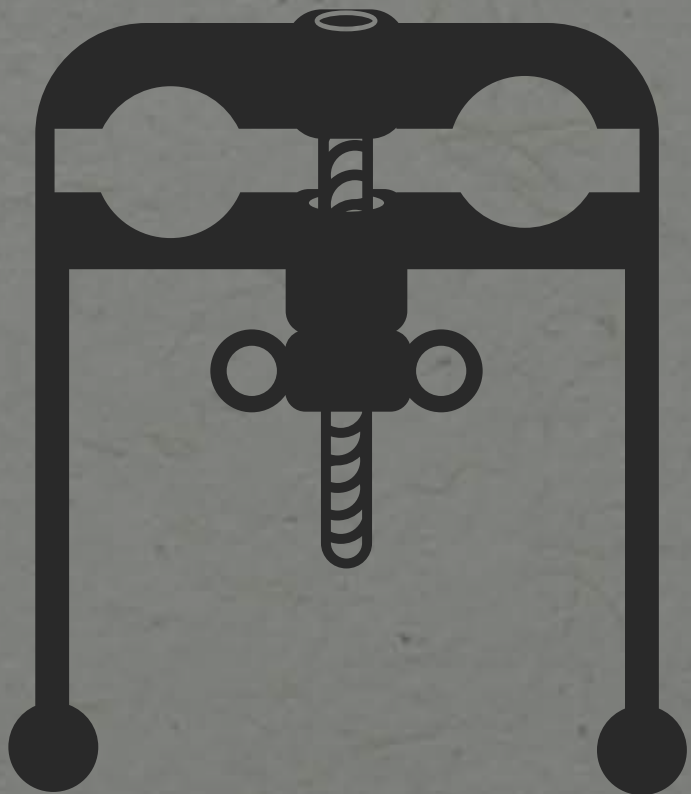


MEDIEVAL TORTURE DEVICES



THROUGHOUT HISTORY, PEOPLE HAVE USED TORTURE DEVICES TO PUNISH THEIR ENEMIES AND THOSE ACCUSED OF CRIMES. HERE ARE SOME FAMOUS TORTURE DEVICES FROM HISTORY, BOTH REAL AND LEGENDARY.



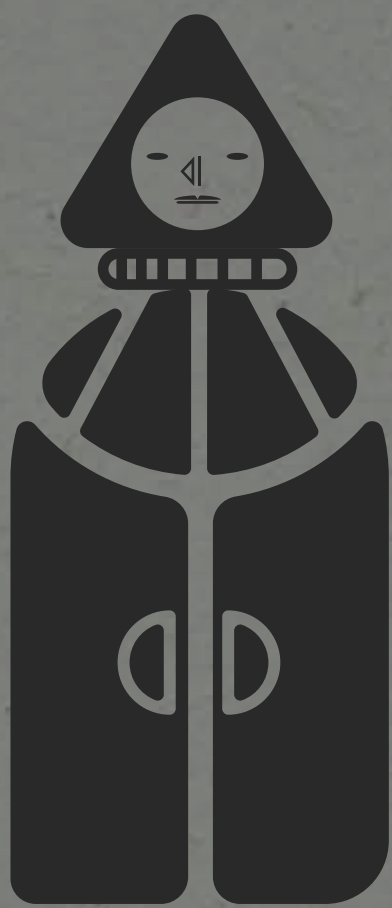
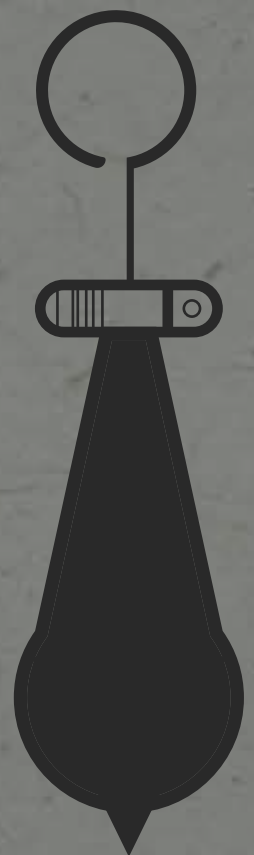
THE THUMBSCREW

TORTURERS USED THE THUMBSCREW, ANOTHER PAIN-INFLECTING DEVICE FROM EUROPE'S EARLY MODERN PERIOD (C.1450 TO 1750), TO CRUSH A PERSON'S FINGERS OR THUMBS.

SIMILARLY TO THE RACK, TORTURERS EMPLOYED THE THUMBSCREW AS A MEANS OF PUNISHMENT AND AN ATTEMPT TO ELICIT A CONFESSION. THE THUMBSCREW WAS ALSO KNOWN AS A "THUMBIKIN," WITH MANY SPELLING VARIATIONS.

PEAR OF ANGUISH

THE PEAR OF ANGUISH IS A DEVICE THAT EARLY MODERN EUROPEANS LABELED AS A MEDIEVAL TORTURE DEVICE. SUPPOSEDLY, A TORTURER WOULD INSERT THE DEVICE INTO A PERSON'S MOUTH, VAGINA OR ANUS IN ORDER TO WIDEN THE ORIFICE, CAUSING EXTREME PAIN. HOWEVER, SCHOLARS HAVE QUESTIONED WHETHER THESE DEVICES ORIGINATED IN THE MIDDLE AGES, A PERIOD THAT ENDED AROUND 1450.



IRON MAIDEN

ANOTHER DEVICE WITH A SKETCHY PROVENANCE IS THE IRON MAIDEN, A MYTHICAL INSTRUMENT OF TORTURE THAT 19TH-CENTURY EUROPEANS FALSELY ATTRIBUTED TO MEDIEVAL EUROPEANS. THAT'S BECAUSE THERE'S NO EVIDENCE OF AN IRON MAIDEN—AN UPRIGHT IRON CASKET WITH SPIKES ON THE INSIDE—EXISTING BEFORE THE 1800S.

THE MYTH THAT IRON MAIDENS EXISTED DURING THE MIDDLE AGES WAS LIKELY SPREAD BY GERMAN PHILOSOPHER JOHANN PHILIPP SIEBENKEES IN THE LATE 18TH CENTURY, WHO WROTE ABOUT HOW A COIN FORGER IN NUREMBERG WAS EXECUTED WITH ONE IN 1515. THE FIRST KNOWN IRON MAIDENS WERE CONSTRUCTED IN THE 19TH CENTURY, AND PASSED OFF IN MUSEUMS AS MEDIEVAL TORTURE DEVICES.

THE SCAVENGER'S DAUGHTER

DURING THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES, YEOMAN WARDERS AT THE TOWER OF LONDON ALSO USED THE SCAVENGER'S DAUGHTER AS A TORTURE DEVICE. THE SCAVENGER'S DAUGHTER WAS A METAL FRAME THAT COMPRESSED THE VICTIM'S BODY IN ON ITSELF.

COMPRESSION FROM THE SCAVENGER'S DAUGHTER WAS SO INTENSE IT COULD APPARENTLY CAUSE THE VICTIM TO START BLEEDING FROM THE NOSE, MOUTH AND OTHER PARTS OF THE BODY. THIS GRUESOME FORM OF TORTURE COULD RESULT IN DEATH.

