

Ancient **Betrayals**

The Dark Side of Ancient Civilizations

6 x 1 hour

Documentary Series



MAIN CONCEPT

We aim to bring to life the full and until now, little-known story of the conspiracies, murders, and acts of treason behind some of the greatest betrayals in ancient history. The traitors who lived in a shadowy underworld of politics, intrigue and revenge, trusting no-one as they watched their backs to survive. One person's treachery was another's smart political move. There are many types of betrayals not always a knife in the back or the rope around the throat, but also political and personal betrayal which can be worse than torture. In this series we will look into some major pivotal acts of betrayal and with the help of ancient history experts, dig into their background, unravel the sequence of events with such dire consequences and understand their impact on history.

FORMAT

6 x 48 minutes documentary series from the creators of The Secrets of the Knights Templar, Warrior's Way, Footprints of Civilization and Empire Games. Each episode will be dedicated to one act of betrayal from Ancient history, rarely documented on television. We uncover the real stories and motivations behind the acts of betrayals. The series can easily be scalable and many more betrayals can be examined in future gripping seasons. In each episode and with help of experts, state of the art CGI and high quality recreations, we will look at the roots of the betrayals, how they happened and changed history.





KEY ELEMENTS

- A fresh look at some of the notorious traitors and betrayals of the ancient world
- We go deep into the minds of the conspirators, traitors and murderers by examining their personalities in detail
- Understand the reasons which led each individual to commit such acts of betrayal. What motivated them: pride, greed, vanity, jealousy, ambition?
- Key moments of each act of betrayal will be illustrated by faithful CGI reconstructions
- Our goal is to reveal the historical, political and social context surrounding these acts of betrayal.
- Faithful re-enactments will bring to life the dramatic events
- Expert interviews will focus on the dark side of ancient civilizations

EPISODE I**THE ASSASSINATION OF EMPEROR CALIGULA**

CASSIUS CHAEREA stabs emperor Caligula to death in a corridor beneath the Imperial Palace. Caligula's wife and daughter are also killed.

ROMAN EMPIRE: 24th January A.D.41

Cassius Chaerea, a decorated officer in the army of Germanicus, part of Caligula's personal Praetorian Guard, betrayer and murderer. Chaerea was disturbed by the increasingly unbalanced cruelty of Caligula, a boy he'd once carried on his shoulders and known since childhood. Caligula's desire for ever more power created enemies in the senate and several plots were forming to bring a bloody end to his rule. Chaeraea turned on the emperor provoked by the emperor's mocking of his voice and of his supposed effeminacy, calling him "Venus" (slang for a male eunuch) and "Priapus" (erection), Chaerea decided to assassinate Caligula during the Palatine games held in January AD41. There beneath the imperial palace on Palatine Hill, Cassius Chaerea and two other soldiers, stabbed the emperor to death then sought out and brutally killed his wife and child. Caligula's uncle, Claudius, was proclaimed emperor. Chaerea was sentenced to death, executed at his request with his personal sword.



EPISODE II**A COUNTRY BETRAYED TO DEFEAT A RIVAL**

KING OMPHIS plots to betray his country to an invader to defeat his rival King Porus.

MACEDONIAN EMPIRE: 326 B.C.E.

Even today, Omphis is known as India's first traitor. As Alexander the Great's army approached his Kingdom in an area near the Punjab, King Ambhi or Omphis of Taxiles sent an embassy to seek a negotiated surrender along with 200 talents of silver (5,000 kilos), 3,000 fat oxen, 10,000 sheep, 30 elephants and a force of 700 horsemen. Omphis offered his kingdom's surrender and assistance to Alexander, placing himself and all of his forces at Alexander's service in exchange for Alexander's help in defeating his enemy, King Porus. Alexander : defeated Porus on the banks of the river Hydaspes. The reward for Omphis' betrayal when Porus was defeated, would have been to share his lands. What happened next shows how conspiracies can sometimes backfire, because even after ultimately losing against Alexander at Hydaspes, Porus was able to "win the peace". Alexander decreed that Porus not only retained his territories, but he was granted lands previously held by Omphis. As for the traitor Omphis, Alexander rewarded him with a mere 1000 talents (25,000 Kilos) of gold.



EPISODE III**HANNIBAL, ONE OF HISTORY'S GREATEST WARRIORS, BETRAYED BY HIS OWN, CARTHAGE'S RULING ELITE**

The Carthaginian Senate, an elite who value their own comfort and luxury over the good of the people, slowly turn the screw on Hannibal.

CARTHAGE -202 B.C.E.

History would have been very different, and the Carthaginian Senate could have saved Carthage from destruction by the Romans if they had supported Hannibal, their most talented General. The Carthaginian senate continually refused aid and reinforcements to Hannibal. Were they hoping he would somehow defeat Rome without them properly funding his campaigns? The commercial interests of the Carthaginian oligarchy chose the reinforcement and supply of the occupied province of Iberia over Hannibal's campaign in Italy. Hannibal was unable to win a decisive victory and conquer Rome. In the long run, such short-term thinking would be the downfall of Carthage. The great Hannibal would die a few years later. Decades after his passing, Carthage would be obliterated by the Romans. Carthage essentially disappears from history after that, wiped out after centuries of existence, in a matter of days.





EPISODE IV

THE SLAUGHTER OF THE GREEKS AT THERMOPYLES

The traitor EPHIALTES leads the Persian army behind the Greek lines to surround and slaughter his countrymen.

ANCIENT GREECE - 480 B.C.E.

In 480 BC, the vast Persian army under Xerxes is conquering large areas of Greece; the allied Greek land forces attempt to block its advance at Thermopylae. Ephialtes betrayed his homeland Sparta by showing the much-larger Persian army a "single-wheel track" that ran behind the allied Greek forces lines. Once surrounded, the Greeks were, slaughtered despite a very brave stand by the Spartan king, Leonidas, who is killed with 300 Spartans. Ephialtes is sometimes portrayed as a grotesque figure, a hunchback, sometimes as a simple shepherd. He was the son of Eurydemus of Malis, a noted warrior, so what could have been his motive for selling his country? Thermopylae turned out to be a strategic defeat for the Greeks because it bought them valuable time. A few months later, they had a glorious victory in the naval Battle of Salamis. This was definitely a battle which changed the course of history.



EPISODE V

JAMUQA, BETRAYS HIS BLOOD BROTHER TEMÜJIN, THE FUTURE GENGHIS KHAN

MONGOL EMPIRE: 1201

Jamuqa was born into the Jadaran tribe, allies of the Borjin clan, to which the future Genghis Khan belonged. He established a very deep relationship with the future Conqueror of the world, and they became "blood brothers". Their bond was to strengthen after the kidnapping of Börte, Genghis Khan's wife by the Merkit clan. Genghis Khan turned to Jamuqa for help, which would involve 50,000 Mongol warriors against his wife's kidnappers. After this event and the subsequent wars against the Tatars. In 1201, Senggüm, the son of Wang Khan, envious of Genghis Khan, will be incited by Jamuqa to wage war against his blood brother Genghis Khan. However, we will see that just before the battle Jamuqa will provide Genghis Khan with vital information, allowing the future "Khan of the world" to defeat the enemy army. After this decisive victory, known as the Battle of the Thirteen sides, Temüjin's became Khan of all the united Mongol tribes and with his army he conquered vast areas in Eastern and Central Europe. Jamuqa was captured in 1206 and, accused of high treason and even though he was offered the chance to save his life, he asked to be executed by dying a noble death without the spilling of blood. His request was granted and his back broken by Temüjin's soldiers. It is said that Genghis Kahn buried Jamuqa with the golden belt that he had given to Jamuqa when they formed their bond of brotherhood.



EPISODE VI**LA MALINCHE: THE TRAITOR, THE SUBMISSIVE, THE LOVER.****The princess who betrayed the Aztecs**

AZTEC EMPIRE: 1592

The story of the beautiful woman who betrayed her people and led to their destruction. La Malinche, also known as Dona Marina, probably the most beautiful woman in the Hispanic world, La Malinche is known as the traitor and, in some circles, the harlot who betrayed and sold her people to the Spanish conquistadors. A former slave, Dona Marina was the interpreter and mistress of Hernán Cortés, the conqueror of "New Spain" or present-day Mexico. Born into an Aztec family, she knew Nahuatl, the Aztec language, when she was sold as a slave on the Yucatan Peninsula where she learned Mayan dialects. She was then able to translate the Aztec emperor's Nahuatl into the Mayan language. According to the historians, her linguistic skills proved crucial in helping Cortés conquer the Aztec Empire and thereby betraying her own people. La Malinche in Mexico has become synonymous with disloyalty and betrayal.





ALTERNATIVE EPISODE_1

THE ARREST OF JESUS OF NAZARETH

JUDAS ISCARIOT betrays Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

ROMAN EMPIRE: 30 - 33 B.C.E.



Is Judas Iscariot the Christian faith's most infamous traitor? Has his story ever really been told? Was his only motivation a mere 30 pieces of silver after following Jesus of Nazareth so faithfully for years? His motivations must have been more complex. In the story of Judas, there is also a sense of Jesus choosing his own betrayer. For the Roman magistrate, Pontius Pilate wasn't this a straightforward case of dealing with a local troublemaker? Was Pontius Pilate himself a cruel or wicked man? The evidence is contradictory, We will endeavour to represent the historical facts.



ALTERNATIVE EPISODE_2

THE ASSASSINATION OF PHARAOH RAMSES III

QUEEN TIYE plans to murder her husband Pharaoh Ramses III and put her favourite son Pentawer on the throne of ancient Egypt.

EGYPT: 1155 B.C.E.



The Harem Conspiracy describes a treasonous plot to murder Pharaoh Ramses III and establish Queen Tiye's favourite son Pentawer on the throne of ancient Egypt. Queen Tiye, one of the Pharaoh's three wives, conspired with the courtier Pebekkamen to murder her husband. They received help from other courtiers. The plot succeeded in killing the Pharaoh, but failed to establish Pentawer on the throne.



ALTERNATIVE EPISODE_3

THE CONSPIRACY AGAINST NERO

GAIUS CALPURNIO PISONE to be proclaimed as the new Princess of Rome.

ROMAN EMPIRE: 65 A.D.

The hatred that surrounded Nero was enhanced by his immoral and cynical conduct: he committed family and political crimes; he lowered his dignity as emperor. On 19 April 65 A.D. a conspiracy against Nero was discovered, organized by the Roman aristocrat Gaius Calpurnius Pisone. For the conspirators, at least 41 people including senators, military and intellectuals, it was mostly personal grudges mainly due to the excesses or cruel acts carried out by the emperor. The members of the conspiracy gathered in Pisone's villa in Baia. They decided to kill Nero during the games dedicated to him at the Circus Maximus. Consul Plautius Lateran should have thrown himself at the emperor's feet posing as a suppliant, only to stab him. Meanwhile, the other accomplices would intervene so that a blatant execution could take place. When the Emperor died, Gaius Calpurnius Pisone would be proclaimed as the new Princeps by the Praetorian Guard.



ALTERNATIVE EPISODE_4

THE ASSASSINATION OF PHILIP II OF MACEDONIA

OLYMPIA, QUEEN OF MACEDONIA, traitor and conspirator of the assassination of Philip II, to favor the throne to his son Alexander.

MACEDONIA KINGDOM: 359 B.C.E.

The murder and betrayal took place while the wedding of Cleopatra, daughter of Philip II, and Alexander was being celebrated. Magnificent games were organized, at the height of which Philip began to appear without the usual escort of bodyguards. Suddenly, Pausanias, a young Macedonian noble whom no one suspected and who had waited at the entrance, killed Philip as he passed. But who was the real conspirator of this betrayal that ended in blood? Historical sources seem to point the finger at Olympias of Epirus, the third wife of Philip II. Olympias wanted to give the throne to her son Alexander the Great, and she was very jealous of the king's last wife, Eurydice. The latter, in fact, shortly after Alexander's coronation, was brutally killed along with her newborn daughter. So was it Olympias who armed the hand of Pausanias, the murderer of Philip II? Was Olympias the instigator of the crime? Olympias was possessed by the same will to power that would animate her son Alexander. After being repudiated by Philip II of Macedon, she played, according to historians, a leading role in the series of plots that led to the king's death and further elimination of Alexander's rivals for the throne.



Some of our experts

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Prof. John Baines, University of Oxford

His principal areas of interest are Egyptian art, literature, religion, self-presentation, the position of writing in Egyptian society, and modelling social forms. In working on these



Prof. Francesca Cenerini, Bologna University, Italy

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Lucia Criscuolo is full professor of Greek History, Greek epigraphy, Papyrology, Ancient Economy.



Prof. Nino Luraghi, Princeton University

Nino Luraghi is a historian of ancient Greece. Trained in Italy and Germany, he has held academic appointments at Harvard University



Prof. Walter Scheidel, Stanford University

Scheidel's research focuses on ancient social and economic history, with particular emphasis on historical demography, labor, and state formation.



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