency). The sample was taken from the [Gale Crater](#), 3.7 billion years ago it came about after a large meteor impact - back then, water still existed on Mars and it formed a large lake. The basic form we see today took 700 million years to be shaped (or 0.7 billion years).

"Mineral and chemical readings show that water from both the lake and subsurface was friendly for potential microbes. Drill samples from the lakebed show key elements, organic molecules, nutrients and energy sources that microbes could have used. Water flowing through underground fractures could have supported life even in deeply buried rocks. And the composition of some layers makes them good for preserving potential signs of past life."
(NASA)

Plasma (in physics)

(source: <https://www.britannica.com/science/plasma-state-of-matter>)

In physics, plasma is the fourth state of matter - different from the solid, liquid and gaseous states. Collectively, due to electromagnetic forces being able to act at large distances, plasma will act like a fluid even when the particles rarely collide with each other. It is produced when the atoms in a gas become ionized.

Findings

The rocks analyzed were located in the lakebed within the crater and were a mix of sands, silts, and muds. Most of the lakebed rocks in the Gale Crater are made up of muds, in contrast to muds the more porous sandy rocks let groundwater pass through more easily.

What was surprising was **the amount of manganese oxide** found there. On Earth, the process is known and happens all the time - through photosynthetic life (Cyanobacteria, plants, etc.) which produces a lot of oxygen and microbes that help in catalyzing the manganese oxidation reactions. On Mars, the mechanism is unknown as there's still no evidence for life and how the manganese was formed and concentrated.

In short: the Curiosity rover discovered large deposits of manganese oxide, but more questions have emerged from this discovery regarding its accumulation and formation.

Sources

Science Daily article

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/05/240501100729.htm>

Mars Science Laboratory: Curiosity Rover

<https://science.nasa.gov/mission/msl-curiosity/>

A Guide to Gale Crater

<https://science.nasa.gov/resource/a-guide-to-gale-crater/>

Plasma (state of matter)

<https://www.britannica.com/science/plasma-state-of-matter>

ScienceExplained

Usually, I'd write about a third scientific article but given that this is not always regular, you might be in good hands with [Nature Briefing](#) which I'm signed up to as well.

So, instead, I'll talk about the sciences in general - from geology to astronomy, or well, rather what I understand and feel capable of doing. If it gets too complicated, but I still find it too interesting to be left out, I'll give a short explanation on my reasoning and then link to the article or study. Without further ado, let's talk about rocks.

Three Types of Rock

From March 28 to April 2, my family and I went to South Tyrol for vacation - we've been there so often, there's pretty much no place we haven't seen yet. An ideal place for hiking.

On Sunday I visited the minerals museum in Teis, it is part of the Villnoeß municipality. A rather small museum, but definitely worth the time! I spent an entire hour in there looking at every mineral exhibited (except the tiny ones in a cabinet next to the microscope).



Figure 18 - Before the visitors were let into the exhibition, there was an introductory movie on the topic - how the minerals formed over millions of years to the man who dedicated his life to discover these magnificent natural structures (source: [Mineralienmuseum Teis](#))

I suppose the National History Museum of London, where I've been to, left behind a seed when I visited their section about minerals too, that was last Summer. Because after spending an hour in there I was finally certain what I'd love to study one day: geology.

And well, that brings us to the three different types of rock we are going to talk about.

Definition

Rock (*n.*) – an inorganic solid composed of a variety of minerals that comprises the Earth's lithosphere.

In geology, you distinguish between [three types of rock](#): igneous rocks, sedimentary rocks and metamorphic rocks. **Igneous rocks** either form through magma consolidating in the depths of Earth resulting in **intrusive rock** like Granite, or the magma flows to the surface where it becomes **extrusive rock** like basalt. The ocean crust, for instance, consists almost entirely of igneous rocks. **Sedimentary rocks** are the result of material, through water, wind or ice, deposited on the earth's surface. Since it is deposited in layers, these different layers are a distinguishing characteristic of sedimentary rocks. In contrast to the other types of rock, you can often find fossils inside of them. Some sedimentary rocks consist of eroded fragments from other rocks, which are then cemented in various ways.

Finally, we come to the **metamorphic rocks**. These rocks form when existing rocks are exposed to extreme temperatures and/or pressure, changing their mineralogical composition, fabric and inner structure. Through this mechanism, quartzite emerged from sand stone through metamorphosis and schist from marl or shale. Such extreme conditions

mean that they mostly form deep within the earth's crust, initiated by the plate tectonic mechanism. However, on the surface they can also metamorphos through the impact of meteors or by being closely beneath the impact. Slate and gneiss belong in this group.

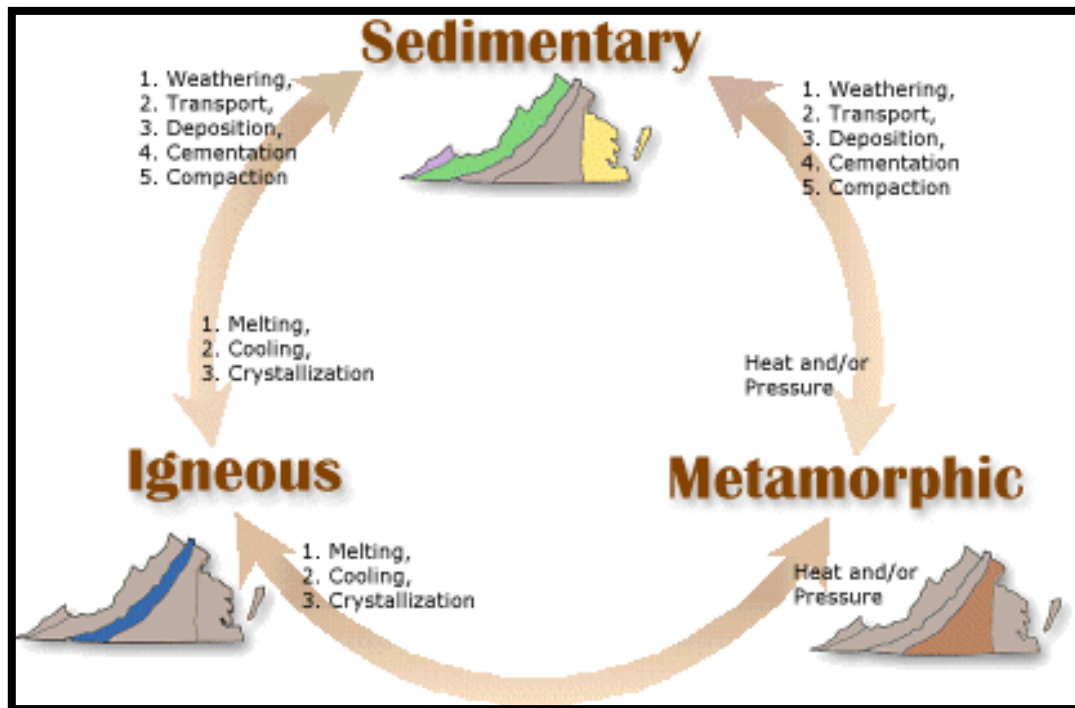


Figure 19 - "Simplified rock cycle" by [The Geology of Virginia](#)

Sources

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Gesteine - Mineralien - Edelsteine - Fossilien

ISBN: 978-3-8310-1469-9

(Page 30-31: Gesteinsarten/Types of Rock)

Mineralienmuseum Teis

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<https://www.mineralienmuseum-teis.it/de.html>

Three Types of Rock

(for visualized examples)

<https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/earth/if-rocks-could-talk2/three-types-of-rock>

The Geology of Virginia

<http://geology.blogs.wm.edu/minerals-rocks-and-fossils/rocks/>

(Published: 9th May 2024, 11:03 pm/23:03 Uhr)

Georgia: History from the 11th to the 21st Century and Recent Protests

Today's blog entry is about the country Georgia, the 11th to the 18th century (1000-1700) will only be discussed briefly. Not to be mixed up with the US State of Georgia which was founded in 1732 (named after [King George II.](#) who lived from 1683 to 1760). The 19th to 21st century will be discussed in more detail; it is followed up by the recent protests against the Russian-inspired law.

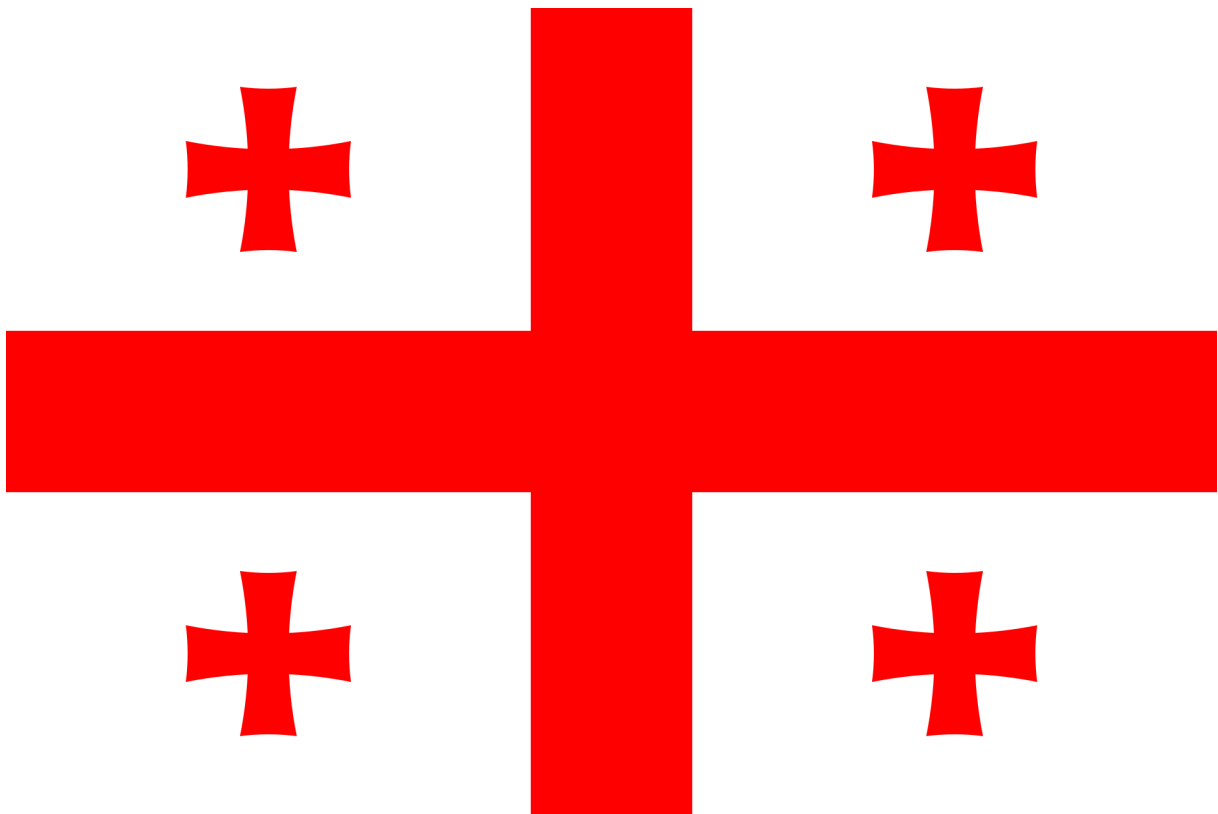


Figure 20 - Flag of Georgia (Image source: Wikipedia)

Geographic Location



illustration 1 - (Image source: [Wikipedia](#))

Georgia is a country located in Eastern Europe and West Asia.
You may have heard it in connection with the Caucasus region of which it is part of.

It shares borders with Russia to the north and northeast, Turkey to the southwest, Armenia to the south and Azerbaijan to the southeast. To the west, it is connected to the Black Sea.

Georgia covers an area of 69,700 km² (or 26,900 sq mi) - quite a bit larger than [West Virginia](#) with an area of 62,756 km² (or 24,230 sq mi).

Demography

It is estimated that, in 2024, **3,809,000 people** live in Georgia.

I took the following graphs from the [Encyclopedia Britannica](#), because they look better than those who I usually create in Excel. First the ethnic composition then the religious affiliations, however, they do not include Abkhazia and South Ossetia. Georgians call themselves Kartveli whereas Georgian is derived from their Persian name Gorj.

According to Encyclopedia Britannica, it is likely that Georgians have always lived in that region - known to them as Sakartvelo.

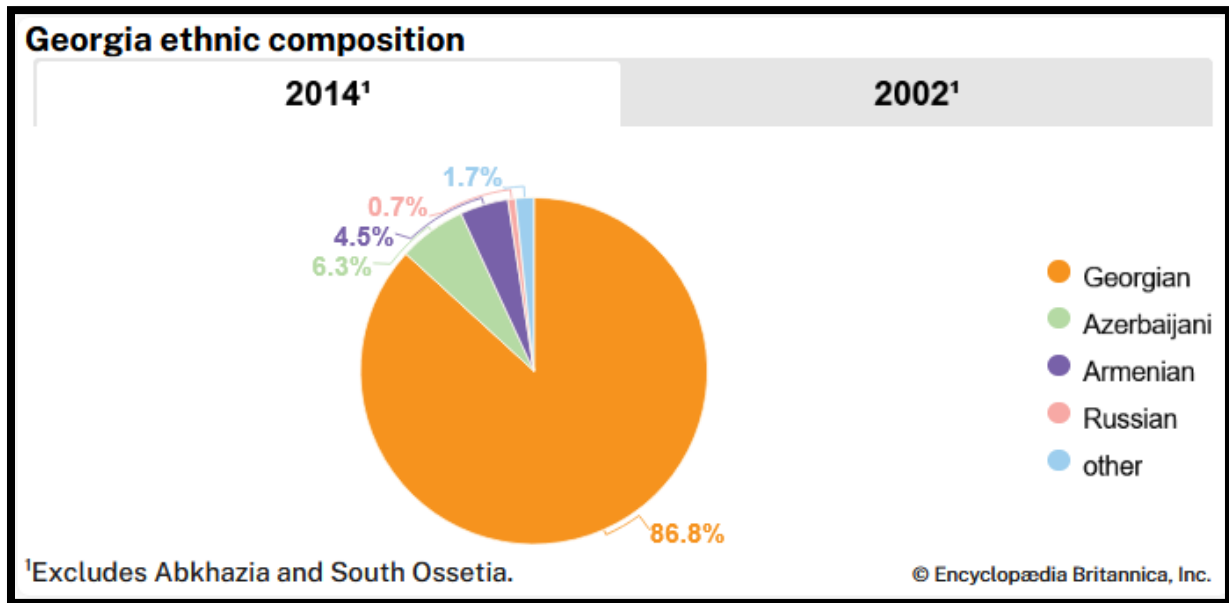


illustration 2 - Georgia's Ethnic Composition

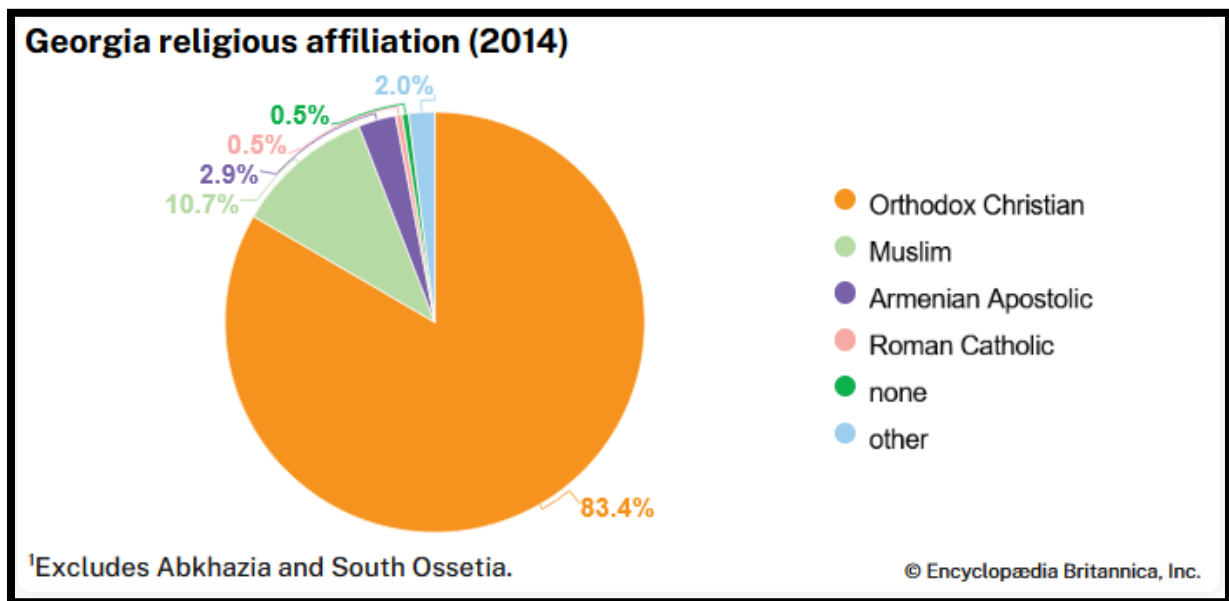


illustration 3 - Georgia's Religious Affiliation

Old History (1000-1700)

As mentioned in the introduction, in this part we will only briefly discuss what happened during these 700 years. And by brief, I mean brief, since this long time period - at least on a human scale - could fill many book shelves. The entire timeline is [based on the BBCs](#) one's.

- **11th to 13th Century**

Under the [Bagrationi dynasty](#), the Georgian kingdom becomes politically unified. The rule of this dynasty began in the early 9th century in southwestern Georgia and the adjacent Georgian marchlands reconquered from the Arabs. The Georgian kingdom was restored in 888 and it prospered from the 11th to the 13th century. The most notable rulers being David IV (1089 - 1125) and his great granddaughter Tamar (1184 - 1213), this time period is described as the "golden age" in Georgian history.

- **c. 1220-1330s**

The Mongols invade and occupy the Caucasus.

Here an excerpt on how the invasion began, the book is only in parts accessible:

"In November or early December 1220, two Mongol tümen arriving from Nakhchivan appeared in north-eastern Armenia, possibly searching for suitable winter pastures. Here they were opposed by Giorgi and Ivane with an army half their size. While the Georgians were defeated, they inflicted heavy losses on the invaders. The Mongols briefly retreated to the Mughan Steppe, only to resume their attack in January 1221."

(source: [History of the Caucasus: Volume 2: In the Shadow of Great Powers](#), p. 32)

King [Giorgi IV Lasha](#) would face the Mongols a second and a third time, with an army of 70,000 in both battles he still lost and the two Mongol generals defeated him in the last battle overwhelmingly due to superior tactical skills. While Giorgi escaped, he was badly wounded and the royal standing army 'virtually annihilated'.

- **1299-1302**

The Georgian kingdom was restored after George V of Georgia defeated the Mongols. However, after his death the kingdom disintegrated politically and collapsed by the 15th century. Until the Russian annexation in the early 19th century, the Bagrationi house ruled the three breakaway kingdoms Kartli, Kakheti and Imereti.

- **16th to 18th Century**

The eastern and western parts of Georgia were subjugated by Ottoman Turkey and Safavid Iran (and successive Iranian Afsharid and Qajar dynasties). In the peace agreement of Amasya, Georgia was divided between the two: *"Kakheti, Mosuki, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Okros Tsikhe (also known as Altunkala), Borchalo, Kartli, Tbilisi, Gori, Surami, Meskheti were taken by Iran, and Bashiachuki (Imereti), Dadiani (Samegrelo), Guria, Part of Saatabago " Dadeli (Tao), Ardahani, Artanuji, Oltisi, Tortumi were taken by the Ottoman State from the bank of the Chorokhi River to the border with Trabzon."* (source: [The Amasya Peace Treaty between the Ottoman Empire and Iran \(June 1, 1555\) and Georgia](#), Bulletin of the Georgian National Academy of Sciences, vol. 3 no. 1 2009, PDF-file which is 7 pages long)

Recent History (1800-2024)

- **1801-1804**

Tsarist Russia annexes most of present-day Georgia.

Next to Georgia, the Russian Empire also annexed the other parts of [Transcaucasia](#) (aka the South Caucasus which includes Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaija) by the 1860s.

From 1815 to 1845, the Circassians of Abkhazia and the Lezgians from Dagestan were particularly fierce and the Russians could only *"do little more than hold these mountain peoples at bay"* (Encyclopedia Britannica). It took until 1864 to completely pacify Dagestan. One year earlier, the Circassian genocide was carried out by Tsarist Russia:

*"The corroboration between both Turkish and Russian documents puts the number of Circassian deaths by military operations and pre-planned massacres **between 1.5 – 2 million**; this is including those that disappeared, died from war, depopulation of villages, and instances of mass murder.[xxiii] Following the events of the genocide, the Russian census of 1897 recorded that there were only 150,000 Circassians remaining in the conquered region.[xxiv] The devastating events that unfolded **resulted in the disappearance, death, or exile of 90-97% of the Circassian population.**"* ([The Circassian Genocide](#) published in Journal of International Services) Georgia is the only country that recognized the case of the Circassians as genocide.

- **1879**

In the town of Gori Iosif Dzhugashvili, later known as [Joseph Stalin](#) (December 18, 1878 - March 5, 1953), was born.

The city [Gori](#) is one of the oldest Cities in Georgia, it was founded in the 7th century as Tontio. As I already mentioned, it was the hometown of the brutal dictator Stalin. He spend his childhood in the city (1888-1894) and later studied at its theological seminary. After his death, it was a source of local pridge for the city. In 2010, the last monument to him was removed. Nowadays, Gori's two main industries are food preservation from locally grown fruit and vegetables and the textil industry which gets its cotton largely from Azerbaijan. As of 2016, there live around 48,300 people.

- **1918**

In wake of the Russian revolution, Georgia declares its independency.

- **1921**

Three years later, the Red Army invades Georgia and absorbs it into the merging Soviet Union.

- **1956**

The Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev implements his de-Stalinisation policy which turned violent and sparked protests as a result, calls for the succession become public. The protest is brutally crushed by Soviet forces.



illustration 4 - Flag of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (1918-1921)

The short-lived independence was recognized de jure by Russia in the [Treaty of Moscow](#) (1920), it turned out that the treaty was merely a delaying tactic by the Bolsheviks to overthrow the Menshevik government.

- **1989**
In South Ossetia, demands for more autonomy lead to violent clashes between Georgians and Ossetians. Soviet - later Russian - peacekeepers are deployed.
In the same year, the South Ossetian Supreme Soviet *"announced its intention to turn the South Ossetian Autonomous Region into an Autonomous Republic"*. Tbilisi rejected it and when South Ossetia turned to Moscow in August 1990 it was unsuccessful as well.
- **1990-1993**
September 20, 1990: South Ossetia declaration of state sovereignty.
October 1990: Georgian parliamentary boycotted by South Ossetia.
December 1990: South Ossetia holds its own parliamentary elections.
The Georgian Supreme Soviet removed South Ossetia's status as an autonomous republic.
January 1991: Prior to the break-up of the Soviet Union, the conflict between the two flares up in violence. By the end of the conflict 1,000 people were dead and 60,000 displaced.
March 17, 1991: Vote within the Soviet Union about a reformed Union. Unlike the Georgians, the population in Ossetia voted in favour.
April 9, 1991: Georgia declares its independence from the Soviet Union and Zviad

Gamsakhurdia was elected the first president of Georgia. He, however, failed 'dramatically' in finding a diplomatic solution for the conflict.

1992: In Spring heavy fighting broke out again, only after Shevardnadze became president both parties found their way back to the negotiating table. On June 10, Shevardnadze met then-Russian president Boris Yeltsin in Kasbegi to discuss ways of solving the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict. Two weeks later, the Sochi Agreement was signed. It also included Joint Peacekeeping Forces (JPKF) consisting of Georgian, Russian (including North Ossetian), and South Ossetian units. Russia took on the role as chief mediator in the following conflict-resolution process.

1992-1993: Georgian-Abkhazia War. Georgia sends troops to halt moves for succession. Georgian forces are expelled at the end and up to 30,000 people are killed.

Before the war, Georgians made up almost half of Abkhazia's population; 250,000 were expelled which basically halved Abkhazia's population.

(Detailed 1990 to 1992 source: [The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict by Marietta König, published in 2004](#) - it's a PDF file and quite informative, p. 4 also includes the background starting in 1918 with the establishment of the short-lived republic)

- **1994**
Ceasefire agreement between the Georgian government and Abkhazian separatists. It paved the way to deploy the Russian peacekeeping force in the region. The full-scale war [claimed the lives of 12,000 people](#) and nearly 250,000 Georgians had to flee their homes.
- **2001**
Clashes in Abkhazia between Abkhaz troops and Georgian paramilitaries, the latter being backed by fighters from the North Caucasus. Russia accuses Georgia of harbouring Chechen rebels (in 1999, the second Chechen war began -> see [Chechnya profile](#)), a charge dismissed by Georgia. Tensions increase.
- **2004**
Clashes between Georgian and South Ossetian forces result in several deaths.
- **2006**
In an unrecognized referendum, South Ossetia votes in favour of independence.

"Ossetians have sought secession for more than a decade, and want to join neighbouring Russia."

Bella Pliyeva, the head of the province's electoral commission, said 95% of the 55,000 population had been eligible to vote in the referendum, which asked voters whether they supported independence and the seeking of international recognition.

The US and European countries have said they will not recognise the result of the referendum, and no western monitors were present at the poll."

[\(The Guardian, November 13 2006\)](#)

- **2008**

Georgia tries to retake South Ossetia by force after low-level clashes with Russian-backed rebels. Tensions between Russia and Georgia escalate into a full-blown military conflict. The war lasts for five days and the counter-attacks of Russian forces push out Georgian troops out of South Ossetia and Abkhazi. France brokers a peace agreement. South Ossetia and Abkhazi are recognized as independent states by Russia.

In Abkhaz the war also had repercussions on the view of both Georgians and Abkhazians: *"Many in Georgia have since then viewed the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia as purely a Russian military occupation of Georgian territory and no longer acknowledge Abkhaz and South Ossetians as parties to the conflicts. The Abkhaz contest this, viewing increased military, economic and infrastructural support from Russia as necessary protection of their security. Ties were strengthened through the signing by Abkhazia and Russia of a treaty on 'alliance and strategic partnership' in November 2014, though on issues the Abkhaz perceive as challenging their sovereignty, there are signs of tension in the Abkhaz-Russian relationship."* ([Conciliation Resources](#))

- **2014**

Association Agreement between the European Union and Georgia is signed. It was signed on 27 June. Here are some recent numbers (as of 2022):

- *The EU is the main trade partner of Georgia. 20.5% of its trade takes place with the EU, followed by Turkey (14.6%) and Russia (13%).*

- *EU trade with Georgia accounts for 0.1% of its total trade, with a turnover of around €4.25 billion in 2022.*

- *EU exports to Georgia amounted to €3.2 billion in 2022, an increase of 57.9% compared to the previous year. The key export products are mineral products, machinery and appliances, and transport equipment.*

- *The key EU imports from Georgia include mineral products, chemical products, and textiles. The EU imported goods to the value of €1 billion from Georgia in 2022, with imports increasing by 25.8% since 2021.*

(source: [EU trade relations with Georgia](#))

And yes, here's the agreement in case you want to read it:

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02014A0830%2802%29-20230306>

It's available in various languages, from English to Portuguese and Swedish.

- **2015**

In South Ossetia, Russian forces move the internal border inside Georgia proper by 1.5 km thus threatening main road linking west and east of country.

- **2017**
A presidential election and another referendum is held in South Ossetia.
This time, the referendum is about changing its name to the State of Alania as part of a plan to join the Russian Federation.
- **2022**
On February 24, Russia begins its war of aggression and illegal invasion of Ukraine.
Georgia becomes a temporary home for many Russian exiles.
On March 3, Georgia presented its application for EU membership.
On June 17, the European Commission [presented its opinions on the applications for EU membership submitted by Ukraine, Georgia and the Republic of Moldova](#).
On June 23, Georgia was given an EU-membership perspective by unanimous agreement between all 27 EU-member states.
- **2023**
Prime Minister Irakli Gharibashvili (from February 22, 2021 to January 29, 2024) claims that NATO enlargement was one of the main reasons for Russia's invasion of Ukraine, drawing domestic and international criticism.
- **2024**
The "transparency on foreign influence" bill introduced in Georgia - also called the "foreign agents law" as it is inspired by a similar Russian law - leads to protests in the capital Tbilisi.

"Under the legislation, media and non-governmental organisations that receive over 20% of their funding from abroad will have to register as "organisations acting in the interest of a foreign power", submit themselves to stringent audits, or face punitive fines." (BBC)



illustration 5 - (Image source: [Wikipedia](#))

The Ossetian People, An Excerpt

from the paper "The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict" by Marietta König, published in the OSCE yearbook 2004.

(source: <https://ifsh.de/file-CORE/documents/yearbook/english/04/Koenig.pdf>)

The Ossetians, who refer to themselves as Iron and to Ossetia as Iriston, are considered indigenous to the region as the indirect descendents of the north-east Iranian Scythians and Sarmatians. They are also the direct descendents of the Iranian Alans, a nomadic tribe that ruled the North Caucasus in the first four centuries A.D. before intermixing with other tribes in the area.

The modern Ossetian people came into existence between the 16th and the 18th centuries. There are four main groups of Ossetians: Adagi, Kurtats, Tagaurs, and Digors, some of whom have merged with other North Caucasian tribes, as in the case of the Digors, who merged with the Kabards, or have split into smaller tribes, leading to the development of many Ossetian dialects. The Ossetians are thus by no means a homogenous people. Despite close relations between North and South Ossetia based on kin, both sides stress ethnic and cultural differences. Within the South Ossetian population, there is greater support for territorial independence than for union with North Ossetia, which is the official goal of the South Ossetian government.

The Protests against the "Foreign Agents Law"

Georgians protested against this Russian-inspired law in two rounds: from March 6 to March 10, 2023 and from April 15 to June 5, 2024. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets.

"Iurevicz, a philosophy student at the TSU State University in Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, belongs to one of a myriad of protest groups sprouting out of universities and schools that have been driving the mass protests against the "foreign agents" law being introduced in the east European country.

They have been horrified by the potential repercussions of forcing civil society organisations and the media that receive more than 20% of their revenues from abroad to register as "organisations serving the interests of a foreign power".

The new law, adopted by parliament on Tuesday, is regarded by critics at home and internationally as a copy of that introduced in Russia in 2012 by Vladimir Putin to silence dissenting voices." ([The Guardian](#))

The Group **Georgian Students for a European Future** has a wide range of ideologies: from **Students for Liberty** with libertarian tendencies, a group called **Wave** which includes environmentalist but describes itself as "not leftist", the **Frankling Group** which advocates for free markets, private property and individual liberties and the group **Shame** which focuses on free and fair elections. While they do not always get along with each other, what unites them is that they are **resolutely pro-European** and **born between 1997 and 2012**.

The Georgian Dream party first tried to buy the favour of the young people through measures like cancelling the debt of thousands of students. And the initial first protests also led to a swift withdrawal of the bill. However, after this didn't work out the ruling party went on to use more repressive tactics such as parents receiving calls warning them of dire consequences. High profile individuals were followed; others were attacked.

“Half of my friends have had calls or been approached in the street”, said Iurevich. “Two of my friends were arrested at the protest. They were beaten, and they were told terrible things.”

But, Abramishvili said, this generation was not used to – nor would accept – the repression that older Georgians had experienced. “They are quite fearless,” he said.

On May 15, 2024, the [Associated Press reported](#) that the bill passed the parliament in a 84-30 vote. Soon afterwards, a crowd of protesters tried to break the metal barriers near the building.

"The protests expanded after nightfall, with thousands of demonstrators marching to Heroes Square about two kilometers from the parliament and blocking off the streets that converge on the square." (AP)



illustration 6 - In the center of Tbilisi, demonstrators wave Georgian national flags during an opposition protest against "the Russian law" (source: [France24](#))

The British band 'Massive Attack' cancelled their show which would have been held on 28 July in protest of the “government’s attack on basic human rights”.

"In late April, the Shame Movement, a local CSO, wrote to Massive Attack, urging them to acknowledge the “serious and alarming political context” in which their event would take place.

In its [letter](#), the Shame movement cited the Georgian government’s “massive attack” on “Georgia’s civil society, independent media, socially vulnerable groups, LGBTQIA+ community, women, ethnic, religious, and other minorities.”

“Your upcoming performance at the Black Sea Arena – a venue constructed by Ivanishvili and now funded by the state – risks being manipulated as part of the Georgian Dream’s pre-election tactics to divert public attention from pressing issues and obscure these critical concerns during the electoral period,” the Shame movement’s letter to Massive Attack read, adding: “Knowing that Massive Attack champions justice, freedom of expression, civil activism, and LGBTQ+ rights, we ask you to familiarise yourselves with the alarming political climate in Georgia.” ([Euronews](#))

Authors Note: I hope that the protests will be successful in the long-run and that the Georgian youth achieve their goals. Hence I fully support their protests against this bill and the fight for a democratic future. I'm worried, however, how the Georgian government will respond over the next weeks and months and how far they are willing to go to enact this law. However, perhaps more could be achieved - at least regarding the awareness - if there was an international democratically-minded youth organization (in my instance: between Germany and Georgia). Simultaneously serving as a place for cultural exchange. There are likely already structures that could serve as a foundation for this (e.g. the [Goethe Institut](#)).

As for South Ossetia, in 1995 autonomy proposals were rejected:

"On 29 March 1994, the OSCE’s Permanent Council shifted the focus of the Mission’s mandate to mediating in the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict.¹¹ In May 1994, the OSCE Mission’s mediation activities made it possible to bring representatives of the Georgian and the South Ossetian conflict parties to the negotiating table for the first time.¹² The Mission presented a first draft plan for the future status of South Ossetia as early as September. This proposal, which envisaged granting South Ossetia territorial autonomy within the federal structure of the Georgian state, was, however, rejected by the South Ossetian side. In the spring of 1995, the Mission, with the support of the Russian Federation, produced a new paper on the federal distribution of powers, but this was also rejected by the South Ossetian representatives." (p. 6-7, The Georgian-South Ossetian Conflict)

Given the current situation I doubt anything will change, given the deadlock that already existed 29 years ago. As I have no expertise on this issue either, on Abkhazi too, there's no point in discussing it either. Unfortunately, I don't know any Georgians, Ossetians or Abkhazians nor any experts so for now that's all I can offer.

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Consolidated text: Association Agreement between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their Member States, of the one part, and Georgia, of the other part

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02014A0830%2802%29-20230306>

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<https://www.goethe.de/ins/ge/de/ueb.html>

(Published: June 24th, 2024 at 1:35 pm /13:35 Uhr)

Baroque's Rant: Germany's Hysteria

Note: I'm really angry while writing this, which means I'll use swear words. My disappointment is immeasurable and I, as a German, want that everyone knows how I feel about this. It's not just Germany's future, but also the future of Europe and the generations that come after us. What happened today was the last straw. At the end I'll make policy proposals, in German though.



illustration 7 - My current mood, symbolized (source: [Pixabay](#))

Cause

The following news, here an excerpt, is the root of my immeasurable disappointment and anger: *"Germany shares more than 3,700-kilometer-long (2,300 miles) of land border with Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Switzerland, Austria, the Czech Republic and Poland. **All are fellow members of the Schengen Zone, within which there are usually no restrictions and checks on travel.** The controls start from next Monday and are to initially set to last for six months."* (source: [Deutsche Welle](#))

The cheap excuse made by our Minister of the Interior, Nancy Faeser, is just embarrassing. **This is not about solving a problem. That's political actionism aimed at a domestic audience who has been pushed to believe an artificially overblown refugee crisis.** If the traffic coalition and the CDU/CSU truly believe they'll achieve anything else besides strengthening the far-right and Putin-loving AfD, then they are completely delusional.

Hate, Agitation and Disinformation

Unfortunately, this development has been going on for a while (and not just in Germany) where the democratic parties focus on the fetishized problems of the far right which are overblown on purpose and portrayed impossible to solve with the only way out being isolationism. Xenophobia is on the rise and the meeting in Potsdam in late-2023, where high ranking AfD officials met with other far-right figures discussing the deportation of all Germans with an immigration background too (around 20 Million people), has shown what their true plan is if they ever get in power. After it was revealed by the investigative journalists at the Correctiv, massive nationwide protests followed. Rightfully so!

The far-right aims to make it an eternal problem that cannot be solved, so that they can stay in power and rule as they deem fit. The constitution (and with it the rule of law), human rights and democracy mean nothing to them.

If the Supreme Court is in their way, they'll circumvent or weaken it by any means necessary. Anything besides their fetishized problems become unimportant, leaving the country to decay internally. First they target the weak and then everyone else suffers. If civil society is in their way, they'll find ways to corrode and destroy it - atomize society with only individuals and interests. As Putin already demonstrates in Russia.

Of course, the hatred, agitation and disinformation on the far-right continued - especially on TikTok and the other political parties didn't really have an answer. So far, so bad.

The failure on the social media front was accompanied by the moronic strategy of Friedrich Merz (CDU) and Markus Söder (CSU) to get in on the bashing of die Grünen which hasn't stopped to this day (Merz called them the 'main opponent' and Söder refused to work together with them in 2023/24, but they've been quiet for quite some time after the Reichsbürger coup was thwarted in 2022 and those responsible for it arrested).

Next to the bashing which was based on baseless claims and disinformation, the Union (as CDU/CSU are also called in the parliament) decided to appear tougher on immigration and the welfare state by lying about the Bürgergeld (a constitutionally protected living wage not just for unemployed but also those in the lower class). After all, the state parliament elections in Thuringia and Saxony were next. To no one's surprise, the voters decided to vote for the original rather than the poor copy which is why we now have a blocking minority in Thuringia (ca. 33%) and a dangerously high AfD in Saxony with 30%.

Reminder: in both federal states, the regional parties of the AfD are confirmed right-wing extremist parties with anti-democratic goals by the Verfassungsschutz (Office for the Protection of the Constitution). Hell, [Joachim Stamp from the FDP](#) (part of the traffic light coalition and migration agreements commissioner) argued for the god damn Rwanda policy of the Tories which deserves to be thrown into the garbage bin of inhumane ideas.

The FDP is no foreigner to such inhumane and awful ideas either. It's abhorrent!

And what did the CDU and CSU didn't do?

They refused to reflect on their role during the 16 years they were in the government.

Blamed the traffic light coalition, and especially die Grünen, for problems that have existed

and worsened during their own tenures. **Instead of arguing for a strong welfare state that leaves no one behind (because that's what our founding fathers and mothers with the German Basic Law had in mind as well) and climate policies to make up for their delay in the past and that of the current government (abolition of the sector targets by the traffic light coalition), both didn't even bother to think about it for a day.**

We have plenty of problems with digitization, our infrastructure (perhaps you have visited Germany during the European Championship and witnessed first-hand the desolate condition our once proud railway system finds itself in), education, environment, climate policies, the welfare state, immigration (by that I mean, for instance, the lack of language courses, the enorm obstacles to citizenship and recognizing professions from abroad) and many other issues which are in dire need of reform and repair.

So, here we fucking are! The European Union, which not only made Europe as a whole stronger but also Germany, is stabbed in the back by the government with support of the conservative opposition. And the far-right AfD laughs in their sleeve that they succeeded with their agitation, hate and disinformation. **Instead of looking for humane and transnational solutions, the easy chauvinistic way was chosen with the foolish hope anything will change.** If the forces of inhumanity emerge victorious within the democratic parties themselves, then everyone loses - especially our democracy.

Democracy is slow, and that's good because all voices - also of the marginalized - deserve to be heard and conflict is natural - it just needs to be constructive and in good faith.

Reforms will take time and results won't always show within four years, but the steady transformation ensures that there'll be a better future for everyone.

Civil Rights in Germany cannot be changed in their essence, and yes, the right to asylum is part of it. Hence international cooperation is essential. These rights are the foundation of our country - Article 1 (the most important) to Article 19. In case our politicians and conservative parties have forgotten about it, here's the link to our Basic Law:

https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_gg/englisch_gg.html

Human Rights are not given, they are not earned and they cannot be revoked. As soon as you are born, these rights are your rights. Your government may claim otherwise, but they'll always remain in the wrong. It's not a 'cultural thing' either, as countless peoples have experienced cruelties and atrocities at the hands of colonialists and imperialists.

It is the simple statement that all are to be treated equally with dignity.

It's long overdue to end this race to complete inhumanity!

There are solutions to the problems we face and the answers are anything but simple, the overburdened municipalities need to be listened to and supported.

While the answers may not be simple, the German people are perfectly capable of understanding what needs to be done if the politicians finally speak clearly without using scapegoats (Robert Habeck being a positive example). **We are a civil society! These problems can be solved democratically, humanely and with our European and international partners.** No solo actions by our country, period.

Proposals/Vorschläge

Hier ein paar Vorschläge was wir stattdessen tun sollten.

- **Tempolimit 130 km/h bundesweit** - reduziert Unfälle und damit auch Tode und Verletzte, weniger Lärm, weniger Co2-Emissionen und 64% der Deutschen sind sogar dafür (Quelle: [Statista](#)). Ist leicht und schnell umgesetzt, nützt allen.
- **Vermögenssteuer** - verringert die soziale Ungleichheit z. B. auch bei der Bekämpfung der allgemeinen Armut (Kinder- und Altersarmut), führt zu mehr staatlichen Einnahmen mit **bis zu €20 Milliarden jährlich mehr** im Haushalt, hilft bei der Transformation (von der Agrarpolitik bis zur Energiewende) und tut niemanden außer den Reichen weh.

*"Die untere Hälfte der Bevölkerung hat nach Daten des Deutschen Instituts für Wirtschaftsforschung keine nennenswerten Vermögen. **Dagegen besitzen die reichsten 10 Prozent rund zwei Drittel des gesamten Privatvermögens, das reichste Prozent der Bevölkerung bis zu 35 Prozent und allein die reichsten 0,1 Prozent der Bevölkerung verfügen über bis zu 20 Prozent.** Zudem halten vor allem Reiche jene Vermögensarten, die in den vergangenen Jahren die höchsten Renditen abgeworfen haben, etwa Aktien, Immobilien und Betriebsvermögen. Hinzu kommen erhebliche finanzielle Herausforderungen an den Staat. So müssen nicht nur die Milliardenkredite, die in den vergangenen Jahren zur Bewältigung der multiplen Krisen aufgenommen wurden, bedient werden. Zusätzlich besteht riesiger Investitionsbedarf, um eine erfolgreiche sozial-ökologische Transformation zu ermöglichen."* (Quelle: [verdi](#))

- **Umweltpolitik** - Umweltschutz heißt den Schutz unserer natürlichen Lebensgrundlagen und ja, auch unserer Heimat mit ihrer Flora und Fauna damit auch zukünftige Generationen nicht nur unsere derzeitige sondern vielleicht eine höhere Biodiversität genießen können während sie durch den Wald spazieren gehen.
Das heißt konkret: wir brauchen wieder Sektorenziele. Diese sind notwendig zum Erreichen, da ein Ausgleich der verschiedenen Sektoren das Klima nicht im geringsten interessiert. Volker Wissing's Rücktritt lege ich damit der Ampel-Koalition aufdringlich nahe, am besten noch heute ohne viel Theater.
Auf der lokalen Ebene sollten Umweltverbände (wie Nabu) und Bauern mehr Gestaltungsmöglichkeiten bekommen. Dezentralisierung ist angesagt und weniger Bürokratie (am besten die Betroffenen fragen was sie ändern würden um eine Idee zu kriegen was sie plagt - als eine allgemeine Annäherung).
Dann, wie gesagt, der Ausbau der erneuerbaren Energien woran sich auch die Bürger und Bürgerinnen direkt beteiligen können und nicht auf ein auswärtiges Unternehmen warten müssen (siehe [Wildpoldsried](#)).
- **Immigration** - wir brauchen mehr Sprachkurse, sollten aber auch mit ehrenamtlich-engagierten arbeiten und diese unterstützen (vor allem der Staat kann auch hier strukturell fördern, da muslimische und jüdische Mitmenschen bereits 2015 und 2022 geholfen haben -> **Buchempfehlung:** Flucht und Engagement - Jüdische und muslimische Perspektiven, Hentrich & Hentrich Verlag) und den Deutschen mit Migrationshintergrund zuhören um Probleme schneller identifizieren und lösen zu können. Auf diese Weise wird

unsere Zivilgesellschaft gestärkt und im Endeffekt auch unsere Demokratie, da mehr Menschen miteinander verbunden werden. Vereine und Veranstaltungen spielen auch eine Schlüsselrolle beim Verbinden von Menschen.

Radikalisierungsprozesse, so meine Hoffnung, können dadurch ebenfalls verhindert werden wenn die Gesellschaft als ganzes zusammenarbeitet und zusammenhält und Taten wie in Solingen sich nicht mehr wiederholen.

Hier will ich auch die [Weltmigrationsorganisation](#) vorstellen wie sie bei der Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung Thema war:

"Darüber hinaus hat das internationale Meinungsforschungsinstitut Gallup im Zuge einer weltweiten Umfrage ermittelt, dass weitere 630 Millionen auswandern würden, hätten sie die Möglichkeit dazu. Vorschläge zur Gründung einer "Weltmigrationsorganisation", die eine globale Führungsfunktion darin übernehmen könnte, dem wachsenden Migrationsdruck zu begegnen und die komplexen Entwicklungs-, Sicherheits- und humanitären Aspekte von Migrationsprozessen zu koordinieren, stießen bislang auf wenig Resonanz."

Anstatt die Grenzen zu schließen und damit die Wünsche der rechtsextremen AfD zu erfüllen, sollte die Ampelkoalition (d.h. alle Parteien darin) und die CDU/CSU an dieser Vision arbeiten. Zuerst in der EU mit Ländern die daran interessiert sind eine menschenfreundliche Organisation dieser Art aufzubauen und dann später eine Ausweitung. Es wird lang und viele Diskussionen geben, aber wir behalten unsere Menschlichkeit und unser Grundrechte bleiben im Wesen unangetastet wie es vorhergesehen war. **Demokratie und Rechtsstaat vor Willkür und Nationalismus.**

- **Flächendeckende Glasfaser und Mobilfunknetz** Ausstattung (4G mindestens) damit auch Unternehmen bzw. Start-Ups sich im ländlichen Raum niederlassen können und damit ehemals verlassenere Regionen wiederbelebt werden. Bundesweit ohne Lücke! Das Internet ist unverzichtbar geworden und ein gutes Mobilfunknetz, wo immer man auch ist, notwendig für die Menschen (z. B. Anrufe die nicht plötzlich wegen eines Funklochs dann abgebrochen werden -> von Geschäfts- bis Privatanruf).

Benutzte Quellen für diesen Abschnitt

Sollte aus ihrer Sicht ein Tempolimit von 130 km/h auf deutschen Autobahnen umgesetzt werden?

<https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/258757/umfrage/umfrage-zum-tempolimit-auf-autobahnen/>

Vermögenssteuer? Brauchen wir!

<https://www.verdi.de/themen/politik-wirtschaft/++co++ee49a8ae-fed7-11ed-9c41-001a4a16012a>

Gemeinde Wildpoldsried: Das Energiedorf im Allgäu

<https://www.allgaeu-klimaschutz.de/wildpoldsried.html>

Migration

<https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/izpb/regieren-jenseits-des-nationalstaates-325/204691/migration/?p=0>

Schlussworte

Dass es Probleme gab und gibt bezüglich Immigration und Flucht ist nichts neues, das muss gesellschaftlich diskutiert werden und in einem demokratischen System sind auch hitzige Debatten natürlich. Am Ende, jedoch, sollten wir uns immer von unseren Grundrechten und Menschenrechten leiten lassen. Wir dürfen unsere Augen nicht vor der Komplexität verschließen, nur weil es leichter ist die Grenzen zu schließen als zu diskutieren. Am Ende, wenn nur einfache Scheinlösungen an die Wand geworfen werden, werden wir nämlich alles zerstört haben und die kaputten Sachen bleiben unrepariert.

Die AfD wird dann das Wrack Deutschland am Ende komplett ausnehmen, was auch immer davon dann noch übrig ist wenn dieser dunkle Pfad weiter beschritten wird.

Ungarn zeigt mit seiner illiberal-gewordenen Demokratie, Vetternwirtschaft-geplagten Wirtschaft und chauvinistisch-aufgeladenen und staatshörigen Medien was uns im schlimmsten Fall bevorsteht. Viktor Orban und seine Clique haben es zu verschulden.

Noch können wir Wenden und diesen Kurs aufhalten, aber nicht mehr lang.

Es liegt allein an uns, denn in uns allein liegt die Kraft zum Wandel.

(Published: September 9th, 2024 at 8:12 pm/20:15 Uhr)

Science News #022

In Today's Science News, we learn about the risk of global water scarcity being greater than previously thought and the discovery of six likely rogue worlds made by the James Webb Space Telescope. However, first we learn about water scarcity and dehydration.



illustration 8 - Glass of Water with Ice Cubes by ColiN00B ([Pixabay](#))

Water Scarcity and Dehydration

"[A]round [1.1 billion people lack access to safe drinking water](#) around the world, and a total of [2.7 billion find water difficult](#) to access for at least one month of the year." ([BBC](#))

For 2.4 billion people inadequate sanitation is also a problem, leading to the exposure of water-born illnesses such as cholera and typhoid fever. And each year, two million people - mostly of whom are children - die from diarrheal diseases alone.

"By 2025, two-thirds of the world's population may face water shortages. And ecosystems around the world will suffer even more." ([WWF](#))

It's a dire situation, there's no denying that and the climate crisis will only worsen it if we do not develop strategies to mitigate the damage that has already been done and prevent worse from happening by drastically reducing our Co2-emissions.

Now to the second point to this unusual start of Science News: Dehydration.

The human body consists between 60-70% of water - it is essential to our survival.

The BBC article above mentions three stages of dehydration, here summarized:

- **Stage 1:** 2% of body weight is lost
 - Kidneys send less water to the bladder -> darkened urine
 - Less sweat -> body temperature increases
 - Blood becomes thicker and sluggish
 - Heart rate increases to maintain oxygen levels
- **Stage 2:** 4% of body weight is lost
 - Risk of overheating increases
 - Blood pressure drops, fainting can occur
 - Kidney try to compensate by retaining water -> less urination
 - Cells shrink in size as water moves to the bloodstream
- **Stage 3:** 7% of body weight is lost
 - Body troubles to maintain blood pressure
 - Blood flow to non-vital organs like kidneys and gut is slowed, which causes damage
 - Kidneys don't filter blood -> cellular waste quickly builds up

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201016-why-we-cant-survive-without-water>

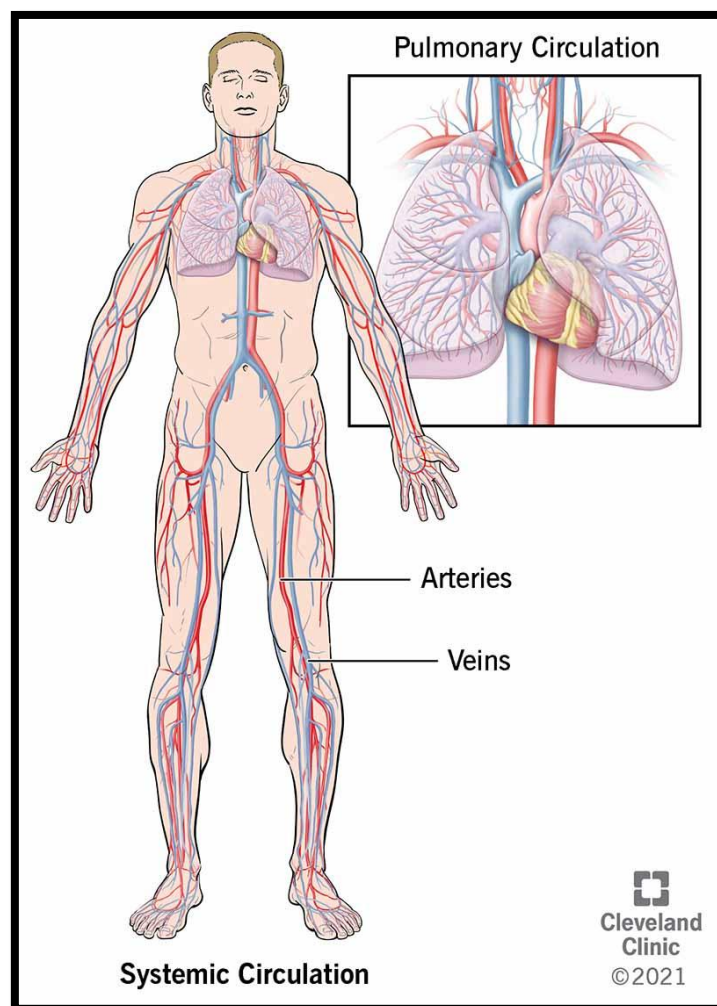


illustration 9 - Our cardiovascular system (source: Cleveland Clinic)

Cardiovascular System:

<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/body/21833-cardiovascular-system>

Article 1: The risk of global water scarcity is greater when accounting for the origin of rain

SD-Date: September 2, 2024

Et-Date: September 7, 2024

ScienceDaily-Summary: *"Securing the world's water supply is one of the greatest challenges of our time. Researchers are now presenting an alternative method for quantifying the global risk of water scarcity. Results indicate higher risks to water supply than previously expected if accounting for the environmental conditions and governability where rain is produced."*

Open-Access: <https://www.nature.com/articles/s44221-024-00291-w>

Method of Research

When we think of the global water supply, the common idea is rain falling on the earth's surface and then stored in aquifers, lakes, and rivers. Usually, this is used to assess water security and the risk of water scarcity. The new study, which was published in *Nature Water*, focuses on where the water supply originates from and how governance and environmental conditions present upwind affect the water risks.

Upstream perspective

Used when a lake or river is shared between different countries or authorities.

As the name already implies, the conditions *'in the direction upriver from the water body'* matter and therefore the assessments and regulations mainly applied here.

Upwind perspective

This perspective is introduced by the team of this research paper.

It takes into account the areas *'where evaporated water is transported before ending up as rain'*. The term for this area, which can cover large areas of the earth's surface, is called precipitationshed.

The research team around Fernando Jaramillo (associate professor in physical geography at [Stockholm University](#)) examined 379 hydrological basins worldwide.

As pointed out in the study (see Open-Access), 40% of the continental rain originates in evaporation from land. In some regions of Eurasia, South America and Africa it increases to 80-90%. Moreover: Irrigation, for instance, increases the precipitation downwind while deforestation has the opposite effect.

Findings

- A very high risk face 32,900 km³/year of water requirements worldwide
- This is a 50% increase of the previous 20,500 km³/year

Consequences

Evaporation from plants play an important role to the availability of water downwind. Meaning that areas where deforestation and agricultural development are predominant, the amount of moisture vegetation provides may decrease which in turn reduces rainfall and increases the risk to water security.

It depends from country to country, of course.

The Philippines receives most of its water from the sea, so a change of land-use poses very little risk to water security.



illustration 10 - Location of the Philippines (source: [Wikipedia](#))

Many land-locked countries are more vulnerable to water security.

In Niger, the moisture for rainfall comes primarily from neighbouring countries such as Nigeria and Ghana. In other words: a change of land-use means higher risks.



illustration 11 - Location of Niger (source: [Wikipedia](#))

Water safety is thus affected by political factors: regulations and environmental management in areas where moisture first evaporates.

"For instance, the Congo River basin, heavily reliant on moisture from neighboring countries with low environmental performance and governance according to global indicators, faces considerable risks due to potential deforestation and unregulated land use changes in neighboring areas," says Lan Wang-Erlandsson, researcher at the Stockholm Resilience Centre at Stockholm University and co-author of the study. (ScienceDaily)

To summarize: there exists an interdependence between countries. We should therefore not only account for how one's own country manages water resources, but also how the neighbours do it. International cooperation is essential: *"We hope that the findings of this study can help identify where and to whom cooperation strategies and efforts can be directed to mitigate the causes of water-related tensions, including atmospheric water flows in transboundary decision-making and water governance frameworks. **We stress the need for***

international cooperation to effectively manage upwind moisture sources" - Fernando Jaramillo

Sources

Upwind moisture supply increases risk to water security

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s44221-024-00291-w>

The risk of global water scarcity is greater when accounting for the origin of rain

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/09/240902111759.htm>

Article 2: Six new rogue worlds: Star birth clues

SD-Date: August 27, 2024

Et-Date: September 8, 2024

ScienceDaily-Summary: "The James Webb Space Telescope [JWST] has spotted six likely rogue worlds -- objects with planet-like masses but untethered from any star's gravity -- including the lightest ever identified with a dusty disk around it. The elusive objects offer new evidence that the same cosmic processes that give birth to stars may also play a common role in making objects only slightly bigger than Jupiter."

Paper can be Accessed: <https://arxiv.org/abs/2408.12639>

It has been accepted for publication in *The Astronomical Journal*.

Background

Before we move on to the study, let's re-visit how stars and planets are formed.

Stars form through the contraction of a cloud of gas and dust.

The brighter and more illuminous a star is, the shorter its lifespan.

(Picture on the next page)

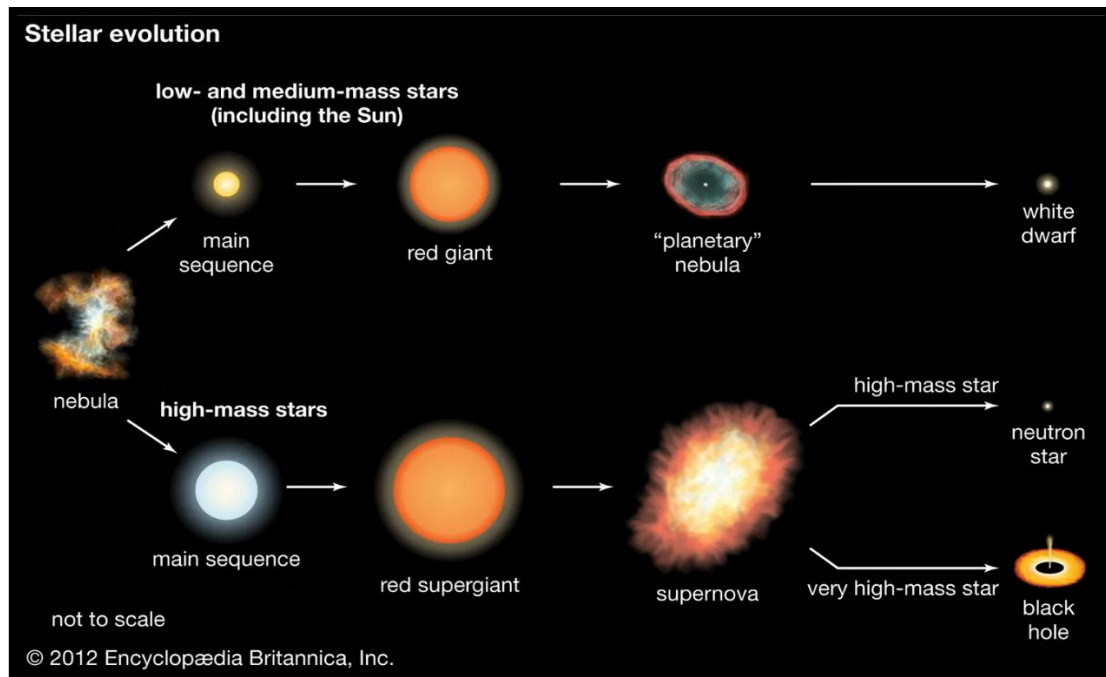


illustration 12 - How stars are formed, only the contraction is missing (source: [Encyclopaedia Britannica](#))

Generally, planets form in disks of gas and dust around young stars.

Planets with a solid surface usually form closer to the star, gas planets outside.

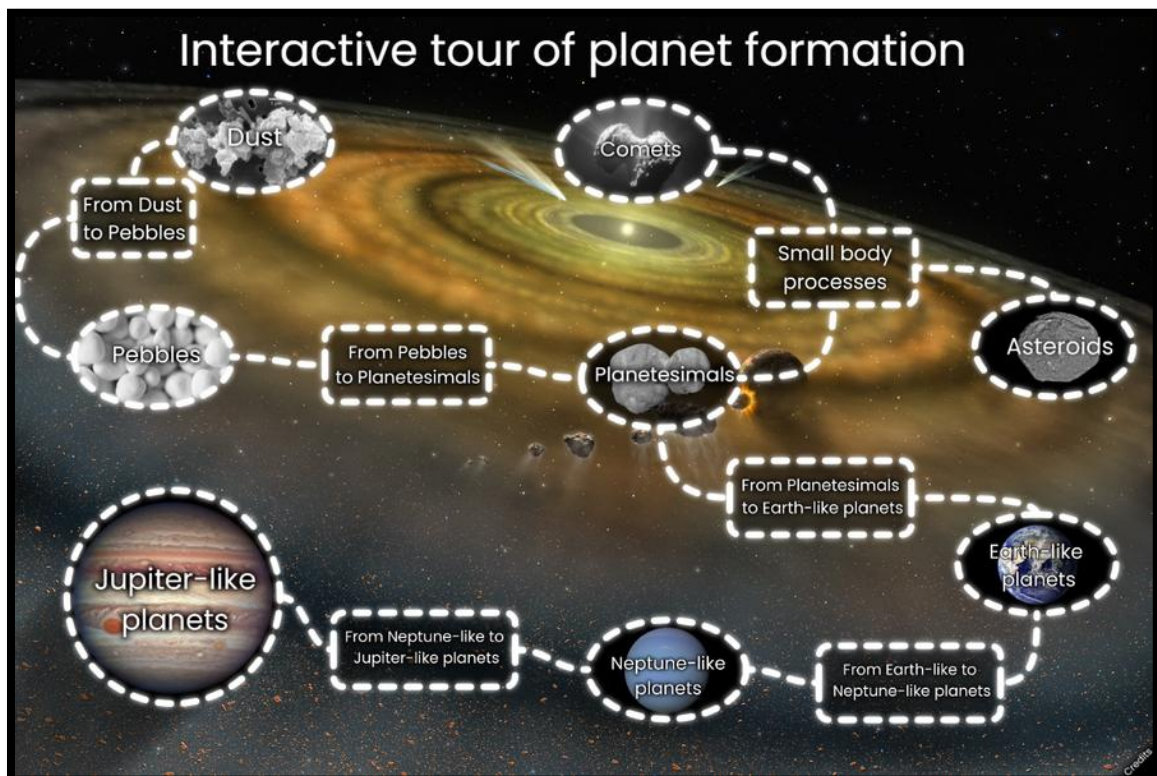


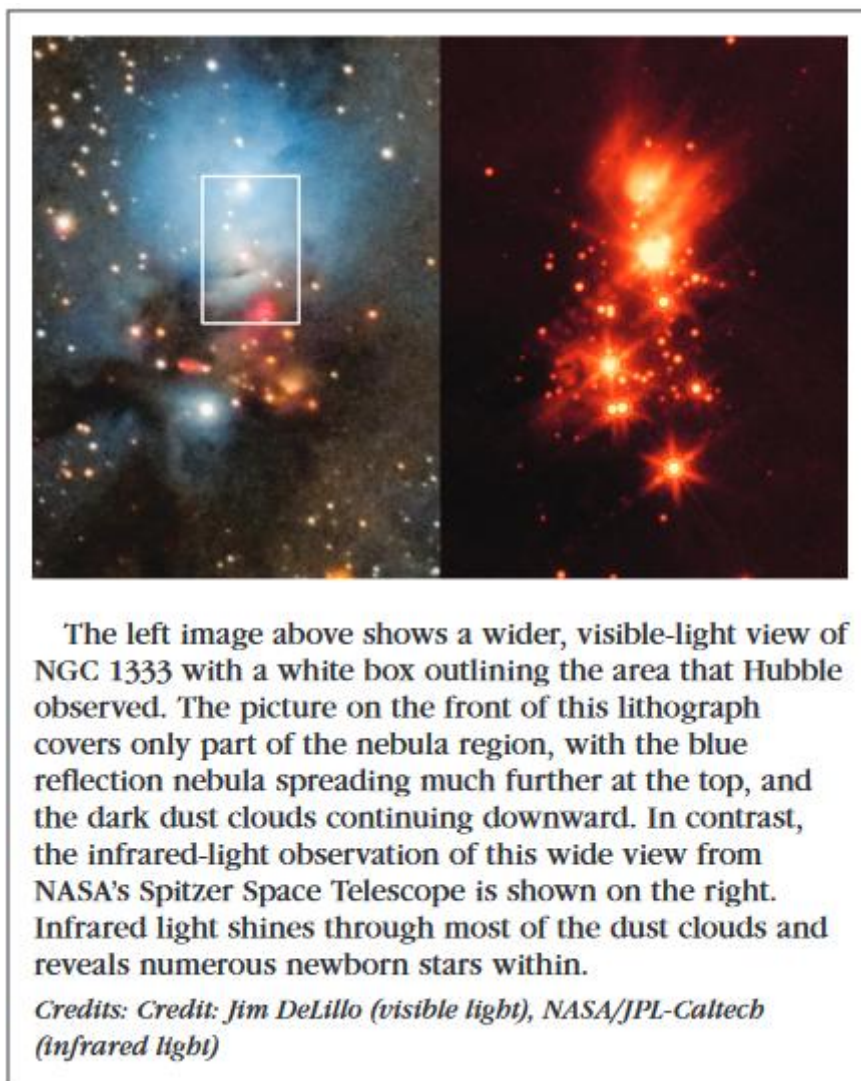
illustration 13 - How planets are formed (source: [Technische Universität Braunschweig](#))
Don't ask me about the interactive tour, I think it may have loaded incorrectly in my case.

Jupiter-sized planets can become hot Jupiters which orbit their star closely, as **TIC 241249530 b** is currently observed to turn into: *"The new planet, which astronomers labeled TIC 241249530 b, orbits a star that is about 1,100 light-years from Earth. The planet circles its star in a highly "eccentric" orbit, meaning that it comes extremely close to the star before slinging far out, then doubling back, in a narrow, elliptical circuit. **If the planet was part of our solar system, it would come 10 times closer to the sun than Mercury, before hurtling out, just past Earth, then back around.** By the scientists' estimates, the planet's stretched-out orbit has the highest eccentricity of any planet detected to date."* ([MIT News](#))

It will take about one billion years until the planet migrates to a much tighter, circular orbit. Currently, it takes 167 days for the planet to revolve around the star once.

Discovery

The star-forming cluster **NGC 1333** was surveyed by the **James Webb Space Telescope**. This young nebula is about 960 light-years away and on the edge of the Perseus molecular cloud. It wasn't the first time that this nebula has been surveyed, the **Hubble Telescope** observed it with visible light and the **Spitzer Space Telescope** in infrared-light.



Thanks to the JWST, we were now able to search for even the faintest members of this nebula due to its extremely sensitivity at infrared wavelengths! And here is it where we also learn that gas giants can form differently. For this survey the **Near Infrared Imager and Slitless Spectrograph** (NIRISS) instrument of the JWST was used.

Findings

The lead author of this study was Adam Langeveld who works as an astrophysicist at the Johns Hopkins University, many more were involved in this study.

- 6 gas giants with masses 5-10 times bigger than Jupiter's, found to have grown *'from a process that would generally produce stars and brown dwarfs'*
- No objects lower than 5 Jupiter masses were found, despite JWST having instruments which could detect them -> strong indication for a threshold: lighter stellar objects may form like planets do
- Lightest object of the 6 was estimated to have the mass of 5 Jupiters
-> virtually certain the presence of a dust disk means it formed like a star
- 19 brown dwarfs (failed stars) were re-analyzed
- **Rare finding:** a newly discovered brown dwarf had a planetary-mass companion
- The masses of these rogue planets overlap with gas giants and brown dwarfs, thus blurring classification -> they make up 10% of the celestial bodies in the cluster

More might be published on this, because the group was rewarded time on the JWST:
"In the coming months, the team will study more of the faint objects' atmospheres and compare them to heavier brown dwarfs and gas giant planets. They have also been awarded time on the Webb telescope to study similar objects with dusty disks to explore the possibility of forming mini planetary systems resembling Jupiter's and Saturn's numerous moons."
(ScienceDaily)

As it is indicated above, rogue planets either form like stars in the beginning but lack the mass for nuclear fusion or they were disks of gas and dust around stars which merged into planet-like orbits and were later ejected from their star system.

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NGC 1333 (PDF-file, 2 pages)

<https://science.nasa.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/hubble-ngc1333-litho.pdf>

Six new rogue worlds: Star birth clues

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/08/240827104959.htm>

(Published: September 13th, 2024 at 3:31 pm/15:31 Uhr)

On the US-Election

Tomorrow, on [November the 5th](#), the US presidential election will take place. Here are my two cents on this crucial election.



illustration 15 - A house with a US-flag painted on its wall (source: [Pixabay](#))

To Hell with Donald J. Trump (and Elon Musk)

I won't beat around the bush this time around, we have seen **the disaster duo** that are Trump and Musk. Both plan to [crash the economy](#) through **extreme austerity** measures, one being to **cut the federal budget by 1/3rd** (around 30%). **Instead of taxing the wealthy**, which is unsurprising for two billionaires - at least on paper -, **to reduce national debt and improve the standard of living** of the lower class and having sustainable growth by increasing the living wage **both seek to make the lives of millions of Americans even harder**. Similar to the far-right Javier Milei whose policies are praised within the GOP (the poverty rate in Argentina skyrocketed to over 50% in the first six months).

Trump made it repeatedly clear that he loves the **Gilded Age** (1870s-1900s) and with it the extreme social inequalities of the time. For those who are not familiar with this part of US-American history, here a quick summary by [Investopedia](#):

(see next page)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The Gilded Age lasted from the late 1800s to the early 1900s and was characterized by economic growth for the wealthy and extreme poverty for the working classes.
- A societal shift from agriculture to industry resulted in a movement to the cities for some and westward migration for others.
- The beginning of organized labor, investigative journalism, and progressive ideologies began to spell the end of the Gilded Age and its rigid class structure.
- The Gilded Age marked the beginning of industrialization in America—a time of innovation, transportation growth, and full employment. It was also a time of economic devastation and dangerous working conditions for labor.

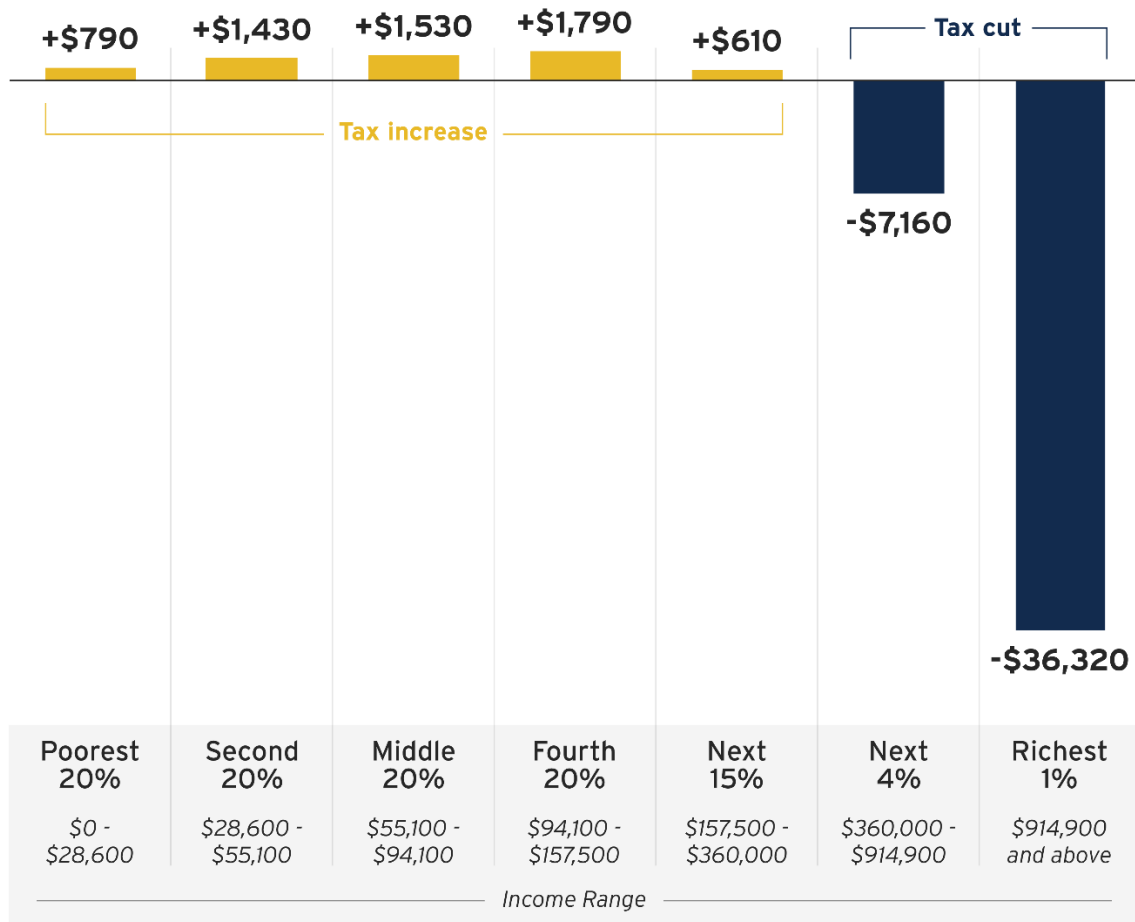
Given that Trump openly advocates for corruption by promising to appoint Musk as an overseer of government agencies, it'd only be a matter of time before **robber barons** haunt the US again (technically they already do, considering that Jeff Bezos, Elon Musk and Co. do not care about worker rights and working conditions - different excuses, same result).

Trump's tax plans don't bode well for 95% of the US-Americans, either.

(next page)

Trump Proposals Cut Taxes for the Richest 5 Percent, Raise Taxes for Other Groups

Average tax change by income group in 2026



Source: Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, October 2024

Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy | [ITEP.org](https://itep.org)

illustration 16 - Impact of Donald Trump's proposed tax cuts (source: [A Distributional Analysis of Donald Trump's Tax Plan](#))

Elon Musk uses his purchased social media platform, formerly known as Twitter, as a propaganda machine to help Trump's cause. Not to mention his bribes to "motivate" voters by signing a petition, in return for a chance to win one million dollars (an illegal lottery). A billionaire helping another billionaire to destroy a democracy entirely.

Musk turned Twitter, which was toxic before but at least moderated, into a cesspool of racism, antisemitism and disinformation (also the reason why I left in December 2022).

Project 2025

It doesn't stop with dreadful economic policies, now we come to the pet project of the Republicans: Project 2025. **From abortion to climate policies, this program would be a nightmare if implemented.** Some Americans may be tired of hearing it, but the democracy of the US - as flawed as it currently is - is still under assault. The far-right successfully mainstreamed their ideology in the GOP, it took them three decades and Trump's election in 2016 exacerbated the authoritarian trends. So, prepare for a long troublesome period.

Government: The authors and supporters of Project 2025 seek to place the Department of Justice, currently an independent agency, under direct presidential control. **The Job protection of thousands of government employees is to be eliminated, they'd get replaced by political appointees (in other words: sycophants).** Then there are other federal agencies that would undergo drastic changes, such as the FBI that was described as a 'bloated, arrogant, increasingly lawless organization'. Lastly, they intend to completely eliminate the Department of Education.

Abortion and family: Reversing [Roe vs Wade](#) (Dec 13, 1971 – Jan 22, 1973), while a major victory for the reactionary right in the US, was only the beginning. **Next to abolishing the right to abortion (thus denying essential healthcare), they propose the withdraw the abortion pill [mifepristone](#) from the market and use existing but little-enforced laws to stop postal delivery of the drug.** The Projecters (a term I now use for the authors, supporters and sympathizers of Project 2025) seek to bolster data collection of abortions. Late-term abortions are to be banned. The Department of Health and Human Services should only maintain a traditional definition of marriage and family.

Reasons for Late-Term Abortions (Excerpt)

Source: [The reasons for termination of pregnancy in the third trimester](#)

Published: April 1999

Comment: For those interested why late-term abortions are carried out, here's a study that was conducted between 1986-1994 in the Maternite Port Royal University Hospital in Paris, France. 305 out of 956 terminations were third-semester.

Results: One hundred and thirteen (37%) third trimester terminations of pregnancy were associated with false negative resulted from the results of earlier screening tests. In 15 terminations (5%), the decision was postponed, although the poor fetal prognosis was established earlier. In 55 (18%) the diagnosis was not possible earlier than the third trimester, and in 122 (40%) the diagnosis was possible earlier but the poor prognosis for the fetus was not established until the third trimester. Maternal morbidity due to termination of pregnancy was similar in the second and third trimester.

Conclusion: One-third of late terminations of pregnancy could have been avoided by more efficient screening in the second trimester. **However, because fetal prognosis is not always clear when a malformation is diagnosed, postponing the decision until fetal development allows more thorough evaluation and may avoid unnecessary termination of pregnancy in the second trimester.** This could be the main beneficial aspect of not setting a limit to the gestational age for performing termination of pregnancy.

Immigration: Unsurprisingly, the Projecters want to increase the funding for a wall on the US-Mexican border. The Department of Homeland Security is to be dismantled and combined with other immigration enforcement units in other agencies. Furthermore, they seek to abolish visa categories for **victims of crime and human trafficking**. Those who want fast-tracked applications have to pay a premium.

Climate and Economy: Another goal of the Projecters is to abandon renewable energy entirely and return to a fossil fuel-based economy. Consequently, there would be no incentive for carbon reduction thus worsening the climate crisis **which threatens our natural basis of existence** (especially agriculture and our fresh water supply). They want to actively ruin the future of the future generations for short-term profits, **the Oil and Gas industry deserves to be blamed here as well** because [they knew about it since the 1970s](#) which is why they initiated the anti-science campaign. Culminating in what we not only see in the US, but also countries like Germany where the far-right AfD represents the same.

On free trade the authors are divided: they are indecisive about whether the next president should support free trade or increase barriers to imports. They do, however, agree on cutting corporate and income taxes further, abolishing the Federal Reserve and even take into consideration to return to the [Gold Standard](#).

Tech and education: If Project 2025 were to be implemented, pornography would be banned and tech and telecom companies that allow access to it shut down. Over the past few years, we've also seen the buzzword "woke" being thrown around. So, expectedly, it also appears in the document where they disguise their authoritarianism and anti-Enlightenment as advocacy for '*school choice and parental control over schools*'.

When it comes to laws and federal regulations, they intend to eliminate a long list of terms in them such as '*sexual orientation*', '*gender equality*', '*abortion*' and '*reproductive rights*'. Programs in schools which promote diversity, equity and inclusion would be terminated.

Mind you: there's no such thing as a "woke ideology". If it ever had a meaning, it's long gone. **It serves - especially on the far-right - as a catch-all phrase for everything they oppose:** pluralism, parliamentarism, the LGBT community (esp. trans rights), women rights, worker rights (basically human rights), renewable energy, and so on.

Prior to the controversy, Project 2025 was backed by a \$22m (£17m) budget.

What happens if Trump loses the election?

Riots. Increase of hate crimes. Defeat denial (which groundwork has already been laid). However, it's also a chance to slowly drive back the reactionary forces through efforts on a state and local level by championing for issues like renewable energies (how it would benefit an individual, for instance a balcony power plant) and inclusivity and equity (that through merit and passion an individual regardless of social or racial background, gender or religion has a chance to get the profession they seek).

What happens if Trump wins the election?

Increase of hate crimes. Likely the complete erosion of American democracy (even though Trump and his campaign try to distance themselves from Project 2025, I don't trust them at all that they actually mean it - he has proven often enough that he loves dictators, said how he wants to be "dictator for one day" and use the military against dissidents).

Roll back of LGBT rights and further aggressions against the trans community on a legislative and public level (e.g. by spreading lies).

Impact Beyond the US

If Donald Trump were to be elected again, we would most likely see a further surge in the far-right across the globe. The Trump Administration would stop aid to Ukraine and, with other far-right Russian bootlicker parties in Europe, serve Ukraine on a silver plate to Vladimir Putin and allow the cultural genocide to occur. **Europe, especially the EU and NATO, would be on its own confronted with an imperialistic, war-mongering Russia that seeks to re-establish the Soviet Union through military force and hybrid warfare** - especially the latter, which includes the spread of disinformation, support of far-right parties and other pro-Putin forces, cyber-attacks on private companies, institutions and public facilities (like hospitals), acts of sabotage carried out by pro-Russian terrorists, propaganda on social media, etc.

The climate crisis would worsen due to the refusal to decrease Co2-emissions and poorer countries would suffer the most. **Even though we have the technology and measures to prevent the worst, the refusal of the biggest economy and military power to do what is right and just might result in more industrialized countries turning their back on combatting the climate crisis.** Us, and future generations, would needlessly suffer.

Instead of solving the looming immigration crisis due to climate change, the wealthy countries would prefer to seal off their borders (the EU is also at fault for yielding to far-right demands instead of going about it in a humane way, for instance by creating safe and regular refugee routes and establishing an international migration center for coordination).

After all, if the EU and the US do it, why shouldn't other countries follow suit?

In this imagined zero-sum situation, an illusion is fed that immigrants only take things away instead of realizing that the vast majority seek to be productive members of society.

Immigration may still be allowed to some extent, but the hostility towards immigrants prevents full integration and leads to two different realities. Their living standard may be better than in their home country, but their quality of life is worse due to isolation.

On Kamala Harris

It is evident by now whom I prefer. Policy-wise it isn't a 1:1 match and that isn't important.

I want that we still have a chance to combat the climate crisis, because even here in Germany I see conservative and economic-liberal politicians arguing more and more how we still would have time or that it is too much asked for. Without a doubt, the Merz, Lindner, Wagenknecht, Aiwanger and Söder would view it as a vital momentum if a party openly

talking about a fossil fuel-based economy would emerge victorious.

Harris would continue the transition to a green economy and ensure that more jobs are generated in this part of the energy sector where energy doesn't run out within a few lifetimes. Unlike Trump and his entourage, she is not anti-science.

Harris would not endanger the rule of law, and I know that bar is extremely low, but sadly this is how low it has sunk due to Trump. Democracy is more than fair and free elections, more than the rule of the majority - or at least it should be -. Democracy is participation in democratic processes (like citizen's groups and local politics), protecting the right of minorities and eventually achieving horizontal respect (that citizens not only tolerate but accept different religious, ethnic and sexual identities), a constructive public discourse, etc.

I don't know how much she'd achieve regarding LGBT issues and women rights, considering that Republicans and the Supreme Court will interfere as often as they can.

A further deterioration could be prevented, especially since the new president-elect wouldn't be one who spews hateful rhetoric. And that in itself is valuable.

I don't have much hope for the immigrants who seek a better life in the US, as the Democrats seem to follow on the harsher line - on the US-Mexican border.

Not much will change regarding the war in Gaza, but there's hope she's going to be a pain in the ass for Netanyahu and doesn't give him a free ride as Trump would do.

Regarding Ukraine, Harris would uphold the support for Ukraine and hopefully finally allow Ukrainians to strike within Russian territory - as it is already legally their right according to international law. Ukraine was attacked by an aggressor, this aggressor is Russia.

Putin's Russia doesn't have the seemingly infinite resources of Soviet Russia, they are very much finite and we might be closer to their depletion than we realize - especially by allowing counter-attacks on military and administrative bases within Russia.

In the long-term, NATO should finally become more independent to ensure better protection for the hopefully future NATO-member Ukraine. I think the US would also prefer to worry less about their allies and partners in Europe.

Lastly, and this is my political philosophy: we are in a political war against authoritarianism. In Ukraine we see what happens when the political war turns into a military war and history has shown us what dictators do if left largely unchallenged by the international community - democracies in particular.

Consequently, my primary focus is to protect democracies and I support political parties, movements, organizations and politicians who are like-minded. It is the foundation.

Only on this foundation the other goals can be achieved, such as strengthening the International Criminal Court, transparency in our democracies, facilitating participation in democratic processes, combatting wealth and income inequality, combatting the climate crisis, etc.

I know that American democracy is flawed, from gerrymandering to the power of large companies like Amazon and billionaires like the Koch Brothers. **It is extremely frustrating and very infuriating, and that's why I advocate for and am in support of efforts that go beyond**

local, state and federal elections. The problems that accumulated over the last four decades are large, but we do not have to reach the summit in one day with our current equipment. It won't be over once this election has been decided; the 30 years of GOP radicalization won't just disappear once Trump is gone; neither all the current problems that plague us. However, our starting position would be much better.

If Trump does emerge victorious, then we'll need strong individuals, communities, groups, organizations and political parties to first survive the onslaught and then re-emerge with perseverance. But it will be a lot more difficult, if not impossibly frustrating and angering.

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(Published: November 4th, 2024 at 11:33 pm/23:33 Uhr)

History of the Advent Calendar and More

In this blog entry we will learn about the origins of the Advent Calendar. Afterwards, I'll share the advent calendar I made for my Discord Server. It features poets and their poems and some interesting facts (all on one DIN A4 page) - it was quite a lot of fun. I'll elaborate on the poets, of course (short summaries of their biographies, that is).

For the facts, it was quite challenging to compromise enough information in it to make it interesting. Feel free to give feedback!

I hope that the poets whose poems I show here, as well as the interesting facts like about evolution or Speculaas, spark interest to dive deeper into these (or similar) topics. I'll link to the sources at the end of each "Türchen" (Little Door, as they are called in German).



illustration 17 - An Advent calendar with the nativity scene behind the 24th Little Door and the adoration of the shepherds behind the 25th. (Image source: [Wikipedia](#))

History of the Advent Calendar

Before we move on to the actual advent calendar, let's see how we've got here in the first place. Advent is latin and means "coming", it originates from Christian customs to prepare spiritually for Christmas. It's both for the celebration of the birth of Jesus Christ and the in preparation of the [Second Coming of Christ](#) (-> "*Early Christians believed the Advent to be imminent, and most Christian theologians since then have believed that the visible appearance of Jesus may occur at any moment and that Christians should be ever ready for it*").

It is uncertain, however, when Advent was observed for the first time. The Encyclopedia Britannica mentions sources which dates it to the 4th century CE "*when it was a period of preparation for the baptism of new Christians during [Epiphany](#) in January*". It was associated with Christmas by the time of [Middle Ages](#) (5th to 15th century).

Note: Most commercial advent calendars do not cover the entirety of the Advent season, because they usually begin on December 1. In Western churches, however, the Advent season begins on the Sunday nearest to November 30 (St. Andrew's Day).

As for the origin of the analogous Advent calendar: German Protestants were known for counting down the days until Christmas. In this case not a calendar with little doors, but through activities like lighting a candle, placing a straw in a Nativity crib, ticking walls or doors with chalk, or hanging a devotional image on the wall.

There's another story as well where a [Munich housewife](#) created the analogue calendar, because she was tired of "*having to answer endlessly when Christmas would come*".

But to keep it short, here a timeline:


- **Early 20th century:** Appearance of first commercially printed calendars.
- **1920s:** German publisher Gerhard Lang (1881-1974) added small doors with pictures behind it; other publishers included Bibel verses.
- **1939-1945:** The Nazi-party banned the printing of calendars with images due to paper rationing. Only a few publishers began printing traditional calendars again after the war, like the [Richard Sellmer Verlag](#) which produces them to this day.
- **1950s:** Introduction of chocolate behind the little doors.
- **21st century:** Children are no longer the main target demographic, as companies began to start first small sample sizes of their products in festive packaging. Adults can now count down to Christmas too with specialized Advent calendars that contain everything from gourmet foods to beauty products and fitness gear.

Baroque's Advent Calendar

As I already explained in the introduction, I'll elaborate on the poets and on my reasoning why I chose to write about X or Y in the Advent calendar. And well, that way you also see why I was busy and didn't write anything until now.

First I'll post the screenshot - as I did on my server -, then write the original text beneath it (in case it is difficult to read, since I had to screenshot it) and finally I'll add the comment or elaboration. Every little door except one will be available as a PDF-file (only in the original blog entry).

Little Door Nr. 1



Little Door to the First of December

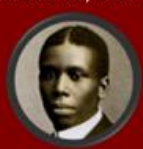
Christmas by Paul Laurence Dunbar
(June 27, 1872 – February 9, 1906)

Step wid de banjo an' glide wid de fiddle,
Dis ain' no time fu' to pottah an' piddle;
Fu' Christmas is comin', it's right on de way,
An' dey's houahs to dance 'fo' de break o' de day.

What if de win' is taihin' an' whistlin'?
Look at dat fiah how hit's spittin' an' bristlin'!
Heat in de ashes an' heat in de cindahs,
Ol' mistah Fros' kin des look thoo de windahs.

Heat up de toddy an' pas' de wa'm glasses,
Don' stop to shivah at blowin's an' blas'es,
Keep on de kittle an' keep it a-hummin',
Eat all an' drink all, dey's lots mo' a-comin'.
Look hyeah, Maria, don't open dat oven,
Want all dese people a-pushin' an' shovin'?

Res' f'om de dance? Yes, you done cotch dat odah,
Mammy done cotch it, an' law! hit nigh flo'd huh;
'Possum is monst'ous fu' mekin' folks fin' it!
Come, draw yo' cheers up, I's sho' I do' min' it.
Eat up dem critters, you men folks an' wimmens,
'Possums ain' skace w'en dey's lots o' pu'simmons.



Christmas by Paul Laurence Dunbar

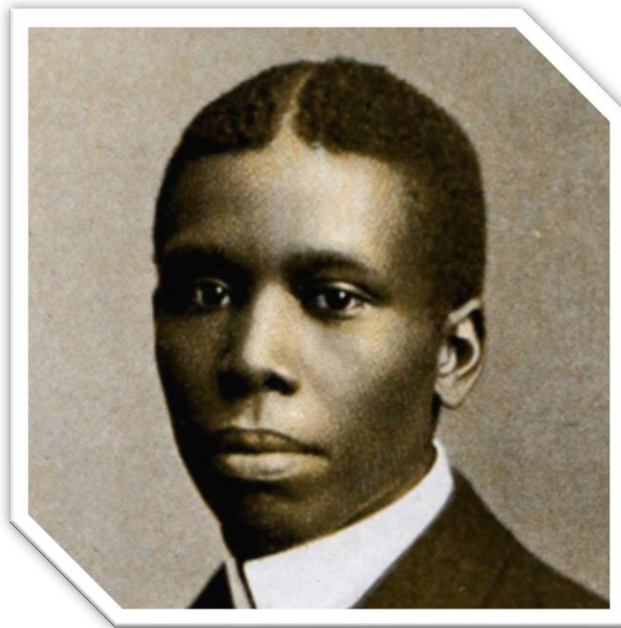
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Want all dese people a-pushin' an' shovin'?

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Mammy done cotch it, an' law! hit nigh flo'd huh;
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Come, draw yo' cheers up, I's sho' I do' min' it.
Eat up dem critters, you men folks an' wimmens,
'Possums ain' skace w'en dey's lots o' pu'simmons.

Short Biography



Born: June 27, 1872 at 311 Howard Street in Dayton, Ohio

Died: February 9, 1906 in Dayton, Ohio

Before the [American Civil War](#) (April 12, 1861 - April 26, 1865), his parents were enslaved in Kentucky. His mother Matila moved to Dayton with other family members after her emancipation and his father Joshua escaped from Kentucky before the war ended.

In Massachusetts he volunteered for the 55th Massachusetts Infantry Regiment, one of the first two black units to serve in the war. Later, he'd also serve in the 5th Massachusetts Cavalry Regiment. His mother left his father soon after receiving her second child and the father died on August 16, 1885 at the age of 12.

At the age of 6 years he wrote his first poem and at the age of 9 years he gave his first public recital. During his years at Central High School in Dayton, Dunbar was the only African-American student. Fortunately, he was well-accepted and was elected as president of the school's literary society, became editor of the school's newspaper and member of the debate club.

1888: Published *Our Martyred Soldiers* and *On The River* in **The Herald** newspaper.

1890: Writer and Editor of **The Tattler**, Dayton's first weekly African-American newspaper.

1891: Completed formal schooling, then took job as an elevator operator for 4\$/hour.

Couldn't study law due to his mother's limited finances and racial discrimination at work.

1893: United Brethren Publishing House printed Dunbar's first collection of poetry called **Oak and Ivy**.

1896: Published his second collection of poetry called **Majors and Minors**, Attorney **Charles A. Thatcher** and psychiatrist **Henry A. Tobey** supported him throughout.

One June 27 of that year, the positive review of **William Dean Howells** in Harper's Weekly gained him national attention: *"Though Howell praised the 'honest thinking and true feeling' in Dunbar's traditional poems, he particularly praised the dialect poems. The new literary fame enabled Dunbar to publish his first two books as a collected volume, titled Lyrics of Lowly Life, which included an introduction by Howells."* (Textarchiv)

1897: Traveled to England for a literary tour where he met young black composer **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**. In October of that year he took a job in the Library of Congress in Washington, DC.

1898: Publication of **Folks From Dixie**, first collection of short stories. It wasn't his first novel, but **The Uncalled** from the same year was not a commercial success.

On March 6, he married **Alice Ruth Moore** who was a teacher and poet from New Orleans. He met her three years earlier.

1900: Doctors diagnosed him with [tuberculosis](#) (TB), at the time it was often fatal.

His doctors recommended him to drink whiskey to alleviate his symptoms.

On advice of his doctors, he also moved to Colorado with his wife, because the cold and dry mountain air was considered favourable for TB patients.

1902: Dunbar and his wife separated, but never divorced. His dependence on alcohol increased due to his depression and declining health.

1904: Returned to Dayton to be with his mother. Two years later, at the age of 33, he died of tuberculosis.



*illustration 18 - The Dunbar House in Dayton, Ohio
(Source: [National Park Service](#))*

Sources

Paul Laurence Dunbar

<https://www.textarchiv.com/paul-laurence-dunbar>

American Civil War

<https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Civil-War>

Tuberculosis Fact Sheet

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/tuberculosis#:~:text=Overview,been%20infected%20with%20TB%20bacteria.>

Paul Laurence Dunbar House Historic Site

<https://www.nps.gov/places/dunbar-house.htm>

Little Door Nr. 2



Little Door to the Second of December



Artist: kurobikariBonm

May this Christmassy Hatsune Miku guide you through December!
There are people out there who love and appreciate you, always remember.

The second 'Little Door' features an artwork of **Hatsune Miku** in Christmas-themed clothing and a motivational text which says: "May this Christmassy Hatsune Miku guide you through December! There are people out there who love and appreciate you, always remember." The artist is called **kurobikariBonm** whose adorable artworks you can also find on zerochan (- > <https://www.zerochan.net/kurobikariBonm?p=1>). Naturally, I didn't want to include the download to a PDF-file that largely consists of their artwork. Moreover, since this is also a blog that talks about politics they very likely wouldn't appreciate it - so, only the screenshot for completion sake (unless the artist wants it to be blurred out) of this Advent calendar will be featured here. I do have some Hatsune Miku songs to recommend, though.

Recommended Songs

Aether_Eru - 初音ミク - End and Start

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fd6AYEz1WCc>

PinocchioP - Ghosts Play to the Audience feat. Hatsune Miku

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M92c6pl10u0>

KIRA - Digital Girl ft. Hatsune Miku (Original Song)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fC4gB841VI>

Deco*27 - Salamander feat. Hatsune Miku

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-H2PCK7DJsQ>

To i Hola - Arranged by daniwell feat. Hatsune Miku

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IoSzz-zr2eA>

運命生命共鳴体 // テンタクル忍者 feat.初音ミク
(it got a really cool music video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-gr-22V0r0>

Deco*27 - HAO feat. Hatsune Miku

(a favourite of mine)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3GzRDW3hZ1k>

[MV] TAK 'mochimochi' feat. 初音ミク

(an adorable music video about the Japanese sweet mochi)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tQM8pfwmcU0>

アンテナ39 / 柊マグネタイト feat. 初音ミク 【マジカルミライ 2024】

(Magical Mirai Miku 2024, a very cute design)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yJR5FFRoQY>

40meterP - DO RE MI FA Rondo

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bphS6_wayug



Above you see Magical Mirai Miku 2024. A song showing once more that public transportation is the best thing to exist and that I envy the Japanese and Swiss for their punctual trains. Public transportation is a public good worth every penny, also environmentally friendly.

Little Door Nr. 3



Little Door to the Third of December

Mid-Winter by Madison Cawein

(March 23, 1865 – December 12, 1914)

All day the clouds hung ashen with the cold;
And through the snow the muffled waters fell;
The day seemed drowned in grief too deep to tell,
Like some old hermit whose last bead is told.
At eve the wind woke, and the snow clouds rolled
Aside to leave the fierce sky visible;
Harsh as an iron landscape of wan hell
The dark hills hung framed in with gloomy gold.
And then, towards night, the wind seemed some one at

My window wailing: now a little child
Crying outside my door; and now the long
Howl of some starved beast down the flue. I sat
And knew 'twas Winter with his madman song
Of miseries on which he stared and smiled.



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Howl of some starved beast down the flue. I sat
And knew 'twas Winter with his madman song
Of miseries on which he stared and smiled.

Short Biography



Born: March 23, 1865 in Louisville, Kentucky

Died: December 8, 1914

Madison was the fifth child of William and Christiana (Stelsly) Cawein. He developed a love for nature due to the profession of his father who made patent medicines from herbs.

He worked as a cashier in Waddill's New-market in Louisville after graduating from Highschool. He worked in a pool hall for 6 years and saved his pay in order to return home to start writing. Over the course of his life, he would publish 36 books and 1,500 poems,

earning him the nickname "Keats of Kentucky" due to the similarity to **Percy Bysshe Shelley** and **John Keats**. By 1900, his income was \$100/month.

In 1907 he purchased a home in Louisville (a 2 1/2 story-brick house).

In 1912, he was forced to sell his home, as well as some of his library, after losing money in the [1912 stock market crash](#) (a minor economic depression mostly affecting the stock market). One year later he published a poem called **Waste Land** in a Chicago magazine.

"Scholars have identified this poem as an inspiration to T. S. Eliot's poem The Waste Land, published in 1922 and considered the birth of modernism in poetry." (Textarchiv)

In 1914, the Authors Club of New York City placed him on their relief list.

On December 8 of the same year, he died.

Sources

Madison Cawein

<https://www.textarchiv.com/madison-cawein>

Finance Panic of 1910–1911

https://handwiki.org/wiki/Finance:Panic_of_1910%E2%80%931911

Little Door Nr. 4



Little Door to the Fourth of December

On the fourth day of December, I'd like to talk about Mesopotamia and cite a surviving translation of their creation myth. In case you do not know yet who the Mesopotamians were: they were one of the earliest civilizations on Earth (3500-1750 B.C.) with cities like Uruk and Ur that emerged during this time (one goddess you may know: Inanna or Ishra).

The following account, however, serves as an introduction to the story of "The Huluppu-Tree". I'll link to it below the post again for you to check out.

**In the first days when everything needed was brought into being,
In the first days when everything needed was properly nourished,
When bread was baked in the shrines of the land,
And bread was tasted in the homes of the land,
When heaven had moved away from the earth,
And earth had separated from heaven,
And the name of man was fixed;
When the Sky God, An, had carried off the heavens,
And the Air God, Enlil, had carried off the earth . . . (Wolkstein 4)**

Ki was a Sumerian goddess and personification of the earth, she was the daughter of the Primordial waters, Nammu.

She then mated with her brother An and produced Enki, Enlil, and other Sumerian deities.
(source: Oxford Reference)

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(source: Oxford Reference)

Comment: I've been interested in Mesopotamia for four years now and already read a book about it. An ancient city in particular, Uruk, was the first city in the world and sparks my fascination in particular: *"It would be true to say that Uruk was Mesopotamia's - and the World's - first city. It seems to have started as two separate settlements, Kullaba and Eanna, which coalesced in the Uruk period to form a town covering 80 hectares; at the height of its development in the Early Dynastic period, the city walls were 9.5 km long, enclosing a massive 450 hectares, and may have housed some 50,000 people.*

In the heart of the city are two large temple complexes: the Anu (god of the sky) sanctuary, belonging originally to Kullaba, and the Eanna sanctuary, dedicated to Ishtar, known by scholars as the Mosaic Temple of Uruk, which rises to a height of 16 m on a square base measuring 60x60 m. Both complexes have revealed several successive temple-structures of the Uruk period, including the White Temple in the Anu sanctuary and the Limestone and Pillar Temples in the Eanna sanctuary. A characteristic form of decoration involves the use of clay cones with painted tops pressed into the mud plaster facing the buildings - a technique known as clay cone mosaic." ([History of Uruk, Western Sydney University](#))

Consequently, it is not just the history of Iraq but mankind too.

Keeping the memory alive is therefore quite important to me and perhaps I can visit these historic sites one day. The book I read about was published by the Reclam Verlag, it is in German so it may not be of much use for most people reading this.

Sources

Sumerian Myth

<https://faculty.gvsu.edu/websterm/SumerianMyth.htm>

Ki

<https://www.oxfordreference.com/display/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803100036831>

History of Uruk

https://staff.cdms.westernsydney.edu.au/~anton/Research/Uruk_Project/History.html

Little Door Nr. 5



Little Door to the Fifth of December

In Today's little door I have a videogame recommendation for you, or rather an idea in case you get bored and decide to try a new videogame.

On March 20, 1992, the videogame **Shining Force** was released and it is a turn-based tactical role-playing game – heavily leaning on fantasy.



Now you might say: "But Evi, how do I get a copy of that." That's the neat part, you don't. Last time it was re-released was in 2021 for the Nintendo Switch Online and it is also available on Steam for 0.99€ (I'll link to it).

Perhaps you already played that game or were aware of it, in case that wasn't the case then I'm glad I could be of help. See you tomorrow again!

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Perhaps you already played that game or were aware of it, in case that wasn’t the case then I’m glad I could be of help. See you tomorrow again!

Note: Unfortunately, the game is no longer available on Steam. A good friend of mine informed me on Discord (also a member of my server) that Sega ceased support for it on December 6. So, you’ll have to resort to an emulator, a physical modern copy or older ones if you can still find them. Btw: Evi is my nickname on the server.

The reason I wrote about this was the following post by Retro Computers on BlueSky:
<https://bsky.app/profile/retrocomps.bsky.social/post/3lclayqgcfm24>

NEWS POSTED Wed, November 6

SEGA Classics Delisting December 6th

Greetings, SEGA fans!

We've got some news to share regarding our Classics bundles. As of December 6th, 2024 we'll be saying farewell to new purchases of the SEGA Mega Drive and Genesis Classics & Dreamcast Classics. Both of these great bundles and select individual games will be delisted on Steam December 6th.

No worries if you already own a game or bundle. These gems will still live in your Steam library. You can download and play SEGA Classics games whenever you want, as long as you own them before December 6th.

Read more in our FAQ: (<https://support.sega.com/hc/articles/29776767664145>) So, if you've been thinking about picking up a SEGA Classics game or bundle, there's no time like the present!



0



Rate Up



368

Discuss



Share

illustration 19 - Screenshot my friend took

Source

Shining Force

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shining_Force

Little Door Nr. 6



Little Door to the Sixth of December

Today we talk about a Christmas song you most likely have listened to: Driving Home for Christmas. Well, not about the song itself but how it came to be.

It was 1978 and Chris Rae (born on March 4, 1951), was banned from driving and the record company wouldn't pay for a rail ticket. But he needed to go from London to Middlesbrough (a 4 hour and 40-minute drive). So, his wife took their old Austin Mini and drove all the way down from Middlesbrough to Abbey Road studios to pick him up.

On their way back home, it started snowing and all they had left were £220. Due to the traffic on the road M25 they kept getting stuck and when Rae looked across at the other drivers he saw how miserable they all looked. Jokingly, he started singing "We're driving home for Christmas ..." and whenever street lights illuminated the car he wrote down the lyrics. Around 3 am they arrived at home where he found a letter from PRS America. His song "Fool (If You Think It's Over)" was a hit in the US and he received a cheque for £15,000. From their last £220 they went up to being able to buy a house.



Initially, he didn't want to write a Christmas song, because he thought it would ruin any credibility he had left: "So initially, the song came out on a B-side. Then a DJ flipped it over and started playing it, so Max suggested we re-record it and add some strings. Max played the distinctive jazzy intro, we did a classic 1950s Christmas carol-type arrangement, and loved it. At first, it was another radio hit – but then it started re-entering the Top 40 every year." (The Guardian) Nowadays, whenever he is stuck on the M25 – Road to Hell – he'd wind down his window and start singing "I'm driving home for Christmas" - to the delight of other drivers.

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illustration 20 - Photo of an Austin Mini from Wikipedia

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Comment: In SWR3 (a German radio station), they sometimes explain the history of songs and while I don't remember if it was this song in particular or even that radio broadcaster, it did give me the idea to write about it. SWR2 Kultur, Bayern 1 and SWR4 are possible candidates too.

Sources

Chris Rea: how we made Driving Home for Christmas

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2016/dec/19/chris-rea-how-we-made-driving-home-for-christmas>

Mini (car)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mini>

Chris Rae

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chris_Rea

Fool (If You Think It's Over)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wjruFXixTFE>

Little Door Nr. 7



Little Door to the Seventh of December

Winter Nightfall by Robert Bridges
(October 23, 1844 – April 21, 1930)

The day begins to droop,—
Its course is done:
But nothing tells the place
Of the setting sun.

The hazy darkness deepens,
And up the lane
You may hear, but cannot see,
The homing wain.

An engine pants and hums
In the farm hard by:
Its lowering smoke is lost
In the lowering sky.

The soaking branches drip,
And all night through
The dropping will not cease
In the avenue.

A tall man there in the house
Must keep his chair:
He knows he will never again
Breathe the spring air:

His heart is worn with work;
He is giddy and sick
If he rise to go as far
As the nearest rick:

He thinks of his morn of life,
His hale, strong years;
And braves as he may the night
Of darkness and tears.



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He thinks of his morn of life,
His hale, strong years;
And braves as he may the night
Of darkness and tears.

Short Biography



Born: October 23, 1844 in Walmer, Kent, in England

Died: April 21, 1930

Robert was the eighth of nine children of John Thomas Bridges and Harriet Elizabeth Bridges née Affleck. He was educated at Eton College and Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Then went on to study medicine in London at St Bartholomew's Hospital with the goal of practising it until the age of 40 so he can focus on poetry in retirement.

- **1869:** Enrolled at St Bartholomew's Hospital Medical School at a time when a more rigorous curriculum was being introduced reflecting the recent medical advances.
- **1873:** Final examination in Oxford, but failed the written tests. Spent the next year traveling in Italy and studied medicine in Dublin.
- **1874:** Retook his final exam and passed.
- **1874-1876:** Worked as a house physician to **Patrick Black** (1813 - 1879). Despite his busy medical life, he wrote poetry throughout his training and resigned as a house physician in June 1876. For Black he wrote a farewell poem in Latin called *Carmen elegiacum*.
- **1877-1878:** Worked in the casualty ward of St Bartholomew.
In 1878, he wrote an article for the St Bartholomew's Hospital Reports where he described the conditions on the ward and the '*almost impossible task of seeing all patients*'. He wrote that of the more than 151,000 patients 'relieved' at the hospital between 1877 and 1878, he had only seen 30,940 (or 140 a day). Moreover, he described the vivid soundscape of a Victorian ward: '*...the rattle of carts in the street, the hum of voices inside, the slamming of doors, the noise of people walking about, the coughings of all kinds, the crying of babies, the scraping of impatient feet, the stamping of cold ones, the chinking of the bottles and zinc tickets, and, after eleven o'clock, the hammering, sawing, and tinkering of the carpenters and blacksmiths who came not unfrequently at that hour to set things generally to rights.*'
- **1879:** Became full physician at the Great Northern Hospital.
- **1881:** His successful medical career came earlier to an end, because he caught a severe case of pneumonia and took a leave of absence from his post.
- **1884:** Married Monica Waterhouse, first settling down at Yattendon on the Berkshire Downs, and then at Boar's Hill, near Oxford.
- **June 1885:** Retired formally after the trip to Italy where he had hoped to recover from his illness. Now wrote full-time. Over the next five decades he wrote several poetry collections, verse drama and criticism.
- **December 1894:** He very much valued his experience as a doctor and maintained the friendship with the physician **Samuel Gee** (1839 - 1911) through letters. Encouraging Gee in December to keeping him up-to-date about his medical work.
- **1913:** Appointment of Bridges to post of the poet laureate after Rudyard Kipling refused the honour. Bridges would hold this title until his death.
- **April 21, 1930:** Day of death of Robert Bridges.

Sources

Robert Bridges

<https://www.textarchiv.com/robert-bridges>

Robert Bridges, the Poet Laureate physician

<https://history.rcp.ac.uk/blog/robert-bridges-poet-laureate-physician>

Little Door Nr. 8



Little Door to the Eighth of December

Here's a fun fact you can throw at people or start a conversation with, because Hatsune Miku always lands – sometimes a happy landing like the 'Invisible Hand' in Star Wars...

Anyways, let's move on to the fact about the One and Only, the Holy Hatsune Miku.

On August 29, 2007, the first demo song of Hatsune Miku was published: 01_ballade. The song was composed by Eiji Hirasawa and gained 294,600+ Niconico views. In case you do not know what Niconico is: it is a Japanese video sharing platform. Niconico being a Japanese ideophone for smiling. Their mascot is a quirky TV with two antennas and a seemingly confused look (or probably some emotion not known to man).

Later, a full version was made which is called "*Hoshi no Kakeru*" (Fragments of a Star). Moreover, this was the first time Hirasawa has written lyrics and he never really thought about being the first Miku producer.

I personally love the music video where she's booted up for the first time – the First Sound of the Future (which is the translation of her name). And it shows that just like in the last little door, sometimes your life leads you somewhere you didn't expect it to go (in a positive way).



Here's a fun fact you can throw at people or start a conversation with, because Hatsune Miku always lands – sometimes a happy landing like the 'Invisible Hand' in Star Wars...

Anyways, let's move on to the fact about the One and Only, the Holy Hatsune Miku.

On August 29, 2007, the first demo song of Hatsune Miku was published: 01_ballade.

The song was composed by Eiji Hirasawa and gained 294,600+ Niconico views.

In case you do not know what Niconico is: it is a Japanese video sharing platform.

Niconico being a Japanese ideophone for smiling. Their mascot is a quirky TV with two antennas and a seemingly confused look (or probably some emotion not known to man).

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Note: By 'last little door' I was actually referring to Little Door Nr. 6. Since the original posts didn't have any biographies it probably made more sense which post I meant.

This little fact may be interesting for all those who are into Vocaloid music (the voice of characters like Hatsune Miku was taken through samples of a real person, then altered to make something new; moreover those who use Hatsune Miku, Megurine Luka or others still have to tune them and add instruments - nothing writes itself, you make them sing).

Sources

01_ballade

https://vocaloid.fandom.com/wiki/01_ballade

Music video of the first song

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bkY_3vXuGBA

Little Door Nr. 9



Little Door to the Ninth of December

In Germany there's a seasonal biscuit called 'Spekulatius' – seasonal because it is only available from autumn onwards until the end of Winter.

This biscuit originates from the Lower Countries like Belgium and the Netherlands where you can buy and eat it all year round, though. Even in the former Dutch colony Indonesia these are still popular. In German, it is called 'Gewürz Spekulatius' (Spekulatius with seasoning), since the recipe includes spices such as clove, cardamom, cinnamon and nutmeg.

Consequently, it was an expensive luxury due to the exotic spices and most people couldn't afford it until the end of the Second World War. It is widespread in Germany and I personally can tell you that they quite delicious! But they mostly come from Westphalia and the Rhineland. Lastly, if you put them in the correct order the images on the Spekulatius tell the story of **St. Nicholas** who lived between ca. 301-400 (or rather is said to have lived around this time as not much is known about him due to the lack of historical documents attesting it). He was probably born in the ancient Lycian seaport city of Patara.

When he was young, he traveled to Palestine and Egypt. After his return, he became the bishop of Myra. During the persecution of the Christians through Roman emperor **Diocletian** (245 CE to 316 CE) he was likely imprisoned and tortured. Under the rule of **Constantine the Great** (after 280 CE to 337 CE) he was released. His reputation for generosity and kindness gave rise to legends of miracles he performed: *"He was reputed to have given marriage dowries of gold to three girls whom poverty would otherwise have forced into lives of prostitution and to have restored to life three children who had been chopped up by a butcher and put in a tub of brine."* (Encyclopedia Britannica)

In case you want to make these treats yourself, here's a recipe:

"Baking Spekulatius is not especially difficult: butter, sugar and spices are stirred together to make a creamy mix. Almond extract, milk and flour mixed with baking powder are added. After three hours in the refrigerator, various motifs are cut out of the flat, rolled-out dough. Because the dough hardly rises during baking, it is well suited for making cookies using pastry cutters or moulds with special motifs. The motifs are clearly recognizable after baking."
(Christmas classic: Spekulatius from deutschland.de)

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(Christmas classic: Spekulatius from deutschland.de)



Comment: I wrote about it, because I ate a lot of Spekulatius the days before.

Sources

St. Nicholas

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Saint-Nicholas>

Christmas classic: Spekulatius

<https://www.deutschland.de/en/topic/life/lifestyle-cuisine/christmas-classic-spekulatius>

Little Door Nr. 10



Little Door to the Tenth of December

Christmas Song by Bliss Carman
(April 15, 1861 – June 8, 1929)

Above the weary waiting world,
Asleep in chill despair,
There breaks a sound of joyous bells
Upon the frosted air.
And o'er the humblest roof-tree, lo,
A star is dancing on the snow.

What makes the yellow star to dance
Upon the brink of night?
What makes the breaking dawn to glow
So magically bright, —
And all the earth to be renewed
With infinite beatitude?

The singing bells, the throbbing star,
The sunbeams on the snow,
And the awakening heart that leaps
New ecstasy to know, —
They all are dancing in the morn
Because a little child is born.



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New ecstasy to know, —
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Short Biography



Born: April 15, 1861 in Fredericton, Maritime province of New Brunswick (Canada)

Died: June 8, 1929 in New Canaan, Connecticut (USA)

"Bliss" was his mother's maiden name and he was the great grandson of United Empire Loyalists who fled Nova Scotia after the [American Revolution](#) (1775 - September 3, 1783), settling in New Brunswick (then part of Nova Scotia). He was educated in at the Fredericton

Collegiate School and the University of New Brunswick (UNB) and received a B.A. in 1881. He was introduced into poetry through **George Robert Parkin** who also gave him a love of classical literature.

- **1879:** First published poem in the UNB Monthly.
- **1882-1883:** Attended Oxford and the University of Edinburgh.
- **1884:** Returned home and received his M.A. from UNB.
- **January 1885:** Father died.
- **February 1886:** Mother died.
- **1886-1887:** Enrolled in Harvard University. At Harvard he moved in literary circles and became close friends with American poet **Richard Hovey**. Both were members of the "Visionists" circle along with **Herbert Copeland** and **F. Holland Day** who would later found the Boston publishing firm Copeland & Day that launched *Vagabondia*.
- **February 1890:** Returned to Boston after briefly visiting Canada. He was unable to find a job, however, and moved to New York City where he became literary editor of the *New York Independent*. He earned 20\$/week. Dismissed 2 years later, as he wasn't a good fit in the 'semi-religious weekly'.
- **1893:** His first book of poetry, **Low Tide on Grand Pré**, wasn't a success. No Canadian company published it and the American company went bankrupt.
- **1894:** The Hovey-Carman collaboration called **Songs of Vagabondia** was published by Copeland & Day and was an immediate success. Both authors quickly found a cult following, especially among college students who responded well to the '*poetry's anti-materialistic themes, its celebration of individual freedom, and its glorification of comradeship*'.
- **1895-1900:** Carman publishes two books with Lamson, Wolffe and worked for the *Boston Evening Transcript* which was published weekly (for the five years of its existence).
- **1896:** Met **Mary Perry King**, she became his '*greatest and longest-lasting female influence in his life*'. She became his patron: "*She put pence in his purse, and food in his mouth, when he struck bottom and, what is more, she often put a song on his lips when he despaired, and helped him sell it.*" (Textarchive)
- **1899:** Lamson, Wolffe was taken over by the Boston firm of Small, Maynard & Co. Carman had a financial stake in the company and when it failed in 1903, he lost all his assets. He was down after that, but kept working - this time with another Boston company called L.C. Page.
- **1902-1905:** 7 books of new poetry published and 3 books based on Carman's *Transcript* columns, as well as one prose work on unitrinianism.
- **1908-1920:** Carman's literary taste began to shift and his fortunes and health declined.

During the First World War, he was part of a group called the Vigilantes who supported an American entry into the war on the Allied side.

- **1920:** Impoverished and recovering from a near-fatal attack of tuberculosis. He revisited Canada and went on reading tours.
- **28 October, 1921:** Crowned Canada's Poet Laureate with a wreath of maple leaves by the newly-formed Canadian Authors' Association at the Ritz Carlton Hotel in Montreal.
- **1925:** He finally found a Canadian publisher, but Page wouldn't relinquish its copyrights. Only after Carmen's death an edition of collected poetry was published due to the persistency of his literary executor, **Lorne Pierce**.
- **1927:** Carmen edited the The Oxford Book of American Verse. Two years later he died of a brain hemorrhage at the age of 68 in New Canaan.
- **May 13, 1954:** A carlet maple tree was planted at his gravesite, as he requested in his 1892 poem "The Grave-Tree":

Let me have a scarlet maple
For the grave-tree at my head,
With the quiet sun behind it,
In the years when I am dead.

Source

Bliss Carman

<https://www.textarchiv.com/bliss-carman>

American Revolution

<https://www.britannica.com/event/American-Revolution>

Little Door Nr. 11



Little Door to the Eleventh of December

Today we will learn about sharks (which are amazing animals). So, let's start with this ancient species which has been around for around 450 million years – long before the first trees and the dinosaurs.

The earliest evidence for sharks is scales from the **Late Ordovician** period – 450 million years ago. It is still debated whether these belong to true sharks or shark-like animals. 420 million years ago chimaeras (cartilaginous fishes) split from the rest of the group. 410 million years ago, in the **Early Devonian**, the first shark-like teeth appear in the fossil record belonging to an ancient fish called *Doliodus problematicus*. 380 million years ago, Cladoselache evolved and while we might recognize them as sharks today, they may have been part of the Chimera branch (see image below).



Before this gets too long, let's talk about the **Golden Age of the sharks** which began 359 million years ago and ended 252 million years ago with a mass extinction that wiped out 96% of all marine life. The domination sharks enjoyed in the **Carboniferous Period** was thanks to a mass extinction in the **Devonian** that killed off 75% of all species on Earth. Bizarre sharks appeared during this period, such as *Helicoprion* with a spiral buzz saw-like bottom jaw. Overall, sharks endured 5 mass extinctions due to their great diversity and thus varying diets. The youngest species is the Hammerhead shark which first appeared 23 million years ago during the **Neogene** (for more information online see: [Natural History Museum](https://www.naturalhistorymuseum.org)).

Unfortunately, these great animals are threatened by misinformation, so to clear it up: Sharks are not immune to cancer and their cartilage is ineffective against human cancer.

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Unfortunately, these great animals are threatened by misinformation, so to [clear it up](#):
Sharks are not immune to cancer and their cartilage is ineffective against human cancer.

Comment: Here, you may already have guessed why I wanted to write about it: because sharks are amazing animals which have been around for millions of years. It was also a great opportunity to remind everyone that they threatened by misinformation - literally.

Sources

Shark evolution: a 450 million year timeline

<https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/shark-evolution-a-450-million-year-timeline.html>

Blowing Shark Cartilage out of the Water

<https://www.science.org/content/article/blowing-shark-cartilage-out-water>

Little Door Nr. 12



Little Door to the Twelfth of December

Greetings, fellow **Eukaryotes**. As you may be aware, our planet is 4.6 billion years old. Meaning geologists work on immensely long time scales. So, here's a quick summary provided by [Georgia Tech Biological Sciences](#) (BYA = billion years ago | MYA = million y. a.)

- **Hadean (4.6-4.0 BYA)**: occurred before life arose (or at least, before there is compelling evidence of life)
- **Archaean (4.0-2.5 BYA)**: featured the evolution of early life, including bacteria, archaea, and the first cyanobacteria capable of oxygenic photosynthesis
- **Proterozoic (2.5 BYA-542 MYA)**: featured oxygen accumulation (the Oxygen Revolution), and the first single-celled and multicellular eukaryotes, and the flourishing of early microbial and multicellular life
- **Phanerozoic (542 MYA to present)**: beginning with the Cambrian explosion, features the proliferation of animal and plant life

We currently live in the Phanerozoic eon, included in this eon are the following periods: Cambrian (542 MYA), Ordovician (488 MYA), Silurian (434 MYA), Devonian (416 MYA), Carboniferous (359 MYA), Permian (299 MYA) which in turn are part of the **Paleozoic era** (= Paleozoic translates to "old life"); the Triassic (251 MYA), Jurassic (200 MYA) and the Cretaceous (145.5 MYA) may be more familiar to you as the dinosaurs dominated during the last two periods – all three of them are part of the **Mesozoic era**; lastly, the Tertiary (65.5 MYA) and the Quaternary (2.6 MYA) are part of the **Cenozoic era** – the era we live in.

So, how's this relevant to my introduction as my fellow Eukaryotes?

Well, not really relevant but I thought it would be cool to show you the geological time scale.

Bacteria and Archaea belong to the **Prokaryotes**, single-celled microorganisms with no nuclei; to the **Eukaryotes** belong we humans and all other animals, plants, fungi, and single-celled protists, our cells have nuclei to enclose DNA from the rest of the cell.

And yes, these are the three domains of life on Earth: Bacteria, Archaea and Eukarya. We do share a single common ancestor, but the first living organisms to appear on our surface were Prokaryotes, one billion years later it was eukaryotes finally appeared.

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...

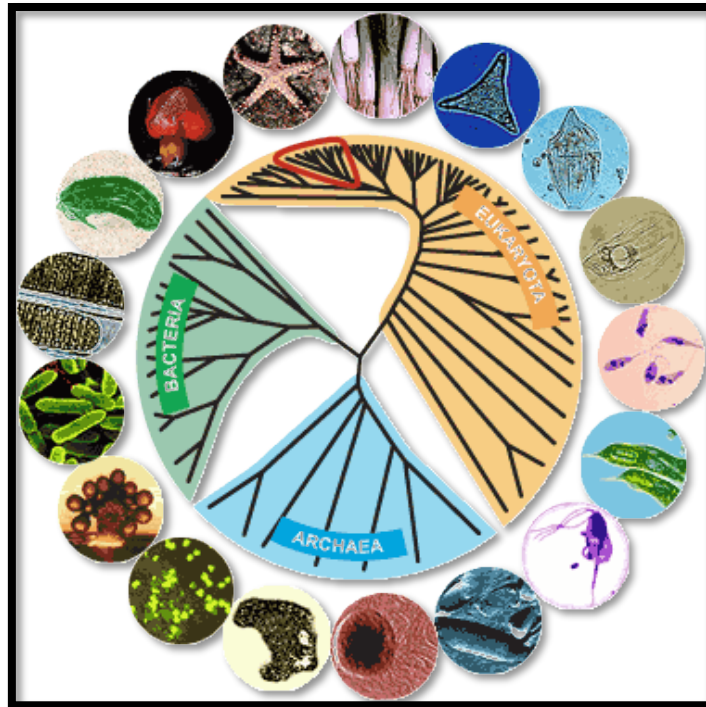


illustration 21 - Originally I wanted to include this in the little door, but there was no more space (source: Georgia Tech Biological Sciences)

Comment: My knowledge on pre-historic Earth (by that I mean not just history of humans before written records, but everything else further in the past) is superficial. It is an interest of mine and not a specialization, still I hope to spark a interest in this topic and the thirst to learn a little more about this very old planet where life went through countless phases and faced numerous challenges. Learning can be quite a lot of fun, and even if you don't remember the details (or only a few details like me), then you can still collect books, bookmark websites or go to the local library to refresh whenever you need the knowledge.

Sources

Prokaryotes: Bacteria, Archaea, and Early Life on Earth

<https://organismalbio.biosci.gatech.edu/biodiversity/prokaryotes-bacteria-archaea-2/>

Little Door Nr. 13



Little Door to the Thirteenth of December

One December by Clinton Scollard
(September 18, 1860 – November 19, 1932)

Now that the year unto its close is
 rounding,
And sleet slants down the breeze,
My mind across the perished past is
 bounding
As leaps a ship across the racing seas.

It is once more that magical December,
 Void of the north wind's stings,
And lighted by Romance's quenchless
 ember,
When first I drank the Orient's golden
 springs.

Again I leave the land of Pharoah's
 daughter,—
The long, low umber dunes,—
Embarking on a waveless waste of water
Beneath the most inviolate of moons.

I see it, like a lovely lotus, lying
 Upon night's placid pool,
And hark the flapping of flamingoes flying
 —
Faint scraps of sunset—through the ether
 cool.

Scarce seems the black bulk of the vessel
 shifting
So soft we glide along.
While dreamily adown the deck comes
 drifting
The liquid ripple of Levantine song.

Thus am I borne unto a goal elysian
 Across sleep's shadowy bar,
To find, at waking, burning on my vision,
From out the east, an iridescent star.

The shepherd's star— not broader and not brighter
 The sages saw it shine!—
Now grows the hill-notched sky-line swiftly lighter;
 'Tis Christmas morning over Palestine!



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Short Biography



Born: September 28, 1860 at Clinton, New York

Died: November 19, 1932

Clinton was the son of James Isaac and Mary Elizabeth (Stevens) Scollard.
(Since his biography is rather short, we'll jump immediately to the timeline)

- **1881:** Graduation from Hamilton College
He is credited with introducing the curveball to college baseball at Hamilton and was member of the Chi Psi fraternity. Later on, he went to Harvard University. Among his friends were the poets **Bliss Carman** and **Frank Dempster Sherman**.
- He spent a period of time in Cambridge, Massachusetts and then spent a year at University of Cambridge in England.
- **1888:** Clinton became an Associate Professor of English at Hamilton
- **1890:** Married **Georgia Brown of Jackson** from Michigan, together they had one daughter called **Elizabeth Scollard Parlon**.
- **1896:** Left Hamilton College.
- **1906:** Granted honorary L.H.D. by Hamilton.
- **1911:** Worked in the English Department of Hamilton for a year again.
Then devoted the rest of his life to creative writing.
- **1924:** Clinton and Georgia divorced early into 1924.
On March 20, he married fellow poet Jessie Belle Rittenhouse with whom he had no children. 8 years later, Clinton Scollard died.

Source

Clinton Scollard

<https://www.textarchiv.com/clinton-scollard>

Little Door Nr. 14



Little Door to the Fourteenth of December

Sometimes, as odd it may sound, I like to google a random place whose name I've heard once. It is unlikely that I'll ever visit the place, but it is still interesting to learn about a town or city's history and see how they developed in other countries – what similarities we share, what the differences are. So, today happens to be **New Berlin in Milwaukee** (Wisconsin).

The city is located in eastern Waukesha County with an approximated population of 39,584 (in 2010). It is the 16th biggest state in Wisconsin and bordered by the city of Waukesha to the west, Muskego to the south, Brookfield to the north, and West Allis and Greenfield to the east. Since it's history as two distinct periods (according to Niles Niemuth), I'll reflect it in the short timeline I present here.

1830s to 1959

- 📖 Late 1830s: Yankees and Irish the first to settle in the township of New Berlin
- 📖 City was very likely named after New Berlin in NY, not Berlin in Germany
- 📖 1840s: German immigrants settle in the township, first German family in 1840
- 📖 1882: First rail line connecting New Berlin to Milwaukee
- 📖 Until 1960: New Berlin's economy dominated by farming
- 📖 Throughout the 120-year period several ethnic farming communities developed



Barn of Weston's Antique Apple Orchard, built in 1906.

Reflects the agricultural history of the area.

1959 to Present

- 📖 1959: Incorporated as a city to avoid annexation by neighbouring Brookfield
- 📖 Since 1960s: promotion of industrial and business parks to attract business
- 📖 Introduction of zoning ordinances shifted the economic base towards industry
- 📖 1965: first industrial park opened
- 📖 Late 1970s: Interstate 43 runs through the southern portion of the city, now the main connection to Milwaukee
- 📖 1950s – 1970s – 2010s: Growth from 5,334 to 26,901 to 39,584 inhabitants
- 📖 2011: home to 3 industrial parks and 2 business parks

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- 📖 **2011:** home to 3 industrial parks and 2 business parks



Barn of Weston's Antique Apple Orchard, built in 1906.

Reflects the agricultural history of the area.

(Image source: Encyclopedia of Milwaukee)

Comment: As I already mentioned in the introductory sentence, sometimes I'm just curious and want to look up cities I have heard about. Whether it is Wuhan in China or a town called New Berlin in a US-state. And well, in some instances if there's the opportunity I'll write about it too like I did on December 14.

Sources

Encyclopedia of Milwaukee: New Berlin

<https://emke.uwm.edu/entry/new-berlin/>

Little Door Nr. 15



Little Door to the Fifteenth of December

Gates and Doors by Joyce Kilmer
(December 6, 1886 – July 30, 1918)

There was a gentle hostler
(And blessed be his name!)
He opened up the stable
The night Our Lady came.
Our Lady and Saint Joseph,
He gave them food and bed,
And Jesus Christ has given him
A glory round his head.

So let the gate swing open
However poor the yard,
Lest weary people visit you
And find their passage barred;
Unlatch the door at midnight
And let your lantern's glow
Shine out to guide the traveler's feet
To you across the snow.

There was a courteous hostler
(He is in Heaven to-night)
He held Our Lady's bridle
And helped her to alight;
He spread clean straw before her
Whereon she might lie down,
And Jesus Christ has given him
An everlasting crown.

Unlock the door this evening
And let your gate swing wide,
Let all who ask for shelter
Come speedily inside.
What if your yard be narrow?
What if your house be small?
There is a Guest is coming
Will glorify it all.

There was a joyous hostler
Who knelt on Christmas morn
Beside the radiant manger
Wherein his Lord was born.
His heart was full of laughter,
His soul was full of bliss
When Jesus, on His Mother's lap,
Gave him His hand to kiss.

Unbar your heart this evening
And keep no stranger out,
Take from your soul's great portal
The barrier of doubt.
To humble folk and weary
Give hearty welcoming,
Your breast shall be to-morrow
The cradle of a king.



Gates and Doors by Joyce Kilmer

There was a gentle hostler
(And blessed be his name!)
He opened up the stable
The night Our Lady came.
Our Lady and Saint Joseph,
He gave them food and bed,
And Jesus Christ has given him
A glory round his head.

So let the gate swing open
However poor the yard,
Lest weary people visit you
And find their passage barred;
Unlatch the door at midnight
And let your lantern's glow
Shine out to guide the traveler's feet
To you across the snow.

There was a courteous hostler
(He is in Heaven to-night)
He held Our Lady's bridle
And helped her to alight;
He spread clean straw before her
Whereon she might lie down,
And Jesus Christ has given him
An everlasting crown.

Unlock the door this evening
And let your gate swing wide,
Let all who ask for shelter
Come speedily inside.
What if your yard be narrow?
What if your house be small?
There is a Guest is coming
Will glorify it all.

There was a joyous hostler
Who knelt on Christmas morn
Beside the radiant manger
Wherein his Lord was born.
His heart was full of laughter,
His soul was full of bliss
When Jesus, on His Mother's lap,
Gave him His hand to kiss.

Unbar your heart this evening
And keep no stranger out,
Take from your soul's great portal
The barrier of doubt.
To humble folk and weary
Give hearty welcoming,
Your breast shall be to-morrow
The cradle of a King.

Short Biography



Born: December 6, 1886 in New Brunswick, New Jersey (USA)

Died: July 30, 1918 by a sniper's bullet at the Second Battle of the Marne

Joyce was the fourth and youngest child of **Annie Ellen Kilburn** (1849–1932), a minor writer and composer, and **Dr. Frederick Barnett Kilmer** (1851–1934), a physician and analytical chemist employed by the Johnson and Johnson.

Kilmer was baptized and his full name was **Alfred Joyce** Kilmer, named after the two priests **Alfred R. Taylor**, the curate; and the **Rev. Dr. Elisha Brooks Joyce** (1857–1926), the rector in Christ Church which is the oldest Episcopal parish in New Brunswick. In the biography of the textarchive, the term '[parishioner](#)' comes up, it means a person who belongs to a parish and goes to a particular local church.

- **1895-1904:** Enrollment in Rutgers College Grammar School (now Rutgers Preparatory School). During his time in the Grammar School he was editor-in-chief of the school's paper, the Argo. He won the Lane Classical Prize, for oratory and obtained a scholarship to Rutgers College which he'd attend the following year. Graduation in 1904.
- **1904-1906:** Continued his education at Rutgers College where he associate editor of the Targum, the campus newspaper. He was a member of the Delta Upsilon fraternity. However, he was asked to repeat his sophomore year after being unable to complete the '*the curriculum's rigorous mathematics requirement*'. He eventually transferred to Columbia University in New York City after being put under pressure by his mother.
- **May 23, 1908:** Completed his Bachelor of Arts degree and graduated from the Columbia University. During his time there he was vice-president of the Philolexian Society (a literary society), associate editor of Columbia Spectator (the campus newspaper), and member of the Debating Union.
- **June 9, 1908:** Kilmer married the fellow poet **Aline Murray** (1888–1941). He has been engaged to her since his sophomore years in Rutgers. Together, they had five children.
- **Autumn 1908 - June 1909:** During this time he taught Latin at Morristown High School in Morristown, New Jersey. He submitted essays to Red Cross Notes (among them his first published essay called "Psychology of Advertising") and poems to literary periodicals. He abandoned any aspirations to teach and instead sought to focus on a writing career. He relocated to New York City.
- **1909-1912:** Employed by Funk and Wagnalls where he prepared an edition of The Standard Dictionary that would be published in 1912.
- **1911:** Publication of his first book called **Summer of Love**. He'd later write that "*...some of the poems in it, those inspired by genuine love, are not things of which to be ashamed, and you, understanding, would not be offended by the others.*" (Textarchive)
- **1912:** He was a special writer for the New York Times Review of Books and the New York Times Sunday Magazine and was also engaged in lecturing. From this time until his death in World War One, he resided in Mahwah, New Jersey.

- **1913:** Kilmer's conversion to Roman Catholicism after their daughter **Rose** (1912–1917) caught [poliomyelitis](#) (also known as infantile paralysis).
In August of this year, he published "Trees" in the magazine Poetry which made him immensely popular. He wanted to reach a Catholic audience in particular.
- **1914:** Publication of Trees and Other Poems.
- **1915:** Became poetry editor of Current Literature and contributing editor of Warner's Library of the World's Best Literature.
- **1916-1917:** Kilmer published four more books before the US entered into World War One: The Circus and Other Essays (1916), a series of interviews with literary personages entitled Literature in the Making (1917), Main Street and Other Poems (1917), and Dreams and Images: An Anthology of Catholic Poets (1917).
- **1917-1918 (War Years):** A few days after the United States entered World War One, Kilmer enlisted in the 7th Regiment of the New York National Guard.
August: Assigned as a statistician with the U.S. 69th Infantry Regiment (also known as the "Fighting 69th" and later re-designated the 165th Infantry Regiment) of the 42nd Rainbow division. He quickly rose through to the ranks to sergeant, but refused to the position of an officer as he preferred to be with the Fighting 69th.
Shortly before he was deployed to Europe, his daughter Rose died and 12 days later his son Christopher was born. He also intended to write a book about the war called Here and There with the Fighting Sixty-Ninth, but it would never come to be.
November: The Fighting 69th arrive in France. While he had no time to write for the planned book, he did find time to write prose sketches and poetry towards the end of the year. **In 1918**, his most notable poem called **Rouge Bouquet** was published which commemorated the deaths of 21 men of the unit who were killed by German heavy artillery bombardment on the afternoon of March 7.
July: In the last days of July there was heavy fighting taking place during the [Second Battle of Marne](#) (May 1, 1918 - August 31, 1918). Kilmer volunteered to accompany Major "Wild Bill" Donovan when his battalion was sent to lead the day's attack on the 30th of July. While leading a scouting party find the position of a German machine gun, he was killed by sniper's bullet - likely killing him immediately.

...

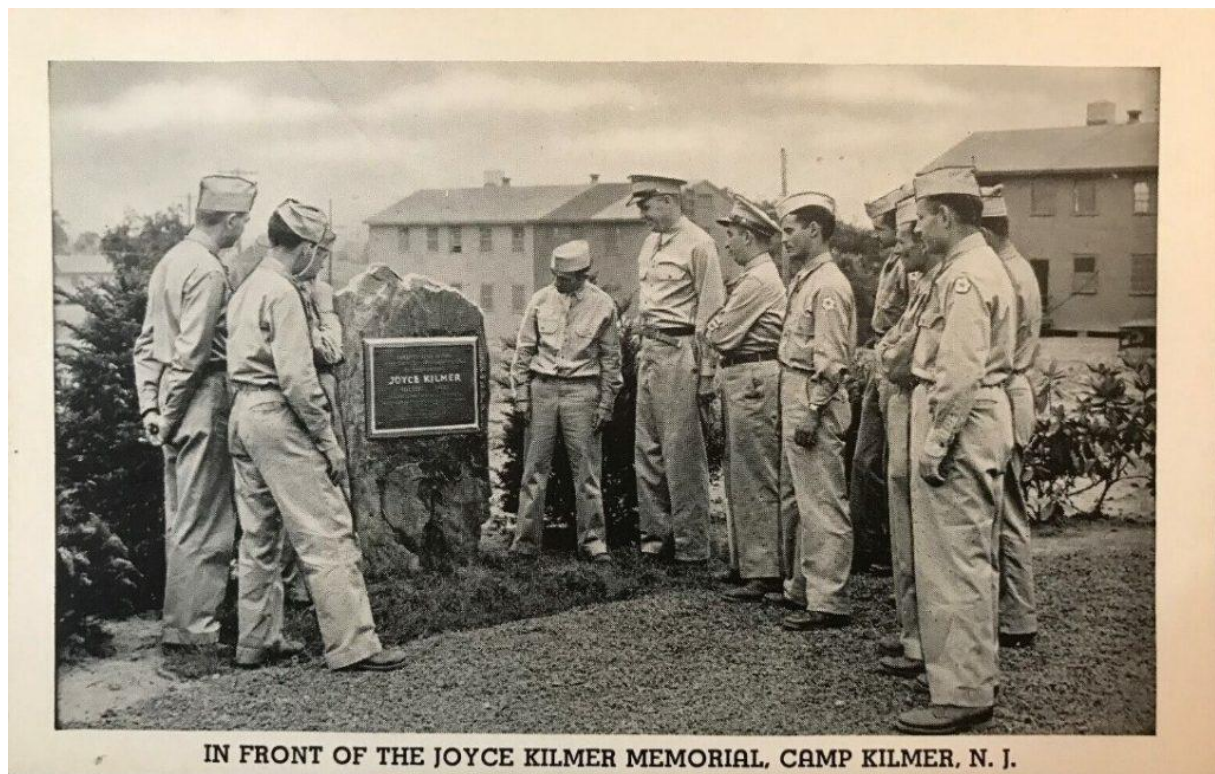


illustration 22 - Postcard showing Kilmer's memorial (source: [Postcard History](#))

Sources

Joyce Kilmer

<https://www.textarchiv.com/joyce-kilmer>

The Story of Alfred Joyce Kilmer and Some Trees

<https://postcardhistory.net/2023/09/the-story-of-alfred-joyce-kilmer-and-some-trees/>

Second Battle of Marne

<https://www.awm.gov.au/collection/E84362>

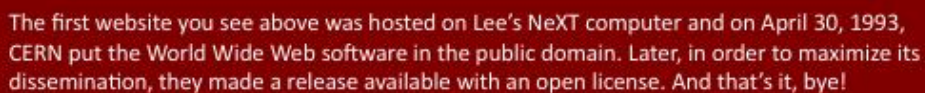
Definition & Meaning: parishioner

<https://www.britannica.com/dictionary/parishioner>

A festive Christmas border featuring red and gold ornaments, holly leaves, pine branches, and red poinsettias on a red background. The border is composed of various holiday-themed elements including large red and gold baubles, smaller gold and red beads, holly leaves with red berries, pine needles, and red poinsettia flowers. The entire design is set against a solid red background.

Nowadays, we take it for granted: the world wide web.
I could now continue with the introduction, but I won't because it is about the birth of the internet and not the snowball that turned into an avalanche which regularly buries villages.

A British scientist named **Tim Berners-Lee** in 1989. He's still alive. He invented it while working at CERN and it was originally conceived and developed "to meet the demand for automated information-sharing between scientists in universities and institutes around the world" (CERN). What you see below is a recreation of the first website.



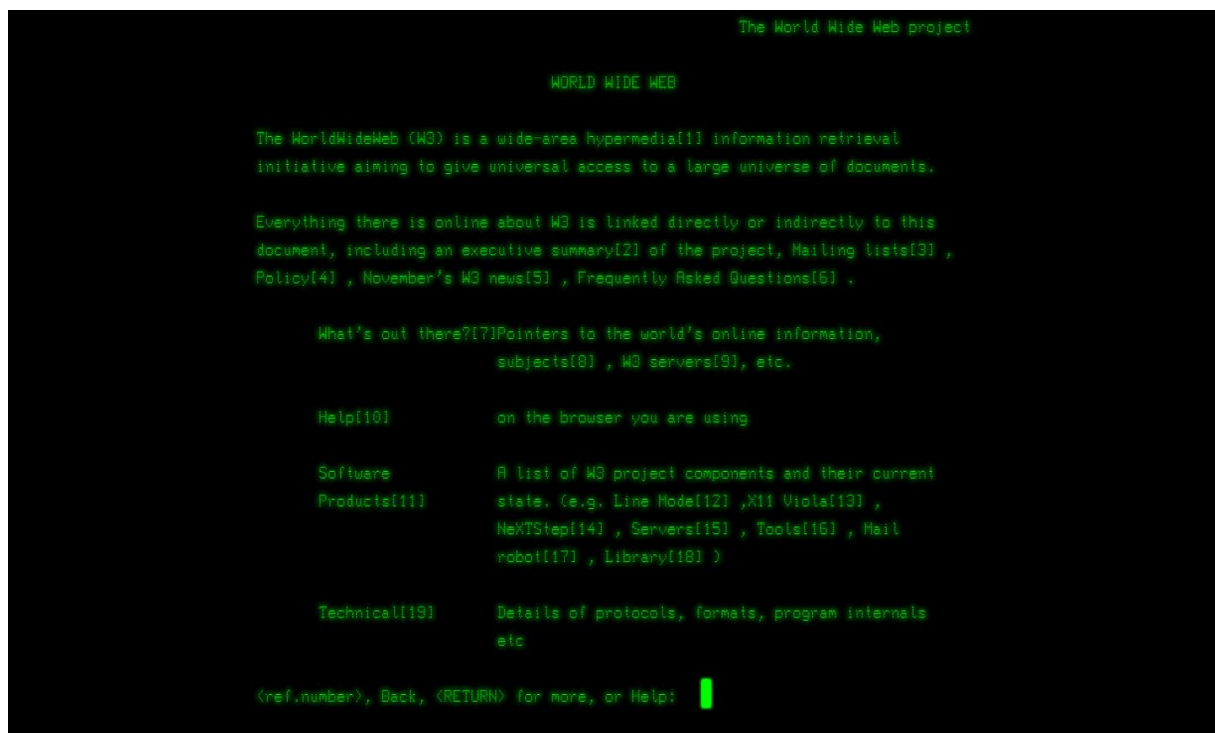
Nowadays, we take it for granted: the world wide web.

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So, who invented the World Wide Web?

A British scientist named **Tim Berners-Lee** in 1989. He's still alive.

He invented it while working at CERN and it was originally conceived and developed *"to meet the demand for automated information-sharing between scientists in universities and institutes around the world"* ([CERN](https://home.cern/science/computing/birth-web)). What you see below is a recreation of the first website.



The first website you see above was hosted on Lee's NeXT computer and on April 30, 1993, CERN put the World Wide Web software in the public domain. Later, in order to maximize its dissemination, they made a release available with an open license. And that's it, bye!

Comment: I wouldn't have been able to continue the introduction, because the image took up a lot of space. However, I wanted to write about it, because it is still pretty interesting that it has been rather a short time since it was invented and where it is nowadays.

Sources

The birth of the Web

<https://home.cern/science/computing/birth-web>

Little Door Nr. 17



Little Door to the Seventeenth of December

Sonnet 5 by William Shakespeare
(??.??.???? – May 3, 1616 Gregorian)

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
Will play the tyrants to the very same
And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
For never-resting time leads summer on
To hideous winter, and confounds him there;
Sap checked with frost, and lustry leaves quite gone,
Beauty o'er-snowed and bareness every where:
Then were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.



Sonnet 5 by William Shakespeare

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A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass,
Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
Nor it, nor no remembrance what it was:
But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

Short Biography



Born: April 23, 1564 in [Stratford-upon-Avon](#)

Died: April 23 or May 3, 1616 (Textarchive mentions his date of birth wasn't recorded, only the day of baptism on April 26, 1564)

Shakespeare is probably the most famous English poet; his plays are his most enduring legacy as well as his poems which remain popular to this day (I also own a book of Shakespeare quotes called "Lexikon der Shakespeare Zitate" by Katrin Fischer, published by Reclams)

Verlag). His parents were **John Shakespeare** married **Mary Arden**, their infant daughters died making him the eldest child. His father was a glove-maker and became an important public figure in Stratford by fulfilling civic duties. This status made it even more likely that he'd sent his children to the local grammar school.

He lived with his parents until the age of 18 and married the already pregnant Anna Hathaway, who was 26 years old, in a rush. They had three children - two being twins. One twin died at the age of 11.

Unfortunately, we don't know much about the time between 1585 - when the twins were baptized - and 1592 - when his reputation was established in London -. Hence these are called 'The Lost Years'. His first printed works, however, were '**Venus and Adonis**' in 1593 and '**The Rape of Lucrece**' in 1594, two long poems. He was a founding member of *The Lord Chamberlain's Men*, a company of actors. For almost 20 years, he produced two plays each year. He'd remain in the company for the rest of his career. From 1603 onwards, he evolved into *The King's Men* under the patronage of [King James I](#) (reigned from 1603-1625).

By 1597, Shakespeare accumulated enough wealth to buy New Place, the largest house in the borough of Stratford-upon-Avon. During his lifetime he wrote 38 plays, 2 narrative poems, 154 sonnets, and a variety of other poems.

"It is actually thanks to a group of actors from Shakespeare's company that we have about half of the plays at all. They collected them for publication after Shakespeare died, preserving the plays. These writings were brought together in what is known as the First Folio ('Folio' refers to the size of the paper used). It contained 36 of his plays, but none of his poetry. "
([Shakespeare birthplace trust](#))

Source

William Shakespeare (in German)

<https://www.textarchiv.com/william-shakespeare>

William Shakespeare Biography (in English)

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/william-shakespeare/william-shakespeare-biography/>

Stratford-upon-Avon

<https://www.shakespeare.org.uk/explore-shakespeare/shakespedia/stratford-upon-avon/>

James I (r. 1603-1625)

<https://www.royal.uk/james-i>

Little Door Nr. 18



Little Door to the Eighteenth of December

Today it's time for an unusual door: an urban legend from Hongkong.

We write the year 1989, 8 years before Hongkong would end to be a British colony. In December that year, the Chiu Yong Kee cha chaan teng in Tai Po Tin took a phone order for four people's worth of food, to be delivered to a unit in Hei Sau Gardens located in western Tai Po Tin. Once on the fourth floor, the delivery man knocked on the door. It opened, but only a small crack, and the food was asked to be left outside. The delivery man placed it in front of the doors, took the money and left.

However, when the owner of the restaurant counted the money that evening, he noticed that there was "hell money" (joss paper burned by Chinese people to help their loved ones in the afterlife). After it happened again on the next day, the owner was convinced that it was a prank so he decided to deliver it the next time himself. As he had predicted, around the same hour the same order came in with the same address. He drove to the place and experienced the same thing: the door only opened slightly, a hand reached out with money and he saw that it was the legal currency. Still, he kept it separate from the rest of the restaurant's money. What must be, must be. On the next day, it was joss paper again.

Consequently, the owner – still terrified - called the police and told them about these weird occurrences. The police arrived at the unit in Hei Sau Gardens and when no one opened the door they forced their way in. As they entered, they noticed a stench in the air and then saw four dead bodies sitting at a table. They have died while playing mahjong.

Despite being dead for a week, finger prints were found on the "hell money" from two individuals and neighbours noted that they were disturbed by the sounds of mahjong coming from the apartment. Furthermore, an autopsy revealed that food was found in the corpses that had only been digested recently. Authorities were baffled by these findings.

Maybe this urban legend was inspired by a similar story that is said to have occurred in 1953. <https://chinesefolktales.blogspot.com/2014/06/a-haunting-in-hong-kong-case-from-1953.html>

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Comment: I decided to write about this urban legend, because I watched a thrilling video about it on Youtube, unfortunately the narrator used AI-generated images which looked like they were drawn, but I didn't notice it until I scrolled through the comment section. Thematically it doesn't really fit an advent calendar, being sandwiched between poems and actual facts :/

Sources

Hong Kong's spookiest ghost stories and urban legends
<https://www.timeout.com/hong-kong/things-to-do/top-spooky-ghost-stories-hong-kong>

A Haunting in Hong Kong--a Case From 1953
<https://chinesefolktales.blogspot.com/2014/06/a-haunting-in-hong-kong-case-from-1953.html>



Little Door to the Nineteenth of December

The Truce Of Christmas by G. K. Chesterton

(April 29, 1874 – June 14, 1936)

Passionate peace is in the sky—
And in the snow in silver sealed
The beasts are perfect in the field,
And men seem men so suddenly—
(But take ten swords and ten times ten
And blow the bugle in praising men;
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And misers haggle and madmen clutch,
And there is peril in praising much.
And we have the terrible tongues uncurled
That praise the world to the sons of the
world.)

The idle humble hill and wood
Are bowed upon the sacred birth,
And for one little hour the earth
Is lazy with the love of good—
(But ready are you, and ready am I,
If the battle blow and the guns go by;
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And the men that hate herd all together,
To pride and gold, and the great white
feather
And the thing is graven in star and stone
That the men who love are all alone.)

Hunger is hard and time is tough,
But bless the beggars and kiss the kings,
For hope has broken the heart of things,
And nothing was ever praised enough.
(But bold the shield for a sudden swing
And point the sword when you praise a
thing,
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And mime and merchant,thane and thrall
Hate us because we love them all;
Only till Christmastide go by
Passionate peace is in the sky.)



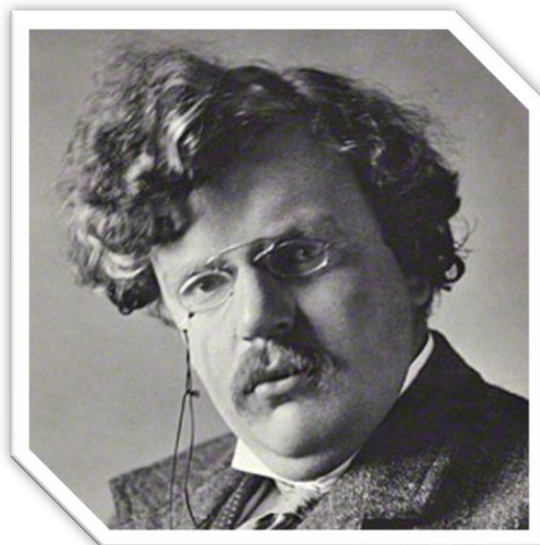
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And in the snow in silver sealed
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And there is peril in praising much.
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For hope has broken the heart of things,
And nothing was ever praised enough.
(But bold the shield for a sudden swing
And point the sword when you praise a thing,
For we are for all men under the sun,
And they are against us every one;
And mime and merchant, thane and thrall
Hate us because we love them all;
Only till Christmastide go by
Passionate peace is in the sky.)

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Are bowed upon the sacred birth,
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And they are against us every one;
And the men that hate herd all together,
To pride and gold, and the great white
feather
And the thing is graven in star and stone
That the men who love are all alone.)

Short Biography



Born: May 29, 1874 in Campden Hill in Kensington, London

Died: June 14, 1936 at his home in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire

Chesterton's parents were **Marie Louise**, née Grosjean, and **Edward Chesterton**.

At the age of one month, he was baptized into the Church of England, even though his parents were irregularly practising [Unitarians](#) (-> "*Unitarians are so called because they insist on the oneness of God and because they affirm the essential unity of humankind and of creation*" BBC). As a young man he became fascinated with the occult.

He was educated at St Paul's School and then attended Slade School of Art in order to become an illustrator. While attending University College London, he also took classes in literature. At the end he did not complete a degree in either, though.

- **1896-1902:** Employed by London publisher Redway, and T. Fisher Unwin. Here, he started his journalistic work as a freelance art and literary critic.
- **1901:** Married **Frances Blogg**, their marriage lasted the rest of his life.
- **1902:** The Daily News gave him a weekly opinion column.
- **1905:** Got a weekly column in The Illustrated London News where he'd work for the next 30 years.
- The character he's best known for is **priest-detective Father Brown**, who appeared only in short stories. His best-known novel is **The Man Who Was Thursday**.
- He loved to debate and engaged in friendly public disputes with men like **George Bernard Shaw**, **H. G. Wells**, **Bertrand Russell** and **Clarence Darrow**.
- **1922:** Entered full communion with the Catholic Church.
- **1931:** Invitation by the BBC to give a series of radio talks. From 1932 until his death, he made 40 appearances per year.
- **14 June, 1936:** Chesterton died of congestive heart failure in the morning. During his life, he published 80 books, several hundred poems, some 200 short stories, 4000 essays, and several plays. He also wrote articles for the Encyclopædia Britannica (which I often use, the online version that is) and wrote the entry for Charles Dickens and part of the entry on Humour in the 14th edition (1929).

There's also a dark chapter to him, as Chesterton also had an anti-semitic side to him.

While he openly expressed his opposition to Hitler's rule from day one, he *"believed that there was a "Jewish Problem" in Europe, in the sense that he believed that Jewish culture (though not Jewish ethnicity) separated itself from the nationalities of Europe [...] He suggested the formation of a Jewish homeland as a solution, and was later invited to Palestine by Jewish Zionists who saw him as an ally in their cause. Later he grew out of the notion of Palestine as a Jewish homeland, and suggested somewhere in Africa instead."* (Textarchive)

There's more about his antisemitism in his biography. Eugenics, on the other hand, is an idea

he completely rejected writing in response to the **Mental Deficiency Act of 1913** *"as if one had a right to dragoon and enslave one's fellow citizens as a kind of chemical experiment"* (the bill proposed sterilizing people deemed "mentally defective").

Note: I didn't read the biography of any of these poets until I decided to make a blog post about it. Since I already featured their poem, I feel it is also my duty to include things like that if I come across it.

Sources

G. K. Chesterton

<https://www.textarchiv.com/g-k-chesterton>

Unitarianism at a glance

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/unitarianism/ataglance/glance.shtml>

Little Door Nr. 20



Little Door to the Twentieth of December

In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport by Emma Lazarus
(July 22, 1849 - November 19, 1887)

Here, where the noises of the busy town,
The ocean's plunge and roar can enter not,
We stand and gaze around with tearful awe,
And muse upon the consecrated spot.

No signs of life are here: the very prayers
Inscribed around are in a language dead;
The light of the "perpetual lamp" is spent
That an undying radiance was to shed.

What prayers were in this temple offered up,
Wrung from sad hearts that knew no joy on earth,
By these lone exiles of a thousand years,
From the fair sunrise land that gave them birth!

How as we gaze, in this new world of light,
Upon this relic of the days of old,
The present vanishes, and tropic bloom
And Eastern towns and temples we behold.

Again we see the patriarch with his flocks,
The purple seas, the hot blue sky o'erhead,
The slaves of Egypt,—omens, mysteries,—
Dark fleeing hosts by flaming angels led.

A wondrous light upon a sky-kissed mount,
A man who reads Jehovah's written law
'Midst blinding glory and effulgence rare,
Unto a people prone with reverent awe.

The pride of luxury's barbaric pomp,
In the rich court of royal Solomon—
Alas! we wake: One scene alone remains, —
The exiles by the streams of Babylon.

Our softened voices send us back again
But mournful echoes through the empty hall:
Our footsteps have a strange unnatural sound,
And with unwonted gentleness they fall.

The weary ones, the sad, the suffering,
All found their comfort in the holy place,
And children's gladness and men's gratitude
'Took voice and mingled in the chant of praise.

The funeral and the marriage, now, alas!
We know not which is sadder to recall;
For youth and happiness have followed age,
And green grass lieth gently over all.

Nathless the sacred shrine is holy yet,
With its lone floors where reverent feet once trod.
Take off your shoes as by the burning bush,
Before the mystery of death and God.



In the Jewish Synagogue at Newport by Emma Lazarus

Here, where the noises of the busy town,
The ocean's plunge and roar can enter not,
We stand and gaze around with tearful
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With its lone floors where reverent feet
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Take off your shoes as by the burning
bush,
Before the mystery of death and God.

Short Biography

(picture on the next page)



Born: July 22, 1849 in New York City

Died: November 19, 1887 in New York City

She was the fourth of seven children and born to a Sephardic Jewish family of Portuguese descent. Her father, **Moses Lazarus**, was a successful sugar merchant and her mother was called **Esther**. Moses wanted to ensure his children received the best education and they were taught multiple languages including German, French, and Italian by a private tutor. At the age of 17, she had already written a book of poems called **Poems and Translations: Written Between the Ages of Fourteen and Sixteen**. Her father supporter her and published the book for private circulation. When Lazarus decided to sent one copy to [Ralph Waldo Emerson](#) (1803-1882). He quickly became her mentor and when she published her next book of poetry in 1871, her main poem was dedicated "*To My Friend, Ralph Waldo Emerson.*" The book was titled *Admetus and Other Poems*.

- **1874:** Published her first novel called **Alide: An Episode in Goethe's Life** based on the autobiography of the German writer Goethe.
- **1878:** Published her second and last work of fiction with the title **The Eleventh Hour** in *Scribner's Monthly*. For the next decade, her poems were published in American magazines.
- **1881:** Her poem **Progress and Poverty** was published in the New York Times. The same year she published a translation of the well-known German-Jewish poet [Heinrich Heine](#) (1797-1856). It was entitled **Poems and Ballads of Heinrich Heine**.
- **1882:** Published another translation of Heinrich Heine with the title **Songs of a Semite: The Dance to Death and Other Poems**.

*"As Lazarus continued to write, she used her poems and essays to speak out against the persecution of Jews in Europe and growing anti-Semitism in the United States. **She publicly proclaimed her identity as a Jewish poet and advocated for Jewish issues internationally.***

Lazarus wrote in various publications promoting Zionism and a Jewish homeland in Palestine. In addition to her writing, she also met with immigrants and refugees, volunteered at the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and helped establish the Hebrew Technical Institute in New York to provide Jewish immigrants with vocational training." ([National Women's Museum](#))

- **1883:** Founded the Society for the Improvement and Colonization of East European Jews. The same year she wrote her poem **The New Colossus** which was to be auctioned to raise money for the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. In order to inspire continued work on the statue, the organizers published it in the *Catalogue of the Pedestal Fund Art Loan Exhibition at the National Academy of Design*.
- **May 1885 - September 1887:** Second trip to Europe to participate in social reform. She met with **Robert Browning**, **William Morris**, and Jewish leaders on her first trip. Documented in her essay "*A Day in Surrey with William Morris*".
- **November 19, 1887:** Died in New York City after she returned home sick from her trip through Europe.

You may know the poem which is engraved at the base of the Statue of Liberty:
"*Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.*"

The full poem goes as follows:

Not like the brazen giant of Greek fame,
With conquering limbs astride from land to land;
Here at our sea-washed, sunset gates shall stand
A mighty woman with a torch, whose flame
Is the imprisoned lightning, and her name
Mother of Exiles. From her beacon-hand
Glows world-wide welcome; her mild eyes command
The air-bridged harbor that twin cities frame.
"Keep, ancient lands, your storied pomp!" cries she
With silent lips. "Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me,
I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"

Source: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46550/the-new-colossus>

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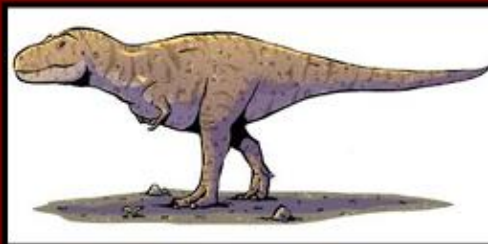
Little Door Nr. 21



Little Door to the 21st of December

I'm a big fan of Jurassic Park since I share the fascination for dinosaurs with millions of other people. Of course, they are presented spectacularly in these movies and there's one scene you may remember from the 2001 movie where a Tyrannosaurus Rex fights a Spinosaurus. And while I have no objections against cool fictional fights between two different dinosaurs, it's best we know about their reality too: how they lived, when they lived, etc.

Both the Tyrannosaurus Rex and the Spinosaurus lived in the Late Cretaceous, with the Spinosaurus living 99-94 million years ago and the Tyrannosaurus 68-66 million years ago. So, 26 million years lie in between these amazing creatures of Earth's ancient past. Moreover, Spinosaurus was the largest meat-eater to ever live and the Tyrannosaurus was the only carnivore of that size during its time and would have never faced a size-matched adversary. It may be a bummer, but it's also incredibly fascinating to learn about these vast periods of time. Also, don't forget that they were just animals too – not monsters. The carnivores, herbivores and scavengers – from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous period.



Tyrannosaurus (upper left)
Spinosaurus (lower right)



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Length: 12 m
Weight: 7,000 Kg
Diet: carnivorous

illustration 23 - A Tyrannosaurus

Length: 14 m
Weight: 7,400 Kg
Diet: carnivorous

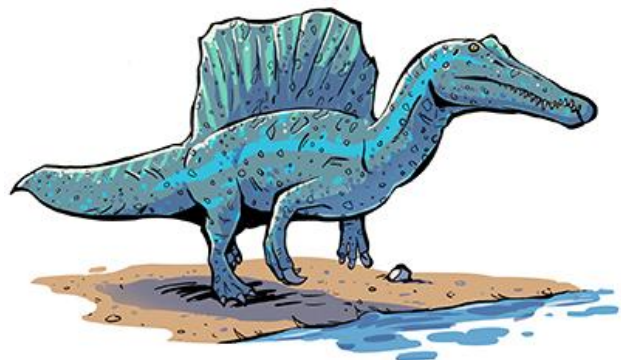


illustration 24 - A Spinosaurus

Comment: In the future, I'll talk about many other prehistoric creatures - from the **Ichthyostega** (which lived in the Late-Devonian) to the **Gigantopithecus** (which lived from the Pliocene epoch of the late Tertiary to the mid-Pleistocene epoch of the Quaternary). My current English vocabulary probably wouldn't do justice to describe my fascination with these ancient creatures, and plant life is not any less interesting to me.

I very much recommend the book "The Complete Illustrated Encyclopedia of Dinosaurs & Prehistoric Creatures" (language: English).

ISBN: 978-1-846-81209-5 | **Price:** UK £11.99 / US \$18.99

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Spinosaurus

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Little Door Nr. 22



Little Door to the 22nd of December

For over 3,000 years – from around 3100 B.C to 30 B.C. –, Ancient Egypt with its pharaohs existed. It was neither a monolithic nor static society, as there were many dynasties during this long time period. This can also be seen by the different burial sites such as the Valley of the Kings (18th, 19th and 20th dynasty - 1539–1075 B.C.) and the Great Pyramid of Giza (c. 2543–c. 2436 B.C.) built by Cheops, the second King of the 4th dynasty.

Throughout much of its history, Ancient Egypt followed a polytheistic religion where many different gods and goddesses were venerated. So, here's a few of them you may have already heard about:

- ☐ Osiris – The God of the Underworld
Abydos, in Upper Egypt, was an important cult centre for him
- ☐ Amun-Ra – God associated with the Sun
Luxor, ancient Thebes, particularly important during the New Kingdom
- ☐ Maat – God associated with truth, justice and order
He was the god who would weigh a person's deeds against a feather.
"If the person had committed a great deal of wrong, the person's heart would be heavier than the feather and the person's soul would be obliterated. On the other hand, if their deeds were generally good, they passed forward and had the opportunity to successfully navigate the underworld." ([LiveScience](#))

Lastly, let's move on to the Egyptian writing.

As you may be aware, their hieroglyphic script is unlike our modern alphabet. The earliest inscriptions date back about 5,200 years. Barry Kemp, a professor of Egyptology, described it as a living oral language where most hieroglyphs represent the sounds of consonants and certain emphatically expressed vowels.

After Alexander the Great conquered Egypt, the Greek language became widely used. Coptic, an Egyptian language that used the Greek alphabet, was used after Christianity spread throughout Egypt. During the 5th century the hieroglyphic writing style became extinct. Arabic spread in 641 A.D. and is widely used in the country to this day.

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Comment: Ancient civilizations, such as Egypt, fascinate people to this day. Sadly, there are many conspiracy theorists out there who either seek to downplay their accomplishments (rambling about aliens *cough* The History Channel *cough*) or deceive their audience by implying it was a monolithic and static society (like a certain TikTokker who's been debunked by [Miniminuteman](#) aka Milo Rossi). **Archeology is about finding facts, not truths.** There may not have been visits of extraterrestrials at any point during Earth's existence, but what we can be certain of: there were many amazing civilizations over the last several thousand years. **Their history, accomplishments, society and culture are worth researching.** As everyone else, archeologists depend on funding from institutions in order to do their work in the first place. **A better understanding of the past also gives us insight into the challenges these people faced, and perhaps we even learn the one or other thing - from their failures and successes.**

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Great Pyramid of Giza

<https://www.britannica.com/place/Great-Pyramid-of-Giza>

Milo Rossi (Miniminuteman)

<https://www.youtube.com/@miniminuteman773>



Little Door to the 23rd of December

Today's the last day before Christmas, at least here in Germany. I might consider doing one for the 25th too. However, today we will focus on a place my grandma and grand-grandma once called their home: East Prussia, or Königsberg to be precise.

Due to the limitation here, we will stick to a short summary of the history; to me it is still important as it is my historic identity (part of my national identity: German). Historic because it was once part of Germany, and in history this region will remain in order to rest for good.

Linguistically, the name Prussia is of Baltic origin. The Teutonic Order, however, exterminated the ancient inhabitants called Prusi (who lived in an area between Vistula and Neman River).

- 📖 1308: The Knights conquer the Polish province of Pomorze.
- 📖 1466: Poland recovers Pomorze
- 📖 1525: Royal Prussia becomes a secular duchy.
- 📖 1657: Treaty of Wehlau, freed Royal Prussia from Polish suzerainty
- 📖 1701: The Elector of Brandenburg, Friedrich III. (1657-1713) becomes king in Prussia.
- 📖 1815: The name 'East Prussia' was given to the easternmost province of Prussia, the boundaries remained unchanged until the First World War (36,995 km² / 14,284 miles²).
- 📖 1919: Treaty of Versailles – the Memel (Klaipėda) territory was taken from Germany and incorporated into Lithuania in 1924, the district of Soldau (Działdowo) given to Poland and the regency of Marienwerder (Kwidzyn) joined East Prussia. The Polish corridor and Danzig separated it territorially from Germany.
- 📖 1945: Partition of East Prussia – southern part was given to Poland, the northern part to the Soviet Union and the Klaipėda territory reincorporated into Lithuania.

Assimilation of the Old Prussians (Prusi) also occurred:

"During the 13th century, the Old Prussians were conquered by the Teutonic Knights, and gradually assimilated over the following centuries. The former German state of Prussia took its name from the Baltic Prussians, although it was led by Germans who had assimilated the Old Prussians; the old Prussian language was extinct by the 17th or early 18th century."

(Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias)

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([Academic Dictionaries and Encyclopaedias](#))

...



illustration 25 - Map of East Prussia in 1939 (source: [Wikimedia](#))

Sources

Comment: As I explained it in the little door, I wrote about East Prussia and a very short summary of its history because my grandma (1942-2023) and grand grandma (1920-2016) were born in Königsberg. I figured the one or other might be interested in it too.

In one of my blog posts, in German though, I talked about the **historic identity** that is different to the **national identity** (in the here and now). The historic identity is exclusive to former German territory where the focus is on preserving the memory, culture and realities of the people back then - the bright, dark and grey chapters alike. However, as some associations of expellees already do, this can also include reaching out to the people who

currently live there and connect by doing projects and festivals together or working on educational material (for instance: after the Second World War, Soviet Russia annexed eastern Poland and Stalin [displaced the Polish citizens](#) forcing them to move westwards). Generally speaking, anyone who is interested in the history and culture is welcome. As long as the person isn't an imperialist who wants to retake the territory. The Putins of the world can go to hell and burn forever.

"With the acquiescence of the western allies, the Soviets re-annexed eastern Poland, Bessarabia, and northern Bukovina. Though the Soviet Union also annexed the Baltic states, those annexations were never recognized by Britain or the United States. Poland annexed Pomerania, Silesia, and southern East Prussia; the new German-Polish border lay along the line of the Oder and Neisse Rivers." (The Soviet Union and Europe after 1945 - USHMM)

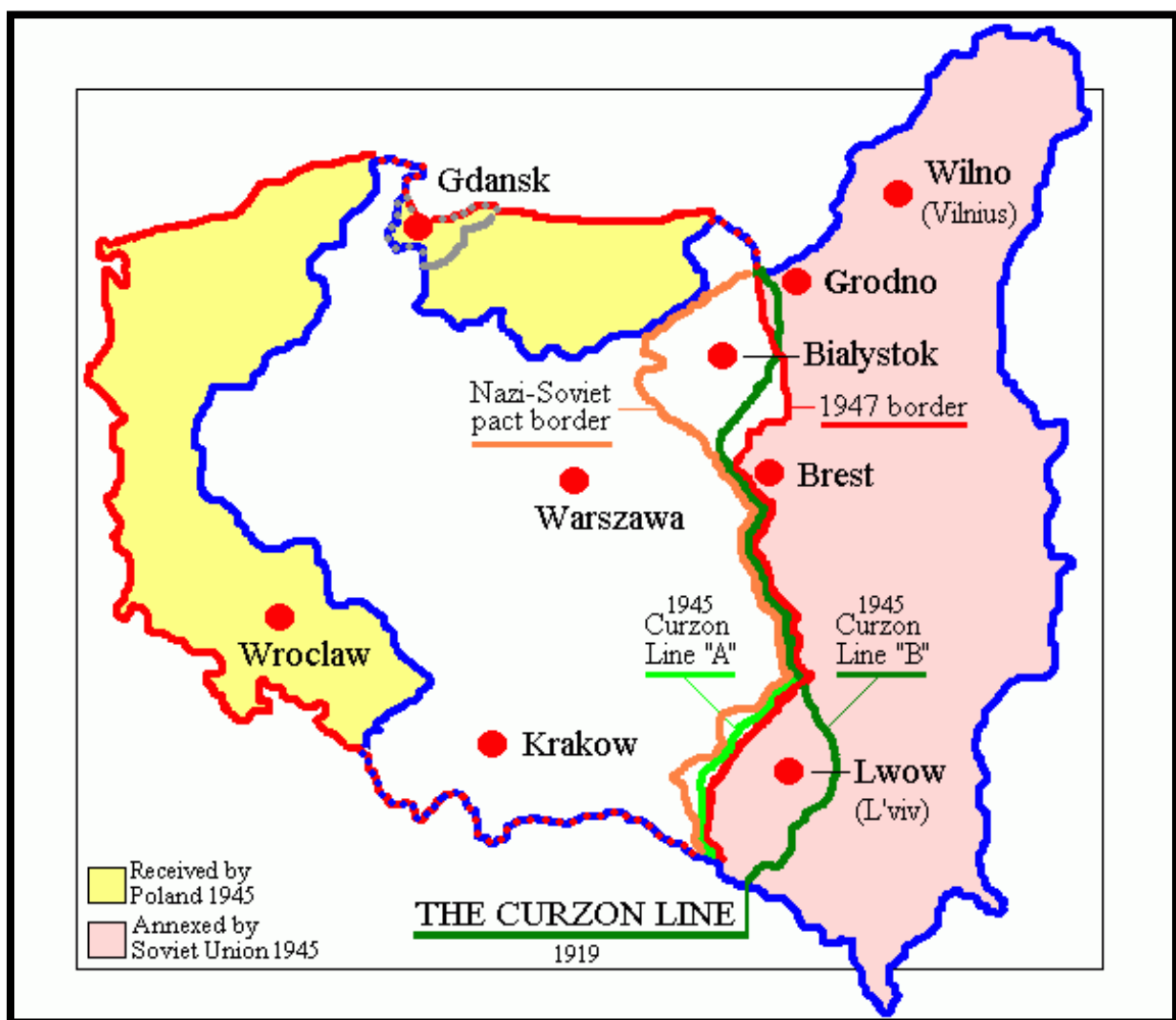


illustration 26 - Between 1944 and 1946, Ukrainian-Polish population transfers also took place (source: [Wikipedia](#)) 483,000 Ukrainians were moved from Poland to Ukraine and 790,000 Poles were transported from Ukraine to Poland - thus being one of the largest transfers undertaken in postwar Europe.

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Little Door Nr. 24-I



Little Door to the 24th of December

Today's the last day of the Advent calendar, at least in Europe. So, naturally, we will talk about Santa Claus and his origins.

Santa Claus is based on traditions associated with Saint Nicholas (which is celebrated on December 6). It was the Dutch who transported the legend of Saint Nicholas (Sinterklaas) to New Amsterdam (now New York, the English conquered it in 1664) with the customs of giving children gifts and sweets.

The current depiction of Santa with an impressive white beard, dressed in a red suit with a black belt and white fur trim, black boots, and a soft red cap was the creation of Haddon Sunblum (1899-1976) in 1931 who worked as an illustrator for the Coca-Cola company.

An earlier depiction was created by the cartoonist Thomas Nast (1840-1902) which was published in Harper's Weekly beginning in 1863. His version was heavily influenced by the description given in the poem 'A Visit from St. Nicholas' (aka 'Twas the Night Before Christmas) first published in 1823. You'll find the poem on the next page.

New Amsterdam, and thus New York as a trading hub, was the result of the Dutch Golden Age.

"The Dutch Golden Age emerged during the Netherlands' long struggle against Spanish rule. The Dutch revolution against Habsburg Spain began in 1566. The Seven Provinces joined together under the Union of Utrecht (1579) and formally declared their independence with the Act of Abjuration in 1581. The new, united Dutch republic fought the Eighty Years War to secure its independence which was finally achieved and recognized by Spain with the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648."
(New Amsterdam History Center)

England was another emerging power at the time and the competition between both countries eventually led to war: between 1652 and 1674, three separate Anglo-Dutch wars were fought. Pressure from France and England, as well as Orangists within the Netherlands, led to the collapse of the Dutch government and WIC bankruptcy.

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...

Little Door Nr. 24-II

A Visit from St. Nicholas by Clement Clarke Moore

(July 15, 1779 – July 10, 1863)

'Twas the night before Christmas, when all
through the house
Not a creature was stirring, not even a mouse;
The stockings were hung by the chimney with
care,
In hopes that St. Nicholas soon would be there;
The children were nestled all snug in their beds;
While visions of sugar-plums danced in their
heads;
And mamma in her 'kerchief, and I in my cap,
Had just settled our brains for a long winter's
nap,
When out on the lawn there arose such a
clatter,
I sprang from my bed to see what was the
matter.

Away to the window I flew like a flash,
Tore open the shutters and threw up the sash.
The moon on the breast of the new-fallen snow,
Gave a lustre of midday to objects below,
When what to my wondering eyes did appear,
But a miniature sleigh and eight tiny rein-deer,
With a little old driver so lively and quick,
I knew in a moment he must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came,
And he whistled, and shouted, and called them
by name: "Now, *Dasher!* now, *Dancer!* now
Prancer and *Vixen!* On, *Comet!* on, *Cupid!* on,
Donder and *Blitzen!* To the top of the porch! to
the top of the wall! Now dash away! dash away!
dash away all!"
As leaves that before the wild hurricane fly,
When they meet with an obstacle, mount to
the sky; So up to the housetop the coursers they
flew
With the sleigh full of toys, and St. Nicholas
too—
And then, in a twinkling, I heard on the roof
The prancing and pawing of each little hoof.

As I drew in my head, and was turning around,
Down the chimney St. Nicholas came with a
bound. He was dressed all in fur, from his head
to his foot, And his clothes were all tarnished
with ashes and soot; A bundle of toys he had
flung on his back, And he looked like a pedler
just opening his pack. His eyes—how they
twinkled! his dimples, how merry! His cheeks
were like roses, his nose like a cherry! His droll
little mouth was drawn up like a bow, And the
beard on his chin was as white as the snow; The
stump of a pipe he held tight in his teeth, And
the smoke, it encircled his head like a wreath;
He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook when he laughed, like a bowl full of
jelly.

He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of
myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread;
He spoke not a word, but went straight to his
work,
And filled all the stockings; then turned with a
jerk,
And laying his finger aside of his nose,
And giving a nod, up the chimney he rose;
He sprang to his sleigh, to his team gave a
whistle,
And away they all flew like the down of a
thistle.
But I heard him exclaim, ere he drove out of
sight—
"Happy Christmas to all, and to all a good
night!"

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Short Biography



Born: 1779 in New York City

Died: July 10, 1863 in Newport, Rhode Island

Clement's parents were Reverend Benjamin Moore and Charity Clarke Moore and was born an only child. Until he entered Columbia College, he was tutored by his father.

- **1798:** Graduation from Columbia College.
- **1801:** MA from Columbia University.
- **1809:** Published the book **A Compendious Lexicon of the Hebrew Language**.
- **1811:** Published a translation from a French book, called **A Complete Treatise on Merinos and Other Sheep**.
- **1813:** Married 19-year old Catharine Elizabeth Taylor. Together they had 9 children.
- **1823:** Began to work as a professor for oriental and Greek literature at the General Theological Seminary. During this year, the poem he wrote for his children (A Visit from St. Nicholas) was published anonymously and got increasingly popular since.
- **1829:** Awarded an LLD by the Columbia University.
- **1837:** The poem 'A Visit from St. Nicholas' was published in **The New-York Book of Poetry**.

- **1844:** Moore's collection **Poems** was published when it was acknowledged it was written by him. Due to the popularity, however, several people claimed authorship.
- **1850:** Retires from his work as a professor at the General Theological Seminary. Purchased a house in Newport, Rhode Island.
- **July 10, 1863:** Died in his house in Newport, Rhode Island.

Clement Clarke Moore was a very religious man, so when he inherited land he gave a large portion to of the land - then called Chelsea estate and now called Chelsea Square - to the General Theological Seminary.

The poem, however, is nowadays attributed to [Major Henry Livingston, Jr.](#) (1748-1828). I'm not sure what exactly the position of the Poetry Foundation is - the source of this poem -, since they wrote *"Livingston had also written verses for his children, but he made no written mention of "A Visit from St. Nicholas" during his lifetime, nor had his friends heard of his connection with the verses. They were said to have been published in a Poughkeepsie newspaper long before they appeared in the Troy Sentinel, but no copies of the paper containing the poem have ever turned up"*, but according to a scholar they also quote on Livingston's biography it was apparently proven otherwise: *"In Author Unknown: On the Trail of Anonymous (2000), scholar Don Foster, a Vassar College professor, gathered evidence to support Livingston as the author of the well-known poem."*

I personally am confused. So, I'll leave it as it is and hope you liked this blog entry of mine. Learning about the poets and their lives was something I enjoyed throughout this entry.

Sources

The Story of New Amsterdam

<https://www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org/bios/origins.html>

Clement Clarke Moore

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/clement-clarke-moore>

A Visit from St. Nicholas

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43171/a-visit-from-st-nicholas>

Major Henry Livingston, Jr.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poets/henry-livingston>

**In case I don't write anything else in the next three days,
I wish you a Happy New Year!**

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