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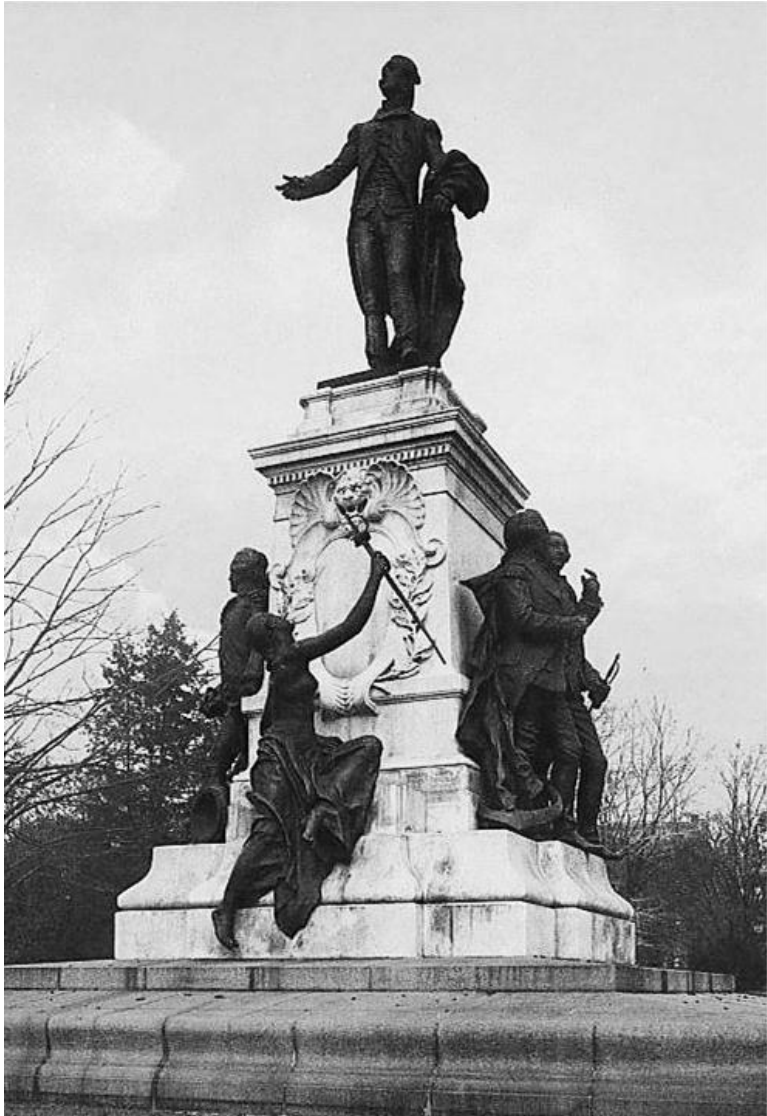
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TENOR OF OUR TIMES

Volume II, Spring 2013



COVER

Lafayette Monument, Washington, D.C.
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TENOR OF OUR TIMES

Volume II, Spring 2013

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THE IMMORTAL LAFAYETTE

By Emalee Krulish

“A nation has risen to receive you, grandsire and youth, the matron and her infant—to receive the man who first came to join their troops in the hour of adversity, to share their dangers when they were distressed—who gave clothing, and who furnished arms—to receive the man who came in his morning of life with his virgin sword, his pure heart, and his French valour....” On September 28, 1824, these words welcomed the “Nation’s Guest,” to Philadelphia.¹ The Marquis de Lafayette was “the patriot hero,” the “friend of Washington,” “the Champion of Liberty,” whom throngs of Americans flooded the streets of their cities to greet with songs and shouts of jubilee, crying, “Hail him!—hail him!”² “Freedom’s favorite son” had returned at last to make his “Triumphal Tour,” which lasted from 1824 until 1825.³ The “god-like” “friend of the people” visited all twenty-four states, populated by American citizens he had come fifty years prior to rescue.⁴

At the age of nineteen, the Marquis de Lafayette evaded the aspirations of his father-in-law, abandoned his pregnant wife, defied the orders of the King, and purchased a ship to come to the aid of a foreign people’s revolution. Throughout the American Revolution, he fought alongside the colonists, shared in their hardships, and fought for their cause of liberty with a commitment worthy of honor and remembrance. Considering the magnitude of his devotion to their cause, it is no surprise that, upon his return in 1824, the name of Lafayette “beat in every grateful heart” and “burst from every tongue.”⁵ For his military, financial, and diplomatic contributions to the Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette earned an enduring, immortal place in the hearts of the American people.⁶

Marie-Joseph-Paul-Yves-Roch-Gilbert du Motier came from a long lineage of military excellence, tracing back to the Crusades and the days of Joan of Arc.⁷ When he was scarcely two years old, his father, a colonel of the French Grenadiers, was killed at the hands of the English during the Seven Years War,

¹ Edgar Ewing Brandon, *Lafayette, Guest of the Nation: A Contemporary Account of the Triumphal Tour of General Lafayette* (Oxford, OH: Oxford Historical Press, 1954), 75.

² *Ibid.*, 70, 23, 65.

³ *Ibid.*, 23, 80.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 66, 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁷ James Breck Perkins, *France in the American Revolution* (Williamstown: Corner House Publishers, 1970), 169; Louis Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935), 11.

leaving him heir to an enormous sum of money and the title of Marquis de Lafayette.⁸ His wealth facilitated his marriage to Adrienne Noailles in 1774, which propelled him further into France's exclusive circle of nobility and associated him with royalty such as Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.⁹

The Marquis de Lafayette first heard of the American Revolution in August of 1775, during a dinner reception honoring the Duke of Gloucester, brother to the King of England, George III.¹⁰ The Duke openly criticized his brother's adverse policies regarding the colonists and "spoke with admiration of the Americans' behavior and expressed sympathy for their cause."¹¹ Upon hearing the Duke's convictions, the impressionable marquis decided that he wanted to lend his support to the colonies' emancipation. He later wrote, "When I first heard of [the colonists'] quarrel, my heart was enlisted, and I thought only of joining my colors to those of the revolutionaries."¹²

The Americans' cause certainly captivated the nineteen-year-old nobleman, but what compelled him to exchange his life of privilege and ease for the bloody battlefields of thirteen rebellious, foreign colonies? Louis Gottschalk suggests that, after the death of Lafayette's father, "To hate the English became a filial as well as a patriotic duty."¹³ In addition to avenging England for claiming the life of his father, by joining the Revolution, Lafayette could simultaneously appease his despondency toward the nobility of Versailles. He "viewed the greatness and the littleness of the court with contempt," and consequently found himself to be discontent in his extravagant lifestyle among French aristocrats.¹⁴ Instead, he gravitated toward the prospect of aiding the colonists, later writing, "The attraction to the American Revolution drew me suddenly to my proper place...where...I could, at the age of nineteen, take refuge in the alternative of conquering or perishing in the cause to which I had devoted myself."¹⁵ The Marquis de Lafayette was seeking retribution, independence, and glory, all of which he hoped to attain in the American Revolution.

Having been inspired by his conversation with the Duke, Lafayette sought out the American Commissioner in Paris in order to enlist in the American

⁸ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 3; David Loth, *The People's General: The Personal Story of Lafayette* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1951), 17.

⁹ André Maurois, *Adrienne: The Life of the Marquise de La Fayette*, trans. Gerard Hopkins (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1961), 30; Sabra Holbrook, *Lafayette: Man in the Middle* (New York: Atheneum, 1977), 9.

¹⁰ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 50.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Perkins, 173, 174; James R. Gaines, *For Liberty and Glory: Washington, Lafayette, and Their Revolutions* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007), 37.

¹³ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 12.

¹⁴ Jules Cloquet, *Recollections of the Private Life of General Lafayette*, trans. Isaiah Townsend (London: Baldwin and Cradock, 1835), 25.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

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Revolutionary Forces.¹⁶ Commissioner Silas Deane was hesitant to accept Lafayette, or any other French soldier for that matter, as he was “well-nigh harassed to death” by officers wanting to lend their assistance to America’s cause.¹⁷ This, however, did not deter Lafayette because he possessed both a willingness to serve and a distinguished reputation among French nobility. In an effort to combat Deane’s resistance, the marquis “specifically and emphatically rejected the very idea of monetary remuneration,” and, furthermore, pledged to purchase a ship to transport Deane’s volunteer officers across the Atlantic.¹⁸

The American Commissioner recognized that there was something different about Lafayette. He was not like the Frenchmen who had come demanding reimbursement for their service and expecting grandiose ranks to match or surpass those which they held in France.¹⁹ Gottschalk notes, “His willingness to serve without compensation or pension singled him out among Americans and foreigners alike.”²⁰ Though not yet nineteen, the Marquis de Lafayette was granted a contract on December 7, 1776, in which Deane clearly detailed the reasons for his acceptance into the Continental army as a major-general.²¹ In the end, his social connections, personal wealth, and zeal for the American cause won Lafayette the appointment he desired, bringing him one step closer to joining the revolution in America.

As he had promised Deane, Lafayette purchased a ship, *La Victoire*, and began making arrangements for his journey to America.²² His eminent departure caused quite a stir amongst the French government, which attempted to prohibit him from leaving by making it illegal for anyone seeking to aid the colonies in America to leave French ports and specifically ordered for the return of the Marquis de Lafayette.²³ The teenager was, in fact, just about to make his exodus when he heard news that a *lettre de cachet* had been issued against him by Louis XVI.²⁴ According to Gottschalk, “With one of these secret orders the king might imprison anyone for any length of time without specifying the reason, and he frequently used them to keep the sons of well-known families from disgracing

¹⁶ Holbrook, 15-16.

¹⁷ Silas Deane, *The Deane Papers: 1774-1790*, vol. 1 (New York: New-York Historical Society Publication Fund, 1886), 375.

¹⁸ David Loth, 49; Emile Babeau and Maurice de la Fuye, *The Apostle of Liberty: A Life of La Fayette*, trans. Edward Hyams (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1956), 26.

¹⁹ Louis Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1937), 25, 15.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 27.

²¹ Jared Sparks. *The Diplomatic Correspondence of the American Revolution* (Boston: N. Hale and Gray and Bowen, 1829), 1:98-99. Deane proposed his “high birth, his alliances, the great dignities which his family hold at this court, his considerable estates in this realm, his personal merit, his reputation, his disinterestedness, and, above all, his zeal for liberty of our provinces” as valid grounds for appointing the Marquis de Lafayette the rank of Major-General.

²² Olivier Bernier, *Lafayette: Hero of Two Worlds* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1983), 28.

²³ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 110.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 101.

themselves.”²⁵ Fearing negative consequences, Lafayette returned to France, but, upon his arrival in Bordeaux, he was overcome by a spirit of rebellion. Rather than continue on to Marseilles, as he was commanded to do, Lafayette instead wrote a letter apologizing for disregarding the order.²⁶ He then proceeded to disguise himself as a courier and fled back to *La Victoire* in order to make his get-away to America.²⁷

When he heard the news of Lafayette’s flight, his father-in-law, the Duc d’Ayen, was “violently angry” and understandably so.²⁸ After all, he had envisioned that Lafayette would hold a position on the court of Versailles as well as maintain a prosperous military career, one which the Duc had worked diligently to secure for him.²⁹ Moreover, Lafayette was young and newly married. His wife, Adrienne, was pregnant with their second child, and the thought that his son-in-law would abandon her for a distant conflict in colonies which did not concern him infuriated the Duc d’Ayen.³⁰ However, Lafayette would not be stopped. Before departing for America, he wrote his father-in-law, expressing his excitement for the adventure which lay ahead of him, saying, “I am filled with joy at having found so good an opportunity to increase my experience and to do something in the world.”³¹

On Friday, June 13, 1777, after nearly eight weeks at sea, *La Victoire* anchored in a harbor off of North Island, South Carolina.³² From there, Lafayette then headed north, nine hundred miles, to the capital city of Philadelphia, where he hoped to immediately present his credentials to Congress.³³ Unfortunately, the young man met resistance from James Lovell, chairman of the new Committee on Foreign Applications.³⁴ Lovell claimed that Silas Deane had “exceeded his authority” by sending him, explaining, “Last year, it is true, we needed officers, but this year we have many, and very experienced ones too.”³⁵ Lafayette had forfeited his life of opulence in France to come to America’s aid and therefore contested, “After the sacrifices I have made, I have the right to exact two favors: one is to serve at my own expense, and the other is to begin to serve as a volunteer.”³⁶ Despite initial reservations of accepting another young,

²⁵ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 110.

²⁶ Bernier, 33.

²⁷ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 120.

²⁸ Bernier, 31.

²⁹ Perkins, 173; Gottschalk, *Lafayette Comes to America*, 39.

³⁰ Bernier, 31.

³¹ Perkins, 179.

³² Gaines, 62.

³³ Marquis de Lafayette, *Memoirs: Correspondence and Manuscripts of General Lafayette*, vol. 1 (London: Saunders and Otley, 1837), 15.

³⁴ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army*, 18.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 19.

³⁶ Marquis de Lafayette, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 17.

inexperienced foreign officer, Congress ultimately consented to the marquis's request and gave him the rank of major-general on July 31.³⁷

Shortly after having received his commission from Congress, Lafayette made the acquaintance of the Commanding General of the Continental Army, George Washington. Years later, in his memoirs, Lafayette recounted the story of their first meeting. Lafayette claims Washington took him aside "and then told him, that he should be pleased if he would make the quarters of the commander-in-chief his home...and consider himself at all times as one of the family."³⁸ Lafayette felt overjoyed with such a welcome, which he perceived as an invitation by Washington into his personal family.³⁹ Gottschalk observes, "He had—almost suddenly—ceased to be merely a companion of French soldiers of fortune seeking for glory in an unknown world and had become the adopted son of a hero."⁴⁰ Yet, David A. Clary suggests that the French-speaking marquis misunderstood Washington's comments because, contrary to Lafayette's interpretation, Washington's English use of the word "family" was exclusively used for referencing his military staff.⁴¹ Furthermore, Clary concludes that "Washington invited Lafayette into his military family to keep an eye on him."⁴² Whether for the purpose of protecting him as a son or merely to lend a watchful eye on the Frenchmen, Washington kept Lafayette close to him during the teenager's first few weeks with his new "family."

After having accompanied Washington on several reconnoitering excursions, Lafayette was eager to finally engage in combat and received his first opportunity to do so at the Battle of Brandywine. Upon joining the center division of General John Sullivan's corps, the teenage major-general gallantly encouraged the retiring troops to charge ahead instead of cowering in retreat, yet they were unwilling to heed the commands of a Frenchman.⁴³ When they resisted his orders, Lafayette resorted to the use of force, pushing them forward by their shoulders and nudging them with the flat of his sword.⁴⁴ Amidst the chaos of the battle, Lafayette was wounded in his left calf, but he persisted in

³⁷ David A. Clary, *Adopted Son* (New York: Bantam Dell, 2007), 93. The decision of Congress to grant Lafayette a commission in the U.S. Army: "Whereas the Marquis de Lafayette, out of his great zeal to the cause of liberty, in which the United states are engaged, has left his family and connexions, and at his own expense come over to offer his services to the United States, without pension or particular allowance, and is anxious to serve our cause: *Resolved* that his service be accepted and that in consideration of his zeal, illustrious family and connexions, he have the rank and commission of Major General of the Army of the United States."

³⁸ Henri Holstein, *Memoirs of Gilbert M. Lafayette* (Geneva: John Greves, 1835), 40.

³⁹ Clary, 97.

⁴⁰ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army*, 39.

⁴¹ Clary, 97.

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army*, 44-45.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Clary, 115.

fighting, unaware that he had been shot.⁴⁵ General Washington insisted that his personal physician tend to Lafayette's wound and that he be taken care of as if he were his own son.⁴⁶

Having shed his blood alongside the colonists in their struggle for freedom, Lafayette attested his commitment to their revolution and, inadvertently, made himself a hero.⁴⁷ His display of bravery and leadership at Brandywine earned Lafayette not only the respect of the soldiers but also the gratitude of Washington. Following the day's events, the General wrote to Congress, praising Lafayette for contributing to their heightened morale.⁴⁸ Concluding his report, Washington wrote, "Notwithstanding the misfortune of the day, I am happy to find the troops in good spirits."⁴⁹ By leading his men, struggling alongside them, shedding his blood for their cause, and ceaselessly encouraging them to carry on, Lafayette had distinguished himself from the other Frenchmen who had served before him. As Olivier Bernier says, "His behavior was different from that of the other French officers, who had shown a marked tendency to avoid actual battles."⁵⁰

Over the course of the months following Brandywine, Lafayette served in numerous battles, in which he continued to demonstrate his military capabilities and commitment for the colonists' cause. Yet, because he did not have command over his own division, Lafayette incessantly pestered Washington in hopes of attaining the appointment he wanted. Washington had been against honoring Lafayette with his own division because he felt that American officers "would be disgusted if foreigners were put over their heads."⁵¹ However, he finally consented to plead the case of his zealous "son," and wrote to Congress: "...he is sensible, discreet in his manner...and from the disposition he discovered at the battle of Brandywine, possesses a large share of bravery and military ardor."⁵² Although previously apprehensive due to past problems with foreign officers, Congress ultimately deemed the young Frenchman to be worthy of commanding his own division based upon his demonstration of leadership and devotion to the cause as well as Washington's recommendation.⁵³

Lafayette had been in the colonies for just over five months when he was given command over a division, and it was evident that he was quickly becoming an "idol of the congress, the army, and the people of America."⁵⁴

⁴⁵ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army*, 45.

⁴⁶ Marquis de Lafayette, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 105.

⁴⁷ Clary, 120.

⁴⁸ Henry B. Dawson, *Battles of the United States, by Sea and Land*, vol.1 (New York: Johnson, Fry, 1858), 279.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰ Bernier, 50.

⁵¹ Sparks, 4:328.

⁵² Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army*, 73.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 85.

⁵⁴ Marquis de Lafayette, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 239.

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Lafayette's popularity among Americans would later contribute significantly to the revolutionary efforts by helping him gain assistance from France. Only weeks after having received the division which he had so eagerly anticipated, Lafayette led his men to Valley Forge in order to establish camp for the winter.⁵⁵ During the harsh winter, he continued to demonstrate his devotion to the American military effort by endeavoring to purchase a ship for the navy's use and attending to the personal needs of his men.⁵⁶ In addition to petitioning Congress for relief, the Frenchman also made efforts to obtain warm clothing and other necessities for his men by expending his personal funds.⁵⁷

Joining him at Valley Forge were approximately fifty Iroquois warriors.⁵⁸ General Philip Schuyler had called upon Lafayette to assist in negotiations with the Six Nations tribes in Johnstown, as Schuyler thought the French major-general could be useful in persuading the Native Americans to abandon their British loyalties by utilizing those which had once been established by the French.⁵⁹ The Native Americans genuinely liked Lafayette and bestowed upon him the name Kayeheanla.⁶⁰ Besides serving as a mediator between them and the colonists while in Johnstown, Lafayette also prevented a mutiny amongst the soldiers, who were upset for having not received their wages.⁶¹ The major-general compensated their earnings from his own funds, and then appealed to Congress about the situation, saying, "We want money, sir, and money will be spoken by me till I will be enabled to pay our poor soldiers."⁶² Whether for the regimentals or the Native Americans, Lafayette was a valuable asset to the army for his ability to intercede, negotiate, and provide.

In the fall of 1778, having verified his abilities to contribute to the war effort militarily, Lafayette requested permission from Congress to return to France so that he might assist the American cause diplomatically.⁶³ Upon his arrival in France, he wrote to the President of Congress, declaring,

The affairs of America I shall ever look upon as my first business whilst I am in Europe. Any confidence from the king and ministers, any popularity I may have among my own countrymen, any means in my power, shall be, to the best of my skill, and till the end of my life, exerted in behalf of an interest I have so much at heart.⁶⁴

⁵⁵ Loth, 99.

⁵⁶ Gottschalk, *Lafayette Joins the American Army*, 105-106.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ Clary, 174.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 162. Also known as the Iroquois Confederacy, the Six Nations tribes included the Cayuga, Mohawks, Onandaga, Oneida, Seneca, and Tuscarora.

⁶⁰ Gaines, 203.

⁶¹ Clary, 163.

⁶² *Ibid.*

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 225.

⁶⁴ Marquis de Lafayette, *Memoirs*, vol. 1, 286.

Almost immediately, Lafayette took to attending after the affairs of America by contacting the Comte de Vergennes and Prime Minister Maurepas to apply for additional assistance.⁶⁵ Thanks to months of relentless negotiations, Lafayette successfully persuaded France to further support the American Revolution. James Breck Perkins says Lafayette's diplomacy was "of inestimable value to the American cause" because he served as "a connecting link between the Americans and the French government."⁶⁶

After a year's work in France, Lafayette returned to America bearing news that Louis XVI intended to supply six warships and six thousand men for the Americans.⁶⁷ Perkins says that, "The decision of the French government to send not only a fleet, but a considerable force of soldiers, to cooperate with the American army was in large degree due to La Fayette,"⁶⁸ and Gottschalk asserts that the marquis influenced the decision "more than any one other person."⁶⁹ Despite his persuasive authority in gaining the endorsement of the French government to provide and dispatch a naval fleet, Lafayette was not granted charge over the expeditionary force. Instead, command was given to the Comte de Rochambeau, with Admiral Ternay in control of the fleet.⁷⁰ Though disappointed, Lafayette accepted Rochambeau's appointment because he understood that, as a twenty-year-old major-general, he was rather young to lead such a command.⁷¹ What is more, as Perkins observes, Lafayette's resolve of contentment is testimony that "he was more interested in obtaining an army for his allies than in obtaining for himself the position of its commander."⁷²

With confirmation that France was sending support in the form of a naval fleet, hope was rekindled in the hearts of the American soldiers. Upon his return to the colonies, "the ringing of bells and the blare of bands...cheers, fireworks, and bonfires" welcomed Lafayette back to the shores of America.⁷³ General Washington was equally delighted to hear of the marquis's return. In response to compliments made about Lafayette by the secretary to French ambassador La Luzerne, Washington is claimed to have "blushed like a fond father whose child is being praised."⁷⁴ The secretary said, "Tears fell from his eyes, he clasped my hand, and could hardly utter the words: 'I do not know a nobler, finer soul, and I love him as my own son.'"⁷⁵

⁶⁵ Gaines, 136.

⁶⁶ Perkins, 189.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 297.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁶⁹ Louis Gottschalk, *Lafayette and the Close of the American Revolution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 66.

⁷⁰ Gottschalk, *Close of the American Revolution*, 65, 70.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 66.

⁷² Perkins, 296.

⁷³ Gottschalk, *Close of the American Revolution*, 77.

⁷⁴ Clary, 245.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*

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With the return of his “son,” and then the arrival of the French fleet months later, Washington made use of Lafayette as an interpreter during strategic exchanges with Rochambeau and Ternay.⁷⁶ The General intended to use the naval advantage provided by the French to organize a decisive ending to the war, culminating in a siege of Yorktown. Perkins argues that such “could not have been attempted without the cooperation of a fleet,” and, as the Americans did not have their own fleet, the assistance from the French was vital to secure the victory and the conclusion of the war.⁷⁷ Largely because of the strength of the French fleet, obtained chiefly by Lafayette’s efforts, American forces seized Yorktown, defeated Cornwallis, and subsequently won the war for the emancipation of the American colonies from Britain.

From the moment he first heard of the colonists’ struggle in the summer of 1775, Lafayette devoted himself to the fight for liberty. As an ambitious nineteen-year-old, motivated by his discontentment with his life at Versailles and a vengeance against England, he pledged to enlist without pay. Once in America, Lafayette quickly gained favor in the eyes of the Americans by first earning the paternal love and friendship of George Washington. He proved himself worthy of the soldiers’ respect by struggling alongside them, bleeding for their cause, and interceding for them when they were in need of provisions. Lafayette then utilized his connections to the French court to solicit for additional assistance. By his influence, France agreed to send a naval fleet which ultimately helped to secure the end of the war. For his contributions to the American Revolution, the Marquis de Lafayette is honored immortally across America today, as he was in Philadelphia on September 28, 1824:

You have seen in foreign regions the gorgeous pomp, and the splendid triumphs of monarchs, and of conquerors; but none has ever before seen the generous emotions and the willing homage of eleven millions of free citizens at the sight of a man endeared to them by services long since rendered, and who proclaim to the wide earth and the high heavens with the thunder of canon and crash of arms, in one deep and loud and tremendous shout, that they never have forgotten, that they never will forget, Lafayette, their early friend—the friend of the Father of their Country—the friend whom the Country delights to honor.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ Gottschalk, *Close of the American Revolution*, 133.

⁷⁷ Perkins, 10-11.

⁷⁸ Brandon, 75.

RAYMOND L. MUNCY SCHOLARSHIP

An Academic Scholarship for Undergraduate Students of History

The Raymond L. Muncy Scholarship is a one-time financial award for those undergraduate students at Harding University majoring in history who demonstrate exceptional scholarship, research, and Christian character. The scholarship was created to honor the late Raymond L. Muncy, Chairman of the Department of History and Social Sciences from 1965-1993. His teaching, mentoring, and scholarship modeled the best in Christian education. Applied toward tuition, the award is granted over the span of a single academic year. The award is presented annually at the Department of History and Social Sciences Banquet.

This issue of *Tenor of Our Times* is proud to include the work of the recipients of the 2012 Raymond L. Muncy Scholarship, which includes both a primary and a secondary award. Alyssa Kirkman was awarded \$1,200 for her essay, “The Meeting of Mothers, Midwives, and Men.” Catherine Hines was awarded \$600 for her essay, “Reaping the Turmoil Within: How Ireland’s Kings Triggered the Anglo-Norman Rebellion.”

THE MEETING OF MOTHERS, MIDWIVES, AND MEN

By Alyssa Kirkman

Colonial women lived in a time without modern medicine or effective birth control. As a result, childbirth dominated their attention for a great portion of their lives and held the potential to be a time of immense joy or immense sadness. Laboring women surrounded themselves with female friends, family, and, of course, a midwife. The women involved in this social childbirth encouraged and commiserated; they ran errands and gossiped about the latest rumors and recipes, ever ready for potential heartbreak. The delivery room belonged to the women, and in it the midwife was in charge. “Midwife” literally means “with woman” or “a woman who is with the mother at birth.”¹ For the first 250 years of American history, midwives delivered almost all of the babies. However, throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries medicine took great strides, and by the 1820s midwives had almost completely disappeared among middle and upper class families. As people learned the mechanics of the female body and childbirth, the trained physician replaced the untrained midwife, and social childbirth turned into a private affair between a woman and her doctor. Even though colonial midwives held a more important societal status than their English counterparts, they were still subject to the medical changes begun in Europe that cost them their profession.

In the American colonies, the social childbirth process closely followed its English example. Seventeenth-century people viewed childbirth as a dangerous affair, and rightly so, as one in twenty-four babies died within their first day of life, with stillborns making up forty percent of that number.² When a woman went into labor, a set of protocols was followed to ensure as much safety and divine blessing as possible. The woman’s female family and friends gathered near as they recited prayers, provided hot water and towels, and withdrew into the dark room for potentially days as they awaited new life to enter the world.³ This community affair can be divided into three stages, all based on social confines. In the first stage, the woman’s contractions began, and she would walk around as much as possible to hasten the delivery. They called for the midwife at this point. The second stage occurred when the midwife determined that the “forcing” or “bearing” pains had come (probably when the cervix was fully

¹ Richard W. Wertz and Dorothy C. Wertz, *Lying-In: A History of Childbirth in America* (New York: The Free Press, 1977), 6.

² Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812* (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), 186-87.

³ Benjamin Woolley, *Heal Thyself: Nicholas Culpeper and the Seventeenth-Century Struggle to Bring Medicine to the People* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers Inc., 2004), 305; 308.

dilated). Then, they would call the local women and possibly even apprenticed midwives. These women were frequently called “gossips,” as they used this opportunity to chatter about local rumors and to exchange recipes. They tried to ease the tension of the mother, often by saying words of encouragement or even telling coarse jokes. After the mother finished delivering, the third stage, or the “lying-in” period, began. The midwife’s role was largely over, and the female friends and family members stepped in. After delivery, mothers would be too weak or too busy to continue their daily housework. Lying-in lasted three to four weeks in order for the mother to recuperate, and during this time she let others do the housework and look after her other children. After the lying-in period, the mother would repay her friends in two ways: she would be ready to return the favor in her neighbors’ lying-in periods, and she held a “groaning party.” They named these parties after the groaning of both the mother in labor and the table under all the food she prepared.⁴ Entire communities of colonial women shared the event of childbirth.

In sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England, midwives constituted a loosely connected group of women, often operating without control or regulation. The few regulations that did exist reveal the specific communal expectations of midwives in the birthing room. An oath from this time period lists fifteen responsibilities that midwives should complete. They would be, “diligent and faithful and ready to help every woman labouring with child, as well the poor as the rich; and...in time of necessity [would not] forsake the poor woman to go to the rich.” Midwives were also required to discover the father of babies of unwed mothers. While the woman was in delivery, the midwife asked the name of the father, and people assumed that a mother in labor could not lie. They were to ensure that children would be baptized into the Anglican Church and stillborns would be buried.⁵ Midwives tried to interfere as little as possible to allow nature to take its course. They viewed birth as a natural process that needed little help. Percival Willughby advised his midwife daughter, teaching her about the patience of nature, that hurrying delivery would “rather than hinder the birthe than any waie promote it, and oft ruinate the mother and usually the child.”⁶ While waiting on nature, they provided the mother with a steady supply of alcohol. Martha Ballard’s diary describes a rum, tea, and sugar

⁴ Ulrich, 183-85; Catherine M. Scholten, ““On the Importance of the Obstetrick Art’: Changing Customs of Childbirth in America, 1760-1825,” in *Women and Health in America*, ed. Judith Walzer Leavitt (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 144-45; Ulrich, 188-89; Wertz, 4-5.

⁵ Jane B. Donegan, *Women and Men Midwives: Medicine, Morality, and Misogyny in Early America* (London: Greenwood Press, 1978), 12.

⁶ Jane B. Donegan, ““Safe Delivered,’ but by Whom? Midwives and Men-Midwives in Early America,” in *Women and Health in America*, ed. Judith Walzer Leavitt (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 303.

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concoction she used.⁷ A midwife's tools consisted simply of either a stool or a pallet-bed that allowed the woman to give birth sitting or even standing. Extra hands helped to catch the baby.⁸ Thus, a midwife's primary role was to comfort, reassure, encourage, and support. John Maubray described the ideal midwife in *The Female Physician*:

She ought not to be too Fat or Gross, but especially not to have thick or fleshy Hands and Arms, or large-Bon'd Wrists: which (of Necessity) must occasion racking Pains to the tender labouring Woman...She ought to be Grave and Considerate, endued with Resolution and Presence of Mind, in order to foresee and prevent Accidents... She ought to be Patient and Pleasant; Soft, Meek, and Mild in her Temper, in order to encourage and comfort the labouring Woman. She should pass by and forgive the small Failing, and peevish Faults, instructing her gently when she does or says amiss...

Skill was not the main concern of the colonial mind. The midwife was rather to be a "paragon of virtue."⁹

Midwifery's importance in family life was demonstrated by its presence among the first professions in the colonies. Wherever women went, midwives followed. The first colonial midwife, Bridget Lee Fuller, wife to Deacon "Doctor" Samuel Fuller, sailed on the *Mayflower* with the Pilgrims and delivered the three babies born on that voyage. Other early examples of colonial midwives include Mrs. Wiat (d.1705), who successfully delivered over one thousand babies in Dorchester, and Mrs. Thomas Whitmore, who did not lose a patient in the two thousand deliveries she attended.¹⁰ Anne Hutchinson, the famous religious dissenter, also served as a midwife in her four years at the Massachusetts Bay Colony in the 1630s before she was banished for her heretical beliefs.¹¹ Southern plantations often had their own midwife who would be responsible for delivering and rearing both slave babies and their master's children. These "granny midwives" introduced African folklore, superstitions, traditions, and practices into southern midwifery.¹²

The best example of midwifery in the colonial period is Martha Ballard, who worked in Hallowell, Maine. Unlike most midwives of her period, she left behind a diary in which she meticulously wrote down the 816 births she

⁷ Ulrich, 190.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 185.

⁹ Donegan, *Women and Men Midwives*, 10-11.

¹⁰ Donegan, "Safe Delivered," 308.

¹¹ Bethany Reid, "'Unfit for Light': Anne Bradstreet's Monstrous Birth," *The New England Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (December 1998): 526.

¹² Judith Pence Rooks, *Midwifery and Childbirth in America* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997), 18.

attended from 1785-1812, along with other thoughts and prayers.¹³ Ballard's diary tells more than just her life events; it tells what a midwife's typical day may have been like. The number of births she attended varied every month, some being much busier than others. During a three-week period in August of 1787, she attended four deliveries and one false alarm, and, in addition to midwifery, she "made sixteen medical calls, prepared three bodies for burial, dispensed pills to one neighbor, harvested and prepared herbs for another, and doctored her own husband's sore throat."¹⁴ Colonial midwives performed the duties of healers and pharmacists while still delivering babies and doing normal housework. For example, Anne Hutchinson attended illnesses as well as deliveries, which is where she performed much of her witnessing.¹⁵ Women frequently were responsible for caring for the ill and treating injuries, as seen in multiple medicinal concoctions within colonial recipe books.¹⁶ Therefore, it was logical for midwives to be viewed as capable family doctors. Midwifery was the best paying job available to a woman, and, as such, many widows became midwives for their livelihood. Mrs. Ballard charged an average six shillings per delivery, which is roughly equal to what her husband made as a surveyor and more than the daily wages of four shillings for the average weaver.¹⁷ They held a job that was central to society, as evidenced by the several New England towns that offered rent-free housing for midwives.¹⁸

Colonial midwives were more successful than their English counterparts partly because colonial women were healthier and partly because tighter regulations produced more skill.¹⁹ Middle to upper class English women stayed inside the home more than colonial, or rather rural, women did. The lack of sunlight often led to rickets, which distorted the female pelvic bone. The twisted pelvis would then obstruct the birth canal and constrict the baby's passage. However, there were no tools to determine if a pelvis was twisted, so they did not know the cause of the obstruction.²⁰ Also, urban women tended to be more fashion conscious, and the quickly developing fashion during this time was a wasp-like waist. The desired waist circumference of fifteen to eighteen inches required pre-adolescent girls to bind their ribcages, which permanently deformed their intestinal structure. Corsets helped to keep up this figure. Naturally, this would cause painful pregnancies and obstructed childbirth.²¹

¹³ Ulrich, 5.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 40.

¹⁵ Reid, 528.

¹⁶ Keven J. Hayes, *A Colonial Woman's Bookshelf* (Knoxville, TN: The University of Tennessee Press, 1996), 88.

¹⁷ Rooks, 18; Ulrich, 199.

¹⁸ Wertz, 8.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 18.

²⁰ Lyle Massey, "Pregnancy and Pathology: Picturing Childbirth in Eighteenth-Century Obstetric Atlases," *The Art Bulletin* 87, no. 1 (March 2005): 77.

²¹ Wertz, 110-11.

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Colonial women did not contend with these issues until colonial urbanization in the early nineteenth century. In addition to more pragmatic minds, rural women had more available food and less crowding, which, in turn, yielded healthier mothers. Maternal mortality rates provide a comparison of women's health as well as the skill of English and colonial midwives. Mrs. Thomas Whitmore, as mentioned above, was said to never have lost a patient. Martha Ballard had five mothers die (none of which occurred on the delivery bed) in 998 total deliveries; Hall Jackson, a midwife in Portsmouth, New Hampshire claimed no maternal deaths in 511 deliveries; and Lydia Baldwin of Vermont had one maternal death in 926 deliveries. To contrast, in 1770, there were 14 maternal deaths in 64 deliveries in one area of London, a 222 per thousand average, and 35 maternal deaths out of 890 deliveries in another area of London, a 39.3 per thousand average. English villages of this time period had mortality rates comparable to this, ranging from ten to twenty-nine maternal deaths per thousand.²² Overall health appears to have been better in the colonies. Urban English and Scottish death rates were twice as high as those in Portsmouth, New Hampshire between 1700 and 1800, whose rate was comparable to other colonial cities.²³

Stricter religion also contributed to more success in colonial deliver rooms, as it effectively dismissed many potentially harmful magical practices.²⁴ Divine expectations led to tighter regulations, producing more skillful colonial midwives. These expectations appeared in the literature written for midwives by men. In 1710, Cotton Mather published *Elizabeth and Her Holy Retirement* for both midwives and pregnant women. He talked about how a woman should ponder her spiritual state as life-threatening childbirth approached. Midwives were to carry this pamphlet around to give to women in childbirth, as it was their job to spread piety:

I will move a godly Midwife, to procure a new Edition of my little Essay, entituled, *Elizabeth in her Holy Retirement*: that it may be scattered thro Town and Countrey; and occasion be taken from the Circumstances of them who are expecting an Hour of Travail, to quicken their Praeparation for Death, and the Exercise of all suitable Piety.

Interestingly enough, it also contained a recipe to improve nurses' milk.²⁵ Furthermore, midwifery pamphlets included directions and advice for midwives in case of complications. Popular manuals included Francois Mauriceau's 1688

²² Ulrich, 172-73.

²³ J. Worth Estes, *Hall Jackson and the Purple Foxglove: Medical Practice and Research in Revolutionary America 1760-1820* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1979), 98.

²⁴ Wertz, 2.

²⁵ Hayes, 97-98.

publication, *Les Maladies des femmes grosses et accouchees*, which was the best compilation of obstetrical knowledge of the period. It went through several editions in the colonies and was very important clinically, as he was the first to write about tubal pregnancy, epidemic puerperal fever, and complications in labor caused by umbilical cords. *Aristotle's Masterpiece, Aristotle's Compleat and Experience'd Midwife, The Problems of Aristotle, Aristotle's Legacy, and The Works of Aristotle*, all popular in the colonies, combined astrological and strange folk medicine with useful, practical information on conception, pregnancy, and childbirth. (Some young men even used these manuals as pornography.)²⁶ Nicholas Culpeper, a famous physician of seventeenth-century London, wrote *A Directory for Midwives*, a self-help pamphlet. He wrote in a simple, engaging style so that any midwife could read and find his manual useful. It contained a large amount of female and fetal anatomy, normal labor, nursing, and lying-in practices as well as causes for infertility and miscarriages. He intended midwives to keep the manual near in case of sudden labors, but he left out directions for emergency situations. He felt they were beyond the depths of a midwife's understanding and into the realm of the physician's.²⁷ Although Culpeper wrote to better midwifery of his day, his opinions about midwives' capabilities to learn, understand, and repeat processes and procedures in the birthing room represent the shift occurring in medicine in the eighteenth century.

The 1600s were a time of great advances in many areas of medicine. As the scientific revolution raged in Europe, the idea that the body was mechanistic and would follow predictable patterns developed. These patterns could be studied, and manipulations could be created to increase the health of individuals; thus, the scientific evaluation of the human body began. This led to an increased interest in the mechanics of childbirth.²⁸ As men were not allowed in the birthing room, childbirth remained a mystery to them. The only time they ever entered the laboring woman's chamber was when a delivery went poorly. A child that did not present headfirst caused difficulty for any midwife. They could attempt to turn the child, but often they could not be sure which end of the child they were viewing, as midwives rarely underwent anatomical training. If it became apparent that the woman was not going to push the child out by her own means—and the midwife could not pull it out—then they called for a physician or surgeon. This was a last resort, only occurring if death was eminent for either mother or child. The presence of a male left the mother and midwife embarrassed and, more often than not, signaled the death of the child. In 1731, physician Edmund Chapman arrived at a delivery in which the midwife had waited too long to call. The midwife, in a hurry, had accidentally pulled out the

²⁶ Hayes, 96, 98.

²⁷ Woolley, 308.

²⁸ Robbie E. Davis-Floyd, "The Technological Model of Birth," *The Journal of American Folklore* 100, no. 398 (October-December 1987): 481-82.

arm of the child. He wrote that the arm “had been 18 hours in the world, and [was] much swelled by the long Time and the Ignorance of the Midwife who pulled violently at the Arm [with] ever Pain; not knowing that it was altogether impossible to extract a full grown Infant by that Method.” It became the physicians’ and surgeons’ jobs to save the mother’s life in these situations, which meant pulling the child out in pieces. They became known as the harbingers of death, bringing iron instruments into a normally natural and joyful process.²⁹ Some attempted to educate midwives through the writing of manuals, like Nicholas Culpeper’s *A Directory for Midwives*, but, since they could not speak from experience, they continued to have little understanding of the normal birth process.

Some physicians attempted to incorporate midwifery into their practice, but their iron instruments were not useful to natural births, giving them little advantage over female midwives. Something revolutionary to the practice, however, was occurring in England. In 1728, Hugh Chamberlen Jr. died without an heir and released the family secret of forceps. Peter Chamberlen had invented the forceps in the early seventeenth century. He had immediately taken them to the palace to secure positions for him and his heirs as the royal man-midwives for the next hundred years. They never released their secret, but people knew the Chamberlens had something that could deliver a woman safely from a complicated birth. Upon death, Hugh Chamberlen did not release all of the different styles of forceps they developed, and the complete family stash was not discovered until 1813.³⁰ Nevertheless, a crude version of Chamberlen’s forceps made their way into the public eye and fell into the hands of one William Smellie, who contributed more to midwifery in the eighteenth century than anyone else. He studied the mechanics of labor and delivery and discovered that the child’s head turned to fit the birth canal. With this knowledge, he improved the design of forceps and taught people to use them to turn the child’s head, not to forcibly pull the child out.³¹ He put together a number of drawings from dissections of women who had died in childbirth to help educate training physicians on female anatomy. These pictures presented pregnancy in the clinical mindset, which helped to transform the view of pregnancy from a natural process in the hands of women to a bodily deformity, or illness, in the hands of physicians.³² However, this was not Smellie’s intention. He tried to find clinical practice for his students, both male and female, by offering medical help to poor pregnant women in exchange for their consent to students’ observation of their deliveries. In times when he did not have a live model, he

²⁹ Donegan, *Women and Men Midwives*, 17-18, 25.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 49-50.

³¹ Scholten, 146.

³² Massey, 73.

had a “mock-woman” for demonstration constructed of a leather child, beer, a doll, and a cork.³³

As with many attributes of Europe, medical practices began to leak into eighteenth-century America. Young, aspiring physicians went to Europe for part of their training. William Shippen Jr. experienced a typical physician’s education by receiving a bachelor’s degree from the College of New Jersey, taking a three-year apprenticeship with his father, and then going to Europe to perfect his learning. He probably attended the anatomical lectures and dissections of William Harvey and took a midwifery course from Smellie while in London. Next, he went on to gain a medical degree in Edinburgh and from there traveled to Paris for more experience.³⁴ Physicians abroad in England found midwifery in uproar over who should be in charge in the delivery room. Thus, the field became the more susceptible to change in the colonies as well. Men coming home from training convinced themselves that they needed to follow in their teachers’ paths and improve midwifery. (The first European-trained physician to add midwifery as a part of his practice was James Lloyd in Boston, who had studied under Hunter and Smellie and quickly became a leading physician of the city.)³⁵

William Shippen Jr. was the most well-known American man-midwife of the period. He returned to the colonies in 1762 from his European training and began his practice in 1763 in Philadelphia.³⁶ He brought back with him the idea of training men and women in midwifery, like Smellie had been doing in London. By 1765, he had set up the first formal education of midwives in America along with lying-in hospitals for poor pregnant women, which he used for class demonstration. Many women, however, did not take advantage of this education for various reasons. Some were simply illiterate and poor, but others believed that birth was a natural process that should not require training, especially not from a man. The Puritan belief that women should not be educated stopped some women from seeking further training.³⁷ Despite these prejudices, Shippen continued to educate both men and women and within a decade had established the first steady man-midwife practice. After the American Revolution, the medical school at the College of Pennsylvania offered Shippen a position as a professor of anatomy. The growth of medical schools within the colonies boosted the growth of man-midwifery because they only educated men. Several schools, like King’s College in New York, had separate chairs for midwifery. After receiving this position, Shippen stopped teaching

³³ Wertz, 42.

³⁴ Whitfield J. Bell Jr., *The Colonial Physician* (New York: Science History Publications, 1975), 43.

³⁵ Donegan, “Safe Delivered,” 310; Henry R. Viets, “Some Features of the History of Medicine in Massachusetts during the Colonial Period, 1620-1770,” *Isis* 23, no. 2 (September 1935): 403-4.

³⁶ Scholten, 145.

³⁷ Rooks, 19.

midwifery to women.³⁸ This is not to say that opposition to his teaching methods ceased. Professors of anatomy were often charged with grave-robbing bodies for their anatomy classes, sometimes by an armed mob. Shippen faced these same charges a few times, and, on January 11, 1770, he published a statement in the *Philadelphia Gazette* saying that he never took a body from, “the Burying-ground of any Denomination of Christians,” but he might have, once or twice, taken them “from the Potter’s Field.”³⁹

Man-midwifery continued to grow within the colonies. Physicians began to think of it as the key to a good practice because a man who could prove himself in the delivery room would secure an entire family’s business for any medical need. They were preferred over midwives among middle and upper class urban women because physicians had training, forceps, and opium.⁴⁰ Thomas Jones of the College of Medicine in Maryland believed that people in urban areas needed more sophisticated health care. Upper class women had lazy tendencies and clothing choices that led to pelvic deformities and long, arduous labors. Some may have also suffered damage from past abortions. The poorer women of cities suffered illnesses due to inadequate diets and long work hours. He said that there was a greater need for “well informed obstetrick practitioners in large cities than in country places.” By 1807, five medical schools had established midwifery courses, which included a study of the female anatomy but rarely any practical experience.⁴¹ Man-midwifery continued to grow, and eventually the term “obstetrician” appeared to rid physicians of the feminine sounding title of “man-midwife.”

Midwives did not sit idly as their practices began to disappear. Many expressed objection on the basis of indecency and inexperience. Medical schools did not require midwifery training for a degree, which led to many young physicians in the birthing room with minimal knowledge of female anatomy and no practical experience.⁴² Martha Ballard disapproved of the 24-year-old physician in her area who attempted to incorporate midwifery into his practice. Dr. Page refused to acknowledge her skill and experience in the delivery room, and, in turn, Martha recorded all of Page’s mistakes in her diary. In the case of Hannah Sewall, Dr. Page gave her laudanum to stop the contractions of what he believed to be a false labor, but Ballard recognized the labor as real by keeping track of the regular pains. Unfortunately for Sewall, Ballard was correct, but the laudanum had already halted her contractions and extended her labor several hours.⁴³ In the case of Mrs. Ansel Neys, Page had given up on the delivery,

³⁸ Donegan, “Safe Delivered,” 311.

³⁹ William Shippen Jr. “To The Public,” *Pennsylvania Gazette*, January 11, 1770, quoted in Bell, 217.

⁴⁰ Scholten, 147; Rooks, 19.

⁴¹ Scholten, 146.

⁴² Donegan, “Safe Delivered,” 312.

⁴³ Ulrich, 177.

convinced the child had died, but Ballard came in, removed obstructions, and safely delivered the baby boy.⁴⁴

Indecency was the more common accusation, and not without cause. In 1670, a group of men called the “Groaping Doctors” said they could only determine the cause of a female’s disease by feeling the woman. In 1722, the *Virginia Gazette* reported man-midwifery as immoral because many adultery cases could be traced back to a man being present at the woman’s delivery. The author claimed that “whether my wife had spent the night in a bagnio, or an hour in the forenoon locked up with a man-midwife in here dressing room” would mean the same to him. Dr. Ewell was told by a woman’s husband while delivering her child that “he would demolish him if he touched or looked at his wife.” Dewees told his students to distract their patients and pretend they know nothing about female anatomy other than the existence of an orifice. Shippen told his students to wait for a contraction to come on before ever attempting an examination because then they could call it “taking a pain.”⁴⁵ To further combat the accusations of immodesty and immorality, man-midwives claimed they could perform a delivery without looking in order to preserve a woman’s dignity. The editor of the *New York Medical Gazette* wrote, “Catheterism, vaginal exploration, manipulations...whether manual or instrumental, delivery by the forceps and embryotomy itself, can all be performed by a competent man as well without eyes as with it.”⁴⁶ As one might imagine, this led to a number of accidents with forceps, such as the puncturing of the mother’s birth canal into the bladder, which caused life-long unpreventable urine leakage, or accidental mutilation of infants, such as the penis of a boy getting caught in the scissors used to cut the umbilical cord.⁴⁷

Between 1750 and 1810, American doctors and midwives unhappily shared the profession depending on the level of complication in the case.⁴⁸ That began to change in the early nineteenth century. By 1815, the Philadelphia city directory listed twenty-one midwives and twenty-three man-midwives; in 1819, Philadelphia had thirteen midwives and forty-two man-midwives; and then, by 1824, Philadelphia listed only man-midwives. The onset of the Victorian era eliminated the idea that childbirth was women’s divine lot to suffer through. Instead, social appreciation of the delicacy of women led to a desire to alleviate the pains of labor. Only physicians could administer drugs.⁴⁹ Books containing information on the nursing and rearing of children and basic gynecological knowledge replaced midwifery manuals. Physicians pushed the “gossips” out of

⁴⁴ Donegan, “Safe Delivered,” 310.

⁴⁵ Patricia Crawford, “Attitudes to Menstruation in Seventeenth-Century England,” *Past and Present* 91 (May 1981) 68; Scholten, 149.

⁴⁶ Donegan, “Safe Delivered,” 313.

⁴⁷ Wertz, 110; Scholten, 150.

⁴⁸ Wertz, 44.

⁴⁹ Scholten, 145, 147.

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the birthing room because they crowded the room and caused too much noise.⁵⁰ Thus, the social childbirth shared by a community of women transformed into the private childbirth between a woman and her doctor. However, American midwifery persisted in rural, immigrant, and black societies until the twentieth century.⁵¹

The American colonies held their midwives in very high respect, but, despite this, midwives were unable to maintain their positions against advancements in medicine. Previous to the late eighteenth century, women preferred social childbirth with their relatives, neighbors, and midwife. Colonial midwives had better survival rates and generally more skill than those of England. These hardy women held a key position in the growth of early society, but, as the urbanization of the colonies took place, they fell into unemployment. Changes in medicine brought about in Europe, such as advances in anatomy and the invention of the forceps, allowed physicians to incorporate midwifery into their practices. They replaced the majority of midwives and drove out social childbirth, claiming that women were too ignorant and untrained to have control over such an important area of medicine. The beginning of the Victorian Era brought the end of social childbirth and the midwife.

⁵⁰ Hayes, 100; Scholten, 149.

⁵¹ Donegan, "Safe Delivered," 313.

REAPING THE TURMOIL WITHIN: HOW IRELAND'S KINGS TRIGGERED THE ANGLO-NORMAN INVASION

By Catherine Hines

Around A.D. 1000, Brian Bóruma successfully fought his way to the throne, ending a line of dynastic high-kings. From then until the reign of Rory O'Connor (1166-1186), the high-kings of Ireland established their rule over the island's provinces through force and conquest—not strictly by line of succession or constitutional provision.¹ The term “high-king,” from the Irish *ard rí*, meant a “distinguished king who had enforced his power over external territories.”² Rory O'Connor,³ king of Connacht in west Ireland and acknowledged as high-king of all Ireland, was the last of the island's high-kings due to the Anglo-Norman invasion.⁴ This invasion began in 1169,⁵ and, ironically, O'Connor had a part in initiating it. A chain of events led by the Irish themselves eventually resulted in the subjugation of their entire country. The two primary factors which led to the success of this conquest were the exile of Dermot MacMurrough,⁶ king of Leinster, and MacMurrough's decision to request aid from Henry II, king of England. The Anglo-Normans had reasons, arguably both legitimate and illegitimate, to invade Ireland. However, Ireland's own weak political and social structure and, ultimately, her kings themselves made the conquest possible.

Whether or not the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland was justified and legitimate is a question that has been debated from both sides. The English found perfectly valid reasons to invade Ireland, ranging from religious to social justifications, while the Irish claim that the invasion was an unnecessary interference. What the Anglo-Normans saw at the time was chaos, a split nation, bloodshed, and, most importantly, an opportunity.⁷

One of the justifications for the invasion is found in the *Laudabiliter*, a bull from Pope Adrian IV apparently authorizing the attack, or, at the very least, not forbidding it. This bull granted Henry II the right to invade Ireland based on Henry II's desire to “enlarge the bounds of the church, to declare the truth of the

¹ Francis John Byrne, *Irish Kings and High-Kings* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1973), 267, 261, 257.

² Brian Lalor, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Ireland* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 492.

³ Also spelled Ruairdri Ua Conchobair, Ruairdhrí Ó Conchobhair, Roderic.

⁴ Edmund Curtis, *A History of Medieval Ireland from 1086 to 1513*, rev. ed. (1938; repr., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1968), xix.

⁵ Goddard Henry Orpen, *Ireland under the Normans: 1169-1216* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1:145.

⁶ Also spelled Diarmait Mac Murchada, Diarmaid Mac Murchu.

⁷ The terms “English” and “Anglo-Norman” are used almost interchangeably in this essay to refer to the invaders. However, note that the Anglo-Normans did not come only from England but also from surrounding territories like Wales.

Christian faith to ignorant and barbarous nations,” and “to extirpate the vices that have there taken root...”⁸ Although Ireland already had churches and was a “Christianized” nation, the *Laudabiliter* permitted Henry II to “align Irish Christianity with the emerging centralized papacy,” as the Irish church had been fairly independent up to that time.⁹ By invading Ireland, Henry II could gain new lands and more money for the Church.¹⁰ To the Anglo-Normans, the cleansing of the Irish church by bringing it under papal authority was legitimate. In addition, they saw their conquest as being in line with God’s will, even shouting as they charged O’Connor in battle, “Strike, in the name of the cross!”¹¹

Second, the English also believed they were the ones bringing order to what they perceived to be a barbarous people,¹² and there was a certain amount of truth to this. For example, Irish kings would blind their opponents, and Rory O’Connor went so far as to imprison three and blind one of his own brothers.¹³ This perception of the Irish needing a governing force beyond their own system has carried through the years: “We went to Ireland because her people were engaged in cutting one another’s throats; we are there now because, if we left, they would all be breaking one another’s heads.”¹⁴ The Anglo-Normans saw themselves as more advanced—militarily, politically, spiritually, and culturally—than the Irish. Therefore, it was almost considered a kindness for the English king to bring order to chaos.¹⁵

Finally, as Ireland was divided into several provinces, so each one had its own *ri cóicid*, king of a province.¹⁶ In “the twelfth century any province-king...who could battle-axe his way into sufficient acceptance could become High king when a majority of the seven underkings of Ireland had...done homage.”¹⁷ This demonstrates how the weakness of the Irish political structure influenced the English to invade. Since the kings of Ireland came to power through military might, not necessarily succession, there was no reason to exclude the Anglo-Normans from this contest.

⁸ Lyttleton, “Life of Henry II,” in *Select Historical Documents of the Middle Ages*, ed. Ernest F. Henderson (London: George Bell and Sons, 1896), 5:371.

⁹ Carmel McCaffrey, *In Search of Ireland’s Heroes: The Story of the Irish from the English Invasion to the Present Day* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, Publisher, 2006), 4.

¹⁰ Lyttleton, 371.

¹¹ Peter W. Sposato, “The Perception of Anglo-Norman Modernity and the Conquest of Ireland,” *Comitatus: A Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 40 (September 2009): 43.

¹² *Ibid.*, 32.

¹³ Orpen, 1:58-59.

¹⁴ J. H. Round, “The Conquest of Ireland,” *The Commune of London and Other Studies* (1899): 168, quoted in Dáibhí Ó Cróinín, *Early Medieval Ireland: 400-1200*, ed. Steven G. Ellis (London: Longman, 1995), 272.

¹⁵ Sposato, 27, 34.

¹⁶ Byrne, 261.

¹⁷ Curtis, xx.

To the Irish, however, these were not justifiable grounds for the occupation. As Brian Ó Cuív, Senior Professor for the School of Celtic Studies at the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, points out, the religious leaders of Ireland had already seen the need and were taking the necessary steps to bring about reformation in the churches.¹⁸ They had noted in their old monastic organization that there was a lack of priests available to lead the people. By 1152 the religious leaders of Ireland had successfully reorganized Ireland into thirty-six pastoral sees, thereby providing more widespread leadership in the church.¹⁹

In addition, there has been much argument about the validity of the *Laudabiliter* and, therefore, the legitimacy of the invasion. Apparently there is no original copy,²⁰ and the question is whether Pope Adrian IV actually wrote this bull or if it was a forgery simply used to give the conquest authority of church sanction. It is known that a contemporary historian, Gerald of Wales, wrote an introduction to the *Laudabiliter* in his “Expugnatio Hibernica,” and it was from him that the earliest copy of the bull comes. One hypothesis is that Gerald of Wales circulated the document to glorify the efforts of his kinsmen who were fighting the Irish, trying to gain this “desirable possession” of land.²¹ Advocates of the Irish tend to say that it is a forgery, but many other historians cite the bull as if it were absolute fact.²² Due to the disorganized and violent state of Ireland, with the constant feuding between kings, some argue the logic of the pope believing the Irish church needed reform.²³ Even if Pope Adrian did not write the *Laudabiliter*, his successor, Alexander III, later granted Ireland to Henry II.²⁴

However, Irish sympathizers argue that not only was the church undergoing reform, but Ireland as a whole was on its way to becoming a unified nation. What appeared to be chaos was actually growing pains,²⁵ and some thought that when “Ruaidrí took the high-kingship in 1166 it looked as if the O’Connors might succeed in establishing feudal-style hereditary kingship which would be comparable to the dynasties in other countries.”²⁶ Ireland’s rulers may or may not have ever succeeded in creating a strong central government, but, whatever

¹⁸ Brian Ó Cuív, “Ireland in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries,” in *The Course of Irish History*, rev. ed., ed. T. W. Moody and F. X. Martin (Lanham, MD: Roberts Rinehart Publishers, 1995), 116-120.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 117-120.

²⁰ Kate Norgate, “The Bull *Laudabiliter*,” *The English Historical Review* 8, no. 29 (January, 1893): 20.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

²² For a more complete description of this debate and the positions of specific historians, see Kate Norgate’s article, “The Bull *Laudabiliter*.”

²³ Norgate, 39.

²⁴ Curtis, 61.

²⁵ Byrne, 269.

²⁶ Ó Cuív, 121.

the reality, the foreigners saw only barbaric behavior and an opportunity.²⁷ Regardless of the validity of the claims from Irish sympathizers, there was inner turmoil and weakness that invited ambitious men to seek glory and new lands.

An ironic twist in this history is MacMurrough's expulsion from Ireland in 1166.²⁸ This exile developed from two main causes. First, MacMurrough, the provincial king of Leinster, had made a bitter enemy of one of O'Connor's closest supporters, Tighnernen O'Ruairc, by abducting O'Ruairc's wife years earlier.²⁹ Although he retrieved her, O'Ruairc never forgot this insult from MacMurrough.³⁰ Second, MacMurrough aspired to the high-kingship and challenged O'Connor for the title after the previous high-king had died.³¹ Even when he returned to Ireland later, MacMurrough had not forgotten his designs on the throne of Ireland, and he plotted with the English to take the high-kingship from O'Connor.³² Whether or not O'Ruairc, out of revenge, instigated MacMurrough's exile by encouraging O'Connor to be rid of him, it is certain that they fought MacMurrough. His own men deserted him, and he was forced to flee Ireland.³³ This feuding between kings and the attempt to display the power of the high-king led directly to the coming of the Anglo-Normans, who aided MacMurrough in his fight to regain his territory in Ireland.

From Ireland, Dermot MacMurrough went almost directly to appeal for foreign aid in reclaiming his lost province.³⁴ Enlisting the services of foreign aid was not uncommon,³⁵ and MacMurrough did not seem to hesitate in asking Henry II to help him regain his kingdom, especially since he had lent aid to Henry II the previous year for the king's campaign in Wales.³⁶ The irony then is, even though the invasion started small with an exiled king enlisting the aid of foreigners to reclaim his throne, it grew into an English takeover of the island.

At first, Henry II was too embroiled in his conflict with Thomas Becket to go to Ireland himself, so he sent a letter with MacMurrough entitling Henry II's subjects to help MacMurrough if they were willing. Ultimately, Richard Fitz Gilbert (Earl of Striguil in Wales, also known as "Strongbow") and many others answered the summons.³⁷ O'Connor and some of his subjects, including O'Ruairc, attempted to put an end to the invasion by besieging Dublin where the

²⁷ Sposato, 44.

²⁸ Ó Cróinín, 285.

²⁹ Curtis, 31.

³⁰ Orpen, 1:56.

³¹ Marie Therese Flanagan, *Irish Society, Anglo-Norman Settlers, Angevin Kingship: Interactions in Ireland in the Late Twelfth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989.), 79.

³² Whitley Stokes, "The Irish Abridgement of the 'Expugnatio Hibernica,'" *The English Historical Review* 20, no. 77 (January 1905), 81.

³³ Curtis, 33-34.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 34.

³⁵ Byrne, 263.

³⁶ Ó Cróinín, 286.

³⁷ Orpen, 1:84-85; Stokes, 91.

invaders had settled. The high-king was unable to defeat them and was then forced to retreat.³⁸ Later, when Henry II decided to go to Ireland and claim lordship over the island, the provincial kings began yielding to him for various reasons.³⁹ It may have been from fear of the ambitions of Anglo-Norman invaders that they wished Henry II to take total control or even because they thought he would leave them alone once he established his rule.⁴⁰ Finally, after seeing all his sub-kings submitting, Rory O'Connor yielded to the king of England as well. The archbishop of Dublin pleaded with the two armies to make peace, and the Treaty of Windsor of October 1175 briefly halted hostilities. It granted O'Connor the continuance of his rule in the west over all lands not already taken by the Anglo-Normans under the condition that he recognized the over-lordship of Henry II and the English king's right to those territories already conquered in eastern Ireland.⁴¹ However, Henry II eventually disregarded this treaty and did not stop his ambitious nobles from continuing their conquest of the island. Later, he even formally granted them more territory that had not been previously conquered.⁴²

How did this attempt by one provincial king to regain territory evolve into such a complete change for Ireland? Assuredly, MacMurrough ushered the Anglo-Normans into Ireland, but the real answer lies in the weakness of the Irish kingship's structure. The first problem with this government was that there were no constitutional provisions for a high-king.⁴³ The law tracts written in the eighth century did not change with Irish politics to authorize a high-king.⁴⁴ Although there was a hierarchy of kings, and for several centuries one dynasty claimed the high-kingship,⁴⁵ after Brian Bóruma, this title was achieved through conquest more than through nationally recognized legislation.⁴⁶ Thus, in the years leading up to the Anglo-Norman invasion, there was almost constant warring between the kings in an effort to gain the title of *ard rí*, and this is displayed in the subsequent and synonymous title "high-king with opposition."⁴⁷ A man could be high-king if he had subjugated enough tribes and collected tribute from enough of the provinces,⁴⁸ but there was usually another provincial king, such as MacMurrough, who did not accept the high-king's claim and sought to gain that title for himself.⁴⁹ The kingship of Ireland was not a stable

³⁸ Stokes, 91; Ó Cróinín, 287.

³⁹ Lalor, 32.

⁴⁰ Curtis, 62.

⁴¹ Stokes, 95, 97; Ó Cróinín, 289.

⁴² Curtis, 69, 81.

⁴³ Byrne, 261-262.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁴⁵ Curtis, xix.

⁴⁶ Byrne, 261.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 269-70.

⁴⁸ Curtis, xx.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

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system. If it had been, Henry II may never have taken the measures granted him by the pope.⁵⁰ Due to the near impossibility of pointing to one man as the true power in Ireland, even though Rory O'Connor was high-king at the time, it could be inferred that when Henry II claimed lordship of Ireland, he was creating the much needed centralized government.⁵¹

The fractured nature of Irish government and the constant warring between the kings also provided the Irish people with little concept, much less the reality, of national unity. This, of course, made them vulnerable and easy prey for the Anglo-Normans. Although the *ard rí* technically had the right to call all the militia of Ireland together if need be, rarely did all of Ireland obey a summons of this kind.⁵² If O'Connor had been able to gather the entire force of Ireland behind him in order to combat MacMurrough and the Anglo-Normans, it is unlikely that MacMurrough would have succeeded in taking back his region of Ireland.⁵³ All the provincial kings did not all follow O'Connor, however, and a country whose people will not band together for its own defense is a country easily conquered.

Thus, relatively quietly, Ireland came under the control of the king of England—an occupation of territory that has lasted for centuries and continues to cause tension and ill-will. The English nobles did not hold to their part of the Treaty of Windsor but expanded across the island, eating up the ground of the high-kings. The Anglo-Normans had come through a door opened by the Irish kings themselves. Whatever the initial intentions of MacMurrough were, his actions, coupled with the disorganization of the Irish kingship and the efforts of English subjects, brought about the end of an entire governmental system. The high-kingship died with the invasion, and the last *ard rí*, Rory O'Connor, died in 1199 almost forgotten.⁵⁴ One author recognized a striking connection between the few lines of a poem by Emily Dickenson and the end of the era of high-kings:

A great Hope fell
You heard no noise
The ruin was within.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ Ó Cuív, 121.

⁵¹ Sposato, 32.

⁵² Curtis, xxi.

⁵³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 92.

⁵⁵ Emily Dickenson, "A Great Hope Fell," quoted in Ó Cróinín, 290.

THE EFFECT OF THE IRANIAN HOSTAGE CRISIS ON THE 1980 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

By M. K. Collins

Fifty-two Americans were taken hostage in the United States Embassy in Tehran, Iran on November 4, 1979, exactly one year prior to the 1980 presidential election.¹ President Jimmy Carter had precisely 365 days to save both his presidency and the lives of the innocent public servants who were being held captive by angry Iranian students. Carter damaged and ultimately ended his presidential career by failing to properly resolve the crisis in a way that would ensure the hostages' safety and quick release as well as prevent an economic disaster in America. This dramatic and lengthy crisis came to an end on Inauguration Day, 444 days later, with the release of the last hostages being held. Carter's incompetent management of the situation in Iran played a major role in his inability to be re-elected and consequently helped the Republican candidate, Ronald Reagan, to win his first term in office.

The initial spark that caused the students' takeover of the American Embassy in Iran has not been discovered. However, many historians link it to the 1953 Iranian coup, when the United States essentially restored Mohammad Rezā Shāh Pahlavī, the Shah, to power, regardless of whether the Iranian people wanted this or not. The coup d'état, which went against the will of the Iranians, was sponsored by the American government, straining the relationship between the two nations. In 1979, radical Muslim university students were very aware of America's involvement in bringing the Shah back to power, and they were upset at the United States for becoming involved in their domestic affairs and defending their oppressive leader.² These students were enraged by the American government's involvement in their own government. Adding to this, the apparent last straw for these radical Muslims was Carter's granting the Shah a temporary visa to enter the United States for medical treatment while he was in exile. When this happened, the students immediately began protesting outside the embassy, and these protests quickly escalated into an attack on the embassy, which then began the months-long standoff between America and the new Iranian leader, Ayatollah Khomeini.³

Before the Shah was exiled, he frequently bought weapons from America. President Richard Nixon's Administration had capitalized on the sale of these arms by the U.S. to the Shah, which both preserved Iran's military forces and

¹ Pierre Salinger, *America Held Hostage: The Secret Negotiations* (New York: Doubleday and Company, 1981), 28.

² Tyler Q. Houlton, "The Impact of the 1979 Hostage Crisis in Iran on the U.S. Presidential Election of 1980" (master's thesis, Georgetown University, 2011), 29.

³ Salinger, 28.

profited America's economy.⁴ The relationship between the two countries relied heavily on the selling of these arms. Iran had a large oil and natural resource supply, and the country paid for the weapons with both oil and revenues.⁵ However, when Carter became President, his administration issued a directive on May 13, 1977, saying, "I have concluded that we must restrain the transfer of conventional arms by recognizing that arms transfers are an exceptional foreign policy implement, to be used only in instances where it can be clearly demonstrated that the transfers contribute to our national security interests."⁶ This hurt American businesses that were producing and selling the arms not only to Iran but also to other nations.

At the end of the revolution in Iran in 1979, the nation cast the Shah into exile. He spent time traveling across the Middle East and eventually settled in Mexico, where he became very ill. Dr. Georges Flandrin, a French doctor, diagnosed him with both spleen and blood cancers. An American doctor, Benjamin H. Kean, declared that, in addition to these cancers, he had obstructive jaundice and needed surgery within the next forty-eight hours.⁷ His doctors encouraged him to go to the United States for treatment since the hospitals there had more technologically advanced equipment than the hospital where he was in Mexico. The Shah did not want to go to the U.S. for treatment because he did not feel welcome there, and U.S. officials also had mixed feelings about the idea. However, Carter decided to admit the Shah to the U.S. during one of his weekly Friday morning foreign policy breakfasts on October 19th.⁸ Three days later, on October 22, he was flown to Fort Lauderdale, Florida, where he was quietly admitted into the country, sped through immigration procedures, and then moved to La Guardia Airport in New York.⁹ All of these plans were specifically made to keep the Shah's travels to America a secret, but this plan failed. His arrival at Cornell Medical Hospital in New York began a chain reaction with both domestic and international reverberations.¹⁰

As soon as the news reached Iran that the Shah had been admitted to the U.S., the radical Muslim student groups began gathering and discussing ways to retaliate. One report of the incident states, "The instigator, Ebrahim Asgharzadeh, put together the group of student radicals from the major

⁴ Don Hopkins, "The October Surprise: The Iranian Hostage Rescue Mission, and the 1980 Presidential Election," *Hopkins Online Journal* (December 1988), <http://www.donhopkins.com/drupal/node/104> (accessed November 19, 2012).

⁵ Houlton, 23.

⁶ Jimmy Carter Library, "Carter Presidential Directive 13, 1977," under "Presidential Directives (PD)," <http://www.jimmycarterlibrary.gov/documents/pddirectives/pd13.pdf> (accessed November 19, 2012).

⁷ Salinger, 15.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰ Lyn Boyd, *A King's Exile: The Shah of Iran and Moral Considerations in U.S. Foreign Policy*. Case Study, (Washington D.C.: Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, 2000). 9.

Universities in Iran in opposition to both the Shah and the United States. This group was formed to show their support for both the Islamic Revolution and their leader Ayatolla Khomeini.¹¹ The students divided into small groups and delegated the jobs to different committees to simplify and speed up their work. Historian and author Mark Bowden records, “They would need about four hundred students to carry out the assault and thousands more to rally in support outside the embassy walls.”¹² Once enough students had been recruited and the plans had been finalized, the Muslim students put their plan into action and stormed the embassy. On the morning of November 4, throngs of students showed up at the embassy to protest America’s support of the Shah and its decision to admit the Shah into the U.S.¹³ They took fifty-two members of the American Embassy hostage, blindfolded them, and paraded them around the city. The students not only caused an international crisis for the country they hated, they also unintentionally caused the downfall of President Jimmy Carter.¹⁴ His decisions throughout the rest of the crisis ultimately led the American people to determine he was inadequate in his ability to lead the country and that the Republican candidate Ronald Reagan was better suited for the job.

As many Presidents’ ratings do after national crises or acts of terrorism, Carter’s approval ratings shot up immediately following the initial takeover in Iran. Pierre Salinger, former White House Press Secretary and ABC News correspondent, stated, “The professionals around Carter, as well as Carter himself, knew that the response was a reaction against the Iranians more than a positive response to the President, and they all knew it wouldn’t last.”¹⁵ In the weeks following, the Americans’ passion transitioned from hate towards Iran to frustration towards their president for not getting the hostages out of captivity. President Carter began deliberating various courses of action with his Cabinet, but the proposed solution did not solve the problem at hand and ended up hurting the nation’s economy in the process.

On November 9, four days after the takeover, Carter declared that the U.S. would cease all shipments of spare parts for military equipment to Iran until the safe release of all hostages.¹⁶ The next day, the President also cut off all oil imports from Iran. This not only further strained the U.S.’s relations with Iran, it also damaged the American economy. Gas prices quickly spiked, as the U.S. relied on Iran for nearly four percent of its daily consumption.¹⁷ In addition to

¹¹ Houlton, 27.

¹² Mark Bowden, *Guests of the Ayatollah: The First Battle in America’s War with Militant Islam* (New York: Grove Press, 2006), 9.

¹³ Houlton, 31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁵ Salinger, 63.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 50.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

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affecting America's trade with Iran, *Newsweek* magazine reported, "Iran's oil minister Ali Akbar Moinefar warned Iran would stop oil sales to anyone who supported U.S. sanctions. And Iran's Commerce Minister Reza Sadr declared that a U.S. naval blockade in the Persian Gulf 'will result in war.'"¹⁸ The use of force through a naval blockade of the Persian Gulf remained an option for the Carter Administration. However, Carter and his Cabinet preferred to "punish Iran with an economic boycott joined by Japan and some Western nations."¹⁹ Iran's stance discouraged any other countries that may have been willing and able to assist the U.S., for they could not afford to lose oil imports from Iran. In Carter's message to the nation on November 28, he recognized America's problem with dependence on other nations' natural resources, stating, "Our entire nation is vulnerable because of our overwhelming and excessive dependence on oil from foreign countries." He went on to say, "We have got to accept the fact that this dependence is a direct physical threat to our national security."²⁰ Throughout the crisis, the United States' dependence on Iran for oil made the situation more complicated than merely retrieving the captives.

Five days after the halt on oil imports, Carter took another significant step and froze approximately ten billion dollars of Iranian money being held in American banks. Although there were negative effects on the U.S. economy from the oil embargo, Iran suffered much worse economic hardship from the combination of the embargo, economic sanctions, and frozen assets.²¹ With the American economy struggling even a minute amount, however, voters did not want to reelect a candidate that was contributing to the downfall of the domestic economy.

Numerous polls were conducted throughout the presidential campaign in the time leading up to the 1980 election. A Gallup poll conducted between September 28 and October 1, 1979 found that fifty-eight percent of respondents believed inflation, a high cost of living, and taxes were the most significant issues facing the United States a year before the election. Energy, fuel shortage, and the price at the pump came in second place at eighteen percent.²² Nearly a year later, the Columbia Broadcast System (CBS) and the *New York Times* gave a second poll. This poll was two months before Election Day, between September 23 and 25. It showed that thirty-two percent of respondents believed inflation was the biggest problem facing the country. A broad "other economy" came in second place at twenty-one percent.²³ These two polls show that the economic issues during the election cycle were at the forefront of the voters'

¹⁸ John Nielsen, "A Long Wait in Iran," *Newsweek*, January 21, 1980, 36.

¹⁹ Nielsen, 37.

²⁰ Marvin Stone, "Carter's Message on Iran," *US News and World Report*, December 10, 1979, 100.

²¹ Houlton, 44.

²² *Ibid.*, 71.

²³ *Ibid.*

minds. Voters began to see, through the rising prices of gas and other daily goods, that many of the economic challenges they were battling were a direct result of the international crisis at hand. Thus, voters were not only concerned about the domestic policies and economy but also about foreign policies and how they affected the nation. The international crisis, they realized, had taken a toll on the economy and affected daily life in America as the gas prices shot up when the oil imports from Iran suddenly stopped.

Eventually, Khomeini began periodically releasing a few hostages at a time for different reasons. On November 17, he ordered the release of all women and black hostages, as they were minorities like the Iranians.²⁴ Ten others were later freed, and then nineteen more were released in time for Thanksgiving Day. In a collection of Jimmy Carter's Public Presidential Papers, a White House statement released on November 19, 1979 states, "On November 18, three persons were released from the American Embassy and flown to the U.S. Air Force hospital in Wiesbaden, Federal Republic of Germany. On the following day, the Iranian captors released ten more persons, who joined their colleagues in Wiesbaden before they all were returned to the United States."²⁵ Later, six of the hostages escaped Iran with the help of Canada's government and arrived at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.²⁶ These six diplomats stayed in hiding in the Canadian ambassador's house until their escape by way of a CIA covert extraction.²⁷ While the Carter Administration was pleased that even these few hostages returned to America, Carter knew he needed to implement an official plan for complete extraction to satisfy the American public and win voters' confidence.

This called for a military mission that was designed to rescue the hostages. The plan became known as Operation Eagle Claw. This mission employed a fleet of eight C-130 gunship helicopters, nicknamed "Bluebeard," in addition to Army Rangers and Green Berets. Operation Eagle Claw failed and consequently damaged Carter's image as Commander in Chief. The mission failed mainly due to inadequate and outdated machinery and the inability of the operation's leaders to properly forecast the weather conditions that would ultimately lead to its downfall. The mission began at 7:30 P.M. on April 24, 1980. It was a complicated and covert mission. A report by historian Paul B. Ryan says, "The helicopters would be concealed at a site about 15 miles away. That evening the raiders would be clandestinely driven in vans and trucks to Tehran. About 11 P.M. that night, they would storm the compound, immobilize the guards, and free

²⁴ Salinger, 331.

²⁵ *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Jimmy Carter* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1977-81), 2142.

²⁶ Salinger, 315.

²⁷ William J. Daugherty, *Executive Secrets: Covert Action and the Presidency* (Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 2006), 184.

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the hostages.”²⁸ Unfortunately, the helicopters never made it to any of the checkpoints or to Tehran.

Within two hours of the mission’s beginning, one of the eight helicopters was down with mechanical issues. While the helicopters were in route to their first checkpoint, a sandstorm made it difficult to see and caused damage to the machines’ engines.²⁹ The crew soon realized it had already suffered more damage than it could overcome to be able to carry out a successful rescue. As too many mechanical errors had occurred, Major-General Vaught, the commander of the Joint Task Force and leader of the Operation Eagle Claw, radioed D.C. to seek permission from President Carter to abort the mission. Hours later, Carter approved the abort, and the surviving troops returned to the U.S. The death of eight crew members and the wounds of five others added to the number of lives Carter had put at risk throughout the catastrophe. On April 25, 1980, a grief-stricken Carter sat at his desk in front of television crews and announced to the world that he had recalled a failed mission to rescue the hostages.³⁰ The failed mission caused the American public to become even more upset about the crisis in Iran, having now taken even more American lives. Many congressmen and senators were also upset that Carter’s Administration had authorized the use of out-of-date helicopters for such a complex mission.³¹ Even though Americans supported sending out rescue missions to extract the hostages, Carter’s approval ratings went down from forty-seven percent to forty-two percent, according to historian Mark Bowden.³² This complicated things for Carter even more, as he was still responsible for securing the hostages’ release while also trying to improve his odds of winning the ever-nearing election.

The national crisis attracted much media attention. News stations were battling for viewers, and a story of this size immediately catapulted to the headlines. The American Broadcasting Company (ABC) began the show *Nightline* on November 8, 1979, just four days after the hostage crisis started. Ted Koppel, a popular news anchor, hosted the show that night, *America Held Hostage*. The ABC news special covered the entire Iranian affair.³³ The media and news stations had a story that would bring in viewers across the country. ABC made sure the public had access to the latest developments in the crisis in Iran each night. Their rival station, CBS, used Walter Cronkite, a man trusted by Americans, to bring the truth to the public. He kept heavy pressure on Carter by showing the total number of days the hostages had been held captive every night

²⁸ Paul B. Ryan, *The Iranian Rescue Mission: Why it Failed* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 1985), 1-2.

²⁹ Houlton, 49.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 51.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Bowden, 480.

³³ Houlton, 61.

before he signed off.³⁴ In his book entitled *Nightline: History in the Making and the Making of Television*, Koppel claims, “The effect the show ultimately had on the American public notably changed the public discourse on the presidential election of 1980...The nightly reminder of how long the hostages remained in captivity surely impacted the American electorate.”³⁵ With every signoff at the end of the show, viewers were reminded that their president, Jimmy Carter, was failing to bring their fellow Americans home.

Ronald Reagan, the former governor of California had mastered how to handle the media and used this to his advantage throughout the campaign. During the crisis, America’s economy was in shambles. The national media favored Reagan due to his gregarious personality and image and thus sided with him from the start.³⁶ While the media showed favor towards Reagan, Carter experienced quite the opposite. His failure to successfully resolve the situation in the Middle East and the media attention it brought only helped the Republican nominee. According to historian Tyler Houlton, “The Carter Administration’s struggles in foreign policy directly worsened America’s economic crisis at home. The Iranian oil embargo helped cause stagflation—high inflation along with high unemployment—one of the most notable problems of the Carter presidency.”³⁷ Due to the media and news networks showing non-stop coverage and updates concerning the Iran crisis and its impact on daily American life, President Jimmy Carter’s political future became a target in front of the nation every night on their television sets.

While the foreign policy issues that resulted from the hostage crisis may not have directly determined the outcome of the election, the economic problems did. The hostage crisis severely damaged America’s economy. The actions Carter took and the policies he implemented, such as the termination of the selling of arms to Iran and other nations as well as to the cancellation of oil imports, caused gas prices to skyrocket. These high prices in oil and weapons helped to determine how the voting public cast their ballots in the election. Exactly a year after the hostage crisis began, on Election Day, the American electorate chose Republican candidate Ronald Reagan with 489 electoral votes, which beat out Jimmy Carter’s 49.³⁸ Not two hours after Reagan was inaugurated, on January 20, 1981, the last of the hostages were set free.³⁹ While Carter managed to negotiate with the barely standing Iranian government and

³⁴ David Patrick Houghton, *US Foreign Policy and the Iran Hostage Crisis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 2.

³⁵ Ted Koppel and Kyle Gibson, *Nightline: History in the Making and the Making of Television* (New York: Time Books, 1996), 5.

³⁶ Houlton, 65.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 67.

³⁸ The Election of 1980, “The American Presidency Project”, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/showelection.php?year=1980> (accessed November 19, 2012).

³⁹ Salinger, 305.

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free the Americans there, his inability to get it done quickly, and without injury to the American economy, was the demise of his career as President of the United States.

HISTORIOGRAPHY OF MEDIEVAL PEASANTS: FROM A NAMELESS MASS TO A THRIVING COMMUNITY

By Mallory Pratt

The conception of medieval peasants in popular consciousness has been of an anonymous mass of people, pinched by hunger and oppressed by the aristocracy for whom it labored. In the occasional mention of them in scholarship, illiterate peasants existed in rags, slaving for the lord of the land to which they were bound. Popular, if satirical, depictions such as *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* reflect that idea. Scholarly depictions of medieval manorial peasants did little to relieve that conception or allocate to them a measure of academic attention until the mid-twentieth century.

The twentieth century was a period of transition in general historiography. According to Georg G. Iggers, traditional historiography of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was concerned with the elites of politics and society while “the new forms of social science-oriented history emphasized social structures and processes of social change,”¹ taking a bottom-up approach and including formerly marginalized groups. The twentieth century ushered in a movement of inclusion of fringe social groups. Until the mid-twentieth century, medieval historians focused their energies on surveys of the Middle Ages, dealing specifically with foreign invasions, development of the papacy, and the creation of feudalism. The study of manorialism, especially the personality of the people on whom the manorial system rested, was virtually absent. Scholarship of the thirties and forties broadened in scope and included explications of the manorial system as well as studies of race, class, and gender. Scholars such as Marc Bloch delved into the intricacies of the manorial system as distinguished from feudalism and built upon the facts provided by earlier scholars, such as H. W. C. Davis and Carl Stephenson. Scholars became more interested in social histories and the people behind the classes and generalizations.

The closely intertwined feudal and manorial systems served as the political and economic foundations of the medieval period. The feudal system was dependent upon the manorial system, though the lifespan of the manorial system exceeded that of the feudal system. The feudal system was a product of the ninth and tenth centuries, especially the disturbance of the invasions of Vikings from the North, Magyars from the East, and the Saracens from the South. The manorial system both preceded and succeeded feudalism: manorialism was “an arrangement which was much older than vassalage and which was for a long time to survive it.”² Although the concept of a weaker man seeking the

¹ Georg G. Iggers, *Introduction to Historiography in the Twentieth Century: From Scientific Objectivity to the Postmodern Challenge* (Hanover, NH: New England University Press, 1997), 3.

² Marc Bloch, *Feudal Society* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1961), 241.

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economic protection of a stronger man—a concept foundational in both systems—was not a new concept in the medieval period, the turmoil of invasion and failing social structures reinforced the idea and brought it to prominence as a method of both economic and physical security. According to Marc Bloch, after the fall of the Roman Empire in the mid-fifth century and in the Merovingian society of the sixth century, “Neither the State nor the family any longer provided adequate protection. Everywhere, the weak man felt the need to be sheltered by someone more powerful.”³ The systems were symbiotic because they functioned simultaneously and because, at a basic level, they resembled each other. Both systems involved the transference of authority over a man from himself to a more powerful man; the use of land as a type of currency, with which men transferred authority; the exaction of a certain type of homage or due; and a developed hierarchy, resulting from the transference of authority. A crucial difference between the two social structures was the purpose of their existence. Feudalism was a political and social organization while manorialism existed for economic purposes. Feudalism concerned the aristocracy and gentry while manorialism concerned the peasantry, a mass of people who functioned around their respective manor houses rather than as a complete social unit.⁴

The Middle Ages adopted preexisting, though rudimentary, hierarchical organizations and vassalage traditions and polished them, creating a more extensive network of contracts and subcontracts between lords, tenants-in-chief, and subtenants. According to H. W. C. Davis, the system of vassalage and patronage existed cross-culturally and cross-temporally in traditions such as the *comitatus* of the Germanic warlords and the *antrusions* of the Merovingian kings. These bands functioned as the military force and the protection of the ruling chieftain. In the eighth and ninth centuries, particularly under the Carolingians, monarchs began systematically granting these bands of men land to reward them and to further bind them to the monarch’s service. In exchange for land—first called *beneficium*, reflecting classical tradition, and renamed “fiefs” during the ninth century—and protection, the *vassi* rendered military service and upheld the honor of their leader.⁵ Although the vassals were already participants in the primitive war band in early feudalism, in the tenth and eleventh centuries, the men outside the feudal system began voluntarily submitting their services and swearing an oath of fealty to a lord in exchange for land and protection. This was the crux of the feudal organization, for “it is on obtaining specialized service, essentially military, by granting support in land (known as fee or fief) that the characterization of feudalism and feudal societies

³ Bloch, 148; Philip Van Ness Myers, *The Middle Ages* (Boston, MA: Ginn and Company Proprietors, 1885), 174.

⁴ Carl Stephenson, *A Brief Survey of Mediaeval Europe* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1941), 151, 158; Myers, 162, 166; H. W. C. Davis, *Medieval Europe* (London: Oxford, University Press, 1911), 67.

⁵ Davis, 73-74; Myers, 166, 168.

hinges.”⁶ Fiefs also arose through the transference of *allodial* lands, or freehold tenures, which the proprietor held absolutely, to a more powerful lord. The lord then released that land back to the very same man as a tenure or fief. There was an advantage for both the powerful and the weak in joining forces, and often the same man was both lord over one and vassal to another, with the exception of the English feudal system, which fueled the complex web of feudal relationships. Philip Myers wrote, “Each vassal became a virtual sovereign in his own domain,” and the monarch or lord had a preexisting force of military men whenever he needed it, as well as court retainers, because his vassals “regularly owed suit to the lord’s court.”⁷

There is a difficulty inherent in an exploration of the manorial system because the reality of the system varied from region to region. For example, manorialism was a more recent development on the British Isles than in the Frankish kingdom, so the customs and regulations governing each varied. According to Philip Myers, “[The serfs’] status varied greatly from country to country and from period to period. Consequently, it is impossible to give any general account of the class which can be regarded as a true picture of their actual condition as a body at any given time.”⁸ There are, however, basic structures of manorialism that existed in some combination throughout the medieval period and across Europe, facilitating a discussion of the system. Manors or great estates subdivided amongst free tenants or *servi*, who were bound to the land, existed in the Classical period as expansive *latifundiae*.⁹ A significant characteristic of medieval manorialism was the control of the estate by the very vassals participating in the feudal system. The estates were either the land that the lord had granted to the vassal upon the ceremonial oath of fealty or the land that was formerly an *allodial* landholding. In turn, some of the sub-tenants of the manorial lord had once been freeholders of *allodial* land.

A manor was an “economic enterprise,” and “first and foremost an estate,” a part of a system which flourished “on all sides because under it, the mass of the people found the possibility of livelihood.”¹⁰ It had three basic components: the lord’s demesne, which the free and unfree tenants farmed; the 30-acre plots of the tenant farmers, which occasionally coincided with a village; and the strips of land farmed by the serfs bound to the land. The basic distinction in manorial tenants was free vs. unfree. However, within those basic distinctions there were gradations of servitude, and the titles of those categories varied from century to century and from region to region. For example, in Britain, the term *villains*

⁶ Sally Harvey, “The Knight and the Knight’s Fee in England,” in *Peasants, Knights and Heretics: Studies in Medieval English Social History*, ed. R. H. Hilton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), 133.

⁷ Myers, 164, 166; Stephenson, 142.

⁸ Myers, 171.

⁹ Stephenson, 155; Bloch, 243.

¹⁰ Bloch, 241, 250; Stephenson, 151.

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existed throughout the medieval period. Initially, in the *Domesday Book*, it delineated free tenants, but, by the thirteenth century, “the villein slipped down into the category of the unfree.”¹¹ The *Codex Justinianus*, a tripartite law code compiled by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century, used the term *coloni* to delineate peasants bound to the land. “He shall be attached to the lord of the land so that he may not be able to depart without suffering penalties,” the law code says, adding that *coloni* are not to leave “those places, the fruits of which support them.”¹² *Serfs* was a fairly consistent term used on the Continent to delineate the unfree peasants. Often, the free tenants formerly had *allodial* land, which they submitted to the manorial lord, who rented their same land back to them as a tenement. The free tenants typically farmed about twenty-seven acres, farming their own plot for their sustenance as well as the lord’s demesne for “manorial income.” The serfs were bound to the land and farmed small strips of land averaging eighteen acres. While the free tenants were able to reserve and sell some of their excess produce, the serfs farmed for the lord alone and received no wages, a situation binding them to the land. The *Domesday Book* preserved extensive records of manorial divisions as well as the land tenanted and worked by specific people. Although the farming of the manorial estate was a communal endeavor, the inhabitants knew their specific plot, and so did the steward and reeve, who would have collected rent from the peasants. A record of Hecham village in the *Domesday Book*, recorded in 1086, shortly after the Norman conquest of England, says “Peter de Valence holds in domain Hecham, which Haldane a freeman held in the time of King Edward, as a manor, and as 5 hides. There have always been 2 ploughs in the demesne, 4 ploughs of the men.” This demonstrates the detailed records that helped make manorialism a widespread and successful system.¹³ “Virtually every peasant was also obliged to perform service, or *corvée*,” which could manifest in anything from laboring the lord’s land certain days in the year to repairing infrastructure such as roads and buildings on the manorial estate. Occasionally, a village consisted of the property of just one manor, but the actualities of the system were far from clear cut and systematic. The tenants of each lord existed in a sort of community in which they often worked together in a communal system and shared plow animals.¹⁴

¹¹ Gies, Francis, and Joseph Gies. *Life in a Medieval Village* (New York: Harper and Row, 1990), 68.

¹² “Codex Justinianus: Coloni Bound to the Soil, c. 530 [XI.51.i],” from P. Krueger, ed. *Codex Justinianus* (Berlin, 1877), 989.

¹³ “Domesday Book: Hecham, 1086,” trans. J. H. Robinson, *Internet History Sourcebook* (accessed November 16, 2012).

¹⁴ The several fields of cultivation left to the peasants were often set up in an open-field with a two- or three-field system that allowed for crop rotation and resuscitation of the soil. In a two-field system, one field lay fallow while the other was divided into halves, one half for autumn crops and one half for spring crops. In a three-field system, one field lay fallow, one field was planted with winter crops, and the third held spring crops. The peasants had certain strips of land in each field that

As the manor was economic in nature, it required precise administration for success. The significant manorial positions were the steward, the reeve, and the hayward. The steward was the *major domus*, or man in charge of the lord's home, particularly while the lord was away. A thirteenth-century document on manorial administration said, "The steward of lands ought to be prudent and faithful and profitable, and he ought to know the law of the realm, to protect his lord's business and to instruct and give assurance to the bailiffs who are beneath him in their difficulties." The steward meticulously managed the affairs of the estate and delegated responsibilities to his subordinates. The reeve presided over the actual production and practical administration of peasant labor. He "must render account for everything," and all the tenants, both free and unfree, answered to him. The hayward, who was responsible to the reeve, administered agricultural production. The manor house had a tenuous existence and every component was necessary for its success, upon which depended the lord as well as the lives of the peasantry who worked his land.¹⁵

Although the manorial organization existed long before feudalism and outlasted the younger system, medieval historians did not turn their attention to discussing the manorial system and its participants until the twentieth century. While historians had largely moved away from Petrarch's damaging title of "The Dark Ages" and had turned their attention to marginalized groups, they had yet to include the manorial peasants. Peasants were a negligible part of society, and the nobility, foreign invaders, papacy, and Carolingian Renaissance consumed the majority of the texts. The latter half of the twentieth century saw an increase in academic interest in the life of the medieval peasant in the manorial system and the free towns. Monographs appeared on certain elements of medieval society, including manors and peasant communities. The shift in focus is apparent in a cursory glance at the title of academic works about the Middle Ages. *The Middle Ages, Medieval Europe, Feudal Society*, and *A Brief Survey of Medieval Europe* were published between 1885 and 1941 while *Life in a Medieval Village* and *Peasant Fires* are products of post-1960 academia. Historical academia had already broadened its scope and embraced sociology, but that did not flourish until the mid-twentieth century. Scholars at the beginning of the century were just turning their attention towards manorial peasants, and their initial research was limited and general.

The writings of Karl Marx were extremely influential on foundational philosophies and, by extension, many other disciplines, including history. The limited and negative view of medieval peasants was due in part to the writings

they cultivated. According to Frances and Joseph Gies, "The strips of plowed land were held individually, and unequally. A few villagers held many strips, most held a few, some had none." Many of the manorial records still in existence deal with the parceling out of land and the guarantee that each man farmed his own strips. Gies, 69, 133; Stephenson, 156, 158; Myers, 172.

¹⁵ "Manorial Management and Organization, c. 1275," trans. Elizabeth Lamond, *Internet History Sourcebook* (accessed November 15, 2012).

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of Marx, namely his *Kommunist Manifesto*, published in 1845. Marx depicted peasants, though not specifically medieval peasants, as a class oppressed under the heel of the upper classes through taxes and, more importantly, through labor, industrial and agricultural. Marx devoted his writings to economics, class struggle, and politics. The term “political economy” appears throughout his work, denoting the kinship between economy and politics. He decried the class system saying, “An oppressed class is the vital condition for every society founded on the antagonism of classes.” According to Marx, it is under the dominance of the property-owners that “the worker [property-less] sinks to the level of a commodity and becomes indeed the most wretched of commodities.” Marx predicted that society was on a straight track to political revolution, a climax he called a “brutal contradiction, the shock of body against body.” Marxist theory was popular throughout the nineteenth century, leading to the conception of peasants as a ragged, ignorant, and potentially violent class, and still had bearings on the twentieth century, though some scholars began to challenge his theories.¹⁶

Philip Van Ness Myers published *The Middle Ages* in 1885, representing the initial move towards social history. He intended “that [his] sketch may not be a recital simply of outer circumstances, but a history of the real inner life of the European people.” Myers praised the medieval period as crucial to both the existence of the Italian Renaissance and the modern period. He wrote, “Over all the regions covered by the barbarian inundation a new stratum of population was thrown down, a new soil formed that was capable of nourishing a better civilization than any the world had yet seen.” Myers intended his history to be a social one, so he first examined the three influences conjoining in the Middle Ages—Teutonic, Classical, Christian—and then looked at specific cultural traits of each that had a hand in medieval culture, such as the Teutons’ “veneration of womanhood” and “love of personal freedom.”¹⁷

Despite Myers’s good intentions, he included only two brief pages on the manorial system, which he treated as a subset of feudalism. He covered the predominant medieval topics and delved into the development of towns; however, manorialism receives little attention. He recognized that “the vassals, or fief holders, of various grades constituted only a very small portion, perhaps, five per cent or less, of the population of the countries where feudalism came to prevail.” Yet, that admission did not induce him to dedicate any more time to the participants in the manorial system. His short depiction of the serfs is not a pleasant one. The “poor serf” existed under a “heavy yoke of servitude,” and his “share was only just sufficient to keep the wolf of hunger from his door.” The cursory glance given towards the peasants does not provide sufficient context

¹⁶ Karl Marx, “The Coming Upheaval,” in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, 2nd ed., ed. Robert C. Tucker (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 218-219. Marx, 70.

¹⁷ Myers, 1, 4, 9, 10.

for his claim to be fully reliable. This sympathy for the supposed plight of serfs is a typical conception of pre-1960 scholars and smacks of Marxist influence. Nonetheless, Myers represents the early move toward thorough social research that examined every aspect of the lives of formerly ignored peoples, such as medieval tenants and serfs.¹⁸

H. C. W. Davis wrote a brief survey of medieval Europe titled *Medieval Europe*, published in 1911. The brevity of the account renders the section of feudalism short and the mention of manorialism nonexistent, with the exception of the mention of serfs as essentially the bottom rung of the feudal system. Davis was a part of the *Annales School*, which “promoted a new form of history, replacing the study of leaders with the lives of ordinary people and replacing examination of politics, diplomacy, and wars with inquiries into climate, demography, agriculture, commerce, technology, transportation, and communication, as well as social groups and mentalities”—that is, *la longue durée*.¹⁹ Despite this approach, Davis does not include the situation of the majority of the European population, the tenants and serfs upon whom feudalism ultimately rested.

Carl Stephenson reflected Myers in the generality of his *A Brief Survey of Medieval Europe*, published 60 years later in 1941, but he also included a discussion of manorialism in which he recognizes manorialism as the precursor of feudalism. Although the information is brief and basic, it is thorough, including the purpose of manorialism, the agricultural methods involved, the persons involved in estate administration, the taxes and obligations of the peasant, the relation of peasant to lord, and even a summary of the practicalities of peasant life. While Stephenson recognized that the peasant worked hard, he qualified that admission saying, “The fact that the entire feudal class was supported, directly or indirectly, by the peasants should not be taken to imply that in general the latter were cruelly treated.”²⁰ Stephenson represents the transition in medieval scholarship, looking more closely at the manorial system and those on whose backs it rested.

Marc Bloch represents the *Annales School* of historical approach, which he founded in the early 1900s with Lucien Febvre. The theoretical approach emphasized attention to “the aspects of feeling and experience embedded in the collective mentalities that form the subject of historical anthropology” and “the stressing the relativity and multilayering of time.”²¹ Bloch wrote a monograph on feudalism titled *Feudal Society*, published in French in 1940 and in English in 1961. Although the book was about feudalism, Bloch recognized that the

¹⁸ Myers, 170-173.

¹⁹ Encyclopedia Britannica Online, s.v. “Annales school,” <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1364891/Annales-school> (accessed November 12, 2012).

²⁰ Stephenson, 155.

²¹ Iggers, 51, 53.

structures were inextricably linked with manorialism, and so he included a section titled “Ties of Dependence among the Lower Orders of Society,” discussing manorial estates, lords, serfs, obligations, and select cases from the period.²² Bloch’s book could also be called a general survey in the sense that, in his detailed discussion of feudalism, Bloch included social, economic, political and military factors. A better term might be a “holistic” history of feudalism.

One strength of the book was Bloch’s attempt to meet the Middle Ages in the past rather than impose modern terms or classifications upon the period. He referred directly to primary sources and extracted information. In the section of the book on “Modes of Feeling and Thought,” Bloch bemoaned “a history more worthy of the name than the diffident speculations to which we are reduced but the paucity of our material would give space to the vicissitudes of the human organism.”²³ More than reporting facts, Bloch wanted to explain the reason for those facts, to delve into the minds and hearts of the men causing those events.

A book in the spirit of Bloch’s *Feudal Society* is *The Ties That Bind* by Barbara Hanawalt, published in 1986. The book is a significant monograph on the life of medieval peasant families in England. Her basic thesis is that, throughout the tumult of the Black Death and increased taxation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the traditional family remained stable. The structure and function of the family endured due to its flexibility as well as economic its necessity and traditional roles, which provided an identity for family members. Before stating the underlying intention of her work, Hanawalt first delineated what she was not trying to do—that is, falsely depict medieval peasants as either equivalent to modern folk or as “boorish, unsentimental, unsociable, gossipy creatures,” such as other historians have done. The specificity of Hanawalt’s book allowed her to delve deeply into nearly every aspect of peasant life, resulting in a vibrant but fair portrayal of the pleasures and difficulties of their lives. Hanawalt’s book does not have a section on manorialism because she addressed the function of the familial unit, though she did write with the foundational assumption that the peasants were tenants of a lord.²⁴

Frances and Joseph Gies in 1990 published *Life in a Medieval Village*, an extensive explication of manorial and village life in thirteenth-century Britain that focuses on a village called Elton in the East Midlands of England. Although they published the book for the general public rather than strictly the academic world, their work nevertheless reflects a stage in the transformation of medieval study. The Gies wrote with a foundational intimate attitude towards their subjects. “[In the village] they lived, there they labored, there they socialized, married, brewed and drank ale,” the Gies write, indicating their intention to

²² Bloch, 240.

²³ *Ibid.*, 72.

²⁴ Barbara Hanawalt, *The Ties That Bind*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 3-4, 8.

depict a medieval village that bustles with the lives of its inhabitants. The village in the Gies' book is "the primary community to which its people belonged for all life's purposes...Together they formed an integrated whole, a permanent community organized for agricultural production." This communal crux of medieval peasant life serves as the foundation from which the Gies approach their writing.²⁵

The Gies' book is about people, first and foremost; secondly, it is about how they formed new institutions and interacted with pre-existing structures such as the manor. Manorialism figures prominently in the book because manorial estates sometimes coincided with a village. The Gies distinguish between the town and the village, defining the town as based on a trade or craft and the village as something agriculturally based. Their work fully represents what Georg Iggers called "the postmodern critique of traditional scholarship," that scholarship which emerged in the later twentieth century, comprising "a broad historical approach that takes both cultural and institutional aspects into consideration."²⁶

Peasant Fires: The Drummer of Niklashausen, a 1992 book written by Richard Wunderli, is an exception to the general departure from depicting peasants as downtrodden anonymous sufferers. Wunderli wrote with a postmodern emphasis on narrative and a Marxist emphasis on class oppression. The narrative, intentionally written for the general public rather than professional historians, focuses on Hans Behem as an avenue to discuss the greater folk culture of medieval Germany. The fictional Behem was a German peasant whose spiritual revelations led to violent uprisings of the peasant population in his region of Germany. Wunderli recreates Behem as a person and then recreates the social/spiritual/emotional mentalities of the medieval period, specifically focusing on the calendar of feasting and fasting days. There is a pronounced Marxist theory behind Wunderli's words: "Peasants the world over live and have lived a precarious existence. Indeed, [Marxist anthropologist] Eric Wolf tells us, they are 'peasants' because others with privilege and power in society have trapped them economically into an existence of work and poverty." He goes on to say that peasants were victims of the upper classes, who created the role of the peasant and forced him into it. It was through the brute violence of the manorial lord that rent was assuredly paid. The two things that suppressed the peasants were the upper classes and the market economy. Whatever they did, the peasants were on the losing end. Wunderli's scholarship is an eclectic combination of Marxist theory, emphasizing political and economic influences, and sociological and anthropological concerns of mentality and belief.

Gender, race, and class studies were part of the development of scholarship in the latter half of the twentieth century. Sally Smith's article "Women and

²⁵ Gies, 7.

²⁶ Iggers, 16.

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Power in the Late Medieval English Village: A Reconsideration,” which focused on the power wielded by the medieval peasant woman in daily life, exemplifies this element of historical approach. She confronted previous scholarship that narrowly defined gender roles in the medieval family, stating that “even a fairly cursory examination of the available evidence makes it clear that there is very little to support this notion of domestic confinement of women.” Smith says that women participated in agriculture, typically depicted as man’s work, and were evidently dominant in the household sphere. She then goes a step further: “If we man men’s and women’s activities, we can argue for asymmetrical spheres of exercise—women could do virtually everything that men could do, but the opposite did not apply.” Smith attempted to uncover the reality of life for medieval peasant women and redefine narrow conceptions of their influence and importance. Her work is a compilation of postmodern critique and feminist theory.²⁷

Historical scholarship in the last century has in some instances retained traditions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but in others it has taken great strides towards a more flexible approach to time and causation as well as a more inclusive approach to people groups. The change has moved scholarship away from “macrohistorical and macrosocial processes” to focus on “culture in the broad sense of everyday life,” essentially uniting multiple disciplines, such as anthropology and sociology, with historical study. Historical study in the twentieth century branched into several different tracks, all with a basic assumption that sociology, anthropology, and history are much closer relatives than previously accepted.

In medieval scholarship, this change has manifested in the type of books written as well as the content of the books. The entire twentieth century demonstrated an inclusion of social history, beginning with stilted inclusions of cultural information in general medieval histories and ending in focused attempts to capture the essence of the manorial peasants and the richness and hardship of the life they lived. Georg Iggers wrote in 1997, “History has again assumed a human face as new attention has been given to individuals, this time not to the high and mighty, but to the common folks.”²⁸

²⁷ Sally V. Smith, “Women and Power in the Late Medieval English Village: A Reconsideration,” *Women’s History Review* 16, no. 3 (July 2007): 312-313.

²⁸ Iggers, 14.

PROHIBITION IN AMERICA: A BAD RAP AND A BIASED ACCOUNT

By Laura Smith

Since December 5, 1933, scholars have debated and struggled to determine the true results of Prohibition in America. Authors have written countless works trying to answer these questions, some hailing, but most criticizing, the amendment that transformed American drinking culture. A careful study of the topic reveals contradictory statistics, rampant biases, outside factors, and generalizations galore that prevent historians from completely uncovering Prohibition's specific results. What can be seen, however, is that the effects Prohibition did have were not as negative as historians so long claimed and, perhaps even more importantly for this audience, the repercussions of Prohibition are no longer present today.

In the Prohibition debate, one thing is certain: America's relationship with alcohol was getting out of control and had been for a long time. Americans had always had a history of drinking hard liquor and often in excessive amounts, especially during the last half of the eighteenth and the majority of the nineteenth century. Herbert Asbury describes the period in his renowned work, *The Great Illusion: An Informal History of Prohibition*. He writes, "The aged and infirm sipped toddies of rum and water—heavy on the rum; babies were quieted by copious doses of rum and opium, and so spent their infancy in a happy fog; and able-bodied men, and women, too, for that matter, seldom went more than a few hours without a drink."¹ Daniel Okrent similarly portrays America's drinking history in his work, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition*. He acknowledges that regardless of the reason, the modern drinking culture is drastically different from that of earlier America. In the first chapters, Okrent gives a synopsis of life in America before Prohibition, emphasizing the early dependence on alcohol that had American adults "guzzling, per capita, a staggering seven gallons of pure alcohol a year."² He puts it into perspective by equating the amount of alcohol consumed per nineteenth-century individual to three times that of the typical American today.

Even so, a phenomenon soon occurred that would forever change the drinking pattern. As poverty and oppression drove millions of immigrants from Germany and Ireland to the country, they transformed the make-up and culture of society. They introduced the inexpensive beer that changed the look of the saloon culture, and heavy displays of public drinking became even more acceptable. It was at this point in time that opponents of this rapidly expanding

¹ Herbert Asbury, *The Great Illusion: An Informal History of Prohibition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1950), 4.

² Daniel Okrent, *Last Call: The Rise and Fall of Prohibition* (New York: Scribner, 2010), 8.

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drinking culture organized. These opponents were largely Christian organizations and temperance leagues run by women, and it made sense that these would be the groups to step forward. In their *Drinking in America: A History*, Mark Edward and James Martin illustrate the climax of the alcohol invasion. They ask, “How, for example, could the nation logically promote better care for the mentally ill or the imprisoned if it allowed people to drink themselves to insanity or to a life of crime?...It seemed impossible to cure national ills without acknowledging the centrality of the liquor question.”³ To the nation’s dries, it seemed the answer to that question was endorsement for the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment and the enforcement of a national prohibition of alcohol. What ensued would rock the nation and introduce the average American imagination then and ever after to the glamorous portrait of the speakeasy and the bootlegger.

In order to judge the success or failure of Prohibition, it must be clear what the goals of Prohibition truly were. Many authors have set out to say that the ultimate goal of Prohibition was to stop all consumption and distribution of alcohol. In this light, Prohibition is almost certainly a failure, as the one thing historians agree on is the abundance of speakeasies lining the streets of every major city in America. A 1933 newspaper article lamenting the evils of Prohibition argued, “For many years, the American took his whiskey at the bar, openly and unashamed. For fifteen years, he took what was sold in the speakeasies as whiskey, furtively and in fear of thugs and raiders. In either case, he has contracted a liking, perhaps a habit, and he will continue to desire his whiskey.”⁴ It is hard to know exactly how many speakeasies there actually were, and estimates are all over the map. Michael Lerner’s book, *Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York City*, attempts to attach a number and struggles. His estimates for Manhattan and Brooklyn alone range from roughly 15,000 to more than twice that many, but nobody can be sure.⁵ This is a glimpse into one of the biggest problems with Prohibition numbers: it is hard to measure what is done in secret. If Prohibition had very little chance of putting a complete end to the liquor trade in America, perhaps the goal was more about lowering overall consumption.

When looking at consumption, mortality rates due to cirrhosis, records of rest homes and mental hospitals, and crime statistics are the general means by which scholars can evaluate American drinking habits. These numbers are risky, as they are often given without context and can be easily molded into ammunition for propagandists. The statistics often lie about the real situation,

³ Mark Edward Lender and James Kirby Martin, *Drinking in America: A History* (New York: Free Press, 1982), 66.

⁴ “The Saloon and the Speakeasy,” *America* 50, no. 4 (October 28, 1933): 75.

⁵ Michael A. Lerner, *Dry Manhattan: Prohibition in New York City* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 138.

especially in the case of alcohol consumption, where illegal production of alcohol may at times drastically rise while overall alcohol consumption remains down over the entire decade. Quantitative historian Jeffery Miron describes the problems behind the numbers in his work, *The Effect of Alcohol Prohibition on Alcohol Consumption*. He explains the flaw with conclusions based on cirrhosis deaths by arguing that, while the number of them decreased during Prohibition and seem to indicate lower levels of consumption, World War I and the following flu epidemic killed off a significant number of young men who would have contributed most to the cirrhosis death rates had they lived longer.⁶ Therefore, the decrease in that factor alone is susceptible to much suspicion.

Even so, in her 1998 work, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America*, Catherine Murdock adamantly argues that Prohibition was at least partially successful on the basis that consumption numbers were down. She writes, “Americans in the first years of federal prohibition drank one-third to one-half as much as they had a decade earlier...Even later in the decade consumption rose to only two-thirds of that in the early 1910s.”⁷ She cites then recent research by Clark Warburton to produce these numbers and says that, regardless of the amendment’s flaws, a drunken man was rare to see on the streets of even most large cities after January 16, 1920.

Assuming that consumption was at least temporarily lower during Prohibition, which even the most biased historian will generally concede, the question then becomes whether the amendment or unrelated environmental factors caused this decrease. Numerous sources argue that drinking was already going down before 1920. As World War I created a need for labor and brought change and substantial profit to America, the economy was not the only positive change in its wake. In her work, *Alcoholism in America: From Reconstruction to Prohibition*, Sarah Tracy argues that by 1919, a year before the amendment went into action, “public drunkards had all but disappeared...The environment—with its high employment rates and wartime restrictions on alcohol—appeared to slow down the production of chronic drunkards.”⁸ For many Americans of the early twentieth century, their argument against Prohibition rested in a general belief that the alcohol problem would most likely take care of itself. They had seen the power of the Temperance Crusade on decreasing consumption by mere suggestion, and many felt coercion would not be necessary. Tracy writes that by the time Prohibition was in debate in Washington, “the number of inebriates was already dropping—thanks to an expanding labor market—the state reasoned with millennial optimism that habitual drunkenness would altogether vanish

⁶ Jeffrey A. Miron, *The Effect of Alcohol Prohibition on Alcohol Consumption* (Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1999), 16.

⁷ Catherine Gilbert Murdock, *Domesticating Drink: Women, Men, and Alcohol in America, 1870-1940* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1998), 94.

⁸ Sarah W. Tracy, *Alcoholism in America: From Reconstruction to Prohibition* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2005), 193.

from sight.”⁹ Tracy is not the only one suspicious of the claims that Prohibition caused the staggering drinking levels to lower from those in the century preceding it. As Miron draws his own data to a close, he makes a similar realization that the decrease may not be a result of government control. He states that, though drinking did decline during the duration of the amendment, “this does not prove what alcohol consumption would have been during the Prohibition years in the absence of Prohibition.”¹⁰

Still other historians believe that even if Prohibition was not the sole reason people drank less, it at least changed how they drank, which perhaps was its goal in the first place. The provision in the Volstead Act which allowed any alcohol hoarded before January 17 for private consumption created two drastically separate classes of American society: those who had the money and the space to store enough alcohol for a decade of dryness and those who were at the mercy of the speakeasy. At least for the first few years of Prohibition, drinking drove many Americans home to their private stashes, thus giving the once liquor-saturated streets the appearance of sobriety. Murdock’s work hinges on this very argument, and she states, “Federal prohibition effectively dismantled the public drinking culture of the saloon and in this respect should be considered a success.”¹¹

The saloon culture of the nineteenth century seemed to many Americans something worth killing. Though once perceived as fit settings for the mingling of political ideas and fit spots of recreation for both the lower and the upper classes, saloons gave way to a very different kind of meeting place produced by the Industrial Revolution. Factory life and long hours of drudgery instilled in many the desire to find escape, be it through a bottle or through one of the many female patrons. Large factories brought numerous young, often unattached men looking to spend their weekly wages on drink and riotous living, and, as for which came first, the need for alcohol or the surplus of it, the drys seemed in a general consensus that neither could survive without the other. In John Marshall Barker’s 1905 work, *The Saloon Problem and Social Reform*, he argued, “The supply of liquor creates the demand, and not, as in the case of necessities, the demand the supply. In a multitude of ways it fosters and overstimulates a thirst for drink.”¹² Regardless of the public’s opinion on the place of the saloon in society, no one could argue against the fact that they were on nearly every street corner before Prohibition began. If the disappearance of saloons in major cities was the goal, then Prohibition appeared to succeed, though the argument that the saloon was replaced by the speakeasy is valid.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 195.

¹⁰ Miron, *The Effect of Alcohol Prohibition on Alcohol Consumption*, 20.

¹¹ Murdock, 88.

¹² John Marshall Barker, *The Saloon Problem and Social Reform* (Boston: Everett Press, 1905),

Understanding the true goal of Prohibition presents its own challenges. Not only is the true goal hard to discern, its immediate results are equally difficult to sift out. That is in part due to a major event that hurled itself into the public eye in the fall of 1929—that is, the stock market crash that ushered in the Great Depression. The people of the United States had not seen an economic downturn to that extent before, and it seemed to some that the wets had been right all along in saying Prohibition was too costly to keep up. Many felt the time had finally come for everyone to pay for it.

However, the economy experienced a period of relative prosperity just after the passage of the Eighteenth Amendment. A prominent economist of the time, Irving Fisher, had named the illegalization of alcohol an economic success in his 1927 work, *Prohibition at Its Worst*. Even without proper enforcement, Fisher contended that Prohibition had saved six billion dollars in the last year, seven years after its start in 1920. Fisher argued, “If Prohibition enforcement cost us even \$1,000,000,000 a year, it would be well worth while purely as an economic investment.”¹³ Fletcher Dobyns gives a similar defense in his 1940 work, *The Amazing Story of Repeal: An Exposé of the Power of Propaganda*. He claims that those who blamed the depression on Prohibition had fallen prey to wet propaganda seeking repeal. He writes that they failed to see “that under prohibition we had had ten years of unexplained prosperity, that the depression was world-wide and due to causes with which prohibition had nothing to do, and that it had come earlier and was more severe in countries like England and Germany which were not ‘afflicted with prohibition.’”¹⁴ Looking back, it is likely that those arguing that the alcohol abeyance had produced a massive economic catastrophe were wrong, but there were other more legitimate accusations doubting Prohibition’s immediate results.

When asked to describe Prohibition, even the most unlearned student of history will pepper his or her answer with depictions of gangsters roaming the streets of major cities and the black market liquor trade. This is largely because these things are known to have existed during the “dry decade,” and few can argue that a rise in crime did not occur in the years of Prohibition enforcement and lack thereof. This is often the central argument condemning Prohibition as an embarrassment of history, as is the case with Edward Behr’s 1996 work, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America*. He introduces the book by describing the climactic scene in the life of a man named George Remus who shot his second wife, Imogene. Behr reveals little else about Remus’s life before his violent act, but says only, “Prohibition itself was the real culprit,” bringing

¹³ Irving Fisher, *Prohibition at Its Worst* (New York: Alcohol Information Committee, 1927), 162.

¹⁴ Fletcher Dobyns, *The Amazing Story of Repeal: An Exposé of the Power of Propaganda* (Chicago: Willett, Clark, 1940), 376.

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with it “irresistible temptations in the wake of unprecedented corruption.”¹⁵ Behr heavily implies that Prohibition provided the opportunity for otherwise good men to become entangled in a world of seedy speakeasies and organized crime, and perhaps he is right. There is no doubt that the number of homicides did in fact rise after the enactment of Prohibition.

It is important, however, to look at the nature of the homicides and once again look behind the numbers. In 2009, Mark Asbridge and Swarna Weerasinghe published an article in which they looked at the data on homicides involving alcohol and those unrelated slightly before and during Prohibition. What they found was that, while non-alcohol-related homicides rose during Prohibition, alcohol-related homicides remained steady. They argue, “If the rise in total homicides is due to an increase in violent forms of conflict resolution, the flat trend in alcohol-related homicides suggests that this increase is not a direct product of the illicit production and sale of alcohol.”¹⁶ Asbridge and Weerasinghe further muse that overall homicides may have risen due to a general trend towards violence in the twentieth century, and not due to Prohibition at all. Dobyns also promoted this notion, declaring,

Every informed person knows that the gangster and the racketeer put in their appearance fifty years before the adoption of the Eighteenth Amendment, and that crimes of violence increased steadily during that period. In the bitter struggle between laborers and employers that began in the middle of the last century, the employers hired strikebreakers and detectives and sluggers to protect their property, and the laborers accepted this method of warfare. The gangsters and racketeers were born of this struggle, although they were not exploited and dramatized until they became the heroes of the wet propaganda.¹⁷

This once again proves how difficult it can be to discern Prohibition’s immediate results. However, a possible result of Prohibition not examined through questionable statistics is what Prohibition proponents deemed the emergence of a more efficient working class. A principle outcry amongst the dries against alcohol was that it robbed time and presence of mind, two commodities esteemed higher than ever before with the onset of industrialization and the values held by those who wanted to move up the economic ladder. Lender and Martin comment on the brewing frustration with this wasteful trend, saying, “The practice of whiling away hours in saloons, which had been

¹⁵ Edward Behr, *Prohibition: Thirteen Years That Changed America* (New York: Arcade, 2011), 3.

¹⁶ Mark Asbridge and Swarna Weerasinghe, “Homicide in Chicago from 1890 to 1930: prohibition and its impact on alcohol- and non-alcohol-related homicides,” *Addiction* 104, no. 3 (March 2009): 361.

¹⁷ Dobyns, 370-71.

harmless enough in the pre-industrial era, was to be avoided on principle...According to the industrialists, wages should be put into savings, investments, and manufactured goods.”¹⁸

One of the greatest problems a foreman faced was poor attendance of his workers. These workers, often the poor, unattached immigrants who had frequented the saloon in the days before Prohibition, often failed to show up for work the day after. This was a practice the drys promised Prohibition would eliminate, and economist Herman Feldman argued that it did. His 1927 work, *Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects*, admitted that, while little data existed to analyze absences and work accidents related to alcohol, the position of the boss was that Prohibition had cleaned up factory efficiency and attendance. He wrote, “That industry has lately been suffering a good deal less from irregular attendance caused by overindulgence than it did in the past is thus the general testimony...There are numerous and emphatic statements, by executives everywhere, that workers generally are steadier because of prohibition.”¹⁹

When trying to determine Prohibition’s results, the scholar cannot help but face cumbersome questions: why are there so many contradictions, and how do so many historians reach drastically different conclusions from the same data? Anyone hoping to delve into the murky depths of scholarship on Prohibition is soon to discover that, apart from general surveys over the topic and miniscule excerpts about it existing in other works, relatively little in-depth scholarship on Prohibition actually exists. In fact, the majority of scholars have written about the subject during three periods: the time surrounding and within Prohibition’s actual enforcement, shortly after 1970, and in the years around the turn of the twenty-first century. The interest in writing around the time of Prohibition is easy to explain, but the spark of interest around 1970 is almost certainly in direct response to another influential event in American history taking place at that time.

The passage of the Controlled Substances Act as a part of the Comprehensive Drug Abuse Prevention and Control Act of 1970 caused a heightened preoccupation in analyzing not just the prohibition of drugs but the concept of *prohibition* in general. The proliferation of Prohibition scholarship after the turn of the century is most likely directly related to renewed interest in the question of drug legalization around this time. Assuming that highly controversial, more current events drove these bursts of scholarship, it should come as no surprise that finding an accurate and unbiased account of Prohibition data is exceedingly difficult. No historian writing in the time directly surrounding Prohibition could completely determine results that would take

¹⁸ Lender and Martin, 108.

¹⁹ Herman Feldman, *Prohibition: Its Economic and Industrial Aspects* (New York: D.Appleton, 1930), 212.

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decades to confirm, and historians writing in tumultuous periods related to prohibition of drugs are unable to write without the blinders of this separate argument. Books abound that attempt to prove the evils of drug prohibition with evidence of Prohibition's own demise. Jeffery Miron and Jeffery Zwiebel introduce their article, "Alcohol Consumption during Prohibition," with a comment about this very phenomenon. They state, "The burgeoning debate over drug legalization in the United States has drawn renewed attention to the nation's experience with Prohibition...Prohibition provides a natural setting in which to examine the impact of legal restrictions on the use of substances such as alcohol or drugs."²⁰

Regardless of Prohibition's role as the overlooked salvation of American society or as a disruption of man's inherent right to intemperance, Prohibition was repealed. Whether it was repealed based on the insufficiency of positive results or by outside factors is another debate, and the arguments are as various and sundry as those on Prohibition's results themselves. In Murdock's argument that Prohibition killed the saloon culture by driving drinking into the home, she simultaneously concludes that Prohibition could not last because it did not provide Americans with the positive aspects of the saloon that had once existed. She writes, "Prohibition failed to produce substitutes for alcohol or the saloon, despite warnings that people would continue to crave the companionship these afforded."²¹ Despite the obvious societal taboos woven into the saloon, its disappearance may have in fact created a need for a social gathering place for those same tired and lonely workers that had once frequented its doors.

Murdock is not the only one arguing that the saloon's absence had to be filled by something. Feldman's economic look at Prohibition also commented on the changes since the saloon's departure, though he felt that more wholesome industries were thus able to profit in its place. He mused, "Has the abolition of the saloon augmented the popular demand for many other goods and services? It appears that it has, that in the degree to which the change has been bad for the saloon and liquor business, it was good for other trades catering to some of the wants which the saloon satisfied."²² He felt that theaters, ballparks, radios, and Sunday drives stepped in to fill the void and provided the entertainment the saloon once did.

Regarding reasons for the repeal, factors outside Prohibition's possibly negative immediate results had quite an influence on the decision. Although historians can now see that Prohibition did not cause the Great Depression, the Great Depression quite possibly brought an end to Prohibition. The stock market crash of 1929 ushered in a decade of unemployment and wide scale poverty,

²⁰ Jeffrey A. Miron and Jeffrey Zwiebel, "Alcohol consumption during Prohibition," *American Economic Review* 81, no. 2 (May 1991): 242.

²¹ Murdock, 127.

²² Feldman, 147.

and, as this dragged on, people were less and less able to justify progressive expenses aimed at improving the morality of a society that was struggling to survive. Bread was worth more than temperance. As Lender and Martin explain, “The battle over liquor paled before the monumental social problems resulting from the depression. Just as an earlier generation of Americans had set aside the dry crusade with the coming of the Civil War, so their twentieth-century counterparts turned away from antiliqor agitation to tackle the awesome task of national economic recovery.”²³ As time passed, it also became harder to ignore the amount of jobs that repeal would provide in breweries, bottling companies, and bars. An example of that hope is evident in a *New York Times* article in March of 1933, only months before the force for repeal finally triumphed. The article claimed that while people expected many businesses to profit from the legalization of alcohol, the only industries they expected to lose money were the soft drink companies and, therefore, the sugar industry.²⁴ Still, many hoped that the repeal of Prohibition would give the nation’s sputtering economy enough of a kick start to propel it out of the depression. As they would soon see, the path to recovery would be as complicated as the depression’s causes.

Another reason for Prohibition’s repeal was the serious lack of funding provided for enforcement even from the start. Few seemed to realize the expense attached to the enforcement of such laws at the time of their passage, something Asbury comments on in his work. He contradicts Fisher’s earlier argument that Prohibition had saved money. Asbury instead argues, “Enforcement would cost at least three hundred million dollars a year. It was obvious that no such sum would ever be provided, and it was equally obvious that the states would do little or nothing.”²⁵ He seems to place the failure of Prohibition not on an increase of alcohol-related crime but on uncooperative state legislatures that, even before the depression when the money was available, felt little need to fund enforcement on a local level. Total prohibition of alcohol, in order to succeed, would have required a level of support it never had.

When the Eighteenth Amendment passed, Prohibition was at a climax of popularity that it could not maintain. Its subsequent failure was not necessarily because of any evil the amendment produced but rather the indifference that followed its initial success. Once the dries had their legal day, many acted as if their job was done, but laws alone could not change a nation. Behr comments, “Perhaps the least-learned lesson of Prohibition is that legislation alone is no answer to America’s problems. The moralists and evangelical pioneers without whom Prohibition would have remained a dead letter believed that enactment of

²³ Lender and Martin, 167-68.

²⁴ “Aid for Many Lines Seen in Legal Beer,” *New York Times*, March 19, 1933.

²⁵ Asbury, 318.

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the Eighteenth Amendment would be sufficient to change the habits of American society as a whole. They were quickly proved disastrously wrong.”²⁶

It became clearer why Prohibition consequences are difficult to delineate, and why a close study reveals very few discernible results at all. Prohibition may have done many things to lower consumption or it may have even raised crime. The multiplicity of outside factors acting during the decade and affecting its repeal strongly suggest that Prohibition did not cause the negative aftermath many projected before it began or argued it had after its end. Testifying to this are the two interesting occurrences on January 16, 1920 and December 5, 1933. In the final weeks before enforcement of the Eighteenth Amendment began, the papers abounded with projections of a nation-wide binge that would take place in the final hours before the Volstead Act’s enforcement. What actually transpired on that night, however, was very different. Behr describes it, saying, “Surprisingly, though a phenomenal amount of drinking took place all over America on the night of January 16, the occasion failed to live up to reporters’ (and saloon keepers’) expectations.”²⁷ In his own survey of Prohibition, *The Long Thirst: Prohibition in America, 1920-33*, Thomas Coffey also mentions, “Throughout the country it was a surprisingly sober night. The national binge which was widely expected did not take place. Even New York, a city prohibitionists considered the modern-day Gomorrah, was relatively sedate during the last hours of legal liquor on January 16, 1920.”²⁸ Some argue that the only reason the binge did not take place was that so many had already stored up enough alcohol in their homes to keep them out of the streets, but that does not explain the similar lack of celebration at Prohibition’s end on December 5, 1933.

Once again, journalists scoured the streets looking for phenomenal excess, and, once again, they found none. They had expected bar brawls and drunken celebrations spilling out into the streets, but Coffey comments that major cities like Boston and Philadelphia were quiet the night that Utah became the last state to ratify. Even in New York, where many had expected celebrations to rapidly escalate, the *New York Times* reported that “with the city’s entire police force of 19,000 men mobilized to guard against overexuberant celebrants, arrests did not exceed the normal number for any day of the last five years.”²⁹ A reporter on the celebrations in Times Square said, “The crowds were orderly and mildly amused at the photographers’ flashlights and the trucks unloading spirits, but they were only slightly larger than on a good Saturday night, and the 200 extra policemen assigned to the district had little to do.”³⁰ This lack of activity suggests that Prohibition came and went with little impact. The hardened drinkers were

²⁶ Behr, 242.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 81.

²⁸ Thomas M. Coffey, *The Long Thirst: Prohibition in America: 1920-1933* (New York: Norton, 1975), 3.

²⁹ “New York Celebrates with Quiet Restraint,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1933.

³⁰ “Repeal Is Greeted Quietly in Streets,” *New York Times*, December 6, 1933.

determined to drink regardless of the law, and much of society chose to abstain with or without enforcement. The only far-reaching result of Prohibition was a change in the national perception of public drinking and general consumption. However, it was probably not a direct result of Prohibition so much as the temperance sentiment brought about by the Temperance Crusade long before January 16, 1920. Furthermore that sentiment continued to have impact sometime after December 5, 1933.

This is the position that Pamela Pennock and K. Austin Kerr take in their article, "In the Shadow of Prohibition: Domestic American Alcohol Policy since 1933." They see Prohibition as largely defective both in enforcement and in stimulating a crime wave that introduced the average, middle class citizen to lawless bootlegging, but they see the temperance sentiment that started it all as having a lasting impact on America's relationship with alcohol. They argue that even once the nation repealed the Eighteenth Amendment, "the consumption level of alcoholic beverages remained a disappointment to their suppliers and tax collectors...Drinking had increased by the end of the 1930s, but remained largely flat thereafter, partly as a result of the ageing of the population, but also because of enduring values of temperance."³¹ Even this result, however, does not extend to today, and by the 1970s, Pennock and Kerr note that Americans returned to drinking as much as they had before Prohibition ever took place.

Herbert Asbury, the writer of what was probably the most in-depth and earliest account of those thirteen sober years, concluded *The Great Illusion* with an interesting final thought on what Herbert Hoover deemed "the noble experiment." Asbury writes, "Well, of course, there are now no 'saloons' in the United States. Instead there are bars, taverns, grills, and cocktail lounges. But by and large it is the same old rose with the same old smell."³² He was right. A thorough study shows that the results many once blamed on the amendment, including increased consumption, economic downturn, and high crime, were not results of Prohibition at all but of outside factors. While it had temporarily lowered consumption and proved efficient to an extent, Prohibition had changed next to nothing permanently.

³¹ Pamela E. Pennock and K. Austin Kerr, "In the Shadow of Prohibition: Domestic American Alcohol Policy since 1933," *Business History* 47, no. 3 (July 2005): 395.

³² Asbury, 330.

REMEMBERING THE MIDDLE AGES

By Zachary A. Strietelmeier

Dialogue.

A. *Was I ill? and is it ended?*

Pray, by what physician tended?

I recall no pain endured!

B. *Now I know your trouble's ended.*

*He that can forget, is cured.*¹

According to the English monk and scholar known as the Venerable Bede, there exist three methods by which time is reckoned: custom, nature, and authority.² To introduce these elements, Bede provides his own etymology for the word time (*tempus*). Considered in the plural, he explains that “times (*tempora*) take their name from ‘measure’ (*temperamentum*).”³ *Temperamentum*, in turn, derives from the verb *tempero*, “to be moderate, to divide, to regulate.” Ergo, in addition to its function as a passive construct of custom, nature, and authority, time also assumes an active role—it moderates, it divides, it regulates.⁴ Writing in the early eighth century, Bede captures this paradoxical nature of time’s sovereignty, one which governs and is governed simultaneously, and thus he lays the groundwork for his own periodization schemata. Recently, however, such schemata have come under attack. A familiar example is the substitution of C.E. (Common Era) for A.D. (*anno domini*) in an attempt to extricate historical inquiry from the sacred.⁵ Not only is this particular division in question, but, today, periodization in general “finds itself in a very bad odor indeed.”⁶ Postmodern criticism of “the period,” by recognizing the dual functionality of time, as outlined by Bede, emphasizes its role as a political act. Most scholars now concur with Johannes Fabian’s assertion that time, if it is regulated by the politics of custom, nature, and authority, will regulate history with those same political phenomena. In other words, periodization has a

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* [1882], trans. Thomas Common, Paul V. Cohn, and Maude D. Petre (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2008), 2.

² Bede, *The Reckoning of Time* [8th century], trans. Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1999), 13.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Kathleen Davis, *Periodization and Sovereignty: How Ideas of Feudalism and Secularization Govern the Politics of Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 1.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁶ Lawrence Besserman, “The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives,” in *The Challenge of Periodization: Old Paradigms and New Perspectives*, ed. Lawrence Besserman (New York: Garland Publishing, 1996), 3.

political agenda.⁷ One temporal division central to this discourse on the “politics of time” is the tripartite periodization of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity. Through a detailed historiography of the ancient-medieval-modern schema, this essay contends that periodization of the Middle Ages reflects the socio-political environments in which it is perceived and thus imposes the same political agendas as a regulating function—that is, the medieval period survives more as a conceptual division than a temporal one.

Like all political structures, this tripartite periodization of Western history builds upon historical paradigms that were present prior to its inception. The earliest temporal schemata developed from ancient myths and legends instituted by the Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans. Yet, while Greek and Roman traditions supplied a plethora of time-reckoning techniques, the main source for Western (Judeo-Christian) periodization paradigms was biblical literature.⁸ For the scholars of Late Antiquity, the Bible served both as a historical account, providing a template for marking the past, and as a prophetic book, providing a method for interpreting the future.⁹ Perhaps the most influential periodization schema derived from biblical narrative was that known as the Six Ages of the World. In the late third century, Sextus Julius Africanus advanced an early but unorthodox version of this schema, asserting that each age equaled a thousand years, and thereby predicted the Second Coming of Christ around A.D. 500. Augustine, a century later, put forward his own division of the Six Ages of the World and, in response to Julius, made a point of declaring the duration of the “sixth age” unknowable.¹⁰ History, then, remained part of this undifferentiated “sixth age,” a true “middle age” (*medium aevum*) from the first coming of Christ to his Second Coming at the end of time.¹¹ It is in the context of this ahistorical “sixth age” that Petrarch advocated a future resumption of history and thus inspired the tripartite periodization of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity.¹²

Francesco Petrarca (1304-74), anglicized as Petrarch, reinvented the medieval periodization schema established by Augustine in the early fifth century, prompting the formation of the ancient/medieval and medieval/modern divisions of history. When Augustine asserted his Six-Ages-of-the-World schema, he set it alongside the Six Ages of Man, claiming that the world grows old and, like man, gets worse over time. By the fourteenth century, this birth-

⁷ Davis, 2.

⁸ Besserman, 5-6.

⁹ Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (1981; repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 29.

¹⁰ Besserman, 7.

¹¹ Amos Funkenstein, “Periodization and Self-Understanding in the Middle Ages and Early Modern Times,” *Medievalia et Humanistica: Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Culture* 5 (1974): 8.

¹² John Dagenais and Margaret R. Greer, “Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction,” *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 30, no. 3 (Fall 2000): 435-36.

maturity-death paradigm was thoroughly ingrained into medieval thought.¹³ Yet, Petrarch saw a hope of temporal resurrection, namely through the rediscovery of classical Rome. After a prolonged visit to Rome in 1341 for his coronation as poet laureate, Petrarch asked a correspondent the following question: “Who can doubt that Rome would rise up again if she but began to know herself?”¹⁴ Rome, in this case, referred to pagan and not Christian Rome, as Petrarch affirms in the same letter, drawing a boundary between what he considers to be ancient and modern history.¹⁵ Unlike the classical age of Rome, Petrarch believed the time in which he lived to be one shrouded in darkness, a “middle squalor” suspended between two “happier ages.”¹⁶ The darkness (*tenebrae*) that for the medieval person was characteristic of the pagan times preceding Christ, described for Petrarch the Christian times in which he lived.¹⁷ In the final lines of his epic poem *Africa* (1338/9), Petrarch emphatically conveys this *tenebrae* along with his ardent hope for a classical revival: “My life is destined to be spent ’midst storms and turmoil. But...a more propitious age will come again...Our posterity, perchance, when the dark clouds are lifted, may enjoy once more the radiance the ancients knew.”¹⁸ In contrast to the Augustinian birth-maturity-death topos, Petrarch offers an alternative tripartite paradigm of birth-death-rebirth, one which can be equally imposed upon or extrapolated from events in the biblical narrative.¹⁹ So, even though Petrarch, in celebrating pagan classicism, introduced historical divisions to the ahistorical “sixth age,” his periodization schema still resided within the Judeo-Christian framework.

Of course, the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scholars did not immediately embrace this novel method of periodization—the roots of the Christian universal histories had grown too deep.²⁰ Even Vasari’s classic account of the so-called “rebirth” (*la rinascità*) of art, written in 1550, reflected the birth-maturity-death topos of Augustine. It was not until Polydore Vergil’s *Historica Anglica* (1534) that a logical, scholastically recognized defense of the birth-death-rebirth model surfaced in northern Europe. Polydore, in this

¹³ Besserman, 7.

¹⁴ Petrarch, *Fam.* 6.2, ed. Rossi, 2:58, quoted in Theodor E. Mommsen, “Petrarch’s Conception of the ‘Dark Ages,’” *Speculum* 17, no. 2 (April 1942): 232. “The etymological connection between *media tempestas* and *tempest* reflects a specialization in the meaning of *tempestas* from ‘time’ to ‘period of time’ to ‘season’ to ‘stormy weather’ to ‘a specific type of storm.’” Dagenais, “Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction,” 434n9.

¹⁵ Mommsen, 233.

¹⁶ Petrarch, *Epistola metrica* 3.33, lines 1-6, ed. F. Neri et al., *Rime, Trionfi e poesie latine* (Millan: Ricciardi, n.d.), 802, quoted in Dagenais, “Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction,” 433.

¹⁷ Mommsen, 227.

¹⁸ Petrarch, *Petrarch’s Africa* [1338-9], trans. Thomas G. Bergin and Alice S. Wilson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), 239, lines 634-41.

¹⁹ Besserman, 8.

²⁰ Funkenstein, 9.

work, adheres to the same life-cycle paradigm of Augustine but provides one notable caveat: he explains that nations, unlike human beings, are not restricted to a single lifetime.²¹ There were exceptions, however, to this tardy reception of the Petrarchan schema; they came largely from the Italian city-states, whose citizens had long rebuffed the claims of the Holy Roman Empire as well as the “transfer of rule” (*translatio imperii*) which gave it legitimacy. By rejecting the *translatio imperii* between the Roman and medieval empires, Italian Renaissance humanists simultaneously rejected a continuous universal history, and thus scholars like Leonardo Bruni (d. 1444) and Flavio Biondo (1392-1463) were more readily able to reference the ancient-medieval-modern periodization in their works.²² Throughout the 1500s and 1600s, many prominent scholars recognized and employed the temporal divisions outlined by Petrarch. Yet, it was Christoph Cellarius who first systematically organized Western history according to this tripartite schema, publishing his *Universal History Divided into an Ancient, Medieval, and New Period* just prior to 1700.²³

Many modern historians, including Fabian, consider the humanists’ rejection of the *translatio imperii* and their break from the continuous universal histories of Judeo-Christianity to be an “achieved secularization of time.” For these modern historians, Cellarius’ work marked a critical divide between sacred and secular history.²⁴ However, Fabian’s famous critique on anthropology, *Time and the Other*, proved to be self-negating on this particular point. While, on the one hand, Fabian advocates the recognition of temporal politics, on the other, he further politicizes the medieval/modern divide by presupposing a corresponding sacred/secular divide.²⁵ His assumption of such a sacred/secular rift in time consequently ignores many historical developments. For example, long before the Renaissance or the Enlightenment, Bede put forward an organized explanation of cyclic and linear time that was based on religious ideology, and these temporal constructions are still being used today.²⁶ The recent substitution of C.E. for A.D. notwithstanding, the incarnation of Christ continues to define the foundation of chronological (linear) time. In fact, with this new nomenclature, the effect of Bede’s periodization is greater, as it employs the same mechanism of division (i.e. the incarnation) but operates under a secular and apparently

²¹ Besserman, 8.

²² Ernst Breisach, *Historiography: Ancient, Medieval, and Modern*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 159. N.b. Polydore Vergil was born at Urbino in central Italy before Pope Alexander VI selected him for a tax-collecting office in England soon after 1500. Holding various church preferments, Polydore remained in England until 1550, when he purportedly returned to Urbino.

²³ *Ibid.*, 181.

²⁴ Davis, 2-3.

²⁵ Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes its Object* (1983; repr., New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 1-2.

²⁶ Davis, 106.

more universal façade.²⁷ Karl Löwith, in his *Meaning in History*, makes a similar observation, asserting that modern historical concepts are merely secularized counterparts to the eschatological patterns found in Judeo-Christian ideology. By exposing the continuity between “sacred” and “secular” histories, Löwith seeks to undermine the popular claim that modern theory presents the only legitimate history and can therefore serve as a decisive sovereign of time (dividing the medieval/sacred from the modern/secular). Modern sovereignty, Löwith argues, disavows the very history upon which it is established.²⁸ Although these twentieth-century expositions on the secularization of time have had a significant impact on recent understandings of periodization, they actually underscore a preexisting attitude of triumphalism, one which dates back to Petrarch’s conception of the “dark ages.”

The term “dark ages” was never primarily a scientific description but rather a “battle-cry,” a condemnation of medieval thought and culture as a whole. Propounded by scholars such as Voltaire and Gibbon, this slogan became most common during the Age of Enlightenment, a period whose very name attests to the disaffection between it and the preceding era of *tenebrae*.²⁹ Voltaire, in his *Essay on the Manners and Spirit of Nations* (1756), bewails the Middle Ages as a time when “human nature was plunged, for such a series of ages, into this condition so similar, and in so many respects inferior to that of brutes...”³⁰ He, not unlike the Renaissance scholars, celebrated the present and denigrated the past. In his *Advice to a Journalist* (1737), Voltaire writes the following: “As to the young, do instill in them a taste for the history of recent times, which to us is a matter of necessity, rather than ancient history, which is only a matter of curiosity.”³¹ Though not yet formulated as a method of periodization, the presentism of Voltaire greatly reflected the sacred/secular divide explored above. The “philosophy of history,” as defined by his influential *Essay on Manners*, was expressly distinguished from the theological interpretation found in medieval universal histories; reason and the will of man, not providence and the will of God, governed Voltaire’s historical inquiry.³² As a result, both Voltaire and Gibbon employed the founding of Constantinople as a symbol to inaugurate the decline of the Roman Empire.³³ Indeed, much of Edward

²⁷ Davis, 3.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 83-84.

²⁹ Mommsen, 227.

³⁰ Voltaire, *An Essay on Universal History: The Manners, and Spirit of Nations, from the Reign of Charlemagne to the Age of Louis XIV*, 2nd ed. [1756], trans. Nugent (London, 1759), 9.

³¹ Voltaire, *Counseils à un journaliste* (May 10, 1737), in *Oeuvres complètes de Voltaire*, ed. Louis Moland, 50 vols. (Paris: Garnier, 1877-85), 22:244, quoted in Pierre Force, “Voltaire and the Necessity of Modern History,” *Modern Intellectual History* 6, no. 3 (2009): 462.

³² Karl Löwith, *Meaning in History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949), 1.

³³ Voltaire, *Essay on Manners*, 9. Cf. Edward Gibbon, *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* [1776] (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879), 503. “Standing first, ‘the foundation of Constantinople’ marks the culmination of that movement of empire to power-centres

Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776) drew from the popular achievements of Voltaire, as did the works of Hume and Robertson.³⁴ Together, the scholarship of these "enlightened" historians did much to extend the perception of the "dark ages" first conveyed by Petrarch, and reinforced the notion that the medieval period was one unworthy of remembrance.

Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, the expression "dark ages" became increasingly restricted and was eventually altogether abandoned by medievalists. While *The American Cyclopaedia* of 1883 still applied the term in its widest sense (ca. 400-1500), by the turn of the twentieth century, the "dark ages" no longer encompassed the full scope of the Middle Ages. Instead, as defined in the 1909 edition of *The Americana*, it represented only the time between the fall of the Roman Empire in A.D. 475 and the discovery of the Pandects at Amalfi in 1137.³⁵ In turn, the fourteenth (1929) edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* did not even include the expression, explaining that "the contrast, once so fashionable, between the ages of darkness and the ages of light has no more truth to it than have the idealistic fancies which underlie attempts at medieval revivalism."³⁶ Yet, despite the absence of the term "dark ages" in the popular encyclopedia, the triumphalism of the Renaissance and Enlightenment has continued to pervade modern thought, especially in the form of monolithic sacred/secular and feudal/capitalist divides.³⁷ In concluding her book, *Periodization and Sovereignty*, Kathleen Davis references a recent National Public Radio broadcast (aired 18 June 2007), which attributed the current unrest in Pakistan to the nation's "ancient system of feudalism and privilege." Essentially, the report maintained that if Pakistan could overcome these antiquated structures of government, it could act as a stable, useful ally to the U.S. in the war on terrorism.³⁸ As conveyed in this NPR sound-bite, use of the term "feudalism"—not unlike Petrarch's "dark ages"—temporally distances its object from the modern world. In Davis's words, "It allows reports such as this to deflect recent political events, and to attribute current problems in nations such as Pakistan simply to 'ancient,' ostensibly endemic, cultural factors."³⁹ So, despite the constant efforts of modern scholarship to eschew triumphalism, the perceptions of the Renaissance and Enlightenment thinkers have left an indelible impression on the Western mind.

alibi quam Romae which Gibbon tells us had 'started in his mind' as a subject on the steps of the Capitol in 1764." J. G. A. Pocock, *Religion: The First Triumph*, vol. 5 of *Barbarism and Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 4.

³⁴ Force, 458-459.

³⁵ Mommsen, 226.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 226.

³⁷ Davis, 2.

³⁸ Philip Reeves, "Pakistanis Criticize Influence of Feudal Families," *Morning Edition*, 18 June 2007, quoted in Davis, 132.

³⁹ Davis, 133.

The scholastic shift away from triumphalism largely precipitated from the series of events that took place in France between 1789 and 1815. During this period, the failure of the Jacobin radical experiment and the Napoleonic Empire left many scholars disenchanted with triumphalist ideology; the notion that a civilization could abolish its age-old traditions in favor of new, purely rational constructs to achieve a society of complete justice and happiness had proved erroneous. As a result, a resurgence of medieval scholarship emerged under nationalistic pursuits, defending the *ancien régime* as a fundamental part of both human progress and national identity.⁴⁰ It is in this context that the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm F. Hegel (1770-1831) proposed his progressive model of cultural history, one which provided the Middle Ages with a functional role in the evolution of the state.⁴¹ Rejecting the birth-death-rebirth topos of Petrarch, Hegel introduced his own tripartite cultural model of history, reflecting the development of Spirit and Idea in what can be best described as an infancy-adolescence-maturity schema.⁴² While this schema did not have much influence as a method of periodization, deviating significantly from the traditional ancient/medieval and medieval/modern divides, his incorporation of the Middle Ages into relevant history is critical to the postmodern discourse on temporal politics. Contrary to the *philosophes* that preceded him, Hegel championed the medieval Christian tradition over the Roman Empire, as it represented one more step toward the self-realization of the Spirit and toward the anthropological consciousness of freedom.⁴³ To Hegel, history was in perpetual progress, and a society of *liberté, égalité, and fraternité* was yet to come.

Implicit, though, in the continuous nature of the Hegelian dialectic, was a portrayal of the modern age as a transitional period.⁴⁴ Framed within the context of a demarcated past and a definite future, Modernity became ahistorical and nonhomogeneous to many of the nineteenth-century scholars. Just as Petrarch had decried the “middle squalor” in which he lived, so these Romantics maligned the modern times on behalf of their parenthetical character.⁴⁵ Victor Hugo, for example, after an exhausting survey of fifteenth-century Paris in *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), candidly writes the following concerning the city’s modern condition: “The present Paris has therefore no general physiognomy. It is a collection of specimens of several different ages, and the finest of all have disappeared.”⁴⁶ Particularly egregious to Hugo was the historical eclecticism he witnessed in the nineteenth century, the remnants of the

⁴⁰ Breisach, 228-229.

⁴¹ Shlomo Aveneri, *Hegel’s Theory of the Modern State* (1972; repr., New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 240.

⁴² Besserman, 9.

⁴³ Aveneri, 227-228.

⁴⁴ Göran Blix, “Charting the ‘Transitional Period’: The Emergence of Modern Time in the Nineteenth Century,” *History and Theory* 45 (February 2006): 52.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 55.

⁴⁶ Victor Hugo, *Hunchback of Notre Dame* [1831] (Boston: Little, Brown, 1899), 197.

ancien régime, the Revolution, and the Empire all coexisting in one temporally pluralistic society. The modern age had no *physionomie* and no homogeneity.⁴⁷ In contrast, the medieval revivalism of the Romantic era had a decisive “homogenizing thrust.”⁴⁸ Seeking to secure proper nationalist forms, especially in France, scholars synthesized the *école narrative* and the *école analytique* to give histories that both celebrated and clarified national identity.⁴⁹ Fundamentally, the movement transformed periodization methodology, defining each period by distinct traits that emerged from the historical process itself. Of course, this relativism was not without precedent. Giambattista Vico, in his *Scienza Nuova* (1725), had previously attempted to determine periods from within, employing terms such as “harmony,” “correspondence,” and “accommodation” throughout his discourse.⁵⁰ Likewise, theologian Johann Gottfried Herder, writing in 1774, had argued that a period should only be referenced according to its own cultural standards and not to the norms of antiquity.⁵¹ In this respect, both Vico and Herder significantly influenced the Romantic scholars who succeeded them. Their push for relativistic periodization precipitated a vast tableau of historical inquiries, from the analytical works of Augustin Thierry and Jules Michelet to the popular novels of Walter Scott and Prosper Mérimée.⁵² The medieval revivalism of the nineteenth century was, at its core, a continuation of Petrarchan logic: it celebrated the distinct, homogenous periods of the past and denigrated the transitional nature of the present.

Over against the contentions of Norman F. Cantor, author of *Inventing the Middle Ages* (1991), late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century scholarship was very much an extension of—and not a divergence from—this Romantic medieval revivalism, exhibiting the same “homogenizing thrust” and driven by similar pursuits of nationalism.⁵³ Moreover, with regards to its effect on medieval studies, the years between 1914 and 1945 differed little from those surrounding the French Revolution. According to Cantor, “Creating a medieval world picture and projecting themselves into it were one therapeutic recourse by which sensitive and benign twentieth-century people sought to regain their sanity and get control of their feelings in the times of slaughter and madness.”⁵⁴ The quest to define (and escape) the transitional age of Modernity continued to

⁴⁷ Blazac, “Complaintes satiriques sur les moeurs du temps present” [1830], in *Oeuvres diverses* (Paris: Gallimard-Pléiade, 1996), 2:740, quoted in Blix, 57-58.

⁴⁸ Blix, 52.

⁴⁹ Breisach, 239. Cf. Douglas Johnson, “Historians,” in *The French Romantics*, ed. D. G. Charlton (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 283.

⁵⁰ Funkenstein, 1-2.

⁵¹ Blix, 52-53.

⁵² Breisach, 239-242.

⁵³ Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists in the Twentieth Century* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 36. Cf. Blix, 52-53.

⁵⁴ Cantor, 43.

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permeate medieval scholarship from the nineteenth through the twentieth century. In this context, English jurist and historian F. W. Maitland co-authored the seminal work entitled *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I* (1895). Historically interpreting the origins of English law within a medieval framework, Maitland effectively defines British national identity via the Middle Ages. For Maitland, the years between 1154 and 1272 are not inferior to Modernity but rather superior; they, unlike the obfuscated times of the present, comprise “a luminous age throwing light on both past and future.”⁵⁵

During the twentieth century, there emerged a variety of critiques regarding the placement of the ancient/medieval and medieval/modern divides, shifting the dates of those temporal divisions to make the intervening periods more homogenous. Henri Pirenne, examining ancient economic trends in his *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1937), posits that the beginning of the Middle Ages should be marked by the advance of Islam and not the Germanic invasions, as it was the former that disrupted the Mediterranean unity of the ancient world.⁵⁶ Note that here, in Pirenne’s depiction of the ensuing medieval period, the Romantic vocabulary of Hugo appears once again: “Europe...assumed a new physiognomy (*physionomie*)...”⁵⁷ Like Pirenne, Maitland, and the Romantics, Cantor also looks to the Middle Ages as a homogenous past that can help better define the present, and thus he too can be considered as part of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century medieval revivalism. Accordingly, based on his own perceptions of cultural frustration with the transitional nature of Modernity, Cantor concludes his work with a prediction of “retromedievalism” for the twenty-first century.⁵⁸ Cantor’s prediction, however, was incorrect.

Long before twenty-first century, scholars had begun deconstructing the traditional ancient-medieval-modern schema as contemporaneous critiques of synchronic and diachronic periodization emerged in modern thought. R. G. Collingwood, an early twentieth-century English historian and philosopher, emphatically disparaged synchronic period discrimination, relating such categorizations to the respective knowledge and ignorance of the historian who invented them. In his “metaphysical epilegomena” to *The Idea of History* (1946), Collingwood wrote the following:

Every period of which we have competent knowledge (and by competent knowledge I mean insight into its thought, not mere acquaintance with its remains) appears in the perspective of time as an age of brilliance: the brilliance being the light of our own historical

⁵⁵ Frederick Pollock and Frederic W. Maitland, *The History of English Law before the Time of Edward I*, 2nd ed. (1898; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1952), 672-673.

⁵⁶ Henri Pirenne, *Mohammed and Charlemagne* (1939; repr., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1958), 284.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 285.

⁵⁸ Cantor, 411-412.

insight. The intervening periods are seen by contrast as... 'dark ages': ages which we know to have existed...but in which we can find no real life because we cannot re-enact that thought in our minds. That this pattern of light and darkness is an optical illusion proceeding from the distribution of the historian's knowledge and ignorance is obvious...⁵⁹

In turn, it was Marc Bloch, medievalist and co-founder of the *Annales* school of history, who offered a powerful critique to periodization in terms of diachrony. He contended that historians should "look to the phenomena themselves for the proper periods" lest they engender absurd descriptions of events, like "Diplomatic history of Europe from Newton to Einstein."⁶⁰ Considering, in *The Historian's Craft* (1949), how the Middle Ages came to be separated from the Renaissance, Bloch decried this partition and the "Voltarian stamp" that was now borne by history. Furthermore, he derided historians for their prudent sequencing of centuries and inevitable tendency to homogenize those events which took place within a hundred-year span.⁶¹ The observations of both Collingwood and Bloch regarding problems of synchronic and diachronic periodization set the stage for a postmodern deconstruction of the Middle Ages and, ultimately, periods in general.

It was in response to these questions of periodization that French theoretician Michel Foucault reformulated the problem of temporal divisions in terms of "power and knowledge."⁶² As with Collingwood's concept of knowledge as an "illuminating agent," Foucault posits that higher, or more empirical, orders of knowledge become increasingly discontinuous because "the rhythm of transformation doesn't follow the smooth, continuist schemas of development which are normally accepted."⁶³ Therefore, the dominant schemata, such as the dialogues of Augustine, Petrarch, and Hegel, only achieved their supremacy via the exclusion of other dialogues, ones which did not conform to the established pattern.⁶⁴ Foucault, subsequently, sought to dismantle these structures. His impetus was not unique but rather drew from a close reading of the nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who, along with Foucault, inscribed himself into his own historical narrative as a millennial moment, dismantling the older constructs to make way for a new order of thinking.⁶⁵ Foucault's definition of the period, found in his *Archaeology*

⁵⁹ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (1946; repr., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949), 327-328.

⁶⁰ Marc Bloch, *The Historian's Craft* [1949], trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1953), 183.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 179-182.

⁶² Besserman, 13.

⁶³ Michel Foucault, "Truth and Power," in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rainbow (New York: Random House-Pantheon, 1984), 51, quoted in Besserman, 14.

⁶⁴ Breisach, 337.

⁶⁵ Besserman, 10, 16.

of *Knowledge* (1969), corresponds directly to this deconstructionist ideology: “The *period* is neither its basic unity, nor its horizon, nor its object: if it speaks of these things it is always in terms of discursive practices, and as a result of its analyses.”⁶⁶ In other words, like the periodization schemata, the period itself is superficial; if it ever achieves homogeneity or distinction, it only does so through the exclusion of historical knowledge. Hence, Johannes Fabian affirms, “there is a ‘Politics of Time.’”⁶⁷ Concerning medieval scholarship, the philosophy of Foucault undeniably propelled twenty-first-century efforts to deconstruct the Middle Ages, conveying with it the simple notion that, by remembering the Middle Ages, one simultaneously forgets all outlying phenomena.

Postmodern discourse on the Petrarchan tripartite periodization of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modernity has, in recent years, adopted for its use the geographic terms of colonization/ decolonization. Many scholars of the twenty-first century now contend that time, like land, can be and has been colonized for the purposes of political domination and exploitation.⁶⁸ In addition, these postcolonial analyses reveal that the temporal colonization of the Middle Ages helped foster the territorial imperialism that characterizes the modern age. The Petrarchan construction of an irrational and superstitious medieval period identified later colonial subjects by similar pejorative terms.⁶⁹ In the same manner that Petrarch and the Renaissance scholars denied the “coevalness [sic]” of the Middle Ages, so too the conquering Europeans denied the native histories of the lands they colonized.⁷⁰ To a great extent, as Kathleen Davis argues in her *Periodization and Sovereignty* (2008), these derogatory conceptions of the “other” continue to plague popular modern thought, exemplified by NPR’s use of the term “feudalism” cited above.⁷¹ However, the relationship between the Middle Ages and Modernity is interdependent, and, as triumphalism and nationalism cease to be prevailing ideologies in academia, the concepts of “medievalism” and “modernism” will, likewise, cease to exist in the scholarly sphere, except possibly as the discursive formations of Foucault. John Dagenais, co-author of “Decolonizing the Middle Ages” (2000), writes that medievalism, being the “creation of a certain form of modernity...cannot survive the demise of that form of modernity—nor should we expect it to.”⁷² A certain set of politics comprises the ancient-medieval-modern periodization

⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* [1969] and *the Discourse on Language*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972), 176.

⁶⁷ Fabian, xl.

⁶⁸ Dagenais, “Decolonizing the Middle Ages: Introduction,” 431.

⁶⁹ Davis, 20.

⁷⁰ John Dagenais, “The Postcolonial Laura,” *Modern Language Quarterly* 65, no. 3 (September 2004): 367.

⁷¹ Davis, 32-34.

⁷² Dagenais, “The Postcolonial Laura,” 367-378.

schema, and, when those political forces no longer retain their sovereignty, the structures established under their rule collapse.

It is, therefore, the task of the modern historian to sail between Scylla and Charybdis, between the extremes of nihilism and naïve teleology. On the one hand, the total deconstruction of historical paradigms would effectively reduce history to entropic nothingness. If scholars are to define historical events by the “phenomena themselves,” then what is the definition of an event? Bede, in his eighth-century treatise *On Times*, explicated and delineated time’s smallest unit: the moment (*momentum*).⁷³ Yet, postmodern thought deconstructs even this foundational unit of periodization, it being irrational to decry the century and preserve the second. Indeed, by deconstructing the “moments” of the past, postmodern scholars implicitly sketch the continuum of history as one infinite transitional period, nonhomogeneous and ahistorical.⁷⁴ On the other hand, temporal divisions do have political agendas, and often they are used to dominate and exploit subaltern traditions. In this respect, the Middle Ages have served amphibiously, employed by both eighteenth-century triumphalists to celebrate Modernity and nineteenth-century Romantics to malign it. Most of all, though, the act of periodization engenders a dangerous “homogenizing thrust,” a desire to fit a host of incongruous events into a singularly progressive narrative. Searching for a temporal sovereign (that is, a means of temporal division), the historian creates his own. In the words of Michel de Certeau, “[Periodization] promotes a selection between what can be *understood* and what must be *forgotten* in order to obtain the representation of a present intelligibility.”⁷⁵ Ergo, periodization is useful but also dangerous, and the modern historian must approach his subject—be it the Middle Ages or any other period—with open eyes.

⁷³ Bede, *On the Nature of Things and On Times* [8th century], trans. Calvin B. Kendall and Faith Wallis (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2010), 107.

⁷⁴ Blix, 56.

⁷⁵ Michel de Certeau, *The Writing of History* [1975], trans. Tom Conley (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), 4.

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In Memoriam:
Raymond L. Muncy