



The Ariadne Objective: The Underground War to Rescue Crete from the Nazis

Wes Davis

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The incredible true story of the World War II spies, including Patrick Leigh Fermor and John Pendlebury, who fought to save Crete and block Hitler's march to the East.

In the bleakest years of World War II, when it appeared that nothing could slow the German army, Hitler set his sights on the Mediterranean island of Crete, the ideal staging ground for German domination of the Middle East. But German command had not counted on the eccentric band of British intelligence officers who would stand in their way, conducting audacious sabotage operations in the very shadow of the Nazi occupation force.

The Ariadne Objective tells the remarkable story of the secret war on Crete from the perspective of these amateur soldiers – scholars, archaeologists, writers – who found themselves serving as spies in Crete because, as one of them put it, they had made “the obsolete choice of Greek at school”: Patrick Leigh Fermor, a Byronic figure and future travel-writing luminary who as a teenager had walked across Europe in the midst of Hitler's rise to power; John Pendlebury, a swashbuckling archaeologist with a glass eye and a swordstick, who had been legendary archeologist Arthur Evans's assistant at Knossos before the war; Xan Fielding, a writer who would later produce the English translations of books like *Bridge over the River Kwai* and *Planet of the Apes*; and Sandy Rendel, a future *Times* of London reporter, who prided himself on a disguise that left him looking more ragged and fierce than the Cretan mountaineers he fought alongside.

Infiltrated into occupied Crete, these British gentleman spies teamed with Cretan partisans to carry out a cunning plan to disrupt Nazi maneuvers, culminating in a daring, high-risk plot to abduct the island's German commander. In this thrilling untold story of World War II, Wes Davis offers a brilliant portrait of a group of legends in the making, against the backdrop of one of the war's most exotic locales.

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