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Ribera, c. 1806.

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Letter from the Editor

The 2016 Fall issue came together quickly. The Journal Team put out a call for papers and indeed, Saber and Scroll members responded, evidencing solid membership engagement and dedication to historical research. This issue contains two articles from Tormod Engvig. In the first article, Tormod discusses the German Battleship *Tirpitz* and its effect on allied convoys during WWII. In the second, Tormod continues his research in naval history with a discussion of the Washington Treaty 1921-1922 and its influence on the French and Italian navy. Stuart McClung continues the focus on WWII with his book review of *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein* by Jonathan Fennell.

The issue provides a good showing of American history as well. Ryan Lancaster discusses the Army's Camel Corps during the antebellum period. In addition, Anne Midgley and Stan Prager provide book reviews focusing on early American history, primarily the Revolutionary War period.

For a number of Saber and Scroll authors the journal provided them their first opportunity to get their work published. Indeed, many have gone on to publish in other journals or have written books. With this in mind, Jack Morato shares a piece with us that he published in the *International Social Science Review*, which focuses on the economics surrounding the Roman farmer during the last two centuries of the republic. In addition, Anne Midgley and Stuart McClung previously published their book reviews in H-War within H-net.

Medieval history is a popular area of study amongst Saber and Scroll members. In this tradition, Mat Hudson contributed an informative article devoted to Anglo-Saxon England.

I hope you enjoy the Fall Issue.

Michael Majerczyk
Editor-In-Chief

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Fleet-in-Being: *Tirpitz* and the Battle for the Arctic Convoys

Tormod B. Engvig

The history of the German battle fleet in World War II is largely one of struggle against hopeless odds, punctuated by brief but dramatic clashes as far afield as the South Atlantic and high Arctic. Yet despite its modest size in relation to its main adversary, the Royal Navy, the German battle fleet occupied a central, almost mythical place in the minds of British planners, who for much of the war saw the individual capital ships of the Kriegsmarine as potent threats to their maritime dominance. The most important role Adolf Hitler's capital ships performed was as a "fleet-in-being," where by their presence astride the Allies' vital seaborne trade routes they represented a significant threat.

Of all the Kriegsmarine's capital ships, none had a more palpable effect on British maritime strategy than the battleship *Tirpitz*. As the second and last unit of the *Bismarck* class, she was arguably the most powerful warship built in Europe before or since. However, her wartime career as her own fleet-in-being was neither very eventful nor very glamorous—especially when compared to the epic drama of the *Bismarck*, her famous sister, which has been immortalized in numerous books and a feature-length film. However, *Tirpitz* was—if more subtly so—by far the more effective ship, although she never fired her guns in anger at an Allied counterpart.¹

Tirpitz, her mundane life notwithstanding, not only contributed indirectly to major Allied shipping losses, but the threat she posed while lurking in Norway's fjords tied down significant Allied naval forces in northern Europe. This was at a time when Allied warships were hard pressed in other theatres. She also forced the British, who became obsessed with her destruction, to commit resources out of all proportion to her value in repeated attempts to sink her. These operations were costly both in terms of men and materiel and achieved little lasting success until 1943–1944. By then, the Allies had for all intents and purposes won the naval conflict in Europe, and *Tirpitz* had ceased to be a significant player in the war.

As the Chief of the Italian General Staff, Marshal Pietro Badoglio, once remarked, "The conception of a naval battle as an end in itself is absurd."² Echoing similar sentiments, Britain's First Sea Lord, Admiral Dudley Pound, asserted in 1942 that "It is only the politicians who imagine that ships are not earning their keep unless they are madly rushing about the ocean."³ While perhaps

unglamorous, the policy of weaker naval powers throughout history has often been to further their strategic goals by keeping their fleets intact, avoiding risking them against the enemy unless absolutely necessary. The fleet-in-being strategy—a term coined around 1690 during the War of the League of Augsburg—is an appealing option for naval powers that have little to gain and much to lose by risking their few precious capital ships in tests of strength against superior enemy forces. By keeping its fleet “in-being,” a weaker naval power risks little while possibly gaining much—forcing the enemy to react in accordance with its wishes, to a greater extent than if its fleet was squandered in costly naval engagements.⁴



Figure 1. “*The Lone Queen of the North.*” Lurking in Norway’s picturesque fjords, Tirpitz posed a grave menace to the Allied Arctic convoys. This is how the ship appeared during Operation Rösselsprung; she is seen here in Altafjord sometime after the abortive sortie. (<http://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-71000/NH-71390.html>)

Tirpitz was commissioned into a fleet that had been thrown into war prematurely with no hope of defeating the Royal Navy in open battle. When Hitler plunged the Third Reich into world war in September 1939, the Kriegsmarine was largely unprepared for a naval conflict. This lamentable situation (from a German standpoint) was very different from that which had faced the Kaiserliche Marine and the Imperial German Navy at the beginning of the Great War twenty-five years prior. In 1914 the German Navy was the second largest in the world behind the Royal Navy. Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the one responsible for sparking a battleship arms race with the British, had in fact contributed to driving that nation

into the Allied camp.⁵

However, the Allied defeat of Germany in 1918 saw draconian measures implemented in order to prevent its maritime resurgence. Besides being the catalyst for the German fleet's defiant scuttling at Scapa Flow in 1919, these measures largely succeeded in stymieing the Weimar Republic's technical and organizational means to rebuild the navy in the interwar years. By the time Hitler came to power and renounced the Versailles Treaty (brokering a naval deal with appeasement-minded Britain in the process), the Germans were hopelessly far behind their future adversaries in naval construction.⁶

Despite the tremendous hurdles faced by Hitler's Kriegsmarine during the rearmament period in the 1930s, its commander-in-chief, Grand-Admiral Erich Raeder, was determined to see the grandeur of the Kaiserliche Marine restored. It is reasonable to believe that Hitler himself (though largely devoid of naval competence) also craved, at least initially, the great-power status and political leverage of the traditional battle fleet. It was a fantastically ambitious program by any standard. Buoyed by Hitler's guarantees that there would be no war with Britain before 1944, Raeder envisioned a powerful fleet of battleships (after the *Bismarcks* would have followed the H-class, displacing over 56,300 metric tons), aircraft carriers, cruisers, destroyers, and submarines able to sweep the British from the North Sea by 1948. This is an important consideration and helps explode the myth that Hitler never really wanted to fight the British Empire or the West. Such a construction program could only have been geared in the long-term toward confronting the Anglo-American naval power bloc.⁷

As it was, Germany's extravagant "Z-plan" was rendered stillborn by the onset of hostilities in 1939. In retrospect, the German decision to reconstruct a battle fleet may have been folly; even if the necessary steel and manpower had been acquired for its ships, the question of where the fuel for operating such a navy would have come from is not clear. Indeed, Germany had enough trouble scrounging fuel for the few capital ships it did possess during World War II. The German war effort would probably have been better served by a stronger focus from the outset on U-boat production over surface ship building—in other words, on sea-denial versus sea-control weapons. Instead, the outbreak of World War II presented the German Navy with the worst of two worlds: an embryonic battle fleet and a U-boat arm that had been neglected in favor of the former until it was too late.⁸

Given the situation faced by the Kriegsmarine surface fleet at the outset of World War II, there were only two strategies for which Raeder's capital ships could be realistically employed: fleet-in-being and *guerre de course* (commerce raiding).

Raeder, being a proponent of the latter, envisioned his heavy units as solitary raiders prowling the sea lanes, using the vast expanse of the open ocean to evade Allied pursuers. For this kind of mission, his new cruisers and battleships were well suited; they were blessed with good range and high speed, able to outrun anything they could not outgun, and possessed ample facilities for reconnaissance float planes. Raeder was keenly aware of the tremendous disruptive potential these vessels could have on enemy shipping and naval movements, as Germany's enemies fumbled around the ocean trying to catch the elusive ships.⁹

While ultimately a failure, Raeder's commerce raiding doctrine with heavy units paid dividends early in the war. The 1940–1941 sorties of battleships *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* were particularly disruptive to Allied shipping. However, deeply distressed by the loss of *Bismarck* during her maiden sortie in May 1941, Hitler prohibited his capital ships from commerce raiding in the Atlantic. Instead, he ordered the Kriegsmarine surface ships rebased to occupied Norway. This was primarily to secure the Reich's northern flank against a potential Allied invasion, which the Führer feared and with which he was obsessed for most of the war. By keeping the surface ships in Norway they would not only serve as an effective fleet-in-being and deter invasion, but also be able to strike out against the Allied Lend-Lease convoys to Murmansk and Arkhangelsk in the Soviet Union, which had begun running the Arctic gauntlet soon after the Germans launched Operation *Barbarossa* in June 1941.¹⁰

In any case, the Kriegsmarine's use of capital ships as commerce raiders in the Atlantic was a dubious proposition by the end of 1942, as by then Allied detection measures and air surveillance had effectively closed the high seas to German surface warships. However, the Allies' Arctic supply route to the USSR was dreadfully vulnerable and could be interdicted far more easily, close as it lay to the Nazi-occupied Norwegian coast. Here, the Kriegsmarine's surface ships were always near safe harbors and could count on air support for their sorties. This, then, was the strategic situation that greeted *Tirpitz* on 10 January 1942, as she concluded her sea trials in the Baltic and was declared fully operational with Captain Karl Topp in command. Five days later, *Tirpitz* departed Wilhelmshaven for Norway.¹¹

The *Bismarck* class battleships, of which *Tirpitz* with her standard displacement of 42,344 metric tons was the second and last, have gone down in popular lore as super ships of immense power. This, however, is not entirely accurate. Though *Tirpitz* was in many respects an excellent design and without doubt a formidable warship, she possessed few clear-cut advantages over contemporary battleship designs. On the one hand, she was well suited for

commerce raiding. She possessed long range with an operational radius of nearly 9,000 nautical miles at 17 knots, and with her 30-knot top speed was very fast for her size. She was seaworthy (an issue plaguing Germany's earlier battleship designs), extremely well constructed with good watertight subdivision, and very difficult to sink, as illustrated by her sister ship's ability to withstand dreadful punishment in May 1941 (although she was in the end sunk, either through scuttling or from British torpedoes).¹²

Tirpitz, like other German warships, also possessed excellent optical equipment and fire directors; the accuracy and rate of fire of the battleship's guns in good visibility was excellent. Her main armament, comprising eight 38-cm (15-in.) guns in four dual turrets, though far from the heaviest broadside then afloat, was in keeping with the standards of the period. She was certainly capable of matching any single Allied battleship before 1943, let alone the cruisers that were often assigned to escort Arctic convoys. Overall, the *Bismarck* class compared favorably with the battleship designs of other nations during the same period. Like *Tirpitz*, none of these vessels were without their strengths and weaknesses. The Japanese *Yamato* from the same period was, by virtue of her gargantuan size (65,000 metric tons standard displacement) in a class all her own, while the later American *Iowa* class fast battleships predictably outclassed *Tirpitz*. But this should come as no surprise; the first of the *Iowas* was not launched until 1942. Thus no genuine conclusions can be drawn by comparing these next-generation ships to their predecessors, all laid down before World War II.¹³

Despite her many strengths, *Tirpitz* did suffer from certain design flaws. Above all was the fact that Germany had been forbidden to build and thus experiment with and develop their warship technology sufficiently during the interwar period. As such, the *Bismarck* class, though modern looking, betrayed a conservative design with its share of drawbacks. The armor scheme was old-fashioned; far too much of the ships' sensitive electrical and hydraulic lines lay exposed above the horizontal armored deck, which was situated lower in the hull than was the case in other navies' battleships. By situating their main armored decks higher and thus keeping these vital parts within the ship's protective scheme, other nations avoided this problem.¹⁴

Lastly, the fact that *Tirpitz's* sister ship *Bismarck* could be successfully attacked by a handful of obsolete carrier biplanes (whose torpedoes jammed her rudder and enabled the British to intercept and sink her) is also telling. However, in this respect the German battleships were no worse than the rest of their Axis (and many Allied) contemporaries, none of which matched the potent anti-aircraft armament of many late-war American battleships. *Tirpitz*, during her sojourn in

Norway, was increasingly up-gunned with single and quadruple 20-mm anti-aircraft mounts, but by and large she remained until the end of her days, like most battleships, vulnerable to air attack.¹⁵

However, it is important to remember that any advantages or disadvantages *Tirpitz* may have possessed as a fighting ship were rendered largely academic by the increasing superiority of Allied radar technology. By 1943, the ability to locate, track, and train their capital ships' weapons by radar gave the Allies an enormous advantage in any gun duel, especially in the perpetual darkness and inclement weather of the Arctic winter. This is perhaps best illustrated by the fate of the German battleship *Scharnhorst* off the North Cape in December 1943. Lured out to sea by a British ruse, *Scharnhorst* made for convoy JW-55B only to come under fire from enemy warships in a carefully laid trap. *Scharnhorst*, considered by her crew the luckiest ship in the Kriegsmarine, fumbled blindly around in the Polar darkness while she was ambushed repeatedly by accurate British radar directed gunnery. Her superior speed almost enabled her to escape back to Norway, until a parting shell from the battleship *Duke of York* crippled her propulsion and enabled the British to close. Overwhelmed, the gallant but doomed *Scharnhorst* eventually slipped beneath the icy waves with all but thirty-six of her crew. *Tirpitz's* radar equipment, though good by early-war standards, was by 1943 outclassed by the rapid pace of Allied electronic development—particularly the ability to integrate radar and fire control.¹⁶

The battleship *Tirpitz*, named after Grand-Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, father of the German Navy, was launched on (a perhaps inauspicious) April Fools' Day in 1939. Commissioned 25 February 1941, the ship will forever be associated with Nazi-occupied Norway and the Arctic convoy battles. Upon completion of sea trials in January 1942, she was allocated to Norway as the centerpiece in Hitler's defense of Fortress Europe's northern flank. From the outset, the intention was to utilize the battleship actively against the Allied convoys to the Soviet Union. The battleship's two major forays against the Arctic convoys would, however, prove abortive, although *Tirpitz's* presence in the area indirectly led to the annihilation of convoy PQ-17.¹⁷

Tirpitz's first sortie into the Arctic Ocean has in post-war sources been called Operation *Sportpalast*. The operation's actual name, insofar as it was given one, was *Nordmeer*, coined by its commander Admiral Otto Ciliax. *Nordmeer* took place between 6 and 13 March 1942; the target was convoy PQ-12, bound for Murmansk. Accompanying *Tirpitz* was a small escort composed of destroyers *Z25*, *Friedrich Ihn*, and *Herrmann Schoemann*. Having left Kiel in Germany for her new base in Fættenfjord, near the city of Trondheim in central Norway, only

two months prior, her crew and their Commanding Officer, Captain Topp, were fresh and keen on getting to grips with the enemy. PQ-12 was only lightly defended against surface attack, and against a monster like *Tirpitz* was extremely vulnerable.¹⁸

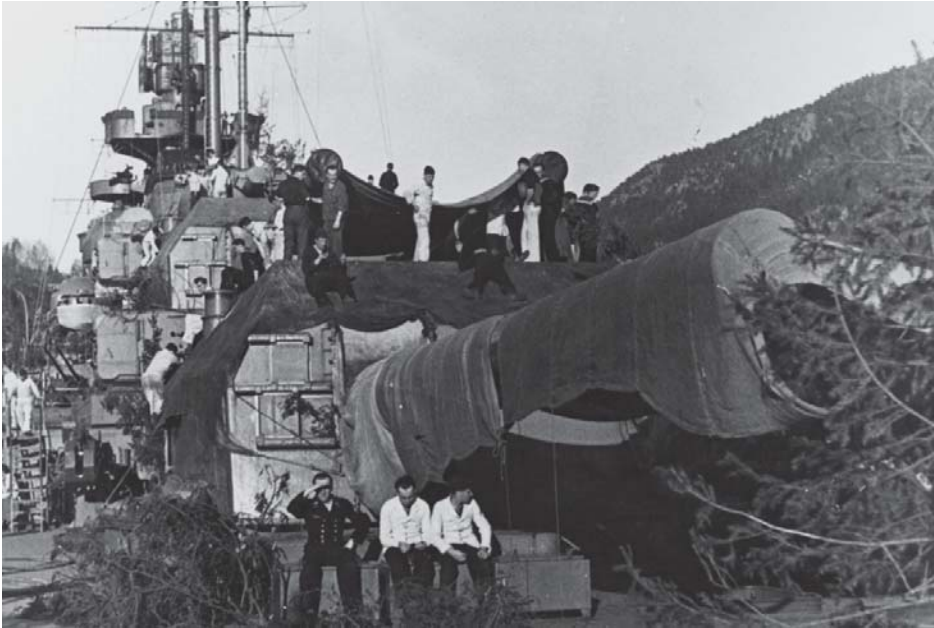


Figure 2. A heavily camouflaged *Tirpitz* nestled in the narrow Fættenfjord, sometime in 1942. While drills and other activities kept the crew fairly busy, they must have chafed under the ship's long periods of inactivity. (<http://www.history.navy.mil/our-collections/photography/numerical-list-of-images/nhhc-series/nh-series/NH-71000/NH-71395.html>)

Also at sea during this time was convoy QP-8; this one on its way back from Murmansk and equally vulnerable. However, the appalling weather of the Arctic winter frustrated German attempts to engage either PQ-12 or QP-8. To make matters worse, elements of the British Home Fleet under Admiral John Tovey, the man who had hunted *Bismarck* in May 1941, were also in the area providing indirect cover for the convoys. Tovey's force, comprising battleships *King George V* and *Duke of York*, the battlecruiser *Renown*, the aircraft carrier *Victorious*, one cruiser and 12 destroyers, was certainly capable of dealing with *Tirpitz* and her tiny escort, though this was dependent on the British admiral's ability to detect and attack the German vessels before they could destroy a convoy and escape back to Norway.¹⁹

After futilely groping around in darkness and blinding snowstorms, Ciliax

reluctantly aborted the operation and returned to Norway. During her return voyage, *Tirpitz* was given her baptism of fire (not the one for which her crew had hoped) when twelve Albacore torpedo bombers from Tovey's force pounced. These were the successors of the old Swordfish biplanes that had attacked her sister the year before. The Albatrosses failed to score any hits on the wildly maneuvering battleship, and lost two aircraft in the process. Temporarily putting into Bogen Bay near the iron ore port of Narvik on 9 March, on 12 March *Tirpitz* left Bogen, returning to her base in Fættenfjord the next day. Ciliax could not have known it at the time, but his flagship had come within 54 nautical miles of PQ-12 and as little as 11 nautical miles of QP-8. Thankfully for the Allies, darkness and appalling weather saved the convoys from detection and probable annihilation.²⁰

Tirpitz remained in Fættenfjord until her next sortie against the Soviet convoys in July. As the darkness of the Polar winter gave way to the continuous daylight of summer, PQ-17 began assembling in Hvalfjord, Iceland. The Home Fleet under Admiral Tovey would again provide distant cover, in the shape of *Duke of York* and *Victorious*, joined this time by the American battleship *Washington*, two cruisers, and 14 destroyers. The timing of the convoy was critical; on the Eastern Front, the Wehrmacht had begun its *Fall Blau* offensive and had pushed deep into southern Russia, driving the Red Army before it toward the city of Stalingrad on the river Volga. The Soviets were desperate for any and all aid the Lend-Lease program could provide. As for the British, they were about to have the latent power of *Tirpitz* as a fleet-in-being hammered home in the most ruthless fashion.²¹

The German operation against PQ-17 was codenamed *Rösselsprung*, and involved a noticeably larger contingent than that which had tried to intercept PQ-12 in March. It was in fact one of the largest sorties of German warships undertaken during the war. *Tirpitz* was the centerpiece of the German raiding force, and her group included the heavy cruiser *Admiral Hipper*, the destroyers *Karl Galster*, *Theodor Riedel*, *Friedrich Ihn*, and *Hans Lody*, and two torpedo boats. A second force composed of the pocket-battleships *Lützow* and *Admiral Scheer*, plus another six destroyers supported *Tirpitz's* group. *Tirpitz's* group would sortie from Trondheim while *Lützow's* group would sail from Narvik. The plan was to rendezvous in Altafjord in northern Norway, then strike out together against the convoy. Admiral Otto Schniewind, Admiral Ciliax's replacement, exercised direct overall command of the operation from the Kriegsmarine flagship, while Vice-Admiral Oskar Kummetz commanded the pocket-battleship group. The surface fleet's operational area would be east of Bear Island in the

Barents Sea, where interference from Tovey's covering force was less likely. Any attack on the convoy west of this meridian was to be conducted by U-boats and aircraft only.²²

From the beginning, several factors severely limited the German surface fleet's freedom of movement. Hitler insisted that first the Germans attack and neutralize any enemy carrier detected in the area. This dramatically curtailed Admiral Schniewind's freedom of action. The second was the expert navigation required along Norway's shoal-strewn coast; the operation got off to an inauspicious start when *Lützow* ran aground in thick fog, as did three of the four destroyers that sailed with the *Tirpitz* group. Lastly, a shortage of fuel oil limited the German fleet's speed and operational radius.²³

The German surface force, minus the four grounded ships, finally sortied with Hitler's blessing from Altafjord against PQ-17 on 5 July 1942, two days after assembling. However, by then the force had already accomplished more than it could reasonably have hoped for, as before the Germans sortied—and to their stunned disbelief—PQ-17 scattered. Responsibility for this momentous decision lay at the feet of Britain's First Sea Lord, the ailing Admiral Dudley Pound. It had been brought about by the belief that *Tirpitz* and her consorts had already sailed and were bearing down on the convoy. The order to scatter was essentially an act of desperation; the logic was that individual ships, running for their lives, would have a statistically higher chance of reaching port.²⁴

As it was, not only were the German warships still swaying placidly at anchor in Altafjord when Admiral Pound made his tragic judgment, but the German surface fleet never got anywhere near the convoy. After rounding the North Cape and steaming east to his operational area, Schniewind began to receive updates of the convoy's dispersal and the U-boat and bomber attacks being conducted against it. As *Tirpitz* was primarily there to neutralize the convoy escorts so the smaller vessels could engage the merchantmen, Grand-Admiral Raeder no longer saw any need to risk his prestige warship with the enemy convoy scattered and at the mercy of the U-boats and Luftwaffe. The disappointment was palpable onboard the German ships as the order was given. The force put about that same evening and reached Narvik without incident the next day, 6 July.²⁵

The order to scatter in the constricted waters of the Barents Sea left the hapless merchantmen to the mercy of the Germans. Of the convoy's original 33 vessels, the Germans sunk 24, including 22 precious merchantmen with their even more precious cargo. With them went 153 unfortunate souls, 430 tanks, 210 aircraft, 3,350 motor vehicles of various types, and almost 100,000 tons of general cargo, including electronics and ammunition. As noted, the German ships returned

to Narvik without incident, although the commander of the patrolling Soviet submarine *K-21* claimed afterward that he had torpedoed *Tirpitz* during her foray. Even if the Soviets fired torpedoes at the ships, the Germans took no notice of the attack.²⁶

The battle for PQ-17 was a disaster for the Allies. Even without the benefit of hindsight, the Admiralty's order to scatter was highly controversial—although there were admittedly few, if any, good choices available to Admiral Pound. Had PQ-17 not scattered it may well have been intercepted by Schniewind's ships and annihilated anyway. This was the end result of risking the passage of a slow convoy in continuous daylight, across an area infested by U-boats and dominated by German air power. Ultimately, the answer to Pound's fateful decision lies in the fact that the mere threat of the German battleship had caused the British leadership to "jump the gun" and consign PQ-17 to its doom. Thus, *Tirpitz* was instrumental in bringing about one of the most decisive Allied defeats at sea without firing a single shot at an enemy vessel. The political ramifications of the PQ-17 disaster continued long after the event; they hurt not only the Royal Navy's prestige but also caused immense bitterness with the Allied merchant navies, and universal condemnation from the United States and USSR, both of which accused the British of bungling and gross misjudgment. The subsequent postponement of the Murmansk convoys incensed Soviet dictator Josef Stalin and further damaged Anglo-Soviet relations, at a time when the outcome of the war in the East was seen to hang in the balance. The Allies did not resume Arctic summer convoys until *Tirpitz* was removed from the picture.²⁷

Tirpitz remained in Bogen near Narvik until late October, when it was decided to return her to Fættenfjord for an overhaul and refit. Northern Norway, severely lacking in infrastructure, was no place to perform extended repairs on a vessel of her size. It was during this time, with *Tirpitz* undergoing repairs, that the Battle of the Barents Sea (Operation *Regenbogen*) was fought on the last day of 1942. Its outcome would have monumental consequences for the Kriegsmarine surface fleet.

The battle opened in characteristically poor weather conditions. Vice-Admiral Kummetz, aboard flagship *Admiral Hipper*, engaged convoy JW-51B in concert with *Lützow* and six destroyers, only to be brusquely driven off by the outgunned British defenders. Each side lost one destroyer in the confused exchange, but it was a surprising and clear-cut victory for the Royal Navy, which through its spirited conduct saved the convoy. The German fleet's bungled attack threw Hitler into a towering rage. The battle's outcome led to Grand-Admiral Raeder's resignation and to the Führer's death sentence on the German surface

fleet, which he demanded be scrapped as it was not worth its weight in steel. Hitler ignored the fact that his own restrictive policies had served to hamper Kummert's freedom of action. In any event, the new commander-in-chief of the Kriegsmarine, Admiral Karl Dönitz, a Hitler favorite and commander of the U-boat arm, convinced the Führer, once he had calmed down, that most of the surface ships be retained, *Tirpitz* especially, which he saw as a valuable fleet-in-being. Dönitz thus prevented Hitler from handing the Allies a bloodless naval victory.²⁸

Tirpitz remained in Fættensfjord until completion of sea trials in early March 1943, when she was declared fully operational. She was transferred to Bogen once more, where she could remain close to the Allied convoy routes. Several smaller vessels accompanied her. In Bogen, and then later in Kåfjord (a part of Altafjord), from late March to September 1943 she formed the nucleus of a small but powerful force, which included *Lützow* and the battleship *Scharnhorst*. From their northern lair, the German ships loomed as ever-present threats to the Allied convoys.²⁹

In September 1943, *Tirpitz* conducted what would be the only operational deployment in which she fired her main guns in anger. As opposed to her abortive forays against the Arctic convoys, Operation *Sizilien*'s scope was much more limited, and, to paraphrase a Norwegian adage, using "cannons to shoot sparrows."³⁰ *Sizilien*'s objective was the destruction of a tiny Allied weather station in the Norwegian Arctic territory of Svalbard, garrisoned by no more than 150 soldiers, mainly Norwegians. To accomplish this task, the Germans called on not only *Tirpitz*, but also sent forth *Scharnhorst* and a destroyer screen. It was an overwhelming show of force, as much for the Allies as for the German naval leadership to demonstrate to the Führer and to themselves that the Kriegsmarine surface fleet could still prove useful.³¹

Needless to say, there was little the Norwegians on Svalbard could do against the guns of two German battleships. On board was a contingent of 615 men from the army's 349th Infantry Regiment. The Allied soldiers not killed or captured fled into the mountains as the enemy troops landed on the island. The German attack killed six Allied soldiers, while capturing 41 men. The Germans returned to Norway unmolested by the British Home Fleet, and put into Kåfjord on 9 September. If nothing else, the German foray had given the ships' crews a chance to practice their gunnery. In strategic terms, however, the attack was nearly worthless.³²

Sizilien was the third and final operational deployment *Tirpitz* would make in World War II. Shortly after returning to Norway, a daring British midget submarine attack crippled the ship and left her in various stages of repair until

March 1944. By then the naval war had long since been decided, and any effect the battleship could hope to have on Allied naval strategy, directly or indirectly, was imaginary. Nonetheless, Allied bombing raids continued to hound *Tirpitz* as she was brought back to operational readiness, and in late July of that year she put to the open sea for the last time, conducting a brief exercise off the Norwegian coast with five destroyers.³³

By mid-September 1944, accumulated damage from British bombs more or less permanently put the battleship out of action, so the Germans decided to move her to shallow water near Tromsø in northern Norway for use as a floating coastal battery. It was to be her final voyage. The battleship limped from Kåfjord that October, anchoring off Håkøy Island after an uneventful passage. On 12 November 1944 she was hit by several massive “Tallboy” bombs dropped from specially modified Royal Air Force Lancasters and capsized, taking 971 of her crew with her. Rescuers eventually saved eighty-seven men trapped inside the hull by cutting holes in her bottom as she lay protruding above the water, like some enormous beached whale. World War II in Europe ended six months later, and from 1948 until 1957, a Norwegian firm scrapped the wreck in situ.³⁴

For nearly three years, *Tirpitz* remained a thorn in the side of Allied naval planners, and while lurking in Norway’s picturesque fjords represented her own fleet-in-being. In hindsight, the Allies doubtlessly overestimated the danger of the German warship on their naval supremacy. Prime Minister Winston Churchill perhaps best illustrates the perceived threat *Tirpitz* posed to the British in a letter to the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, General Hastings Ismay, in January 1942: “The destruction or even crippling of this ship is the greatest event at sea at the present time. No other target is comparable to it . . . the whole strategy of the war turns at this period on this ship.”³⁵

Churchill’s words illustrate how paranoid the British were of the battleship and how effective she ultimately became as fleet-in-being in Norway. It should be kept in mind that at the same time as Churchill’s words were being put to paper, the British were fighting tooth and nail in the Mediterranean, had just lost two capital ships, *Prince of Wales* and *Repulse*, to the Japanese, and were in serious danger of losing Singapore, the crown jewel of their empire in the Far East. The Prime Minister feared *Tirpitz*—“The Beast”—and was as obsessed with her destruction as Hitler was obsessed with keeping her in Norway to guard against an imaginary Allied invasion. Churchill and British naval planners saw the battleship as a constant menace to their maritime dominance and, taking no chances, acted accordingly. This attitude helps put the thirty-nine different direct and indirect attacks (thirty-seven British, two Soviet) on the battleship between 1940 and 1944,

in their proper context.³⁶

The mere presence of *Tirpitz* as a fleet-in-being in Norway tied down considerable enemy resources. These would have been of great value to the hard pressed Allies on other fronts, especially in 1942. The British regularly called upon the Home Fleet, based at Scapa Flow in northern Scotland, to provide long distance protection for the Arctic convoys in case the beast should come out of her lair. British and American heavy warships remained off Norway while the naval war teetered on disaster in other theatres. The Home Fleet's assets would without a doubt have proven useful in either the Mediterranean or South Pacific, where the Royal Navy was fighting for its life bringing convoys to Malta, while at the same time trying to check the Japanese rampage in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. Additionally, the allocation of destroyers to screen the Home Fleet for its sorties against *Tirpitz* also meant that these small warships were unavailable to escort convoys and to help counter the U-boat menace in the Atlantic, which reached its last, great crisis point in 1942.³⁷

British efforts to neutralize *Tirpitz* comprised a multitude of schemes, some more imaginative than others. The most common attacks mounted on the battleship while in Germany as well as in Norway consisted of Royal Air Force Bomber Command raids and Royal Navy carrier airstrikes. By and large these raids achieved little success until 1944, by which time *Tirpitz* had ceased to play any practical role in the war. Had the British air raids met with success in 1942 the effort would doubtlessly have been worth it. However, by the time the air raids finally succeeded, the real reason for mounting them—neutralizing *Tirpitz* to keep the sea lanes safe—no longer existed.

Though costly, the September 1943 “X-craft” midget submarine attack on *Tirpitz*—which left her crippled for six months—effectively ended the threat of the German battleship to the Arctic convoys, which resumed their runs to the Soviet Union that November. Though the Germans brought the ship back to operational readiness the following spring, there was no conceivable way for her to directly affect the naval war from then on. Had she dared to go to sea in 1944 there is little reason to believe her fate would have been any different than that which befell *Scharnhorst* off the North Cape.³⁸

The story of Axis battleships—German, Italian, and Japanese—in World War II presents a sobering picture. Unlike their Allied counterparts, the Axis vessels never really found a purpose for which they were well suited. German capital ship raiding doctrine, pioneered by Grand-Admiral Raeder, proved a flawed concept and a strategic dead-end. In addition, the Axis navies rarely conducted shore bombardment and support of amphibious landings. Lastly, in the few classic

fleet engagements and battleship duels that did occur during the war, their opponents usually bested the Axis battleships (the notable exception being *Bismarck*'s spectacular destruction of battlecruiser *Hood* in May 1941).

Against the backdrop of her Axis counterparts, however, *Tirpitz* was—by virtue of her comparatively long career as a fleet-in-being—an exception to this trend. No other individual Axis warship tied down as many Allied resources and was the singular focus of so much enemy attention in World War II. The effect the ship had on the war was out of all proportion to her actual utility. To the British, her mere existence was the source of immense anxiety. This innate fear of the German battleship in turn had unfortunate consequences for the Allied war effort. The virtual destruction of PQ-17 in July 1942 might not have happened had the British Admiralty kept its head over the question of whether or not *Tirpitz* had put to sea.

By the time the Allies were able to first cripple, then sink *Tirpitz*, the naval war in Europe and the Atlantic was for all intents and purposes won. There was little, if any, way the German battleship could practically affect the war from 1943 onward. Nevertheless, she continued to be an object of incessant British attention right up to her sinking off Håkøy Island in November 1944, when she was so battered and decrepit that she was useful only as a floating battery. It is no small irony that *Tirpitz*, a vessel that never fired her guns in anger against an enemy counterpart, may arguably have been the most effective Axis battleship of World War II.

Notes

1. In the unflattering words of author Ludovic Kennedy, the ship “lived an invalid’s life and died a cripple’s death.” Ludovic Kennedy, quoted in Dan Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign: World War II’s Great Struggle at Sea* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), 365.

2. Pietro Badoglio, quoted in Donald Macintyre, *The Naval War Against Hitler* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1971), 155.

3. Dudley Pound, quoted in Vincent P. O’Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940–1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), Kindle eBook Loc. 5984.

4. Robert C. Rubel, “Talking about Sea Control,” *Naval War College Review* 63, no. 4 (2010): 40, accessed 7 November 2015, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/750836496?accountid=8289>.

5. Laurence Lafore, *The Long Fuse: An Interpretation of the Origins of World War I* (Long Grove, Illinois: Waveland Press, 1971), 131–134.

6. Gerhard L. Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler and World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 72–73. Nazi Germany, of course, had no intention of actually abiding by the terms of the 1935 Anglo-German Naval Agreement.

7. Tony Gibbons, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Battleships* (New York: Crescent Books, 1983), 248–249; Erich Raeder, *My Life*, trans. Henry W. Drexel (Annapolis: United States Naval Institute, 1960), 272–273; Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 60, 65–66; Weinberg, *Germany, Hitler and World War II*, 85–86.

8. Bernard Ireland, *Jane's Battleships of the 20th Century* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), 40; Niklas Zetterling and Michael Tamerlander, *Tirpitz: The Life and Death of Germany's Last Super Battleship* (Philadelphia: Casemate Publishers, 2009), 53, 108, 110, 121.

9. Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 82, 93.

10. Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 48, 52–55.

11. John Asmussen, “*Tirpitz* Operational History,” *Bismarck and Tirpitz*, accessed 19 October 2015, <http://www.bismarck-class.dk/tirpitz/tiroperationhist.html>; Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 48, 56.

12. Gibbons, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Battleships*, 254–255.

13. Gibbons, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Battleships*, 266; Janusz Skulski, *Anatomy of the Ship: The Battleship Yamato* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1989), 10; Jonathan Parshall, “Battleship Comparison,” The Imperial Japanese Navy Page: Nihon Kaigun, accessed 9 November 2015, <http://www.combinedfleet.com/baddest.htm>. Jonathan Parshall, an expert on the Imperial Japanese Navy, has conducted a comparative study ranking the top World War II battleships against one another. The results are interesting, although he appears to sell the *Bismarck* class short.

14. Gibbons, *The Complete Encyclopedia of Battleships*, 255.

15. Roger Chesneau, ed., *Conway's All the World's Fighting Ships, 1922-1946* (New York: Mayflower Books, 1980), 221, 224; Parshall, “Battleship Comparison,” accessed 9 November 2015.

16. Richard Humble, “Sinking the *Scharnhorst*,” in *History of the Second World War*, ed. B.H. Liddell Hart (London: Phoebus Publishing Ltd, 1966), 1593–1596; Vincent P. O'Hara, *On Seas Contested: The Seven Great Navies of the Second World War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), Kindle eBook Loc. 1517–1527. The Germans used radar operationally for detection, but not for gunnery.

17. Asmussen, “*Tirpitz* Operational History,” accessed 19 October 2015; Siegfried Breyer, *Battleship Tirpitz* (West Chester, Pennsylvania: Schiffer Publishing, 1989), 25.

18. Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 333–334.

19. *Ibid.*, 26–27.

20. *Ibid.*, 29–30.

21. Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 283.

22. Ireland, *Jane's Battleships of the 20th Century*, 42–43; Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 282–283; Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 121. “Pocket-battleship” was an alternate designation for Germany's unique 11-in. gunned cruisers, the most famous of which was perhaps *Graf Spee*, scuttled early in the war.

23. Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 282–283; Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 121, 123.

24. Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 284–285.

25. Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 286; Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 137–138.
26. Asmussen, “*Tirpitz Operational History*,” accessed 19 October 2015; Guðmundur Helgason, “PQ-17,” *The U-boat Wars*, accessed 29 October 2015, <http://www.uboat.net/ops/convoys/convoys.php?convoy=PQ-17>; Asbjørn Jaklin, *Nordfronten: Hitlers Skjebneområde* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 2006), 130; Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 137.
27. Helgason, “PQ-17,” accessed 29 October 2015; Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 140–141. A lion’s share of the merchant ships on the Murmansk run were American.
28. Karl Dönitz, *Memoirs: Ten Years and Twenty Days*, trans. R.H. Stevens (New York: The World Publishing Company, 1959), 372–273; Dudley Pope, “Battle of the Barents Sea,” in *History of the Second World War*, ed. B.H. Liddell Hart (London: Phoebus Publishing Ltd, 1966), 1177–1183.
29. Asmussen, “*Tirpitz Operational History*,” accessed 19 October 2015; Breyer, *Battleship Tirpitz*, 26.
30. Jaklin, *Nordfronten*, 180.
31. *Ibid.*, 181.
32. Asmussen, “*Tirpitz Operational History*,” accessed 19 October 2015; Jaklin, *Nordfronten*, 181–183.
33. Breyer, *Battleship Tirpitz*, 40–41.
34. Asmussen, “*Tirpitz Operational History*,” accessed 19 October 2015; Van der Vat, *The Atlantic Campaign*, 364–365.
35. Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 56–57.
36. Asmussen, “*Tirpitz Operational History*,” accessed 19 October 2015.
37. O’Hara, *Struggle for the Middle Sea*, Loc. 4251–4475, 4493–4568; Peter Padfield, *War Beneath the Sea: Submarine Conflict During World War II* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1995), 275. In the Mediterranean at this time the convoy war had reached its climax, with three British operations to relieve Malta by sea—*Harpoon*, *Vigorous*, and *Pedestal*—sustaining heavy losses.
38. Zetterling and Tamerlander, *Tirpitz*, 251–252, 327.

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Outside the Sandbox: Camels in Antebellum America

Ryan Lancaster

There was a time during the antebellum period in America when the United States military thought to use unconventional means to explore the deserts of the Southwest. One of the methods chosen was to use camels—not only as a vehicle of conveyance but also for hauling supplies and potentially for use in combat. However, it was to be short lived, as the United States Camel Corps was only in service for a few years. The loss of crucial leaders, the oncoming Civil War, and the advent of new transportation technology combined to end the Camel Corps experiment in the United States.

The Camel Corps had a small, yet crucial collection of advocates who helped advance the project. Influential men, like Secretary of War Jefferson Davis, virtually formed a cabal that surrounded the program. At the advent of the Civil War, Davis departed for the Confederacy. With his departure, the Camel Corps lost the clout in Washington DC that it needed to survive. In addition, the war itself brought in a new directive for the Union. Experimentation was no longer a luxury or ready commodity, so using camels for warfare was not a chance worth taking. Most importantly, the advent of new technologies like the steam engine pacified the West and provided an easier mode of transportation compared to the camel or the horse. In essence, the Camel Corps was not a victim of its own hubris, but rather a victim of timing. Had the Army used these animals even a few years prior to these events, perhaps the Camel Corps would have established itself as an integral part of the military.

The people of America did not know much about camels. The success of the experiment would have been of the utmost advantage to the Southwest, for it would have secured the West until the railroads were finished. The supporters who pushed for this program, though often partisan in the beginning, were pleased in the end with the outcomes. They postulated that the animal was superior to the mule in speediness, load carrying, and durability. They also argued that the camels' upkeep was more affordable. People who witnessed the camel being field-tested could attest to the animal's flexibility.¹

Discrepancies exist in the historiography of the subject regarding the origins of this endeavor. In 1836, Captain George H. Crosman lobbied the United States Department of War to use camels as a means of conveyance. His report was

unheeded. However, in 1847 his urgings, amplified by those of Major Henry C. Wayne, won the consideration of Senator Jefferson Davis of Mississippi.² The son of frontiersman and camel rider Edward F. Beale specified an alternative version to this origin story in a newspaper article:

The idea came to General Beale when he was exploring Death Valley with Kit Carson. He had carried with him a book of travels in China and Tartary, and it occurred to him that with the camel the Arizona desert would become less terrible. Jefferson Davis, then Secretary of War, sympathized with (General) Beale, and a supply ship sailed, under command of David Dixon Porter, Beale's kinsman, for Tunis, where a herd of camels was purchased.³

Money and support were crucial if this project was going to gain traction. In the last days of the 1851 session of Congress, when the army appropriation bill was under deliberation, Davis presented an amendment providing for the acquisition of thirty camels and twenty dromedaries, with ten Arab drivers and the essential equipment.⁴ During this time, miners were extracting gold in California, thousands of people were exploring the western plains, and a transcontinental railway was only at best a vague vision. Posted at Fort Yuma, between California and Arizona on the Colorado Desert was Edward F. Beale, then a lieutenant. A torrent of westward migration and goods passed that way every week. The sickness, misery, and heavy death rate amongst horses and mules in the arid, solar warmth persuaded Beale that the camels of the Sahara and Arabia could be beneficial to the Army in that region. He wrote extensively on the topic to Davis. He arranged images displaying numerous potential uses for the "ship of the desert," including transporting field cannons across their backbones and moving sharpshooters to the front.⁵

Davis could not launch and sustain this project alone. In fact, this proved to be one of the eventual pitfalls of the experiment. However, when U.S. forces were required to function in dry desert areas, the President and Congress began to take the idea seriously. Freshly appointed as Secretary of War by President Franklin Pierce in 1853, Davis established an army goal of developing transportation into the southwestern United States, which he and most onlookers believed to be an enormous desert. In his annual report for 1854, Davis penned, "I again invite attention to the advantages to be anticipated from the use of camels and dromedaries for military and other purposes."⁶

Other nations' history of success using the camel, not just in transportation but also in actual combat, would be the greatest selling point of the Camel Corps. In promoting his amendment, Davis alluded to the degree to which several countries in Asia and Africa used camels as beasts of burden. He specified that the English used camels in the East Indies to move army provisions and to carry light artillery. In addition, French emperor Napoleon Bonaparte used camels in his Egyptian operations in dealing with a culture that the French considered "wild"—much like the America power structure considered the Comanche and Apache of the American Southwest. Davis supposed that the army could effectively use camels against the Native Americans on the Western frontier. "Consuming enough water before they start to last for one hundred miles; traveling continually without rest at a rate of ten or fifteen miles an hour, they would overtake these bands of Indians, which our cavalry cannot do," claimed author J.M. Guinn.⁷

Congress warmed to the idea. On 3 March 1855, the U.S. Congress appropriated \$30,000 for the project.⁸ Secretary Davis appointed Major Wayne to obtain the camels. On 4 June 1855, Wayne departed New York City on board the *USS Supply*, under the command of Lieutenant David Dixon Porter. After arriving in the Mediterranean Sea, Wayne and Porter began the process of acquiring camels. Stops included Malta, Greece, Turkey, and Egypt. They took possession of thirty-three animals: two Bactrian two-humped camels, twenty-nine one-humped dromedaries, one dromedary calf, and one booghdee (a cross between a male Bactrian and a female dromedary). They also employed five camel drivers. On 15 February 1856, *USS Supply* put out to sea for Texas.⁹ They arrived at Indianola and unloaded the camels on 14 May 1856.¹⁰ During the journey across the Atlantic, one male camel perished, but two calves were born. The excursion consequently landed with a net gain of one camel.¹¹

Naturally, their arrival was a spectacle. When the camels sauntered into Houston, they generated quite an impression. People observed, engrossed, as the obedient animals knelt and rose on command. Miss Mary A. Shirkey of Victoria, Texas, crocheted a somewhat malodorous pair of socks for President Franklin Pierce from the coat of a government camel. For this civility, she received suitable thanks—Pierce sent her a silver goblet in return.¹² Major Wayne believed that perchance camel hair would prove to have monetary worth.¹³ Immediately the Army put the camels to work. Throughout the initial days of summer in 1856, soldiers loaded them up and drove them to Camp Verde via Victoria and San Antonio.¹⁴ News from early tests was optimistic. The camels demonstrated that they were exceptionally resilient, and were able to move speedily across the desert

topography, which horses found challenging. Camels demonstrated their renowned aptitude to go without water on an 1857 survey mission led by Beale. He rode a camel from Fort Defiance, Arizona, to the Colorado River, and his team used twenty-five camels on the expedition. The survey team cantered the camels into California, to their base at the Benicia Arsenal.

As an unexpected side effect, Middle Eastern culture began to creep into the American West, albeit in a small dose. The Army employed Hadji Ali and an additional immigrant to demonstrate to the soldiers how to pack the beasts. The Americans had a hard time pronouncing Ali's name so they dubbed him "Hi Jolly." Beale left on a Western excursion in June 1857, with "Hi Jolly" alongside as chief camel driver. Camels laden with six hundred to eight hundred pounds each journeyed twenty five to thirty miles per day. If the creatures performed well, a series of Army outposts could later be set up along the route to dispatch correspondence and provisions across the Southwest.¹⁵

The project achieved success. After reaching California, the voyage returned to Texas—certainly a significant achievement for Beale. He remarked:

The harder the test they (the camels) are put to, the more fully they seem to justify all that can be said of them. . . . They pack water for days under a hot sun and never get a drop; they pack heavy burdens of corn and oats for months and never get a grain; and on the bitter greasewood and other worthless shrubs, not only subsist, but keep fat. . . . I look forward to the day when every mail route across the continent will be conducted and worked altogether with this economical and noble brute.¹⁶

However, he may have been too optimistic. What he did not mention was that the camels did not take to the West's rock-strewn topsoil. The mules used by prospectors and the Army were frightened by the strange-looking animals and would occasionally panic at their mere appearance. His annual report continued with praise for the camel. The beast, to his mind, had already shown its "great usefulness and superiority over the horse for all movements upon the plains or deserts." It would be of great value against the prowling Indians, and it would substantially decrease the expenditures of the quartermaster's responsibility in supplying transport.¹⁷ Ironically, these camels would eventually meet their fate at the end of a Native American tomahawk. "Instead of the camel hunting the Indian, the Indian hunted the camel . . . whenever an opportunity offered, the Apaches killed the camels; but the camel soon learned to hate and avoid the Indian, as all



Figure 1. *Horses Quenching Their Thirst, Camels Disdaining*, by Ernest Etienne de Franchville Narjot, c. 1856. The Stephen Decatur House Museum, Department of the Navy, Naval Historical Center.

living things learn to do,” historian Guinn wrote.¹⁸ Regardless, Beale advised Congress to sanction the acquisition of one thousand more camels.¹⁹

The program grew. On Davis’s instructions, Porter sailed again for Egypt to obtain more camels. In late January 1859, *USS Supply* returned with a herd of forty-one animals.²⁰ While Porter was on his second undertaking, five camels from the first herd perished, leaving the Army with seventy.²¹ These animals were going to see much of the American landscape. Through an 1859 survey of the Trans-Pecos area to find a speedier path to Fort Davis, the Army used the camels yet again. Under the expertise of Lieutenant Edward Hartz and Lieutenant William Echols, the team plotted much of the Big Bend expanse. In 1860, Echols led an additional survey squad through the Trans-Pecos utilizing the Camel Corps.²²

It was about this time that interest in using the camel program began to wane. There were numerous explanations for the eventual failure of the test, which was so effective in its actions. There was a loss of interest in the venture when

Davis left the office of Secretary of War prematurely in 1858. He was its primary organizer, having worked on it as a senator and then as Secretary of War. His replacement, John B. Floyd, gave the research some backing, but never with the eagerness that Davis displayed. The Army ordered the second most respected enthusiast, Major Wayne, to other obligations a few months after the experiment got under way, and there was never afterwards a passionate field director watching over the animals at Camp Verde.²³

Besides the lack of support from Washington, there was a breakdown in the care of the animals. Almost from the start, there was trouble in training and nourishing the creatures. In a span of a few weeks, several died of mysterious illnesses, and others suffered and became unfit for labor. The military officers found it difficult to get any hostler to attend to the camels, to which most of the cavalrymen took a vehement abhorrence. Horses became fidgety and unruly when stabled or rounded up with the outlandish animals. There were frequent rumors that when a camel or two had broken away during the night and wandered off, soldiers did not always put forth eagerness to find the creatures and bring them back.²⁴

A shift in power undermined the project; however, the outbreak of the Civil War delivered the deathblow to the Camel Corps. After the spring of 1861, the camels were in the control of Confederate soldiers, horse and mule men from the South, who did not appreciate camels and did not suitably care for them. The soldiers left the camels to fend for themselves and permitted them to run wild. After the war broke out, the North shunned everything that Jefferson Davis had once supported.²⁵ On 9 September 1863, the last of the herd in California, thirty-five in number, were ordered to be sold at public auction, and were procured by Samuel McLaughlin, in whose care they had been for some time. It is likely that most of the animals found their way into farm parks and game reserves. In March 1866, following the close of the Civil War, the Army Quartermaster-General ordered that the camels remaining at Camp Verde, Texas be sold at auction.²⁶

The Confederacy wanted little to do with the camels. In the upheaval of the Civil War, every fort in the South fell into neglect and the animals meandered away at will. They journeyed in twosomes, and occasionally in clusters of four and six across the deserts and into the mountains.²⁷ Finally, the horse and mule-dominated army did not favor the camel. The old stalwart army mule had ample friends but the camel had few. A mule would react to a lot of profanity, which did not work as well with a camel. They seemed never to give into any blasphemy in the company of a cussing driver.²⁸

The animals were finding themselves out of a government job and needed

to look towards the private sector for gainful employment. The Portland, Oregon *Oregonian* of 20 November 1865, noted:

A correspondent asked the other day, what had become of the camels the U. S. had in Texas before the war. We have come upon traces of one of these animals which seem to have joined the rebels. . . . The first effort to introduce the camel into this country was in process of successful experiment when the war came and put a stop to it. One of the camels originally imported for the purpose fell into the hands of one of Sterling Price's Captains of infantry, commanding a company from Noxubee County, (Mississippi), who used it all through the war to carry his own and the whole company's baggage. Many a time on the march he might have been seen swinging easily along under a little mountain of carpet sacks, cooking utensils, blankets etc., amounting in all to at least 1200 lbs.²⁹

The upkeep of these animals was a heavy price to bear. The animals required cleanliness, which meant that their keepers must scour their stalls every day, and often whitewash them. Their daily allowance of food involved a gallon of oats, ten pounds of hay, and a gallon of water to each camel, this spread by periodic servings of crushed peas or barley. The animals got along very well on this routine, even though their usual diet entailed the leaves and tender branches of all types of bushes and shrubs.³⁰

William Brewer wrote about the ease of finding accessible food for the camels, rendering the cost of feeding them negligible: "The creosote bush grows in the more southern deserts, vile-smelling, with sticky, stinking leaves, so repulsive that it is said even the camels will not touch it. In justice to the camel, I should say that this fact has been denied. One of the men who had charge of the camels introduced by Jefferson Davis, and tested on these deserts, told me that the camels did eat sparingly of even the creosote brush."³¹

Locals did not like the camels. Free now to go where they pleased, rather than drifting away and isolating themselves from humankind, the camels seemed determined to loiter near the hangouts of men and to make trouble. Locals shot the camels every time they could get in range of them. In 1882, numerous wild camels were caught in Arizona and sold to a zoo, but a few survived all adversities and roved at large in the desert areas of southern Arizona and Mexico. Occasionally the soldiers in the garrisons of New Mexico and Arizona caught sight of a few

wild camels on the alkali plains. Guinn wrote on the matter,

All reports agree that the animals have grown white with age. Their hides have assumed a hard leathery appearance and they are reported to have hard prong hoofs, unlike the cushioned feet of the well-kept camel. Whether these are some of the survivors of the original importation brought into the country nearly fifty years ago, or whether their descendants are gradually being evolved to meet the conditions with which they are surrounded, I do not know.³²

The camel never replaced the horse or mule in the West. However, technology eventually supplanted the camel movement. The steam engine ultimately overtook all other forms of transportation. The camel had its fair chance as a beast of burden. It flourished in every trial, but in the end was unsuccessful in swaying the people of the West. As historian Frank B. Lammons put it, "He passed on, and his bones bleached on the desert wastes of Arizona and in the Bandera Hills. 'Operation camel' passed into history because the camel was a foreigner."³³

The loss of vital advocates, the outbreak of the Civil War, and the arrival of new technology ended the Camel Corps test in the United States. In this case, most American history books completely overlook a successful program because it never left any permanent effect on the culture. One could speculate about what could have been as opposed to what actually did transpire. Perhaps if the Army had brought camels to the United States a decade earlier, they might have caught on as a popular means of conveyance. However, the camel slumped into the sandstorm of historical accounts. Much like Percy Shelley's *Ozymandias*, all that remains of the American camel in the desert of American history is sand stretching for miles on end.

Notes

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2. Vince Hawkins, "The U.S. Army's 'Camel Corps' Experiment," *On Point* 13, no. 1 (2007): 8-16.

3. "American Camel Corps: They Proved Efficient in Arizona Desert but Suffered from Prejudice," *The Washington Post*, June 16, 1912, p. MS2.

4. J.M. Guinn, "Camel Caravans of the American Desert," *Annual Publication of the Historical Society of Southern California and Pioneer Register*, Los Angeles 5, no. 2 (1901): 146.
5. Henry O. Tinsley, "Camels In The Colorado Desert," *The Land of Sunshine* 6, no. 4 (March 1896): 148.
6. Hawkins.
7. Guinn, 146.
8. The Library of Congress, "A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 – 1875," accessed December 2, 2013, <http://memory.loc.gov/cgi-bin/ampage?collId=llsl&fileName=010/llsl010.db&recNum=660>.
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22. Francell.
23. Lammons, 50.
24. Tinsley, 149.
25. Lammons, 50.
26. Fred S. Perrine, "Uncle Sam's Camel Corps," *The New Mexico Historical Review* 1, no. 4 (October 1926): 443-444; Hawkins.

27. Tinsley, 149-150.
28. Lammons, 50.
29. Perrine, 442-443.
30. Walter L. Flemming, "Jefferson Davis's Camel Experiment," *Popular Science Monthly* 174 (1909): 141-52, 399.
31. William H. Brewer, "The Great Basin," *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York* (1889): 197-227, 214.
32. Guinn, 150-151.
33. Lammons, 50.

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Aethelred and Cnut: Saxon England and the Vikings

Matthew Hudson

Never has a single occurrence changed history. While tempting to point to the Norman Conquest of 1066 as the event that caused the fall of the Anglo-Saxons, the change had begun decades before by other events from both within and without England. The rise of the Saxons meant the waning of the Roman British and their relocation into what is now Wales, Cornwall, and Brittany. The Saxons were able to survive numerous Viking raids and internal strife before the end began its journey. In the midst of Viking invasions, both invading Vikings and neighboring Saxons alike absorbed the numerous Anglo-Saxon kingdoms. This struggle for solidified power brought a political unity to the island and laid the foundation for what would become England. While many factors played a role in the eventual fall of the Saxons, one of the pivotal pieces in the evolution of Anglo-Saxon England was the conflict between Aethelred II (978-1016), called the Unready, and Cnut (1016-1035), the son of Aethelred's Viking rival. The failure of Aethelred to repel the Vikings provided an atmosphere in which an emboldened Cnut was able to successfully conquer and consolidate Anglo-Saxon England as well as much of Scandinavia. Cnut strengthened the central authority of the crown and increased the stability of the kingdom while opening a door for the rise of earls to play a larger part in England. In the process of Cnut's conquest, Anglo-Saxon relations with Normandy grew and planted the seeds of future conquest.

A discovery of how Cnut's reign in the aftermath of Aethelred changed the course of Anglo-Saxon England must begin with a glimpse into a previous time. A view of the evolution of England from the time before the invasion at Lindisfarne in 793 and into the centuries of turmoil that followed set the stage for the culmination of unity under Cnut. This stabilization in the face of waves from both Viking raiders and settlers occurred under Saxon kings such as Alfred (871-899) and Aethelstan (924-939). After a period of relative peace, renewed invasions from the north threatened Saxon stability. What would play out between the new invaders and the Saxon kings would set the stage for the penultimate reign of the Saxons. The necessity of foreign allies in the face of Viking incursions would also factor into how Saxon England would meet its fate.

Before the Viking raid of the monastery at Lindisfarne, conflict, both with the Britons as well as each other, characterized Anglo-Saxon history in England.

The Saxons had established multiple kingdoms in England after the fall of Roman Britain early in the fifth century. These kingdoms could be large in territory or as small as a shire is today. The political dynamic of these kingdoms often resulted in the most powerful of the kings becoming an overlord of the others. The Saxons were a mixture of Germanic people from the continent who had enjoyed relations with the Romans and settled along the coast of the North Sea. The British regarded them as barbarians, yet in great Roman tradition had brought many of their warriors in to assist the British against invaders.¹ Originally a pagan people, they slowly converted to Christianity over the following centuries. The small Saxon kingdoms coexisted amongst themselves and their British, Pict, and Scottish neighbors.

Detailed knowledge of the Saxons is limited prior to the Viking raids. Most has come down through the ages via Church fathers and archaeology. The last of the leading kings was Offa of Mercia (757-796). A contemporary and often seen as an equal to Charlemagne (769-814), Offa represented a step towards political unity within the stability of his long reign, an anomaly for its time.² Offa reformed the church, led building projects, and continued the struggle against the Britons, who the Saxons began calling the Welsh. An irony of the name Welsh stemmed from it being the Saxon word for foreigner. Another testament to the greatness of Offa was that by the end of his reign the neighboring kingdoms had all but ceased to exist.³ Saxon England had become a relatively stable region by the end of the eighth century.

The consolidation of Saxon England did not begin with the influence of Offa. The seventh century saw aggression and conflict, which set kings in opposition and saw alliances that brought more unity to England than had been previously enjoyed. That unity however was not intended to have England under one true king. Rather, the kings were choosing sides in efforts to dominate the island and defend against other cultures. The Venerable Bede listed seven kings as being preeminent over their contemporaries. The first four kings of the list were Aelle of Sussex (477-514), Ceawlin of Wessex (560-591), Aethelberht of Kent (560-616), and Raedwald of East Anglia (599-624). Bede's reasons for choosing these kings are unknown. Whatever the reason, there currently exists no proof that their influence extended north of the Humber River.⁴ The overlap of rule spoke more to the dynamic of dominance and less to cooperation. As one region waned in prominence, the next could obtain influence.

The remaining three kings in Bede's list dominated the bulk of the seventh century and were all from Northumbria—Edwin (616-633), Oswald (634-642), and Osuiu (642-670). Battle and resistance from unlikely alliances defined all three.

The southern Christian kingdoms, including the Welsh, allied with the pagan Penda of Mercia (632-655) to combat the rise of Northumbria and the northern kings. A factor in this unification became the idea of a common enemy. Alliances and victories brought the prominence of one region over another, while the ambitious kings sought dominion over their peers. Without a familial bond or legacy amongst the kingdoms, it remained that a king under the sway of one powerful crown could assume the mantle of overlord through the death of the leading king. A united England was in its infancy and would experience the growing pains of sibling rivalry before the coming of the ultimate common enemy in the form of the Vikings.

Of great importance to medieval right of rule was the notion of legacy and familial claims. While those on the throne easily ignored facts in favor of the factors supporting their causes, the written word had yet to establish itself as preeminent. The Anglo-Norman chronicler Gaimar presented the idea that the Danes had come to England before the Saxons. Cnut would come to embrace this idea as Danish prior sovereignty validated his right to rule England.⁵ In addition, Gaimar utilized the alleged sovereignty of a King Dan in 787.⁶ The claim, of course, was only effective when backed by a position of strength. However, in 793 the nature of Saxon England would be forever altered regardless of hereditary claims. This homogenized Saxon stability.

Amidst “immense sheets of light rushing through the air, and whirlwinds, and fiery, dragons flying across the firmament” the Vikings raided the holy island of Lindisfarne.⁷ The Anglo-Saxon world turned upside down as the wealth of the churches was now under attack not by kings but by marauders. Despite the advancements in political unity, the Saxon kingdoms were not prepared for this type of invasion. Claims of jurisdictional dominion before the end of the eleventh century were not forthcoming.⁸ The raiding of the British Isles evolved into Viking settlements. It would be under this strain that the Saxon adaptation would begin towards true political unity and set the stage for one England.

The whole region felt the wrath of the Viking invasions. Ireland and the smaller islands surrounding the primary two bore witness to raids and settlers. Viking lords established themselves in makeshift kingdoms. In England, by the late ninth century, the whole of the island save Wessex lived under Viking rule. Viking lands from Dublin to York presented a cohesive opportunity. A strong Viking king could have united a territory in such a way that it would have been impossible for the Saxons to resist. Yet, the early Viking kingdoms of the British Isles were not true monarchies, their kings not military visionaries, and the attractions of assimilation proved greater.⁹ The Saxons were not the only culture

who lacked strong central authority of any lasting kind. In fact, it was quite indicative of the period throughout Europe.

The confederation of kingdoms that collectively made up Saxon England had begun to fall. English wealth and resources remained steady, but new leaders emerged. The Saxons and Scandinavians had begun to assimilate culture and place names, practice and polity, and laws and customs in the Viking-held lands. The lone Saxon kingdom of Wessex would fight to defend Saxon liberties and attempt to regain lands lost to the invaders. Saxon life had become so ingrained in England that they dismissed the notion they themselves were the invaders a mere few centuries before. The multi-kingdom Anglo-Saxon system had progressed into a single throne by the end of the tenth century. There were drawbacks. For instance, circumstances occurred in the eleventh century when the candidate options for king became narrow and the choice of individuals was not promising. During this time, the threat from Viking conquest was great. To survive, the Saxons would have to unify and reinvent themselves.¹⁰

King Alfred, known to history as Alfred the Great, and his immediate successors would stem the advance of the Vikings and renew Saxon advances in England. Alfred reformed battle tactics, added a true Saxon navy, and turned the tide of the Viking conquest. The 878 Peace of Wedmore saw Alfred recognize the Danish occupation of non-Wessex England. The legitimacy of the Viking settlements now in place, the Danelaw, those areas controlled by the Vikings, further solidified the administration of a large section of the island. Despite Alfred's advances, the Vikings were now in England to stay and became assimilated with the Saxon population. Unlike the Saxon conquests centuries before that pushed the Britons west into Wales, the Viking conquest failed to contain the Saxons in Wessex.

The largest gain in political solidarity occurred under Aethelstan during the decades after Alfred. His successes unintentionally laid the foundation for the ease of conquest by Cnut. Aethelstan became the first English monarch by declaration and to large extent conquest. More than solidifying rule over the English, he also reclaimed the Danish lands to the northeast. Historians considered him the first to have hegemony over the whole island of Britain.¹¹ With political control now established over the entirety of Britain, a usurper or conqueror could easily supplant the ruling authority by force and have the administrative mechanisms in place for ready control.

The benefits of hegemony were substantial. During this time of relative internal peace, the Saxons enjoyed law and church reform as well as building projects. Newfound unity while bringing stability also increased the opportunity

for rapid and total conquest. Missing from the Saxon kingdom that existed centuries prior were the buffer states that create the piecemeal confederation of kingdoms. A unified Saxon kingdom was what Aethelred inherited, albeit accompanied by the significant internal strife that typically associated itself with Saxon successions. Saxon England by the end of the tenth century had become a realm of all or nothing.

The Viking contributions to England and the nature of their influence and intent evolved over the centuries of contact. Vikings brought more than the rapine and slaughter described in the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. England increased both its trade and trading partners and this included Viking networks. The fortified town or *burh* also arrived on the islands. This positively increased the infrastructure of Saxon life.¹² The Scandinavians lived alongside the Saxons in England for such an extended period that the familiarity would become an advantage for the next wave of Viking invaders. The nature of this wave of invasions witnessed much change from the January raid on Lindisfarne in 793. A key difference between the early and late Viking Ages were that kings led the later raids. Men who failed to be recognized as rulers in their homelands led the early age raiders. In addition, by the end of the tenth century, the riches of Russia were no longer available to plunder.¹³ This led the Scandinavians to sail westward to reclaim the lands lost to the Saxons.

The Viking raids resumed in 997 during the reign of Aethelred II, called the Unready. They were milder than those previous but deadly and effective nonetheless. Danish king Svein (986-1014), called Forkbeard, and father of Cnut made efforts not to antagonize potential allies by senseless pillage.¹⁴ The Vikings had already established settlements on the island and had no need to establish further expansion. These raiders sought to gain riches, while Svein Forkbeard contemplated adding England to his domain. Unlike previous Viking rulers seeking to carve a piece of England for themselves and their people, Svein assessed the whole of England as available to conquer.

Historians have portrayed Aethelred as a poor ruler unready for his mantle of kingship or poorly advised in his enterprises. Yet, there are those, such as P.H. Sawyer and Ryan Lavelle, who claim this assessment as unfair. Sawyer contends Aethelred is unfairly blamed and compared unjustly to Alfred. Ryan Lavelle has argued that Aethelred was not entirely to blame for the success of the renewed Viking incursions. Blame may be steered towards the poor defenses that plagued the ealdormen, or nobles, and the succession turmoil surrounding Aethelred and his ascension to the throne. It should be argued that the poor defensive effort derived more from the style of defenses employed rather than circumstance. The tenuous situation between king and country was a series of

compromises between the aims and wishes of the king and his nobles.¹⁵ Furthermore, Lavelle acknowledged that Scandinavian sources were often complimentary towards Aethelred and viewed him as a worthy and noble ruler. Much of the vilification stemmed from the Anglo-Norman culture following the eleventh century Norman Conquest of England. Yet, the fact remained that under his reign, the Danish kings conquered England in 1013. Shortly after his death, England became part of Cnut's vast North Sea Empire.

Since the nature of the Viking raids of the end of the tenth century was more piratical than strategic, England realized a return to the original days of the Viking threat, only this time, potential Viking allies surrounded the Saxons. Another concern that threatened Saxon security was the lack of direct heirs to the throne at the time of the raids. This ensured internal conflict and a power struggle became inevitable. Aethelred solved the issue of succession by fathering ten children in slightly over twelve years. His choice of wife would play heavily into the future of England. He married Emma of Normandy. Peaceful succession of kingship had not been the norm either in Saxon England nor anywhere else in Europe during the medieval period. Despite a resolution in providing heirs, the ambitions of Svein and his son Cnut would run counter to the initial pillage style of raiding in England.

After the millennium, England became a steady battleground between Saxon and Dane. Svein raided at will leaving devastation in his wake. The cohesion that had grown in England from previous reigns now faded into the mist of war. Because he learned that the Danes planned to deprive him of his life, in 1002 Aethelred ordered all Danes in England put to death.¹⁶ Therefore, it was the Danes that were killed in England on Saint Brice's Day. Historian Susan Reynolds argued that the Saint Brice's Day Massacre of 1002 targeted not those of Danish descent but rather those visiting aliens or recent immigrants.¹⁷ If that were the case, it would make sense that the earlier Scandinavian settlers had become so entrenched in England that they were considered more English than Dane.

The situation in England deteriorated after the massacre. One way to view his action would be that it showed a decisive, confident, and active ruler rather than a skulking king fearful of treachery that historians have often made him out to be.¹⁸ Yet, action so decisive in the face of an enemy that had not been defeated and a kingdom near defenseless to their attacks was a gamble that would lead to dire consequences. Svein continued his raids as ealdormen—the magistrates and commanders of shire forces—feared facing the Vikings in combat.¹⁹ Aethelred and his ealdormen were at a loss to fend off the raids and protect the shires. By 1010, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle stated that no shire would stand by another.²⁰ The

administration remained intact in England. It was not the political structure but the ineptitude of the leaders that caused the Viking successes.

That ineptness was due to the massive changes in leadership occurring during the age. There were great changes in the ranks of the thegns, or king's retainers, under Aethelred and Cnut. Among these were the rise of Godwin and Leofwine. The narratives record lengthy purges between 1010 and 1017 that rivaled the carnage of the Norman Conquest.²¹ While a change at the top of the political pyramid often brought some change, the increase of turnover within the ranks of those who handled the day to day operations of the kingdom changed not only the leadership on the islands, but the families which now controlled local administration.

Aethelred lost his kingdom to Svein in 1013. The Saxon royal house fled to the safety of Normandy for the year that Svein ruled England. The legitimate heirs to England would spend a significant portion of life in the Norman court. Upon Svein's death in 1014, the people recalled Aethelred and rebuked Cnut. Cnut did not simply sail home to sulk. Instead, the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle mentioned Cnut sailing to Sandwich before cutting the hands, ears, and noses from the hostages his father had collected.²² The return of Aethelred was under the condition that he ruled the people better than his first reign. Cnut continued his struggle against Aethelred until the death of the king in 1016. Lavelle called it a testament to effective rule under Aethelred that the English political machinery remained in operation and continued into the following reigns.²³ It would be more accurate to heap that praise on those who preceded Aethelred than the king himself. While history likely viewed him unfairly, the stability of Saxon England's administration had become a staple of daily life.

While Cnut failed to immediately assume the throne in Denmark, he became king in England in 1016. However, he was not the only king. Edmund II (1016)—called Edmund Ironsides—also became the English king. Cnut married Emma of Normandy, widow of Aethelred, seeking to take advantage of the political union. Discussion opened between the two kings to determine the best method to settle the matter of their claims. The tradition of resolving conflict through single combat had become entrenched in England by the eleventh century. Cnut and Edmund were to meet to decide the matter in this manner but opted to divide the island instead.²⁴ Edmund, however, was unable to survive the year, and the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle spoke of his burial in Glastonbury next to his grandfather.

Cnut became sole ruler of England by 1017, the year of his marriage to Emma. Although he kept his previous common law wife, Aelgifu, he sent her to

Scandinavia. He divided England into four parts—Wessex, East Anglia, Mercia, and Northumbria. Cnut repaired churches destroyed by the Vikings, built new churches, and became patron to monasteries. His being moved to tears by a ballad while his boat neared Ely displayed a more gentle side of Cnut. The view of the church and the singing of the monks prompted him to savor the moment.²⁵

Upon his brother's death, Cnut claimed the Danish throne and became king of England, Denmark, Norway, and parts of Sweden. In Scandinavia, he earned the title, "Cnut the Great." His English rule was one of purges and change. Cnut's changes did not place the Danes in the seats of aristocracy. Rather, the Englishmen who survived the purges and battles assumed leadership roles.²⁶ This could have been in part due to the non-English holdings of Cnut and the desire to have stability throughout his empire. Historian Katherin Mack also highlighted that the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle described five ealdormen killed in battle or by deceit before 1016, but Cnut surpassed that number in just four years.²⁷ With Cnut's death in 1035, a return to the Saxon line was less than a decade away. His Viking heirs proved inadequate to stem the return of the Saxons.

Cnut's sons became kings of England if only for a few years. The question of which son should follow Cnut remained a topic of debate. Edward the Confessor (1042-1066), son of Aethelred followed Harold I (1035-1040), called Harefoot, and Harthacnut (1040-1042). During the reign of Cnut and his sons, Godwin, Earl of Wessex, grew in power. His strength would cast an ominous shadow over the kingdom until his death, and his sons would be the last leaders of a Saxon England. With the death of the Viking kings, England looked inward for rule. The story of Aelfgifu and her alleged adultery illustrated the further break between England and Scandinavia following the death of Cnut and his sons. The Norwegian rejection of her and her son Swen broke any blood claim to the English throne by the Norwegians.²⁸ Her story could be the one woven into the Bayeux Tapestry referencing an illegitimate pretender and his line's claim to the throne. It would be the rise of the Godwin and the relationship of Emma to Normandy that would chart England's course.

In the strong English tradition, sons who all saw themselves as rightful heirs contested the succession following the death of Cnut. Cnut's sons divided his empire, with Harthacnut taking Denmark and Harold reigning in England. Norman poet and chronicler Wace described Aethelred's sons Alfred and Edward as believing their claim to the English throne the strongest. They assembled a fleet and invasion force and set sail from Normandy with Norman backing. The English defended Harold from the invaders either due to a fear of Harold or liking him the best according to Wace.²⁹ Either way, Edward realized that the loss of life

necessary to gain his inheritance would be too great and ended his quest. A strong precedent had now been set and would be reflected upon by future Normans. The conflict between the duchy and the islands had begun.

The nature of England's progression of central authority into a strong kingship in the Saxon years is noteworthy. Chris Wickham wrote of the paradox existent in England; it was a European country, which enjoyed the most complete aristocratic dominance, based on property rights while at the same time being a land in which the king maintained near total control over political structures. He attributed this peculiarity to the combination of the oligarchical compact that allowed Wessex to rise to dominance in the 910s and the crystallization of property rights that occurred in the ninth and tenth centuries.³⁰ This paradox led to Godwin and his sons merging the two at the death of Saxon England. While not a cause for the fall of the Saxons, it made for an easier transition of a strong monarch to supplant existing nobility with his own men while resting assured of their ability to maintain property based on tradition and the servitude of the populace.

A strong central authority, in conjunction with a political structure that supported the aristocracy's control over the wealth and resources of England, made for a very attractive realm. In addition, Cnut had established a strong military structure that would provide significant stability to England. He created a standing military force called the *housecarls* and maintained a strong navy as well. To pay for this internal security, Cnut levied a heavy tax known as the *heregeld*.³¹ The *housecarls* would survive to fight at Hastings and die alongside the last Saxon king. Because the tradition of a standing army and the taxes to pay for it were already established, the transition to Norman rule was straightforward. The Normans would increase their dominance over the island through castle building and military might. While Cnut increased the infrastructure in England, the stronger aristocracy that began in the wake of the purges and as with the death of most great kings, created an environment wherein his successors struggled to live up to his lineage.

The success enjoyed by Cnut provided him the moniker "the Great" in Scandinavia. However, despite his attachment and success in England, the English did not bestow the title upon him. His empire came about by the subjugation of five kingdoms, Denmark, England, Norway, Scotland, and Wales. He even boasted that by the favor of Christ he had taken the land of the Angles and called himself emperor.³² Not many in the post-Roman world had dared call themselves emperor, but those that did, had their greatness remembered. Perhaps the fact that Alfred remains the only monarch called "the Great" by the English speaks to the nature of what it was to be considered English. The link between Aethelred, Cnut, and the

eventual Norman rulers was Emma of Normandy. During the ascension of Svein, Emma and her two sons by Aethelred, Edward and Alfred, fled to Normandy for safety. The impact of Edward living in Normandy cannot be understated. Being half Norman, the complexion of England would change drastically under his rule. Emma's children, both by Cnut and Aethelred, would guide England during the last days of the Saxons.

The atmosphere of England at the death of Cnut was one of positioning and struggle. William of Malmesbury argued that the English desired the sons of Aethelred. Earl Godwin, being the greatest stickler for justice, professed himself the defender of the fatherless and having Emma and the royal treasures in his possession, held out against his opponents for some time.³³ No matter the real reasoning behind Godwin's support, the root of his goals was to secure his position as the leading nobleman within England. The rise of the earls defined the remaining decades of the Saxon era. It was the actions of the earls that created the kings and provided them with both security and headache.

The consequence of the purges and violence during Cnut's reign revealed the changes within the political structure of England. Cnut divided the island in order to better rule it. This gave the earls power they had not enjoyed before. The king remained the seat of power, but the aristocrats grew in influence. The subsequent reign of Edward included the incipient political disintegration of the kingdom in the face of the advancing territorial power of the great earls.³⁴ This situation seemed destined to devolve the kingdom, as Edward remained childless. However, the political hierarchy longed for a powerful figure to unify the realm. The heirs of Cnut and Aethelred were not as strong as the nobles that surrounded them. The eleventh century became a time of great political upheaval in northwestern Europe.

Cnut had been able to utilize his power base and alliances with the aristocracy of the Danelaw to his advantage. Coupled with the selection of favorable ealdormen and the loss of life by Saxon aristocracy in battle, Cnut was able to overcome many of the disadvantages that traditionally faced kings of Wessex.³⁵ The destruction of the traditional power families and the rise of the new nobility, such as the family of Godwin, played a role in Cnut's ability to administer the kingdom. Consider the division made in ancient Rome to better rule the empire and how it increased the speed and efficiency of administration. Cnut's empire was also vast and divided by a large sea. The restructuring allowed the crown's presence to be felt in more than one region at a time. However, like the division of the Roman Empire, those selected to administer the new earldoms pressed their advantages and sought more control and freedoms. The line between lord and

vassal thinned with the solidification of the earls.

Heavy taxes raised to provide security had been a hallmark of Cnut's reign. The population accepted these only as long as peace endured. Harthacnut had no such luxury. In order to provide for his fleet, he immediately alienated his new subjects with a hefty tax. He also burned Worcester in response to protests of taxation.³⁶ The stability that his father had enjoyed slipped his grasp. The English rejoiced as he collapsed after a drinking binge at a wedding and died. The earls and administrators of the realm were now in a position of strength. The matter of succession allowed them to play puppeteers once again.

The rise of powerful earls did not create a weakened monarchy. The monarchy remained in full control. However, the influence of men like Godwin of Wessex became greater as time progressed. The system created opportunity for the new earls to place family members in positions of power. These families had previously exercised little power. The ascension of Edward the Confessor brought an additional problem to the throne. In addition to his connection to the Normans, as he himself was half Norman, Edward also had more interest in spiritual matters. Taking as his wife Edith, the daughter of Godwin, Edward refused to create an heir. Moreover, Godwin and his sons would utilize their closeness to the throne to increase their sphere of influence, which Edward resented. He exiled Godwin and his family. Even during his exile, Godwin's strength grew to the level where he was able to return to his earldom with little repercussion.

England had become a melting pot of cultures. The Vikings and Saxons, barbarians of the post-Roman world, had obtained full control of the islands. Although England served one king and followed one banner, the tradition of local leadership survived in the offices of the earls. A new England rose in the wake of Aethelred and Cnut. A stronger monarchical position provided the ability to control government beyond the bounds of ethnicity. The new aristocracy tested the limits of its own power. The subsequent outcome of Danish conquest and the collapse of the regional kingdoms of Saxon England increased the position of those who survived.³⁷

Saxon England slowly consolidated from a confederation of smaller kingdoms into a single political unit. While there existed kings who held preeminence over their neighbors, the kingdoms remained separate. The coming of the Vikings altered the political dynamic. While the early raids targeted the spoils of war, the later waves of Viking invasions found settlements and new kings in old kingdoms. The struggle against the Viking invader brought most of the Saxon kingdoms to their knees, but the resurgence of Wessex not only saved Saxon England, it reclaimed the island for the Saxons.

The actions of Aethelred and Cnut led Saxon England into the final phase of the Anglo-Saxons. The unification under Cnut brought with it a change in aristocracy and a rise in the power of the earls. A stronger connection to Normandy through marriage and alliance began the shift to the continent and away from Scandinavia. The Battle of Hastings ended Saxon England, but the conflict between Aethelred and Cnut initiated the decline.

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Praecipitia in Ruinam: The Decline of the Small Roman Farmer and the Fall of the Roman Republic

Jack Morato

War and fraternal bloodshed dominated the late Roman Republic. From the tribunate of Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus in 133 to the beginning of the Augustan Principate in 27, Rome was wracked by internal dissent and political anarchy.¹ The chaos was the product of the unbounded personal ambitions of Rome's leading men—ambitions that were encouraged by a militaristic culture that impelled individual aristocrats to pursue fame and glory for themselves at all cost. Powerful Roman commanders made war with each other and sacked the city of Rome with their personal armies. "Violence," according to Appian, "prevailed almost constantly, together with shameful contempt for law and justice."² This traumatic episode witnessed the dismantling of the oligarchic Republic and its replacement with a government ruled by the despotic authority of one man. Personal ambition tells only part of the story. The Republic was, in many ways, a victim of its own success. By 133 the Romans found themselves in command of a far-flung empire extending from Spain in the west to Asia Minor in the east, but they were forced to administer it with the government structure of a city-state. Rapid imperial expansion during the middle Republic strained nearly every aspect of the Roman system but none more so than the very foundation of Roman military strength—the small farmer. Spoils of war were channeled into agriculture by the landed elite, resulting in economic polarization and the displacement of independent labor in the countryside. This inquiry traces the socio-economic developments that led to the decline of independent farming in Rome, developments that culminated in political turmoil and civil war during the first century.

Sallust, a contemporary of G. Julius Caesar and Catiline, complained of the "shamelessness, bribery and rapacity" prevalent in the political life of his time, the "corruption of the public morals," and the "two great evils of . . . extravagance and avarice."³ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, writing towards the end of the first century, reflected on the virtuous days of the early Republic when Roman leaders "worked with their own hands, led frugal lives, did not chafe under honourable poverty, and, far from aiming at positions of royal power, actually refused them."⁴ The first century historian Velleius Paterculus complained of the "private luxury" and the "public extravagance" of Rome's leading citizens.⁵ This view continues to attract its

defenders. Historian R. E. Smith, for example, argued that the senatorial class was handling Rome's problems just fine up until the end of the Third Punic War and that it was the "fundamentally irresponsible" behavior of the Gracchi that disrupted the traditional political system and set in motion the decline in aristocratic morals.⁶ Historian David Shotter blamed the corrupting influence of imperial wealth for the gradual loss of the "old-fashioned corporateness" of Roman society and the rise in individualism among the Roman aristocracy.⁷ Historian Monte Pearson attributed the degeneration of aristocratic morals to imperial growth, the corruption of the political process, and the breakdown of collectivist norms that had once imposed an unshakeable restraining influence on the behavior of individual magistrates.⁸ Historian Pamela Marin drew attention to the erosion of long-held Roman ideals of patriotism and selfless service to the state and their replacement with "competition, desire, and greed" on the part of the Roman elite.⁹ Historian Ronald Syme focused on the incessant squabbling of the Roman nobility and their corrupt, sinister, and fraudulent behavior in his discussion of the Republic's end.¹⁰

The central thrust of this traditional interpretation was that there was some sudden change in the behavior of the ruling aristocracy,¹¹ that "love of office and the disgrace entailed by obscurity"¹² seized the aristocracy and expanded the extent to which aristocrats were willing to go to win political power for themselves at the expense of the state. According to the argument, this was not always the case. The community sentiment of the early Republic imposed such a powerful constraint on aristocratic ambition and behavior that fame, glory, and wealth were not pursued at the expense of the common good. Prestige for one's self and for one's family was won through selfless acts of bravery that primarily benefitted the state rather than the individual.¹³ This selfless behavior was engendered by the unusually high value the typical Roman placed on his citizenship. It gave even the lowliest member a stake in the future of his great city, and it created a sense of community that permeated every rung of Roman society.¹⁴ As the second century satirist Lucilius so romantically put it, virtue is "thinking our country's interests to be foremost of all, our parents' next, and then thirdly and lastly our own."¹⁵ The sense of community broke down by the first century. Deprived of cities to besiege and armies to defeat, so the argument goes, members of the ruling elite eventually turned their competitive wrath on each other.¹⁶ Constructive competition turned destructive as personal prestige took precedence over the well-being of the Roman state, and whereas the heroes of Rome's wars of expansion fought for the glory of their country and the praise of their fellow citizens, the leading men of the late Republic fought simply to enhance their personal fame and wealth.

Roman culture was indeed highly competitive, especially for those at the top of the social hierarchy.¹⁷ Historian Norman Cantor described it as a "one-class"

society dominated by a single group—the Roman *nobilitas*.¹⁸ Collectively, this group monopolized all military and political power and steered the affairs of the Roman state. Individually, however, aristocrats of the Republic exercised political power indirectly by way of elections and assemblies.¹⁹ Winning the esteem of other aristocrats was crucial if one was to enjoy influence over the political process. Therefore, the Roman ruling elite sought to constantly outdo each other in terms of prestige, fame, and glory, for winning all three meant leverage in the assemblies and election to the magistracies. For an ambitious aristocrat, the shortest route to glory and fame—and political power—was through a successful military command. Evidence of this can be seen in the peculiar characteristics of Roman culture itself, a culture which—through its outward physical symbols, its stories of past heroes, and its social rewards system—cherished military success above all other social accomplishments. The high value placed on warfare increased the frequency and severity of Rome’s wars and explains, at least in part, the rapid march of Roman power throughout Italy and the Mediterranean during the early and middle Republic.²⁰ In this way at least, the aristocratic pursuit of glory and fame through warfare served the interests of the Roman state, for the competitive energies of the ruling aristocracy were absorbed by neighboring communities during the initial flush of Roman expansion. It is unsurprising, therefore, that the typical Roman aristocrat was exposed to combat and military command at an early age and throughout his political career.²¹

The moral interpretation of the Republic’s decline has some serious flaws. Greed, ambition, and lust for power are constants in human nature, and as Harris convincingly demonstrates, the aristocratic pursuit of fame and glory was not exclusive to the late Republic—competition for both among the Roman elite was already vigorous during the late fourth century.²² Roman aristocrats preferred fame to obscurity long before the so-called period of moral decline in the second century, and it is therefore unreasonable to assume that the nobility of the late Republic were less ambitious than their counterparts in the early Republic.²³ Furthermore, the use of violence in domestic politics was just as common, if not more so, during the early Republic as in later times. This was especially true during the Conflict of the Orders, a drawn-out civil struggle in the fifth and fourth centuries waged by the lesser nobility to break the higher nobility’s exclusive grip on political power.²⁴ The assertion that ambition, greed, and political violence were the main drivers of political decline is seriously undermined by the presence of these tendencies during the early days of the Republic. Furthermore, the moral interpretation is far too simplistic and superficial and does little to acknowledge the immense socioeconomic changes brought on by the process of empire. Rome found it increasingly difficult to replenish its legions as the economic position of its yeomanry declined. The

manpower shortage was a chronic symptom of fundamental economic changes occurring at the heart of Rome's traditional, subsistence-based economy. Marius saw professionalization as the only means of balancing the recruiting deficit, and his decision to enlist propertyless men in his *supplementum* of 107 was one of monumental consequence for the later history of the Republic. Professional armies became instruments of unscrupulous commanders who were willing to use them against the state. Political decline and civil war were thus the final steps in a long economic process that originated in the late third century. Rome's independent farmers were squeezed by a number of specific economic developments including the development of large estates, the influx of slave labor, the importation of cheap grain from newly acquired provinces, and a sharpening of the economic divide separating the landed elite from the urban and rural *proletarii*.

The growth of Rome's Mediterranean empire during the second century was both rapid and unplanned, and it set in motion a number of economic developments that, in combination, fundamentally altered the nature of Rome's traditional subsistence economy. Wars of conquest brought untold wealth into the city in the form of plunder, tribute, and slaves. These went overwhelmingly to members of the *nobilitas* who, in turn, channeled this new wealth into agriculture—the most lucrative and sustainable investment available at the time. Independent farmers found themselves unable to compete with the *latifundia*, large agglomerations of public land and abandoned farms. These sprawling estates made extensive use of slave labor and concentrated on the production of lucrative goods like olives, grapes, and animal products. Commercial farms enjoyed the benefit of scale, and their use of cheap slave labor gave them a cost advantage over small farms that had to rely on the efforts of their owners. Many yeomen were economically ruined and forced to sell their holdings to rich investors, furthering the cycle of dislocation and impoverishment.²⁵ Meanwhile, imperial growth brought new provinces into the Roman orbit, territories that were particularly efficient at producing grain for consumption in Roman cities. The introduction of Spanish, North African, and Sicilian grain to the Roman market lowered its price and made it impossible for small farmers to compete. Taken together, these developments led to a sharp reduction in the Roman middle class and a radical shift from a traditional subsistence economy to a market-oriented one.²⁶ Imperial growth thus struck at the heart of Rome's strength in ways that its conquered enemies never could. The weakening of the Roman middle class brought on a progressive decline in the number of men qualified to serve in the army, leading to a military recruitment crisis in the late second century that served as the prime motivation for the reforms of Marius.

New wealth was one of the principal stimulants of socio-economic

change throughout the second century. In a short period of time, Rome was transformed from a rural backwater into a magnificent urban metropolis as war booty and tribute flowed into the city. The din of new construction was constant as the city became adorned with elaborate new temples, gymnasia, baths, and palaces. Plunder from the communities of the Hellenistic east was a particularly lucrative source for the treasury and the aristocracy. Lucius Aemilius Paullus Macedonicus's triumphal procession of 167 is largely representative. It took three days to complete. The first was scarcely long enough to exhibit the priceless works of plundered Greek art, carried through the city streets on 250 wagons. The next day featured carts upon carts of fine Macedonian arms and armor along with some 2,250 talents of silver carried in large pots by some 3,000 men. The third displayed 231 talents of gold, 400 gold wreaths, and the enslaved royal coterie. Aemilius left these riches for the state treasury, but he took the entire Macedonian library for himself.²⁷

Tribute was another means of extracting wealth from conquered people. Defeated rulers were saddled with crushing indemnities for resisting Rome. Philip II of Macedon, for example, was made to pay 1,000 talents of silver after his defeat at the hands of Titus Quinctius Flamininus in 197,²⁸ and the Seleucid ruler Antiochus III was forced to pay a ruinous 15,000 talents in 188.²⁹ Roman aristocrats funneled the wealth they derived from foreign commands and provincial governorships into land ownership and agriculture. Agriculture, for both social and economic reasons, was the most attractive investment available to a rich aristocrat during the late Republic. Romans held an elevated view of land ownership, and Roman culture associated farming with lofty social values. Members of the nobility competed with each other by increasing their landed possessions much like they did in commissioning grandiose works of art, constructing new public buildings, and sponsoring elaborate public games and festivals. Cato called farming the "most highly respected" occupation.³⁰ Varro perceived agricultural work as the key to a healthy body and a cure for idleness.³¹ Cicero claimed that there was "none more profitable, none more delightful" than agriculture.³² Agriculture was so valued that Roman senators were legally prohibited from engaging in any profitable activity other than farming out of fear that doing so would taint their character.³³ Large-scale farming was also the safest and most sustainable source of continuous wealth for the ruling class.³⁴ While election to the higher magistracies had the potential of yielding considerable returns for a successful commander, it was difficult to secure and never certain. Because of this, the typical aristocrat felt intense pressure to make his fortune quickly once appointed to a command or a governorship. He then sank that wealth into land upon leaving office. Doing so guaranteed his long-term financial health and that of his progeny.³⁵

Through purchases, extortion, or force, the wealthy gradually expanded

their estates by acquiring adjoining farms and encroaching upon the *ager publicus*.³⁶ The landscape of Italy came to be dominated by these *latifundia*, many of which grew far larger than the stipulated 500 *iugera* maximum set by Roman law.³⁷ Appian, Livy, and Plutarch are unanimous in attributing the problems of the late-Republic to the growth of these estates.³⁸ These commercial farms employed large numbers of slaves.³⁹ Unlike tenant labor, slaves were a substantial fixed cost, and it was because of this that slaves had to be worked longer and more intensively than wage laborers. Aristocratic landowners had an incentive to capitalize on economies of scale in the presence of such fixed labor costs. They did this by concentrating on the mass production of a few commodities that could be profitably exported to urban and overseas markets. Included in this category were olive oil, wine, meat, and hides, products that commanded much higher prices than grain. These goods held a much higher value-to-weight ratio than cereals, a characteristic that made them ideal for export.

The economic independence of Rome's small farmers was further harmed by the exactions of war. Rome's ad hoc system of army recruitment worked, as long as campaigns were short enough and close enough to home to allow veterans to return to their farms with minimal disruption to their normal routines.⁴⁰ However, as campaigning seasons grew longer and legions went further afield from the First Punic War onward, the farmer-legionnaire of the middle Republic came to be called away from home for much longer than his counterpart in the early Republic. Many farms were ruined for want of maintenance and subsequently abandoned by their owners.⁴¹ Dionysius of Halicarnassus recounted the plight of Cincinnatus who, upon being called away from his plough, lamented, "my field will go unsown this year, and we shall be in danger of having not enough to live on."⁴² Although a legendary story, the sentiment was probably shared by scores of small farmers who were called away for extended service in the legions. Livy and Polybius also tell of farms suffering physical destruction at the hands of rampaging armies, both Roman and foreign, especially during the Hannibalic War.⁴³ Scores of veterans returned home only to behold the burnt remnants of their once-productive farms and were forced to sell or abandon their plots when they could afford neither the resources nor the time to restore them.⁴⁴

Slavery was a critical component of the *latifundia* system of agricultural production and an important facilitator of peasant dislocation. Slavery was not a new institution for the Romans—they had been enslaving their foes since the early Republic⁴⁵—but both the number of slaves and their importance to the Roman economy grew precipitously throughout the second century. Chattel labor gradually supplanted free peasant labor in the countryside, but the displacement was not complete. There remained a substantial number of non-slave laborers working the

land well into the first century.⁴⁶ Still, the consolidation of innumerable small farms into large, slave-worked ones had the effect of reducing the employment of free, non-slave labor in the countryside.⁴⁷ This dislocated an immense rural labor force that had previously been fastened to small plots. Some emigrated to the provinces. Others remained to labor on the estates of the rich as free but property-less laborers. Many flocked to the cities to swell the ranks of the urban poor. Although the rich employed both free men and slaves on their farms, they preferred the latter. Why this is so is less clear, and several hypotheses have been advanced.⁴⁸ However, the profit motive was the foremost concern of wealthy landlords, so slave labor was probably preferred because it was the lower cost production method in the long run.⁴⁹ Indeed, the profitable acquisition of slaves was probably an important influence on the willingness of Roman aristocrats to go to war during the second century, as Harris has suggested.⁵⁰ Slaves, unlike free laborers, were exempt from military service, and the natural reproduction of slaves meant that the value of the initial investment was constantly increasing.⁵¹

Like the concentration of land ownership, the growth of slavery was a product of overseas expansion. War captives from newly-conquered territories were the main source of slaves.⁵² The great bulk was extracted from provinces conquered during the second and first centuries. Thousands of Spaniards, Illyrians, Greeks, Gauls, Macedonians, and Africans were forced under the Roman yoke as the great Roman war machine lumbered through their territories. One consul reportedly took 150,000 slaves during a single punitive campaign.⁵³ Estimates place Roman slave imports to Italy at between 100 and 300 million throughout the period of the Republican empire, far more than were involved in the transatlantic slave trade during the age of colonialism.⁵⁴ The unfortunates were employed in nearly every occupation as stewards, secretaries, builders, architects, household servants, readers, physicians, and tutors to name but a few.⁵⁵ Most were unskilled and were put to work in sprawling plantations where they served as key inputs into an agricultural system that produced massive surpluses for the market. The wealthy owned the most slaves. Crassus, a man who was worth 142 million dollars (as measured in 2004 U.S. dollars), employed 500 slaves for his building projects in Rome alone.⁵⁶ Most suffered a brutal existence. Cato, for example, reportedly flogged his slaves for the slightest error in serving food and drinks to his guests.⁵⁷

Roman slavery was unique in a number of ways, especially in the nature of the master-slave relationship. Slaves were granted both their freedom (*libertas*) and their citizenship (*civitas*) upon their emancipation (*manumissio*), a unique feature of Roman law and one that was established very early on in the history of the Republic.⁵⁸ Emancipation was the constant hope of Roman slaves, and most understood that this was attainable through good behavior and loyalty rather than

rebellion. Although a former slave faced some social stigma, a freed person was more fully integrated into Roman society than in other slave societies. The act of manumission created a patron-client relationship between the freedman and his former owner, and because clients were obligated to provide their patrons with political support, ambitious politicians had an incentive to free as many slaves as possible to build a solid voting base in the forum and in the popular assemblies.⁵⁹ The incidence of manumission was therefore relatively high during the Republic, and this sustained a strong motivation within slaves to be diligent in their work.⁶⁰ As a group, freedmen were numerous, and they played an important role in Roman politics.⁶¹ By the late Republic more than a few prominent statesmen possessed slave ancestry. All of this is not to say that slavery was a desirable condition. Roman slaves, like their counterparts in other socio-economic systems, were treated with a degree of harshness and inhumanity that is difficult to comprehend. Slaves were the property of their masters, subject to all their whims and desires. Still, overall, the legal device of manumission provided both a strong incentive for slaves to be cooperative and an additional source of political support for ambitious politicians.

Just as they steered decisions on *how* to produce, market incentives steered landowners' decisions on *what* to produce. As profit-seeking actors, Roman aristocrats rejected grain in favor of olive oil, wine, and animal products, high-margin cash crops that could withstand the cost of transportation.⁶² The demand for grain, however, only increased throughout the period of agricultural innovation. Rome's population grew throughout the third and second centuries, and massive quantities of grain were required to feed it. The conversion of Italian land into pastures, vineyards, and orchards reduced the grain yield of Italy at the same time that demand was increasing, but this was offset by large imports from Sardinia, Sicily, Spain, and North Africa.⁶³ These provinces held a comparative advantage in the production of grain. So efficient were their fields that the Roman grain supply experienced no chronic crisis during the latter second century.⁶⁴ The conversion of the Mediterranean into a Roman-controlled lake throughout the century lowered the cost of shipping further than it already had been and made trafficking in grain a profitable endeavor for both public and private entities.⁶⁵ That long-distance trade was sufficient to meet the demand of large urban populations in Rome and in Italy's other urban centers is supported by the very existence of these large, non-farming populations.⁶⁶ Grain imports from efficient provincial sources put downward pressure on the price of grain and created yet another source of hardship for small farmers. With their limited production volumes and higher per-unit costs, independent farmers could not cover their expenses at the market price and were forced out of business.⁶⁷

The assertion above rests on the assumption that Roman Italy's grain

market was linked to the regional grain markets of its provincial periphery, that the price of grain was more or less consistent throughout the Mediterranean. This assumption has been challenged by historians of the twentieth century. M. I. Finley rejected the idea, claiming that ancient societies, Rome included, “did not have an economic system which was an enormous conglomeration of interdependent markets.”⁶⁸ Paul Erdkamp echoed him three decades later.⁶⁹ Economic historian Peter Temin, however, has convincingly shown that the Roman economy was a market oriented economy in which price was determined by the interaction of supply and demand, that a significant volume of goods and services were exchanged in markets, and that “the parts of this economy located far from each other were not tied together as tightly as markets often are today, but they still functioned as part of a comprehensive Mediterranean market.”⁷⁰ Through an empirical analysis of the existing data, Temin showed that grain prices moved in response to the forces of supply and demand, and he demonstrated that enough goods and services were exchanged in markets to consider the Roman economy, overall, a market-driven one.⁷¹ He also showed that Roman grain farmers faced a highly competitive market and were price takers. That is, individual farmers took the market price for wheat as a given and were unable to affect it. Therefore, farmers made production decisions, including decisions on whether or not to continue producing, based on a monolithic market price.⁷²

This new interpretation paints the Roman economy as a dynamic, evolving system, one that underwent a period of profound change during the second century in response to external stimuli. Seen in this way, the shift in Roman agricultural production from many small, inefficient producers to a smaller number of larger, more efficient ones was a natural outcome for the Roman economy as a whole made possible by the injection of large amounts of liquid capital. The price of grain fell as land, labor, and capital were diverted towards the most efficient means of production, the *latifundia*. The older system based on small independent farmers collapsed simply because small farmers were less efficient than the large estates and provincial grain producers who supplanted them. The contribution of the latter was made economically viable by the reduction in shipping costs following Rome's victory over Carthage, her chief maritime rival in the Mediterranean, in the first and second Punic wars. Cheaper shipping set the stage for regional specialization based on comparative advantage. Italian agriculture increasingly specialized in the production of high-value crops while the periphery concentrated on producing a high volume of grain for consumption at the core. As in all economic decisions, tradeoffs were involved. Some were made winners while others lost as the structural adjustments took place. Members of the landed aristocracy were clear winners, as were the private individuals involved in the pan-Mediterranean grain trade. The

losers, of course, were the thousands of small agriculturalists who were economically displaced at a time when Rome had no significant urban industries to absorb their productive energies. The “proletarianization”⁷³ of the Roman small farmer was therefore a complex process of structural economic adjustment set in motion by capital asset formation (slaves and liquid wealth) and the emergence of regional specialization based on comparative advantage—both side effects of imperial expansion during the middle Republic.

A brief review of Roman army organization is useful at this juncture. The strength of the Roman Republican army was based on a citizen militia of property-owners who were first divided into five wealth-based classes by the legendary Roman king Servius Tullius of the late sixth century.⁷⁴ Livy defined the property requirements for the five classes as those who held a minimum of 100,000 (Class I), 75,000 (Class II), 50,000 (Class III), 25,000 (Class IV), and 11,000 asses (Class V).⁷⁵ As in classical Greece, Roman infantrymen were expected to furnish their own arms and armor.⁷⁶ The first class was the *equites*, Roman cavalrymen rich enough to maintain horses. The next three classes encompassed the three degrees of heavy infantry, the *hastati*, *principes*, and the *triarii*. The lowest and poorest class formed the Roman light infantry skirmishers, the *velites*.⁷⁷ Those who did not meet the requirement for the lowest class were excluded from service in the legions, but these *proletarii* were not absolved of the duty to serve. They were compelled to row in the navy and to take up arms to defend the city in times of exceptional emergency.⁷⁸ Legions were called up for some specific campaign by the consuls through the *dilectus*, first in Rome itself and then in allied (*socii*) cities by consular representatives.⁷⁹ Allied contingents (*alae sociorum*) contributed approximately half of the typical army’s military strength, sometimes even more. Soldiers received a negligible amount of pay through the *tributum* to partially compensate for expenses incurred while on campaign.⁸⁰ Legions were then disbanded after hostilities had ceased or the campaigning season had ended, and soldiers returned to their fields.⁸¹

Rome found it increasingly difficult to raise troops as the number of propertied citizens (*assidui*) declined,⁸² and the poorest members of the *assidui* were struggling to survive by midcentury. Using conservative estimates of land prices, wheat yields, and nutritional requirements, Brunt convincingly shows that 4,000 asses—the minimum wealth requirement for the fifth and lowest class of *assidui*—was insufficient to feed a typical Roman family of four.⁸³ Evidence for this persistent recruiting crisis can be seen in the progressive reduction in the fifth class wealth requirement.⁸⁴ What was probably a temporary measure to replenish the ranks following the disasters at Cannae and Trasimene during the Second Punic War became a permanent change made necessary by Rome’s constant wars of expansion throughout the second century. This reduction was carried out twice throughout the

middle Republic: from 11,000 asses to 4,000 asses during the Hannibalic War and then to 1,500 asses around the time of the Gracchan Revolution.⁸⁵ The census was eventually abandoned altogether as the basis for military recruitment in 107 under Marius.⁸⁶ The dramatic reduction in the wealth requirement of the fifth class artificially increased the number of *assidui* by allowing ever increasing numbers of *proletarii* to qualify for service in the legions. Brunt agrees that manpower shortages were the impetus behind these reductions, offering as evidence the “difficulties that magistrates encountered in some years in carrying out levies, the concern evinced by Tiberius Gracchus and his contemporaries at a putative decline in manpower, and a decision . . . to raise once more the proportion of allies serving with the legions.”⁸⁷

The expansion of Rome’s Mediterranean empire simultaneously increased the demand for recruits and, through the effect of victory on the Roman economy, reduced their supply, a dual squeeze that, in the absence of fundamental reforms, made the professionalization of the Roman army almost inevitable. Rome pacified many enemies in the years following their victory over Hannibal. The Romans tangled with a variety of Gallic and Germanic peoples to their west and north—the Boii, Insubres, Allobroges, and Arverni in Northern Italy; the Celtiberi and Lusitani in Hispania; and the Teutones, Ambrones, and Cimbri in Transalpine Gaul. The Romans dealt with the Numidians and the Carthaginians in northern Africa, and they subdued the Greeks, Macedonians, Thracians, Pergamenes, and Seleucids of the eastern Mediterranean. While chronic, the recruitment problem approached crisis levels in the last decades of the second century, a time when the Romans faced acute demands for military manpower from several fronts. The Cimbri and the Teutones, Germanic tribes from beyond the Rhine, began encroaching upon Roman territory in 113 and defeated several consular armies in southern Gaul before they were defeated by Marius in 102 and 101 respectively.⁸⁸ The defeat of Gnaeus Manlius and Quintus Servilius Caepio at the hands of the Cimbri in 105 was particularly devastating. The consuls barely escaped with their lives, and Roman losses totaled 80,000 soldiers and 40,000 camp attendants.⁸⁹ Meanwhile, the Romans waged the Jugurthine War in Africa from 111-105, a protracted struggle against a nimble enemy that perplexed several Roman commanders.⁹⁰

Gaius Marius is a looming figure in the history of the Roman Republic, an uncommonly talented soldier, commander, and military organizer with complex political inclinations. He played a large role in the Jugurthine War and was instrumental in defeating the Cimbri and Teutones. More importantly, it was he who undertook the final step of professionalizing the Roman army. Marius, according to Plutarch, was “born of parents who were altogether obscure—poor people who lived by the labour of their own hands.”⁹¹ He served with distinction under Scipio Aemilianus, the destroyer of Carthage, during the Numantine campaign as military

tribune in 134 and as Quaestor in 127.⁹² Marius was elected to the tribunate in 119 at the age of 38, and in 115 he won election to the praetorship and was awarded the governorship of Hispania Ulterior.⁹³ The consul Caecilius Metellus selected Marius as one of his legates in the war against Jugurtha in 109, but Marius soon asked for leave to campaign for the consulship.⁹⁴ He leveraged the growing disillusionment with aristocratic military leadership during his campaign and won the consulship of 107 at the age of 50.⁹⁵ His famous *supplementum* of 107 came in the immediate aftermath of this victory.⁹⁶

Marius's *supplementum* marked the final transition of the Roman army from a citizen militia of propertied men to a state-funded professional force, but its significance has been overstated.⁹⁷ It loses much of its impact when viewed in relation to the long-run changes undergone by the citizen militia throughout the second century. The Roman army was moving towards professionalization long before Marius, evidenced by the growing "continuity of service" and a rising "mercenary outlook" among the Roman soldiery.⁹⁸ The need to serve for extended periods on campaign increased the burdens of legionary service and created economic losses that "gave rise to a demand that citizen soldiers should be rewarded on discharge after service."⁹⁹ Furthermore, the dwindling number of *assidui* and the consequent shortage of recruits were felt long before 107. Shortages had prompted the use of volunteers at least twice before.¹⁰⁰ Already in Polybius's time there was an established precedent of the state furnishing arms and armor to its soldiers, perhaps to achieve uniformity, but the practice made obsolete the old rule that soldiers must be wealthy enough to supply their own equipment.¹⁰¹ The failure of the Gracchi to address the problem at its source made the final reduction in the census requirement a military necessity, and at 1,500 asses the poorest members of the *assidui* were virtually indistinguishable from the *proletarii* by Marius's time. In any case, as noted before, even the higher requirement of 4,000 asses was probably insufficient to guarantee that a man could sustain his family, let alone furnish his own panoply, and the much lower requirement of 1,500 asses totally precluded such a possibility. In light of these developments, Marius's enlistment of the *capite censei* in 107 seems less revolutionary than it is usually portrayed.¹⁰²

Marius's intentions in enlisting the *proletarii* are somewhat harder to discern, but there is little evidence that he was motivated by political ambition as his enemies have suggested.¹⁰³ Instead, his *supplementum* was probably motivated by military necessity. As A.N. Sherwin-White pointed out, soldiers at this stage were not yet willing to commit violence against the state on behalf of their generals.¹⁰⁴ Indeed, by pursuing legislation for their settlement, Marius supported his veterans more than they supported him. He was not a radical reformer, and while he did associate with the radical Lucius Appuleius Saturninus to secure land allotments for his veterans, he

repeatedly demonstrated an unwillingness to remove senatorial authority.¹⁰⁵ Marius was “conditioned by the political habits of the second century,” an “unimaginative child of his age.”¹⁰⁶ That is, he sought power within the context of the existing senatorial system and did not dream of supplanting the establishment through violence. That destructive innovation was left for others to pursue.

Whatever his intentions, Marius’s enlistment of the *capitei sensei* had enormous consequences for the Republic. The connection between land ownership and military service was decisively severed, and veterans gave their loyalty to unscrupulous commanders who did not hesitate to use them against the state. During the middle Republic, veterans of Rome’s wars simply returned to their farms and resumed their lives, but that happy equilibrium was destroyed along with the economic position of Rome’s independent agriculturalists. Possessing little to no property, veterans of the Marian period needed a place in Roman society upon discharge. Marius solved this problem by settling his veterans in Africa and Italy with the help of Saturninus, a ruthless demagogue.¹⁰⁷ He also awarded Roman citizenship, a coveted prize, to those among his soldiers who had displayed “conspicuous bravery” on campaign.¹⁰⁸ Marius’s *optimates* opponents in the senate generally opposed both the settlements and the granting of citizenship, and their obstructionism made the political establishment an enemy in the minds of veterans and generals alike. Therefore, the connection between a commander and his veterans—already stiffened by many years of hard service under austere conditions—was further solidified by the presence of a common enemy in Marius’s time. Once discharged, veterans remained connected to their former commanders, and they expected the opportunity to share in the spoils of future campaigns.¹⁰⁹ Their economic well-being became tied to the success of their generals, and they gave their loyalty to commanders who promised to provide for them in peace and to lead them to plunder in war. The terrible potential for the misuse of veterans was realized when Sulla marched on Rome with six legions of his veterans in 88.¹¹⁰ Sulla’s example was followed many times: by Lucius Cornelius Cinna in 87, by Sulla again in 82, and by Marcus Aemilius Lepidus in 78.¹¹¹ The situation continued to worsen as the Republic entered its twilight phase. Gnaeus Pompeius, Julius Caesar, Gaius Octavius, and Marcus Antonius chased each other around the empire leaving death and destruction in their wake while the senatorial oligarchy in Rome sat helpless and unable to intervene. Civil war had come to Rome. The convulsions of the late Republic were essentially a series of painful but logical changes to the political-economy of the Roman state. Economic restructuring brought about by imperial growth culminated in the rise of personal armies, civil war, and the end of the Roman Republic.

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Notes

1. All dates are B.C.E. unless otherwise noted.
2. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Horace White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 1.2.
3. Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 3.3, 5.8.
4. He contrasted this noble behavior with the rampant greed of his own day when Roman aristocrats followed “the very opposite practices” as those he mentioned. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1937), 10.17.6.
5. Velleius Paterculus, *The Roman History*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Frederick W. Shipley (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1924), 2.1.2; 2.10.1.
6. R. E. Smith, *The Failure of the Roman Republic* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1955), 82-4.
7. Changing norms, according to Shotter, led to the “ruthless pursuit of dominance” by ambitious individuals who sought to “dominate Rome through the relationship between the tribune and the plebian assembly.” David Shotter, *The Fall of the Roman Republic* (London, GBR: Routledge, 1994), 2-85.
8. Monte L. Pearson, *Perils of Empire: The Roman Republic and the American Republic* (New York, NY: Algora Publishing, 2008), 157-78.
9. Pamela Marin, *Blood in the Forum: The Struggle for the Roman Republic* (London, GBR: Continuum, 2009), 7.
10. Liberty and peace, according to Syme, could not coexist in a Republic led by men whose “personal ambition and political intrigue” constrained their ability to defend the state. Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford, GBR: Oxford University Press, 1939), 9-27; 17.
11. The sources vary in identifying the exact moment when aristocratic morals collapsed, but almost all point to the second century. The nineteenth century Roman historian Theodor Mommsen drew attention to the emergence of “short-sighted, selfish, and negligent” behavior within the ranks of the hereditary nobility during what he described as a period of “tranquility” following Rome’s conquest of the Mediterranean world in the second century. “The single leading thought of the governing corporation,” according to Mommsen, “was the maintenance and, if possible, the increase of their usurped privileges.” Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome*, trans. William P. Dickson (London, GBR: Richard Bentley, 1867), 3:72. Polybius pointed to the destruction of Carthage at the end of the Third Punic War as the point when life became “more extravagant and the citizens more fierce in their rivalry regarding office and other objects than they ought to be.” Polybius, *The Histories*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. W. R. Paton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), 6.57; 38.21. Livy traced the “beginnings of foreign luxury” to the spoils of war brought to Rome after Gnaeus Manlius Vulso’s successful campaign against the Galatians in Asia Minor in 189. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 39.6.
12. Polybius, *The Histories*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. W. R. Paton (Cambridge,

MA: Harvard University Press, 1922), 6.57.6.

13. Sallust, for example, claimed that service to the state was once the highest form of accomplishment, and to be publicly praised for such service was a Roman's highest reward. Sallust, *Catiline*, 7.6. Livy tells the story of the humble sixth century consul P. Valerius Publicola who held the post four times during his life but was said to have been so poor upon his death that the state had to pay for his funeral. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 2.16.

14. Livy notes that political control had to be wrenched from the last Roman king (*rex*), and it was jealously preserved throughout the early and middle Republic. Livy's record of the early Republic is filled with celebratory tones extolling the "public liberty," the freedom of the people of Rome to participate in the political steering of their city. His account should be used with caution. While political control was decentralized after the expulsion of the king, by no means was a democracy established. Political control was fragmented into the hands of a narrow elite, the *nobiles*, but it was not handed to "the people" in spite of what Livy believed. Still, this early political struggle must have shaped the Romans' view of their republic as something unique in the world that was both destined for great things and that needed to be protected from outside forces at all costs. This feeling of uniqueness probably contributed to the Roman belief in the just use of preemptive warfare against its neighbors. Livy, *The History of Rome from the Founding of the City*, ed. Ernest Rhys, trans. Canon Roberts (London: J. M. Dents & Sons, 1905), 2.1-41. For more on Roman attitudes towards preemptive war, see Susan P. Mattern, *Rome and the Enemy: Imperial Strategy in the Principate* (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1999), 171 and William Vernon Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford, GRB: Oxford University Press, 1979), 169-72.

15. Lucilius, *Remains of Old Latin*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, ed. and trans. E. H. Warmington (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1938), 1210.

16. "Impetuous and premature ambition" seized the corporate nobility, according to Mommsen. Mommsen, *The History of Rome*, 3:74.

17. At least part of this competitiveness can be attributed to the powerful internal locus of control held by most Romans. As the famous saying of Appius Claudius Caecus goes, "Every man is the architect of his own fortune." Sallust, *Speech to Caesar on the State*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 1.2.

18. Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1993), 7-9.

19. William Vernon Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford, GRB: Oxford University Press, 1979), 17.

20. Diodorus Siculus claimed that "the most distinguished men are to be seen vying with one another for glory, and it is by their efforts that virtually all matters of chief moment to the people are brought to a successful issue." Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. F. R. Walton (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982), 31.6. Sallust held a similar view, attributing Rome's remarkable achievements to the "thirst for glory that had filled men's minds." Sallust, *Catiline*, 7.4-6. In his study of Roman attitudes towards warfare, Historian William Harris noted that "the Romans' regular warfare grew out of and was supported by the social ethos, above all by the ideology of glory and good repute." William Vernon Harris, *War and Imperialism in Republican Rome, 327-70 B.C.* (Oxford, GRB: Oxford University Press, 1979), 2.

21. Indeed, successful military experience was a prerequisite for holding office. Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 11-5.

22. Harris points to the existence of institutions that glorified personal and family fame—the triumph, the use of imagines during funeral processions, public laudations, and a political system which emphasized reputation and *clientela*—during the Italian wars as evidence that aristocrats were always concerned with individual fame and that competition was already vigorous among leading families of the state during the latter-fourth century. Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 27-30. 23 Even Sallust acknowledges this. He noted that it was important for nobles of the early Republic to be seen while they carried out brave acts in the service of the state: "their hardest struggle for glory was with one another; each man

strove to be the first to strike down the foe, to scale a wall, to be seen of all while doing such a deed... It was praise they coveted..." Sallust, *Catiline*, 7.4-6.

24. Mark Toher, "The Tenth Table and the Conflict of the Orders," in *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome: New Perspectives On the Conflict of the Orders*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 268-91; Alexander Yakobson, *Elections and Electioneering in Rome: A Study in the Political System of the Late Republic* (Stuttgart, Germany: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1999), 189. Riots and mob lynching occurred with frequency and shaped the final form taken by the political settlement. Jurgen von Ungern Sternberg, "The End of the Conflict of the Orders," in *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome: New Perspectives On the Conflict of the Orders*, ed. Kurt A. Raaflaub (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 312-31; Kurt A. Raaflaub, "From Protection to Defense to Offense and Participation: Stages in the Conflict of the Orders," in *Social Struggles in Archaic Rome: New Perspectives On the Conflict of the Orders* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2005), 185-221.

25. Henry C. Boren, *Roman Society: A Social, Economic, and Cultural History* (Lexington, DC: Heath and Company, 1992), 70.

26. Mousourakis partly attributed the crisis of the late Republic to "the deepening schism between the growing urban and rural proletariat on the one hand and the landowning senatorial aristocracy on the other." Mousourakis, *A Legal History of Rome*, 44.

27. Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 32-4. A talent was the equivalent of 6,000 Athenian drachmas or Roman denarii.

28. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 33.30; Polybius, *The Histories*, 18.44; Plutarch, *Life of Titus Flamininus*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 9.5.

29. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 37.45.

30. Cato the Elder, *De Agricultura*, praef. 4.

31. Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 2.praef.

32. Cicero, *De Officiis*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Walter Miller (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 1.151; See also Cicero, *Cato Maior de Senectute*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. W. A. Falconer (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 16.56.

33. The Lex Claudia of 218. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 21.63; Cicero, "In Verrem," in *The Orations of Marcus Tullius Cicero*, trans. C. D. Yonge (London, GBR: George Bell & Sons, 1903), 2.5.45.

34 P. A. Brunt, "The Army and the Land in the Roman Revolution," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 52 (1962): 69.

35. Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 14.

36. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.8.

37. The Licinian Law of 367. Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 1.2.6; Livy, *The History of Rome*, 6.35; Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.8; Livy, *The Periochae of Livy*, 58. An iugerum was approximately one-fourth of a hectare. Harris notes that "we know that by 173 the tendency of landowners to engross in excessive quantities of *ager publicus* was clearly perceived..." Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 82.

38. Plutarch, *Life of Tiberius Gracchus*, 8.1-3; Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.8-9; Livy, *The Periochae of Livy*, 58.

39. Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 80-84.

40. Indeed, this was a Roman romantic ideal. Livy relates the story of L. Quintus Cincinnatus, a modest and hardworking citizen who was called away from his farm by the Senate to serve as dictator

during a crisis. He demonstrated remarkable bravery and soundness of command in leading his legions against the enemy and won many spoils and a triumph upon his return to Rome. He dutifully relinquished the dictatorship after a mere sixteen days even though his appointment was for six months, judging his duty to Rome fulfilled and opting to return to his quiet farm to resume his husbandry. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 3.26-29. Plutarch told a similar story, of one Manius Curius Dentatus, a hero of Rome's wars against the Samnites and Pyrrhus of Epirus. Dentatus returned to his humble farm, a "little patch of ground," after winning three triumphs for his heroism. Envoys of the Samnites reportedly found him seated by his hearth cooking turnips and offered him a large bribe in gold. Dentatus rebuffed their offer, saying that he had no need of gold with such a fine meal of turnips at his feet and that he would rather conquer the possessors of the gold than have the gold itself. Plutarch, *Life of Cato the Elder*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 2.1-2. The two stories clearly reveal the model Roman leader—equal parts farmer, soldier, and patriot. The Romans believed that farmers made the best soldiers. Cato the Elder, *De Agricultura*, praef. 4. The difficulty of agricultural work was thought to strengthen the body and steel the constitution, and it was believed that land ownership gave soldiers a greater stake in the outcome of Rome's wars. Marius, in a speech attributed to him by Sallust, portrayed himself as being of the same mold as these heroes of old—a modest, hardworking, and self-sacrificing leader who worked for the good of the state. Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, 85.

41. A. Toynbee takes this view, arguing that the independent position of the Roman and Italian peasantry was irreversibly ruined by the increasingly burdensome military levies required to fight Rome's many second century wars. Arnold J. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy, the Hannibalic War's Effects On Roman Life*, vol. 2, *Rome and Her Neighbours After Hannibal's Exit* (London, GBR: Oxford University Press, 1965). E. Gabba agrees with Toynbee's assessment in his review of the latter's work, noting that "the harshness of the levies and . . . the continuous demands for large numbers of soldiers to fight the wars of the second century . . . is the fundamental cause of the collapse of the traditional small peasant farms." Emilio Gabba, "Review of Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy*," in *Republican Rome: The Army and the Allies*, trans. P. J. Cuff (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 157. Brunt agrees as well: "The peasantry . . . must have suffered gravely [during the Second Punic War], not so much from devastations of their lands as from deterioration in husbandry, which inevitably ensued from the protracted absence of so many able-bodied men." Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 404.

42. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 10.17.5.

43. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 22.3; 22.14; Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.82.9-10; 3.88.3. Livy told of a former centurion who had fought valiantly in the Sabine War of the late-sixth century. The old centurion's experience in private life did not match his success on the battlefield, for he lost his farm to the "depredations of the enemy" and was forced into indentured slavery. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 2.23.

44. While Toynbee accepts the idea that physical destruction played a major, long-term role in economically ruining the independent farmer, several other authors believe that the legionnaires' prolonged absence and the progressively heavy burden of the *dilectus* were much more impactful. Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy*; Gabba, "Review of Toynbee, *Hannibal's Legacy*," in *Republican Rome*, 154-61; Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 269-77, 404.

45. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 2.22.

46. M. Terentius Varro, *De Re Rustica*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. W. D. Hooper and H. B. Ash (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 1.17.2. The dynamic processes which contributed to the growth of slavery were well underway by the time Varro wrote his treatise on agriculture in the first century. He observed that "all agriculture is carried on by men—slaves, or freemen, or both; by freemen, when they till the ground themselves, as many poor people do with the help of their families; or hired hands."

47. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 283.

48. See Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 13 for several ideas on why rich landowners preferred slave labor to free labor.

49. Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 80; Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 1.4.1. In his *De Agricultura*, Cato assumes that slaves will assume the bulk of the agricultural work in the ideal farm. Cato, *De Agricultura*,

2.2, 5.1-5.

50. Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 82.

51. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.7.

52. Plutarch, *Cato*, 21.1.

53. Aemilius Paullus after his victory over Epirus in 167. Plutarch, *Life of Aemilius*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 29.4. Plutarch's flattering style suggests that the figure is inflated, but even a third of this number is staggering.

54. Walter Scheidel, *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Economy* (Cambridge, GBR: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 90-4; Hopkins, *Conquerors and Slaves*, 1: 9

55. Plutarch, *Life of Crassus*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 2.6.

56. Plutarch, *Crassus*, 2.3-4.

57. Plutarch, *Cato*, 21.3.

58. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 2.5. The free population of Rome was divided into those who were formally manumitted from slavery (*libertini*) and those who were born free (*ingenui*). Gaius, *The Institutes of Gaius*, trans. James Muirhead (London: Stevens and Sons, 1880), 1.10-11.

59. Plutarch, for example, complained that Scipio Aemilianus was frequently accompanied to the forum by "men who were of low birth and had lately been slaves . . . who were frequenters of the forum and able to gather a mob and force all issues by means of solicitations and shouting." Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 38.4.

60. Indeed, Edward Gibbon painted a rather rosy picture of Roman slavery by suggesting that Roman slaves were motivated workers and not merely mindless drones being forced to labor at whatever task their masters deemed worthy. "Hope," he wrote, "was not denied to the Roman slave; and, if he had any opportunity of making himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom." Edward Gibbons, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. John Bagnell Bury (New York: Fred DeFau & Company, 1906), 1:51. This optimistic view is reinforced by the advice of Varro, a first century farming expert who prescribed liberal treatment as a means of securing what modern management scholars call "buy-in"—hard work and commitment to superordinate goals. Varro believed that the liberal treatment of slaves made them "take more interest in their work," and resulted in "their loyalty and kindly feeling to the master." Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 1.17.6-7.

61. Brunt inferred from the literary and epigraphic evidence that "freedmen were a very numerous class." P. A. Brunt, *Italian Manpower, 225 B.C.-A.D. 14* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1971), 121-2. While the senate and the magistracies were closed to *libertini*, their *ingenui* sons could hope to enter the ranks of the *nobilitas* one day. Gaius, *The Institutes*, 1.10-11.

62. Cato, *De Agricultura*, 1.7. Significantly, he ranked grain sixth in importance behind wine, olive oil, and even vegetables. See Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 2. Praef. 4 to read Varro's complaints of grain land being converted into pastures "out of greed and in the face of the laws."

63. Paul Erdkamp, *The Grain Market in the Roman Empire: A Social, Political, and Economic Study* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 206-36; Peter Garnsey and Dominic Rathbone, "The Background to the Grain Law of Gaius Gracchus," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 75 (1985): 23; Varro, *De Re Rustica*, 2.praef.3. Sicily was a particularly productive province and a crucial producer of grain for Rome. See Livy, *The History of Rome*, 26.40, 27.5; Grain was also brought in from Spain. See Plutarch, *Life of Caius Gracchus*, 6.2-3.

64. There were, however, acute crises caused by famines, poor harvests, war, slave rebellions,

and the like, but these were temporary supply disruptions in an otherwise abundant grain market. The real contribution of Gaius Gracchus's grain legislation was increased predictability and stability in both the supply and demand side of the Roman grain market. Intermittent supply shocks were reduced by the creation of proper storage facilities in Rome and the demand for grain was smoothed out by the minimum grain allotment. Garnsey and Rathbone, "The Background to the Grain Law of Gaius Gracchus," 21-5.

65. The flow of imported grain was in the hands of public officials (the aediles), profit-seeking private entities, and their agents. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 30.38, 38.35; Peter Temin, *The Roman Market Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 30-33, 97-107.

66. Temin, *The Roman Market Economy*, 3. Erdkamp argues convincingly that Roman grain producers enjoyed relatively high yields compared to other societies in pre-industrial Europe and that they generated large surpluses for the market. Erdkamp, *The Grain Market*, 12-54.

67. Boren, *Roman Society*, 70.

68. M. I. Finley, *The Ancient Economy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973), 22-3.

69. Erdkamp, *The Grain Market*, 194-5, 204.

70. Temin, *The Roman Market*, 4.

71. Temin argues that very low transaction costs permitted productive specialization based on comparative advantage. Temin, *The Roman Market*, 9-27, 30.

72. *Ibid.*, 17.

73. The term is Gabba's. Emilio Gabba, *Republican Rome: The Army and the Allies*, trans. P. J. Cuff (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1976), 5.

74. Livy also credits Servius with the creation of the census. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 1.42-43.

75. *Ibid.*

76. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 402.

77. Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.21.6-23.14; Livy, *The History of Rome*, 8.8.

78. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 22.57, 41.34, Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.19; Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 402.

79. Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.19-6.21.5.

80. Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.39.12-14; Livy, *The History of Rome*, 4.59; Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, 14.16.5; Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 402.

81. Accounts of legions being raised for specific purposes and for limited durations and objectives are prevalent in the written record for the period of Roman overseas expansion. For some examples see Polybius, *The Histories*, 3.88.7; Livy, *The History of Rome*, 3.27.

82. Mousourakis notes that "a major cause of the crisis was the decline of the free peasantry. . . [and] the growing inability of the state to recruit enough yeoman legionaries to fight its wars." George Mousourakis, *A Legal History of Rome* (London, GBR: Routledge, 2007), 44. Harris observes that "in the second century, as the number of *assidui* declined . . . it became difficult to recruit as many legionaries as the leaders of the state wished." Harris, *War and Imperialism*, 101. Gabba describes the "proletarianization of the middle class *assidui*" as a grave injury to the military readiness of the Roman state and one of the main causes of the professionalization of the Roman military under Marius. Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 9. Rome also endured a declining population and a general increase in poverty during

the second century. Polybius, *The Histories*, 1.61.1-2; Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities*, 4.18; Cicero, *De Officiis*, 2.21.73.

83. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 194, 405-6. He did this by placing the price of a *iugerum* of land at 250 asses during the latter-second century, a conservative extrapolation based on the prices given by Columella in the first century C.E. The poorest *assidui* of the late-Republic could only afford 6 to 16 *iugera*, an amount insufficient to sustain a family of four that consumed 120 *modii* of wheat.

84. This argument is skillfully laid out by Gabba. Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 1-19.

85. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 1.43; Polybius, *The Histories*, 6.19.2. Cato the Elder, writing in the mid-second century, placed the daily wage of an unskilled transportation worker at 2 sesterces per day. This means that an unskilled worker would have had to labor for 800 days in order to amass the 400 drachmae (4,000 asses) required to qualify for military service at the time. Cato the Elder, *De Agricultura*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. W. D. Hooper and H. B. Ash (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1934), 22.3. Information on the relative values of second century Roman coinage is derived from Dunstan, *Ancient Rome*, 99. Both Gabba and Brunt agree on these reductions and their timing. Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 3-7; Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 403-4.

86. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 9.1.

87. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 404-5. Brunt also points the fact that Gaius Gracchus felt it necessary to enact that boys under 17 be prohibited from being conscripted in the army, meaning that the practice must have been common enough to warrant its legal prohibition. See also Plutarch, *Life of Caius Gracchus*, 5.1.

88. Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.8.3, 2.12.2-5; Livy, *The Periochae of Livy*, 63, 65; Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Earnest Cary (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1927), 27.

89. Livy, *The Periochae of Livy*, 67.

90. Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.11.1-12.1.

91. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 3.

92. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 4; Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.17.

93. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 4-5.

94. *Ibid.*, 7-8.

95. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 9; Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 85.

96. Sallust, *The War with Jugurtha*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. John C. Rolfe (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), 86.2; Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Bernadotte Perrin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1923), 9.1.

97. The *supplementum* was modest in absolute terms as well—Marius enlisted but 5,000 *proletarii* in 107. Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 430.

98. Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 11; Livy, *The History of Rome*, 32.3, 32.9, 37.4, 42.32.

99. Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 11. Gabba points to a *senatus consulto* of 201 that provided Scipio's African veterans with allotments of Samnite and Apulian land and the later extension of this provision to include veterans of other foreign wars as well. Livy, *The History of Rome*, 31.4, 31.49, 32.1.

100. Scipio Africanus reportedly raised 7,000 volunteers during the Hannibalic War. Livy,

The History of Rome, 28.46; Appian, *The Foreign Wars*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. Horace White (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1913), 8.8. Scipio Aemilianus raised some 4,000 volunteers in 134 for his Numantine campaign. Appian, *The Foreign Wars*, 6.84.

101. The cost of equipment was deducted from the soldiers' pay. Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 9-10; Brunt, *Italian Manpower*, 405.

102. Gabba champions this view. He saw the proletarianization of the Roman army as a century-long process that was inaugurated by the tremendous manpower requirements of the Second Punic War and sustained by the progressive impoverishment of the *assidui*. He views the professionalization of the army under Marius as the logical final phase of a process that, for over a century, saw the inclusion of ever increasing numbers of *proletarii* in the legions. According to Gabba, Marius's *dilectus* of 107 was "not a genuine reform of the Roman military system but the outcome of developing tradition." Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 15.

103. Paterculus was one of them, describing Marius as "excellent a general as he was an evil influence in time of peace." Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.11.1.

104. A. N. Sherwin-White, "Violence in Roman Politics," *Journal of Roman Studies* 46 (1956): 5.

105. Marius nearly broke with Saturninus in 100 over the latter's famous oath that compelled senators and magistrates to implement plebiscites or be exiled, and when Saturninus's political methods turned violent, Marius acted against him on behalf of the senate. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 29.1-3, 30.1-4; Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.30. For Saturninus's methods, see Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.28-33; Velleius Paterculus, *The Roman History*, 2.12.6.

106. Sherwin-White, "Violence in Roman Politics," 5.

107. Jurgen von Ungern-Sternberg, "The Crisis of the Republic," in *The Cambridge Companion to the Roman Republic*, ed. and trans. Harriet I. Flower (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 84-5; Gabba, *Republican Rome*, 41-2.

108. Plutarch, *Life of Marius*, 28. The autonomous granting of citizenship by a commander was another innovation of the Marian period. Sherwin-White points out that Cicero could not find a single example of this action before Marius. Two entire cohorts of Umbrian infantry were granted citizenship by Marius during his German war. A. N. Sherwin-White, *The Roman Citizenship*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, GBR: Oxford University Press, 1973), 294; Cicero, "Pro Balbo," in *Cicero Oration: Pro Caelio. de Provinciis Consularibus. Pro Balbo*, Loeb Classical Library Edition, trans. R. Gardner (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1958), 46-51.

109. Marius regularly reenlisted his veterans. See Diodorus Siculus, *The Library of History*, 38.12.

110. He did so by appealing to their desire for plunder in the Mithridatic campaign. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 1.57.

111. Appian, *The Civil Wars*, 107.

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The Washington Treaty and the Third Republic: French Naval Development and Rivalry with Italy, 1922-1940

Tormod B. Engvig

The 1921-1922 Washington Conference on naval arms limitation had a profound effect on the French Navy. For the *Marine Nationale*, as in the other signatory fleets—those of Great Britain, the United States, Japan, and Italy—the conference and resultant treaty stymied capital ship construction. However, in its attempt to forestall a battleship arms race of the kind that had helped spark World War I, the treaty led instead to an increased focus on cruiser, aircraft carrier, and submarine development. France was humiliated by the conference's outcome; despite possessing an overseas empire second in size only to that of Great Britain, she was allocated a minor ratio of capital ship tonnage, and on par only with Italy—a young and aggressive nation with Mediterranean ambitions. Although overshadowed by the emerging U.S.-Japanese naval rivalry in the Pacific, the Washington Treaty presaged a naval arms race between the Third Republic and Fascist Italy for control of the western and central Mediterranean.

Nevertheless, for the French Navy, the Washington Treaty reaffirmed many of the views of the *Jeune École* (Young School), the doctrine which throughout the second half of the nineteenth century had espoused the value of smaller warships—armed with the latest breakthroughs in torpedo and mine warfare—to counter the powerful battle fleet of Great Britain, France's preeminent naval rival until the early 1900s. What resulted in the wake of the treaty was in many ways a golden age of French naval architecture, which produced a series of innovative and striking vessels, large and small. Although the catastrophic events of 1940 unfolded in a way few in the French Navy could foresee, on the eve of World War II the *Marine Nationale* retained—despite significant financial hurdles—the means to contest the Mediterranean against its Italian rival.

Epochs of heady growth—followed by periods of tremendous upheaval—have characterized the long and turbulent history of the French Navy. Throughout the nineteenth century, the *Marine Nationale* was the second largest fleet in the world after Great Britain's Royal Navy. However, with the commissioning of Britain's revolutionary HMS *Dreadnought* in 1906, the British-inspired fleet of Imperial Germany rapidly eclipsed the French position. France, meanwhile, did not lay down her first dreadnought, *Courbet*, until 1910. As the French Navy fell steadily behind in quantity and quality, World War I (1914-1918) further diverted

resources from naval development in favor of the army. On the eve of the Washington Conference in 1921, France maintained a largely obsolete fleet.¹

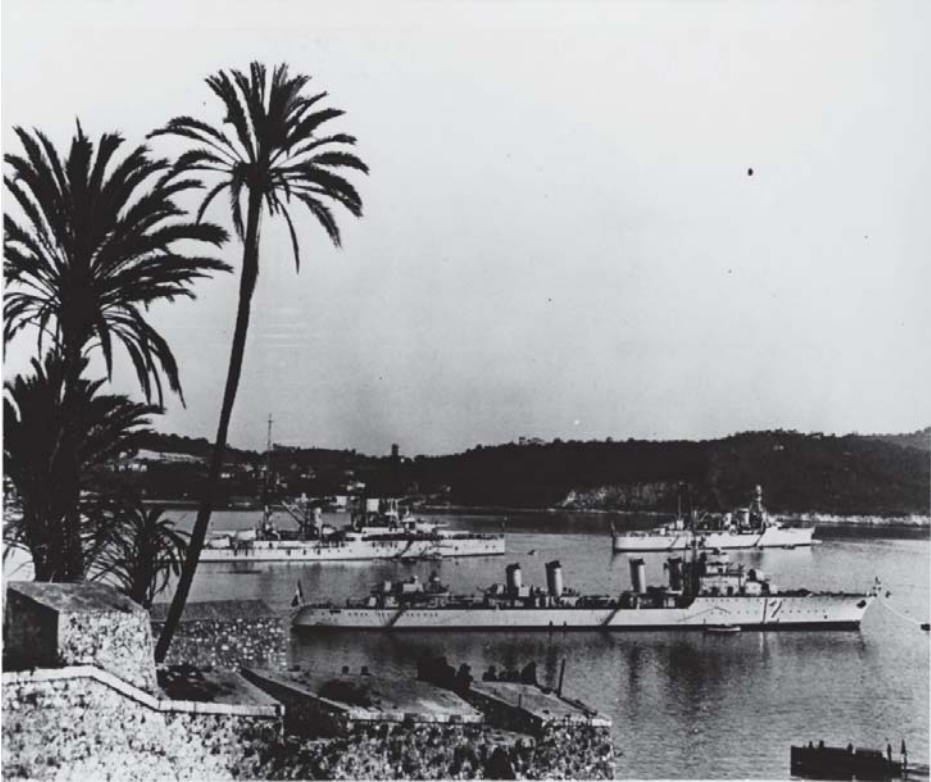


Figure 1. French warships at Villefranche on the Riviera in February 1939. In the foreground is the *contre-torpilleur* *Vauban*, on the right is the proto-treaty cruiser *Duguay-Trouin*, and on the left is the modernized World War I-era dreadnought *Courbet*. Courtesy of www.history.navy.mil

The United States government invited Great Britain, Japan, France, and Italy to Washington in the hope of forestalling a renewed—and expensive—battleship arms race of the kind that had soured Anglo-German relations and destabilized Europe before World War I. As representatives of a major colonial power, the French delegation came to Washington expecting parity with the Japanese Empire. However, France was in 1921 a great power in decline, a fact many of her policymakers seemed loath to admit. French naval planners had in any case given up on the nationalist dream of a global navy. Knowing that the Republic could never afford such a force in the wake of World War I, they had

advocated a fleet with a regional scope: an ability to dominate the Mediterranean and tip the scales in an Anglo-American conflict—preferably in support of the latter—and one equal to the German and Italian fleets combined. It was this resultant navy with which the French nation went to war in 1939.²

The Washington Treaty itself was as ground-breaking as it was succinct. Capital ship ratios totalled 525,000 tons for Great Britain and the United States, 315,000 tons for Japan, and 175,000 tons for Italy and France. Aircraft carrier ratios were set at 315,000 tons for Great Britain and the United States, 81,000 tons for Japan, and 60,000 tons for Italy and France. Battleships were also limited to 35,000 tons individual displacement and 16-inch (bore diameter) main armament, while carriers were individually limited to 27,000 tons. Furthermore, the treaty stipulated a 10-year “battleship holiday” in which no new capital ships would be laid down. A qualitative—but not quantitative—limit was extended to all other vessels at 10,000 tons and 8-inch main armament; the resulting “treaty cruiser” would become a prolific warship in all five navies.³

For the French delegation, led by Prime Minister Aristide Briand, the Washington Conference included a series of humiliations. After being slighted in the seating arrangement—Briand found no place for himself at the great power table and ended up among the British dominions—the French (along with the Italians) were kept out of the initial round of negotiations on account of their relative naval weakness and lack of recent construction. And while Italy was very pleased by an offer of parity in capital ships with her emerging rival, the French were appalled. The sizes of the signatories’ navies at the time of the conference was apparently what mattered in determining the limitation ratios, not their world standing or colonial responsibilities; a move clearly favoring nations like the United States and Great Britain.⁴

However, cloaked in this loss of prestige at the hands of *la perfide Albion* (“perfidious Albion”) the fact remains that the French delegation actually accomplished its main goal at Washington. The construction of expensive capital ships was in the 1920s a low priority for the financially strapped Third Republic. By consenting to battleship parity with Italy, Briand helped ensure there would be no quantitative limits on cruisers, flotilla craft, and submarines; vessels that French naval planners saw as essential in the confined waters of the Mediterranean. This was no mean feat considering that the British favored outright abolishment of the submarine, while the United States pushed for ratios. Desiring a large cruiser fleet for colonial policing and commerce protection, the British eventually came around to the French position as it enabled them to press for similar ships. Furthermore, the treaty gave France—along with Italy—the right

to build 70,000 tons of new capital ships during the building holiday, to enable her to modernize her ageing battle line. It was the Jeune École doctrine born anew, a French alternative to the big-fleet, decisive battle theories of the American naval officer and Francophile Alfred Thayer Mahan.⁵

Although the Washington Treaty helped delineate the Franco-Italian naval rivalry, French strategists had viewed their World War I ally as a potential adversary as early as 1919. This assumption was natural given the mutual interest of the two nations in controlling the Mediterranean as regional powers, France as an empire in decline, Italy as a young nation on the rise. France's interest in the Mediterranean stemmed in large part from the need to maintain her lines of communication with the Maghreb—the jewel of her colonial empire—and beyond. In the period of 1914–1918, the French shipped thousands of colonial troops from North Africa and as far away as Senegal to the Western Front. By fighting for France, they made a major contribution to the Allied victory. Naturally, interbellum policy makers took it for granted that the colonies would provide *la Métropole* (metropolitan France) with crucial manpower in any future war. Ensuring the safe transport of these troops was a vital function of the navy. Protection of Middle Eastern oil shipments also played its part; their most obvious and direct route to French ports was through the Mediterranean, not around the Cape of Good Hope.⁶

In the wake of the Washington Treaty, the Marine Nationale's doctrinal development included an increased focus on groups of fast hit-and-run raiders in lieu of the traditional battle fleet. This new model navy, centered on treaty cruisers and powerful destroyers—and augmented where appropriate by a small core of battleships—would be used to mount raids on Italian lines of communication, as well as counter similar sorties by the Italian *Regia Marina* (Royal Navy). As fleet scouts and sea-lane interdictors, submarines—a traditional French focus—were a crucial component of the new fleet. The Italians appeared to reach similar conclusions on the use of naval power in the Mediterranean, as was the case with other rivals like the United States and Japan in the Pacific. Unsurprisingly, the navies of France and Italy came to resemble one another.⁷

The Washington Treaty had permitted France to construct 70,000 tons of new capital ships during the building holiday, and like the other signatory navies, she also set about modernizing her aged fleet of six dreadnoughts. The modernization efforts made to the *Courbet* and *Bretagne* classes were less comprehensive than those being given foreign contemporaries, no doubt in part because French planners were hard pressed to find the old and slow vessels useful employment in their new model navy—except perhaps in the shore bombardment

role.⁸ Italy's first post-Washington treaty cruisers—the *Trento* class—had meanwhile made a big impression on French naval planners, being both fast and heavily armed. Not surprisingly, French capital ship design gravitated toward a fast, modestly sized “cruiser-killer,” not unlike in concept to the British World War I-era battlecruiser.⁹

Planning was well underway on what would become the *Dunkerque* class when, from an unexpected direction, the world learned in 1929 of Germany's *Deutschland* class “pocket battleships.” These unique vessels, essentially heavily armed cruisers, mounted an 11-inch main armament, well in excess of the Italian 8-inch guns the French cruiser-killers expected to encounter. Modifications quickly followed. The result was a 26,500-ton fast battleship theoretically immune to 11-inch shellfire, armed with eight 13-inch guns in two innovative quadruple turrets, and at 30 knots fast enough to catch the German raiders. The two ships, *Dunkerque* and *Strasbourg*, launched in 1935 and 1936 respectively, comprised the hard-hitting core of the late interbellum Marine Nationale. Their battlecruiser-like design also made them ideal raiders in their own right, and the British viewed them with apprehension after France's 1940 armistice with Nazi Germany. The British—their backs to the wall—realized the potential threat these two ships posed if Germany controlled them outright. As it was, the German 1940 Armistice commission allowed the French to keep their fleet, out of a similar fear that the French ships would otherwise flee to Britain before they could be secured. Ultimately the *Dunkerques* spurred Italy and Germany to lay down fast battleships of their own (the *Littorio* and *Scharnhorst* classes, respectively), to which the French countered yet again with an improved and enlarged design, the *Richelieu* class. The namesake vessel, of 37,250 tons and equipped with eight 15-inch guns, was nearing completion at Brest when France was overrun by Nazi Germany in June 1940.¹⁰

French naval planners responded to the advent of the treaty cruiser with unrestrained fervor. As no quantitative limit had been set on these 10,000-ton, 8-inch gunned vessels in 1922, they saw in this warship the potential—like the Japanese in the Pacific—to compensate for their own inferiority in capital ships with the Anglo-Americans. The concept of the fast, heavily armed cruiser warship also fit well into the doctrinal framework of the Marine Nationale's Mediterranean focus. As such, the French had already designed a proto-treaty cruiser before the Washington Conference. The three ships of the *Duguay-Trouin* class essentially preempted the treaty cruiser concept, and although later classified as light cruisers, provided the framework for more powerful vessels.¹¹

The naval architects of the period faced a dilemma when attempting to

keep to an arbitrary, treaty-stipulated tonnage limit. Certain characteristics had to be prioritized over others, as it was physically impossible to build a fast, well-protected, and well-armed vessel within a 10,000-ton displacement. French treaty cruiser design therefore essentially went through three phases. Phase one exclusively focused on speed and armament at the expense of protection. This principle produced the *Duquesne* class, which comprised two ships, the *Duquesne* and *Tourville*. They were exceptionally fast at 34 knots but virtually unprotected. In the second phase, French designers, influenced in part by the heavier armor of Italian treaty cruisers, pushed for increased protection, even if this meant a reduction in speed. What resulted were the four ships of the *Suffren*



Figure 2. The French heavy cruisers *Suffren* (r) and *Duquesne* during a visit to Norfolk in October 1931. Note their four twin 8-in. gun turrets and the scouting floatplanes mounted on catapults abaft their funnels. Courtesy of www.history.navy.mil.

class. Built in pairs, the first two, *Suffren* and *Colbert*, were equipped with an armor belt over the machinery spaces, while the following pair, *Foch* and *Dupleix*, had the machinery enclosed by an armored *caisson* (box). While an improvement over their predecessors in terms of protection, this was still insufficient. Capable of 32 knots, the *Suffrens*'s focus was still on high speed and armament.¹²

In the third and final phase, French planners largely reversed the focus on speed in favor of protection. As was characteristic of the naval rivalry between the Third Republic and Italy, the final French treaty cruiser, *Algérie*, largely coincided with the development of the Regia Marina's powerful *Zara* class. A very well-balanced design, *Algérie* was—along with her Italian counterparts—among the finest treaty cruisers of her generation. She was also the last of her kind built for the Marine Nationale; in the end France only completed seven of the twenty-one treaty cruisers requested after Washington—the same number as Italy.¹³

The follow-on London Naval Conference of 1930—signed by a French delegation but not ratified by the French government—sought to redress the Washington Treaty's cruiser imbalance by extending quantitative tonnage limits to these ships. After 1930, cruisers fell into two categories: 8-inch armed category a (heavy) and 6.1-inch armed category b (light). By 1939, in addition to their seven treaty/heavy cruisers, the Marine Nationale possessed a force of ten light cruisers, of which the six units of the *La Galissonnière* class were a particularly successful design. The earlier generations of light cruisers, including the graceful, one-off experimental *Emile Bertin*, tended to mirror their very fast but poorly protected treaty cruiser counterparts.¹⁴

Destroyer and submarine development perhaps best represents the Jeune École's spirit in interbellum French naval affairs. Here, as in other aspects of naval construction, the French were very innovative. In 1919, with an eye toward Italy, Chief of the Naval General Staff Admiral Ferdinand de Bon and Georges Leygues, Navy Minister, outlined the future foundations of the Marine Nationale's destroyer force. The French divided their destroyers into two primary categories: larger *contre-torpilleurs* (torpedo-boat destroyers) whose primary task it was to scout for and to screen the battle fleet against enemy flotilla craft and light cruisers, and smaller *torpilleurs d'escadre* (fleet torpedo boats) built primarily to harass and attrite the enemy's battle line with torpedoes.¹⁵

With their demanding mission profile, the *Jaguar*, *Guépard*, *Aigle*, *Vauquelin*, *Le Fantasque*, and *Mogador* classes of *contre-torpilleurs* were in essence super-destroyers, and they made a notable stir in foreign naval circles when unveiled. Having been conceived as an answer to the Italian post-World War I superiority in light cruisers, the French vessels completely outclassed their

foreign contemporaries. The Italians could not fail to take notice, and answered with a whole series of light cruisers specifically designed to counter the French ships.¹⁶ On the eve of World War II, the Marine Nationale possessed thirty-two of these striking 2,126 to 2,880-ton vessels. They were the fastest warships in the world for their time. The *Le Terrible* achieved a blistering 45 knots on trials in 1935. The contre-torpilleurs were a highly visible and potent arm of the interbellum French Navy.¹⁷



Figure 3. Four 1500-tonne type fleet submarines at Toulon or Marseilles in the 1930s, with the heavy cruiser *Algérie* on the left. Note the trainable box mounts for the four stern torpedo tubes. A similar triple mount was located abaft the conning tower as well. Courtesy of www.history.navy.mil.

The smaller torpilleurs d'escadre were more akin to the destroyer designs of other navies. Nevertheless, here too the French flair for innovative flotilla craft shone brightly; arguably, only Japan's large fleet destroyers were comparable. Unlike the other signatory nations, the French also had to build their destroyer force from scratch since it had been particularly hard hit by the lean naval years of 1914-1918. The *Bourrasque*, *L'Adroit*, and *Le Hardi* classes ranged in displacement from 1,320 to 1,772 tons and by 1940 comprised thirty-four ships. Although they carried torpedoes for their primary role as battle-line harassers, the torpilleurs d'escadre also emphasized powerful gun armament. In the end, the super-destroyer and fleet torpedo boat concepts were an inventive solution to France's capital ship inferiority. However, while impressive vessels, they were not without a number of drawbacks. Their light construction made them poor gunnery platforms in heavy seas, their operational radius was poor, and their mechanical

unreliability—the price paid for their many innovative features—caused their captains no shortage of headaches.¹⁸

The French have maintained a love affair with the submarine since the time of Jules Verne. The Third Republic saw this sea-denial weapon as a cornerstone of imperial defense—another ingenious way to counter superior enemy battle fleets: “The day when France shall have a fleet of 250-300 submarines it could regard the future with perfect security.”¹⁹ Events at Washington clearly reflected this attitude; French indignation vis-à-vis the Anglo-Saxon power bloc tended to revolve around British and American proposals to ban or limit submersibles. However, the French submarine effort in World War I had been rather paltry, and her pre-1918 contraptions were more novel than practical. After securing the secrets of German World War I U-boat design, the French built their interbellum submarine force like their destroyers—from scratch.²⁰

Submarines of the 1920s and 30s were divided into three distinct types: smaller coastal boats for local area defense, medium to large “fleet” boats to accompany the battle fleet and act as its eyes and ears, and large cruisers for long-range commerce interdiction. The French built prolifically in the first two categories, characterized by the 600/630-tonne coastal and 1500-tonne fleet classes. Like its flotilla craft, the navy often contracted its submarine designs out to private yards as an expedient in the face of naval dockyard delays. However, the most famous French submarine built during this period was undoubtedly the one-of-a-kind *croiseur corsaire submersible* (raider cruiser submarine) *Surcouf*. At 2,880 tons and armed with not just torpedoes but also with two 8-inch guns in a watertight turret, a spotter floatplane, a motor launch, and a brig for forty prisoners, *Surcouf*'s political impact was undoubtedly greater than her practical utility. Essentially a vessel tailored for commerce raiding against global maritime trading powers like Great Britain, France's erstwhile and future ally, her potential usefulness against Italian or German maritime commerce was slight. In an ironic twist, the huge submarine found itself escorting Allied convoys in the North Atlantic during World War II.²¹

Aircraft carrier development was not a priority in the Marine Nationale the way it was in the United States or Imperial Japanese Navies. Manifested in the two French carriers built before World War II were separate theories on the utilization of naval airpower. Like many of her contemporaries, *Béarn* (22,150 tons) was built on a converted capital ship hull (from the canceled *Normandie* class dreadnoughts). Although a proper carrier, sporting a number of innovations such as hydraulic arrestor wires and a system for cooling funnel gases blowing across the flight deck, *Béarn* was, with her modest air wing and 21 knots, too small and slow to have

much utility. The other alternative concept was a less expensive—and less flexible—mobile floatplane base, the 10,000-ton *Commandant Teste*. Both of these ships were experimental in the French Navy, and World War II interrupted plans meant to test future concepts. But French advances in this area also have to be seen in terms of the naval rivalry with Italy. The latter developed no carrier and banked on seamless coordination between the navy and air force from land bases in the event of war. This fell far short of expectations, and lack of air support would prove to be the Regia Marina's Achilles' heel in World War II.²²

Ultimately, France's inability to produce all the ships she wanted was a result not of the limitations imposed by the Washington Treaty, but rather the Third Republic's own financial straits in the wake of World War I. Coupled with fiscal hardship was the modest capacity of the French naval dockyards. In fact, lengthy build times and interminable delays characterized French warship production as much as technological innovation throughout the interbellum. In an effort to speed up production, private yards built many of the Marine Nationale's smaller vessels, such as its destroyers and submarines. This in turn resulted in an awkward lack of uniformity among many ships. In addition, despite the originality of French naval thinkers and ship architects—in fact partly because of it—many of their vessels suffered from unreliable engines, light construction, and very short range which hampered their operational effectiveness. Furthermore, in common with all other pre-World War II navies, effective ASW (anti-submarine warfare) tactics or technology received little attention.²³

Nevertheless, when comparing the interbellum Marine Nationale with its chief rival, the Regia Marina, the conclusion must be that on the eve of World War II the French, with their modern and innovative fleet, possessed the ability to contest the Mediterranean against Fascist Italy—with or without Great Britain as an ally. The navy's esprit de corps and confidence in its training, abilities, and equipment was justifiably high as it looked east toward a potential showdown with Mussolini's sailors. Unlike the Regia Marina, the Marine Nationale also appreciated the possibility that low visibility conditions or night would portend naval engagements; French ships were equipped with powerful searchlights, illuminating shell, flashless propellant, and trainable torpedo tubes for rapid firing.²⁴ Conversely, the Italian Navy's lack of preparation for night combat—both tactically and technologically—would have serious consequences in its war with Great Britain between 1940 and 1943.²⁵

As the war clouds loomed heavy in the late 1930s, the Allies, conspicuously spearheaded by the Chief of the French Naval General Staff, the dynamic Admiral François Darlan, seriously considered a preemptive strike against

Italy. Only Britain's overblown fears of the risks involved—which the French political and army leadership went along with as they became fixated on the German threat—enabled Mussolini to be the one to declare war first in June 1940. By that time, the German Army's successes in France had completely altered the strategic picture. It is interesting to consider what may have transpired had the Allies acted more boldly; the Marine Nationale undoubtedly felt ready to do its part, and it is certain that with their combined might the French and British fleets would have presented a daunting foe indeed for the Regia Marina. The Allies may well have succeeded in closing the Mediterranean, with dire consequences for the Axis war effort in general and Italian ambitions in Africa and the Middle East in particular.²⁶

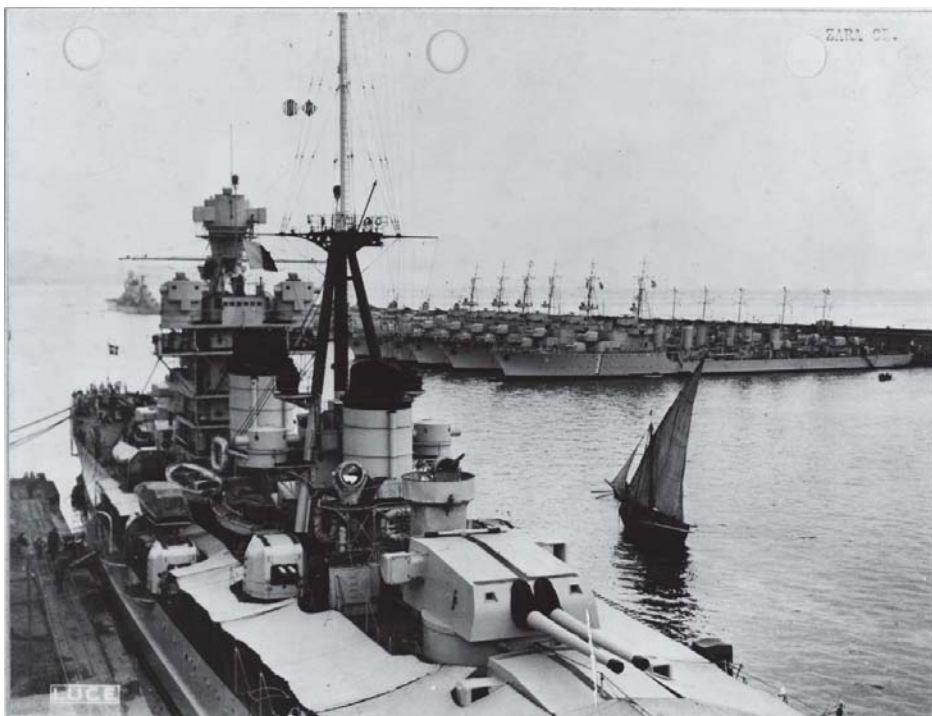


Figure 4. The Mediterranean naval rivals: Six French 2400-tonne type contre-torpilleurs (r to l: *Tartu*, *Albatros*, *Chevalier Paul*, *Gerfaut*, *Aigle*, and *Vautour*) visit Naples in May 1935. In the foreground is the Italian heavy cruiser *Zara*. "Showing the flag" was an important role for French warships in the interbellum. Courtesy www.history.navy.mil.

The Allied failure to exploit Italy's vulnerability in the winter of 1939-1940, the Third Republic's collapse the following June, and the subsequently

tragic events at Mers-el-Kébir in Algeria on 3 July 1940—where a bungled British operation to keep French ships out of German hands sank the battleship *Bretagne* and killed over a thousand French sailors—serves to illustrate that the most carefully laid war plans often come undone due to unforeseen events. Nevertheless, what was left of the fleet, rechristened the *Forces Maritimes Françaises* (FMF), proved in the end to be one of post-Armistice France’s most powerful political tools, as it continued to exert a strategic influence in the Mediterranean Basin. By its existence as a “fleet-in-being,” it provided priceless leverage. It ensured the Vichy regime a modicum of independence it would otherwise never have enjoyed. As it was, the French (working in their perceived national best interest) navigated a political tightrope between the Axis and Allies from 1940 to 1942.²⁷

The Marine Nationale spent the interbellum preparing for a conflict with Italy in the Mediterranean. This confrontation never materialized as envisioned. When World War II broke out, events soon relegated France and its navy to a comparatively minor role. When the Vichy fleet, imbued with its own unique sense of honor, scuttled its ships at Toulon on 27 November 1942 instead of joining the Allies, it seemed as if the war had long since passed it by. As the heart of the French Navy destroyed itself, Germany, in answer to the American landings in French North Africa, annexed the Vichy *zone libre* (free zone). However, France’s eclipse in world affairs should not overshadow the important geopolitical role her navy played during the period. In the end, the Third Republic’s attempt to create a regional “force of balance” during the interbellum serves as a model for nations attempting to forge independent strategies in a world of superpowers. This is as true today as it was during the Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Marine Nationale of 1922-1940 represents the spiritual predecessor to not only the Fourth Republic’s own Cold War nuclear-armed strike force, the *Force de Frappe*, but also other regional naval forces of the post-1945 period.²⁸

Notes

1. Bernard Ireland, *Jane’s Battleships of the 20th Century* (London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1996), 14-15, 18-19; John Jordan, *Warships After Washington: The Development of the Five Major Fleets 1922–1930* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2011), 16-19.

2. Joel Blatt, “The Parity That Meant Superiority: French Naval Policy towards Italy at the Washington Conference, 1921-22, and Interwar French Foreign Policy,” *French Historical Studies* 12, no. 2 (Autumn 1981): 228, 232.

3. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 49, 53-55.

4. Blatt, "The Parity That Meant Superiority," 235; John Jordan and Robert Dumas, *French Battleships 1922-1956* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), 15-16.
5. Blatt, "The Parity That Meant Superiority," 229-30, 239, 241-42; Jordan and Dumas, *French Battleships*, 17.
6. Stephen Corrado Azzi, "The Historiography of Fascist Foreign Policy," *The Historical Journal* 36, no. 1 (March 1993): 197-98; Blatt, "The Parity That Meant Superiority," 226-27; Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 39; MacGregor Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed 1939-1941: Politics and Strategy in Fascist Italy's Last War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 19-20; Martin Thomas, "At the Heart of Things? French Imperial Defense Planning in the Late 1930s," *French Historical Studies* 21, no. 2 (Spring 1998): 334-35.
7. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 103.
8. Maurizio Brescia, *Mussolini's Navy: A Reference Guide to the Regia Marina 1930-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012), 58-59, 62-63; Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 61, 98-101. The Italians similarly modernized their *Cavour* and *Duilio* class dreadnoughts to give them a stop-gap capability against the French. The modernized French battleships were an approximate match for these Italian vessels, although the latter were much faster.
9. Brescia, *Mussolini's Navy*, 72-74; Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 103-5; Jordan and Dumas, *French Battleships*, 19-21.
10. Ireland, *Jane's Battleships of the 20th Century*, 46-47, 62-63; Jordan and Dumas, *French Battleships*, 29-31, 38, 59, 99, 124-25. *Richelieu* subsequently escaped to the French colony at Dakar in Senegal, where she exerted a powerful influence on the balance of power in Equatorial Africa.
11. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 109; John Jordan and Jean Moulin, *French Cruisers 1922-1956* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2013), 24-25, 30.
12. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 140-42; Jordan and Moulin, *French Cruisers*, 41, 43-45, 54-55, 58-60, 63, 69, 72, 74, 77, 79.
13. Brescia, *Mussolini's Navy*, 76-77; Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 73; Jordan and Moulin, *French Cruisers*, 107, 109-10. Of note, *Algérie's* Italian counterparts blatantly violated the 10,000-ton treaty limit, as did the Japanese with their treaty cruisers in the Pacific.
14. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 302, 308-9; Jordan and Moulin, *French Cruisers*, 96, 99, 121, 124.
15. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 39-40; John Jordan and Jean Moulin, *French Destroyers: Torpilleurs d'Escadre and Contre-Torpilleurs 1922-1956* (Barnsley: Seaforth Publishing, 2015), 16, 206.
16. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 206-11. These Italian light cruisers—the "large scouts" of the *Condottieri* series—were not a success, as in their attempt to match the contre-torpilleurs in speed they were unbalanced vessels, being unstable and completely lacking in armor.
17. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 40-41; Jordan and Moulin, *French Destroyers*, 22, 79, 94, 112, 139-40, 144, 164.
18. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 263; Jordan and Moulin, *French Destroyers*, 41, 62, 184.
19. Count Gustave de Kerguézec (1920) quoted in Blatt, "The Parity That Meant Superiority," 238.
20. Blatt, "The Parity That Meant Superiority," 239-41.

21. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 251-52.

22. Brescia, *Mussolini's Navy*, 21, 70-71; Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 179-86. The Italians never resolved this issue thanks largely to the intransigence of the Air Force, which in Italy controlled virtually everything that flew. The Regia Marina only began constructing its first aircraft carrier, *Aquila*, in mid-1941; she was never completed.

23. Vincent P. O'Hara, W. David Dickson, and Richard Worth, eds., *On Seas Contested: The Seven Great Navies of the Second World War* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2010), Kindle eBook Loc. 1068-1112.

24. Jordan and Dumas, *French Battleships*, 101, 106. In addition, to more easily identify the splashes of individual ships' guns in a daylight surface action, the French Navy developed for its shells a simple but clever system of different colored dyes. These gave off smoke when detonated, and in battle made for a colorful spectacle.

25. Jordan, *Warships After Washington*, 205-6; Vincent P. O'Hara, *The Struggle for the Middle Sea: The Great Navies at War in the Mediterranean Theater, 1940-1945* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2009), 6, 256-57. In fact, all of the Royal Navy's most notable surface victories against the Regia Marina took place at night.

26. Knox, *Mussolini Unleashed*, 44-46; O'Hara, *The Struggle for the Middle Sea*, 6-7, 187-89, 254-55, 260-61; Reynolds M. Salerno, "The French Navy and the Appeasement of Italy, 1937-9," *The English Historical Review* 112, no. 445 (February 1997): 74, 76, 94, 96-97, 99-102. As it was, the Italians had enough difficulty exercising sea control in the Central Mediterranean against just the British—although, and contrary to popular belief, they were largely successful in doing so until the end of 1942.

27. O'Hara, *The Struggle for the Middle Sea*, 19-24, 26, 29; O'Hara, Dickson, and Worth, *On Seas Contested*, Loc. 1036-49. The main arm of the FMF—the High Seas Force—was based at Toulon, and at its core consisted of the battleship *Strasbourg*, five cruisers, and eleven destroyers.

28. Blatt, "The Parity That Meant Superiority," 248; O'Hara, *The Struggle for the Middle Sea*, 196-98, 259-60.

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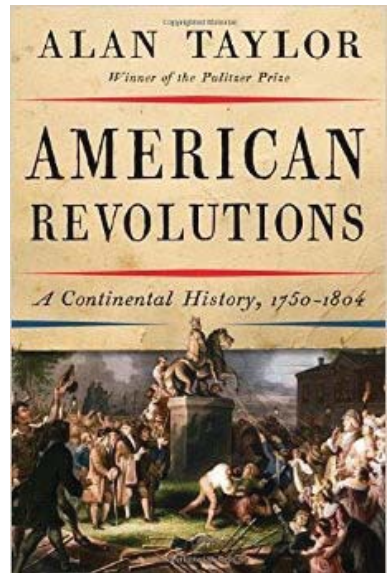
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Book Review

Stan Prager

American Colonies, the first volume of *The Penguin History of the United States*, was published to critical acclaim in 2001. This groundbreaking work by historian Alan Taylor broadly surveyed not only those English colonies that later became the United States, but also the often-overlooked rest of North America and the West Indies, including the French, Spanish, and Dutch colonizers, as well as the Amerindians they supplanted and the Africans they forcibly transported and enslaved.¹ Some fifteen years after the publication of *American Colonies*, Taylor—a professor of history at the University of Virginia who has won two Pulitzer Prizes for other fine works of early American history—has written a sequel of sorts: *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804*.²

The plural implication in the title, *American Revolutions*, is deliberate. Americans tend to think of the American Revolution as a singular event, but in fact, what occurred here in the latter part of the eighteenth century was a series of social, economic, and political revolutions, both among its English inhabitants as well as among competing cultures. As in *American Colonies*, Taylor leans more to the “big history” approach to relationships and interdependencies frequently ignored by a more traditional historical methodology. Thus, he reveals how events, ideas, and individuals acting in one arena often produced striking consequences elsewhere.



Especially unintended consequences.

The British decision to permit a French and Roman Catholic element to persist and be tolerated in that portion of Canada that was her prize after the French and Indian War generated a frustrating barrier to conquest and annexation for the

English colonials in America who had helped prosecute that war, something rarely noted by other historians. Stymied in Quebec, their ambition for domination was more cruelly successful elsewhere. After Independence, the British no longer served as a brake upon the territorial expansion of Americans hungry for new lands and utterly unsympathetic to its aboriginal inhabitants, whom they wantonly displaced and slaughtered with little reluctance. The other great irony centered upon human chattel slavery, which the British retreated from and gradually abolished throughout the empire. In contrast, slavery saw great expansion in a newly independent United States, especially in the southern states where it served as a critical component central to the economic model of plantation agriculture. Thomas Jefferson and James Madison are often credited with the expansion of the rights of white planters and the increase in social and economic mobility that resulted in the abolition of primogeniture and entail that had formerly kept estates intact. However, this bred the chilling and often overlooked consequence of facilitating the breakup of African-American families, as these human commodities could be sold to other geographies at premium prices.

This reviewer has read four histories penned by Alan Taylor, and all of them are highly recommended.³ If there is a weakness, it is that some of Taylor's books get off to a very slow start and are frequently populated with a vast cast of minor characters that add authenticity but can bog down the narrative. That is happily not the case with *American Revolutions*, which adroitly opens with a discussion of an iconic short story by Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux," that serves as a metaphor for the dramatic societal shift that was the result of the toppling of British rule over the thirteen colonies.⁴ The War for American Independence was indeed one of those revolutions. There were many more. For instance, the aftershocks of the American Revolution sent legions of despised loyalists to Canada, later followed by numbers of disenchanting rebels struggling in the economic morass that was the byproduct of revolution and separation from the empire; these were the building blocks of what came to be a nation north of the Great Lakes. That initial financial disaster begat the revolution of Hamiltonian fiscal policies that forged a new economy. At the same time, hints of early instability and fears of mob rule spawned a new revolution against the original loose federation of states under the Articles of Confederation that saw the propertied elite of those states come together to seize the reins of government and force a more structured and perhaps more conservative Constitution upon the masses. Still, the break with Britain irrevocably loosened social hierarchies and there was truly a revolution in this regard for citizens of the new United States—if they could count themselves as white males—but certainly not if they were women

or blacks or Native Americans. The shift, for those white men, was underscored in what has been called the “Revolution of 1800,” as Jeffersonian Republicans came to power and the influence of the Federalists that constructed the new constitutional government first waned and then went extinct. There was indeed a great leveling in the game, if one was qualified by complexion and gender to play the game.

Taylor relates this saga in an extremely well-written and engaging narrative of complexity and nuance that never loses sight of all the action on the periphery. He surveys the dramatic way the American Revolution resounded in monarchical France, upon slave insurrectionists in the West Indies, and even in the uprisings of Spanish Peru, as well as how these events sometimes echoed back on the new nation. He also reminds the reader not to look back from the union of “those” thirteen colonies and the creation of the United States as if it was destined to be; there were other English colonies to the Canadian north and the West Indian south that could well have been part of that union but are conspicuous in their absence. Most critically, he returns again and again to the horrific consequences that an independent United States had upon Native Americans and enslaved blacks.

A tragic constant was the almost universal disregard for the welfare and very lives of the natives who occupied lands coveted by expansionary white Americans. Decimated by Old World pathogens that devastated once thriving populations, their traditional lifestyles upended and reshaped by horses, guns and alcohol, and frequently used as proxy pawns by European powers struggling for control of North America, Native Americans found themselves ultimately powerless to avoid displacement and often extermination by shrewd and ruthless citizens of a new nation who justified brutal tactics on the grounds of race and religion and paternalism. In 1929, The United States issued a commemorative stamp that honored George Rogers Clark, the courageous soldier and adventurer of the Northwest Territories. *American Revolutions* reveals a far less heroic Clark who zealously executed Amerindians he encountered and declared that “he would never spare Man, woman or child of them on whom he could lay his hands.”⁵ In those days, South Carolina and Pennsylvania offered bounties up to \$1000 for Native American scalps, “regardless of the corpse’s age or gender.”⁶ Likewise, in what became known as the Gnadenhutzen Massacre, in 1782 Ohio militiaman David Williamson directed an attack on “a peaceful Delaware village led by Moravian missionaries . . . [and] . . . butchered 96 captives—28 men, 29 women, and 39 children—by smashing their skulls with wooden mallets before scalping them for trophies. The natives died while singing Christian hymns.”⁷ There were

no repercussions for this hardly uncommon kind of white savagery on the frontier. For African-Americans, the legacy was no less tragic. Despite the wishful thinking of some members of the revolutionary generation that human chattel slavery would wither over time, it instead gained new traction in an America unburdened by growing British guilt over what came to be called the peculiar institution. Meanwhile, few—north or south, or across the Atlantic for that matter—could ignore the paradox of Americans crying out in ringing rhetoric for a universal right to a freedom from tyranny while at the same time reserving the contradictory right to enslave others because of the color of their skin. That irony was everywhere: “In New York City . . . [in 1776] . . . Patriots toppled the great equestrian statue of George III and melted its lead to make 40,000 bullets to shoot at redcoats. In that blow for liberty, the Patriots employed slaves to tear down the statue.”⁸ African-Americans fought on both the British and American sides in the Revolutionary War, in hopes for freedom and a better life, but were in the end betrayed by each of them, although most of those that remained in America had the worst of it. Conditions for blacks, both slave and free, deteriorated markedly in the new nation, just as these gradually improved elsewhere in the British Empire. Slavery remained an essential economic building block, despite a horrific brutality too often overlooked by more traditional studies of the early Republic. Taylor reminds the reader that recalcitrant slaves were routinely beaten, branded, and even killed, something known to others at the time if not advertised, but nevertheless rationalized by planter elites with a new brand of Christian paternalism: “At the first hint of resistance, these paternalists expected their overseers to practice the old brutality but less conspicuously. In barns and secluded spots, they whipped backs and inflicted ‘cat-hauling:’ dragging a cat by the tail along the bare back of a trussed-up victim.”⁹

Heritage historians no doubt loathe Taylor’s approach; they want to celebrate the birth of liberty in British North America while often ignoring its contradictions. Massacred Native Americans and enslaved Africans uncomfortably get in the way. There is indeed much to champion in the creation of the American Republic, but sound historical scholarship must include more than self-congratulatory patriotism. *American Revolutions* soundly highlights how a variety of social, economic, and political revolutions produced an independent United States at the catastrophic expense of Native Americans and African-Americans. The history that was foisted upon most Americans, including this reviewer, in schoolrooms of the 1960s contained precious little of that. Alan Taylor’s masterful narrative succeeds both in widening the lens and restoring the balance of what it was like for the actual people who lived those events, both the winners and the

losers. This is an exceptional volume from a gifted historian that belongs on the shelf of anyone serious about early American history.

The author previously published a slightly different version of this review of *American Revolutions* on his book blog at: <https://regarp.com/2016/10/30/review-of-american-revolutions-a-continental-history-1750-1804-by-alan-taylor/>.

Notes

1. Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (NY: Viking, 2001).
2. Alan Taylor, *American Revolutions: A Continental History, 1750-1804* (NY: W. W. Norton and Company, 2016).
3. Stan Prager has reviewed Alan Taylor's *The Civil War of 1812: American Citizens, British Subjects, Irish Rebels, & Indian Allies* on his book blog at <https://regarp.com/2015/10/01/review-of-the-civil-war-of-1812-american-citizens-british-subjects-irish-rebels-indian-allies-by-alan-taylor/>; and, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and the War in Virginia 1772-1832* at <https://regarp.com/2016/02/09/review-of-the-internal-enemy-slavery-and-the-war-in-virginia-1772-1832-by-alan-taylor/>.
4. Nathaniel Hawthorne, "My Kinsman, Major Molineux" (originally published 1831), accessed on October 30, 2016, <http://www.eldritchpress.org/nh/mm.html>.
5. Taylor, *American Revolutions*, 260.
6. *Ibid.*, 258.
7. *Ibid.*, 262.
8. *Ibid.*, 161.
9. *Ibid.*, 476.

Thomas S. Kidd. *Patrick Henry: First Among Patriots*. New York:
Basic Books, 2011
Book Review

Anne Midgley

Mesmerizing, soaring oratory marked Patrick Henry's political career, while unfortunately for historians, writing meticulous notes did not. Henry's well-known speech of March 23, 1775, which was purported to end with the stirring phrase "give me liberty or give me death," has been the subject of much historical debate, as no extant copy of the speech exists. What Americans today understand to be the most rousing speech of the Revolutionary War era was pieced together years after the fact. Nevertheless, historian Thomas Kidd has found extensive primary source material from which to craft his portrait of Virginia's famed son, Henry.



Figure 1. *Patrick Henry* by George Bagby Matthews (1857-1943), based on a portrait by Thomas Sully. Oil on canvas, c. 1891.

Unlike his more celebrated countrymen, George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison, Henry did not seek a national stage; his home and his country remained Virginia. For that state and its citizens he was a steadfast and devoted statesman and hero. Kidd sets out to examine whether Henry can indeed be considered one of the leading Founding Fathers, regardless of the role he played igniting the War for American Independence, since he exerted strenuous efforts to defeat Virginia's ratification of the Constitution in 1788. Through an in-depth analysis of the political and social framework of the late colonial and Revolutionary War period, Kidd depicts Henry as a true patriot, albeit one who defined his country as Virginia and not the nascent United States of America.

Kidd's work is at its weakest in the first chapter; however, through the remainder of the book he writes with confidence and clarity. As a specialist on American religious history, Kidd expertly portrays Henry's experience as a youngster during America's first Great Awakening which proved to be a critical, formative period for his later life. Exposure to the thundering sermons of evangelical preachers not only shaped Henry's lifelong Christian faith and sense of providential design but also acted as a key influence on the development of his oratorical skills. In a similar manner to historian Charles L. Cohen, Kidd traces the biblical influences evident in Henry's "Liberty or Death" speech and outlines the manner in which these references spoke to Henry's compatriots, who would easily have recognized the political inferences in its scripture-inspired passages.¹ Unlike the citizens of secular twenty-first century America, most eighteenth-century American colonists were imbued with a deep religious conviction and shared a common ethos, regardless of the Christian denomination they practiced.

Kidd traces Henry's military and political career during the Revolutionary War and notes that despite the legislative restrictions in place, during his five terms as Virginia's governor, Henry was as effective as circumstances allowed; much more so than his rival, Thomas Jefferson. Kidd portrays the harsh realities of war and its effects on Virginians, many of whose actions did not honorably reflect upon their character. Jefferson's flight from the British in the late spring of 1781 left Virginia without a leader during a very dark hour, and as Kidd notes, was an act "nothing short of cowardly" (p. 158). Kidd states that Henry's reaction to Jefferson's actions as governor led to a life-long breach between the two men.

Kidd also treats the relationship between Henry and George Washington to extensive analysis; while strained at times, the mutual respect between these two great Virginians remained in place until their deaths in 1799. It was Henry's

opposition to the Constitution Convention of 1787 and the subsequent proposed Constitution that led to the rift between him and Washington. Kidd demonstrates how each man's patriotism led him to a different political position; Washington, who had operated on the national platform since assuming command of the Continental Army in June 1775, sought a stronger central government, while Henry, who through choice limited his stage to Virginia, desired to protect the interests of his state. To Henry's credit, however, once the Constitution became a *fait accompli*, he reconciled with both Washington and the new republic. Together with the anti-Federalists who also opposed the Constitution, Henry's resistance to its ratification led to the creation of the Bill of Rights, the first ten amendments to the Constitution which clearly lay out Americans' most "basic [political] rights" (p. 211).

As noted above, a number of weaknesses are found in the first chapter of the book, which lacks sufficient detail and context in a number of areas. Kidd refers to "well-known British opposition figures" but fails to provide sufficient background for his readers to appreciate the then current state of Britain's constitutional government, as well as the political ideologies of its Whig and Tory factions. He fails to identify that many colonists adopted the English "country Whig" political philosophy with its definition of personal liberty opposed to monarchical power ideally managed through a balanced government design which pitted legislative against executive authority. The Whig philosophy adhered to in the colonies was not mainstream political thought in Britain, but rather that espoused by the more radical British element. He misquotes a description of a St. Andrew's Day festival on page 12 by referring to "diverse" prizes, when the original quote was "divers;" leading to a different meaning. Likewise, he extracts from historian Fred Anderson's *Crucible of War* the story of George Washington's mishandling of a military encounter with a French scouting party which ended brutally in the death of its leader and ignited war between the British colonists and the French. Kidd includes a quote "Thou art not yet dead, my father" without context (p. 20); it is the same quote which Anderson explored in depth as it reflected the motivation behind the savage act of Tanaghrisson, who accompanied Washington and murdered the French commander.

Regardless of its faults, Kidd has created a scholarly, yet accessible introduction to Patrick Henry, one of America's most important, yet least understood founding fathers. By placing Henry's actions within the religious, social, political and military context of revolutionary Virginia, Kidd leaves his readers much better prepared to understand the factors which shaped one of America's greatest orators.

The author previously published this review in H-War, H-Net Reviews in March 2014, under the sponsorship of Dr. Margaret D. Sankey, H-War Book Review Editor, Minnesota State University.

The original review may be found at:

<https://www.h-net.org/reviews/showpdf.php?id=39474>

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Notes

1. Charles L. Cohen, "The 'Liberty of Death' Speech: A Note on Religion and Revolutionary Rhetoric," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (October 1981): 702-717, accessed October 2, 2013, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1918911>.

Jonathan Fennell. *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign: The Eighth Army and the Path to El Alamein*. Cambridge Military Histories Series. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Book Review

Stuart McClung

Morale: The Eighth Army's Critical Factor in the Desert War

The world has long known the legend of the British Eighth Army in the North Africa campaign in World War II and the influence of Bernard Law Montgomery in effecting the turnaround that began at El Alamein and ended with the surrender of Axis forces in Tunisia in May 1943. In any military campaign, many factors are considered decisive for success. In *Combat and Morale in the North African Campaign*, Jonathan Fennell argues that morale was the most important, contending that all other factors were secondary. He examines the relationships between morale and other factors, using, primarily, official archival sources of the diverse nationalities comprising the Eighth Army (British, Australian, New Zealander, South African, Indian, etc.). In particular, he looks at military censorship summaries, diaries, orders of army commanders, and reports generated by psychiatrists and analysts, as well as, to a lesser degree, letters and other personal ruminations of those in the ranks. His case is compelling as is his methodology.

To validate his thesis, the author provides six chapters showing the relationship of morale to many other important factors considered vital to success in combat. Fennell begins with a summary of the success of the Eighth Army against the Italians in 1940, when its morale was highest. He then proceeds to its many encounters with Erwin Rommel's Panzerarmee Afrika, beginning in the spring of 1941, up to the pre-El Alamein summer of 1942, when morale was at its nadir following the fall of Tobruk and the long retreat into Egypt, and preceding Montgomery's arrival in the theater to assume command in August. Having laid this foundation, the author supports his premise by demonstrating how morale was affected by technology, firepower, quality of manpower, environment and provisions, troop welfare and education, leadership and command, and training. Considering the emphasis given to these factors by most strategists and

military historians, Fennell admits that “published work on morale is consequentially quite limited,” with most literature focused on personal accounts and analysis that concludes that any connection between morale and combat was based on ideological or cultural issues (p. 3). To prove his argument, the author relies on extensive and impressive official sources, from the Army Education and Medical Offices to the Records of the Central Office of Information, various Training Commands, Records of the Home Office, Middle East Weekly Censorship Summaries, and Military Archives of Australia and South Africa. Not surprisingly, these official sources gave the British High Command an accurate look into what was necessary to maintain morale levels in order to achieve success on the battlefield. And what was necessary, and became obvious, was to provide the most advanced new technology for increased firepower; offer entertainment for the welfare of the troops; mitigate as much as possible the privations of the fighting environment (flies, ubiquitous sand, lack of cover, heat, etc.); and train the troops to employ new weapons and familiarize themselves with tactics that would defeat the enemy. Those new tactics stemmed from the army leadership and command, namely, Montgomery.

Over the course of the desert campaign, the Eighth Army had been blessed and plagued with some effective generals who were killed in combat, captured, or otherwise unable to get their views across to the army commander or had simply been incompetent, uncaring, or unable to cope with the enemy’s tactics, operations, or even Rommel’s reputation for success. As a result, Rommel was finally victorious at Tobruk and had pushed into Egypt, ready for the final blow that would carry his army to Alexandria and the oil reserves of the Middle East. Unfortunately for him, this final blow did not occur for two reasons. First, he had outrun his supplies and his extended supply lines were vulnerable, not only to the Royal Navy in the Mediterranean Sea but also to the Royal Air Force, which, as Fennell points out, was as successful and effective a force as there had been in the desert campaign in spite of the Eighth Army’s defeats. Second, the arrival of Montgomery with his assumption of command and style of leadership turned around the Eighth Army’s strategic situation along with the fact that the El Alamein position was such that the Germans and Italians were restricted in their operational options to frontal assaults, by the sea, on one flank, and the Qattara Depression, on the other. The author pulls no punches in describing Montgomery as being methodical and unwilling to move until absolutely ready, yet he also credits the man with an incisive mind, ideas, and sense of flair, all of which would once again give the British Tommy pride in himself and his capability to overcome the enemy and attain final victory. In the two months leading up to the battles at El

Alamein, which finally put the Axis forces on the long road to final surrender in North Africa, Montgomery was able to provide the necessary turnabout in morale that the Eighth Army desperately needed by that time in order to stem the consequent manpower losses to sickness, desertion, and capture experienced in previous battles and return the army to its utmost fighting capability.

In his conclusion, Fennell admits that his “perspective on war is not a new one” and that “morale is not the generally accepted explanation for the outcomes of the major engagements of the desert war” (p. 281). Yet he also maintains that the resurgence of the Eighth Army in the late summer of 1942 was specifically a result of the shift in morale as shown by the near lack of manpower loss to desertion, surrender, and psychological factors, such as battle exhaustion, as shown in the many tables and figures provided along with statistics in the text. He denies that success in the desert was a result of the Allies’ technological and numerical superiority, pointing out that such existed throughout 1942 but was not converted to any tactical or strategic success. Indeed, it was the soldiers’ morale and confidence in themselves, their leadership, weaponry, and so forth that provided the ultimate margin of victory in the desert.

In addition to the many sources cited, maps showing the areas of operations and relevant photos are also included in this latest addition to the Cambridge Military Histories series, edited by Hew Strachan and Geoffrey Wawro. For those interested in insightful analysis and the impact of morale on combat operations, Fennell has made a decided contribution to the literature of military history and, consequently, this volume is recommended.

The author previously published this review in H-War, H-Net Reviews in November 2011, under the sponsorship of Dr. Margaret D. Sankey, H-War Book Review Editor, Minnesota State University.

The original review may be found at:

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