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## From the Editor

Welcome to the ninth edition of the Saber & Scroll Journal. The collected works are an eclectic mix of historical genres and time periods prepared with care for your reading pleasure. The authors and the all-volunteer editorial team have worked diligently to prepare this issue for publication and include: Anne Midgley, Kay Reynolds, Kathleen Guler, Ben Sorensen, Mike Gottert, Matt Meador, Rebecca Simmons Graf, Chris Schloemer, Joe Cook, Chris Booth and Cam Rea. Our proofreading team consists of: Saber & Scroll's President, Mr. Lew Taylor as well as Frank Hoeflinger, Jackie Wilson and new comers Marlene Malone and Aida Dias. This issue would not be possible without the tireless work of our copy editor DeAnna Stevens and our webmaster Danielle Crooks. We hope you enjoy the combined efforts of our authors and staff in bringing you this edition.

Sincerely,  
William Potter  
Editor -in-Chief

Early Dynastic or Hegemonic? An Argument for  
Re-Periodization in Mesopotamian Studies

Brandon L James Bowden

This article will argue that the period currently known in Mesopotamian research as the Early Dynastic should be altered to that of the Hegemonic Period or Rival City-State Period, following Hans J. Nissen and his periodization.<sup>1</sup> Modifying this nomenclature would more accurately delineate this period of Mesopotamian history and the nature of power possessed by four primary city-states. Far from a stable, unitary succession of dynasties or dynastic houses as was present in Egypt (3200-2686) the so-called “Early Dynastic” period for Mesopotamia was distinctively characterized by conflict and city-states which imposed hegemonic rule over large areas of Mesopotamia in the period between 2900-2350 B.C. The evidence for such hegemonic domination, rather than unitary rule, means alteration of this nomenclature is almost necessary beyond question.

Periodization within historical studies is, as Dietrich Gerhard has stated, “artificial” and there is consensus that it can be regarded as a necessary evil. Periodization in some manner is a broad definition covering minor but important details and variants within them that do challenge the designations in some respects. In addition, their emerging and terminal dates are sometimes hard to define with satisfaction. However, without them the data would be overwhelming and difficult to manage. Periodization can therefore be at times imprecise but precise enough to allow those diverse elements to factor in without overt contradiction. Given that periodization is an artificial construct it follows that greater flexibility in redefining periods ought to be found within historical disciplines should new, contradictory evidence emerge. However, that is not the case; it is more often that the square peg of new evidence is forced into the round

hole of the pre-established periodization leaving the scholar and student to develop some sense of consistency. However, there are movements within various historical specialties to re-designate and more accurately articulate periodization based on new interpretations of data. Assyriology is moving in this direction with new interpretations and new discoveries being uncovered in the Northern Mesopotamian periphery.<sup>2</sup>

Northern Mesopotamia has been the focus of Assyriology over the last few decades as governments and events in the region of southern Mesopotamia have made it impossible for specialists to access that area. With this new emphasis and greater detailed analysis, formerly entrenched terminology has been undergoing intense revision; however, this has been directed at parsing the periods into ever narrower categories with some arguing for wholesale revision.<sup>3</sup> The movement towards greater specificity has slightly touched upon the southern Mesopotamian region since the ultimate goal is a much broader integrated system. The “Early Dynastic Period” nomenclature has long been regarded as unsatisfactory to specialists in this area of study since its inception in 1929. According to Marie H. Gates in *Archaeology and the Ancient Near East: Methods and Limits*, the terminology for the Early Dynastic period emerged from the Oriental Institute in Chicago following a conference held in 1929 based on work done in the Diyala region of Iraq, led by Dr. Henri Frankfort.<sup>4</sup> The Institute decided upon a framework in which the periods following the invention of writing would be designated by major components of that time period, for example; the period addressed in this paper was originally thought to have been one during which chronological successive dynasties ruled over southern Mesopotamia. This unitary nature depended greatly on Dr. Frankfort’s work in Egyptology before he arrived in Mesopotamia.<sup>5</sup>

The Egyptian Early Dynastic Period (3200-2686) clearly evi-

dences a unified political control exercised by a series of kings over the extent of the Egyptian Nile Valley. This extensive control is evidenced by seals, tags and the names of successive kings that were found on various objects that were recovered in royal household contents. These tags and jar seals consistently identify rulers and their succession leading to an effective chronology. Additional evidence consists of fortresses, monumental architecture, and art that is found throughout the region. This system was held together by an as yet not fully documented or understood language held in common. It was this strain of unified cultural elements and their consistent artifact representation in Egypt, which led Dr. Frankfort to come to a similar conclusion about the nature of Mesopotamia. In the Diyala region of Iraq, near modern Iran, he found several sites that shared many of the same elements as above only in a Mesopotamian context. This led to the inference that Mesopotamia also held a unified dynastic structure that was held together through common objects and language, which initially appeared to be confirmed by the Sumerian King List as it was then understood. The conclusion by Dr. Frankfort is further understandable in light of the fact that Frankfort was a student and disciple of Flinders Petrie who developed the method of seriation in 1899. However, evidence uncovered in different parts of Mesopotamia contemporaneous with Dr. Frankfort's research in the Diyala was pointing to a hegemonic power structure that oscillated among the primary cities of Uruk, Ur, Kish, and Lagash in a north/south dynamic over the course of the period between 2900-2350 B.C.<sup>6</sup>

### **A Definition of Hegemony**

It is important to define hegemony before proceeding into the discussion on how this period reflected such a pattern of political organization. It should be no surprise that there is no one operable



definition of hegemony and various scholars acknowledge different definitions of what constitutes hegemony as well as different levels of hegemony.<sup>7</sup>

The approach taken here is that hegemony occurs when a city-state, nation, or combination of such exerts power against other states through aggressive but not always direct military action and subtle forms of power and action rather than full occupation. Hegemonic powers tend to recognize that the other states are not completely under its authority but it can impose its will in such a way as to make dissension from that hegemony so disadvantageous that the behavior is almost automatic and assumed. The other states have no real genuine ability to resist unless they want to injure themselves in the long run.<sup>8</sup>

Hegemony is often formed as the result of an alliance to face a common threat with a leading powerful force, in this case a city-state that can organize and lead the other city-states with its own centralized government. The hegemon is usually the largest city with the biggest resources: a metropole that can sustain the efforts of the others based on its own logistical base. However, it appears that hegemonic power tends to tighten these bonds to the point that the allies are made subordinate and the influence can become as stated above, such that the withdrawal of the hegemon would cause disruptions. However, hegemons remain after the initial conflict. They continue to lead and direct after the initial threat is over and continue to exert pressure that can be economic, military, and resource-based to produce obedience to the hegemon's direction.

Hegemonies, if not allowed to proceed to the strength of an empire, can be overthrown. There is evidence that often, especially in Greece as possibly in Mesopotamia, hegemonies were overthrown if the individual participants felt like the state was becoming an empire or no longer acting in the best interest of the ones in the hegemony.

In this case, a city-state could lead others in an attempt to take the place of the metropole or leading city of the hegemony and declare itself to be the hegemon. Thus hegemony may, to a certain extent, and in some circumstances, depend on consensus, as Gramsci has postulated. However, the nature of evidence for Mesopotamia indicates that hegemony was only overthrown by city-states that were powerful enough to overcome the initial hegemon and immediately imposed hegemonic power over the others. Thus some city-states were in the position of continually changing hegemonic leaders but not being free or being hegemons themselves.<sup>9</sup>

### **The Nature of the Rival City-State / Hegemonic Period**

The archaeological record demonstrates the dominance of four primary city-states in Mesopotamia: Uruk, Ur, Kish, and Lagash in a north - south hegemonic pattern and provides the firmest evidence on which to base re-periodization in terms of hegemony and not dynasty. The evidence demonstrates a situation wherein the four city-states competed with one another for control of this area through limited military expansion and the ability to impose some type of tribute or labor extractions. The hegemonic city-states exacted tribute or indemnities from city-states in their sphere of influence but could not occupy them with military force, which correlates with the above definition of hegemonic power.<sup>10</sup>

The historiography of the period itself introduces one of the most pressing issues and that is developing a stable, relative chronology from which to even derive an agreed upon representation of political organization. Primary sources and archaeological finds in the form of inscriptions and artifacts (sometime one and the same) creates a confusing, non-succinct mass of information from which no relative chronology can be developed with satisfaction. Secondary sources are at variance on the chronology of events. Hans J. Nis-

sen's work *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.* offers a conflicting chronological structure with that of Samuel N. Kramer in his much earlier work *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*. Other primary source dependent works such as Jerrold S. Cooper's *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict* and Anton Moortgat in his thick volume *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia* all provide a studied contrast. The main issues revolve around when a city-state or which city-state had the hegemonic power, however, all agree that within this period the city-states operated on a hegemonic basis. Anton Moortgat's volume provides something of a useful split when he divides his chapters chronologically between the Mesilim Period and that of the First Dynasty of Ur. The sources vary further on such fundamental aspects as to the duration and the years in which a ruler reigned and which sub-period (E. D. I, II, IIIa, and IIIb) various events or rulers should be placed. Thus what the following discussion is intended to do is provide a basis from which it can be seen that, even if we lack a precise chronology, the Sumerian sources strongly suggest a hegemonic pattern for a limited number of city-states in southern Mesopotamia and nowhere allow for a mono-dynastic succession.<sup>11</sup>

The original source for the theory of stable dynastic succession was the primary source document known as the Sumerian King List. This list has served as a primary resource for researching this period for a multitude of different subjects. Due to the intensive study of such scholars as Thorkild Jacobsen, the interpretation of the King List has modified over the years. Originally, it was approached as a systematic chronology of events, however; further archaeological discoveries and Jacobsen's prosopographical study have revealed that the Sumerian historiographic objective was not chronological history. The full objective of the list is not known and scholars are still attempting to understand it.<sup>12</sup>

The list does passively indicate that the city of Ur had hegemonic power over the majority of southern Mesopotamia in two interrupted phases losing and regaining this hegemonic dominance to and from the city of Uruk. The city-state of Larsa, according to one recension of the list had one period of hegemonic dominance, Adab one hegemonic cycle, and Uruk three hegemonic cycles, and, outside of the King List, there is evidence that the city-state of Lagash experienced at least one full hegemonic period. The city-state that appears to have had the most hegemonic power during the entire span of this period was that of Kish. Kish held hegemonic power in the Sumerian heartland in two non-successive periods. The list indicates that Kish had five dynasties; however, there is not archaeological confirmation that all five of these were hegemonic periods. The other dynasties may have been restricted to dominating only the hinterland and slightly more territory.<sup>13</sup>

### **Northern Kish-Lagash Hegemonic Powers**

The hegemonic dominance of the city of Kish can be observed through a number of archaeological and toponymographical evidences. The appearance of a number of ceremonial maceheads in temples in different city-states bearing the name of Mesilim and royal dedication to him as being the “King of Kish” attests that Kish was able to impose its political will upon a number of subject states for a period of time, however, undefined that time is. These city-states were Adab, Umma, Lagash, and Nippur.<sup>14</sup> Indeed, a number of separate inscriptions verify that Mesilim was regarded as a king powerful enough to arbitrate local disputes between what would be considered independent city-states, Umma and Lagash.<sup>15</sup> Arbitration by Mesilim could only have been effective if he were in a hegemonic position that was enforceable and brought with it the consequence that one or both parties could be subject to some type of retributive

action should the accord be broken or modified without consent by both parties and Mesilim himself. Secondly, the conflict between the two states shows that they had independence of action enough to still have inter-city conflict that was not sequestered by Kish indicating that local disputes could arise. This is similar to a number of Greek city-state conflicts that arose despite being under the nominal suzerainty of the same hegemonic power. Thirdly, it is in fact highly indicative of hegemons that they tend to only get involved in local inter-city conflicts if there is a reasonable basis to suspect that the conflict may spread to a wider zone of conflict and involve more parties or that the two parties, belonging to the same organization, will appeal for arbitration on the basis of hegemonic ties.<sup>16</sup>

Retribution on the part of the hegemon against one or both of the parties was a distinct possibility. However, this threat appears to have been removed because the next ruler of Umma, after the dispute had initially been settled, broke the agreement and invaded the territory of Lagash without fear of retribution. It is therefore likely that Mesilim, or his descendent on the throne, was unable to hold onto this hegemonic position of leadership of Mesopotamia. Indeed, archaeological evidence points to this as being the beginning of the Lagashan hegemony in which the ruler, Eanatum, then engaged in a campaign that spanned the region and imposed tribute exactions on the cities of Ur, Uruk, and others.<sup>17</sup>

### **Southern Ur-Uruk Hegemonic Powers**

According to cuneiform texts and an inscription mostly identified as the Tummal Inscription, Ur has been shown to have exercised at least two hegemonic periods of power over the lower portion of southern Mesopotamia.<sup>18</sup> The inscription appears to show a rapid succession of hegemonic power that was taken and given up to Uruk. It does not provide a solid chronological timescale: howev-

er, it links certain rulers which were formerly thought of as mythical as being real and places them in a sequence with other known kings. Again, the exact chronology for this is as varied as the researcher that is consulted. Hans J. Nissen, Thorkild Jacobsen, and Samuel Kramer all have very distinctive renderings of the dynastic sequence and which was more hegemonic. From the research that has taken place at this point, it appears reasonable to conclude that Kish and Ur held hegemonic power at a contemporary point in time and slightly overlapped in the drive to bring certain city-states within their respective sphere of influence that often included the same border cities, such as Nippur. Nippur, according to all scholarly consensus was a spiritual hub for the region of Mesopotamia and the control of that city appears to have cast some type of legitimacy upon the hegemonic claimant.

It is considerably likely that Ur, in the declining years of Uruk, experienced its first hegemonic period and was able to control larger amounts of territory. Then the southern hegemonic supremacy was re-transferred to the city of Uruk through conflict and essentially the conquest of the city of Nippur. A short time later, at least according to the inscriptions, Ur was able to re-take Nippur and the surrounding area in another shift of power relations between the two cities. Indeed, at one point in the Umma-Lagash conflict Umma appears to have appealed to Ur for support against the Lagashan state. This would only be the result if Umma recognized that Ur had a powerful enough army and resources to carry the conflict in its favor against Lagash. Once again, the pattern of how hegemonic relationships are formed and stabilized appears documented in unambiguous terms. Additionally, city-state seals found in Ur indicate its hegemonic influence. The seals are jar seals which were placed on items bound for the palace or governmental distribution to the people. These bear the names of individual city-states in the southern region

and is absent from this list. This strongly suggests that Ur was in a position of power over these dependencies and that the food was a part of food exactions or tributes used to supplement Ur's own resources.<sup>19</sup>

### **Artistic References to Conflict**

The archaeological evidence that supports the contention that this was a period of hegemonic power brought on by and sustained through war is in the form of art which depicts numerous scenes of war involving prisoners, death, and burial mounds. The already mentioned ceremonial weapons of King Mesilim and the inscriptions such as the Tummal show that war was a constant feature of Mesopotamian city-state relations during this entire period. It is also noteworthy that all of the following depictions and more that could not be included have their origin in the four cities of Ur, Uruk, Kish, and Lagash this re-enforces the notion that these four cities were the primary drivers of conflict in the period.

A gradual but definite transition from the typical artistic motifs of animals and natural phenomenon takes place between the Uruk period and this Hegemonic period, in which the art is dominated by war imagery. The primary examples of this war imagery are the Standard of Ur, the Stele of Victory, also known as the Stele of Vultures, and a number of smaller one panel art, most notably from Kish. In the Kish relief, a king of unknown identity, but most probably Mesilim, carries a macehead staff and tramples on a number of fallen combatants.<sup>20</sup> The martial nature of this relief exhibits that a martial culture may have been in existence at the time and that the king was expected to be the chief warrior of the city-state. This scene may have been dedicated after a battle or after a conflict with another city-state and its submission.<sup>21</sup>

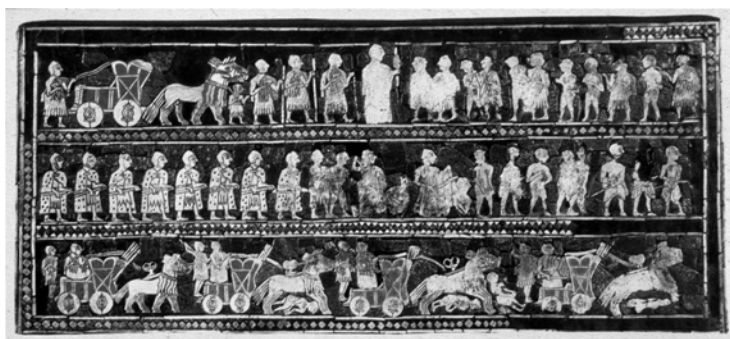


LIMESTONE PLAQUE

With relief showing a king trampling on his enemies

Image in Relief. Unknown Kish king, possibly Mesilim, attacks and tramples enemies. Found near mud layer several feet beneath the ground level structures of Kish. This indicates deep antiquity. Image used by permission of the Field Museum of Natural History. Please see special note in endnotes concerning use.

### Plate 1.0



The Standard of Ur. This image was discovered in the Royal Tombs (PG779) and depicts a scene from either the first or second dynasty of Ur. It demonstrates that war was frequent enough to lead to the development of regular corps and equipment. Public domain use.



Plate 1.1



The Stele of Vultures or Stele of Victory. This image depicts the conflict between Umma and Lagash. The image indicates how war was waged in Hegemonic Mesopotamia. Public domain use.

The above plates from the city-states of Lagash, Ur, and Kish may demonstrate a city-state needed to adopt imagery of success in war in order to legitimate its position as hegemonic ruler of the region. Indeed, the maceheads of Mesilim within the temples and not within the palatial context possibly indicates that Mesilim was declaring a form of spiritual or cultic, as well as political, hegemony over the city-state.<sup>22</sup> The Standard of Ur is another such example of possible royal iconography that may have been used for the purpose of enforcing the hegemonic ideology of the state. Since it was found within the royal tombs of the Ur dynasty (first or second) the role of this imagery has been speculated upon extensively. The most likely use was imagery used in the royal hall while city-state representatives presented tribute to the king, thus conveying the consequences of failure to pay proper homage. It most likely portrays an actual battle or several that had occurred. The use of such art in royal reception chambers can be found even in modern contexts in England and other countries with strong royal traditions. This practice is most often adopted to enable a single city-state or empire to influence the decisions of the subordinate city-states and their hinterlands without

having to garrison the city with troops, which may not have been practical.<sup>23</sup>

At this point, it seems evident that a pattern of northern and southern hegemonies competing for power can be clearly identified. Ur and Uruk were in the southern most portions of this region and competed for control of Nippur, northward, and its dependencies during this period. Kish and Lagash, towards the northern portion of this region, competed for dominance of this area with Nippur also functioning as a status symbol for control, along with city-states to the north of their locations. Thus two city-states, Uruk and Ur, competed to expand towards the north, whereas Kish and Lagash were seeking to expand both southwards and north into what is now Iran. This introduces more questions than answers but points to a strategy that was in operation and was not a random set of circumstances. However, it is clear that the hegemon took power because it could but had to release it on the occasion when another city-state gained enough power through collective action to overthrow the hegemonic power. This hegemonic contender in the process became the new hegemon, setting up an almost never-ending hegemonic cycle as we see in the Sumerian King List, the last two of which were Lugalzagesi and Sargon. Sargon was initially another hegemonic ruler who was able to exert just enough political and military power to finally break the hegemonic cycle by placing civilian governors and military governors and forces within the conquered city-states, thus introducing the first empire. Had he not succeeded thus in such an overwhelming manner hegemonic succession would have continued.<sup>24</sup>

A few questions remain regarding the nature of these hegemonies; were they based on consensus, were they based on pure exercise of power, or was it a combination of both? The example of Ebla in later second millennium Syria indicates that both methods

were utilized in Near East contexts based not on the nature of the hegemon but on the responsiveness of the city-state under hegemonic influence. The city-state could respond easily to the influence and coercion of the main city and would be free to pursue its own initiatives but had to pay a tribute and contribute a military contingent. Other city-states were under much more active forms of domination and were subject to military punishment for not fully cooperating.<sup>25</sup> However, in Greece, which bears a remarkable equivalency to Mesopotamia, the hegemonies were based purely on consensus and the hegemon could even be accused of not fulfilling its duties as such. In such a case, the individual members could break away from the hegemony and switch alliances. It was when Athens obtained the hegemony given away by Sparta that the hegemonic leadership turned into an empire. Athens initially held consensus hegemony but as states attempted to break away after the Persian Wars and towards the beginning of the Peloponnesian War, they found that they had no choice to leave and were brought forcibly back into it, resulting in an Athenian Empire.<sup>26</sup>

Persistent questions remain, particularly whether the Mesopotamian city-states operated in a Greek city-state league fashion. Leagues, as observed, are hegemonies but of more limited extent and are more based on consensus and not on force or the threat of such. Thorkild Jacobsen originated the idea that Mesopotamian city-states were a part of what he termed the “Kengir League.”<sup>27</sup> Although it requires more extensive comment than what can be discussed in the limited space provided, it is necessary to say that it has gained some circulation among scholars. However, the difference between league and hegemony may be very thin and more likely, based on what is known about other Near East hegemonies, like Ebla, indicate that “league” is perhaps too democratic for a region that was more subject to strong powers and centralizing tendencies.

The nature of Mesopotamian governments has never led to leagues based on mutual respect for power. The evidence leans more towards governments that were seeking power over their neighbors and did so without considering anything as philosophical as democracy and consent by the governed. These were hegemonies of power, not protection. Additionally Jacobsen relied heavily on myths and not hard archaeological evidence. His interpretation drew from myths originating at an early, but imprecise period, which may have been expressing an idealized vision of leadership by the gods against the reality of leadership in that time. In these myths, the gods selected not a secular human ruler but a god ruler of the region from the central religious city of Nippur. In the myths, this appears to rotate in a regular, collegial fashion; however, the artistic representations of war as noted above, and the Tummal inscription, show a much different picture of human war and conflict creating realities on the ground. Thus hegemonic power structures fluctuating between competing states is most likely the best model that can be adopted and would lead one to expect more in-line nomenclature.<sup>28</sup>

This consideration of the nature of the period has been necessarily brief and sketchy but it has been offered to demonstrate that there was no single political dynasty or succession of different dynastic houses operating a unified state leading to an imperial period under Akkadian rule. There was a general cultural unity but even this has proven to be ephemeral and subject to variation on a noticeable scale. Much of this evidence surfaced less than ten years after the adoption of the nomenclature and researchers who followed the adoption of the term realized that it was ineffective and misleading. The continued use of Early Dynastic nomenclature has served to more effectively obscure the reality of this period than help in elucidating the outstanding problems. Indeed, there has been no major attempt in the last couple of decades to unwind the as yet

difficult chronology of this period and set it in order.

## Conclusion

As demonstrated in this article the period of history between 2900-2350 B.C. in Mesopotamia was a period of intense rivalry and endemic warfare in the region and no one polity or city-state was able to effectively control the region as a whole. Instead, four city-states in a north - south dynamic competed with each other for authority over the region and held each of the others in effective check. These four city-states emerged briefly and dominated large portions of land and in particular the spiritual center of Nippur. This now favors a hegemonic framework for power relations in the Near East at this time. They shared a common language, religion, philosophy of life, literature, and many other aspects. Yet, as the Greek city-states did much later in the second half of the first millennium B.C., these did not prevent widespread conflict or produce a lasting unified structure of government.

Thus, the period does not continue to demonstrate a reasonable basis to be designated as Early Dynastic because no successive state structure was implemented until the founding of the Akkadian Dynasty. The original designation of "Early Dynastic" was adopted from Egyptology without recognition of the wider social and martial nature of the period and, even after such evidence was uncovered, the Oriental Institute made no effort to consult with specialists in the field to adjust the terminology. Frankfort's efforts at seriation, being a disciple of Petrie, led to the erroneous impression that a monolithic culture existed in Mesopotamia and had led to a successive dynastic structure. Based on this and far more evidence than can be presented within the context of a journal article, it appears more useful to change the periodization terminology towards hegemony rather than dynasty. Hegemonic Period has been the term most used in

this article and is by far the easiest to use. It more accurately circumscribes the evidence for this period and gives the historical data instant context. This may help in resolving the nature of the period, possibly re-setting or re-booting the interpretation of the data within its proper context. Rival City-State Period could be adopted but has the disadvantage of being somewhat long, thus lacking in the virtue of brevity and its aid in memory. Warring States Period or Era has been adopted by Chinese studies, although it also accurately reflects the nature of this period and development of Mesopotamian city-states at this point.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Hans J. Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), 129.

<sup>2</sup> Dietrich Gerhard, "Periodization in European History," *The American Historical Review* 61:4 (1956), 900; Mitchell Rothman, "Introduction," in *Uruk Mesopotamia & Its Neighbors: Cross-Cultural Interactions in the Era of State Formation* ed. Mitchell S. Rothman (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 2008), 8, 126.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 9-25.

<sup>4</sup> Pinhas Delougaz, Seton Lloyd, Henri Frankfort et al., *Pre-Sargonic Temples in the Diyala Region* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 125-35.

<sup>5</sup> Mari H. Gates, *Archaeology and the Ancient Near East: Methods and Limitations in A Companion to the Ancient Near East* ed. Daniel Snell (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 68-69. The pre-history sites were named for major patterns or their find spot, thus Al-Ubaid, Uruk, and Jamdet Nasr. The author makes it clear and it is evident in other writings that this entire scheme was not well received and has proven to be unsatisfactory for almost all researchers.

<sup>6</sup> Kathryn Bard, "The Emergence of the Egyptian State (3200-2686 B.C.)," in *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt* ed. Ian Shaw (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 57-81; Nicolas Grimal, *A History of Ancient Egypt* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 1992), 49-67; Seton Lloyd, "Henri Frankfort:1897-1954," *Man* 54 (1954):106.

<sup>7</sup> John M Wickersham, *Hegemony and Greek Historians* (London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1994) 36; Cornelia Beyer, *Violent Globalism: Conflict in Response to Empire* (Oxon: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2008), 1; Lisa Cooper, "States of Hegemony: Early Forms of Political Control in Syria during the Third Millennium B.C.," in *Development of Pre-State Communities in the Ancient Near East: Studies in Honor of Edgar Pettenberg* eds. Diane Maguire and Louise C. Bolger (Oxford UK: OxBow Books, 2010), 92.

<sup>8</sup> Cooper, *States of Hegemony*, 92.

<sup>9</sup> Beyer, *Violent Globalism: Conflict in Response to Empire*, 17. Gramsci's point is well taken and the majority of hegemonic relationships that are present historically do appear to be based on some level of consensus, particularly those of Greece, but it appears that the level was based on the individual state rather than the hegemon. At other times bellicosity appears to play the major factor.

<sup>10</sup> Cooper, *States of Hegemony*, 90.

<sup>11</sup> Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.*, 129-164; Samuel N. Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969), 33-58; Jerrold S. Cooper, *Reconstructing History from Ancient Inscriptions: The Lagash-Umma Border Conflict* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1983), 22-37; Anton Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: Classical Art of the Near East* (London: Phaidon Press, 1967), 19-43; Seton Lloyd. *The Archaeology of Mesopotamia: From the Stone Age to the Persian Conquest* 2<sup>nd</sup>.Ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1984), 110.

<sup>12</sup> Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1939), 62-126.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 53; Stephen Langdon, *Excavations at Kish* (University of Oxford and Field Museum of Natural History) 1, 1923-1924, 1, 5; Edgar J. Banks, *Bismaya, Or the Lost City of Adab....Oldest of the Buried Cities of Babylonia* (London: G. P. Putnam and Sons, 1912), 244.

<sup>15</sup> Cooper, *History from Ancient Inscriptions*, 48; Nissen, *The Early History of the Ancient Near East, 9000-2000 B.C.*, 79; Benjamin R Foster, *Civilizations of Ancient Iraq* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 36. The discussion of the city-state seals will continue for a very long time as many researchers hold differing opinions as to their use and function. To postulate a league or confederation from this evidence seems highly tentative as the only other source for this is Thorkild Jacobsen's own tentative reconstruction. Given the state of conflict between the cities and Ur's already well understood domination of the surrounding area, it is best to place these seals in the context of tribute exactions brought in by the hinterland.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, 22-43.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature <http://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk/cgi-bin/etcsl.cgi?text=t.2.1.3#> Accessed on 1/6/2014. Reproduction of the text would be very long, however, the main of the inscription does show both Ur and Uruk in a see-saw tug-of-war where each attempted to possess the same land over successive generations. The listing of what was previously considered to be a mythic personage, Gilgamesh, along with a king of Ur, allows us to at least coordinate these two rulers with the earliest portion of Sumerian history since by 2600 B.C. Gilgamesh had already obtained a mythic standing.

<sup>19</sup> Cooper, *History from Ancient Inscriptions*, 23.

<sup>20</sup> Henry Field, *The Field Museum-Oxford University Expedition to Kish, Mesopotamia 1928-1929* (Chicago: Field Museum of Natural History, 1929), 21. Image used by permission. However, the Field Museum wished to make special note that this

piece is not in the Museum's collection and they do not know where it currently resides.

<sup>21</sup> Moortgat, *The Art of Ancient Mesopotamia: Classical Art of the Near East*, 42-43. See also chronologically ordered pictorial display at the end of the volume. Susan Pollock, *Ancient Mesopotamia: The Eden that Never Was* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8. In her work, she offers a differing opinion and traces the changes in art from animals to war scenes beginning in the Uruk period but what phase is unstated. Holly Pittman, "Mesopotamian Intraregional Relations," in *Uruk Mesopotamia & Its Neighbors*, 416-417. In her work she correlates the transition of imagery with Late Uruk / LC5 which relates to the transition phase of Late Uruk and Jamdet Nasr, around 3000 B.C. (for southern Mesopotamia) which is at the horizon of the Hegemonic Period.

<sup>22</sup> Langdon, *Excavations at Kish*, 1.

<sup>23</sup> Julian Reade, "Religious Ritual in Assyrian Sculpture in Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia," in *Ritual and Politics in Ancient Mesopotamia*, edited by Barbara N. Porter (New Haven: American Oriental Society, 2005), 63. Christine E. Grey, "Hegemonic Images: Language and Silence in Thai Polity," *Man* 26:1 (1991):43-65.

<sup>24</sup> Kramer, *The Sumerians: Their History, Culture, and Character*, 59-63.

<sup>25</sup> Cooper, "States of Hegemony," 90.

<sup>26</sup> Wickersham, *Hegemony and Greek Historians*, 54.

<sup>27</sup> Thorkild Jacobsen, "Early Political Development in Mesopotamia," in *Toward the Image of Tammuz* ed. William L. Moran (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), 140.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid*, 137-139.

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Unfinished Work: Oval Office Occupants and Aspirants  
Come to Gettysburg

Joseph Cook

In November 1863, thousands descended upon the small town of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania to commemorate the thousands who had descended upon and fallen upon the fields around the town four months earlier. They came for a ceremony of official culture: the dedication of a national cemetery for thousands of citizen-soldiers of the Union. Famed orator Edward Everett delivered a classical oration recounting the battle and memorializing the dead which would make even Pericles proud, and then Abraham Lincoln delivered his immortal 272 words. In the ostensibly secular but popularly religious society of nineteenth century America, it seemed like the embattled nation had a potential shrine for pilgrimage for its citizens – a national religious site, in the mode of Canterbury Cathedral in England, which similarly was sanctified by death. Southerners were excluded from this initial commemoration, but in his own, little-remembered Gettysburg address on November 18 (the night before the official ceremonies), Secretary of State William Seward proclaimed the administration's hope that once again there would "be only one country, having only one hope, one ambition, and one destiny."<sup>1</sup> Little did any of the people present in November 1863 know the tremendous role Southerners would play in adopting this sacred field for popular pilgrimages in the years after the war. Nor could those on the stage know the extent to which the hallowed ground of the battlefield – and the memory of the Civil War as a whole – would play a critical part in the struggles of twentieth century America. Lincoln's renowned speech included the statement: "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here." It is true that twentieth century Ameri-

cans never forgot what their ancestors did during the Civil War – but the debate over why they did it and how to memorialize it created enduring conflict that echoed the deep-set disagreements of the nation’s population, and resulted in continued battles waged on the old battlefield of Gettysburg – with the fate of the nation at stake.

Several prominent events, persons, and issues could be used to examine the issue of Civil War memory as a reflection of twentieth century politics and culture. The field of Gettysburg alone witnessed prominent speeches and contributions by giants such as Woodrow Wilson, Lyndon Johnson, and George Wallace – not to mention Dwight Eisenhower, who was stationed in Gettysburg during World War I and purchased a farm there upon his return from Europe, which he used as his vacation home while president and retired to after exiting office. The Civil Rights Movement and the debate over the rights of blacks throughout the century (if one dates the Civil Rights Movement purely as an event of the 1950s and 1960s, i.e. Martin Luther King Junior’s contributions) were played out with references to the great national struggle of the 1860s by those in all camps.<sup>2</sup> Leaders of the mid-century press had strong ties back to the Civil War, as Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff did a terrific job of demonstrating in their book, *The Race Beat*.

However, while that book explained the personal connections of editors and reporters to the Civil War generation (typically through lineage), it did little to tie Civil War memory as a theme to the culture at large – or even to policy-makers at the upper levels of government. It also, perhaps, gave the news media too much credit for shaping the mindsets of constituent populations. Historians such as Caroline Janney, author of *Remembering the Civil War*, contend that popular culture pieces are much more critical, particularly films like *Gone with the Wind* – partly because of the large audiences these items of culture can reach, through multiple generations. This paper will

examine all of these elements: speeches, media, and pop culture – but with a particular emphasis on leaders of national prominence. The overall scope will be the full twentieth century, beyond the reach of Janney’s work (which essentially ended with the release of *Gone with the Wind* in 1939) and broader than the timeframe of Roberts/Klibanoff. The focus will be on four popular leaders who represented different times, viewpoints, and issues: Woodrow Wilson, Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon Johnson, and George Wallace – all of whom established direct connections to Gettysburg Battlefield and to the legacy of the Civil War.<sup>3</sup>

By the start of the twentieth century, the Lost Cause narrative of the Civil War was well-established in the American mind. Seeking unity and fraternity between the populations of the North and South – or rather the white populations of the two sections – popular memory focused on the universal courage and devotion of the Civil War generation to their ideals, regardless of allegiance. In order to establish this version of the past, another element of the history needed to be adjusted or ignored entirely: the issue of race. David Blight, in his book *Race and Reunion*, promoted the thesis that one of the most critical parts of memory is what one chooses to leave out or forget. The great national consensus was to forget the issue of race and the fight for black civil rights – thus creating the true tragedy of Reconstruction in the South: the abandonment of the freedmen.

One of the early great tragedies of Civil War memory in the twentieth century was a piece of popular culture: D.W. Griffith’s 1915 film *The Birth of a Nation*, based on Thomas Dixon’s 1905 novel *The Clansman*. “Like Dixon’s novels, the motion picture version acknowledged the bravery of both Union and Confederate soldiers...More important, the film highlighted what Griffith considered the atrocities of Reconstruction: the U.S. army unleashed rene-

gade black soldiers on the South [and] black politicians took over southern legislatures.”<sup>4</sup> In the climax of the film, a Ku Klux Klan member saves a pure white Southern lady from being raped by a black man, establishing the Klan as the heroes of society. Not coincidentally, the movie was followed by a rebirth of the Klan, which had been suppressed in the 1870s. It received a further bump in popularity with a supposed endorsement of the film by President Woodrow Wilson: “It is like writing history with lightning, and my only regret is that it is all so terribly true.” While some historians now doubt Wilson ever actually said this, the quote was circulated in press for the film.<sup>5</sup> Historically, the tragedy is that Wilson’s quote could have been all so true, as it is well-known that he was a Southerner and a racist. The public accepted this as the view of the president, and black leaders such as W. Munroe Trotter ranted against the president during protests of the film as a result. Trotter was arrested with associates while attempting to enter a theater showing the film in Boston, and the *New York Times* reported that he was a man “who made what was called an insulting address to President Wilson at the White House not long ago.”<sup>6</sup> Griffith’s film swept through the nation infuriating blacks, inspiring reactionary whites, and possibly striking a chord with the president. Few movies have had such profound impact in the century of film-making since, and even less cause such trouble as this one did by inspiring the Ku Klux Klan to re-emerge.

This was a part of the atmosphere of Woodrow Wilson’s presidency, but certainly not exclusive in illustrating his part in Civil War memory and contemporary society. The semi-centennial of the war occurred from 1911-1915, coinciding with Wilson’s presidency, and it fell to the president to deliver remarks at the fiftieth anniversary celebration at Gettysburg Battlefield. His speech on July 4, 1913, was anything but a resounding success. The *New York Times* report-

ed, “He was interrupted only once or twice with cheering and that seemed perfunctory.”<sup>7</sup> The *Times* ran numerous reviews of the speech. One piece on it was written by the widow of the Confederate General James Longstreet; her column was meaningless in its content other than her repeated reference to Wilson as “A Virginia President.”<sup>8</sup> Another piece in the same paper conceded, “If a trifle academic in its argument, and somewhat too guarded in expression greatly to sway the public feeling, it was a good speech.” The speech was “characteristic of his mental habit, and indicative of the mood which now controls him.”<sup>9</sup>

It was a speech fully driven and inspired by the themes of reunion and reconciliation between the whites of North and South. Reflecting his own brand of liberalism, Wilson made strong appeals for Americans to continue to fight to secure the national dream of upward social mobility. “We have harder things to do than were done in the heroic days of war,”<sup>10</sup> Wilson proclaimed. Speaking of himself as the commander of a great host as a comparison to the generals of the war, Wilson stated, “That host is the people themselves...What we strive for is their freedom, their right to lift themselves from day to day and behold the things they have hoped for, and so make way for still better days for those whom they love who are to come after them.”<sup>11</sup> He continued the martial comparisons in describing society: “The recruits are the little children crowding in. The quartermaster’s stores are in the mines and forests and fields, in the shops and factories. Every day something must be done to push the campaign forward.”<sup>12</sup> Some of his exhortations harkened back to the “unfinished work” that Abraham Lincoln alluded to in his Gettysburg Address, but there was a difference. Lincoln’s unfinished work involved fulfilling the promise of the Declaration of Independence that “all men are created equal” and proving that a democracy could survive; Wilson’s unfinished work (“Do we deem the nation com-

plete and finished?” he asked) centered on this liberal notion of social mobility and economic opportunity for all – or at least for all whites.<sup>13</sup> Wilson’s speech featured no concrete mention of race – perfectly in keeping with the tradition of reconciliation. In this same tradition, President Wilson also began a custom of the Oval Office sending a wreath to the Confederate memorial at Arlington National Cemetery – a tradition that has continued into the 21st Century, even with the nation’s first African-American president.<sup>14</sup>

During this time that President Wilson was continuing the reconciliation tradition of Civil War memory and historiography, an army captain named Dwight David Eisenhower came to Gettysburg as part of the army’s new tank corps. The nation was going to war in Europe, and the new technologies of battle were being brought to the old battleground of the Civil War to be tested and familiarized to troops. The young officer developed a great fondness for the historic town and for the old battlefield on which he observed tank maneuvers. He purchased a farm on the outskirts of the town, where he lived with his wife Mamie for the next several decades – while not away on duty – until the time of his death. Eisenhower, of course, rose to supreme commander of the Allies in Europe during World War II, the great victor of Normandy and the drive to Berlin, commander of NATO in Western Europe in the post-war period, and the Republican President of the United States after the election of 1952.<sup>15</sup>

The farm in Gettysburg served as his unofficial residence – and he frequently brought fascinated foreigners and politicians to the fields for private tours with the most famous soldier alive. His diary rarely detailed the visits to the battlefield he took with men ranging from Field Marshal Montgomery to Nikita Khrushchev, but some of his reflections on World War II revealed his interest in the Battle of Gettysburg, such as comparing his problems with Montgomery in



Europe to General Lee's issues with General Longstreet at Gettysburg. Gettysburg was also the place he came to in order to convalesce from the health problems that struck him during his time in office. Important decisions were made by the president at Gettysburg, including about the future of his career: "On July 10, at a meeting of legislative leaders at Gettysburg, the president casually remarked that he would campaign vigorously [for re-election]."16 Prior to that, there had been curiosity – due to his health – whether he would even run again. After two terms, when it did come time to retire, he could not wait to return to Gettysburg for good. "At Gettysburg a fine house awaited him, rebuilt from the ground up...The prospect of going up to Gettysburg kept him going through the year."17

Deep into Eisenhower's retirement, the very mention of Gettysburg had clear meaning, particularly for Republicans aspiring to high office. Since Lincoln spoke there in 1863, Gettysburg held a powerful place in the imagination of Americans when thinking of their presidents; the reviews of Wilson's speech in the *New York Times* in 1913 conceded that judging his speech was unfair due to the fact: "It is a difficult and disconcerting task for any statesman these days to deliver an address on the battlefield of Gettysburg, especially for any President of the United States."18 Yet now an endorsement from Gettysburg made it clear that a candidate had the bona fides to be president. "The 'Letter from Gettysburg' is beginning to have some...mystical value in Republican circles," the *New York Times* reported in December 1963.19 A qualification from Gettysburg was "the essential prerequisite for any serious seeker of the party's top favor."20 The crisis of conservatism was alluded to in this same article from the *Times*, as it discussed Barry Goldwater. "There is little doubt among party regulars here that the general does oppose the right-wing ascendancy of Senator Goldwater. The 'Letter from Get-

tysburg' in the *Arizonian's* case was marked by careful circumspection. And his alarm at the gathering speed of the Goldwater bandwagon undoubtedly spurred him to start distributing his favors more widely."<sup>21</sup>

However, despite his very strong connection to the field of Gettysburg for decades, Ike's most critical tie to the legacy of the Civil War came far from the fields where Lee's invasion of the north was repulsed in 1863. Eisenhower's presidency of 1953-1961 involved critical early steps in the Civil Rights Movement, including the Montgomery Bus Boycott and the Little Rock Incident following the Supreme Court's ruling in *Brown v. Board of Education*. In Little Rock, President Eisenhower felt the need to send troops, including the 101st Airborne Division, into the Arkansas capital city to enforce desegregation of the schools. Southern segregationist leaders did not miss the symbolism of federal troops being deployed into a southern state by the great general Eisenhower. The *Arkansas Gazette* reported rumors that Governor Faubus was "considering declaring martial law to prevent the School Board from obeying the federal court order."<sup>22</sup> Other newspapers criticized the northern press as scoundrels in terms reminiscent of the twisted version of Reconstruction promoted by the Lost Cause – especially as Little Rock became "a symbol of racial turmoil."<sup>23</sup> These opinions swept through the South. "In Charleston, Tom Waring had been annoyed for some time by the coverage, and by the treatment of segregationist editors. With a particular sensitivity that only whites of long southern lineage could understand ... Waring saw the flow of reporters into the South as an invasion. 'There are as many Yankee reporters dropping off planes and trains as there were carpetbaggers in the 1860s,' he had grumbled even before Little Rock."<sup>24</sup> The president worked hard to avoid strong statements on the race issue throughout his presidency, but sending troops in to enforce a feder-

al court ruling was a necessary decision. In his diary, Ike wrote only that he advised Governor Faubus repeatedly to “not necessarily withdraw his national guard troops but just change their orders,” and that “I did not believe it was beneficial to anybody to have a trial of strength between the president and a governor because... there could be only one outcome – that is, the state would lose, and I did not want to see any governor humiliated.”<sup>25</sup> Unfortunately, the southerners who had the governor’s ear won out, and the event was subsequently seized upon by partisan segregationist southerners for their own purposes after Eisenhower took the necessary action.

Eisenhower exited the presidency just as the centennial of the Civil War began in 1961. Martin Luther King Jr. was leading the fight for African-American Civil Rights from his home-state of Alabama. In the capital of that state, a new face in the national political spotlight was inaugurated governor in 1963: George C. Wallace. Southern segregationists were eager to find a dynamic, personable leader, and “Wallace, by virtually every angle of news coverage, seemed comfortable leading the charge. He was good copy and camera ready. Reporters were drawn to him like biologists are drawn to the unexpected emergence of an old virus they believed had been exterminated.”<sup>26</sup> The vigor with which he opposed desegregation seemed anachronistic to the northern press, but struck a deep chord with a “ground zero of resistance, at the core of the Deep South, in Alabama and Mississippi.”<sup>27</sup> The states of the upper South had “emerged intact from their own initial experiences with integration” – even Arkansas after the ugliness of Little Rock.<sup>28</sup> However, Wallace proudly led the charge for the reactionary segregationists of the South and racists throughout America – and he did so by alluding back to the Civil War past. He began his inaugural address in Montgomery by reminding everybody that he was standing in the same spot where Jefferson Davis was inaugurated as the Confederate

president. Concluding an angry tirade of a speech, he proclaimed, “I draw the line in the dust and toss the gauntlet before the feet of tyranny. And I say, ‘Segregation now! Segregation tomorrow! Segregation forever!’”<sup>29</sup> George Wallace was a force to be reckoned with and proved it through his overwrought and dramatic stand at the door of the University of Alabama and through his violent efforts to suppress Civil Rights marches.

Continuing the trend of the politicians examined thus far, Wallace seized on Gettysburg as a setting for his fight. The Centennial featured “persistent efforts by segregationist leaders like Governor George Wallace of Alabama to turn Civil War memory to their own political advantage.”<sup>30</sup> On June 18, 1963, Wallace penned a letter to the *Gettysburg Times* newspaper, in which he celebrated the centennial celebration’s theme of “Peace eternal in a nation united,” which demonstrated the reunion/reconciliation tradition that dominated the Civil War Centennial as a whole.<sup>31</sup> “Originally planned...as an exercise in cold war nationalism, the centennial was soon mired in controversy – much of it generated by the renewed racial and sectional tensions of the era.”<sup>32</sup> Wallace was stoking the fires of those tensions. In his letter, he alluded to the critical importance of checks and balances within the political system, but he meant this to refer to the right of the states of preserve their liberty from an oppressive federal government. “We must do our part to see that we remain a nation united in peace, retaining individual rights and liberties. We must resist regimentation. Individual liberties must be safeguarded, for without freedom and liberty for each of us, we are traveling down the dead-end road of destructive centralization,” he wrote.<sup>33</sup>

In these concluding sentences, he showed the true meaning of his calls for liberty: liberty for a governor and his people to do as they pleased in a decentralized system. He made no mention of race, but his meaning was clear. He further clarified his hope when he

personally travelled to Gettysburg for the official celebration, giving a speech in which he proclaimed “the descendants of both sides of the Civil War will soon be united in a common fight to end the growing power of the central government” and “we will stand for defense of the Constitution.”<sup>34</sup> While there, he proclaimed “I think I am safer here than I am at home. I’ve got political enemies in Alabama, but I haven’t met any here.”<sup>35</sup> Meanwhile, his allies continued to attack the members of the northern press “that promote radicalism in every form, the New Deal, the Fair Deal, Modern Republicanism, and have completely disregarded the right-thinking, sound-thinking people of [the South].”<sup>36</sup>

The governor of Alabama was waging a war of rhetoric steeped in historical memory against the authority of the federal government, and those in the Oval Office could not ignore his challenge. In his term of 1963 to 1967, Wallace squared off against two liberal presidents: the wealthy New Englander John Kennedy and – most galling to Wallace – the Southerner Lyndon Johnson. Both men made their own connections to Gettysburg in 1963, to discuss their perspectives on Civil War memory and the contemporary issues. Unlike in the days of Woodrow Wilson, a liberal could not avoid the race issue in the atmosphere of 1963. Kennedy’s message delivered at Gettysburg on the 100th anniversary of Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address proclaimed, “The goals of liberty and freedom, the obligations of keeping ours a government of and for the people are never never-ending.”<sup>37</sup>

Johnson took the cause a step further, and while he was vice-president, he traveled to Gettysburg personally to do it. As the *New York Times* recounted in November, 1963, “He chose last Memorial Day as the time and Gettysburg as the place for a speech calling upon whites and Negroes to work together toward solution of the race question. He said: ‘One hundred years ago the slave was freed. One

hundred years later the Negro remains in bondage to the color of his skin. The Negro today asks justice.”<sup>38</sup> A twenty-first century newspaper recollection stated, “With those two sentences, Johnson accomplished two things. He answered King’s ‘Letter from Birmingham Jail.’ And he signaled where the later Johnson administration might lead.”<sup>39</sup> The Kennedy-Johnson administration was the first to openly step out from the reunion/reconciliation theme of Civil War memory. Johnson attacked the tradition of asking black leaders for patience: “The Negro says, ‘Now.’ Others say, ‘Never.’ The voice of responsible Americans – the voice of those who died here and the great man who spoke here – their voices say, ‘Together.’ There is no other way.”<sup>40</sup> Six months later, Johnson was president, and he pushed ahead his vision for the Great Society – with new civil rights legislation at the core of his policy agenda.

The liberal vision on race issues that was supported by Kennedy and Johnson marked a shift in Civil War memory – for the purposes of finding a usable past – at the highest level of government. George Wallace and his erroneous nostalgia for an imagined romantic past of the Old South gained sway among reactionary and disgruntled portions of the white population, but could not halt the liberal arc of progress in policy coming from Washington, DC. His vision for a united front against the growth of the federal government never materialized. In fact, Johnson’s presidency resulted in an over-extension of liberalism rather than a constriction or rolling-back of it.<sup>41</sup>

Just like in Lincoln’s time, the great struggle played itself out on the fields around Gettysburg. The celebrated Southern author William Faulkner wrote in his 1948 novel, *Intruder in the Dust*, a popular concept of Southern Civil War memory, alluding specifically to Gettysburg: ““For every Southern boy fourteen years old, not once but whenever he wants it, there is the instant when it’s still not yet two

o'clock on that July afternoon in 1863...and it's all in balance, it hasn't happened yet, it hasn't even begun yet, it not only hasn't begun yet but there is still time for it not to begin...and that moment doesn't need even a fourteen-year-old boy to think *This time. Maybe this time.*"<sup>42</sup> By the 1960s, it was African-Americans who could be saying, "This time. Maybe this time" – as they were repeatedly asked for patience and repeatedly marginalized in both society and Civil War commemoration. Lyndon Johnson came to Gettysburg and proclaimed the future as he saw it for America – just as Lincoln had done a century earlier. They did this on the very field to which Faulkner harkened back all Southern boys, ready to make their charge as their ancestors had. Two months after Johnson's speech, George Wallace stood ready on the field, prepared to stand in for Jeff Davis or General Lee and lead the Southern horde against the liberal assault on the segregationist way of life. In 1863, it was Abraham Lincoln's words that set the future course for the divided country, not Lee's soldiers. In 1963, it was Lyndon Johnson's words that set the course for the future of the reunited nation, not Wallace's combativeness. Unfinished work remained for the nation in both cases, but unlike during the interval period – with leaders like the academic Woodrow Wilson or the congenial (though practical) Dwight Eisenhower – the president was committed to fulfilling the promise of the nation's founding and the ideals of the Declaration of Independence for all citizens. Wilson and Wallace each came to Gettysburg and looked back to the past, Eisenhower came to live in comfort in his present, but Johnson came to point the nation toward the future.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John Hay and John G. Nicolay, *Abraham Lincoln: a History*, vol. 8 (New York: the Century Company, 1890), 191.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Cook's history of the Civil War Centennial, *Troubled Commemoration* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), noted that "Civil rights

leaders like Martin Luther King Jr. and Roy Wilkins were hardly less aware than Frederick Douglass of the need to marshal a usable past in the service of contemporary objectives and viewed the centenary of the Emancipation Proclamation as a heaven-sent opportunity to wrest control of the centennial away from southern whites” (14).

<sup>3</sup> Certainly there were many other prominent people who played roles in shaping and utilizing Civil War memory – not least of whom would probably be black leaders such as W.E.B. Du Bois and Martin Luther King, Jr. For a fine examination of them and others in the larger fight beyond the Oval Office and its hopefuls, David Blight’s *Race and Reunion* is a superb place to which to turn.

<sup>4</sup> Caroline Janney, *Remembering the Civil War: Reunion and the Limits of Reconciliation* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 276-277.

<sup>5</sup> Philip Dray, *At the Hands of Persons Unknown: The Lynching of Black America* (New York: Random House, 2002), 198.

<sup>6</sup> “Negroes Mob Photo Play,” *New York Times*, April 18, 1915.

<sup>7</sup> “Gettysburg Cold to Wilson’s Speech,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1913.

<sup>8</sup> “Wilson’s ‘Bugle Call,’” *New York Times*, July 5, 1913.

<sup>9</sup> “Mr. Wilson at Gettysburg,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1913.

<sup>10</sup> “The President’s Address,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1913

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Janney, *Remembering*, 388.

<sup>15</sup> “Army Orders and Assignments,” *New York Times*, March 26, 1918.

<sup>16</sup> Robert H. Ferrell, ed., *The Eisenhower Diaries* (Norwalk: the Easton Press, 1981), 366.

<sup>17</sup> Ferrell, *Diaries*, 327. According to a plaque on the campus of Gettysburg College that rests next to a statue of the general, “Here, General Eisenhower wrote 4 volumes of memoirs and was consulted by his own government, foreign dignitaries, aspiring political candidates, authors and students of this and other colleges.”

<sup>18</sup> “Mr. Wilson at Gettysburg,” *New York Times*, July 5, 1913.

<sup>19</sup> “Eisenhower Playing a Broad G.O.P. Role,” *New York Times*, December 29, 1963.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat: the Press, the Civil Rights Struggle, and the Awakening of a Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), 152.

<sup>23</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, *Race Beat*, 373.

<sup>24</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, *Race Beat*, 211.

<sup>25</sup> Ferrell, *Diaries*, 347-348.

<sup>26</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, *Race Beat*, 303.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>30</sup> Robert J. Cook, *Troubled Commemoration: the American Civil War Centennial, 1961-1965* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2007), 14.



<sup>31</sup> “George C. Wallace to the Gettysburg Times,” *Gettysburg Times*, June 29, 1963.

<sup>32</sup> Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 2.

<sup>33</sup> “George C. Wallace to the Gettysburg Times,” *Gettysburg Times*, June 29, 1963.

<sup>34</sup> Cook, *Troubled Commemoration*, 198. Cook notes that although reunion and reconciliation were the overwhelming themes of the centennial, other politicians such as New Jersey’s governor Richard Hughes extolled the emancipationist theme of Civil War historiography and memory.

<sup>35</sup> “Wallace Guarded in Gettysburg Stay,” *The Tuscaloosa News*, July 3, 1963.

<sup>36</sup> Roberts and Klibanoff, *Race Beat*, 373.

<sup>37</sup> “The Fateful Week,” *New York Times*, November 24, 1963.

<sup>38</sup> “Johnson’s Position,” *New York Times*, November 24, 1963.

<sup>39</sup> David M. Shribman, “L.B.J.’s Gettysburg Address,” *New York Times*, May 24, 2013.

<sup>40</sup> Press Release, “5/30/63, Remarks by Vice President, Memorial Day, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania,” Statements File, Box 80, LBJ Library. <http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/speeches.hom/630530.asp> (accessed July 8, 2013).

<sup>41</sup> The over-extension of liberalism during Johnson’s presidency is discussed in detail in Alonzo L. Hamby, *Liberalism and Its Challengers: from F.D.R. to Bush*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 231-281.

<sup>42</sup> William Faulkner, *Intruder in the Dust* (New York: Vintage Books, 1991), 190.

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Pox Mongolica  
The Impact of Imperial Peace and Plague  
Matthew C. Hudson

Even during periods of relative peace and prosperity, an ever adaptive and microscopic enemy has waged a deadly war against man. From the thirteenth to the early fifteenth century, the Mongols influenced, either directly or indirectly, one of the largest empires the world has ever seen. It included the valuable Silk Road where traders could bring exotic goods from the Far East to markets in the Arab world, Africa, and Europe. The increased security of the Silk Road due to the stability of the Mongol Empire allowed for more than the trade of goods and ideas; disease also moved along its routes. The Mongols rapidly swept through Asia and Eastern Europe conquering all in their path, regardless of religion, culture, or race. Among the diseases that initiated in the steppes of Central Asia, the Black Death of 1313 – 1353 spread through the trade routes killing millions in its wake. The four decades of that iteration of the plague altered art, religion, and trade at a global scale in no small part due to the speed by which distant lands were connected via the Pax Mongolica and Silk Road. The Black Death caused by the bubonic plague devastated the eastern hemisphere. Mongolian imperial peace and the stability it provided to the ancient Silk Road served as a conduit for cultures to trade and transmit knowledge, goods, wealth and infectious disease.

Spanning more than three millennia and four thousand miles, the trade routes connecting the farthest reaches of East Asia to Europe and East Africa became collectively known as the Silk Road. The origins of the Silk Road are tied to the people of Central Asia and the Indo-European migrations stretching back four millennia.<sup>1</sup> Those who migrated along the routes would learn to utilize them

and act as middlemen for the markets that resided in either geographical direction from them. The European markets craved spices and silks among the myriad of exotic goods traveling westward into the Italian peninsula while gold and salt traveled back to the east. Control of trade routes has long meant control of wealth, thus the regions in which the Silk Road traveled suffered from political instability and conflict. With the spread of Islam in the seventh century, the western regions of these trade routes became more politically stable which in turn created wealth for the peoples of Central Asia and the Middle East. As the Arabs swept their way east towards India and west across the whole of North Africa and into Spain, they maintained existing trade routes and agricultural systems as they sought revenue through taxation and trade.<sup>2</sup> Historian David Levering Lewis argues in his work, *God's Crucible: Islam and the Making of Europe, 570-1215*, that ancient conflicts which began as Persian against Greek evolved into what Western Europeans call a *Crusade* to recapture holy lands and routes of pilgrimage beginning in the eleventh century. It is no coincidence that these pilgrim roads connected to more than spiritual wealth but to the very material Silk Road as well. While the western end of the Silk Road was often in turmoil and conflict, the eastern region remained relatively stable. Ideas and goods were the chief exports of the Far East until the rise of the Mongols.

By the beginning of the thirteenth century, Genghis Khan, c. 1167-1227, born Temujin, unified the clans of the Mongols under his leadership. "With power and mandate bestowed upon him by Heaven, as he and his sons believed, he set out to subjugate the unsubmitted peoples of the four directions."<sup>3</sup> Sweeping down from the steppes, the once isolated population of the Mongols mixed with the cultures around them and along the trade routes to the west. The Mongol conquest of China allowed them to control the

source of the wealth in the Far East and the precious commodities that those on the other end of the Silk Road trekked so far to obtain. By 1279, the Mongols' influence spanned from the eastern shores of China to the border of Hungary in Eastern Europe. The entire length of the great trade route was securely under their control. The days of regional powers jockeying for control over stretches of road temporarily vanished as the efficient Mongols provided stability and speed to trade.

As the Mongol conquests grew, they established a strong communication network in order to manage and control their new-found sphere of influence. The strength of the Mongols lay firmly in their skill as horsemen. Caravans, postal riders, and soldiers sped along the ancient trade routes, which by this time created a territorially vast human web that linked the Mongol headquarters at Karakorum with Kazan and Astrakhan on the Volga, with Caffa in the Crimea, and Khanbaliq in China and with innumerable other caravanserais in between.<sup>4</sup> While the benefits of imperial peace were numerous, often lost in the shimmering glow of glory were the negative attributes that arose with stability and progress. Due to the speed with which the riders could traverse elements from remote areas goods found their way to the thriving urban markets and cities in very short periods of time. Material goods and food did not travel alone. Rats and parasites were found in the caravans and infested new locales in the process. The speed with which the Mongols were able to travel the trade routes along with the volume of traders that were able to peaceably navigate the Silk Road allowed new diseases to introduce themselves to new hosts in a short period of time. The most deadly of these diseases was the Bubonic Plague, which may have had its origins in the steppes of Central Asia.<sup>5</sup> Communities exposed to new diseases required adequate time to develop immunities. The Mongols hold over their

empire was not much different from any other great empire. By an occasional show of force, the Mongols quelled rebellions and threats to imperial peace. In addition, savage acts of retribution kept challenges to peace at a minimum. By the early decades of the fourteenth century, the Silk Road was the ideal conduit for the transmittal of potential pandemics. The stability in the region satisfied the requirement that accelerated the change in the nature of controlling the source of a deadly disease and allowing it to flourish within its own environment.

The creation of urban areas gave witness to the rise of communal diseases. Over time man developed methods of public safety to combat the threat of introducing new disease into unaffected communities. The Mongols, a rural people, may have disregarded customs and traditions that had arisen to combat the introduction and spread of viruses as they conquered new areas and unwittingly infected themselves.<sup>6</sup> Man suffered from the threat of the Bubonic Plague as early as the time of the Byzantine Emperor Justinian, 483 – 565. In 1313, another wave of plague appeared on the steppes of Central Asia and in 1331 it reached the Mongolian courts of China. Large buboes, or enlarged glands, appeared in the groin, under the arms, or even on the neck of those suffering from *Pasteurella pestis*, while the microorganisms rapidly multiplied within the victim's bloodstream and in almost every instance brought high temperature and death from septicemia, or blood poisoning.<sup>7</sup> Those fortunate enough to survive still suffered greatly from the symptoms and never regained full strength. Burrowing rodents, fleas, rats, and humans made fine carriers for the microorganisms. When the infected party travelled from rural to urban centers by way of caravan routes and entered multiple markets the plague was then unleashed to susceptible hosts making its mark on the fourteenth century.

Mongols exposure with more advanced cultures of Eastern Asia did not introduce the fourteenth century version of the plague as evidenced by the length of time between conquest and the spread of the plague. Furthermore, the stability and speed of transportation allowed plague carriers to move rapidly from east to west. The high mortality rate of those with the disease allowed the plague to run its course in isolation with little movement across great expanses. The Silk Road's stability during the reign of the Mongols coupled with their military tactics aided the spread of plague to Western Asia. It eventually became necessary for the Mongols to lay siege to the Genoese controlled Crimean city of Caffa in 1346. While the Mongols besieged Caffa, the plague spread throughout their camp. As a form of biological warfare, the Mongols hurled the plague-ridden corpses into the city in an attempt to weaken Caffa. Significantly, Caffa connected the Silk Road to Europe by sail, fueling speculation that Caffa served as one vector for the plague's introduction to Europe. Historian R.S. Bray argues that the plague may have been introduced via the Tigris River on the spice and silk routes and then up through the Crimea and Levant regions. As a result of biological warfare, survivors of Caffa would have certainly been hosts to and carriers for the disease, enabling its movement outside the city and fueling its spread across the Mediterranean into Europe.<sup>8</sup> The impact the Black Death would have on Europe would alter the course of history.

The plague killed tens of millions in a very short time period, turning entire villages into graveyards and leaving crops in the field to waste as there was no one to harvest them. Even after the initial wave of contagion had passed, successive outbreaks periodically surfaced. In the first outbreak in Cairo, for example, one-third of the population died and a century later, the population was little more than half of what it was prior to the plague.<sup>9</sup> It was much more than

just the deaths of citizens, but the implications of this disease were the deficits it created in the affected population's labor force, military size, and the educational opportunities of the lands it ravaged. The feudal economic situation of Europe in the fourteenth century was already a source of contention between the rich landowners and the peasants working the land. Peasants in Europe struggling with hunger became even more susceptible to disease. A new economic and political system rose in a post-plague Europe. Coff mentions, "The lessening of the feudal income and the upheavals owing to the growing proportion of money in peasant dues called the basis of the power of the great into question."<sup>10</sup> Coff's statement indicates that the world was literally transformed because of this toxic disease and traditional roles in society were subjected to change.

While the Black Death caused massive loss of life, an odd side effect of the plague was that there were fewer mouths to feed during a European food shortage. The unrest caused in part by over population in Europe, food shortages, and economic inequalities between the classes changed in the aftermath of the Black Death. The plague served as a great equalizer of man; all were susceptible whether rich or poor, noble or peasant, clergy or layman. Historian Norman Cantor described the dead and dying laying in the streets, abandoned by frightened friends and relatives as a society in flux.<sup>11</sup> Revenues of the rich lessened as nature took back cultivated lands. The labor shortage advanced the end of serfdom in Western Europe and created an increase in wealthy peasants. However, it would take many more centuries before the common man gained a voice in government and the rule of the land. The changes brought on by the plague accelerated the process of cultural advancement in Europe.

Cultures require healthy citizens to maintain stability. A stable workforce, soldiers for defense, leaders and merchants all add to the



wealth of a nation. However, a sudden and significant drop in skilled participants from both the active population and the upcoming population hinder a culture's ability to feed, defend, and manage itself. In North Africa, the Black Death destroyed what had been centuries of economic prosperity. The Egyptians provided the defense of Africa against the Mongolian advance and thrived on the edge of the Mongolian Empire. Resilient agriculture and control of trade between Asia and Europe enabled Egypt to combat the Black Death better than the rest of North Africa and the Middle East. However, economic decay in Egypt was nevertheless grave and it coincided with a rebirth and advance of post-plague Europe.<sup>12</sup> Post-plague Africa would later be colonized and rebuilt by a stronger European presence.

While stability reigned under Mongol control, unity of leadership had long been divided. Much like the division of the Roman Empire into two political entities, the Mongols had divided the lands under their control. The Black Death era did not exist in a vacuum, for the fourteenth century witnessed a large number of natural disasters in addition to the plague epidemic. In the wake of these disasters, the Mongol rulers began to lose control over their conquests and the stability of the Silk Road was no more. The Mongols lost China and Persia to rebellions in the decades following the Black Death. The Central and Western steppes remained under the control of the Mongol Golden Horde for two additional centuries, but the treasure chest of the Orient and the profitable pipeline of the Silk Road slipped from their control. Subsequent leaders in Central Asia began ruling under their own name while setting up puppet Khans to maintain the legitimacy and connection with the former glory of the Mongols.<sup>13</sup> The Mongols suffered the inevitable slow decline that all previous empires experienced and natural factors or elements especially that of the Black Death accelerated the demise

of their empire and freed China, Eastern Europe and the Middle East from their influence.

The landscape of the world had changed for all time. The stability of the Silk Road during the reign of the Mongols allowed for considerable ease of trade and cultural exchange. As demonstrated, one of the by-products of that trade was the exchange of diseases. After the plague and the passage of time, much of Asia and the Middle East returned to their pre-Mongol statuses. Africa struggled greatly to cope with the loss of manpower and slipped into decline. However, Europeans managed to rebound from the enormous loss of life within the course of five or six generations. The plague reoccurred on a smaller scale during the centuries following the introductory exposure of Black Death, but by this time, Europe had begun to adjust. "Europe, in short, entered upon a new era of its history, embracing as much diversity as ever, since reactions and readjustments followed differing paths in different regions of the continent, but everywhere nonetheless different from the patterns that had prevailed before 1346."<sup>14</sup> European society changed in many ways in the years following the Black Death, and the Silk Road played a distinct role in that change.

With the Silk Road in context, much more than material goods and devastating disease linked Europe, Africa and the Asiatic worlds; ideas were transported through cultures and societies from great thinkers and scientists as they made their way to destinations of their choice along the Silk Road. The exchange of knowledge had been prevalent along the trade routes for millennia, but the tenacity of the Mongol military forces seeded encouragement for many Europeans to travel east in search of fortune. Due to the exchange of ideas across the route, the Arab world long enjoyed the classical knowledge of Greek and Roman philosophers misplaced by Europeans. In the wake of the Black Death, this knowledge, which had

been lost to Christendom for so many centuries, would not only be rediscovered but embraced by the philosophers and artists of Europe. The modern world remained centuries away and rebuilding Europe included great advancements in thought, technology, and trade. Quarantine laws helped Europe prepare for future outbreaks, while an increased awareness and study of medicine aided the advancement of science and anatomy. The instability of the Silk Road in post-Mongol Asia encouraged Europeans to explore alternate routes to trade markets that housed those spices, silks, and wares that were in such high demand in European cities. Sea routes were sought after and the “Age of Discovery” would follow, as a result, providing a means to navigate to the East as well as a providing a link to the side of the world previously unknown to the bulk of Europe. Europe was poised for greatness.

Survivors of the Black Death in Europe laid the foundations for an age that became known as the Renaissance. Italian poets Francesco Petrarch, 1304- 1374, and Giovanni Boccaccio, 1313- 1375, both witnessed the powerful effect of the Black Death on Europe. While the Church remained at the center of the European universe, a growing sense of humanism coupled the rebirth of the classical knowledge. Boccaccio’s *Decameron* tells the story of a youthful group who have gone to the hills outside Florence in hopes to escape the plague. The city-states of Italy were forced to address public health and safety after exposure to the plague. Only Milan escaped the ravages of the Black Death with minimal loss of life. The works of writers such as Petrarch and Boccaccio as well as other artists in Italy would inspire Europe to recapture lost knowledge and expand upon it both in science and art. Boccaccio spoke of an increase in the notion of seeking personal pleasure in the dark days of the plague; that the people “are prompted by their appetites, they will do whatever affords them the greatest pleasure, whether by day or

night, alone or in company.”<sup>15</sup> A societal shift was underway and a more secular man would arise from it.

Another shift in Europe following the Black Death was spiritual. As many as a third of the clergy in Europe succumbed to the plague. Parishioners feared attending Mass, which allowed for a more personal faith to evolve. The clergy who replaced their fallen brethren lacked the experience and knowledge of their predecessors. A rise in mysticism accompanied the plague. Man sought communication from God and assurance that he and his family would be spared. While anticlericalism was not new, after 1346 it became overt and widespread in Europe and provided an element that would contribute to the eventual Protestant Reformation.<sup>16</sup> The Black Death contributed greatly in charting the course for the new Europe.

The plague ravaged Asia with fierce vengeance. Upwards of half the population China perished during the years of Mongol occupation, and despite their savagery and the view of Chinese historians, plague killed the majority of the dead. Villages in Central Asia emptied and the vast caravans that roamed the Silk Road began to vanish. The Mongols’ military might declined in the years after 1346. The heavy losses to plague death hindered the Mongols ability to replenish troops in the outlying areas of their realm. Nomadic overlords were able to reclaim or absorb those areas that the Mongols could no longer support.<sup>17</sup> The need to maintain an agricultural existence in order to survive on the steppes hindered industrial and technological advancements. The old guard had died and a new era, a European era, stood on the precipice of greatness.

The stability of the ancient trade routes known as the Silk Road provided by the military might of the Mongol Empire provided a conduit for goods, wealth, ideas, and death. When the Bubonic Plague-carrying creatures of the Central Asian steppes infected and infested the rural travelers, they in turn became the vector that car-

ried the deadly disease to the urban areas. With that the Black Death of 1313-1353 became a horrific reality. Tens of millions died due to the disease that plagued half of the planet. From the destruction of life sprang many different outcomes for those who survived. As a result, the Mongols lost their imperial influence and military might. China regained its autonomy and recovered its wealth and prowess. Much of Asia returned to a series of independent and warring states. Africa slipped into a downward spiral that resulted in the colonization and control by European nations over African societies. Europe survived and learned from the Black Death. A new era of European culture, polity, and discovery began as Europeans became the most active and dominant force on Earth. While man fancies himself at the top of the food chain, there remains the threat of another plague where a microscopic organism can bring down the mightiest of empires and create another history changing wave of death.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Christopher I. Beckwith, *Empires of the Silk Road* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (New York: Warner Books, 1992), 102.

<sup>3</sup> Beckwith, 185.

<sup>4</sup> William H. McNeill, *Plagues and People* (New York: Anchor Books, 1998), 163.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. 163.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 172.

<sup>7</sup> Frederick F. Cartwright, *Disease and History* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1991), 30.

<sup>8</sup> R.S. Bray, *Armies of Pestilence: The Impact of Disease on History* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2000), 56.

<sup>9</sup> Hourani, 213.

<sup>10</sup> Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization: 400-1500* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 2000), 108.

<sup>11</sup> Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), 482.

<sup>12</sup> John Iliffe, *Africa: The History of a Continent* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 48.

<sup>13</sup> Beckwith, 196-197.

<sup>14</sup> Beckwith, 180.

<sup>15</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron* trans. G.H. McWilliam (Franklin Center, PA: Franklin Library, 1981), 18-19.

<sup>16</sup> McNeill, 195.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, 200.

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## The Black Death and Persecution of the Jews

Catherine M. Porter

The Middle Ages were a time of great change for Europe. Countries were developing and growing rapidly. Due to the development and growth of the European countries, trade was becoming a worldwide industry. Expanded trade routes brought many good things to Europe, however; the advent of international trade brought to Europe a new scourge it was unprepared to face in the form of the bubonic plague. The plague, in turn, resulted in another wave of Jewish persecution. The European Jewry were no strangers to persecution preceding the advent of the Black Death. The Black Death of 1348 led to more widespread persecution as the European Jewry became the scapegoats for the cause of the plague.

The Black Death was not a new phenomenon in 1348. The plague had reared its ugly head in prior centuries and would continue to do so in future ones. However, the plague outbreak in 1348 is considered the most devastating and well-remembered in all of history. "The Black Death of 1348-49 was the greatest biomedical disaster in European and possible world history...[one] third at least of Western Europe's population died in what contemporaries called 'the pestilence.'"<sup>1</sup> The plague of 1348 purportedly infiltrated Europe on the backs of rats, and more specifically, the fleas that had taken residence on the rats. The rats and their flea companions found their way into the holds of cargo ships coming from China and infected the crews. Once the ships docked at their destinations, the crew would go out into the towns after a long sea voyage and would unknowingly spread the plague to more people.

The bubonic plague progressed through three distinct phases before the infected person succumbed to the disease.

The first stage is marked by flulike symptoms, normally accompanied by high fever. In the second stage, buboes...black welts and bulges – appear in the groin or near the armpits...[in approximately] 10 percent of plague victims...the buboes develop intra-abdominally...The third – and often fatal – stage of the plague is respiratory failure.<sup>2</sup>

During the second stage, the buboes would also increase in size and cause a tremendous amount of pain. Additional stomach flu-like symptoms would also manifest within the infected person with running a fever, vomiting, and diarrhea.<sup>3</sup> Death was relatively quick after the onset of symptoms. Victims would be dead within a matter of days. There was also a pneumonic version of the plague which manifested itself similarly but without the swelling and it was most definitely contagious through contact. The survival rate for victims of the Black Death of 1348 was relatively low.

Some scientists today argue that the Black Death of 1348 was more than just the bubonic plague. Anthrax spores have been found at “ten medieval abbeys or priories whose cattle herds were known to be diseased.”<sup>4</sup> The fact that the pestilence spread so quickly flummoxed scientists. The bubonic plague travelling on rats alone did not cause such a “rapid dissemination, a quality more characteristic of a cattle disease than a rodent-disseminated one.”<sup>5</sup>

The bubonic plague and anthrax have very similar symptoms. Medieval medical doctors and medicine in general in the 14<sup>th</sup> century were primitive at best. Diagnosing the plague and effectively treating the symptoms and the cause were for the most part out of reach. This led to blaming the cause on other avenues such as the European Jewry. In spite of this lack of current medical knowledge;



the 14<sup>th</sup> century was on the cusp of attaining higher learning and great advances in society.

Medieval clergy and rich lords were now well educated as far as medieval standards went, but had rudimentary medical knowledge and lacked scientific reasoning. They could not explain the plague symptoms or the causes. Explanations of why things happened in the world were still based on superstition and not sound scientific reasoning or facts. While people during the Middle Ages did practice basic hygiene, it was still a fairly filthy existence. Society had devolved from the grandeur of the Roman Empire where there had been running water and sewer systems. Rats were commonplace in medieval life. They could be found everywhere. Medieval doctors thought the plague was carried through the air. “Windows must remain closed and covered – for the affluent, with thick tapestries.”<sup>6</sup> The burning of incense was also very common in an attempt to ward off the plague: “...juniper, laurel, pine, beech, lemon leaves, rosemary, camphor, sulphur [sic] and others Handkerchiefs were dipped in aromatic oils....”<sup>7</sup> Even with these attempts, people kept getting sick and dying.

14<sup>th</sup> century reasoning for the plague took many forms. Some people blamed scandalous dress as the cause, which people then tied to the wrath of God and that God was punishing them. People clung very tightly to their religious beliefs, especially since no one in authority at the time could explain why the plague was happening. “The sin of pride manifested in this way must surely bring down misfortune in the future.”<sup>8</sup> Some people thought that God was punishing them for their sins by unleashing the plague upon them. Some of those who felt that God was punishing them went to extreme measures to attempt to appease him. Flagellation became more popular during the plagues. The plague of 1348 was no exception to the self-punishment of the flagellants. Flagellants also blamed the Jews for the plague.<sup>9</sup>

Boccaccio, an Italian poet, born in 1313, lived through the pestilence and composed his great work *Decameron*. His book opens up with his musings regarding the Black Death. The plague "...made its appearance that deadly pestilence, which, whether disseminated by the influence of the celestial bodies, or sent upon us mortals by God in His just wrath by way of retribution for our iniquities..."<sup>10</sup>

Boccaccio was not the only one who felt this way. Before Boccaccio wrote *The Decameron* even Pope Clement VI felt that God was punishing people. In Clement VI's papal bull in September of 1438, he wrote "this pestilence with which God is affecting the Christian people."<sup>11</sup> However, Clement VI reflected the scientific ignorance of his time. He reached out to astronomers and was told that Jupiter, Saturn, and Mars fell into a peculiar alignment and this "conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter notoriously caused death and disaster while the conjunction of Mars and Jupiter spread pestilence in the air."<sup>12</sup>

While the Catholic Church did not condone the persecution of the Jews, many Christians at the time still thought the European Jewry was responsible. There was no concrete or logical reason behind the blame except hundreds of years of prejudice and persecution. During the plague of 1348, a rumor was started that led to more persecution. Even today, this myth is still synonymous with the bubonic plague. A rumor was started that Jews were secretly poisoning water sources and that was the cause of all of Christianity's pain and suffering. Jean de Venette, a contemporary of the plague, put his thoughts to paper regarding the plague and the poisoning of the wells:

Some said that this pestilence was caused by infection of the air and waters, since there was at this time no famine nor lack of food supplies, but on the contrary great abundance. As a result of this theory

of infected water and air as the source of the plague the Jews were suddenly and violently charged with infecting wells and water and corrupting the air. The whole world rose up against them cruelly on this account.<sup>13</sup>

Jews have borne the brunt of persecution for centuries. Even in Biblical times, the Jews faced persecution. Christians held them responsible for the death of Christ. According to the Gospels, after Pilate had asked the crowd gathered in Jerusalem they responded, "...His blood *be* on us, and our children."<sup>14</sup> For many Christians there was no other proof for them except what was in the Bible.

In addition to the Biblical reason to persecute the Jews, many restrictions were already in place prior to the outbreak of plague in 1348. While the Catholic Church did not condone the flagellants going after Jews, the papacy was still guilty of persecuting the Jews. The papacy had enacted a law that required Jews to wear distinctive clothing in order to set them apart from Christians. In addition to the clothing restrictions, they were limited in what they could do professionally. They were mainly pigeonholed into being moneylenders or merchants due to restrictions. Their usefulness in the roles of moneylenders and merchants did assist in preventing some persecution. However, the turn of the 11<sup>th</sup> century brought about change for the Jews. Christianity had taken the world by storm as the predominant religion again, and many people were fanatical about their faith. Another change that affected and impacted them was the introduction of merchant guilds. "The growth of merchant guilds, which came to control international commerce, resulted in the exclusion of Jewish entrepreneurs from business by their gentile competitors. By the early 12th century their main economic recourse was usury."<sup>15</sup> As moneylenders, they were of great use to the general public, but like any collection agency today, they were hated when they tried to collect on the loans.

The Jews were persecuted for other reasons as well. They were blamed when Christian children went missing. “[Blood libels were] the myths which held that the Jews had a propensity for engaging in the ritual slaughter of Christian children.”<sup>16</sup> They were not only accused of slaughtering them, they were also accused of eating them.

Contrary to popular contemporary belief, not all Christians felt the same way. Gregory X attempted to protect the Jews from persecution. In his Letter on the Jews he proclaimed, “Inasmuch as the Jews are not able to bear witness against the Christians, we decree furthermore that the testimony of Christians against Jews shall not be valid unless there is among these Christians some Jew who is there for the purpose of offering testimony.”<sup>17</sup> However, the papal decree did very little and persecution for blood libel still occurred.

The plague was indiscriminate who it took to the grave. Young or old, male or female, rich or poor contracted the disease. Even Jews succumbed to the plague as easily as the Christians; but Christians still felt Jews were to blame. Clement VI realized this and attempted to stem the persecution against them by issuing papal bulls. He announced in the papal bulls that the plague was not caused by the Jews. He proclaimed that the plague “afflicted and afflicts the Jews themselves and many other races who have never lived alongside them.”<sup>18</sup> He also decreed that not a person should “dare (on their own authority or out of hot-headedness) to capture, strike, wound or kill any Jews or expel them from their service on these grounds.”<sup>19</sup> He threatened to excommunicate anyone who did not follow his wishes and also tried to persuade those if there were any truth to the accusations, to use the judicial and law systems instead of vigilante justice and outrage.

Even though the accusations and their results were cruel and horrific, it was not a farfetched idea that the pestilence people were suffering from could indeed be from poison. Poisoning presented

itself similarly with the stomach issues. However, the accusations against the Jews were completely unfounded. Who started this rumor is not clear or why they chose the Jews to be their scapegoats except for past incidents of persecution. Even though there was no veracity in the claims, many Jews confessed to the made up crimes. These confessions sealed their fate as the cause of the plague for many Christians.

The Count of Savoy was very quick to round up Jews, men and women both, to torture them. He had this "...done after public rumor had become current and a strong clamor had arisen because of the poison put by them into wells, springs, and other things which the Christians use-demanding that they die..."<sup>20</sup> One of the most convincing confessions comes from Agimet, a Jewish man from Geneva. He was tortured off and on to varying degrees until he finally confessed what his part had been in the poisoning of the wells. Agimet was to go to Venice to buy various items when a Jew by the name of Rabbi Peyret sought him out before he left for a special task. "We have been informed that you are going to Venice to buy silk and other wares. Here I am giving you a little package of half a span in size which contains some prepared poison and venom in a thin, sewed leather-bag. Distribute it among the wells, cisterns, and springs about Venice and other places to which you go, in order to poison the people who use the water..."<sup>21</sup> While Agimet confessed and provided great detail, the Rabbi Peyret was nothing but a delusion of a tortured man past his breaking point and willing to say anything. Other Jews put to torture also confessed to poisoning wells. A letter from a lord of Lausanne to the Burger of Strassburg names Bona Dies and that he "confessed to the same appalling crime"<sup>22</sup> as Agimet from Geneva. Letters from Bern also told of Jews confessing to poisoning the wells under torture.

A very similar confession to that of Agimet's was elicited out of a Jew by the name of Balavigny. He confessed that a Rabbi Jacob from Toledo had sent him poison to distribute in the various water sources but not to tell a soul. He distributed the poison as instructed and also confessed that the boy who delivered him the poison "showed him many identical letters addressed to numerous other Jews."<sup>23</sup> Balavigny confessed to warning other Jews not to drink from the wells. He also confessed to how the poison would spread after a person had become afflicted by it. Since he was a surgeon for his Jewish community, this lent further credence to his confession. "[I]f anyone suffering the effects of the poison comes into contact with someone else, especially while sweating, the other person will be infected; and that infection can be transmitted by breath as well."<sup>24</sup> He also made a blanket statement by bringing the wrath of Christianity on all the Jews, "[he was] certain that the other Jews cannot acquit themselves of the charge, for they knew perfectly well what they were doing and are guilty."<sup>25</sup>

These confessions called for drastic action on the part of Christians. Many cities and towns simply rounded the Jews up and murdered them. In the town of Basel, Jews were rounded up and forced into a large wooden structure which had been purposely built to be set on fire.<sup>26</sup> In other towns, they were murdered or were cast out. In Strasbourg, both occurred. There was a massacre on St. Valentine's Day in 1349. Two thousand were burnt and approximately one thousand accepted baptism to avoid being killed. Children were torn away from their mothers and fathers while on the pyre and baptized. After the Jews were put to death, the town council declared anyone who had been in debt to them was now free of it, and any property and possessions of the Jews was divided up. Financial gain became another motive to persecute them and be rid of them. In the town of Eslingen, "the whole Jewish

community burned themselves in their synagogue; and mothers were often seen throwing their children on the pile, to prevent their being baptized, and then precipitating themselves into the flames.”<sup>27</sup>

These are only a handful of the atrocities against the Jews during the plague outbreak of 1348. The outbreak in 1348 wiped out between thirty and sixty percent of Europe’s population. However, according to the Zionism-Israel Center, no definite number of Jews killed from torture or pogroms, or from the Black Death itself can be ascertained. Unfortunately, the Black Death was just a small period in Jewish history where they were singled out to be persecuted. Eventually the pogroms and torture ceased on the Jews blamed for the spread of the Black Death, but others would find new excuses to continue persecuting them for other misfortune and catastrophes in history.

The outbreak of bubonic plague in 1348 was one of the lowest points in medieval history. The plague brought many changes to the landscape of Europe as most of the population was stricken by it and succumbed to it. The economy was affected due to the available workforce being reduced. Uneducated and scared, people will always find a reason or a scapegoat to help them cope with disaster. Unfortunately, like most of their existence, the Jewish people of Europe were blamed and suffered for a conspiracy that was a fallacy; these poor tortured souls would confess to just stop the pain and hopefully end their suffering and that of their people.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Norman F. Cantor. *In the Wake of the Plague: The Black Death and the World it Made*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), 7.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 12.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 15.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid, 22.

<sup>7</sup> E.L. Skip, "The Black Death: Medical Measures" *History of Western Civilization*. 1995. <http://europeanhistory.boisestate.edu/westciv/plague/10.shtml> (accessed 13 Jan 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Rosemary Horrox, *The Black Death* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 131.

<sup>9</sup> Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Western Civilization: Volume 1: to 1715*. (Boston: Wadsworth, 2012), 307.

<sup>10</sup> Giovanni Boccaccio, *The Decameron*, ed. and trans. by G.H. McWilliam. (London: Penguin Books, 1972), [http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian\\_Studies/dweb/texts/DecShowText.php?myID=d01intro&expand=empty&lang=eng](http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Italian_Studies/dweb/texts/DecShowText.php?myID=d01intro&expand=empty&lang=eng) (accessed 13 Jan 2014).

<sup>11</sup> Steven Kreis, "Lecture 29: Satan Triumphant: The Black Death" (August 2009). <http://historyguide.org/ancient/lecture29b.html> (accessed 13 Jan 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Phillip Ziegler, *The Black Death* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969), 38.

<sup>13</sup> "Jean de Venette on the Progress of the Black Death" In the History Guide. (February 2006) <http://www.historyguide.org/ancient/plague.html> (accessed 14 January 2014).

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 27:25 (King James Version)" in *The Official King James Bible Online*, <http://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/book.phpbook=Matthew&chapter=27&verse=25> (accessed 14 Jan 2014).

<sup>15</sup> Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages*. (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), 365.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> "Gregory X: Letter on Jews, (1271-76) Against the Blood Libel" In the Medieval Sourcebook (February 1996) <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/source/g10-jews.html> (accessed 14 January 2014).

<sup>18</sup> Horrox, 222.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> "The Black Death and the Jews 1348-1349 CE" In the Jewish History Sourcebook (July 1998) <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/jewish/1348-jewsblackdeath.html> (accessed 14 January 2014).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Horrox, 211.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 212.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 214.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> J.F.C. Hecker "The Black Death," trans. B.G. Babington. [http://history-world.org/black\\_death.htm](http://history-world.org/black_death.htm) (accessed 14 January 2014).

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

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The Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre  
Christopher N. Schloemer

The Saint Bartholomew's Day massacre was horrific and had far-reaching consequences for France. Thousands of citizens in Paris suffered brutal deaths. What caused this massacre? What were the causes that touched off such a bloody event and what was the result for France? This massacre changed the Reformation and the political and religious climate of France itself. One contributing factor was the spread of Protestantism. The spread of Protestants into France was inevitable, but French Catholics fiercely resisted it.

The Huguenots spread into France for different reasons. France's proximity to Geneva, geographically and linguistically, was a factor in the spread of Protestantism into France—pastors sent from Geneva played a significant role in this process. Additionally, John Calvin himself was from France. He always hoped to see France converted to the “true religion,” even dedicating his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, published in Latin in 1536 and translated into French in 1541, to the French king Francis I.<sup>1</sup> He corresponded with converts in France, welcomed refugees to Geneva, and encouraged the spread of his writings in France. Between 1555 and 1562, at least eighty-eight pastors trained in Geneva tried to organize Calvinist congregations in France.<sup>2</sup> Even with Henry II terrorizing them they created a network of congregations, and in 1559 held their first synod.<sup>3</sup> By 1561, about ten percent of the French population was Huguenot, but about forty percent of the aristocracy had converted. Richard S. Dunn, in his book *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715* states that this is because they saw a chance to gain power from the absolute monarchy.<sup>4</sup> However, many of these members of the French aristocracy truly believed in the new Protestant move-

ment and took great risks by converting.

Why did they meet so much resistance from the Catholics? From early on, the Catholics perceived the Huguenots as a threat to their community, especially after the “placards affair” in 1534.<sup>5</sup> On October 18, 1534, a group of French Protestant exiles in Switzerland had organized the printing of placards and had them posted conspicuously throughout Paris and northern France (reportedly even on the door of the king’s bedchamber) so that Catholics would see them on their way to Mass. The placard ridiculed Mass acerbically—so much so that Calvin’s future deputy Theodore Beza even decried it, realizing the negative result it would have, saying “everything was shattered by the indiscreet zeal of a few.”<sup>6</sup> This was very offensive to French Catholics. To the Catholic community, Mass is “the principal focus of reconciliation and communal satisfaction,” a way to seek forgiveness of sins and redress grievances with neighbors: it is as much a symbol recognizing the bond between members of the community as it is between man and God.<sup>7</sup> Catholics thought of this attack on the Mass as not just an attack on their theology, but also an attack on their community. This event was one of the “signal events” that underscored the differences between “heterodoxy and heresy...from 1534 on, most French Catholics forever perceived that Protestantism and rebellion went hand in hand.”<sup>8</sup> A wave of persecution followed this event forcing Calvin into exile in Switzerland. French Catholics even considered the Huguenots a threat to the monarchy.

To many Catholics, the Huguenots not only spread heresy, they were a political threat that “challenged the power and profits of the crown.”<sup>9</sup> With the conversion of Admiral Gaspard de Coligny of Montmorency and the Bourbon prince of Conde, Huguenots became a political threat. This political bloc wanted an arrangement similar to the Peace of Augsburg created in Germany, with each no-

ble controlling the church in his or her lands. Catherine de Medici tried to mediate a peaceful co-existence, bringing Calvinist and Catholic theologians together in 1561 at the Colloquy of Poissy, but they could not reach an agreement. Although she sought to come to a settlement such as Elizabeth had in England, she could not, as the Catholics and Huguenots in France were not looking for religious toleration—they both thought they were right and that they could win. Catherine did not recognize how antagonistic these sides were to one another and her attempts at reconciliation backfired. Catherine's advances towards the Huguenots actually shocked some fervent Catholics into taking up arms against the Calvinists, increased the power of the anti-Huguenot Guises, and created another political bloc dangerous to the Valois monarchy. The Guises had the loyalty of Paris and the support of the Jesuits, the Pope, and Phillip II of Spain.<sup>10</sup> This pushed Catherine further towards the Huguenots, as she did not want any faction to take power away from the Valois. In 1562, the Duke of Guise ordered his men to kill a congregation of Huguenots worshipping near Vassy, which touched off the French Wars of Religion that lasted from 1562-1570. These wars produced years of inconclusive combat, in which noncombatants suffered more than the armies did, and which produced little result. The wars did however, build religious hatred and animosity, especially in Paris, as damaging psychological effects built up that resulted in tensions that never dissipated—beginning with the first of the early French Wars of Religion.<sup>11</sup>

During the first French War of Religion that began in 1562, the Catholics became more and more restless, and conflict resulted between civilians as well as armies, especially in Paris. After the military successes of the Huguenots in Tours, Blois, Rouen and other major cities, the largely Catholic population of Paris lived in

dread of an invasion. In May, Catherine took the young king, Charles IX, out of the city. The king, through Catherine, ordered all Protestants to leave Paris, so as not to leave the city vulnerable to Huguenot plots, and the newly formed militia was used to identify Huguenots.<sup>12</sup> There was a growing lawlessness. Catholic residents of Paris killed reputed Huguenots in the streets. “Officials who tried to intervene were themselves in danger, and attempts to legislate an end to the killings met with violent protest.”<sup>13</sup> In November 1562, the Huguenot army actually did march on Paris. Even as Catherine tried to negotiate a peace after the royal army defeated the Huguenots at Dreux, the Parisians resisted, promising amnesty to those who wanted to convert back to Catholicism and intensifying persecution of religious suspects.<sup>14</sup> Often the city authorities had to arrest people to save them from the wrath of the crowds. In early 1563, Catherine had to station more troops in Paris because local officials were unwilling or unable to control the population. The assassination of the Duke of Guise prompted additional violence among the city’s populace. Finally, Catherine was able to bring the sides together to come up with a compromise peace settlement. This settlement, the Edict of Amboise, was a peace treaty allowing “freedom of conscience” and limited rights to Calvinists and allowed Huguenots to return to their homes—it was highly unpopular with Catholics, especially in Paris. As Huguenots tried to return to Paris in accordance with the treaty, violence continued. Gradually calm returned and the Protestants began to rebuild secretly in the city as the population became more interested in economic crises between 1563 and 1567 caused by a crop failure and the plague.<sup>15</sup> However, the peace was not peaceful.

Neither side was satisfied with the Edict of Amboise. Although Catherine was eager to reach a compromise between the two sides, neither of which could militarily defeat the other, keeping her son’s

kingdom together was an uphill struggle. The Catholics, especially in Paris, did not believe that two Christian denominations should exist. The Huguenots were unhappy about not being able to have a church in Paris. Many provincial parliaments refused to register this edict legalizing Calvinism in France until forced to by the king.<sup>16</sup> For years, it became readily apparent that neither side was enforcing the articles of the edict. Catholics complained about Protestants worshipping in more places than allowed. Protestants argued that Catholics in many areas were not recognizing the tolerance clauses that allowed them to worship. Protestant cells that emerged in overwhelmingly Catholic Paris worsened the existing tensions, creating hostility and confrontation.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, the Huguenots revived their Parisian church underground only six months after the edict dissolved it. They believed that the Edict of Amboise had left a large population of Protestants deprived of the ability to exercise their right to worship as they saw fit. The Huguenots were afraid this would prevent future growth and eventually Protestantism would die out in Paris. In 1565, the Protestants even held an illegal national synod in Paris. As the Protestants began worshipping again, tensions increased and the Catholics became increasingly angry. After a subsequent illegal sermon in the city, placards appeared throughout the city urging people to violence with messages such as “Cut them down...burn them...kill them without a qualm.”<sup>18</sup> In the end, the first French War of Religion had set a pattern in 1562 that would be repeated over and over in the coming decades. Catholics and Protestants fought a military campaign that neither side could win decisively. A peace agreement that the monarchy could not enforce or administer followed the bloodshed.<sup>19</sup> Next, the Protestants broke the peace, leading to the second French War of Religion.

In 1567, Charles IX had used the excuse that the Spanish Duke of Alba was passing near the French border with an army (to quell

religious unrest in the Netherlands), to raise new companies of Swiss guards. The Huguenots decided to strike first. They wanted to intervene before the 6,000 Swiss troops arrived and desired to separate the king from his devout Catholic advisors so they could convince him to reconsider Protestant grievances.<sup>20</sup> They gathered near Meaux to seize the king but word leaked out. Charles fled to Paris and all hopes of an amicable settlement were dashed. Charles took this as an attempt on the crown and was not in the mood for compromise. The Huguenots decided to attempt to capture Paris and laid siege. After the attempted kidnapping at Meaux and the siege of Paris, Catholics were ready to believe the worst from the Huguenots—once again, it seemed that Protestantism and rebellion went hand-in-hand.<sup>21</sup> Convinced that conspirators were inside Paris, they broke into the houses of Huguenots. Most had already left the city, but those found who had stayed behind “suffered arrest, assault, or even death.” One of the key symbols of the Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre appeared at this time—“anyone who did not put the sign of a white cross on his hat was in danger of being killed.”<sup>22</sup> After a short siege, the king’s troops drove Huguenot army from the capital. Negotiations for peace ensued, but Parisians were not ready for another agreement. They reportedly offered Catherine “great sums of money” to continue the war.<sup>23</sup> They wanted to fight to a clear victory and drive the Huguenots out of France. However, the king made peace again in 1568. Since the Huguenots were in a position of relative strength, the Peace of Longjumeau was favorable to them. It restored the rights of the Edict of Amboise, gave amnesty to Huguenot military leaders and their followers, and the king promised to pay the wages of the Huguenots’ German allies so they would leave the country.<sup>24</sup> This uneasy peace did not last long.

Once again, the peace was unpopular with Catholics, especially in Paris, where Catholic priests raged against the treaty and predict-

ed dire consequences for the king if he did not stop supporting these “false prophets.”<sup>25</sup> They warned that the Huguenots would destroy France if not exterminated. People sacked Huguenot houses and assaulted any left in the city. Catholics took to heart the message from their priests to drive out the infidel Huguenots. Neither side had disarmed; the third French War of Religion in 1568 was really just a continuation of the second. Although this war had little to do with Paris, Parisians were still fearful of attack, so much so that they had all houses outside of, but close to, the walls of the city torn down.<sup>26</sup> City authorities struggled to quell mob violence. Most Huguenots had left Paris at the beginning of the second war, but records of Huguenots arrested during this period show that many were arrested to save them from menacing crowds. One example that shows the hatred of this time is the case of Philippe and Richard de Gastines, arrested in 1569 for performing a Protestant Lord’s Supper in their house.<sup>27</sup> Reports state that crowds of people heckled and harassed the magistrates while they judged the case. In the end, the magistrates handed down a sentence of death for the Gastines and for one neighbor; this for a crime that usually resulted in banishment or a fine. After they were hanged, “in an exceptional measure of reprisal,” Catholics leveled the Gastines’ house and erected a monument—a massive stone pyramid with a cross on top, which would become a symbol of religious hatred in Paris.<sup>28</sup> This was done to “symbolize their victory over heresy as well as to purify the site where the Catholic mass had been profaned by the Protestant supper.”<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the crowd hung Admiral Coligny in effigy. The third French War of Religion finally ended in 1570 with another controversial peace—the Peace of Saint-Germain.

These wars had been trying for French citizens, and the Peace of Saint-Germain only added to the religious tension, leaving both sides “anxious and suspicious.”<sup>30</sup> This treaty provided legal frame-



work for Huguenot reintegration into the Catholic-dominated society, granting the right for open Protestant worship inside certain towns (not Paris) for the first time. Catholics and Parisians especially, protested orders to disarm and allow Protestants to return home. The treaty also allowed the Huguenots to legally occupy four fortified towns, which gave them places of refuge and provided them the ability to maintain arms and garrisons of troops.<sup>31</sup> One edict mandated that “monuments to the persecution of Huguenots were to be demolished and the properties on which the monuments stood returned to their owners.”<sup>32</sup> This was especially unpopular in Paris. Parisians refused to take down the cross of Gastines, which had become a symbol of Parisian resistance to coexistence with the Huguenots. To the Catholics, it stood for “their collective commitment to the city, to the crown, and to Christ.”<sup>33</sup> City leaders were under extreme pressure from the citizens of Paris not to move this monument—every time these leaders tried to move it their efforts were undone by protests and clandestine sabotage. Eventually, under direct pressure from the king, city magistrates were able to move the cross in the dead of night under heavy guard to the cemetery of the Holy Innocents. This did not placate the citizens of Paris who sacked the houses of relatives of the Gastines and burned their belongings in the street. Paris was seething in religious tension and riots between Protestants and Catholics resulted in the deaths of as many as fifty people.<sup>34</sup> Huguenot rhetoric now became much more anti-royalist—Calvin had said “when kings defy God, they are no longer worthy to be counted as princes...when they raise themselves up against God...it is necessary that they in turn should be laid low.”<sup>35</sup> This was an obvious statement to the Huguenots that popular sovereignty was required and alarmed the Catholics. To make matters worse, there were economic pressures.

The French government was deeply in debt. The French Wars

of Religion closely followed the Habsburg-Valois Wars and soldiers required pay. Also, during the war, areas of the countryside had been ravished. Additionally, Catholics had purchased political offices formerly held by Huguenots. The terms of the peace required that these offices be returned to their previous owners. Due to the government's financial woes, these Catholic office holders were not paid when they left their positions.<sup>36</sup> Similarly, individuals had paid high prices to lease houses left vacant by fleeing Huguenots. Now, they too had to return these to their previous lessees. These people received little or no compensation from the state, since the treasury was empty.<sup>37</sup> So not only had Catholics' pride been hurt by the peace, many had suffered direct financial losses. To many Catholics, the peace seemed to favor the rebels and penalize the king's loyal subjects. Economic issues as well as religious grievances worked to alienate the Catholic-dominated public from their rulers. However, the Huguenots were also frustrated with the edict, as there was really no way to enforce it effectively among a country dominated by Catholic citizens who were convinced that the Huguenots were infidels. These concerns with the edict caused even more resentment by both sides. Catherine wanted to relieve these tensions, but her political actions instead exacerbated them.

Catherine had orchestrated a marriage between the Huguenot Bourbon prince Henri of Navarre (head of the Huguenot party in France) and her daughter, King Charles IX's sister Marguerite, in hopes of strengthening the bonds between the crown and the Huguenots to bring them back into the mainstream of society.<sup>38</sup> She hoped to end the Huguenot-Catholic conflict. Catherine had been trying for some time to end this conflict and reach reconciliation through the normal political means of the time. She had already tried to marry one of her other sons, Henry, Duke of Anjou, or Francois, Duke of Alencon, to Queen Elizabeth of England, but the

plans fell through. The marriage of Henry and Marguerite went forward, but this marriage and Catherine's attempts at union with the heretical English, only furthered tensions as French Catholics were already very suspicious of Huguenot power in the court. Many prominent Huguenots attended the wedding, the most prominent of which was Coligny. His attendance only five years after his effort to kidnap the king also increased tensions.<sup>39</sup> It was also a rash move by Coligny; he still had a reward of 50,000 *écus* on his head. However, Coligny had been readmitted to the king's council and given a pension—it seemed to the Catholics that the king had restored a traitorous rebel to a position of political influence, and it was widely assumed that the cross of Gastines had been removed through his influence. Adding to the angst of the Catholics were the efforts of many Huguenots to send military aid to Dutch rebels and news that a Protestant army was en route to the Netherlands.<sup>40</sup> Catholics saw this wedding as just one more affront. Henri and Marguerite were married on August 18, 1572.<sup>41</sup> However, instead of reconciliation, an explosion of extreme religious violence soon rocked Paris, and ultimately France.

To many French Catholics, the thought of this marriage between Huguenot and Catholic royalty was very unpopular. It was also unpopular with the clergy. Catholic priests railed against this “perverse union.”<sup>42</sup> One source described a nun or lay sister going around Paris before the wedding telling people that God had sent her to tell the people that the city would be destroyed if they did not kill all of the Huguenots. This tension boiled over after the wedding. On 22 August 1572, four days after the wedding, an assassination attempt was made by sieur de Maurevert on Coligny (through a window of a house owned by the Guise family) near Coligny's lodgings.<sup>43</sup> Coligny had stayed in Paris after the wedding to present petitions to the king on violations of the Peace of Saint Germain and

was returning from a meeting with the king. Maurevert only wounded Coligny, but city officials feared a riot and took precautions, posting guardsmen at the gates of the city. Soon rumors began to fly that Protestants were demanding revenge for this attempt. The people of Paris, already angry about the wedding, were also now fearful. It is significant that Coligny survived. Had he died, the Huguenot leaders would have fled Paris and tried to raise forces to renew the civil wars. However, the Huguenot leaders reluctantly decided to stay, trusting in royal assurances of protection. They furiously protested the attempt on Coligny's life, and some did rashly speak of revenge, playing right into the fears of the king. Although historians disagree on who was responsible for what happened next, sometime on August 23, a meeting was called to discuss the escalating tensions. Coligny's brother-in-law, Teligny, had an army of about four thousand troops stationed outside the capital, and many feared a strike against the Guises, the Catholic population of the city, or even on the king.<sup>44</sup> No matter who came up with the plan, the council decided that a preemptive strike was the safest thing to do and Catherine and the king finally agreed. They concluded that civil war was now inevitable, and by killing the Huguenot leaders, they would not have to face them in the field.<sup>45</sup> On Sunday, 24 August 1572 (The feast of St. Bartholomew), royal Swiss guards were detailed to kill the Huguenot leaders.<sup>46</sup> The king ordered the city militia out to guard the streets while the murders took place.<sup>47</sup> This spark set off the massacre.

In the early hours of that fateful Sunday morning, Henry, duke of Guise, led the Swiss guards on their mission. The duke personally killed Coligny in revenge for the murder of his father.<sup>48</sup> Other Huguenot leaders died in the attack. The bridegroom Henri of Navarre was trapped at Court, and was only spared by converting to Catholicism—he was under house arrest for five years afterwards.<sup>49</sup> How-

ever, the killing did not end with the Huguenot leaders. The noise and commotion of these murders unleashed a wave of violence in Paris. According to a witness, after Coligny's death, one of the murderers, (some say the duke himself) upon leaving the house with his followers, said—"Cheer up, my friends! Let us do thoroughly that which we have begun. The king commands it." The witness stated the words "the king commands it" were repeated over and over, and soon "on every side arose the cry, 'To arms!'"<sup>50</sup> This was very significant, because many now believed it was the king's command to kill the Huguenots. These words "transformed private passions into private duty."<sup>51</sup> Not only were the Catholics taking out their hatred on the Huguenots, they were doing it at the command of their king, or so they believed. Once this rumor began, it was almost impossible to stop, even though the king and even the duke of Guise tried to stop the violence and the duke actually gave refuge to some Huguenots.<sup>52</sup> The Catholic majority also acted upon the exhortations of their religious leaders, who, instead of quelling the tensions, encouraged violence by "describing the extermination of heresy as a necessary purging of the social body."<sup>53</sup> Fiery sermons of Catholic priests in Paris acted as a stimulus to violence against the Huguenots. The massacre lasted for almost a week, with civilians committing most of the murders.. Although pillage and looting occurred, evidencing that economic motives were at work, the killings were mostly motivated by religious hatred. The fact that the Huguenots involved in the removal of the cross of Gastines were among the very first victims of the massacre supports this.<sup>54</sup> Often Catholics offered Huguenots a stark choice – they could convert, recite Catholic prayers, go to Mass, or die if they refused. Catholics not only killed Huguenots, they "humiliated, dishonored, and shamed [them] as the inhuman beasts they were perceived to be."<sup>55</sup> Their oppressors took "special cruelties" against pregnant Huguenots and

their unborn babies. Catholics ritually murdered, dismembered, or drowned Huguenots in the Seine River.<sup>56</sup> Catholics purified places the heretics had “profaned” by burning many houses. Later pamphlets also show that these killings were not only believed to be condoned by the king, Catholics believed they were executing the will of God—many “blood-splattered priests” affirmed that notion on the spot.<sup>57</sup> The massacre was “a terrible act of faith on the part of an impassioned populace that believed itself to be executing the will of God.”<sup>58</sup> Over two thousand Huguenots died in Paris during this massacre. The massacre in France was not confined to the capital though.

As word of the massacre in Paris spread, over the next weeks the bloodshed spread to other provinces in France. Populations of other Catholic-dominated cities joined their capital in similar brutal ritualized killings—cleansing the Huguenots from their populations as well. In some cases, Catholics carried out the killings “to the accompaniment of minstrels and musicians.”<sup>59</sup> Often, authorities put the Protestants into protective custody, only to see Catholic mobs storm the prisons, haul out the prisoners, and kill them in the streets. Some three thousand Huguenots died outside of Paris.<sup>60</sup> This massacre affected the Huguenot community immensely.

The Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre had a huge impact on the Protestant population of France. By October, 1572, most of the main Huguenot leaders were dead.<sup>61</sup> Huguenot communities never again felt the confidence that had led to their great expansion over the previous ten years. This was especially true in the north where the Guises were able to eliminate many of the inroads the Huguenots had made in the 1560s.<sup>62</sup> Even in the south, Huguenots were on the defensive. Studies of baptismal registries in Rouen show that after the massacre, far fewer babies were given names from the Old Testament. These types of names would “mark them as Protestants

as they grew up and make them vulnerable.”<sup>63</sup> Thousands of Huguenots who survived the massacre were re-baptized into the Catholic faith, abjuring Protestantism. It seemed to many that not only had the king turned against them—God had also turned on them. A Calvinist minister, Hughues Sureau, converted back to Catholicism because he said the massacres were a sign that God was against the Protestant movement.<sup>64</sup> Even in towns where there were no killings, Protestants defected. Many others simply left the country for cities such as Geneva or London, where they could keep their faith without fear.<sup>65</sup> However, the massacre did not just affect the Huguenots.

The St. Bartholomew’s Day Massacre made religious tension and hatred even worse in France. Huguenot and Catholic towns banded together as states-within-states, especially in the largely Huguenot south.<sup>66</sup> Governors of some provinces became almost independent local rulers, ignoring the central government and allying themselves with whichever religious faction was convenient. The Huguenots did fight back, as they still had support from much of the French nobility and still had military strength, so they could not be eliminated. However, the movement had changed them. Instead of seeking compromise, Protestants were now openly against the monarchy. Politically, they called for popular sovereignty. They refused to submit to royal authority, and the king was not strong enough to enforce his authority. Warfare continued over the next quarter century or so as the French monarchy tried to find a solution to accommodate the Huguenots and militant Catholics.<sup>67</sup>

Why did this violent massacre occur? Why did the royal political machinations exacerbate rather than eliminate the tension? The massacre happened for many reasons, one of which was that Catherine and the royal leaders did not recognize just how volatile the situation was. Politicians of this time were used to “courtly power games in which the threat and the bluff and ultimately the negotiat-

ed compromise were used by all parties to advantage.”<sup>68</sup> Royal policy had vacillated during the second half of the sixteenth century. No reformation was driven from above (as in England) because no French king embraced it, but efforts to repress it were not successful because there were so many Protestants in the kingdom; that and largely ineffective monarchs contributed greatly to the French Wars of Religion. At times, Catherine cooperated with both the Huguenots and the Catholics, depending on how she perceived she could compromise and keep Valois power on the throne. Besides, Catherine’s plan was not so different from Elizabeth’s plan that had worked in England.<sup>69</sup> The problem was that Catherine was dealing with a different situation and did not understand the depth of the rift between the Catholics and the Huguenots. There were deep social issues at hand.

The Catholics and the Huguenots had their own versions of an ordered society and each was a threat to the other. It was as much a clash of cultures as it was a clash of religions. One large part of the French Catholic culture was in the religious nature of the crown. The coronation of a new king in France was steeped in religious significance—patterned after Charlemagne’s crowning by the Pope in Rome in 800. The coronation took place in the cathedral church in Reims and the Archbishop of Reims performed the ceremony. This ceremony melded together the king and the church—the king was not only defender of the country, but also defender of the Catholicism in France. During the ceremony, the king was explicitly charged with defending the church from heresy.<sup>70</sup> There was no separation of church and state in France. Because of this, the Protestant vision of church and state was incompatible with the vision of most French people—any attack on the Catholic Church was seen as an attack on the authority of the king. The Gallic principle of “one faith, one king, one law” was strong in France.<sup>71</sup> Either



the monarchy or the reformed religion would have to modify its very essence to coexist. Catholics perceived Catherine's efforts at compromise as traitorous. They felt vindicated when the king had done his duty as protector of the faith and ordered the extermination of the Huguenots. Both Catholics and the Huguenots considered Christianity to be a body of believers instead of a body of beliefs, which made social discipline much more important. This was evident in Calvin's work. These differences led to atrocities on both sides. Although Huguenots decried the massacre, they forgot that Huguenot mobs had at times murdered Catholics without mercy and tortured priests, nuns, and monks in imitation of the *Inquisition*.<sup>72</sup> The Catholics and the Huguenots both thought that they could not compromise and remain true to their faith and their community of believers. They also each thought they were right and would prevail in the end. This made Catherine's attempt at political balance impossible. Radical Catholic priests also had a role in the massacres.

Priests such as Rene Benoist, Pierre Dyvole, and above all Simon Vigor, inflamed the passions of the Catholics in Paris.<sup>73</sup> They often used Old Testament scenes, where God "animated the people to kill the false prophets without sparing a single one, thereby teaching us how grievously and without mercy the obstinate heretics should be punished and exterminated." They urged their congregations to follow Moses' instructions and "buckle on their swords, go from house to house, and 'each one of you kill his brother, his friend, and his kin.'"<sup>74</sup> One pamphlet urged Catholics to "spill your blood for God, even to the last drop."<sup>75</sup> Parisian Catholics fueled by these sermons were eager to believe that the king had ordered the extermination of the Huguenot heretics. They believed they were doing the will of God and king. This made the popular violence "much more coherent and plausible, if no less grisly."<sup>76</sup>

The Catholic population in the capital city of Paris had a huge role throughout this time of religious warfare, in these conflicts, and ultimately, the massacres. As seen before, the Catholic citizens of Paris were very resistant to any reconciliation. They helped bring on the first French War of Religion with their reaction to the massacre at Vassy and interfered with the queen's efforts to negotiate a truce at several points in the war. They delayed and undermined peace by refusing to disarm and refusing to allow the Huguenots to return. They acted similarly during the second and third French Wars of Religion, as shown by the Cross of Gastines riots, and when they fought city officials' efforts to put the treaty into effect. Additionally, they had a strong impact on the king. The city was one of the major sources of funding for the crown in its efforts to conduct these religious wars, and they reportedly offered money to the queen to continue the third French War of Religion.<sup>77</sup> Finally, their intolerance and extreme anger culminated in their violent reaction to the killing of the Huguenot leaders and the resulting massacre, which hardened the resolve of both sides. Afterwards, the Parisians were proud of what they did.

The Catholic citizens of Paris believed they were in the right. Many Parisians interpreted the sudden blossoming of a long-dormant hawthorn tree in the Cemetery of the Innocents as a visible sign of approval from God. Pious Catholics gathered in front of the tree to pray and touch the tree with relics, even bringing their sick to view the tree to be healed.<sup>78</sup> On September 4, 1572, Charles IX ordered a solemn procession of the relics of Saint Genevieve to "give thanks to God for the Huguenot defeat." The king and his brothers participated in the procession. Although Charles had accepted responsibility for the massacre, he portrayed his role as "the executor of the divine command to rid the kingdom of the pollution of heresy."<sup>79</sup> Catholics around Europe concurred that the Parisian Catho-

lics were right in their efforts to rid the city of Huguenots. When the Pope heard of the massacre, he ordered a “*Te Deum*” chanted, had a commemorative medallion struck, and had frescoes painted at the Vatican showing angels approving the massacre. Catholic princes throughout Europe sent congratulations to the king and Catherine.<sup>80</sup> However, at the end of the religious wars, although France stayed a Catholic country with a Catholic king, the Huguenots remained legally entrenched with “perpetual and irrevocable” rights.<sup>81</sup>

The Saint Bartholomew’s Day Massacre was a terrible event in history. Thousands of people were massacred for their religious beliefs. One causal factor was the spread of Protestantism into France through France’s close geographic and linguistic proximity to Geneva and the efforts of John Calvin to spread Protestantism there. Catholics saw the Huguenots as a threat to their way of life and their political system. They had much difficulty peacefully coexisting socially and politically—especially in the capital city of Paris. The first three French Wars of Religion and their peace resolutions were unpalatable to both the Catholic and Huguenot citizens. The citizens of Paris vehemently and violently reacted. The attempts of Catherine De Medici to facilitate a political compromise to a religious conflict were unacceptable to the Catholics, and the violent events of the attempted assassination of Coligny led to the decision to kill the Huguenot leadership. This act sparked the massacre in Paris which killed over two thousand Huguenots in the city, mostly by rioting citizens who believed they acted on behalf of their king and their God. The massacre was repeated throughout France and changed the political and religious climate in France itself, destroying much of the power of the Huguenot movement, which was never the same, and at the same time hardening their stance towards the crown and creating more hatred and tension. Normal royal political intrigues did not work in a situation in which the conflicting sides

were so opposed religiously and socially that they could not compromise. These attempts only made the matter worse as tensions were raised by passionate proselytizing. Catholic priests also drove Catholics to a frenzy of hatred. The king justified his acts as his duty to God and Catholic rulers outside France celebrated the grisly massacres.

The spread of Protestants into France was inevitable, but met with much resistance. The French Wars of Religion were different to the people of Paris, and France in general, than other wars such as the Habsburg-Valois wars. The French Wars of Religion not only affected the French in material ways, such as higher taxes and economic ruin. They threatened the very substance of the way their society was built—in their relationships with others and with God. To the Catholics and the Huguenots, these wars were not about theological differences—they were “crucial choices between truth and error, between salvation and damnation, between God’s favor and his impending wrath.”<sup>82</sup> Although Catherine De Medici, the king, and the political parties involved may have seen this as another conflict that could be resolved by normal political means, the people of France had a different perception, and their rulers’ inability to understand this led to a violent tragedy.

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Barbara B. Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross: Catholics and Huguenots in Sixteenth-Century Paris*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1991), 119.

<sup>2</sup> Mack P. Holt, *The French Wars of Religion, 1562-1629*. 2d ed., (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2005), 26.

<sup>3</sup> Richard S. Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars, 1559-1715*, (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. 1970), 32.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 33.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>7</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 18.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>9</sup> Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 34.

- <sup>11</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 64.
- <sup>12</sup> Ibid., 65.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid., 66.
- <sup>14</sup> Ibid., 66-67.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., 70.
- <sup>16</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 57.
- <sup>17</sup> Mack P. Holt, "Putting Religion Back into the Wars of Religion," *French Historical Studies* 18, no.2, (1993), 539.
- <sup>18</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 78.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., 79-80.
- <sup>21</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 65.
- <sup>22</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 80-81.
- <sup>23</sup> Ibid., 82.
- <sup>24</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 65.
- <sup>25</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 82.
- <sup>26</sup> Ibid., 83.
- <sup>27</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 79.
- <sup>28</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 83-84.
- <sup>29</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 79.
- <sup>30</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 80.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid., 71.
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid., 84.
- <sup>33</sup> Holt, "Putting Religion Back", 539.
- <sup>34</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 80.
- <sup>35</sup> Ibid., 78.
- <sup>36</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 90.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>38</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 76.
- <sup>39</sup> Diarmaid MacCulloch, *Reformation: A History*, (New York: Penguin Group (USA) Inc. 2004), 338.
- <sup>40</sup> Cathal J. Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion, 1000-1650: An Encyclopedia of Global Warfare and Civilization, Vol. 2*. (Westport: Greenwood Press 2006), 807.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>42</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 91.
- <sup>43</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 82.
- <sup>44</sup> Ibid., 83-84.
- <sup>45</sup> Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion*, 807.
- <sup>46</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 96.
- <sup>47</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 85.
- <sup>48</sup> Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars*, 35.
- <sup>49</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation: A History*, 338.
- <sup>50</sup> De Thou, *Histoire des choses arrivees de son temps*, (Paris, 1659), 658 sqq, in J.H. Robinson, 2 vols. (Boston: Ginn, 1906), 2: n.p.
- <sup>51</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 99.
- <sup>52</sup> Holt "Putting Religion Back", 540.
- <sup>53</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 105.

- <sup>54</sup> Holt “Putting Religion Back”, 540.
- <sup>55</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 87.
- <sup>56</sup> Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion*, 808.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>58</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 177.
- <sup>59</sup> Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion*, 808.
- <sup>60</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 95.
- <sup>61</sup> Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion*, 809.
- <sup>62</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation: A History*, 339.
- <sup>63</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>64</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 95.
- <sup>65</sup> Ibid., 95-96.
- <sup>66</sup> Cameron, Euan, *Early Modern Europe, An Oxford History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, Inc. 1999), 128.
- <sup>67</sup> MacCulloch, *Reformation: A History*, 339.
- <sup>68</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 180.
- <sup>69</sup> Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars*, 35.
- <sup>70</sup> Ibid., 2-8.
- <sup>71</sup> Ibid., 198.
- <sup>72</sup> Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion*, 809.
- <sup>73</sup> Holt, “Putting Religion Back”, 541.
- <sup>74</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>75</sup> Holt, *French Wars*, 75.
- <sup>76</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>77</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 179.
- <sup>78</sup> Ibid., 105.
- <sup>79</sup> Ibid., 176.
- <sup>80</sup> Nolan, *The Age of Wars of Religion*, 809.
- <sup>81</sup> Dunn, *The Age of Religious Wars*, 40.
- <sup>82</sup> Diefendorf, *Beneath the Cross*, 178.

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Augustus and the Visionary Leadership of *Pax Romana*

Guy Williams

The assassination of Gaius Julius Caesar (100-44 BC) on 15 March 44 BC propelled the Roman Republic into the final throes of internecine warfare as the Roman Senate struggled to fill the vacuum left by Caesar.<sup>1</sup> The period between 44-30 BC remained one of constant turmoil and warfare. The situation became so dire that at one point the Roman Republic resembled an assortment of independent states under the control of military dictators. In the end, neither legislation by the Roman Senate nor effective governance restored order. Rather, the application of overwhelming military force by Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus “Augustus” (63 BC-14 AD) brought peace to Rome.<sup>2</sup> Although events thrust Augustus into the center of Roman affairs unexpectedly rather than by design, he quickly developed into a superior political leader and competent military commander to rescue Rome from the fires of civil war. The visionary leadership of Augustus enabled Rome to end a lengthy period of civil war and completed the transformation from a republic into a *principate* (as derived from the root word *princeps* meaning “leading man” from Christopher Mackay’s definition).<sup>3</sup> The emergence of Octavian as Augustus began the era of *Pax Romana* (Roman Peace) and brought stability to the citizens of Rome.<sup>4</sup>

In order to understand the influence of Augustus’s action upon Roman history, a brief synopsis of the previous century leading up to the assassination of Caesar enables readers to understand the transformation of the Roman Republic and the decisive role Augustus held at the end of the process. Rome’s evolution from a Republic to a *principate* proved bloody and spanned over one hundred years, but the Republic had to change in order for the Roman state



to survive. These changes began with the end of the Punic Wars.

After the end of the Third Punic War, the Roman Republic emerged as a hegemonic power in the Mediterranean region. The Punic Wars profoundly influenced the development of the Roman military, government, and the everyday life of Roman citizens. Rome fought against the Carthaginians from 265-146 BC in a near constant state of warfare. Rome emerged from the wars as a republic challenged with governing larger swaths of territory. Additionally, Roman society grew increasingly polarized over class divisions, a militia based military not structured for protracted campaigns abroad, and an economy that struggled to meet increased taxation to support government subsidies, wars, and a large influx of slaves into the labor market.<sup>5</sup>

The three Punic Wars conditioned generations of Roman citizens to the privations and logistical challenges of lengthy campaigns, but more importantly helped Rome develop as the dominant regional power and placed stressors upon the Roman militia system. The Punic Wars forced Rome to realize the limitations of a citizen militia based army and the logistical challenges of extended campaigns away from the Italian peninsula. The idea of service and those eligible to serve highlights a key shortcoming of the Roman militia system of the era. By narrowly defining the eligible population for the *dilectus* (draft or levy), Rome limited their ability to project or replace forces. The Punic Wars demonstrated the need for a larger pool of manpower to answer strategic requirements. With the destruction of Carthage, Rome established a new precedent of campaigning abroad and eliminated their nearest peer in military strength and economic capacity.

During the time of the Punic Wars Rome did not employ a *levée en masse* (total mobilization of a nation's population to support a war), but filled the ranks of their military from land owning citizens.

Throughout the early and mid-Republican period of Roman history, the military existed as a militia based army and Rome mobilized their landholders and aristocrats to support the strategic goals of Rome. Historian Adrian Goldsworthy notes the civic duty belief held by Roman citizens during this period and comments, “For such soldiers service in the army was not a career, but a duty owed to the state.”<sup>6</sup> The societal norms espoused by the Romans of the third and mid-second century BC era denoted a civilization that placed a greater premium on the needs of the state rather than the individual. Early historian Theodor Mommsen commented in his multivolume *History of Rome*, “The Roman constitution was essentially based on the view that the citizen was at the same time a soldier, and that the soldier above all a citizen.”<sup>7</sup>

Additionally, the militia system displayed the tenuous link between an agrarian based society and an effective military. Historian Paul Veyne described the importance of land to the Roman citizen of the era as, “Land was at once a repository of wealth, a means of survival, and a source of trade goods.”<sup>8</sup> This truism became increasingly apparent as Roman forces campaigned away from the Italian peninsula against the Carthaginians. In the beginning of the Punic Wars, Roman forces remained on the Italian peninsula and the campaigns ended quickly and allowed the legionnaires time to fight and farm.<sup>9</sup> However, as the Carthaginians pulled Roman forces away from the Italian peninsula to regions across the Mediterranean, Rome’s military could not quickly complete a campaign and release the legionnaires in time to harvest crops. The longer campaign seasons contributed to legionnaires losing revenue, land, and afforded *patricii* (members of the aristocrat class) the opportunity to buy up or seize land from defaulting landowners. Rome also stood to gain with the acquisition of land from conquered territories, land that legionnaires failed to maintain or land from legionnaires that died in the

service of Rome. State ownership of land became so extensive that the Roman state eventually owned twenty percent of the entire Italian peninsula.<sup>10</sup> As the state and wealthy individuals increased their land holdings, the smaller landowners faced increased challenges to maintain a sustainable income to survive.

While the state or *optimates* (the best ones) stood to gain from the acquisition of land and the associated revenue, the Roman Senate did not enact effective legislation to increase the eligible population base for service within the Roman legions. Rather than distributing the land won or acquired during the Punic Wars, the Roman Senate sought to increase the eligible population base for military service by decreasing the property requirements. The Senate changed the property requirement during the time of *consul* (the highest elected public official in the Roman Republic that normally served for a one year term) Lucius Lucullus 151 BC from 11,000 to 4000 *asses* (Roman monetary unit). Although the Senate attempted to maintain the strength of the Roman army, they did not address the growing discontent felt by aristocrats and commoners alike as the distant campaigns meant more time away from Rome. The Senate failed to propose or enact any legislation that shortened the required ten-campaign term that the Roman law mandated aristocrats to complete before they became eligible for political service. The Senate's inability to recognize and remedy the shortage of manpower caused by Rome's near constant state of warfare and outdated *dilectus* requirements, exacerbated the growing rift between the *optimates* and *populares* (the populists or popular party). Two brothers entered into Roman Senatorial politics in an attempt to address the inadequacies of the *dilectus* and to redress the disparity between social classes in Rome.<sup>11</sup>

The two brothers, Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus (163-133 BC) and Gaius Sempronius Gracchus (154-121 BC), increased the fric-

tion between the *optimates* and *populares* with their legislative efforts as *tribunes* (elected officials that represented the interests of *plebes*) to address the shortage of eligible citizens for military service while simultaneously providing the lower classes with land. The Gracchi sought a solution to a strategic necessity whereas the Senate perceived the efforts of the Gracchi as a challenge to their power. History recorded the displeasure of the Roman Senate against the Gracchi when senate inspired mobs killed each of the brothers during their tenure as *tribunes*. The senatorial class clearly illustrated, “the hatred and malevolence of the rich” described by ancient historian Lucius Mestrius Plutarchus “Plutarch” (46-120 AD) when the mobs dumped the bodies of the Gracchi and their supporters into the Tiber River on both occasions.<sup>12</sup> The extreme measures taken by the Roman Senate offers credence to the assertion made by Renaissance historian and philosopher Niccolò Machiavelli (1469-1527) about the importance of the agrarian laws of the Gracchi brothers. Machiavelli wrote, “This grew into a disease [the distribution of property to the *plebes*] which led to the dispute about the Agrarian Law and in the end caused the destruction of the republic.”<sup>13</sup> While the Agrarian Laws were not the sole causal factor behind the transformation of the Roman Republic, the Agrarian Laws evidenced the failures of the Roman Senate and the shortcomings of a militia based army that only drew recruits from a small portion of the Roman population.

The Roman Senate failed to implement permanent changes to the eligibility requirements for military service, resorted to violence as the final arbiter against the legislation of the Gracchi brothers, and did not succeed in healing the growing rift between the *populares* and the *optimates*. Although the Gracchi brothers died violent deaths at the hands of the mobs, their ability to harness the sympathy and support of the *populares* established a dangerous precedent of wresting power away from the Senate. Mommsen offers an ex-

cellent summation with his comment, “in short, he [Gaius Gracchus] accustomed the people to the fact that one man was foremost in all things, and threw the lax and lame administration of the senatorial college into the shade by the vigour [sic] and versatility of his personal rule.”<sup>14</sup> The period that the Gracchus brothers served as *tribunes* displayed the criticality of the *populares* as a political power base and the importance of military recruitment/employment. Gaius Marius (157-86 BC) and Lucius Cornelius Sulla (138-78 BC) built upon the example set by the Gracchus brothers as they used the *populares* and military to further their personal ambitions for greater power.

The need for change to the Roman military’s militia system became apparent during the Gracchi period as Rome required more legionnaires to maintain distant territories and faced new opponents. The requirement for more legionnaires coupled with the growing rift between the *optimates* and the *populares* began the sequence for the professionalization of the Roman legions. Marius and Sulla harnessed the power of the military as a political tool to rise to unparalleled levels of individual power. Their use of the military as a political tool on the path of power marked a new chapter in the history of Rome.

The final transformation of the Roman Republic occurred during the bloody period of the Roman Civil Wars from 88-30 BC. What began with civil unrest and attempts at progressive reform under the Gracchus brothers ended with the total victory of Augustus over Antonius and Cleopatra in 30 BC and the creation of a *principate*.<sup>15</sup> Throughout the civil wars, the Roman army completed their transformation into a professional army and transferred their loyalty from the Roman state to their generals. Apart from their physical embodiment of power, the legions and the veterans also constituted a significant political faction. As the legions grew increasingly privat-

ized and comprised of common class citizens, their needs for compensation and representation increased as their ranks swelled to some sixty legions or approximately 360,000 men during the war between Augustus and Antonius.<sup>16</sup> The Roman Civil Wars epitomized the intrinsic truism of power politics that ancient historian Thucydides referenced with his writings, “that right, as the world goes, is only in question between equals in power, while the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”<sup>17</sup> Sulla marked the first of the Roman dictators to prove this axiom.

While historians may debate the motivation behind Sulla’s decision to march against Rome, the evidence remains that Sulla used military force to influence the Roman political process and his precedent encouraged a deadly form of one-upmanship for individuals that sought power within the Roman political system. Sulla, above all previous Roman leaders, demonstrated the capabilities of political ambition melded with military force. Sulla was the first *consul* to march on Rome at the head of a *consular* army. Sulla cemented the loyalty of his men with generous rewards from plunder and awarded land to his veterans upon completion of their term of service. Ancient historian Gaius Sallust noted the same sentiment with his words, “Besides all this, Lucius Sulla, in order to secure the loyalty of the army which he led into Asia, had allowed it a luxury and license foreign to the manners of our forefathers.”<sup>18</sup> These entitlements provided powerful incentives for service and more importantly, once enacted they proved almost impossible to take away. Sulla inculcated a greater sense of dependence amongst veterans towards their commander. Although Sulla stepped down from his dictatorship and enacted legislation to prevent the abuse of military power, the allure of absolute power and the expedient vehicle of military command to fulfill political ambition encouraged future Roman leaders, such as Julius Caesar, to build upon the example of Sulla.

Caesar's methodical climb to the eventual position of *dictator* offered Rome another example of the pursuit of power through the application of military force. Caesar's rise, like that of Sulla before him, typified the unique Roman blend of soldier and politician. Historian Paul Veyne captures this concept with his comments, "Engaging in political life,' which meant simply 'holding public office,' was not a specialized activity. It was something that any man worthy of name and member of the governing class, was expected to do...A man could be as rich as he liked, but he did not count among the 'the first men of the city' unless he cut a figure on the public stage."<sup>19</sup> Caesar understood this concept implicitly and his exploits in Roman history denoted a deliberate climb to absolute power rather than an opportunistic grab for prestige.

Caesar learned from the previous examples of Marius and Sulla and enacted his strategy to gain power on both a political and military front. Caesar made political alliances, bribed rivals, bestowed gifts upon the masses and public officials alike. Caesar did not use the military against the citizens of Rome as a blunt object as Marius and Sulla did, but rather like a fine surgical instrument. Caesar's eventual conflict with Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus "Pompey" did not result from any poor political skills of Caesar, but from the Senate's fear of Caesar's growing power and the refusal of Pompey to negotiate with Caesar.

Caesar above all previous *consuls* understood the intrinsic relationship between the politics of the Roman Republic and the power of the Roman legions. Caesar attempted to improve the inefficient republican form of Roman government that proved ill equipped to deal with expanding territories and independent commands of *pro-consuls* (a former *consul* that serves as a governor/military commander) and *consuls*. Caesar implemented a plan to obtain power that resorted to both military force and soft political power, but he failed

to account for the resentment and fear that his actions caused amongst members of the Senate. Although Caesar may have thought his person inviolable within the walls of the Senate forum, some members of the Senate displayed the same violence that killed the Gracchus brothers and represented the ultimate veto power that Senate employed with greater frequency in the late Roman Republic. The death of Caesar plunged Rome into the darkest days of civil war and Caesar's nephew and appointed heir, Augustus, transformed the last vestiges of Roman Republic into a *principate*.<sup>20</sup>

After the death of Caesar, confusion reigned as the various factions waited to see the reaction of the people. The will of Caesar named young Augustus as his heir and that every Roman citizen should receive seventy-five *denarii* (Roman monetary unit) from Caesar's fortune.<sup>21</sup> This further incensed the people because Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 BC) and his fellow conspirators argued against the tyranny of Caesar, yet the donatives left by Caesar to the common people did not depict the actions of a tyrant. The speech by Marcus Antonius (83-30 BC) further angered the masses and in a fit of rage, the crowd burned the building down where Caesar died and sought out the assassins.<sup>22</sup> The conspirators fled from Rome and the initial amnesty brokered between Antonius, Brutus, and the Senate fell to pieces under the anger of the Roman people. Although order eventually returned to Rome, resentment continued to grow between Antonius and the young Augustus who wished to claim the fortunes of his inheritance and enter into politics. Augustus's motive for entering into politics may have resulted from a sense of self-preservation, a convenient opportunity or as a simple matter of revenge for the murder of his uncle, but his decision created another faction in the final battle for absolute power during the last days of the Roman Republic. Suetonius suggested that the motivation behind Augustus's eventual campaigns "was that Augustus felt it his



duty, above all, to avenge Caesar and keep his decree in force.”<sup>23</sup> While this sentiment certainly drew the support of Caesar’s veterans, evidence indicated that Augustus reacted to an opportunity and once enmeshed within Roman political and military affairs, he sought to dominate affairs as a matter of expediency and security for himself and the Roman state.

The conflict between Antonius and Augustus, which began with a dispute about Augustus’s inheritance soon boiled out into the open as Antonius prepared to leave his consulship and assume the governorship of Macedonia. Antonius falsely accused Augustus of plotting to assassinate him and in return, Augustus incited unrest by requesting Caesar’s veterans bear arms under his name and encouraged Antonius’s men to defect to his cause. Augustus gathered a sizeable force, and Antonius began legislative efforts to award himself the province of Cisalpine Gaul rather than the earlier agreed upon province of Macedonia. Antonius had already begun the transfer of troops from Macedonia towards Cisalpine Gaul when the Senate belatedly realized that Antonius not only held the Macedonian legions but also stood to gain the troops of Cisalpine Gaul if the Senate did not intercede. Augustus sensed an opportunity and allied himself with the *optimates*, and petitioned for recognition as a Senator. In a mutually beneficial action, Cicero supported Augustus, helped him win a place as Senator, and gave him *imperium* (the authority) to command the forces that Augustus had gathered. Additionally, the Senate declared Antonius an enemy of the state and Augustus along with *consuls* Aulus Hirtius (90-43 BC) and Gaius Vibius Pansa Caetronianus (? -43 BC) marched on Mutina to defeat Antonius. The forces of Augustus, Pansa, and Hirtius won against Antonius in 43 BC but Antonius escaped with a large part of his force; Pansa and Hirtius died during the fighting and Augustus remained the sole surviving commander of the forces dispatched by the Sen-

ate. This placed Augustus in an awkward position as the commander of a *consular* army without the rank of *consul*. Augustus still faced a very capable enemy in the form of Antonius that maintained a capability of inflicting damage on the provinces of Rome. Additionally, one of the murderers of Caesar, Decimus Junius Brutus Albinus (81-43 BC), remained in command of Cisalpine Gaul.<sup>24</sup>

The Senate wanted Decimus Brutus to command the remaining forces of Augustus, but Augustus refused to aid one of Caesar's assassins. Brutus did not consolidate his forces with those of Augustus and sent out after Antonius, but died during the pursuit. Augustus felt slighted by the Senate because they failed to pay his men for their campaign against Antonius and had attempted to place Augustus's forces under the command of Decimus Brutus. Augustus used these arguments to put the case to his legions, and with their support, he marched on Rome to demand a *consulship* to fill the vacancy left by Hirtius and Pansa. In a strange echo of Caesar's life, Augustus marched across the Rubicon with his forces to redress a perceived slight from the Senate. Antonius did present a clear threat to the Senate and to Augustus's ambitions. Augustus's refusal to obey the law and to follow the instructions of the Senate reinforced the concept of *gloria* (fame or glory) and *virtus* (courage in battle) that Roman society held in such high regard. Augustus placed his own *virtus* and ambition above the dictates of the Roman state.<sup>25</sup>

Augustus's march on Rome did not result in wholesale violence but demonstrated an example of *détente* as each side gradually relaxed their military posturing and Augustus won the consular election in 43 BC. During this period, Antonius maneuvered closer to Italy, but did not attempt to invade. In order to consolidate his power and to offset the power of the Senate, Augustus began negotiations with Antonius. Augustus rescinded the decree outlawing Antonius and in a display of Roman pragmatism, Augustus, Antonius,

and Marcus Aemilius Lepidus entered into a formal alliance that the Popular Assembly recognized as a Second *Triumvirate* (an appointment of three men as special or ordinary magistrates to execute a public office), with a term of five years. This *triumvirate* differed from the earlier secret *triumvirate* of Caesar, Pompeius, and Crassus because the Popular Assembly ratified their appointment and this did not subject the edicts of the *triumvirate* to any veto from the Popular Assembly or the Senate. In effect, the Popular Assembly appointed a military autocracy with little or no oversight.<sup>26</sup>

The Second *Triumvirate* wasted little time in the consolidation of their power base and split the Roman territories and areas of responsibilities amongst themselves. The *triumvirate* eliminated potential rivals and gathered money for impending campaigns by proscribing some 300 senators and 2,000 *equites*.<sup>27</sup> Rather than imposing tariffs or enacting taxes, the *triumvirate* chose the most expeditious means available to support their aims. The Second *Triumvirate* chose proscription because without any oversight and little or no resistance to their edicts, the Second *Triumvirate* acted as they wished in a brazen form of autocracy. The legions provided the *triumvirs* with the power they needed to achieve their ambitions and Augustus, Lepidus, and Antonius clearly recognized this fact with the allowances they made for their legionnaires. Appian recalled how soldiers, “would ask sometimes for the town-house, estate, country place, or whole inheritance of the proscribed” and the *triumvirs* dared not contradict the soldiers, “Because the only safety for the rulers...lay with their soldiers.”<sup>28</sup>

After amassing sufficient funding and resources, Antonius and Augustus began their campaign against Marcus Junius Brutus (85-42 BC) and Gaius Cassius Longinus (85-42 BC) in Macedonia. Antonius and Augustus defeated the forces of Brutus and Cassius in 42 BC at two separate battles at Philippi. With the defeat of the main con-

spirators behind Caesar's death, little seemed to bind *triumvirs* together and the growing friction between Augustus and Antonius supported this observation as Antonius directed Augustus to pension out 100,000 veterans onto the Italian peninsula. Antonius hoped to draw support away from Augustus by forcing Augustus to deal with the prospect of failing to keep a promise with his veterans or by seizing land from citizens to give to the discharged legionnaires. Rather than incur the wrath of 100,000 irate veterans Augustus seized eighteen Italian cities, evicted the inhabitants, and gave the territory to the discharged veterans. Augustus's actions proved unpopular with the *plebes* and Antonius's brother Lucius Antonius and Antonius's wife Fulvia sought to exploit the friction point as a cause to dissolve the Second *Triumvirate* but failed in their endeavors.<sup>29</sup>

While a strained peace appeared in effect between Augustus and Antonius, the son of Gnaeus Pompeius, Sextus Pompeius Magnus Pius (67-35 BC), sought to redress the wrong done to his father during the Caesarean Civil Wars. In 40 BC, Sextus applied enormous pressure on Augustus and Rome by maintaining a naval blockade that intercepted the grain shipments to Rome and to break the blockade, Augustus and Antonius appointed Sextus *proconsul* of Sicily and Sardinia.<sup>30</sup> Not content on having an independent command that threatened his power, Augustus decided to campaign against Sextus. Suetonius referred to Augustus's campaign in Sicily as "his most dangerous campaign."<sup>31</sup> Augustus attempted to defeat Sextus with an initial invasion in 38 BC, but between poor leadership and terrible weather, Augustus lost the majority of his fleet and suffered a humiliating loss.<sup>32</sup> Faced with such a decisive defeat, Augustus turned to his most capable general, Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa (64-12 BC) to train and equip a navy. While Agrippa trained the forces, Augustus sought more ships from Antonius and another five-year

extension to their *triumvirate*. Antonius gave Augustus 120 warships; the Senate approved an extension of another five years to the *triumvirate*, and in 36 BC, Augustus launched his final campaign against Sextus.<sup>33</sup> Although the initial efforts of Augustus proved unsuccessful, his subordinate Agrippa scored a huge victory over Sextus, and this victory led to the ultimate triumph of Augustus. The victory of Augustus in Sicily marked his ascendancy as the most powerful military leader in the *triumvirate*. Augustus now commanded some 500 to 600 warships in addition to the forty-five legions that he commanded and he further expanded his power by stripping his fellow *triumvir* Lepidus of his command.<sup>34</sup>

With the growing military power of Augustus, the friction between Antonius and Augustus grew and the final war of the Roman Republic began as Augustus and Antonius sought to garner public support for their factions by launching disinformation campaigns against one another. In 34 BC, Antonius began the war of insults by conducting a *triumphus* (a public ceremony that recognized the successful exploits of a military commander) in Alexandria. Plutarch commented about how the actions of Antonius riled the Roman populace and wrote, “And herein particularly did he give offence to the Romans, since he bestowed the honourable and solemn rites of his native country upon the Egyptians for Cleopatra’s sake.”<sup>35</sup> Augustus used the supposedly pro-Egyptian sentiment of Antonius to discredit him. Antonius further distanced himself from Augustus by divorcing his wife Octavia (Augustus’s sister) and in response; Augustus published the will of Antonius that listed his heirs as the children Antonius sired with Cleopatra.<sup>36</sup> Once Augustus believed he had generated sufficient support against Antonius, he formally declared war against Cleopatra and Antonius.

Augustus occupied the moral high ground in both the mind of the *populares* and many of the *optimates* because of his legal standing.

With the end of their second term as *triumvirate* in 33 BC, Augustus retained a consulship in 32 BC and Antonius held no legal position in Egypt. In the winter of 31 BC, Augustus's forces began their campaign against Cleopatra and Antonius, which culminated with a sea battle at Actium. Although Cleopatra and Antonius managed to escape, they committed suicide the following year and the last civil war of the Roman Republic ended. Augustus emerged as the richest man in Roman history and the commander of the largest Roman military force ever assembled.<sup>37</sup>

Unlike Sulla, Augustus did not lay down the mantle of power and he remained in power long enough to enact lasting reforms that codified the *principate* into Roman law and ingrained his reforms into the psych of the *populus Romanus* (Roman people). Rome stood tired and wracked after decades of war and desired stability and peace. Augustus understood the clearest path to power resided within the ranks of the legions and enacted measures to prevent others from using the same tool that he and other predecessors used to gain power.

Augustus began mitigating the power of the legions by gradually drawing down their numbers. Augustus reduced the strength of the legions from sixty legions to twenty-eight legions. Additionally, Augustus moved the legions to the frontiers of Roman territories to protect earlier Roman gains and to keep military forces away from the capitol. Augustus further strengthened the ties between himself and the legions by enfranchising auxiliary troops and granting them Roman citizenship upon their discharge. Augustus promoted the professional status of the soldier by extending the term of service to twenty years, establishing a military treasury to pay gratuities for retiring soldiers, and paying the salaries of the soldiers directly from the imperial treasury. The legionnaires no longer looked to their commanders for payment and reward, but to their emperor Augustus.<sup>38</sup>

While Augustus developed an excellent solution to the allure of military power as a political tool, he also faced the challenge of dealing with the Roman Senate and a government not equipped to deal with administering a large geographical area and an increased population base. Early historian W. W. Tarn neatly articulated Augustus's dilemma with the statement, "But that was the negative side merely: no man can win and retain supreme power in a nation by the simple slaughtering of all opponents; he must be able to convince a majority of supporters that he has something definite and acceptable to offer them."<sup>39</sup> The recent fifty years of civil war demonstrated the danger of abdicating power without providing some control measures. Augustus could not relinquish his position of supreme power without causing a struggle for power amongst his potential rivals. Augustus arrived at a novel solution that allowed him to maintain his power, but gave the appearance of a humble Roman citizen that sought to emulate civic virtue. Beginning in 27 BC and over a period of approximately four years, Augustus assumed the title of *Princeps Civitatis* (First Citizen) and turned over control of some provinces and their associated legions to the Senate, but he still maintained control of the majority of the provinces and some twenty legions.<sup>40</sup>

To further foster the transition and to change the focus of the Roman Senate, Augustus also removed less than ideal members of the Senate and reduced their numbers from 900 to 600 members. Augustus greatly influenced the selection of the Senators and attempted to blend the old *optimates* with the *novus homo* (new men) to arrive at a balanced Senate that focused on administrative tasks rather than the pursuit of power through military means. Additionally, Augustus established a court system in the Senate to try political crimes and actively involved the Senators in the governorship of the provinces. Augustus established the beginnings of a civil service sys-

tem with his personal staff and developed an executive committee to deal with administrative tasks.<sup>41</sup>

While Augustus formally gave up the position of *consul*, he maintained an unprecedented amount of individual power on three fronts. First, the Roman Senate awarded Augustus the lifetime powers of *tribunicia potestas* (tribune or representative of the tribe/people power) that allowed Augustus to veto legislation, intervene/overturn court verdicts and introduce legislation. Second, the power of *imperium proconsulare maius* (greater ex-consul command authority) allowed him to override the governors and the power allowed him to assume command of the entire Roman army and all Roman territories. Finally, Augustus started the Praetorian Guard, which consisted of nine cohorts (each cohort numbered approximately 480 men) and stationed them around Rome and in outlying cities in Italy, a police force of three cohorts in Rome and a fire watch of approximately 7,000 men. These three powers while not overtly contrary to the idea of a Roman Republic in the eyes of the general population, allowed Augustus to centralize authority and establish a *Pax Romana* with his control of the government and the nearby veiled threat of a military under his personal control.<sup>42</sup>

The Roman Senate lost much of their power before Augustus subtly refocused the role of Senate governance and decreased the allure of power politics during the century leading up to the Caesarean Civil Wars from 49-44 BC. By the time of the Caesarean Civil Wars the Senate effectively lost control of the military as key individuals struggled for power. Political theorist Samuel P. Huntington's discussion of conservative realism describes the key tenets that the Senate failed to enforce. Huntington writes, "It holds that war is the instrument of politics, that the military are the servants of the statesman, and that civilian control is essential to military professionalism."<sup>43</sup> The professionalization of the military occurred be-



cause of a necessity to meet Rome's increased strategic demands, but the Senate did not sufficiently control the military as it developed into an instrument of politics. Men like Sulla and Caesar recognized the utility of the military as an instrument in politics, demonstrated the skill, and the resolve to wield such a dangerous tool to achieve their personal goals, but Augustus employed the military to stabilize the state, centralize authority, and promote civil engineering.

When the Roman Senate gave Octavian the name Augustus in 27 BC and he became the *Princeps Civitatis*, the Roman Republic that existed at the completion of the Punic Wars formally ended.<sup>44</sup> The vision of Augustus established a *principate* that enforced peace, improved the economy, mitigated the military as convenient vehicle for political power, and brought Rome peace after fifty years of internecine warfare. W. W. Tarn wrote, "In sixteen years he [Augustus] avenged his father's death and attained more than his honors, he had surmounted all opposition and made himself master of the Mediterranean world."<sup>45</sup> The visionary leadership of Augustus enabled Rome to end a lengthy period of civil war, completed the transformation from a republic into a *principate*, and began the era of *Pax Romana*.

#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Christopher S. Mackay, *Ancient Rome: A Military and Political History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 158.

<sup>2</sup> Ronald Syme, *The Roman Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939), 9.

<sup>3</sup> Mackay, *Ancient Rome*, 179.

<sup>4</sup> Throughout this essay the author uses the name Augustus rather than Octavian to avoid confusion.

<sup>5</sup> Susan O. Shapiro, *O Tempora! O Mores!: Cicero's Catilinarian Orations: a Student Edition with Historical Essays* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005), 203; Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Fall of Carthage: The Punic Wars, 265-146 BC* (London, UK: Phoenix, 2006), 12.

<sup>6</sup> Adrian Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army* (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd, 2003), 7.

<sup>7</sup>Theodor Mommsen, *The History of Rome vol. I-V* (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2011), 322.

<sup>8</sup>Paul Veyne, ed., *A History of Private Life: From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*. trans. Arthur Goldhamer (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1987), 155.

<sup>9</sup>David Shotter, *The Fall of the Roman Republic*, 2nd ed. (London, UK: Routledge, 2005), 27.

<sup>10</sup>Michael Grant, *History of Rome* (New York: History Book Club, 1997), 162.

<sup>11</sup>Max Cary and Howard Hayes Scullard, *A History of Rome: Down to the Reign of Constantine*, 3rd ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1975), 185.

<sup>12</sup>Plutarch, *Rome in Crisis Nine Lives by Plutarch: Tiberius Gracchus-Gaius Gracchus-Sertorius-Lucullus-Younger Cato-Brutus-Antony-Galba-Otho*, trans. Ian Scott-Kilvert and Christopher Pelling (London: Penguin Books, 2010), 54.

<sup>13</sup>Niccolò Machiavelli and Bernard R. Crick, *The Discourses*. Reprinted with a new chronology and updated ed. (London: Penguin Books, 2003), 201.

<sup>14</sup>Mommsen, *History of Rome*, 554.

<sup>15</sup>Grant, *History of Rome*, 245.

<sup>16</sup>Goldsworthy, *The Complete Roman Army*, 50.

<sup>17</sup>Robert B. Strassler, Victor Davis Hanson, and Richard Crawley, *The Landmark Thucydides: A Comprehensive Guide to the Peloponnesian War*, rev. ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1996) 5. 89.

<sup>18</sup>Gaius Sallust, *The War with Catiline*, 11. 5., ed. Bill Thayer, last modified February 1, 2010, [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Sallust/Bellum\\_Catiline\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Sallust/Bellum_Catiline*.html).

<sup>19</sup>Veyne, *A History of Private Life*, 106.

<sup>20</sup>Cary, *A History of Rome*, 276-277; Mackay, *Ancient Rome*, 158.

<sup>21</sup>Appian, *The Civil Wars* trans. John Carter (London: Penguin Books, 1996), 2.143.

<sup>22</sup>Ibid., 2.147.

<sup>23</sup>Gaius Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars* trans. Robert Graves (London: Penguin Classics, 2007), 10.1.

<sup>24</sup>Cary, *A History of Rome*, 285; Appian, *The Civil Wars* 3.51; Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars: Augustus* 10.6-8; Cary, *A History of Rome*, 286.

<sup>25</sup>Appian, *The Civil Wars* 3.73; Ibid., 3.88.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 3.94; Grant, *History of Rome*, 242; Cary, *A History of Rome*, 287.

<sup>27</sup>Appian, *The Civil Wars* 4.5.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid., 4.35.

<sup>29</sup>Grant, *History of Rome*, 242; Cary, *A History of Rome*, 291.

<sup>30</sup>Cary, *A History of Rome*, 292.

<sup>31</sup>Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars: Augustus* 16.6.

<sup>32</sup>Marcel Le Glay et al., *A History of Rome*, 4th ed. (West Sussex, U.K.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), 165.

<sup>33</sup>Cary, *A History of Rome*, 293.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>Plutarch, *Lives: Antony* 50.4.

<sup>36</sup>Suetonius, *The Twelve Caesars: Augustus* 17.1-2.

<sup>37</sup>Cary, *A History of Rome*, 296; Grant, *History of Rome*, 245.

<sup>38</sup> Grant, *History of Rome*, 247; Lawrence Keppie, *The Making of the Roman Army: From Republic to Empire* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1998), 148-149.

<sup>39</sup> W. W. Tarn and M. P. Charlesworth, *From Republic to Empire: The Roman Civil War 44 B.C.-27 B.C.* (New York, NY: Barnes & Noble Books, 1996), 154.

<sup>40</sup> Cary, *A History of Rome*, 318-319.

<sup>41</sup> Grant, *History of Rome*, 249; Cary, *A History of Rome*, 318; Grant, *History of Rome*, 253.

<sup>42</sup> Cary, *A History of Rome*, 319; Grant, *History of Rome*, 256.

<sup>43</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1957), 79.

<sup>44</sup> Syme, *A Roman Revolution*, 313-314.

<sup>45</sup> Tarn, *From Republic to Empire*, 156.

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## From Hero to Traitor: The Motivations of Benedict Arnold

Elizabeth D. Young



Benedict Arnold

Benedict Arnold. The name has become synonymous with the word traitor, an epithet used against anyone who appears to or actually betrays their loyalties. But what would cause an American hero to reverse his course and offer his services to a sworn enemy? There are some seemingly obvious reasons, such as money, anger, or ambition, all of which played a part in Arnold's case. However, his motivations run much deeper and attest to the character of the man. A character molded by the roller coaster of success and failure that Arnold rode throughout his life, beginning with an initial, disastrous plunge in his early teens.<sup>1</sup> That plunge caused psychological wounds that festered internally over the years erupting under the pressure of war and ultimately bringing him down.

Arnold was born January 14, 1741 in Norwich, Connecticut the second son (his older brother and namesake had died at eight months of age) of Benedict and Hannah Arnold. The Arnolds were a prosperous and respectable family who held a prominent role in society; however, his father turned to alcohol for solace following the deaths of three of his children so that by the time young Benedict was fourteen the family's money and business were gone. Arnold was removed from his boarding school and brought back home to become an apprentice in the apothecary shop of his mother's cousins, Joshua and Daniel Lathrop.<sup>2</sup> The humiliation engendered in this forced return to face neighbors and friends as the son

of a bankrupt drunk can be imagined. His inner confidence and self-esteem vanished to be replaced by a life long desire for assurance and respect that no matter what he attained would never be satisfied.<sup>3</sup>

The apprenticeship with Lathrop was highly successful and at age 21 Arnold struck out on his own in the town of New Haven, where he could escape the disgraceful history of his father, opening a shop that was very much like a general store.<sup>4</sup> By the age of 26, he had established himself owning three trading ships and a larger store, but the money he was making meant more than financial security. "Arnold needed money as a tangible expression of the world's regard, and he craved it not so much for its own sake as for its ability to confirm his substantiality to the world and to himself."<sup>5</sup> When the British began enacting a series of taxes and to enforce old trade laws his livelihood was threatened and he was soon in debt. To assuage his anger and frustration with the British for jeopardizing his new life and the lives of his wife, Margaret (Peggy), and their three sons, which he had worked so hard to create, Arnold enlisted in the local militia. He was soon elected company captain, an honor he greatly desired, and after hearing of the confrontation at Lexington and Concord gathered his men to march to Boston as reinforcements. When the town council denied them gunpowder Arnold marched his company to Hunt's Tavern, where the council met, demanding the keys to the powder house.<sup>6</sup> Following a confrontation and ultimately successful argument, the keys were procured and Arnold and his company were off to war.

On the way they encountered Samuel Parsons who told Arnold that the assembling army had no ammunition, supplies or cannon. All of these, Arnold knew from his frequent business trips to Canada, could be found at the weakly defended Fort Ticonderoga. Upon arrival in Massachusetts he shared this with the Committee of Safety

obtaining an appointment as colonel and a commission to seize the fort, but Parsons had taken Arnold's information to the authorities in Connecticut who organized a group, led by Ethan Allen, to do the same. Arnold, feeling betrayed, immediately set out to overtake Allen and when he reached him presented his orders which Allen's men refused to accept. After much discussion, more akin to an argument, the two agreed on a joint command. They easily took Ticonderoga, but Allen's men found rum in the cellar and "set about destroying and plundering private property."<sup>7</sup> Justifiably furious and realizing that the British would launch a counter-attack, Arnold toured the fort writing detailed reports until his own men arrived in a schooner which he used to attack the British base at St. John's and take control of their vessels. British counter-attack was now impossible without building new ships.<sup>8</sup> Arnold, seeing the British weakness, pleaded for a Canadian invasion, sending the Continental Congress a clear and detailed plan based on good intelligence. The Congress, however, was divided and distracted and instead of acting on his plan brushed him aside, cutting off money, supplies, and men, even launching an investigation into his expenses. When confronted with this knowledge, Arnold was insulted that he was being investigated without a hearing or being court-martialed. Adding insult to injury, his men were not going to be paid unless considered fit for duty which given the hardships they had endured in recent weeks meant few would receive compensation.<sup>9</sup> Disgusted with this treatment, Arnold resigned his commission and headed home. On the road, he received word that his wife had died. With his "dear" Peggy gone Arnold reconsidered his resignation, befriended General Philip Schuyler, and, after a brief visit with his sons, set off to offer his services to George Washington.<sup>10</sup>

In August 1775 Arnold was commissioned a colonel in the Continental Army and in September he set out with approximately 1,100

men to capture Quebec, marching up the Kennebec River. November found 40% of the American army lost due to death or desertion but the remainder had made it to the settlement of St. George's, Quebec. Now, all that remained was to cross the St. Lawrence River before the enemy could prepare. However, circumstances prevented this being done quickly and British reinforcements arrived first. This, combined with Arnold's delusion that Quebec was weak and divided and would support the invaders would lead to bitter defeat. For Arnold, self-interest was above all else, he could not conceive of men having an overriding allegiance to country or sovereign so he led his men across the river.<sup>11</sup> Encamped on the Plains of Abraham he found himself outnumbered two to one, without artillery, waiting on reinforcements from General Richard Montgomery and his men. On New Years Eve Montgomery and Arnold attacked in a blinding snowstorm but were quickly repulsed; Montgomery was killed and Arnold badly wounded in his right leg.<sup>12</sup> Arnold's march up the Kennebec and his ability to emanate confidence and energy to rally the army from his hospital bed made him a hero in the army. In January 1776, Congress made him a Brigadier General turning him into a hero in the eyes of the world, but inside, the old fears – of being pitied, poor, ashamed – were still there. The idea of being a Patriot – Hero was extremely satisfying and according to historian Clare Brandt would become his armor. Armor he would do anything to preserve. Thus, when Congress did not respond to his reports but demanded an accounting of his Canadian expenditures during the failed Canadian invasion he was convinced they distrusted him.<sup>13</sup>

Then, in May, thousands of British reinforcements arrived in Canada and Congress promoted a series of generals over Arnold's head.<sup>14</sup> Arnold began his retreat, along the way burning towns, forts, bridges, and ships to slow the British and also evacuating thousands of sick and wounded. In July, he was at Crown Point with other



American generals to form a strategy for dealing with the British plan to divide and conquer America using ships prefabricated and waiting in the holds of British warships anchored in the St. Lawrence. Arnold came up with a plan: to quickly build a small naval squadron and delay the British until winter forced them to cease their operations. In October, in two small battles, he succeeded. The British sailed back to Canada and within a few weeks the waters were frozen and America was safe for another year. Despite his success, Arnold was decried by many Americans as an “evil genius [who] with a good deal of industry, got us clear of all our fine fleet,” as General William Maxwell wrote, and as “fiery, hot, and impetuous and without discretion” as Richard Henry Lee put it in a letter to Thomas Jefferson.<sup>15</sup>

Arnold’s success boosted the revolutionary cause in another way as well. Thanks to reinforcements from the northern army Washington was able to launch his surprise attack on the Hessians at Trenton and to defeat British regulars at Princeton taking pressure off Philadelphia and allowing the Americans to withdraw to winter quarters. Alfred Thayer Mahan may have said it best when, more than a century later, he wrote, “The little American navy was wiped out, but never had any force, big or small, lived to better purpose.”<sup>16</sup>

During these same months Arnold’s enemies were busy too. A court-martial, run by friends of Ethan Allen, investigated charges of looting from Canada during the siege of Quebec. There was no evidence Arnold had committed any wrongdoing but the proceedings dragged on until Arnold challenged each court officer to a duel as his anger boiled over. There was also a court of inquiry held by Congress into his affairs, instigated by more of Allen’s friends, against whose charges Arnold found it difficult to defend himself as many of his papers were burned or lost during the retreat from Quebec. Now found, those papers prove he did nothing wrong.

Congress also, in February 1777, promoted five brigadiers to major general, all junior to Arnold in distinction and length of service.<sup>17</sup> Washington championed Arnold and urged him to remain in the army, but to no avail; he wrote his resignation, saying, “I can no longer serve my country with honor.”<sup>18</sup> His honor, of course, was purely concerned with appearance, his pride and public dignity. Since the war also gave him an opportunity to once again be a hero, when Washington requested that he postpone a final decision until Congress could reconsider, he was willing to oblige.<sup>19</sup> In May, Congress did reconsider and Arnold was granted a commission as major general, but without restoring his seniority over the men promoted in February.<sup>20</sup> Once again, he submitted his resignation to Congress who tabled it as they needed him to counter another threat from the British.<sup>21</sup>

The northern army was facing a tremendous challenge from British General John Burgoyne and Washington needed all men available to counter his operations. As Arnold was eliminating Indian allies of the enemy at Fort Schuyler, Congress accepted his resignation but failed to notify him. As the weakened Burgoyne made his way to Albany hundreds of militia poured into the Continental camp, and General Horatio Gates assumed command of the northern army. Gates and Arnold clashed immediately over Gates’ cautious military style that held that the army was better off behind fortifications. Arnold, on the other hand, was daring and imaginative and pushed Gates in September 1777, at the first battle of Saratoga, to allow his men to advance.<sup>22</sup> Finally they were allowed to advance on a reconnaissance mission that broke the British line. Arnold pleaded with Gates for reinforcements, but Gates refused to budge and the conflict ended in a draw. According to British military historian J.W. Fortescue, “Arnold possessed all the gifts of a great commander . . . [he] was the most formidable opponent that could be

matched against the British in America;” had Arnold been given the troops he asked for, when he asked for them, Burgoyne would have been defeated then and there.<sup>23</sup>

For the next several days Arnold fumed and fussed until he received word that Gates’ official report of the action made no mention of him or his division. Storming into Gates’ headquarters where the two exchanged “high words and gross language,” Arnold learned that his resignation had been accepted weeks earlier so he was nothing more than a temporary force to be ordered about as Gates wished.<sup>24</sup> Furious and feeling trapped, Arnold announced he would leave camp, but Major Generals Enoch Poor and Benjamin Lincoln spearheaded a campaign to persuade him to stay – which he consented to. However, he had no command, so when the British attacked, on October 7, 1777, Arnold paced about helplessly itching to take part. He asked Gates for permission to go to the front, but Gates, not trusting him to go alone, sent Lincoln with him. Not long afterward they returned, Arnold arguing for a vigorous assault which Gates did not want, telling him, “I have nothing for you to do. You have no business here.”<sup>25</sup> Lincoln, knowing Arnold was right, continued to lobby for more men. Gates acquiesced and soon the British were scattering in all directions, except the center, which refused to budge. Arnold, humiliated, but not about to let another victory elude him, mounted a horse and rode for the front exhorting Ebenezer Learned’s regiments to follow until the center broke. Most of the enemy retreated to the protection of two redoubts which Arnold wasted no time in attacking leading a charge headlong into the left flank where he was shot in the right leg, the same leg that had been struck in Quebec. He was carried off the field as darkness fell after ending Burgoyne’s dream of conquering the northern colonies.<sup>26</sup> A few days later Burgoyne would surrender his army to Gates who, as before, downplayed Arnold’s role in achieving victo-

ry. Others did not, though, and Washington honored him with a gold epaulet and sword knot. Congress even consented to allowing an adjustment to his date of rank, restoring him in seniority and to the army.<sup>27</sup>

During his months of convalescence Arnold saw Washington's army, decimated by desertion and battle and ravaged by sickness from lack of food and clothing, withdraw to Valley Forge. He saw Congress refuse to grant peacetime pensions to Continental officers and seemingly ignore the needs of its army. Lacking a sense of honor, wanting only a hero's reward of a top place in society and the world, Arnold pondered the ineptitude of Congress beginning the mental preparation for treason. Preparation that convinced him, along with the threat of financial ruin that surrounded him, that war ruined people. He had to look out for himself above anything else, whatever it took.<sup>28</sup>

May 1778 found Arnold appointed as military governor of Philadelphia following the British evacuation.<sup>29</sup> The job was filled with frustrations as he was expected to cooperate with Congress and the Supreme Executive Council of the State of Pennsylvania, who were constantly fighting and issuing contradictory orders. He soon found himself at odds with many influential revolutionaries who were constantly looking for misconduct in his actions.<sup>30</sup> The Executive Council was pushed to their limits when Arnold bankrolled Connecticut sailor Gideon Olmstead and three companions in a lawsuit against the state. If they won, Arnold would pocket half the value of the ship, *Active*, and its cargo. Anonymous radicals vilified him in the press almost weekly and he counterattacked in like manner until February 1779 when the Council of Pennsylvania brought eight formal charges against him. He was accused of using troops as slave labor, closing shops to benefit his own self, and ordering army wagons to transport private goods to Philadelphia, amongst others. Six

of the charges were substantive while two were about political attitude. Of those six actions he was guilty, at least by design, but to acknowledge such never occurred to him.<sup>31</sup> Instead, he proclaimed that the charges were made up “in a cruel and unprecedented manner” in order to sully his reputation and he appealed to Washington for support.<sup>32</sup> According to Arnold’s account Washington advised that he request a court-martial to clear his name, which Congress granted, appointing a committee to look into the charges. This committee decided that Arnold should be tried on two of the charges: using slave labor and using army wagons to transport private goods. Congress, however, ordered him to be tried on four charges: the two decided on by the committee, plus issuing a pass to the ship *Charming Nancy*, and benefiting from the closure of the shops.<sup>33</sup>

In the midst of all this intrigue, Arnold had met and courted Margaret “Peggy” Shippen, the daughter of a suspected loyalist, Edward Shippen, and a part of Philadelphia’s high society. On April 8, 1779 they were married. While on his honeymoon, Arnold decided that if America, i.e. Congress, were going to abandon him, if it could not appreciate what he had suffered and give him the security he craved, he would offer his services to someone who would appreciate what he offered. His new bride had no qualms with his plan and even encouraged it.<sup>34</sup>

In May, Arnold sent an emissary, Joseph Stansbury, to the British offering his services. Through Peggy, Stansbury knew to seek out Captain John André, personal aide, and later Adjutant-General, to British commander Sir Henry Clinton.<sup>35</sup> Clinton accepted his offer and soon Arnold was dispatching his first report, partly in cipher, that revealed where Washington was



From the Collections of the Clements Library  
Coded letter from Arnold to Andre

moving and that Congress had given up Charleston, South Carolina due to lack of men, arms, and ammunition to defend it. Old comrades could have been captured or killed due to Arnold having supplied this information, but none of this mattered to Arnold.<sup>36</sup> He was looking out for his own interests and believed the British would reward him handsomely for forging a reconciliation with the Americans.<sup>37</sup>

Meanwhile, everyone involved prepared for the court-martial which finally began June 1, 1779 in Middlebrook, New Jersey but then, due to events in the war had to be reconvened in Morristown on December 20.<sup>38</sup> A month later it was over and on January 26, 1780, Arnold was found guilty on one charge: granting the illegal pass to the *Charming Nancy*. While not convicted on the other three charges he was deemed to have been “imprudent and improper” on the use of the wagons and a public reprimand from Washington was ordered as his sentence.<sup>39</sup> Arnold could not fathom that he had not been exonerated and reaffirmed his commitment to treason. With this in mind, he wrote to Washington seeking a naval command, but it would not be granted.<sup>40</sup> Disappointed, but not beaten, Arnold set his sights on a larger prize: command of West Point. After fourteen months of bargaining with Washington and other officials the command was his.<sup>41</sup>

Arnold arrived at West Point on August 5, 1780 and while appearing to strengthen actually began to systematically weaken the fort's defenses, which were in poor condition before his arrival but would now reach dire conditions.<sup>42</sup> On September 16 he learned that Washington along with Henry Knox and the Marquis de Lafayette would be arriving in the next few days to spend the night en route to Hartford for talks with the French command. Immediately, Arnold, knowing how vulnerable Washington would be, sent a courier to Clinton apprising him of the situation and suggesting that if

they moved quickly they could capture Washington as he crossed the Hudson River or at the inn in Peekskill where he planned to stay. Arnold met Washington personally and escorted him to Peekskill but the expected raid never came – the message had not reached Clinton in time. What did arrive, in Haverstraw Bay, twelve miles from West Point, was a British vessel, the *Vulture*. On board was André, Arnold's spymaster, who had arrived for a face-to-face meeting to confirm and detail plans for the surrender of West Point. André had been given three orders: not to go behind enemy lines, not to disguise himself, and not to carry any compromising papers. He would violate all three.<sup>43</sup>

On September 22, shortly after midnight, André, his uniform concealed beneath a dark cape, talked with Arnold until daybreak at which point they retired to Belmont where breakfast was ordered. From here they witnessed firing on the *Vulture* that forced her to sail for deeper water, out of range. André was trapped behind enemy lines so Arnold wrote out passes for André to pass through American lines as he made his way by water or over land to the British post in New York. Before setting out he changed his uniform for civilian clothes and concealed Arnold's treasonous documents, in undisguised writing, between his stocking and boot.<sup>44</sup> En route, André was stopped by three men he believed to be Loyalists to whom he identified himself as a British officer than presented the pass that claimed he was civilian. Suspicious, the men searched him and found Arnold's papers which were turned over to an American colonel who dispatched them to Washington, but who also sent word to Arnold of events, giving him time to flee to the *Vulture* before he could be arrested.<sup>45</sup> From there he wrote to Washington saying, "I have ever acted from a principle of love to my country . . . the same principle of love to my country actuates my present conduct, however it may appear inconsistent to the world, who very

seldom judge right of any man's actions.”<sup>46</sup> In truth he had only ever acted in his own self-interest. In his eyes the American hero had now become, or soon would, the British hero.

Arnold was paid twenty thousand pounds for his treason and given command of his own unit, the American Legion, which was comprised of Continental Army deserters while André was court-martialed, convicted, and hanged on October 2, 1780.<sup>47</sup> Arnold, suffering no qualms from his treason and with a little editorial assistance from William Smith wrote a series of public statements to persuade Americans to return to the British Empire.<sup>48</sup> Washington, however, launched his own propaganda campaign in which Arnold's private papers, that showed his dishonesty, were made public and divine providence was credited with his discovery and other fortuitous events.<sup>49</sup> Peggy returned to her family in Philadelphia but with Arnold's actions public knowledge she was banished by the town council, fleeing to New York where she was reunited with her husband.<sup>50</sup>

Three months after his defection Arnold set sail on his first British command. In January 1781, he reached Richmond, Virginia where he put warehouses, shops, and magazines to the torch and seized “thirty to forty ships loaded with tobacco, West Indies goods, wines, sailcloth.”<sup>51</sup> In September he reached his native Thames Valley and the harbor of New London in Connecticut. In short order he had taken Fort Trumbull and occupied the town. Fort Griswold took longer but eventually, after heavy loss of life on both sides, was also subdued. Once Griswold was cleared Arnold's men set fire to ships in the river and searched the waterfront. Storehouses and public buildings were also burned as were a number of private homes.<sup>52</sup> The attacks on Richmond and New London did nothing to bolster Arnold in the eyes of the British as he suffered a 25% casualty rate. After a plan to attack Philadelphia and capture



Congress was rejected by Clinton, Arnold sailed for England in December 1781 on the same ship as the recently vanquished Cornwallis. He finished out the war on a half-pay pension as a retired British colonel and lived in exile the remainder of his life.<sup>53</sup>

In England Arnold tried to have the war continued but the pro-war ministry in Parliament was replaced with a pro-independence government that soon established terms for peace.<sup>54</sup> He then began a quest for money, to ensure his standing and that of his children, but all his applications to the government went unheeded and he was forced to take a job on a ship headed for the British colony of New Brunswick.<sup>55</sup> There he was soon faced with the old accusations of treachery and greed to which he turned his back and sailed for the West Indies, and after fetching Peggy and the children, settled once again until returning to England in December 1791.<sup>56</sup> Once again he appealed to the government on behalf of his children and in 1793 was finally rewarded; a king's warrant established one hundred pound per year pensions on each of Peggy's four children.<sup>57</sup> After this he sailed back and forth to the West Indies trying to support his family and himself. Toward the end of 1800 he finally faced his own failure succumbing to the realization that he had failed as a husband, having fathered an illegitimate child in New Brunswick, father, and traitor.<sup>58</sup> Even in England, he never achieved the acclaim he so craved. Soon he was suffering from terrible pain in his twice-wounded leg as well as gout and asthma. Shortly before dawn on June 14, 1801 he died.<sup>59</sup> Three years later, Peggy also died. The couple is buried in a dark crypt of St. Mary's church in the London suburb of Battersea.<sup>60</sup>

Arnold died leaving a debt of six thousand pounds which Peggy managed to pay off within eighteen months through the sale of their home, possessions, and other means.<sup>61</sup> The death notices were terse, but in 1976, 172 years after his death, he was finally given some of

the recognition he had craved all his life when an American admirer



Stained Glass tribute to Arnold 1  
Courtesy Christopher Hodapp  
Freemasons for Dummies

placed a stained-glass window in St. Mary's church in honor of he and Peggy. Twelve years later a historical plaque was placed on his former home, in Gloucester Place, dedicated to "Major Benedict Arnold, American Patriot."<sup>62</sup> At long last, he would have been pleased.

After Arnold's treason he became the most hated turncoat in American history, but was Benedict Arnold really a traitor, or a hero? The people of Philadelphia who burned him in effigy in 1780 were not certain as they gave his head two faces and had him holding a mask. The mask was a symbol of treachery but the two faces were contradictory indicating his true nature was split. As a writer in the *Pennsylvania Packet* noted, it depended on one's perspective; he could be "the ornament or the disgrace, the pride, or the pestilence of mankind."<sup>63</sup> Many of his flaws were equally present in his one-time countrymen. One of the causes of his bitter feelings was being passed over for promotion, something Washington was greatly concerned about with other officers when he wrote, "They murmur, brood over their discontent, and have lately shown a disposition to enter into seditious combinations."<sup>64</sup> Arnold's desire for money and fine things was also not uncommon as many colonists carried on a lucrative, though illegal trade, with Britain. Many people took advantage of wartime conditions. The army received shoddy supplies, officers cheated men of their pay, and soldiers took bribes and sold army property for their own profit. Historian Charles Royster believes Arnold became an outlet for the tension saying, "When widespread self-seeking began to look irreversible . . . the Revolutionaries turned to the corruption of one man whose ruin would signify

the defeat of corruption within the Revolution.”<sup>65</sup> Major Henry Lee, Jr. among others feared that Arnold’s defection would be the first of many as the reaction to him revealed America’s distrust in itself and jealousy ran high, even in government.<sup>66</sup> Thus, Americans had to create a story or a framework to tell themselves that illustrated the importance of loyalty, making Arnold a focal point to absolve guilt feelings they harbored about the darker side to their own characters.<sup>67</sup>

Another thing to consider is that in 1775 Arnold quickly joined the Revolutionary cause becoming a traitor to Britain, so in 1780 he could have been purging his original treachery. He even claimed this was what he was thinking. Loyalists during the Revolution were citizens of two countries, uncertain which to call home, much like Robert E. Lee felt when nearly a century later he chose loyalty to his home state of Virginia over loyalty to the Union. Few call Lee a traitor, and had Britain won the Revolution Arnold may not have been labeled as one.<sup>68</sup> In the end, the verdict on such matters falls to history and is confirmed only in retrospect. Only victory wins plaudits and rewards.

On the battlefield at Saratoga is a monument shaped like a boot hailing Arnold as “the most brilliant soldier of the Continental Army,” but with no name inscribed.<sup>69</sup> It is the only monument in America to one of the military’s greatest commanders and, perhaps, the commander who would have appreciated it the most.



Courtesy Christopher Hodapp  
Freemasons for Dummies

### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey C. Ward, Review of *The Man in the Mirror: A Life of Benedict Arnold*, by Clare Brandt, *American Heritage* 45, no. 3 (1994), Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 20007).

<sup>2</sup>James Kirby Martin, *Benedict Arnold Revolutionary Hero: An American Warrior Reconsidered*, (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 18-27.

<sup>3</sup>Clare Brandt, *The Man in the Mirror: A Life of Benedict Arnold*, (New York: Random House, 1994), 6.

<sup>4</sup>Willard Sterne Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It," *American Heritage* 41, no. 6 (1990), Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed January 26, 2007).

<sup>5</sup>Brandt, 10.

<sup>6</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup>Martin, 75.

<sup>9</sup>Willard Sterne Randall, *Benedict Arnold: Patriot and Traitor*, (New York: William Morrow and Company, Inc., 1990), 122-134.

<sup>10</sup>Martin, 101-105.

<sup>11</sup>Brandt, 61.

<sup>12</sup>Esmond Wright, "A Patriot for Whom? Benedict Arnold and the Loyalists," *History Today* 36, no. 10 (1986), 33.

<sup>13</sup>Brandt, 79-80.

<sup>14</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."

<sup>15</sup>General William Maxwell to Governour Livingston, October 20, 1776, in Martin, 288 & Richard Henry Lee to Thomas Jefferson, Philadelphia, November 3, 1776, in *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee Vol. 1 1762-1778*, ed. James Curtis Bal-lagh (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1911), 222.

<sup>16</sup>Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Major Operations of the Navies in the War of American Independence*, (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1913), 25.

<sup>17</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It".

<sup>18</sup>Benedict Arnold to George Washington, March 12, 1777, in *Angel in the Whirlwind: The Triumph of the American Revolution*, Benson Bobrick (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 239.

<sup>19</sup>Brandt, 116.

<sup>20</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."

<sup>21</sup>Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 342.

<sup>22</sup>Eric Ethier, "The Making of a Traitor," *America Heritage* 36, no. 3 (2001), Academic Search Premier, EBSCOhost (accessed January 25, 2007).

<sup>23</sup>Barney Sneiderman, "Benedict Arnold: Saratoga 1777" in *Warriors Seven: Seven American Commanders, Seven Wars, and the Irony of Battle*, (New York: Savas Beatie, 2006), 31.

<sup>24</sup>Brandt, 136.

<sup>25</sup>Ethier

<sup>26</sup>Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."

<sup>28</sup>Martin, 403-415.

<sup>29</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."

<sup>30</sup>Brandt, 153.

<sup>31</sup>Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."

<sup>32</sup>Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 443-444.

<sup>33</sup>Ibid., 444-448.

<sup>34</sup>Wright, 34.

- <sup>35</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>36</sup> Brandt, 178-179.
- <sup>37</sup> Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 468.
- <sup>38</sup> Ibid., 470-471; 485.
- <sup>39</sup> Brandt, 188 & Randall, 492.
- <sup>40</sup> Randall, 495.
- <sup>41</sup> Ibid., 517.
- <sup>42</sup> Brandt, 201.
- <sup>43</sup> Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."
- <sup>44</sup> Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 545-547.
- <sup>45</sup> Becky Akers, "Major John André captivated his captors but they condemned him to death just the same," *Military History* 21, no. 2 (2004), 18 & 22.
- <sup>46</sup> Benedict Arnold to George Washington, September 25, 1780, in Randall, 560.
- <sup>47</sup> Akers, 22.
- <sup>48</sup> Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 572-574.
- <sup>49</sup> Brandt, 232-233.
- <sup>50</sup> Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 576-577.
- <sup>51</sup> Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It".
- <sup>52</sup> Bruce A. Trinke, "An American Traitor's Homecoming," *Military History* 23, no. 2 (2006), 60.
- <sup>53</sup> Randall, "Why Benedict Arnold Did It."
- <sup>54</sup> Brandt, 255.
- <sup>55</sup> Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 595.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid., 600-604.
- <sup>57</sup> Brandt, 269.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid., 272-273.
- <sup>59</sup> Martin, 431.
- <sup>60</sup> Ward.
- <sup>61</sup> Randall, *Benedict Arnold*, 614.
- <sup>62</sup> Brandt, 278-279.
- <sup>63</sup> Andy Trees, "Benedict Arnold, John André, and His Three Yeoman Captors: A Sentimental Journey to American Virtue Defined," *Early American Literature* 35, no. 3 (2000), 246.
- <sup>64</sup> Sneiderman, 39.
- <sup>65</sup> Charles Royster, "'The Nature of Treason': Revolutionary Virtue and American Reactions to Benedict Arnold," *William and Mary Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1979), 184.
- <sup>66</sup> Trees, 248.
- <sup>67</sup> Ibid., 249.
- <sup>68</sup> Wright, 35.
- <sup>69</sup> Sneiderman, 1.

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The Battle of Chaeronea: The Culmination of Philip II  
of Macedon's Grand Strategy

Kathleen Guler

In August 338 BC, Philip II of Macedon (c. 382-336 BC) won a major battle near the central Greek city of Chaeronea against a coalition of city-states. The Latin historian Justin wrote, "This day put an end to the glorious sovereignty and ancient liberty of all Greece."<sup>1</sup> Though he became master of the region, Philip did not annex it directly into the Macedonian kingdom after spending many years in conflict, especially with Athens, in what logically looked like a grab for the whole of Greece. Instead, Philip simply imposed hegemony. By the spring of 337 he revealed why: the quest to conquer Persia. Evidence suggests, therefore, that Greece's cooperation and resources were essentially tools he had intended to use all along to accomplish this vastly larger goal. When he won the day at Chaeronea, Philip completed one of the most important steps in a grand strategy that was more than twenty years in the making.

### Classical Sources

Whether Philip already had the conquest of Persia in mind when he became king of Macedonia in 359 BC while still in his early twenties is not recorded in any of the surviving ancient accounts. For the battle of Chaeronea, the most detailed source is the *Bibliotheca historica*, written by the Greek historian Diodorus Siculus between 60 and 30 BC.<sup>2</sup> Additional information can be gleaned from Justin's work, written much later, between the second and fourth centuries AD and from fragments by Theopompus of Chios, Plutarch and a few others, but these are minor and considered unreliable. Demosthenes, the famed Athenian orator, wrote numerous diatribes that casti-



gated Philip, offering some context, but his rants were mostly propaganda. Overall, in following Diodorus's account, the flow of events suggests that from the day Philip became king, he immediately began to implement an overall strategy that was leading him towards the planned Persian expedition.

## Background Context

Taking over a fractured and impoverished Macedonia, within ten years Philip rebuilt the army, unified the kingdom internally, secured its frontiers and stimulated the economy with resources that had been grossly underused. Much of his success was due to his understanding of highly mobile and disciplined military tactics, the wise use of resources, and clever diplomacy that often included not only negotiation and strategic political marriages but outright deceit as well. Held hostage in Thebes from about the age of thirteen to fifteen, Philip likely had learned military tactics from the Theban generals Pammenes and Epaminondas, the latter considered one of the best generals prior to Philip. This education served Philip well, demonstrated in his rapid gain of firm control over his realm. Further, while governor of the port of Amphaxitis under his brother Perdiccas III's rule (r. 369-359 BC), he may have also experimented with military tactics that supported some of his later reforms.

A major contribution to Philip's military success included his innovative Macedonian phalanx that was spearheaded—literally—by the eighteen-foot long, iron-tipped pike called the *sarissa*, much longer than any of the shorter weapons the Greeks wielded. Marching in tight ranks, the Macedonian phalanx was usually shaped in a wedge formation. During attacks, the forward few rows held the *sarissa* horizontally with both hands; each row offset behind the one in front, so the long pikes protruded between the soldiers ahead.

Philip drilled them arduously until they could skillfully march and run with the long pikes. The weapon served both offensively and defensively, lightening his soldiers' overall equipment load and increasing their mobility. Shields became smaller and were slung over the shoulder so the phalanx formation could be denser.<sup>3</sup> The Greeks also used a phalanx, but in a more static block formation compared to the quill-pointed Macedonian wedge that was more flexible and maneuverable.

As Philip gained territory, he levied from these new lands native men who were already trained as archers or javelin throwers. Moreover, cavalry grew into an important element in Philip's army. Originally a group of retainers from Macedonian nobility, these horsemen became known as "Companions." When Philip's influence deepened in the powerful region of Thessaly, he gained access to mercenary cavalymen and Thessalian horses, considered the strongest and fastest animals of the day. After he subdued Thrace in the late 340s, it became a prime source for additional mounted soldiers. Cavalry became the army's main shock force, also in a wedge formation and used to attack enemy flanks while the infantry focused on the center. While Philip learned the phalanx from the Greeks, he may have picked up the wedge from the Thracians.<sup>4</sup>

To the Greeks, Philip was quickly seen as a dire threat. Though embroiled in bulking up Macedonia's strength and fighting off incursions from neighboring enemies, in 358 BC Philip already began to interfere in Greek affairs. Constantly on the move, his army rarely lost a battle, and throughout the twenty years following his accession, Philip gradually increased his influence in Greek lands. He took advantage of the distraction and growing weakness that Athens and other predominant city-states created in their continuous struggle for supremacy over each other. Although defeated in the devastating Peloponnesian War that ended in 403 BC, Athens had rebuilt

some of its power and was still considered—traditionally and psychologically—the leading power in Greece.

### **The Road to Chaeronea**

Philip must have known from the beginning that to gain control of Greece he would need to defeat Athens at some point. He also must have known he could not simply rush in and pick a fight, demonstrated in how he bided his time for a little over two decades. In 340-339 BC, he moved closer towards this goal. He took control of Greek colonial cities on the northern coast of the Aegean Sea, a region that Athens had long considered its own. He captured the Athenian corn fleet and declared war on Athens. Ongoing for years, a bitter rivalry between Philip and Demosthenes turned fierce. Trying to prod the Athenians to fight back, Demosthenes spoke of Philip: “not only is he no Hellene, not only has he no kinship with Hellenes, but he is not even a barbarian from a country that one could acknowledge with credit;—he is a pestilent Macedonian, from whose country it used not to be possible to buy even a slave of any value.”<sup>5</sup> Underlying the diatribe, Demosthenes understood how dangerous, ambitious and capable Philip was.

The Amphictyonic Council, an alliance to protect temples and sacred lands, knew of Philip’s interest in determining Greek affairs. When it declared a sacred war (Fourth Sacred War, 339 BC) against Amphissa, a city that had been farming on sacred ground, the council made Philip its *hegemon* (leader), obligating him to mitigate the sacrilege. The action provided Philip with the right excuse to move farther into Greece.

Justin wrote that fearing Philip, the Thebans allied with their long-time foes, the Athenians, along with other Greek cities.<sup>6</sup> Under Theban control, the road Philip needed to take southward to exe-

cute his duty was blocked. Undeterred, he chose a mountain route into Phocis, a region he had previously defeated in the Third Sacred War (356-46 BC). With the winter of 339-38 coming on and his leg still healing from a severe spear wound received in the spring, he abruptly turned and seized Elatea, a city that gave him access to Amphissa, Thebes, and most importantly, Athens, only three days' march away. He restored Elatea's fortifications and the political structure of Phocis, turning it into his winter base. In the meantime, he sent envoys to Thebes, hoping to secure an alliance with it at the expense of Athens, the diplomats pointing out that if the Thebans did not join Philip they would face both his and the Council's wrath.

Athens was jittery. Demosthenes called for all able men to march north into Bœotia and prepare for war while he himself traveled to Thebes to try to hold onto the alliance, but a Macedonian envoy was already there. Apparently Demosthenes was convincing—whatever he said is unknown—the Thebans remained allied with Athens in spite of the consequences.<sup>7</sup>

The Thebans positioned one force on the road to Amphissa, and another on the border of Bœotia to block Philip from reaching Attica and therefore Athens. Both forces included large numbers of mercenaries hired by the Athenians. Most other city-states refused to join the Athenian-Theban alliance out of animosity towards Athens' previous exploitations and manipulations of them. Likewise, except for Phocis that lay in a precarious location and was grateful for Philip's restoration of its towns, few joined the Macedonians.

While preparing for the coming battle with Athens, in the spring of 338 BC Philip executed his obligation to the Amphictyonic League. But to reach Amphissa to settle the issue, he faced an enemy force of 10,000 mercenaries. Patiently, he wrote a letter saying he was going to withdraw from a specified position. The letter was sent—deliberately where it would be intercepted by the enemy—

while he feigned withdrawal. The mercenaries let down their guard and Philip's general Parmenion easily surprised them. Within three hours, Amphissa was taken. The Fourth Sacred War ended. More importantly, central Greece was opened to Philip.

## **The Battle**

Details of the battle itself are inconsistent in the sources, causing much historical debate among scholars, but with Diodorus's description as a foundation, Chaeronea is thought to have unfolded as follows: the Athenian coalition decided to hold a pitched battle on the border of Phocis, northwest of the city of Chaeronea that would determine their fate. About two miles wide, the plain of Chaeronea was crossed by several rivers, bordered with hills to the north and south, and swampy land to the east. The restricted space gave, in the Athenians' opinion, their best bet to defeat Philip.<sup>8</sup>

In late summer, the Macedonians camped for at least a day along the Cephissus River on the eastern edge of the plain. They are estimated to have had about 30,000 foot soldiers and 2,000 cavalry. About 20 percent of the infantry were from Macedonian allies. The Greeks camped on the opposite side along the stream called the Haemon, their coalition totaling about 30,000 infantry and 3,800 cavalry. The majority of this infantry were armed as hoplites. While the exact position of the two armies is not certain, historians generally believe that the Greeks stretched their forces across the plain, approximately in a west-east line. They were arranged by ethnic group, their Bœotian allies with their elite Sacred Band of warriors all the way by the Cephissus River, the Athenians and 5,000 light infantry on the left wing by the Haemon near Chaeronea's acropolis. Other allies filled in the center. Facing the Greek right flank, the Macedonian left flank was comprised of the elite Companion Caval-

ry, headed by Philip's son Alexander (eighteen at the time) and probably two top generals. Philip himself and his most elite men faced the Athenians. The bulk of his phalanx was stationed in the center. The Greek allies were supposedly in a superior but defensive position. Philip realized at once that they planned to stretch his line out in order to thin the phalanx. In the constrained fighting space, the cavalry was also limited in effectiveness. If the Macedonian line weakened, it could break and be forced into the marshes. Conversely, if the Greek line broke, the enemy could escape over the Kerata Pass to the south, too narrow for cavalry to pursue.<sup>9</sup>

Philip's army had far more battle experience and discipline, having fought almost every year since he became king. The Athenians had cobbled together their forces in haste, calling up "all the Athenian youth,"<sup>10</sup> hence, inexperienced men, and "at least 6,000 soldiers up to the age of fifty," men no longer in their fighting prime.<sup>11</sup> Further, the best Athenian generals were all dead.<sup>12</sup> Philip, wily as ever, used three tactics. First, he moved his line forward at an oblique angle, he and his right flank closing in earliest. Second, he appears to have feigned retreat, though this tactic's use has been debated. If true, the action pulled the Greek allies to the right, opening gaps they tried to fill but could not close. The well trained Macedonian line held. And third, Alexander took advantage of the gaps, charging with his flank through the Greeks, destroying the Sacred Band and defeating the rest of the Boeotians. At the same time, Philip halted his retreat and the phalanx drove the Athenians into an utter rout. Demosthenes, who had joined the Athenian army, deserted and fled. Greece was now under Macedonian control.

### **The Peace Settlement**

In 337 BC, the year after Chaeronea, Philip revealed that he was

planning to invade Asia. His reasoning was that he must follow the Greek vision of the past and needed to “avenge the Persian invasion of Macedonia and Greece of 480 BC.”<sup>13</sup> With this goal in mind and from the day after the battle, Philip set about finding the most efficacious way to control Greece while gaining its support. His supreme diplomacy came into play once more. He stationed few garrisons—only those that were necessary—judging from past problems in which foreign garrisons brought resentment and rebellion. Athens feared a coming siege, but Philip went easy on the city, sending Alexander and high-ranking generals on a mission of peace, honorably returning the ashes of dead Athenian soldiers and bringing home prisoners while not demanding ransom. He punished Thebes harshly, an act of which Athens would approve.

Historian Ian Worthington speculates that Philip needed to promote good relations with Athens. If he were to punish the city, he would generate the same ill will the Persians had created in their tough treatment in the 480s. Further, Athens was still the most formidable and resilient city in Greece, the most likely to rebel, given the traditional fierce independence Greek city-states craved. Philip also needed to prevent Thebes from becoming a high-ranking power again. Athens could help with that.

Though Athens had to make some concessions in the peace settlement, it kept intact most of its political structure, navy and territory. Philip also made agreements directly with other major cities. Then in Corinth, at a meeting of envoys from each state, he set up the foundation for a Common Peace, a “constitutional mechanism that would keep the Greeks passive and under the rule of Macedonia in his absence.”<sup>14</sup> Each city-state had to swear an oath to not interfere or harm any other state or to ally with any foreign power. A council was created to manage the peace agreement and settle disputes. In creating this structure, Philip let Greece feel it was han-

dling its own affairs and he would not be perceived as a despot. Except for Sparta, all the states accepted the settlement, creating what modern scholars call the League of Corinth. At a second meeting, Philip was elected its *hegemon*.

## Conclusion

Chaeronea has been called one of the most decisive battles in ancient history.<sup>5</sup> Although Philip could not have pinpointed when or where the final battle between the Macedonians and Athens would occur when he took the kingship in 359, he likely envisioned its eventuality as part of his master plan. He wanted to “lead a united Macedonian and Greek army against the Persian Empire.”<sup>16</sup> Overall, Philip saw Greece as a tool and Chaeronea was the step in his grand strategy that gave him that tool. Ironically, he never participated in his ultimate goal; Philip was assassinated in 336 BC. It was left to his son Alexander to carry out the mission.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Justin, *Epitome of the Philippic History of Pompeius Trogus*, transl. Rev John Selby Watson (London: Henry G Bohn, 1853), Book VII-IX. <http://forumromanum.org/literature/justin/english/trans9.html> (accessed August 14, 2013).

<sup>2</sup> Diodorus Siculus, *The Historical Library of Diodorus the Sicilian in Fifteen Books*, Trans. by G. Booth (London: 1814), Book XVI <http://books.google.com/?id=E1UDAAAAMAAJ> (accessed August 27, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Michael M. Sage, *Warfare in Ancient Greece: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 1996), 166-68.

<sup>4</sup> Arrian, *Tactics*, 16.6-7.

<sup>5</sup> Demosthenes, *Public Orations of Demosthenes*, Vol.2, 9.31, <http://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/9061/pg9061.html> (accessed September 18, 2013).

<sup>6</sup> Justin, *Epitome*, 8.2.

<sup>7</sup> Plutarch, *The Parallel Lives: The Life of Demosthenes*, [http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes\\*.html](http://penelope.uchicago.edu/Thayer/E/Roman/Texts/Plutarch/Lives/Demosthenes*.html) (accessed September 18, 2013).

<sup>8</sup> Ian Worthington, *Philip of Macedonia*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 147.



- <sup>9</sup> Ibid., 149.  
<sup>10</sup> Diodorus, *Historical Library of Diodorus*, 16.85.2.  
<sup>11</sup> Worthington, *Philip*, 148.  
<sup>12</sup> Diodorus, *Historical Library*, 16.85.2.  
<sup>13</sup> Thomas R. Martin, *Ancient Greece: From Prehistoric to Hellenistic Times* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996), 190.  
<sup>14</sup> Worthington, *Philip of Macedonia*, 159.  
<sup>15</sup> George Cawkwell, *Philip of Macedon* (London: Faber & Faber, 1978), 148.  
<sup>16</sup> Martin, *Ancient Greece*, 190.

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***Kathleen Guler's biography was not available at the time of publishing.***

Woody Holton. *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*. New York: Hill and Wang, 2007.

In *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution*, Woody Holton gives an account of the origins of the U.S. Constitution that differs from the traditional version. He argues that the Framers were unhappy with the excesses of democracy in Confederation America and convened the Constitutional Convention as a means to limit the control ordinary Americans exerted over the government. The Constitution was an effort to rein in democracy, take power from the states (and the people) and put it in the hands of the national government and not an effort to safeguard civil liberties. Holton rejects the ideological interpretation of the Constitution's beginnings; his view is that economics were the driving force behind the Constitutional Convention. Charles Beard noted that the members of the Convention were not "disinterested" as most of them had substantial economic interests, which a new government would affect. Holton, while acknowledging Beard's argument, believes he goes too far and fails to explain why men such as James Madison and Alexander Hamilton, who were neither major creditors nor owners of government bonds, supported the Constitution.

Holton points out that textbooks and popular histories mostly ignore the Framers' motivations for organizing the Convention, only mentioning the weaknesses of the federal government under the Articles of Confederation. This contrasts with the Framers' own statements that, according to Holton, concentrate on difficulties surrounding "the internal administration of the States." The weakness of the federal government was less of a concern than the problems with the state governments. The particular state actions that most concerned many of the participants at the Convention involved debt and tax relief. They believed that states were too willing

to cave in to pressure from constituents regarding these issues. At the time, many Americans agreed with the Founders that the country was on a road to economic ruin; however, while the Founders blamed the states for giving in to constituents who demanded debt and tax relief, many people blamed the national government for its excessive demands.

Holton makes an interesting point, which he should have explored further. When discussing the constitutional provisions designed to protect the national government from popular pressure, he notes that the Convention discussed and rejected many "antidemocratic" proposals because they lessened the chances that the states would ratify the Constitution. He stated, "Numerous explicitly elitist proposals, each of which would have obtained majority support if the delegates had had free rein, had to be abandoned-or at least replaced with more subtle devices-because they jeopardized ratification." A fuller discussion of these proposals, in particular, what they were, would have been interesting if not particularly relevant to Holton's argument.

Another issue that Holton glosses over is substantially more important. He argues that "unruly" farmers forced action and reform prior to the Constitutional Convention, but he takes little note of them after the Convention. If they did not fight against the proposed Constitution with its reduced level of democracy, then did they support the new Constitution? Holton acknowledged, "Some of the most avid supporters of the Constitution were not creditors but debtors." This would seem to somewhat undercut his argument and he does not adequately address it.

As Holton believes that economics played a deciding factor in the structure of the Constitution and the new government, there were plenty of details on the usage of paper money, debt assumption, bonds, and taxes. Much of this discussion requires careful

reading for a reader not well versed in the intricacies of eighteenth century finances; Holton seems to have provided a good overview of financial issues and the tax policy of the Confederation era.

Arguing that the point of view of the Founding Fathers has long been the dominant one, Holton said his book would focus on the alternate views of the Founders' contemporaries; however, it failed to do so. He only referred to Herman Husband on occasion and briefly mentioned Joseph Brant, Adonijah Mathews, and others, but the Framers, particularly Madison seemed to be the stars of the story. This is unfortunate since the Founders are usually the star of every story. While Holton gives the reader a glimpse of the "unruly," it is only a glimpse.

Holton repeatedly portrays the Framers as elitist and anti-democratic while portraying the common man as a victim. He often seemingly sides with the common people; perhaps a more balanced portrayal would have better served his arguments. Holton makes a strong argument and has done a good job utilizing a large number of sources; however, he has seemingly overstated his case. While there was more going on in Philadelphia than the traditional story explains, economic concerns were probably not the primary factor.

While Holton has provided an interesting alternative look at the origins of the Constitution and the nation by examining the class issue through his economic argument surrounding the framing, the topic does not seem to rate a book length treatment. Unfortunately, Holton is somewhat repetitive in driving home his main points and perhaps this would have worked better as a journal article.

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#### Notes

<sup>1</sup> Charles A. Beard, *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (New York: The Free Press, 1986), 151.

<sup>2</sup> Woody Holton, *Unruly Americans and the Origins of the Constitution* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2007), 4.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 211.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 230.

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