



The Book of Firsts: 150 World-Changing People and Events from Caesar Augustus to the Internet

Peter D'Epiro

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The Book of Firsts is an entertaining, enlightening, and highly browsable tour of the major innovations of the past twenty centuries and how they shaped our world.

Peter D'Epiro makes this handy overview of human history both fun and thought-provoking with his survey of the major “firsts”—inventions, discoveries, political and military upheavals, artistic and scientific breakthroughs, religious controversies, and catastrophic events—of the last two thousand years. Who was the first to use gunpowder? Invent paper? Sack the city of Rome? Write a sonnet? What was the first university? The first astronomical telescope? The first great novel? The first Impressionist painting? *The Book of Firsts* explores these questions and many more, from the earliest surviving cookbook (featuring parboiled flamingo) and the origin of chess (sixth-century India) to the first civil service exam (China in 606 AD) and the first tell-all memoir about scandalous royals (Byzantine Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora). In the form of 150 brief, witty, erudite, and information-packed essays, *The Book of Firsts* is ideal for anyone interested in an enjoyable way to acquire a deeper understanding of history and the fascinating personalities who forged it.

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