

**THE  
HANOVER  
HISTORICAL  
REVIEW**



**Volume 14**

**2019**

## GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION OF MANUSCRIPTS

The *Hanover Historical Review* (*HHR*) Editorial Board welcomes submissions of essays, document transcriptions, and book reviews of a historical nature from any discipline. The essays should have been submitted in a Hanover College class between January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of the preceding year.

Manuscripts must be prepared in conformity with *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 17<sup>th</sup> edition, in 12-point Times Roman font, double-spaced (including footnotes) and with pages numbered.

Submissions should be sent by email attachment to Professor Michael Raley ([raleym@hanover.edu](mailto:raleym@hanover.edu)) as a digital file in Microsoft Word. Because all submitted manuscripts will be evaluated anonymously, the author's name should appear only on the title page. There should be no personal identifying markers (including headers and hidden texts) within the body of the paper.

Articles should not exceed 3,000 words without the prior approval of the *HHR* editors. Please note that submissions accepted for publication may be edited to conform to the *HHR*'s style. The *HHR* editors remain the final arbiters of length, grammar, and usage. However, they will endeavor to consult with authors with regard to any changes made in the interest of clarity and economy of expression.

The *HHR* disclaims responsibility for any statements, either as fact or opinion, made by contributors.

# THE HANOVER HISTORICAL REVIEW

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The *HANOVER HISTORICAL REVIEW* is dedicated to the promotion of excellence in undergraduate scholarship and writing.

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## FOREWORD

In the fall of 1992, supported by colleagues and enthusiastic students, Professor Frank Luttmer proposed a journal that would publish student papers and documents related to the field of history written, transcribed, and/or translated by students from any department of Hanover College. An editorial board of students was selected to determine which papers and documents would be chosen for the journal, and also to edit them for uniformity of style in preparing the journal for publication. Professor Luttmer provided support to the editors in the early stages of preparing the journal, while Professor Daniel Murphy helped oversee the final copyediting for the printer.

The inaugural issue of *The Hanover Historical Review* appeared in Spring 1993 and enjoyed great success. The *HHR* flourished for the rest of the decade, but was published only sporadically after Professor Luttmer's illness and untimely death. At the outset of the 2016-17 academic year, the Hanover College History Department decided to resume publication of the *Hanover History Review*, provided that we could find sufficient support for this project among our students. Twelve of our students immediately volunteered to serve on the *HHR*'s editorial board. Working with this group of eager and diligent students and now their successors in 2018-2019 has turned out to be a great joy for us as faculty mentors. The result of their diligent efforts may be found within the covers of this latest volume of the *HHR*.

Throughout the 2018 fall semester, the *HHR* Editorial Board met every other week on Thursday evenings at 7 p.m. to discuss the 2019 *HHR* Call for Papers and submission guidelines, as well as to conduct training sessions for new *HHR* Editorial Board members and also provide grammar, formatting, and editorial training and review for all current *HHR* Board members. The 2018 *HHR* contains, first and foremost, essays on historical themes written and submitted by Hanover College students. Some of these were written by freshmen, while others were authored by upperclassmen and women. Abridgements of two outstanding senior theses are also published here.

The historical essays included in this year's *HHR* have all been written for classes at Hanover College. All submissions must conform to *The Chicago Manual of Style* and are reviewed by the board members anonymously. Only Professor Raley knew the identity of the authors until the essays had been reviewed by the board members. This the board regarded as especially important at a small liberal arts college such as Hanover College, where everyone knows everyone else; beyond this, however, a few of the board members wished to submit essays for consideration, and to ensure impartiality here Professor Raley distributed these, minus their authors' names, to other members of the board for anonymous peer review.

Eight specific criteria guided the board's reviews:

1. Does the essay have a clear thesis that is supported with focused arguments and plausible evidence? (If yes, please also state the thesis.)
2. Is the thesis supported with an ample supply of primary sources, critically interpreted for the reader?

3. Is the author's argument placed within the field of current scholarship on the subject (historiography)?
4. Does the essay make a substantive contribution to our knowledge of the subject matter?  
In other words, does the essay advance the current scholarship in new directions?
5. Are the footnotes/endnotes correctly formatted in Chicago Style? Do they show evidence of attention to detail?
6. Is the writing style clear and fluid? Is the argument interesting?
7. Does this still seem like a paper written hurriedly for a class, or has the author carefully revised the essay for consideration by the *Hanover Historical Review* editorial board?
8. What specific revisions or additions would you suggest that the author make to improve the article pending its acceptance for publication?

Following the review process, the authors of the submissions were provided with summaries of the board members' comments. The review process, the board decided, would yield one of three ratings: (1) accept for publication as is (or with only minor editing required); (2) revise and resubmit (typically requiring more research and substantive revisions and/or additions as well as reediting the prose and reference notes); or (3) reject for publication. This year we rejected no submissions outright, though some authors chose not to revise and resubmit their work. Those who did revise and resubmit their work were expected to pay close attention to the comments and suggestions for substantive revisions as well as for the editing of the text and formatting of the notes that had been provided by the board members in their reviews. The Junior and Senior Editors of the *HHR* took over from here, reading all essays still under consideration again and suggesting editorial grammatical and format changes for consistency and clarity. Professors Murphy and Raley oversaw the final editing of the journal, which was printed on campus by Carol Persinger.

What we as faculty members have found refreshing has been the seriousness and dedication with which these students and also the authors of the articles appearing in this volume have approached their tasks. In the midst of the burdens of daily college assignments, athletic commitments, club and student senate responsibilities, rehearsals for campus musical organizations, community volunteer work, and part-time employment, each gave willingly and freely of his or her time to make this project come to fruition. In the process, these students not only performed a worthy public service, but also no doubt learned a great deal in the process.

For all of these reasons and many more personal ones, we have once again thoroughly enjoyed working with these fine students. We hope that you will share our enthusiasm as you read the articles and documents published within these covers (or within this .pdf file if you are reading the digital version).

Daniel P. Murphy and J. Michael Raley,  
Managing Editors, June 2019

## **Outstanding Freshman History Essays**





## **The Easter Rising: The Beginning of the End for the British Empire**

Bradley Hancock

In 1916, with the First World War raging on continental Europe, a group of Irish republicans plotted a revolt intended to free Ireland from King George V's British Empire. These revolutionaries, led by Patrick Pearse, James Connolly, Tom Clarke, Seán MacDermott, Joseph Plunkett, Éamonn Ceannt, and Thomas MacDonagh, would strike on Easter Monday, April 24, 1916, and thereby incite rebellion all across the island of Ireland. Assuming they were to be supplied by the Germans in their fight, the revolutionary leaders planned on assembling the Irish Volunteers to take towns across Ireland and hold them as the British would attempt to take them back while simultaneously fighting the Germans in the Great War.<sup>1</sup> In the end, though, this grand plan was not to be. Errors were made in its execution, and miscommunication botched any chance that Irish Republicans might have had to free their country from British rule. In Dublin, however, the seven leaders of the so-called Easter Rising and their followers would successfully seize the city and hold out for six critical days against the British Army. These six days would prove to be pivotal and go on to spark the decline of the once powerful British Empire. Thanks to those seven Irish Republican leaders, regions once dominated by the British Empire would now be thrown into contention.

Before the rebellion in 1916, there was a plan in place to gain some amount of autonomy in Ireland. This initial plan, supported by legislation in the British Parliament known as the "Home Rule Bill," would have allowed for a more autonomous Irish government, albeit with continuing ties to the British government. Essentially, this pre-rebellion home rule would have allowed a freer Ireland that would remain in the British Commonwealth. This bill, despite having been defeated twice already, would be reintroduced to the British Parliament in 1912 by Prime Minister H. H. Asquith.<sup>2</sup> Although it would end up being passed by Parliament in 1914, it would never be enacted due to the outbreak of the First World War. Nonetheless, the passage of the bill alone was enough to frustrate the Ulster Unionists and to lead them to create a militia organization known as the Ulster Volunteers to resist Home Rule.<sup>3</sup> In response, the more radical republican nationalists would create the Irish Volunteers to oppose the Unionists, setting the stage for the Easter Rising, and thus, the domination of the radical republicans over the less-radical Home Rule Movement.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Sloan, "The British State and the Irish Rebellion of 1916: An Intelligence Failure Or a Failure of Response?" *The Journal of Strategic Security* vol. 6, no. 3 (2013): 328-57.

<sup>2</sup> H. H. Asquith, "The Government of Ireland Bill" (April 11, 1912), *The Parliamentary Digital Service*, <https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/commons/1912/apr/11/government-of-ireland-bill> (accessed February 28, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> "Those that set the stage" *The National Library of Ireland*, <http://www.nli.ie/1916/exhibition/en/content/stagesetters/index.pdf> (accessed March 2, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> "Those that set the stage." *The National Library of Ireland*.

The effort to free Ireland, of course, had not always been a legislative struggle as it was with the Home Rule Bill. Ireland had been a hotbed of insurrection in the British Empire since the days of Oliver Cromwell, in particular with a rebellion along with much of continental Europe in 1848 and again in 1867, but even more notably in 1798 when Irish leader, Wolfe Tone, attempted to seize the revolutionary fervor sweeping Europe in the wake of the French and American revolutions.<sup>5</sup> Despite being bloodily suppressed, the 1798 rebellion failed to elicit a backlash against the British Empire from its other colonies. One thereby might easily assume that a small-scale rebellion against an already militarized British Government would never be capable of bringing about the decline of the Empire, when larger-scale rebellions such as that of 1798 had failed to achieve the same goal. Nevertheless, the botched rebellion in 1916 accomplished what Wolfe Tone and other Irish republican precursors had failed to do. The rebellion in 1916, which would come to be known as the Easter Rising, generated the response that Ireland had been seeking for generations by reinvigorating the Irish public with a sense of militant nationalism that, in the end, signaled the beginning of the end for the British Empire.

Originally, the planned Easter Rising appeared quite threatening to the distracted British Empire. In 1914, many of the conspirators behind the Easter Rising would come to realize that the war presented a unique opportunity for Irish independence, an opportunity that was too good to pass up. In an effort to secure a marriage of convenience with the German Empire, Irish Volunteer leader Roger Casement traveled to Germany to discuss German support for the upcoming 1916 rebellion. Later that same year, Casement would be joined in Germany by Joseph Plunkett, and, together, the two would continue the effort to gain foreign support. By the time that the scheduled rebellion in 1916 had arrived, Germany had repurposed a former British ship, once called the SS *Castro*, and disguised it under the codename *Aud* as a neutral Norwegian ship. Under the command of German Captain Karl Spindler the *Aud* was then tasked with smuggling arms and ammunition to Ireland for the rebels' use. The *Aud* also carried a large supply of whiskey and a Norwegian flag to be used to disguise the German ship. In case of a boarding, Spindler planned to try and get the English drunk in order to dispose of them more easily. "What was more natural than that the English prize crew should fall on the whiskey, which stood invitingly in every corner?," Spindler later wrote in a memoir of the campaign.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately for Ireland, this plan soon fell apart on the voyage as Spindler's rendezvous with his British contact, Sir Roger Casement, failed, and the British Navy was about to apprehend the *Aud* when Spindler gave the order to scuttle the ship and he and his crew were captured.<sup>7</sup> German support for the rising would end there, with no arms or ammunition ever reaching Irish shores in time.

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<sup>5</sup> Theobald Wolfe Tone, *The Autobiography of Theobald Wolfe Tone*, ed. by Seán O'Faoláin (London: T. Nelson, 1937), 211-12.

<sup>6</sup> George Renwick, "German Describes Effort to Arm Irish," *The New York Times*, January 3, 1921, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1921/01/03/103526649.pdf> (accessed January 2, 2019).

<sup>7</sup> George Renwick, "German Describes Effort to Arm Irish."

Although it was a mere six days and could be categorized as a failed rebellion, the Easter Rising was crucial to beginning the Irish War of Independence. Those aforementioned leaders (Pearse, Connelly, Clarke, MacDermott, Plunkett, Ceantt, and MacDonagh) were executed without trial soon after the events of the Rising. This incensed the Irish public, even those who were not originally supportive of the Easter Rising, creating an atmosphere ripe for an independence movement. Even the self-proclaimed moderate Irish MP Stephen Gwynn said, “Nothing could have prevented the halo of martyrdom from attaching itself to those who died by the law for the sake of Irish freedom; the tradition was too deeply ingrained into Irish history.”<sup>8</sup> Gwynn, who had no involvement in the Easter Rising, nor was he even a part of Sinn Féin, nevertheless recognized the impact that those who died during the Easter Rising would have on the men and women all throughout Ireland. Ultimately the independence movement would be led by Michael Collins and Éamon de Valera, who were both involved in the 1916 uprising. Not only would the members of the Easter Rising be seen as admired figures in the upcoming war of independence, but they would continue to be viewed in modern Ireland as martyrs for the cause of Irish freedom.<sup>9</sup>

Much like Ireland (which had many Indian residents), as future Irish president Sean T O’Ceallaigh put it in a speech to an Indian group in 1924, India already had a history in the British empire as having been “beaten into subjugation” and having been “so long oppressed.”<sup>10</sup> Although it was the “crown jewel” of the British Empire, India had become more heavily involved with anti-colonial organizations and sentiments with people like Mahatma Gandhi joining the Indian National Congress and working towards an independent India.<sup>11</sup> When news of the Easter Rising reached Indian shores in 1916, these feelings only intensified, as stated by Indian independence activist Subhas Chandra Bose when describing the inspirations used by Indians to answer the question of independence: “Of all the freedom movements we Indians have studied closely and from which we have received inspiration, there is perhaps none that can equal the Irish struggle for independence. The Irish Nation has had the same oppressors and exploiters as ourselves. It has had the same experience of ruthlessness, brutality and hypocrisy as we have had.”<sup>12</sup> Like the Irish, the Indians had invested thousands of men to the protection of the Empire during the First World War. Those who did not fight were sometimes away receiving an education in British or Irish

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<sup>8</sup> Quoted in Christopher M. Kennedy, *Genesis of the Rising, 1912-1916: A Transformation of Nationalist Opinion* (New York: Peter Lang, 2010), 284.

<sup>9</sup> “The People of the 1916 Easter Rising,” *The Irish Times*, <https://www.irishtimes.com/1916/people-of-the-1916-rising> (accessed November 13, 2018).

<sup>10</sup> Michael Silvestri, ““The Sinn Fein of India”: Irish Nationalism and the Policing of Revolutionary Terrorism in Bengal,” *Journal of British Studies*, vol. 39, no. 4 (2000): 454-486 at 485.

<sup>11</sup> B. R. Nanda, *Mahatma Gandhi* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1958).

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Jane Ohlmeyer, “Ireland, India and the British Empire,” *Studies in People’s History*, vol. 2, no. 2 (2015): 169-188 at 183-184.

universities, such as Gandhi, who associated closely with the Irish Volunteers and James Connolly. V. V. Giri would go on to speak about this experience in Ireland during the Rising saying:

I remember vividly meeting Connolly on several occasions as I was regularly invited to their Citizen Army meetings. More than any of the leaders of the uprising, it was Connolly who inspired me. I resolved that as soon as I returned to India, I would give a graphic account of these struggles to inspire our own people. . . . With the fervour inspired by the revolutionaries still fresh in my mind, I determined to return to India and take an active part in the political movement to secure the independence of my country.<sup>13</sup>

Not only did the Indians recognize the significance of the Rising, but the British themselves were keenly aware of the danger that open rebellion in Ireland posed for the continuity of the British Empire. Prime Minister David George Lloyd would comment soon after the Rising, speaking of the danger it posed for the rest of the British Empire saying, “Suppose we gave it to them – It will lower the prestige and the dignity of this country and reduce British authority to a low point in Ireland itself. It will give the impression that we have lost grip, that the Empire has no further force and will have an effect on India and throughout Europe.”<sup>14</sup> Here we can see the recognition of the danger that this insurrection in Ireland posed, a danger not only to the colony of India but also to another key British colony, Egypt. “If you tell your Empire in India, in Egypt, and all over the world that you have not got the men, the money, the pluck, the inclination and the backing to restore order in a country within 20 miles of your own shore, you may as well begin to abandon the attempt to make British rule prevail throughout the Empire at all.”<sup>15</sup> British MP Edward Carson commented when he first saw signs of potential chaos caused by the Easter Rising. The realization Parliament had about the threat of an Irish revolution set the stage for the British Empire to put up a stiff resistance in 1919 when the Irish, once again, rose in an attempt to finally grasp independence.

The Easter Rising did not merely cause a headache for wartime Britain, but it would also go on to garner support for British resistance even outside of places like India and Ireland itself. In Australia, Irish Catholics would begin to push back against the British war effort after they learned of the Rising in Dublin. These Irish Catholics in Australia would demonstrate their frustration in the voting for conscription to send more Australians off to fight in World War I, with Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes commenting to British confidant Keith Murdoch,

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<sup>13</sup>V. V. Giri, *Irish Days, Indian Memories: V. V. Giri and Indian Law Students at University College Dublin, 1913-16*, ed. and trans. Conor Mulvagh (Sallins, Ireland: Irish Academic Press, 2016), 79-80, 85.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted by Liam O’Ruairc in “Easter Rising,” *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Imperialism and Anti-imperialism*, ed. Immanuel Ness and Zak Cope (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 622-624 at 623.

<sup>15</sup> David George Boyce, *Decolonisation and the British Empire, 1775-1997* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, U.K.: Macmillan Press, 1999), 75.

“Australian recruiting is practically at a standstill. Irish National Executive here has carried resolution to effect that until Home Rule granted no Irish Catholics shall join forces.”<sup>16</sup> With the Irish in Australia effectively blocking Australian conscription, more pressure would be on the British themselves to fight, which would have an impact on the number and severity of casualties that Britain would suffer in the Great War.<sup>17</sup>

Australia was not alone in causing worry for the British now, because joining the Australians were Irish Americans, who were gathering support for the Irish cause. By the end of the First World War, the United States had become the world’s largest economy and was not a nation to be trifled with. It just so happened that the United States also contained the largest Irish population on the planet, a population that had become eager to see Ireland be a free nation. In fact, when fundraisers were started at the beginning of the Irish War for Independence, the United States’ Irish population sent over \$3,000,000 to support the new Irish government – more than Ireland itself raised.<sup>18</sup> The vast majority of Irish-Americans were behind the idea of Irish independence, so much so that it would have potentially caused even more trouble for the struggling post war British Empire if they continued to upset a large demographic in their key American ally.<sup>19</sup>

In conclusion, the Easter Rising would not only be the event which would begin to unravel the once-mighty British Empire, but also would serve as a battle-cry for the future Irishmen and Irishwomen who would attempt to construct an independent Irish state. Not only that, but it was also representative of the British Empire becoming more fractured as the twentieth century rolled along. The Irish rebels involved in the 1916 uprising were not only made out to be martyrs for Ireland, but for all freedom fighters in the colonies controlled by Great Britain. An already weakened wartime Britain was further damaged by rebels in Dublin, and the cracks that the rebels exposed would go on to be widened by other colonies in the coming decades. All of these factors shown in 1916 would ultimately culminate into what would become the decline and dissolution of the British Empire.

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<sup>16</sup> Jeff Kildea, “Killing Conscription: The Easter Rising and Irish Catholic Attitudes to the Conscription Debates in Australia, 1916-1917,” *Journal of the Australian Catholic Historical Society*, vol. 37, no. 2 (2016): 161-180 at 172-173.

<sup>17</sup> “Conscription Referendums, 1916 and 1917 - Fact Sheet 161,” *National Archives of Australia*, <http://www.naa.gov.au/collection/fact-sheets/fs161.aspx> (accessed November 15, 2018).

<sup>18</sup> Michael Hopkinson, *The Irish War of Independence* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2002), 165-176.

<sup>19</sup> “Region and Country or Area of Birth of the Foreign-Born Population, With Geographic Detail Shown in Decennial Census Publications of 1930 or Earlier: 1850 to 1930 and 1960 to 1990” by the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1999): table 4, <https://www.census.gov/population/www/documentation/twps0029/tab04.html> (accessed Nov. 15, 2018); *Irish American Verdict on Easter Week* (ca. 1916), *University College Dublin Digital Library*, <http://digital.ucd.ie/view-media/ivrla:30975/canvas/ivrla:30976> (accessed Nov. 13, 2018)

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## Hyksos and Hebrews: Coexistence at Its Finest

James T. Moll

During the third and second millennia BC, according to the third century BC Egyptian priest and historian Manetho in his *Aegyptica*, Egypt underwent five distinct periods with thirty-one dynasties.<sup>1</sup> These can be broken down into three long and stable periods, known respectively as the Old (2686-2181 BC), Middle (2040-1782 BC), and New Kingdoms (1570-1070 BC), between which lay the First and Second Intermediate Periods of ca. 150 and 200 years each, respectively. Whereas the kingdoms were characterized by strong monarchs and long dynasties, competent bureaucracy, freedom from invasion, massive construction projects, and cultural and intellectual development, the intermediate periods were characterized by political instability marked by weak kings, invasions by foreign peoples, and internal rivalries for leadership.<sup>2</sup>

Of particular interest in this essay are the Second Intermediate Period and the New Kingdom. Although a glorious time for Egypt (considered so even now), the Middle Kingdom mysteriously ended around the mid-seventeenth century BC and was replaced around ca. 1720-1640 BC by a group of people dubbed the “Hyksos” by Egyptians, which means “princes of foreign lands.”<sup>3</sup> Not a lot of information about these people survives, although research remains ongoing, but we do know that they were a Semitic people whose language and culture were not far from those of the ancient Israelites. Around the middle of the sixteenth century BC, these people were eventually forced out of power and compelled to leave the country by Ahmose I and his brother from Upper Egypt, who ushered in the New Kingdom. This new dynasty hated the Hyksos so much that they destroyed many of the artifacts and records from the Second Intermediate Period (the rule of the Hyksos).

This event has caused historians angst ever since. Who were the Hyksos? Foreign invaders? Hebrews? Many sources will say they were invaders from west Asia, who brought horses and composite bows to Egypt, as well as war.<sup>4</sup> The Bible, though it does not give dates, says that there

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<sup>1</sup> Manetho, *The Life of Manetho: Traditions and Conjectures*, trans. W.G. Waddell (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1964), available online at: [https://archive.org/stream/manethowithengli00maneuoft/manethowithengli00maneuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/manethowithengli00maneuoft/manethowithengli00maneuoft_djvu.txt) (accessed January 21, 2019).

<sup>2</sup> Howard Spodek, *The World's History*, Volume One: *Prehistory to 1500*, 5<sup>th</sup> ed. (Upper Saddle River, NH: Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2014), 128-129.

<sup>3</sup> Hyksos can also be translated as “King Shepherds,” “Foreign Rulers,” or “ruler of foreign lands.” These are noted by Ronald A. Geobey Trinity College Dublin, in “Joseph the Infiltrator, Jacob the Conqueror? Reexamining the Hyksos–Hebrew Correlation.” *Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. 136, no. 1 (January 2017): 23-37 at 24-25, available online at: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315063483\\_Joseph\\_the\\_Infiltrator\\_Jacob\\_the\\_Conqueror\\_Reexamining\\_the\\_Hyksos-Hebrew\\_Correlation](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/315063483_Joseph_the_Infiltrator_Jacob_the_Conqueror_Reexamining_the_Hyksos-Hebrew_Correlation) (accessed January 21, 2019). On the dating of the Hyksos rule, see Geobey, “Joseph the Infiltrator, Jacob the Conqueror?,” 23-24, n. 1; and Ian Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, *A Biblical History of Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 132.

<sup>4</sup> Bob Brier and Hoyt Hobbs, *Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2008), 253. A detailed discussion of the Hyksos and their takeover and subsequent rule of Egypt may be found in

is a point in Egyptian history at which a Pharaoh allowed a Hebrew man to take control of Egypt's fortune for fourteen years or more. At this time, the Bible says, the Hebrews from Canaan were allowed to enter Egypt. This is the parallel between the Hyksos and the Hebrews. Though it may seem like they were the same people, history of their militaries and their interactions with the Egyptians tell us otherwise, marking them as separate, if also linguistically- and culturally-related, entities.

The Second Intermediate Period in Egypt was very similar to that of the Yuan Dynasty in China (r. 1279-1368 CE), when a group of outsiders came into the region and gained control. In China, it was the Mongols who took charge by force. In Egypt, it was the Hyksos, and one interpretation argues that they, too, came by force. The ancient Egyptian historian Manetho says:

[A] blast of God smote us, and unexpectedly, from the regions of the East, invaders of obscure race marched in confidence of victory against our land. By main force they easily seized it without striking a blow; and having overpowered the rulers of the land, they then burned our cities ruthlessly, razed to the ground the temples of the gods, and treated all the natives with a cruel hostility, massacring some and leading into slavery the wives and children of others.<sup>5</sup>

The Hyksos ruled for a short amount of time, somewhere between 70 and 160 years.<sup>6</sup> They only had control over Lower Egypt, including the delta, where they built their capital. When they invaded, they brought with them chariots, horses, and composite bows. Many paintings from the New Kingdom depict Egyptians with two-wheeled chariots carrying spears and compound bows, weapons of war that are not found in earlier Egyptian art.<sup>7</sup> These, it seems, entered Egypt with the coming of the Hyksos. As we have seen, the label Hyksos simply means “foreign rulers,” with no ethnic designation implied. An alternate theory among some historians, however, points to earlier Egyptian paintings portraying visitors at court, perhaps traders, with long beards, suggesting that they were Semites related to the Hebrews. This has raised the question among historians as to whether or not these people may have infiltrated Egypt, perhaps as early as 1900 BC, during the period when many refugees (such as the Hebrew founder Abraham of Ur) were also fleeing

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Donald B. Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1992), 98-122 (Chapter 5: “The Hyksos in Egypt”).

<sup>5</sup> Manetho, *The Life of Manetho: Traditions and Conjectures*, trans. W.G. Waddell (Harvard University Press, 1964) [https://archive.org/stream/manethowithengli00maneuoft/manethowithengli00maneuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/manethowithengli00maneuoft/manethowithengli00maneuoft_djvu.txt).

<sup>6</sup> Howard Spodek, *The World's History*. Based on Mr. Howard Spodek's textbook, the dates of the Second Intermediate Period are 1640-1567 BC, creating a gap of 73 years. However, if Manetho's writings were misunderstood, or we pay a little more attention to biblical chronology, we find that the Hyksos were there for more than a century. Here I compromise, giving a wide range, as modern scholars generally have done.

<sup>7</sup> “Hyksos,” *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ancient.eu/image/5824/egyptian-war-chariot/> (accessed October 5, 2018). This article includes a picture of one such painting. It depicts an Egyptian chariot from the New Kingdom. Chariots like the one depicted were not used by Egyptian military until after the Hyksos. It was considered the technological advance of the age, and New Kingdom Pharaohs were often depicted riding chariots, to show their military prowess. Also see Brier and Hobbs, *The Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 256.

Mesopotamia, and then somehow taken control of Egypt during a period of political weakness after residing there for as long as two or three centuries.<sup>8</sup> Resolving the controversy over the Hyksos' seizing control of Egypt will likely require the discovery of more information, and Hyksos research in the Delta is indeed ongoing, though made more difficult by the marsh conditions there. Whatever the case, the Hyksos adopted Egyptian culture after they seized control: their kings called themselves Pharaohs, they incorporated Egyptian gods into their own belief system, and the Hyksos rulers even adopted the Egyptian way of dressing.<sup>9</sup>

The story of Joseph and how the Israelites came to reside in Egypt is well known, but merits summarizing here before consideration of the historicity of the story.<sup>10</sup> According to the broad chronology depicted in the Genesis narrative about the Hebrew Patriarchs Jacob and Joseph, it must have been during the years of Hyksos rule that the Hebrews also came to Egypt. The Hyksos apparently did not mind, for the Hebrews posed no physical threat. The Genesis account in the Bible claims that the Israelites, or Hebrews, were descended from Abraham, a resident of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Ur, who was commanded by the God Yahweh to leave and seek out the land to which Yahweh would lead him. There he would found a nation as numerous as the stars. In the end, he settled in Palestine. Abraham's son was Isaac, whose own son was named Jacob, or, following a dream in which he struggled with an angel, Israel. Now Jacob had two wives, Leah and Rachel, the former bearing Jacob ten sons (not counting daughters), while Rachel (who died following the birth of Benjamin) gave birth to only two sons. Joseph and Benjamin incurred the enmity of their half-brothers, in part because they were Jacob's obvious favorites. Jacob gave to Joseph the "coat of many colors" (Gen. 37:3), while Benjamin means "son of my right hand," the son who sat at the father's right hand and thus enjoyed his favor.<sup>11</sup> Joseph was known not only to have dreams, but also to be able to interpret them. One of his dreams had eleven plants bowing down to him; another had eleven stars bowing down to him (Gen. 37:5-11). He was tactless enough to tell his brothers about these dreams and interpret them as meaning that his eleven brothers would one day bow down to him. His brothers hated him so much that they took Joseph's multi-colored coat and bound him and threw him in a well, intending to leave him to die, but his older brother Judah persuaded the brothers to sell Joseph to a band of Ishmaelite (or Midianite) slave traders who happened to be passing by at the time on their way to Egypt (Gen. 37:12-36). Joseph

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<sup>8</sup> Geobey, "Joseph the Infiltrator, Jacob the Conqueror?," 25-26. Though the culture of the Asiatics before Egypt is mostly unknown, speculation says that a culture to look at for reference would be Syria.

<sup>9</sup> Joshua J. Mark, "Hyksos," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ancient.eu/Hyksos/> (accessed February 15, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Martin Noth and Gerhard von Rad are among those modern historians who have questioned the historical accuracy of the Joseph narrative. See J. Alberto Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 2<sup>nd</sup>, rev. and updated ed., trans. from the Italian by John Bowden (Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1993), 113-114. Another skeptic is Donald B. Redford; see his *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 408-429, and *A Study of the Biblical Story of Joseph* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

<sup>11</sup> "Benjamin," *Behind the Name*, <https://www.behindthename.com/name/benjamin> (accessed February 16, 2019).

ultimately was sold to an Egyptian official named Potiphar—in Egyptian, “Pa-di-Ra,” meaning “He-Whom-the God Ra-gives”)—by whom he was rewarded for his industrious service.<sup>12</sup>

Even though Joseph was still his slave, Potiphar soon recognized his skills and intelligence, and placed him in charge of all of his affairs. In time, Potiphar’s wife found Joseph attractive and even sought to have sex with him. Joseph allegedly refused, but then unwisely ran off naked in public view after she grabbed hold of his robe. This allowed her to accuse Joseph of attempted rape. Once again Joseph found himself in trouble, and this time Potiphar had him imprisoned in a dungeon (Gen. 39:1-23). This story, scholars have observed, is similar to the Egyptian “Tale of the Two Brothers,” but this should not be taken to mean that the story of Potiphar’s wife is fictitious.<sup>13</sup>

In prison Joseph met the Pharaoh’s cup bearer and a baker. Both of them subsequently have dreams, but neither of them knows what his dream means. Joseph, however, is gifted in that he can interpret dreams, so he proceeds to do so. The cup bearer has dreamed of three branches of grapes, the baker of three cakes which birds will eat from his head. Joseph tells the cup bearer that he will go free in three days, the baker that he will be hanged in three days and the birds will land on his head and pluck his eyes out. Everything comes to pass exactly as Joseph has foretold. He asks the cup bearer to remember him when he is set free, but of course, once he has been released, he forgets Joseph completely, at least for a time.

Meanwhile, the Pharaoh, presumably a Hyksos, also has dreams periodically. The Joseph narrative is, after all, a biblical story about dreams and the interpretation of dreams and about how God works to protect his chosen people. About two years later, Pharaoh had a dream about seven healthy cows and seven starving cows (he also dreamed of grain in the same way) (Gen. 41:17-24). The seven lean cows ate seven fat cows, and seven lean ears of corn ate seven fat ears. He could not understand what these dreams meant, but the ancients believed that the gods often communicated with humans or provided premonitions through dreams—cf. the story of Xerxes and Artabanus in Book Seven of Herodotus’s *Histories*—so Pharaoh took them very seriously. He called upon his trusted *sesperonchs*, literally, “scribes of the house of life,” but often mistranslated as “magicians,” who, however, could not decipher the dream.<sup>14</sup> Pharaoh then heard from his cup bearer that a certain prisoner had the ability to interpret dreams and that his predictions always seemed to come true, so Pharaoh has Joseph summoned to interpret his dreams.<sup>15</sup> After a time, Joseph tells Pharaoh that Egypt will enjoy seven years of bounty followed by seven years of famine (Gen. 41:25-27). After Joseph interpreted Pharaoh’s dream, the Pharaoh became convinced that

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<sup>12</sup> Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 424.

<sup>13</sup> H. H. Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua: Biblical Traditions in the Light of Archaeology* (London: Oxford University Press, and the British Academy, 1950), 120-121.

<sup>14</sup> “Sesperonchs” were used as dream interpreters, and in English Bibles they are often referred to as magicians and wise men.

<sup>15</sup> Bernd U. Schipper, “Joseph, Potiphar’s Wife, and the Jewish Colony in Egypt” (lecture, Harvard University, December, 3, 2013). <https://hmsc.harvard.edu/file/987105> (accessed November 18, 2018).

Joseph had special powers, confessing, “Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you” (Gen. 41:39). He then placed Joseph “in charge of the whole land of Egypt” (Gen. 41:41). Thus the Hyksos Pharaoh welcomed Joseph as his vizier (that is, the general administrator of Egypt, second in power to only the Pharaoh himself), which was confirmed by Pharaoh’s awarding to Joseph of his signet ring, and placed him in charge of the grain stores and public distribution for at least the next fourteen years.

What can we make of this Joseph narrative, the Israelite sojourn in Egypt, and the Exodus? Siegfried Herrmann, in his work entitled *Israel in Egypt*, boldly asserted, “A detailed investigation, carried out against the background of developments as a whole in the second millennium BC, confirms in a surprising way what the biblical evidence suggests.”<sup>16</sup> Other modern historians, however, remain convinced that the narrative was created very late, perhaps around the time of the Babylonian Exile. Thus Donald B. Redford has argued, “We conclude that, on a judicious appraisal of the evidence, the Biblical Joseph story was a novella created sometime during the seventh or sixth century BC (the end of the Judaeen monarchy or the Exile). . . . There is no reason to believe it has any basis in fact . . . and to read it as history is quite wrongheaded.”<sup>17</sup> Others have pointed to the geographic ambiguities in the Exodus narrative and concluded that it should be considered “mythology rather than . . . a detailed reporting of the historical facts.”<sup>18</sup> Ian Provan, V. Philips Long, and Tremper Longman III, in contrast, argue for a middle ground: “The Joseph narrative fits well into its putative Egyptian setting in the early second millennium, even though it occasionally betrays through anachronistic comment that . . . it has at the very best been updated from time to time as the tradition has come down through the generations.”<sup>19</sup> Who is correct here? What can we glean from the surviving evidence?

Here is what we do know. The House of Life was a religious school that trained Egyptian priests for the temple, the house of life, so what this tell us is that the Pharaoh sent for his leading priests, the *sesperonchs*, literally “scribes of the House of Life,” to interpret his dream. How did you get dreams interpreted? You went to the temple and asked the priest, who then looked up the dream in one of the dream interpretation books that were commonly found in the temples. There is one of these books made out of papyrus in the British Museum.<sup>20</sup> So why were the Egyptian priests unable to interpret the Pharaoh’s dream? If the Egyptian dream interpretation book in the British Museum gives us any indication, this was because the dream book contained no examples

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<sup>16</sup> Siegfried Herrmann, *Israel in Egypt*, trans. Margaret Kohl (Great Britain: SCM Press Ltd; and Naperville, IL: Alec R. Allenson, 1973), 19.

<sup>17</sup> Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 408-429 at 429.

<sup>18</sup> Gösta W. Ahlström, *Who Were the Israelites?* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1986), 46-49.

<sup>19</sup> Provan, Long, and Longman, in *A Biblical History of Israel*, 125.

<sup>20</sup> For more on the House of Life, see A. H. Gardiner, “The House of Life,” *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology* 24 (1938): 157-179. On *sesperonchs* and the Egyptian Dream Book, see Bob Brier, *The History of Ancient Egypt* (Chantilly, VA: The Great Courses, 1999), available online at: [https://archive.org/stream/TheHistoryOfAncientEgypt\\_834/TheHistoryOfAncientEgypt\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/TheHistoryOfAncientEgypt_834/TheHistoryOfAncientEgypt_djvu.txt) (accessed February 15, 2019).



of seven lean cows eating seven fat cows and seven lean ears of corn eating seven fat ears in the book, so the priests did not know how to interpret the dream.

As for the seven-year famine, a fascinating piece of evidence survives on Sehel Island, an island in the middle of the Nile River in the south of Egypt that is covered with big boulders of black stone. Every ancient Egyptian who wanted to record some great deed, it seems, went there and hired a scribe to inscribe light-colored hieroglyphs on these rocks. These inscriptions are still there today, and one of these boulders tells of a seven-year famine and widespread suffering in ca. 2,700 BC, during the Third Dynasty, that was caused by a failure of the Nile to rise for seven years, presumably because there had been no snow in the mountains to the south in which the Nile had its origins. Pharaoh Djoser was informed following the dream of his architect, Imhotep, that the reason for the failure of the Nile was the abandonment of the Temple of Khnum, the god of fertility, at Yebu (Aswan). Pharaoh Djoser rebuilt the temple, and the Nile once again began to flow as before.<sup>21</sup> Although this clearly was not the famine described in the Joseph narrative (since it preceded it by a millennium), it nevertheless establishes that prolonged droughts along the Nile did occur on rare occasions and that their consequences were severe enough to attract the attention of the Pharaoh. The particular Pharaoh is not named in the Joseph narrative, but until the tenth century, even the Egyptians typically referred to their kings without mentioning the Pharaoh's name. There also is no record of a vizier named Joseph, but again, the list of viziers from the Hyksos period has not survived. Nonetheless, we know that a Semite named Bay was awarded the title of "Great Chancellor of the entire land" following the death of Seti II in 1194 BC.<sup>22</sup> The naming of Joseph as the Hyksos Pharaoh's vizier marked the point in time at which the Hyksos and Hebrews joined together as one; their coexistence lasted until the Hyksos were driven out of Egypt and the Hebrews were enslaved in the mid-sixteenth century BC.

Scarabs, mostly used as symbols of good fortune and health, were prominent in Egypt during the Second Intermediate Period, though their use began in the Middle Kingdom.<sup>23</sup> Those made for Pharaohs often bore the Pharaoh's name and were then inlaid in a ring. This signet ring could then be used to represent the Pharaoh on official state documents as well as on the wax-sealed lids of storage jars containing grain and wine that were sent out or owned by him. During the Hyksos rule, the art on the scarabs was influenced by other cultures such as Crete and Syria.<sup>24</sup> These cultures also traded with the Hyksos frequently, and these trade deals were sealed with the signet rings. The markings on all scarabs found so far have been Egyptian, with design patterns from Crete and Syria. On no scarab found thus far, however, has there been Hebrew writing, a

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<sup>21</sup> Samar Samir, "Famine Stela: A Piece of Pharaonic Diary," *Egypt Today*, July 15, 2018, <https://www.egypttoday.com/Article/4/54056/Famine-Stela-A-piece-of-Pharaonic-diary> (accessed February 15, 2019).

<sup>22</sup> Provan, Long, and Longman, *A Biblical History of Israel*, 124-125.

<sup>23</sup> John Van Seters, *The Hyksos: A New Investigation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1966), 64.

<sup>24</sup> Seters, *The Hyksos*, 63, "spirals, guilloches, concentric circles, rope, and other geometric designs . . . generally considered to be the Middle Minoan culture of the Aegean."

clear indication that the Hyksos that ruled during that time were not Hebrew. The Hebrews would never have given up their culture and religion for Egyptian faith and language.

In response to the approaching crisis, Joseph subsequently ordered the storage of all surplus grain during the seven years of plenty so that there would be sufficient grain during the years of famine that were to follow. The Genesis account (Gen. 41:43) adds that all cried out “Abrek” wherever Joseph went. Everything proceeded as foretold. When the seven years of famine arrived and word spread that Egypt still had plenty of grain in storage to sell, Jacob sent his ten sons by Leah to Egypt to purchase grain. He kept Benjamin who, as far as Jacob knew, was his sole offspring left from his beloved wife Rachel, at home because of the dangers of the highways. As the brothers arrived, Joseph was in the process of distributing the grain. He recognized them immediately, the Genesis account tells us, but his brothers failed to recognize him. (He has aged, of course, and he is now the vizier!). Joseph asks if they have any other brothers, and they mention Benjamin, and Joseph insists upon meeting him. Meanwhile, the brothers return home with grain, but Joseph has secretly returned all their money to them as well (in their packs). Jacob is troubled by this; it looks as if they have stolen the grain. Also he is troubled because of the vizier’s request that Benjamin travel to Egypt, but in the end he allows him to go anyway.

When Joseph meets Benjamin, he plays a trick. He plants a silver dining cup in Benjamin’s pack, and after the brothers have left, he sends soldiers out to find the thief of the cup. Benjamin is discovered with the cup, and Joseph orders him held until his father (Jacob) comes for him. When the brothers return with Jacob, all comes out and Joseph forgives his brothers, who at first had feared that Joseph would take revenge. Instead, he explains that God has sent him into bondage in Egypt in order to ensure the survival of the children of Israel (Jacob). Afterward, Jacob and his sons settled in Goshen, the eastern Delta of the Nile (near the site where the Hyksos were ruling). In fact, we know that the Egyptians commonly assigned particular sections of land to various Asiatic peoples who settled there. Moreover, a papyrus from the late thirteenth century BC about a frontier region notes that the official has “finished passing the tribes of the shepherds through the fortress . . . which is near *tkw* (probably the Succoth of Ex. 12.37) to the cisterns of *pr. ’tm* (Pithom?) which are near *tkw*, to keep them and their animals alive by means of the *ka* of the Pharaoh.”<sup>25</sup>

Jacob had a vision: “I will bring you out of Egypt.” Now this actually happens when Jacob dies, for Joseph has his body embalmed and he and his brothers take him back to Palestine for burial, but this dream is also a foreshadowing of the Exodus. Meanwhile, the famine continues and Joseph distributes grain, but shrewdly (since he is working for the Pharaoh). He gives the grain in exchange for the lands of the farmers who have no crops. All of this land becomes the land of the Pharaoh, but Joseph takes care not to buy the land of the temple priests. To encourage the gods to favor them, the Pharaohs (and also others) had given land to Egyptian priests for centuries so that they would have means of support. Before Jacob died, he told his son to take his body from here back to Palestine. So when he died, Jacob was embalmed and mummified “taking a full forty days,

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<sup>25</sup> Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 116.

for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned him for seventy days” (Gen. 50:2-3). His body was then taken to a burial ground bought from the Hittites generations before. When Joseph left to bury his father, his brothers as well as a whole parade of Egyptians, including “chariots and horsemen” (Gen. 50:9), left with him. Finally, Joseph died, but before he did, he told the Hebrews, “Be sure to take my bones from here when you leave.” Then Joseph’s body was embalmed, and they lay him in a coffin in Egypt, exactly the time frame of forty days embalming and seventy days mourning common with Egyptian mummies. Interestingly, too, in the entire Bible, Jacob and Joseph are the only ones mentioned as having been embalmed, so this was clearly exclusively an Egyptian practice.

The use of chariots and horses by the Egyptians in the Joseph Narrative also allows us to infer that the time period is after the Middle Kingdom, for horses were not introduced and used until the Second Intermediate Period and thereafter.<sup>26</sup> Horses were what the Hyksos were known for best. Horses originated from northwest Asia, just north of the Black and Caspian Seas.<sup>27</sup> The Hyksos came from northwest and west Asia, bringing their horses and bows with them. When the Hebrews came, they came from Canaan which is also west Asia. Hebrews and Canaanites did not possess horses, though; instead, they rode on donkeys. When the brothers of Joseph left Egypt the first time, “they loaded their grain on their donkeys and left” (Gen. 42:26), and donkeys are very different from a horse that can pull a chariot. The Hebrews had no need for chariots; they had no known use of them for they did not engage in wars until centuries later. The Hyksos’ use of horses explains how they moved so quickly from northwest Asia, or even the Sinai desert, and descended upon the Egyptians of the Middle Kingdom with the haste that they did.

This attack on Egypt could not have been made with the donkeys of Canaan, or any part of the Hebrew military. Egypt’s military had the most recent in technology, and they went to war all the time in order to keep up Pharaoh’s reputation with his people.<sup>28</sup> The Hebrews did not keep up an army; they were shepherds and a religious people, not warriors.<sup>29</sup> Therefore, an insignificant army such as the Hebrews could not possibly defeat the Egyptians. Even though the Egyptians had many great inventions and weapons, they didn’t have horses or chariots.<sup>30</sup> Their army was all infantry at the time.<sup>31</sup> They were no match for the cavalry of the Hyksos. The chariot had never been seen by the Egyptians, and the maneuverability of the machine made it a formidable foe. A

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<sup>26</sup> Bob Brier and Hoyt Hobbs, *The Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 253-256.

<sup>27</sup> Gus E. Cothran, “Tracing the History of Horse Evolution and Domestication,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Tracing-the-History-of-Horse-Evolution-and-Domestication-1900351>.

<sup>28</sup> Brier and Hobbs, *The Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 247.

<sup>29</sup> Herrmann, *Israel in Egypt*, 21.

<sup>30</sup> Brier and Hobbs, *The Daily Life of the Ancient Egyptians*, 251

<sup>31</sup> “The success of the Hyksos may have been due to superior archery and to the use of horse-drawn chariots, previously unknown in Egypt.” Manetho, *The Life of Manetho: Traditions and Conjectures*, trans. W. G. Waddell, (Harvard University Press, 1964) [https://archive.org/stream/manethowithengli00maneuoft/manethowithengli00maneuoft\\_djvu.txt](https://archive.org/stream/manethowithengli00maneuoft/manethowithengli00maneuoft_djvu.txt).



few Middle Kingdom civil wars in the eleventh dynasty also made toppling the twelfth dynasty easier for the Hyksos, since the army and political stability had been weakened.<sup>32</sup> All this together made conquering Egypt a simpler task for the Hyksos. Here it is important to remember that we possess none of the names of the viziers from the 15<sup>th</sup> dynasty, because the official records and memory of the Hyksos were destroyed once Ahmose I rose to power and restored Egyptian rule at the beginning of the New Kingdom. It should therefore come as no surprise that we cannot find any mention of Joseph's name (or its Egyptian equivalent) in Egyptian documents and hieroglyphs. Joseph's signet ring of authority with the Pharaoh's name on it and his seal for documents and state-owned jars of grain, we have seen, were also typical Egyptian. "Abrek," interestingly, has no meaning in Hebrew, but is close to the Egyptian phrase: ab ("heart") + r ("to") + k (=suffix meaning "you"), suggesting a meaning similar to "my heart to you" or "may god go with you" or perhaps "grand vizier!"<sup>33</sup> According to the Genesis account (47:13-22), the Egyptian priests were allowed to retain and even accumulate more land while the common people gave their land to Pharaoh in return for grain to eat and plant. This system of land tenure was introduced in Egypt some time prior to the reign of Ahmose I, who drove out the Hyksos. Later, we know, the Egyptian priests owned more land than even Pharaoh himself!<sup>34</sup> So in sum, the internal evidence of the Joseph Narrative in Genesis seems to fit very well with the findings of modern Egyptology. This makes it highly unlikely that the story was later concocted by Hebrew leaders redacting the Hebrew Bible during the Babylonian Captivity or even living earlier in Palestine as some modern scholars have asserted.<sup>35</sup>

The second installment of the story of Israel in Egypt comes at the beginning of Exodus (chapters 1-15). Just what do we know about Egypt during this period and what does the Biblical account in Exodus add to our knowledge of the Hebrews' existence there? Exodus records (1:8), "There arose a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph." This seems, once again, to fit well with the emergence of the New Kingdom.<sup>36</sup> During the Second Intermediate Period, Upper Egypt strove to retake the rest of the kingdom from the Hyksos. Two attacks were made, the first of which failed. When Kamose and his brother Ahmose made the second attack, they succeeded and ran the Hyksos out of Egypt around 1567 BC. With the Hyksos gone, the Egyptians marked the beginning of the New Kingdom. Many things changed for the Egyptians in the New Kingdom; they now had slaves, and eventually some citizens only worshipped one god. The Hebrews did not leave from their residence on the Nile River Delta when the Hyksos were run out. At first the Hebrews posed no

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<sup>32</sup> Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 72.

<sup>33</sup> *Encyclopedia of the Bible*, s.v. "Abrek," Bible Gateway <https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/encyclopedia-of-the-bible/Abrek> (accessed March 1, 2019).

<sup>34</sup> Rowley, *From Joseph to Joshua*, 121-122.

<sup>35</sup> Joshua A. Mark, "Clergy, Priests & Priestesses in Ancient Egypt," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, <https://www.ancient.eu/article/1026/clergy-priests--priestesses-in-ancient-egypt/> (accessed March 10, 2019).

<sup>36</sup> Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 119.

threat, but the Pharaoh became afraid of their growing numbers (Exod. 1:8-11).<sup>37</sup> The new Pharaoh worried in particular about an uprising, afraid that the Hebrews might join up with outside armies and overthrow the regime. When the New Kingdom started up, one of the first things they did was destroy the official records of Hyksos' rule in Egypt. They really did not want a repeat of Semitic rule, so the Egyptians enslaved the population of the Hebrews who dwelled in the Nile River Delta.

The Exodus account presents the children of Israel in bondage, working in mud brick, not in stone, to build Pharaoh's store cities at Pithom and Ramses (Ex. 1:11). Here the Israelites were not building pyramids, which had been constructed several centuries earlier; rather, they were working on new store cities for the Pharaoh. As noted above, the Israelites had become so numerous that they were beginning to be perceived as a problem for the Egyptians (Ex. 1:9-22), so Pharaoh decided to ensure that all male Hebrew children were killed at birth. He commanded the midwives (1:16), "When you help the Hebrew women in childbirth and observe them on the delivery stool, if it is a boy, kill him; but if it is a girl, let her live." This is likely a reference to the Egyptian birthing stool, on which Egyptian women gave birth sitting up, letting gravity help with the delivery of the baby. The midwives refused to do as commanded, however, and when questioned by the Pharaoh, they responded (1:19), "Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive."

When Moses, the main Biblical character in the Exodus narrative was born, he was born to a Hebrew woman. Since Pharaoh decided that was the best way to cut down the population of the Hebrews was to kill all of their newborn males, Moses's mother placed him in a basket in the river in the hope that he might be rescued by an Egyptian woman. In fact, Moses was plucked out of the river by Pharaoh's daughter, who made him her son and gave him an Egyptian name, but sends him to his real mother to be nursed (Exod. 2:3-10).<sup>38</sup> Moses eventually learns of his Hebrew heritage and flees Egypt after killing an Egyptian who was beating a Hebrew slave.

While out in the wilderness, he encounters God near a bush which is burning but not being consumed (a natural gas leak in the soil, perhaps). God tells him that he will deliver the people of Israel from their bondage and lead them to the Promised Land of milk and honey. Moses doubts that Pharaoh will listen to him, so God gives him a staff with divine powers that it turns into a serpent when thrown onto the ground. When he uses it in Pharaoh's presence, however, the Egyptian *sesperonchs* are able to do the same thing. Moses has an audience with Pharaoh ("the one who lives in the great house"). Moses does indeed return to Egypt later to get the rest of the Hebrews, saying that he has been sent by Yahweh, and that he has been told to say to Pharaoh: "'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, has sent me to say to you: Let my people go, so that they may worship me in the desert.'" (Exod. 5:1-9). Pharaoh responds that no more straw for bricks will be given to the Hebrews. This does not mean, contrary to Cecil B. DeMille, that the Israelites will

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<sup>37</sup> "[A] new king, who did not know Joseph, came to power in Egypt . . . [Pharaoh says] the Israelites have become much too numerous for us . . . we must deal shrewdly with them . . . so [Pharaoh] put slave masters over them to oppress [the Israelites] with forced labor" (Gen. 1:8-11).

<sup>38</sup> Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 109.

make bricks without straw; rather, the task master told the Israelites, the Exodus account says, that from now on they will have to gather their own straw and also make the same number of bricks as before (5:8).<sup>39</sup> Two last details of interest: God tells Moses that he will harden Pharaoh's heart (7:3-5), but that in the end, the Hebrews will not only go free, but they will also take with them the Egyptians' silver and gold (3:21-22).

In 1350 BC Amenhotep IV became Pharaoh, King Akhenaten,<sup>40</sup> and he decided that there was only one god that Egyptians should worship. This introduced a monotheistic ideology to the Egyptians.<sup>41</sup> Many Egyptians did not believe in this one god propaganda. When Moses brought up a singular god, Yahweh,<sup>42</sup> Pharaoh dismissed this for he had most likely heard accusations of this way of thinking before.<sup>43</sup> Moses told Pharaoh that Yahweh would send plagues down upon the people of Egypt if Pharaoh did not let his people go. According to the Bible, a great many plagues took a toll on Egypt when Pharaoh did not comply, creating a problem for those who lived there. While it was ignored at first, the plagues became unbearable after the Plague of the Firstborn.<sup>44</sup> Pharaoh came to Moses in the night and told him to leave (Exod. 12:31). All the Hebrews exited Egypt about 430 years after they arrived (Exod. 12:40) led by this man named Moses.

God sent plagues like the one mentioned above until Pharaoh told Moses he needed to leave. God sends ten plagues upon the Egyptians to convince the Pharaoh that it would be a good idea to let the Israelites go. These first nine plagues, all explicable as well by natural phenomena – river of blood (Egyptian topsoil) killing all the fish in the Nile, frogs, swarms of gnats and flies, the deaths of Egyptian (but not Israelite) cattle, boils on their skin, a hailstorm that ruins the crops, locusts that eat every plant (including the fruit trees) left after the hailstorm, and darkness (a blinding sandstorm for three days) – fail to convince the Egyptians, but the tenth plague, the death of the first-born sons of every Egyptian family, including the first-born son of the Pharaoh himself, forces Pharaoh to relent and let the Israelites go.

The Israelites then left Egypt, and the Egyptians gave them their silver and gold to go, just as had been foretold (Ex. 3:21-22; 11:2-3; 12:35-36); they were about 600,000 strong, not counting women and children (12:37), thus likely a total of around 2 million, though some modern historians

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<sup>39</sup> Here also see Provan, Long, and Longman, in *A Biblical History of Israel*, 128.

<sup>40</sup> Amenhotep IV changed his name to Akhenaten, and then claimed that there was only one true God, referred to as Aten or the solar disc.

<sup>41</sup> On the tempting, but problematic, question of a possible link between Egyptian monotheism under Akhenaten and Israelite monotheism, see Redford, *Egypt, Canaan, and Israel in Ancient Times*, 377-382.

<sup>42</sup> Yahweh, or YHWH, meaning "I am Who I am," is one of the Hebrew names for the God found in the Pentateuch.

<sup>43</sup> Though the actual name of the Pharaoh at the time is under speculation, the Bible tells us these events took place after the building of the cities Rameses and Pithom, both of which were built after King Akhenaten's reign.

<sup>44</sup> This is the plague that supposedly killed all firstborn children in Egypt.

have questioned the accuracy of such a large numerical count.<sup>45</sup> Still, the Israelites had been in Egypt, we are told, for 430 years (Ex. 12:40). Now Ramses the Great, whom many scholars assert was the Pharaoh in the account of the Hebrew Exodus, if it indeed happened, ruled from 1279-1212 BC. This would place the entry of Joseph and his brothers into Egypt sometime during the early 17th century BC, during the Second Intermediate Period when the Hyksos were ruling Egypt as the Pharaohs.<sup>46</sup> Working from the other end, if Joseph came to Egypt not long after the Hyksos' arrival (thus around 1680 BC), then that would put the Exodus ca. 320 years after the end of the Second Intermediate Period (ca. 1250 BC), during the reign of Ramses II. The Pharaoh, we are told, chased after the Hebrews, on "horses and chariots" (Exod. 14:9) because he realized that he enjoyed their service to him. His use of chariots shows the New Kingdom's continued use of the horses that the Hyksos brought with them.

The Israelites, however, were not ignorant folk. Lacking weaponry and trained soldiers, and also anticipating that the Egyptians might change their minds and employ chariots to pursue them, the Hebrews left Egypt not by the Philistine Road, which was guarded by troops and fortresses, but rather, by the Sea of Reeds (mistranslated in the KJV as the Red Sea).<sup>47</sup> The Pharaoh did in fact change his mind after they left and pursued them with more than 600 chariots. The Sea of Reeds parted with the prevailing winds, allowing the Israelites to pass, but the wheels of the Egyptian chariots clogged (Ex. 14:25), and the army of the Pharaoh was lost when the wind stopped blowing and the sea closed in around them. This, of course, is a marshy area, not hard to transverse by foot, especially when the east wind blows a particular way, drying the surface a bit, and chariots would sink down and mire in the mud. After fleeing Egypt, the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for some 40 years, but eventually reached the Promised Land.

Just how reliable is the evidence presented in the Exodus account? First, we know that the cities of Pithom and Ramses were indeed real. Ramses did build a capital city called Pi-Ramses in the Delta, and also he built the store cities of Pithom and Ramses. Their storehouse buildings were constructed of brick, not stone. Moreover, mud bricks in Egypt were made with straw, but not so in Palestine, where bricks were made only of baked mud, so a Canaanite author writing the story down centuries later would not have known about this detail if it had not been passed down orally (or perhaps in written form) by those who had experienced Egyptian brick making firsthand. The Leiden Museum has a papyrus dating from Ramses' reign that provides instructions for the overseers of workers. It says, "Distribute grain to the soldiers and to the *Apiru* [*Habiru*] who

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<sup>45</sup> Provan, Long, and Longman, in *A Biblical History of Israel*, 130-131, for a summary of the scholarship on this thorny issue, and whether a smaller number may actually be consistent with the biblical account.

<sup>46</sup> Howard Spodek, *The World's History*. Once again, this is based on Mr. Howard Spodek's timing for the Hyksos stay in Egypt. The Hebrews were said to have been in Egypt for 430 years (Exodus 12:40). No matter how long the Hebrews and Hyksos collaborated, the Hyksos only stayed for about 70-120 years, leaving the Hebrews with the New Kingdom Egyptians for at least two and a half centuries more. For a fuller discussion, see Provan, Long, and Longman, in *A Biblical History of Israel*, 131-132.

<sup>47</sup> Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 124-127.

transport stones to the great pylon of Ramses.”<sup>48</sup> Now Ramses was building temples of stone, not just store houses of brick, and many scholars believe that the word *Habiru* refers to “Hebrew” (similar in sound), or that it at least refers to foreigners or refugees, “dependent workers who were ‘economic failures, deprived of their rights,’” living in Egypt.<sup>49</sup> Other Egyptian texts, in particular the 350 so-called cuneiform tablets of the late fifteenth and early fourteenth centuries BC discovered in the el-Amarna district of Egypt at the end of the nineteenth century, also refer to the *Habiru*.<sup>50</sup>

Second, Moses and Aaron were coming daily to see the Pharaoh, so his palace had to be nearby. Moses is another Egyptian name, more commonly combined with the name of a god such as Ramses (Ra-m[o]ses), though some modern scholars point out that “the argument from nomenclature is not conclusive,” in part due to the relatively cordial relations between Egypt and Israel during the monarchies of David and Solomon, which likely would have allowed for “foreign influences on the [Hebrew] language and the names.”<sup>51</sup> Moreover, Ramses II’s palace was in the north in the Delta as well, close to where the Israelites were working, so daily conferences between the Pharaoh and Moses and Aaron are entirely plausible. Moreover, in later years the name of Pharaoh’s city was changed to “Tanis,” yet the Exodus account retains the original name, “Ramses.”<sup>52</sup> If any Israelite had written about this city later, he would have referred to it as Tanis rather than Ramses, for the latter name was used only in the thirteenth century BC.

Third, the Exodus account says that “Pharaoh’s heart was hardened.” This, too, is an Egyptian concept, for Egyptians believed that you thought with your heart, and that the heart was the seat of all emotions.<sup>53</sup> In other words, Pharaoh resisted letting the Israelites go. This is a fascinating detail which biblical scholars and pastors/priests often struggle to explain. The problem for modern-day Christians, of course, is that Pharaoh can hardly be held accountable for his actions if God is making his heart hard, and that is what pastors and priests focus upon – Pharaoh’s “sin,” if you will – but in fact, this may just be an Egyptian expression to explain why Pharaoh resisted against letting the Israelites go for so long.

The Merneptah Stela (named for Ramses II’s successor, Merneptah, who reigned from 1213-1204 BC), which dates from year 5 of Merneptah’s reign, ca. 1208 BC, helps place the Exodus in time. Ramses II was succeeded by his 13th son, so clearly his first son had preceded

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<sup>48</sup> See Abraham Malamat, “The Dawn of Israel,” in Haim Hillel Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976), 28-46 at 42.

<sup>49</sup> Herrmann, *Israel in Egypt*, 34, quoting Klaus Koch.

<sup>50</sup> See Niels Peter Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition* (London: SPCK; and Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 58-62; J. Maxwell Miller and John H. Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 65-67; and Herrmann, *Israel in Egypt*, 34-35.

<sup>51</sup> Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 109-110.

<sup>52</sup> Soggin, *An Introduction to the History of Israel and Judah*, 110.

<sup>53</sup> Brier, *The History of Ancient Egypt*.

him in death. The stela says, “Plundered is Canaan with every evil; carried off is Ashkelon; seized upon is Gezer; Yanoam is made as that which does not exist; Israel is laid waste, his seed is not.”<sup>54</sup> This is the earliest non-biblical reference to Israel. We do not find anything like this in sources that date from the reign of Ramses. Now Merneptah is not talking about the Exodus. He first lists all these places he has conquered outside of Egypt. What is crucial here is the way the word Israel is written. All the other names of countries have at the end of their names a hieroglyph that shows three hills. That’s how Egyptians said “country.” When Merneptah refers to Israel, however, there is no sign for a country. What you have instead is a sign of a man and a woman. This suggests that, unlike the other places mentioned, Israel at this point is a people, and not a place. This suggests that they were still wandering when this stela was carved. As Niels Peter Lemche observed, “Israel alone is determined by the hieroglyphic sign for ‘foreign people,’ something that may be taken as an indication of a different status of Israel in comparison to the other names on the inscription. These are . . . provided with the determinative for a foreign place.”<sup>55</sup> The text refers to the destruction of Israel, although there is no parallel reference to this battle in Exodus. Given that the Exodus account says that the Israelites went on to wander in the wilderness for a period of some 40 years before settling in Palestine, if we count backwards, this would place the Exodus during the reign of Ramses the Great, who ruled for 67 years. Some leading scholars have suggested that it might have occurred around 1250 BC. Ramses’ first-born son died in the twenty-sixth year of his reign.<sup>56</sup> The death of Ramses’ first-born child might have occurred just prior to the Exodus as the biblical account suggests.

Whatever one concludes about the historical veracity of the Joseph-Exodus narrative, there are clearly kernels of truth here in the biblical and extra-biblical evidence. The Hyksos and the Hebrews lived together in Egypt. While the Hyksos forced their way in, the Hebrews were allowed into Egypt later. Then, the Hyksos were beaten out of Egypt and back into the Sinai desert over multiple Egyptian Campaigns from the South. The Hebrews left centuries after the New Kingdom began. This separates these two peoples from each other, even though at one time they resided close together. There are few primary sources for this research, the best being Manetho and the few artifacts that have been found. The best primary sources for the Hebrews are the Joseph Narrative in Genesis and the beginning of Exodus, but much of this biblical evidence fits well with our knowledge of ancient Egypt. This period in time is still very mysterious, but as historians and archaeologists uncover more artifacts and theories, the truth of this period will show itself.

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<sup>54</sup> For more on the stela of Merneptah, see Miller and Hayes, *A History of Ancient Israel and Judah*, 68; and Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition*, 35-38.

<sup>55</sup> Lemche, *The Israelites in History and Tradition*, 36-37; Lemche also refers to the interpretation of Gösta W. Ahlström in *Who Were the Israelites?*, 39, where Ahlström argues for a territorial interpretation of Israel as part of a “ring” composition, with three names forming an outer ring, and Canaan and Israel forming an inner ring. Either way, however, this text provides the first known reference to Israel in extra-biblical texts.

<sup>56</sup> Aidan Dodson and Dyan Hilton, *The Complete Royal Families of Ancient Egypt* (London: Thames & Hudson, 2004), 170.

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## **Student Essays**



## Social Fascism: A Reconsideration

James Macumber

Germany in the interwar period was a space for experimentation in all aspects of life.<sup>1</sup> The Weimar Republic, with its brief and bright lifespan, was aborted long before its rich culture could reach a different conclusion than dictatorship. From Dada to Expressionism, from the occult to the invention of the loudspeaker, Weimar Germany was an eclectic society that could have produced many different historical outcomes. The political world of the Weimar Republic was just as idiosyncratic, though more cutthroat than, its cultural one. One particularly absurd example is the bitter division between the *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Social Democratic Party of Germany, SPD) and the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands* (Communist Party of Germany, KPD). Nominally, both the SPD and KPD had socialism as their political goal, but the SPD sought to achieve it by reform where the KPD advocated revolutionary violence.<sup>2</sup> If method was their chief difference, it appears that they were splitting ideological hairs. Yet, the peak of these parties' division was so intense that the KPD, with the support of their affiliated international organization, the Communist International (Comintern), drafted a condemnation of the social democrats into theory as "social fascism."<sup>3</sup>

Outside of niche ideological debates between left political factions (i.e., Marxist-Leninists, Trotskyists, social democrats), there is scant historiographical discussion about this term.<sup>4</sup> Even these political debates often do not take the form of books, articles, or comprehensive works. Due to the lack of serious historical investigation, there are misconceptions about the term's creation that deserve to be reexamined. Was "social fascism" anything more than a political epithet? Or did it have a basis in reality? Research reveals that though both parties contributed to an atmosphere of resentment and explicit aggression, the KPD's theory of social fascism was ultimately rooted in the SPD's parliamentary and electoral practices.

Social fascism as an indictment of the SPD by the KPD could explain the bitter relations between the two parties. If, in an act of sectarianism (or Stalinism, by some assertions), the KPD severed ties with the SPD by labeling them "social fascists," then part of the failure of Weimar democracy could be laid at the feet of the Communists. Combined, the KPD and SPD would have

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<sup>1</sup>In this case, the period of analysis is in Germany, running from shortly before the end of the First World War to 1933 (the Nazi assumption of power). The beginning of the debates which led to allegations of social fascism started in intra-party discussions before 1917. After 1933, political plurality more or less ends, and so too does the debate being discussed here. Both the SPD and KPD more or less cease to exist until the end of the Second World War.

<sup>2</sup>Eduard Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism* (New York, NY: Schocken Books, 1961).

<sup>3</sup>There is a lack of clarity and agreement on the exact definition of "social fascism" - suffice it to say that it is used to characterize left-leaning reformist groups or parties that allegedly, or actually, engage in the suppression of other, or more radical, left-wing factions. In this context, the communists are arguing that the social democrats have more in common with fascists than other groups on their shared end of the political spectrum.

<sup>4</sup>Joseph Redman and Brian Pearce, *From 'Social-Fascism' to 'People's Front'* (ca. 1937), *Marxist Internet Archive*, April 22, 2007, <https://www.marxists.org/history/etol/writers/pearce/1957/09/sftopf.html> (accessed December 19, 2018).

commanded a mobilized electorate numbering in the millions. This type of people power extended not just to the polls, but to unionizing, and all levels of the Weimar government. Where did this division originate? Did the KPD accuse the SPD of social fascism out of ideological purity? In reevaluating the chain of events which led to the conceptualization of social fascism, more light will be shed on why these two parties failed to preserve a nascent German democracy and the ideological nuance of the Social Democrats.

The German parliament was, itself, a stage for discord with its many parties and backroom dealings. The fact that there were several parties, including the KPD, that opposed the democratic government they were elected to speaks to the sense of confusion at the time.<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that, ideologically, the KPD was opposed to democracy as it existed in the Weimar Republic because of what they perceived as the Republic's bourgeois nature.<sup>6</sup> The KPD believed the post-war democracy was dominated by the bourgeoisie, both by those who held public office and by the focus of the Weimar government. By this logic, the state of the poor and working classes were lower priorities than those of the elite of society. The distinction between the motives for being anti-democratic is important because some factions sought to replace the Weimar Republic with a restored monarchy or a dictatorship. Despite having a presence in the Reichstag themselves, the KPD sought to replace the Weimar democracy with one dominated by the proletariat. This is the poorly named "dictatorship of the proletariat" they so often referred to. The KPD, in fact, managed to be a consistent electoral challenger; KPD Reichstag election results between 1920 and 1933 ranged from 2% to 17%, often placing it third overall.<sup>7</sup> While these numbers may seem small, the Reichstag pioneered proportional representation in a parliamentary-style government. This means that seats in Germany's federal legislative body were given to parties based on the portion of the votes they received; this would mean that they gained significant representation in the Reichstag's approximately 600 seats.<sup>8</sup> The SPD managed to capture anywhere from 18% to 30% of the electorate in the same time period.<sup>9</sup> The strength of the SPD's hold on the Weimar Reichstag is apparent here; by routinely securing at least a fifth of federal votes, the Social Democrats could always expect to be either part of the governing coalition or a significant force for opposition.

Yet, the SPD's position in the German government began with several major party splits. Eduard Bernstein, a chief theorist and public official in the SPD, left the party because of its support for the First World War (WWI). Bernstein, along with other important figures in the SPD, founded the *Unabhängige Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (Independent Social

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<sup>5</sup>Benjamin Carter Hett, *The Death of Democracy: Hitler's Rise to Power and the Fall of the Weimar Republic* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 2018), 14-27.

<sup>6</sup>Karl Liebknecht et al., "Manifesto of the German Spartacists" (January 30th, 1919), *Marxist Internet Archive*, <https://www.marxists.org/history/international/social-democracy/call/1919/30.htm> (accessed December 01, 2018).

<sup>7</sup>Dieter Nohlen and Philip Stöver, *Elections in Europe: A Data Handbook* (Baden-Baden, R.F.A.: Nomos, 2010).

<sup>8</sup>The precise number of seats oscillated from 423 to 661 during the Weimar Republic, but generally remained around 600.

<sup>9</sup>Nohlen and Stöver, *Elections in Europe*, 762.

Democratic Party of Germany, USPD).<sup>10</sup> The SPD's support for the war ran counter to established Marxist orthodoxy, which has long held that the working class has more in common with its foreign equivalents than with the elite of their own country. The reasons for the SPD's commitment to the war effort are complex and still heavily debated, and as such, fall out of the scope of this paper. The importance of this split is that it happened, and that it remained unresolved due to the lack of compromise between both parties.

This commitment to the war effort ultimately benefited the SPD, as they found themselves in the ruling coalition at the end of the war. The elections in Prussia illustrate this point: the SPD won 20-36% of the vote (compared to the 1-15% earned by most other parties) from 1919-1932.<sup>11</sup> The catastrophic defeat Germany suffered in the First World War was coupled with the forced abdication of its monarch, Kaiser Wilhelm II. These political upheavals, which occurred alongside the Russian Revolution, triggered the first major test to the Weimar Republic's legitimacy. A faction of the SPD known as the Spartacists, led in part by socialist intellectuals Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht, sought to establish a socialist republic in solidarity with their Russian comrades.<sup>12</sup> The Spartacists declared their intent to establish a socialist republic on the same night that a democratic republic was being declared in Berlin. The Spartacists helped lead the violent November Revolution in conjunction with other uprisings, such as the Kiel Mutiny. Those Social Democrats in office were now faced with a decision: either defend their newfound power, which they had struggled for since the party's founding in 1863, or support the revolution. However, to the decision-makers at the time, the revolution was an unthinkable and undesirable path. The fork in the road that the SPD government found itself at offered only one option they were truly interested in: defense of the new government.

Friedrich Ebert, a leading member of the SPD opposed to revolution, took office in 1918 as the first President of Germany. Ebert had formerly been a unionizer, and in the twilight of the First World War, found himself the first President of Germany. In this new position, the President lived in the affluent Presidential Palace, and in a position of some authority. Ebert's personal improvement in social stature mirrored that of the rest of the Social Democratic Party; after struggling for legal, democratic power since 1863, the Party was now at the helm of Germany's new government. To the Party leadership, the possibilities for a more egalitarian Germany would have been a sight to behold as much as the Presidential Palace. However, there remained the matter of the socialist revolutionaries.

With the aid of Gustav Noske, then *Reichswehrminister* (Minister of Defense), Ebert and the SPD government suppressed the November Revolution.<sup>13</sup> Noske coordinated the use of

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<sup>10</sup>Joseph A. Biesinger, *Germany: A Reference Guide from the Renaissance to the Present* (New York, NY: Facts On File, 2006), 755.

<sup>11</sup>Dietrich Orlow, *Weimar Prussia, 1918-1925: The Unlikely Rock of Democracy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2009).

<sup>12</sup>Karl Liebknecht et al., "Manifesto of the German Spartacists."

<sup>13</sup>Kate Evans, Paul Buhle, *Red Rosa: A Graphic Biography of Rosa Luxemburg* (London: Verso, 2015).

German troops and helped organize paramilitary groups, early instances of what would come to be known as the *Freikorps* (Free Corps).<sup>14</sup> This is all in spite of a shared ideology: socialism. To the KPD, this cooperation with far-right groups would have been the worst betrayal had it not been surpassed by the fact that the SPD went to these lengths to suppress a socialist revolution. Even Eduard Bernstein's *Evolutionary Socialism*, the first articulation of modern social democracy, argues that one goal of reform is the development of the political and economic conditions for a revolution.<sup>15</sup> The actions taken by the SPD triggered a rift in the German left which eventually led to the formation of the KPD.

Members of the USPD either returned to the SPD, as Bernstein did, or joined the new KPD. The KPD's founding congress began in Berlin on the 30th December, 1918.<sup>16</sup> Ernst Thalmann and Clara Zetkin were among the SPD refugees to join the new German Communist Party. The ideological point at which the SPD and KPD diverged was in their preferred method of achieving socialism. The SPD's doctrine, drawing from the writings and research of Eduard Bernstein, was that reforms could eventually result in a socialist state.<sup>17</sup> By competing successfully in elections and legally acquiring power, the Social Democrats argued that socialism could be legislated into existence. The KPD, on the other hand, believed that violent revolution by the working class was the primary, if not the only, way to achieve socialism.

As late as 1931, the SPD leadership was opposed to cooperation with the KPD. In 1931, Otto Wels, then Party Chairman of the SPD, said that "[Bolshevism and fascism] are both founded on violence and dictatorship, regardless of how socialist or radical they may appear." This statement was made at the SPD's 1931 Party Convention in Leipzig.<sup>18</sup> This split continued in the face of the rising threat posed by the *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (National Socialist German Workers' Party, NSDAP), or, as we know it today, the Nazi Party.

The influential state of Prussia was an important battleground in the twilight of the Weimar period. In Prussia's last free days, the SPD still had enough support to form a government, but it had to contend with half the Landtag positions being held by either the KPD or the Nazis. SPD politicians expected this deadlock to either solidify or result in their loss of power in Prussia. The KPD and the Nazis, predictably, refused to form a coalition government with other parties. As a result, the traditional SPD coalition, which also contained the Centre and German Democratic parties, remained in power. It is worth noting that, alone, the Nazis controlled 43% of the vote in Prussia.<sup>19</sup> However, the SPD's days in office were now numbered.

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<sup>14</sup>Eric D. Weitz, *Creating German Communism, 1890-1990: From Popular Protests to Socialist State* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1997).

<sup>15</sup>Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, 6.

<sup>16</sup>John Peter Netti, *Rosa Luxemburg: Abridged Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969), 472.

<sup>17</sup>Bernstein, *Evolutionary Socialism*, xxix.

<sup>18</sup>Marcel Bois, *Kommunisten gegen Hitler und Stalin: Die linke Opposition der KPD in der Weimarer Republik* (Essen: Klartext Verlag, 2015).

<sup>19</sup>Gordon Alexander Craig, *The End of Prussia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

The event that served as a prologue to the Nazi seizure of power, the *Preußenschlag* (Prussian Coup), occurred shortly after the 1932 Landtag election. Ostensibly, the Reich/federal German government blamed the deadlock of the Prussian Landtag and the violence of KPD-Nazi street fighting as their basis for dissolving the Prussian government. In reality, Chancellor Franz von Papen sought to establish a nationalist government via extralegal means. In response to this elaborate conspiracy and its anti-democratic result, the KPD called for a general strike in unison with the SPD.<sup>20</sup> However, the SPD urged moderation, intending to take the case to the German Supreme Court.<sup>21</sup> Joseph Goebbels, the prominent Nazi Party propagandist and the future Minister for Propaganda, noted the lack of response by the SPD, despite the readiness of the allied paramilitary Iron Front faction.<sup>22</sup>

Yet, in some cases, the SPD had in fact organized with the KPD. The chief limitation on cooperation had always been the national leadership of both parties. However, the KPD, and specifically its leader, Ernst Thälmann, was known to have periodically called for general strikes and united fronts *despite* the allegations of social fascism between 1928 and 1933. Additionally, local or regional KPD branches were known to have worked with the SPD on occasion. There are a handful of recorded instances in 1931 when the KPD and SPD ran on a combined ballot. This meant that the SPD and KPD would combine their lists of candidates into one, and seat appointments would be drawn from this KPD-SPD list. Cooperation was often among local groups whose members disagreed with national leadership on the direction of the party. Research by Joachim Petzold has revealed that the Reich Interior Ministry believed that the majority of the KPD's members wanted a united front with the SPD to combat the fascists.<sup>23</sup> There was support outside of the KPD and SPD as well. 33 public intellectuals signed an open letter declaring their desire to see a united front between communists and social democrats.<sup>24</sup> Among these figures was Albert Einstein, himself a socialist and admirer of Lenin.<sup>25</sup>

The Prussian Coup was not the only impetus for cooperation, either. In the same month, a local SPD chair proposed "Setting aside that which divides us is an appropriate demand given the

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<sup>20</sup>"Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands: Aufruf, 30. Januar 1933," *321Ignition*, [http://321ignition.free.fr/pag/de/lin/pag\\_007/1933\\_01\\_30\\_KPD\\_Aufruf.htm](http://321ignition.free.fr/pag/de/lin/pag_007/1933_01_30_KPD_Aufruf.htm) (accessed December 12, 2018).

<sup>21</sup>Marcel Bois, "Hitler Wasn't Inevitable," *Jacobin*, November 15, 2015, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2015/11/nuremberg-trials-hitler-goebbels-himmler-german-communist-social-democrats/> (accessed December 19, 2018).

<sup>22</sup>Joseph Goebbels, *My Part in Germany's Fight* (New York, NY: Fertig Howard, 1979), 110.

<sup>23</sup>Joachim Petzold, "SPD und KPD in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik: Unüberwindbare Hindernisse oder ungenutzte Möglichkeiten?," in *Die Deutsche Staatskrise 1930-1933. Handlungsspielräume und Alternativen*, ed. Heinrich Winkler (Munich: Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, 1992), 94.

<sup>24</sup>"Das Volksbegehren der Arbeiterschaft für die Einheitsfront Lläuft!" *Der Funke* (Berlin), June 25, 1932, 147th ed., sec. A.

<sup>25</sup>Albert Einstein, "Why Socialism?" *Monthly Review*, May 1949.

grave nature of our time,” presumably referring to the Nazi threat.<sup>26</sup> In response to the appointment of Hitler, the KPD leadership called for a general strike, specifically in unison with the SPD.<sup>27</sup> However, the SPD’s leadership had called for “joint struggle,” but whatever was meant by this will never be known, as both the SPD and KPD were outlawed soon after (with much of the KPD forced into hiding or executed outright).

These calls for a united front against the Nazis by the KPD may have been frustrated by the events of the Sixth Congress of the Communist International in 1928. It was at this conference that arguments were made that the SPD, and other parties, were “social fascists.” The KPD cited what they saw as the centrist attitudes of the SPD. Many Communists believed the SPD were committed to a defense of the status quo so stalwart that they would routinely betray would-be comrades.<sup>28</sup> In this resolution, the SPD were named enemies of the revolution on the basis that they had deliberately stood in the way of a socialist revolution.

Where does this sliver of history leave social fascism in the nebula of Marxist theory? Its position must be weighed in its historical context, and on the events which formed its basis. Cooperation and division can be shown as trends from the previously outlined situations. Social democrats (an identifier not limited to members of the SPD) had clearly lost interest in the potential gains to be made by way of revolution. This is most clearly shown in the unpopularity of the Spartacist Revolt and the November Revolution, as well as their mutual suppression by an SPD-led government. The split occurred specifically because of the decision by Friedrich Ebert to give General Wilhelm Groener permission to pursue socialist rebels who had taken some social democratic politicians hostage.<sup>29</sup> On the 4th of January, 1919, Karl Liebknecht called for an uprising against Ebert’s government. It was at this point that Ebert and Noske called upon the new Freikorps and ignored or sanctioned the murder of Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg. This is the physical manifestation of the ideological difference between modern social democracy and communism. Prior to the First World War, social democracy and social democrats were committed to advancing the cause of socialism and had the revolution as its general aim. Today, most social democratic parties seek reform, and rarely advocate for changing the entire economic system. This decision by the post-war SPD government, and the tacit approval it received from most of the party, indicates that they preferred a continuation of liberal capitalism. So opposed were they to revolution that they allied with an uncertain monarchist and the most far-right organizations of the time. This fits moderately well with the assertion that social fascists “stand in the way of a dictatorship of the proletariat.”<sup>30</sup> The preference by some members of both the SPD and KPD,

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<sup>26</sup>Bois, “Hitler Wasn’t Inevitable.”

<sup>27</sup>“Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands: Aufruf, 30. Januar 1933.”

<sup>28</sup>Klaus Hildebrand, *The Third Reich* (London, UK: Routledge, 1984), 106.

<sup>29</sup>Hett, *The Death of Democracy*, 23.

<sup>30</sup>Dmitrii Zakhar’evich Manuil’skiĭ, *Social Democracy, Stepping-stone to Fascism: Or, Otto Bauer’s Latest Discovery: Address Delivered to Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International Dec. 1932* (New York, NY: Workers Library, 1934).



notably those not in national leadership, undermines the legitimacy of social fascism. Seen another way, it could be said that those seeking a united struggle against fascism are, therefore, not fascists. If an individual or group is opposed to fascism, they cannot be any kind of fascist. However, if these same people are equally opposed to revolution, then they cannot be social democrats as they were before 1914 (nor communists). Some other category, if one exists, would describe this section of the leftist population.

However, the version of social democracy that the leaders of the SPD (i.e., Friedrich Ebert) espoused fits the KPD's definition of social fascism. There is no official statement by the Social Democrat leadership, in the Interwar period or after it, where they explicitly abandon revolution. However, the actions of the SPD demonstrate their real migration on the political spectrum. The social democrats, like the fascists, sought a nation in which there were still distinct classes and hierarchies, but also established equal rights and privileges for all members, at all levels, of society.<sup>31</sup> The SPD does not seem to have ever officially embraced corporatism, but their legislative priorities and hostility to communism leaves no other appropriate description.<sup>32</sup>

Rather than being a baseless epithet, the label of social fascism holds some merit. Today, "fascist" has become less of a description of one's ideology, and more an insult against anyone that is allegedly authoritarian or power-hungry. In the 20s and 30s, fascism was a new ideology, unassociated with the unbridled horror it would soon unleash. Social fascism, as it was used by the KPD and the Comintern, was a theory grounded in observations of the behavior of social democratic parties, specifically the SPD. Perhaps it would never have come in to use, or had its tone tempered, if the leaders of the KPD and Comintern were more aware of the efforts by SPD members who were outside of the national leadership. The KPD itself did not simplify matters by oscillating between strategic reconciliation and apocalyptic condemnations of the German social democrats. However, the SPD's violent and energetic defense against the communists in the early 20s made their loyalties clear. Though the SPD may never have claimed to be the party of parliamentary democracy and liberal capitalism, the strategy they used to suppress the communists made it clear that when forced to make a choice, they would choose the established order. It is not unfair that for an ideology known for its never-ending analyses, it would rationalize the actions of a "socialist" party as a new political phenomenon, social fascism.

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<sup>31</sup>Andrew Heywood, *Political Ideologies: An Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2003), 172.

<sup>32</sup>Sheri Berman, "Understanding Social Democracy," *The Minda De Gunzburg Center for European Studies*, [http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~ces/conferences/left/left\\_papers/berman.pdf](http://www.people.fas.harvard.edu/~ces/conferences/left/left_papers/berman.pdf) (accessed December 19, 2018), 13.

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## Overcoming Rhetorical Barriers in the Ahiara Declaration: Colonel Ojukwu's Rhetorical Success in the Face of Adversity

Oforitsete Ogor

Colonel Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu is remembered in Nigeria as a national leader even though he led the secession of the Eastern part of the country which led to the civil war of 1967.<sup>1</sup> The political climate in Nigeria prior to the time of the secession was tribalistic with a lot of conflict between the major ethnic groups. At the time Nigeria consisted of three main regions (east, north and west) where people lived according to their ethnic groups in most of the regions. The Igbo people (from the eastern region), tired of their mistreatment in Nigeria, urged their leaders to create their own country, and Colonel Ojukwu answered their call.<sup>2</sup> The western and northern parts of Nigeria acted as one to fight against the secession of the eastern part (Biafra). Nigeria had a population of 53 million against Biafra's 12 million and at the beginning of the war Biafra's troops numbered 35,000 against Nigeria's 100,000.<sup>3</sup> In retrospect, Biafra had no chance of seceding or winning the civil war because the western and the northern part of Nigeria combined were more than double its size in terms of population and land mass. Nigeria also had an upper hand in every other respect, from logistics and armaments to economic strength.<sup>4</sup> The Ahiara Declaration was written by the National Guidance Committee of Biafra and delivered by Colonel Ojukwu on June 1, 1969, when the war had already waged on for two years and Biafra clearly was losing.<sup>5</sup> Through the Declaration, Colonel Ojukwu successfully motivated the people of Biafra to keep on fighting. This paper will study the rhetorical strategies used by Colonel Ojukwu to divert the people's attention from their loss to the hope of a victory which lay ahead. According to Robert Rowland, a rhetorical barrier is "an attitude, belief or other problem that a rhetor must overcome in order to persuade an audience to accept a given position." In contrast, a rhetorical advantage is "an attitude, belief or other position that gives the rhetor assistance in persuading an audience."<sup>6</sup> This paper will show how a political leader can overcome their rhetorical barriers through embracing and enacting rhetorical advantages. Through the Ahiara Declaration, Colonel Ojukwu

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<sup>1</sup>Roderick MacCleod and Tomi Oladipo, "Biafra at 50: Nigeria's civil war explained" *BBC News Africa*, July 5, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-40507324/biafra-at-50-nigeria-s-civil-war-explained> (accessed April 10, 2018).

<sup>2</sup>Victor Alumona, "A Critical Rhetoric Analysis of Ojukwu's Ahiara Declaration," *African Identities*, vol. 9, no. 1 (February 2011): 67-84.

<sup>3</sup> A. K. Essack, "Biafra Holds Out," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 5, no. 1 (January 1970): 8-10.

<sup>4</sup> Essack, "Biafra Holds Out."

<sup>5</sup> Chukwuemeka Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration: The Principles of the Biafran Revolution* (Geneva: Markpress, 1969). The text of the Ahiara Declaration also may be found online at: <http://biafra.org/Ahiara.htm> (accessed April 21, 2019).

<sup>6</sup> Robert Rowland, "Understanding Context and Judging Effectiveness," in *Analyzing Rhetoric: A Handbook for the Informed Citizen in a New Millennium* (Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2002), 35-57 at 40.

utilized his skill as a rhetor and the history surrounding the civil war to create arguments of dissociation and blame diversion that helped him overcome the rhetorical barrier of Biafra losing the war.

One major reason why Biafra was losing the war stemmed from the lack of support from the international community. Through the Ahiara Declaration, Colonel Ojukwu was able to combat this barrier by pointing to the racist history of the black man's relationship with the white leadership of Western countries.

I have for a long time thought about this our predicament the attitude of the civilized world to this our conflict. The more I think about it the more I am convinced that our disability is racial. The root cause of our problem lies in the fact that we are black. If all the things that have happened to us had happened to another people who are not black, if other people who are not black had reacted in the way our people have reacted these two long years, the world's response would surely have been different.

In 1966, some 50,000 of us were slaughtered like cattle in Nigeria. In the course of this war, well over one million of us have been killed: yet the world is unimpressed and looks on in indifference. . . .

For this reason our struggle is a movement against racial prejudice, in particular against that tendency to regard the black man as culturally, morally, spiritually, intellectually, and physically inferior to the other two major races of the world the yellow and the white races.<sup>7</sup>

Even before the Ahiara Declaration, Colonel Ojukwu had informed Biafran citizens several times that they would wage war with the enemy (Nigeria) until the conscience of the world would effectively be aroused against genocide.<sup>8</sup> He had hoped that the international community would intervene and bring about a cease fire which would lead to a political settlement guaranteeing the independence of Biafra.<sup>9</sup> The international community did respond to the attempted genocide in Biafra by providing humanitarian relief. However, that was not enough. The international community failed to provide the political intervention that Ojukwu's regime so desperately sought and needed in order to conduct and win the war.<sup>10</sup> At the time of the Ahiara Declaration, in fact, the Biafran troops were only able to maintain a position of defense, and even this defensive position increasingly was being attacked by the Nigerian army.

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<sup>7</sup> Ahiara Declaration, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140811030417/http://biafra.org/Ahiara.htm> (accessed April 21, 2019).

<sup>8</sup> John Stremlau, "The Futility of Secession," in *The International Politics of the Nigerian Civil War, 1967-1970* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977), 320-356.

<sup>9</sup> Stremlau, "The Futility of Secession."

<sup>10</sup> Stremlau, "The Futility of Secession."

During his speech, he accused the international community, and especially the Western powers, of turning a blind eye to the genocide being committed by the Nigerian government.<sup>11</sup> The Western powers' decision not to provide political assistance to Biafra acted as a rhetorical barrier, one that Colonel Ojukwu combated by recounting the history of racism within the international system of imperialism. He painted the struggle for Biafra not only as one of independence from Nigeria, but also as one to rid the "Negro" of the West's racial prejudice. He explained in his speech that Western powers remained convinced of the "myth" of an innate inferiority in the Negro, and that this belief explained their lack of concern for Biafra's cause.

It is this myth about the Negro that still conditions the thinking and attitude of most white governments on all issues concerning black Africa and the black man; it explains the double standards which they apply to present-day world problems; it explains their stand on the whole question of independence and basic human rights for the black peoples of the world. These myths explain the stand of many of the world governments and organizations on our present struggle.<sup>12</sup>

This rhetorical strategy was one of a diversion of blame. During the declaration, Colonel Ojukwu also praised the people of Biafra for upholding their value of self-determination. As a way to instill hope in the people and divert their attention from the loss of the war, he stated that the only way that Biafra could achieve success was through maintaining the value of self-reliance. He says; "The only hope of success lies in the state pursuing an active policy of self-reliance in putting its own economic house in order . . . . This is what Biafra must do . . . if they are to save themselves."<sup>13</sup> By telling the citizens of Biafra that the only way they could achieve success was to pursue economic self-reliance, he instilled hope in the people. By diverting the blame of the war to the racist values of Western powers and providing a solution to Biafra's losing the war, Colonel Ojukwu made a case for the idea that Biafra could win the war without the help of the international community. He succeeded in overcoming this rhetorical barrier by portraying the people of Biafra as triumphant despite their numerous challenges and, in the process, utilized his rhetorical recounting of Biafran history to divert any blame to the Western powers.

Colonel Ojukwu faced another significant rhetorical barrier with the starvation and death of the Biafran people and he was able to overcome this by using his skills as rhetor to create an argument of dissociation and diversion of blame. At the time of the Ahiara Declaration, over one million Biafrans had died from starvation and millions more were suffering.<sup>14</sup> Other main causes of death were diseases such as kwashiorkor (a disease caused by malnutrition) and bombs being

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<sup>11</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 6.

<sup>13</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 25.

<sup>14</sup> Essack, "Biafra Holds Out."

dropped on Biafra by the Nigerian Army.<sup>15</sup> The international community responded to the starvation of the Biafran people by attempting to send aid in the form of food and medication. However, these materials could not get to the people of Biafra because the governments of the warring parties could not come to a consensus on an effective method of food transportation to the besieged territory. This led Colonel Ojukwu to accuse Nigeria of committing an act of genocide and the Western countries of aiding and abetting Nigeria in their crimes against humanity.<sup>16</sup>

Colonel Ojukwu was able to create and utilize dissociative arguments, first by establishing the Biafran value of respecting human life, and then by showing how Nigeria did not uphold this value. “The Biafran sees the willful and wanton destruction of human life not only as a grave crime but as an abominable sin. In our society every human life is holy, every individual counts.”<sup>17</sup> Nigeria, in stark contrast, “embarked on a crime of genocide against our people by first mounting a total blockade against Biafra.”<sup>18</sup> He was able to combat the rhetorical barrier of his people’s starvation by reminding Biafrans that, in order for them to uphold their values, they must gain their independence from Nigeria, which did not share those same values.

The history of the Igbo people being attacked in Nigeria before the civil war acted as a rhetorical advantage for Colonel Ojukwu. He embraced this advantage by diverting the blame of the people’s starvation and death to the country’s enemies. The Igbo people had suffered death at the hands of Nigerians previously with acts such as the 1966 pogrom which led to the death of 30,000 Igbos living in the northern part of Nigeria.<sup>19</sup> In short, it should not come as a surprise to the people of Biafra that Nigeria would attempt to commit genocide. Colonel Ojukwu utilized the distrust of the Biafra people towards the Nigerian government to construct his argument of blame diversion in the Ahiara Declaration. “Fellow Biafrans, I have for a long time thought about this our predicament [and] the attitude of the civilized world to this our conflict.”<sup>20</sup> By using the term “predicament” he implied that the situation of starvation and suffering was one that the Biafrans were coerced into by forces beyond their control.<sup>21</sup> The predicament of the Igbo people’s mistreatment and now their starvation according to Ojukwu was something over which they had no control. Throughout the speech, Colonel Ojukwu portrayed the idea that the only way to avoid

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<sup>15</sup> Zubeida Mustafa, “The Nigerian Dilemma,” *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1969): 135-152.

<sup>16</sup> Another argument for the genocide was that the Western press alleged that Nigerian troops massacred the Igbo troops in large numbers and its air force dropped bombs on civilian targets. Although this allegation was subsequently disproved by a team of international observers, Colonel Ojukwu still pushed the idea of a genocide attempt in the Ahiara Declaration. Mustafa, “The Nigerian Dilemma.”

<sup>17</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 16.

<sup>18</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 5

<sup>19</sup> A. B. Akinyemi, “The British Press and the Nigerian Civil War,” *African Affairs*, vol. 71, no. 285 (October 1972): 408-426.

<sup>20</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 5.

<sup>21</sup> Alumona, “A Critical Rhetoric Analysis of Ojukwu’s Ahiara Declaration.”



complete annihilation of the Biafran people by its enemies was to keep on fighting. By portraying the war as essential to their survival, he was able to divert the attention of the people from their suffering to a greater purpose which was their struggle for independence. "Thus, the Biafran Revolution is not dreamt up by an elite; it is the will of the People. The People want it. They are fighting and dying to defend it. Their immediate concern is to defeat the Nigerian aggressor and so safeguard the Biafran Revolution."<sup>22</sup> Colonel Ojukwu overcame this rhetorical barrier of starvation first by reminding the Biafran people of their history and cultural values, and then by employing them to his advantage.

Colonel Ojukwu utilized his dissociation argument when corrupt government officials in Biafra created a rhetorical barrier. One of the main reasons why Biafra seceded stemmed from the fact that corrupt governments in Nigeria had allowed for the mistreatment of the Igbo people when they were still a part of the country. The Igbo people had long harbored a feeling of deprivation going back to the time of British colonization. According to Juliet Kaarbo and James Lee Ray, "The theory of relative deprivation is the idea that groups that perceive themselves as relatively worse off than others will mobilize and take action."<sup>23</sup> The Igbo people were convinced that northerners in Nigeria received more opportunities in the country in terms of education and jobs as a result of their corrupt government. Colonel Ojukwu played up this idea in the Ahiara Declaration:

Nigeria persecuted and slaughtered her minorities; Nigerian justice was a farce; her elections, her census, her politics - her everything - was corrupt. Qualification, merit and experience were discounted in public service. In one area of Nigeria, for instance, they preferred to turn a nurse who had worked for five years into a doctor rather than employ a qualified doctor from another part of Nigeria; barely literate clerks were made Permanent Secretaries; a university Vice-Chancellor was sacked because he belonged to the wrong tribe.<sup>24</sup>

This statement illustrates how many Biafrans felt towards the Nigerian government: a person from a tribal minority (that is, Igbo) who was the most qualified for a position invariably lost the opportunity to obtain the job as a result of nepotism and tribalism in Nigeria's corrupt government.

Nepotism and bribery, however, were also commonplace in the Biafran government. This obviously posed a problem, because if the Biafran government was also corrupt, then the Biafrans were facing the same issues that they faced in Nigeria and their attempt at secession had been futile. Colonel Ojukwu overcame this barrier, however, by disassociating Biafra from the Nigerian degree of corruption. He achieved this through his speech by listing the failures of the Nigerian

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<sup>22</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 15.

<sup>23</sup> Juliet Kaarbo and James Lee Ray, "Ethnic Conflict and International Terrorism," in *Global Politics*, 10<sup>th</sup> ed. (Belmont, Ca.: Wadsworth Publishing, 2010), 215-258 at 228.

<sup>24</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 12.

government and showing how Biafra can rise above these failures.<sup>25</sup> He conceded that there were a few corrupt government officials in Biafra who did not “shake off Nigerianism.” He accused those corrupt government officials of hypocrisy:

Let us admit to ourselves that when we left Nigeria, some of us did not shake off every particle of Nigerianism. We say that Nigerians are corrupt and take bribes, but here in our country we have among us some members of the Police and the Judiciary who are corrupt and who “eat” bribe. We accuse Nigerians of inordinate love of money, ostentatious living and irresponsibility, but here, even while we are engaged in a war of national survival, even while the very life of our nation hangs in the balance, we see some public servants who throw huge parties to entertain their friends; who kill cows to christen their babies.<sup>26</sup>

These corrupt officials were not “true” Biafrans because they were not upholding their country’s values. “It is clear that if our Revolution is to succeed, we must reclaim these wayward Biafrans. We must Biafranize them.”<sup>27</sup> Here he clearly used dissociation to demonstrate the corruption stemmed from Nigeria and not from Biafra, and then went on to describe the proper tasks of a Biafran leader. The ideal Biafran leader, according to Ojukwu, should always listen to the people and put their needs first. He/she has to know that he/she is a servant of the people placed in a position of power to fulfil the people’s wishes.<sup>28</sup> He described this leader as being “Biafranized”, in terms of embodying the values of the country’s revolution and rejecting the corrupt system of the Nigerian government. By distancing the Biafran movement from these corrupt officials Colonel Ojukwu was able to debar the voices of the naysayers against his government. By calling out the leaders who were corrupt, he showed how their acts were a reflection of their prior Nigerian influence and therefore could not be categorized as a shortcoming of the Biafran government. He successfully asserted that Biafra was making successful strides to rid itself of “Nigerianism.”

In the last five or six months, I have devised one additional way of learning at first had how the ordinary men and women of our country see the Revolution. I have established a practice of meeting every Wednesday with a different cross-section of our people to discuss the problems of the Revolution. These meetings have brought home to me the great desire for change among the generality of our people. I have heard a number of criticisms and complaints by people against certain things; ... All this indicates both that there is a change in progress and need for more change.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 12.

<sup>26</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 14.

<sup>27</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 14.

<sup>28</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 16-17.

<sup>29</sup> Ojukwu, *The Ahiara Declaration*, 14-15.

As a result of his skills as a rhetor, Colonel Ojukwu was able to show how the people of Biafra would be able to rise above corruption and achieve their goal of self-determination. He turned around the situation of corrupt Biafran leaders to showcase how excellent attributes of the Biafran people would lead them to keep out Nigeria's corruption. He embraced rhetorical advantages such as his oratorical skill and good standing to overcome the political weakness of corrupt government officials.

Colonel Ojukwu remained a hero in the eyes of many Nigerians even though he led a major secession attempt. In 1982, he was granted a presidential pardon and returned to Nigeria after 13 years of living in exile.<sup>30</sup> At the time of his return, he was welcomed by enormous crowds. My findings about the Colonel through the descriptive and contextual methods of analysis explain his people's respect and love for him. He was able to embrace his rhetorical advantages and harness them to his benefit with clarity. As a result of the mistreatment of the Igbo people in Nigeria, his move to create an independent state has been viewed as heroic as opposed to being viewed as treasonous. The power of effective rhetoric is evidenced in the Nigerian public's remembrance of Ojukwu because he was able to maintain his good reputation even though he fought for a failed secession. Through his arguments of dissociation and diversion of blame in the Ahiara Declaration, he was able to showcase a different perspective of Biafra's loss and encourage the people to continue fighting for their right to self-determination.

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<sup>30</sup> Robert D. McFadden, "Odumegwu Ojukwu, Breakaway Biafra Leader, Dies at 78," (November 26, 2011), *The New York Times*, <https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/27/world/africa/odumegwu-ujukwu-leader-of-breakaway-republic-of-biafra-dies-at-78.html> (accessed April 12, 2018).

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## **The Crusader's Property: The Crusaders' Rights and Protections while Fighting the Holy Wars**

Katarina Rexing

In the New Testament, Jesus preaches that his followers should abandon all worldly desires and possessions in order to serve God more effectively.<sup>1</sup> Although the life of poverty was the ideal for monastic communities and ascetics during the Middle Ages (albeit with mixed amounts of success), members of the Roman Catholic secular clergy and laity as a rule were far less concerned with this teaching. Therefore, when Pope Urban II called the nobles to take up the cross and reclaim Jerusalem from the Muslims at the Council of Clermont in 1095, he offered them a plenary indulgence: "Accordingly undertake this journey for the remission of your sins, with the assurance of the imperishable glory of the kingdom of heaven," the pontiff concluded, according to Robert the Monk.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, however, Urban knew that nobles might otherwise be reluctant to journey to the Holy Land to reclaim Jerusalem because of the need to protect their lands and material possessions at home while they were away, perhaps for several years, as well as to insure the safety of their wives and children.<sup>3</sup> Ideally, then, Urban II's sermon at the Council of Clermont should have provided sufficient motivation for the Catholic nobles to fight the Muslims over control of Jerusalem; nevertheless, Pope Urban II recognized that they would need a more practical guarantee than merely the promise of an afterlife in heaven.<sup>4</sup> This helps explain why, when the pope addressed those attending the Council of Clermont, he encouraged them not to allow their earthly possessions and other concerns to prevent them from embarking on their pious mission. Indeed, one eyewitness reported that Pope Urban II admonished those in attendance, "Let neither property nor the alluring charms of your wives entice you from going; nor let the trails that are to be borne so deter you that you remain here."<sup>5</sup>

In so doing, Pope Urban, arguably made a wise concession. As James A. Brundage has observed, "The crusader required some assurance that further legal claims might not be raised against him during his absence and that he might not lose property, rights, and possessions by default while engaged in his pious purpose."<sup>6</sup> Urban thus declared that all Crusaders would have

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Matthew 19:16-30 (cf. Mark 10:17-23 and Luke 18:18-30); also, Luke 9:1-6 and 10:1-17.

<sup>2</sup> See Robert the Monk's version of Urban II's sermon, "Urban II (1088-1099): Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095, Five versions of the Speech," *Internet Medieval History Sourcebook*, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/urban2-5vers.asp> (accessed April 2, 2019).

<sup>3</sup> Theodore Evergates, "The Crusade," in *Feudal Society in Medieval France: Documents from the County of Champagne* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1993), 96-122 at 96.

<sup>4</sup> Munro, "The Popes and the Crusades," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 348.

<sup>5</sup> Baldric of Dol, Sermon of Urban II at Clermont, in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 37-40 at 40.

<sup>6</sup> James A. Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader* (Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 159.

their families and possessions protected by the Church while they were away. This, of course, would have included tithes paid to local parishes. Payments of any outstanding debts would be paused, meanwhile, and no properties could be forfeited for debt during the months while the Crusaders were away on their holy journey. This safety net first devised by Urban II and repeatedly confirmed by his successors provided the necessary final push that many devout and non-devout alike needed to venture across the known world, from Europe to the holy city of Jerusalem. Despite these bold promises and the ideal that they represented, however, modern historians have wondered whether or not these protections were upheld by Church prelates. Overall, the surviving evidence suggests that the Roman Catholic Church leaders did endeavor to keep their promises of protection to their Christian soldiers; however, that same surviving evidence also makes it clear that such promises occasionally went unfulfilled. All of this is complicated by the fact that, despite the increasing availability of published texts from the heyday of Crusading history, many Crusader sources still lie unpublished in European archives. Therefore, the possibility remains that the Roman Catholic Church may very well have broken their promises to dozens or even hundreds of Crusaders. Still, whenever possible, it appears that Church leaders endeavored to protect the property and families of Crusaders while they were away in the East. The enforcement of protections extending to Crusaders' property at home, however, also required the support and cooperation of secular authorities, some of whom were rivals of the Crusaders with their own agendas.

Enforcing the privileges claimed by individual crusaders required the collaboration and interaction of multiple ecclesiastical and secular authorities during a period marked by crucial developments in governmental apparatuses, law, and church-state relations. Often presented as an exceptional and urgent project that ought to have enabled secular and ecclesiastical authorities to put aside traditional rivalries and long-simmering conflicts to cooperate in defending Christendom, the organization of the crusade tested the effectiveness of governance and the parameters and conditions of church-state relations, creating precedents and habit patterns that influenced quotidian interactions on crucial matters such as taxation, keeping the peace, and law enforcement .<sup>7</sup>

In his sermon at Clermont in 1095, Pope Urban II apparently promised would-be Crusaders, in rather general terms, that their lands, possessions, and families would be safe for the duration of their pilgrimage to the Holy Land, assuring them that the Church would place this property under its protection until the Crusaders returned. As an additional incentive, the Bishop of Rome declared that all outstanding debts owed by a Crusader would not only be put on hold while he was away fighting for God, but in addition, would draw no interest during the interim.

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<sup>7</sup> Jessalyn Bird, "Crusaders' Rights Revisited: The Use and Abuse of Crusader Privileges in Early Thirteenth-Century France," in *Law and the Illicit in Medieval Europe*, ed. Ruth Mazo Karras, Joel Kaye, and E. Ann Matter (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 133-148 at 133.

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One eyewitness, Guibert, abbot of Nogent, reports that Pope Urban II himself concluded his sermon at the Council of Clermont by pronouncing “a fearful anathema [on] all those who dared to molest the wives, children, and possessions of these who were going on this journey for God.”<sup>8</sup> In December 1099, Urban’s successor, Pope Paschal II, ordered that any confiscated or forfeited properties be restored to the crusaders “as was ordained, you may recall, by our predecessor, Urban of blessed memory, in a synodal decree.”<sup>9</sup> An actual legal case dated ca. 1106 or 1107 is recorded in the correspondence of the canonist Ivo of Chartres involving the possessions of a crusader named Hugh, who was Viscount of Chartres. It seems that another count had taken advantage of Hugh’s absence to build a castle upon a site that legally belonged to Hugh. Hugh’s representative lost the initial fight in the court of the countess of Chartres, but appealed to the pope, who appointed judges to investigate the affair. The question revolved around guarantees that protected the actual property of the crusader versus property for which the nobleman was obligated to provide defense as its lord. The judges were unable to come to an agreement in adjudicating this case, but as James Brundage has observed, it shows that crusaders were invoking their right to protection of their property very early.<sup>10</sup> As Edith Clementine Bramhall observed, however, “The crusaders’ privilege of exemption from secular jurisdiction in cases involving their property was not embodied in a decree until the time of the proclamation of the second crusade . . . .”<sup>11</sup>

These protections were expanded upon in 1145 in the bull *Quantum praedecessores*, issued by Pope Eugenius III.

We have likewise ordered that their wives and their children, their worldly goods, and their possessions, should be placed under the safeguard of the church, of the archbishops, the bishops, and the other prelates. We order, by our apostolic authority, that those who shall have taken the cross shall be exempt from all kinds of pursuit on account of their property, until their return, or until certain news be received of their death.<sup>12</sup>

With this proclamation, the Pope enjoined the Church to fulfill the promises that he had made to the Crusaders. Typically the pontiff addressed personal letters, known as *littere executorie*, to the local bishop in advance of a crusader’s departure for the East guaranteeing protection of his

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<sup>8</sup> See Guibert of Nogent’s version of Urban II’s sermon, “Urban II (1088-1099): Speech at Council of Clermont, 1095, Five versions of the Speech,” *Internet Medieval History Sourcebook*, <http://legacy.fordham.edu/Halsall/source/urban2-5vers.asp> (accessed April 2, 2019).

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 165.

<sup>10</sup> Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 165-166.

<sup>11</sup> Edith Clementine Bramhall, “The Origin of the Temporal Privileges of Crusaders,” *The American Journal of Theology* vol.5, no. 2 (1901): 279-292 at 283.

<sup>12</sup> Eugenius III, *Quantum praedecessores*, trans. in *The Crusades: A Reader*, ed. S. J. Allen and Emilie Amt, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 183-184 at 184.

property and possessions from attack during his absence. This brought them directly under papal protection.<sup>13</sup> Likewise, the enforcement of Eugenius III's bull, *Quantum praedecessores*, which stipulated protection of crusaders' property, was left to the bishops. But at the same time, crusaders often contracted with a "conservator," often a Church prelate trained in canon law, or a secular lawyer who would then serve as a guardian over the crusader's property and possessions during his absence.<sup>14</sup> This suggests that bishops, intentionally or not, were either too busy or for other reasons unwilling to invest much time and energy into enforcing the papal decrees.

Likewise, the protections and privileges extended to crusaders included moratoriums on the repayment of debts and the payment of interest. This was important not only because of the crusaders' existing debts, but also because of the necessity of incurring new ones in order to finance their time on crusade. Again, the bull *Quantum praedecessores* provided: "Those who are laden with debt to another and who shall, with pure heart, begin the holy journey, shall not pay interest for time past. If they, or others for them, are bound by their word or by an oath for the payment of interest, we absolve them by the apostolic authority."<sup>15</sup>

In 1215, these Crusader protections became enshrined in canon law with the proclamations of the Fourth Lateran Council, convened by Pope Innocent III in Rome at the Lateran Palace, adjacent to the Cathedral of the Most Holy Savior and of Saints John the Baptist and the Evangelists in the Lateran, which serves as the cathedral church at Rome. As church historian Henry Joseph Schroeder observed, "The Fourth Lateran Council was by far the most important ecclesiastical assembly of the Middle Ages and marks the zenith of ecclesiastical life and papal power."<sup>16</sup> It was at Lateran IV that the church prelates determined the canon outlining the specific promises and protection granted to the Crusaders.

It is only right that those who are associated with a good cause should enjoy a special privilege, we exempt the crusaders from collections, taxes, and other assessments. Their persons and possessions, after they have taken the cross, we take under the protection of Blessed Peter and our own, decreeing that they stand under the protection of the archbishops, bishops, and all the prelates of the Church. Besides, special protectors will be appointed, and, till their return or till their death shall have been certified, they shall remain unmolested, and if anyone shall presume the contrary, let him be restrained by ecclesiastical censure . . . . In the case of crusaders who are bound under oath to pay interest, we command that their credits be compelled to cancel the

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<sup>13</sup> Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 166-167.

<sup>14</sup> Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 169.

<sup>15</sup> Quoted in Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 180.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Joseph Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils: Text, Translation, and Commentary* (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1937), 136.



oath given to cease exacting interest. Should any creditor force the payment of interest, we command that he be similarly forced to make restitution.<sup>17</sup>

This mandate was significant because the Pope appointed all Church leaders as ‘special protectors’ of the Crusaders’ property. This demonstrates that there was a concerted effort on the Pope’s part to protect the Crusaders’ property while they fought a holy war. This shows that the Roman Catholic Church did not take lightly the promises made to their Christian soldiers and determined it was necessary to address it legally in an official and important council. At the same time, these repeated pronouncements and, now, enactment in canon law suggest that both the need for protection remained ongoing and also that the enforcement sometimes lagged or was non-existent.

By mandating that all Church leaders act as special protectors of the Crusaders’ property, the Pope also effectively protected himself. The Pope was not the only Church official who had taken on the responsibility of protecting the Crusaders’ property. Instead, all of the Church leaders would be responsible for the failures and successes of this policy. Though it is impossible to determine whether the Pope implemented this policy because of bureaucratic concerns or a desire to protect himself against charges of negligence, the policy was effective in giving Crusaders confidence that their property would be safe in their absence.

In addition, during the Fourth Lateran Council, Thomas F. Madden observed, “*Quia maior* and the subsequent decrees of the council expanded and regularized the rights and privileges of the crusader. Clergy who crusaded could continue to receive their benefices while absent for up to three years. Also, it was decreed that those who paid to outfit and supply a crusader could share in the crusading indulgence.”<sup>18</sup> Not only was the noble Christian warrior who journeyed to the Holy Land to wage war against the Muslim awarded crusader benefits, but also those members of the clergy who made the journey using the incomes of their benefices and even the wealthy who remained at home while helping to finance the service of others.

At least based upon the canon of Lateran IV which, it must be cautioned, postdated the first four crusades, it would seem that the Roman Catholic Church officials intended, at least on paper, to keep their promises to their Christian warriors. The fact that the Lateran Council addressed this critical issue provides evidence of the fact that the Church thought that it necessary to make official provisions for the care of the Crusaders’ property. Moreover, it would seem unlikely that the Church hierarchy would engage in so much discussion about the matter if they never intended to uphold their promises to the Crusader. At the same time, while there can be little doubt that the decree was issued to persuade the Crusaders to fight, it also served as a list of instructions for the Church prelates. As for the intent here, although there is no evidence to support the idea that the

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<sup>17</sup>Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*, Fourth Lateran Council, 236-296, Holy Land Decrees, available online at the *Internet History Sourcebooks*, ed. Paul Halsall, <https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/lateran4.asp> (accessed April 4, 2019).

<sup>18</sup> Thomas F. Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades*, Third Student Edition (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishes, 2014), 136.

Church did not intend to honor its commitments to the Crusaders, it is possible that certain individuals succeeded in hiding their own malicious intentions.

In terms of the Holy Fathers' intentions, these were no doubt mixed and more complex than we might otherwise assume. Thomas Asbridge thus concluded that the pope's motives in 1095 were proactive rather than reactive, and that they were designed to serve his own ends, rather than those of the Byzantine Emperor Alexius. In short, he has argued, they must be seen "as an attempt to consolidate papal empowerment and expand Rome's sphere of influence."<sup>19</sup> Urban II also faced a rival for the papacy in the form of anti-pope Clement III and thus needed to shore up his power base. Moreover, the papacy had long sought to extend firmer control over the kingdom of France, so this helps explain Urban's choice of location for his tour and sermon in the autumn of 1095. At the same time, it seems quite likely that Urban genuinely wished to aid the Byzantines, whom he recognized as fellow Christians. Urban saw a unique opportunity to purify the Latin West, in particular the nobility, who were plagued with guilt and obligations. Urban, after all, held care of souls for all of Western Christendom. His plan for a crusade offered these nobles a new path to spiritual and moral redemption: they would participate in a holy war to liberate Jerusalem from the hands of the Infidels. Thus Urban hoped that the nobles of Europe would cease fighting each other and instead turn their swords against the enemies of the Faith, aiding the churches of the East and recovering the Holy Land. In this way he would achieve at least a partial solution to the devastating problem of private warfare among Europe's noble families by redirecting their knightly endeavors against the Turks, in other words, by turning the knights' skills to a positive purpose. In the process, the pope hoped to achieve reunion with the East. Retaking Jerusalem and reuniting the two Churches would increase papacy's prestige so that it might assume the moral and spiritual leadership of both East and West. Urban's sermon appealed in particular to the younger sons of the nobility, who could not inherit family land due to the system of primogeniture and therefore had to seek other means of support unless they entered the religious life or married into a wealthy family. Nevertheless, as Jordan makes clear, many landed nobles and experienced fighters of these young knights' fathers' generation also went on the mission. Their possessions were protected against foreclosure and their families were exempt from certain taxes during their time away.

So much for Urban's complex motives. What about Innocent III at the time of Lateran IV? Pope Innocent III is remembered for truly desiring to improve the Church, "'Two things', he [Pope Innocent III] says, 'lie particularly near my heart: the regaining of the Holy Land and the reform of the whole Church.'"<sup>20</sup> This suggests that the intentions of the Holy Father were pure when creating the canon, but in reality there is simply no way to know if he truly cared or even meant all that he said based upon the surviving evidence. Lateran IV, however, was held during the so-called Albigensian Crusade (1209-1229) directed against the Cathar heretics in southern France. By this time, the privileges and protection of property were expected and thus needed to be upheld

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<sup>19</sup> Thomas Asbridge, *The First Crusade: A New History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 19.

<sup>20</sup> Schroeder, *Disciplinary Decrees of the General Councils*, 136.

if recruitment for the Crusade as a whole was to be successful, so, like Urban II, Innocent III clearly must have had additional motives at heart.<sup>21</sup>

Although this official practice of protecting the property of the crusaders was started by Pope Urban II in 1095 with the call for the First Crusade, it was continued into many of the succeeding crusades. In addition to the Albigensian Crusade noted above, examples of this policy can be found in the early thirteenth century when King John of England attempted to protect the rights of the crusaders<sup>22</sup> and also during the Fifth Crusade (1217-1221).<sup>23</sup> In addition, the Church extended the same protections afforded to the Crusaders' property to the soldiers who fought the Pope's 'temporal foes,' including the Sicilian kingdom, heretics, and monarchs who threatened the Pope's sovereignty.<sup>24</sup> This expansion in protection of property indicates that the policy was an effective incentive to fight for those soldiers who were afraid that their property would not be safe while they fought in distant lands. The Pope and the Church hierarchy, then, had good motivation to fulfill their promises to the Crusaders.

Various Crusades continued to be called well into the eighteenth century. However, by the time of the Fifth Crusade, the composition of the Pope's army had begun to change, with pious volunteer soldiers of Christ increasingly being replaced by professional mercenary troops.<sup>25</sup> Eventually, the Crusades turned from a mass movement of volunteers theoretically fighting for Christ to war efforts fought by professional armies and mercenaries endorsed by the papacy. "Yet the Fifth Crusade took place amidst great changes in medieval warfare. Improvements in State administration and increased centralization enabled kings to raise armies on a more regular basis, permanent professional armies whose oat[hs] and recruitment were organized through indentures."<sup>26</sup> When mercenaries or paid professional armies of the king were used in warfare, they were generally given a salary and not privileges. Therefore, once professional fighters became a normal occurrence in medieval warfare, the Roman Catholic Church ended providing privileges as there were no longer volunteer crusaders to provide them for. Instead, they had to pay the soldiers, which was very expensive. In fact, "Frederick II was complaining about the financial

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<sup>21</sup> "The Albigensian Crusade, 1209-1229," in *Crusade and Christendom: Annotated Documents in Translation from Innocent III to the Fall of Acre*, ed. Jessalynn Bird, Edward Peters, and James M. Powell (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 66-82, esp. 66.

<sup>22</sup> Bird, "Crusaders' Rights Revisited," 133.

<sup>23</sup> Bird, "Crusaders' Rights Revisited," 134.

<sup>24</sup> Munro, "The Popes and the Crusades," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 352.

<sup>25</sup> Michael C. Horowitz, "Long Time Going: Religion and the Duration of Crusading," *International Security*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2009): 162-193 at 179-180.

<sup>26</sup> Philip M. Taylor, "The Crusades," *Munitions of the Mind: A History of Propaganda* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2003), 73-80 at 80.

burden of outfitting over 1,500 soldiers . . . while also providing ships and men to sail them.”<sup>27</sup> This vast expense is perhaps one of the many reasons why crusading became an increasingly less frequent phenomenon.

During the Crusades' heyday, secular leaders for the most part appear to have upheld their duty to the Roman Catholic Church and their people to fulfill the assurances made to the Crusaders. “In this period royal governments in England and France collaborated with local ecclesiastics in defining and enforcing privileges often vaguely outlined in crusade bulls. . . . Provided that individuals did not attempt to abuse crusader privileges for political, legal or financial advantage, their rights were generally upheld, although in certain instances personal or political interests dictated otherwise.”<sup>28</sup> In 1188, French King Philip Augustus promulgated a statute just prior to his departure on the Third Crusade that protected the nobles joining him on the crusade from foreclosure due to non-payment of not only interest on their debts, but also of the principal. Those who joined him would not have to make a payment until the feast of All Saints' Day (November 1<sup>st</sup>) two years after Philip's departure on crusade.<sup>29</sup> While this process was far from perfect, it is clear to see that the secular leaders generally respected the Church's promises towards soldiers and that most Crusaders were able to claim the privileges that they earned.

While most secular rulers upheld the Catholic Church's promises to the Crusaders, however, some princes refused when they believed that fulfilling the promise would be detrimental to their reigns. Ironically, when King Philip Augustus of France went to war later with King John of England, Philip reneged on the promises that he made to the Crusaders:

However, the privileges hypothetically granted to crusaders in *Quia maior* (including freedom from taxation, protection of person and possessions, and the right to interest-free loans) threatened to erode feudal and royal prerogatives. Although secular authorities were urged to help endorse these privileges and often did so, Philip Augustus clearly feared that Innocent III's mandate to give the cross and its attendant privileges to all who desired them would mean that the masses would attempt to escape the military and financial obligations due to himself, his vassals, and his Jews during a crucial period in his struggle against John of England.<sup>30</sup>

Therefore, King Philip Augustus did not fulfill his duty to his people who were rightfully owed crusader's privileges. Due to this fear that the Church's promises to French crusaders would undermine his authority, he chose not to personally support Pope Innocent III's crusades.

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<sup>27</sup> Joanna Drell, “Norman Italy and the Crusades: Thoughts on the ‘Homefront,’” in *Crusading and Pilgrimage in the Norman World*, ed. Kathryn Hurlock and Paul Oldfield (Suffolk, UK: Boydell and Brewer, 2015), 51-64 at 58.

<sup>28</sup> Bird, “Crusaders' Rights Revisited,” 133.

<sup>29</sup> Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 181.

<sup>30</sup> Bird, “Crusaders' Rights Revisited,” 135.

Nevertheless, he knew that he would not be able to stop many of his people from going on a crusade, so he chose to have local secular authorities guard the rights of the Crusaders.<sup>31</sup> Therefore, one might assert, the Roman Catholic Church was not responsible for the fate of the property of crusaders from France during this crusade, since their King decided not to allow the property of his people to be protected by the Church. Nonetheless, one could counter with the assertion that making a promise that the Church (knowingly or unknowingly) could not keep did not absolve the Church prelates of their responsibility to fulfill their promises. Despite the Church's promises, however, such protections quite obviously required support from more groups than just the Church authorities. The process of protecting the rights of the crusaders was so complicated that "cooperation between various authorities and legal systems: royal, prelatial, papal, and noble" was required.<sup>32</sup> While the Church did seem to make the Crusaders believe that these protections would be provided to them no matter what, these promises did, in fact, entail a lot more cooperation. The Church should have been more accurate in its explanation of the privileges to the lay masses, but this does not mean the Roman Catholic Church deserves all the blame when secular rulers denied promises to Crusaders.

In addition, there were occasional cases where neither the Catholic Church prelates nor the secular rulers of the region were at fault over the confusion of a Crusader's privileges. Individuals occasionally took advantage of the crusade privileges in order to con the Church, the government, or innocent lay people. In one such instance, a man pretended to be Baldwin of Ardres, who had actually died on a crusade. Lambert of Ardres, the son of Baldwin, recounted the story:

He [Baldwin of Ardres] was thrown into the sea and never again appeared before his men. Nevertheless, there were some people who asserted that they had seen him [the imposter] . . . in the thirtieth year after my father had taken up the voyage of the holy pilgrimage . . . . He [the imposter] came to Douai under the guise of religious holiness and sheeplike simplicity, so that perhaps at first he might delude and deceive incautious and simple men and afterward others more easily. . . . He also added, but as though he wished to hide who he was, that he had once been Baldwin, the heir and lord of the citadel of Ardres, but he asserted with a false and lying tongue that he had preferred to be in exile wearing base clothes and to persist in pious works so that he might earn Christ than to return to his Ardres and take up again his hereditary house and holding. . . . Then whoever or whatever this Baldwin was, he spoke with the burgers of the aforementioned place and also with the princes of the adjacent province . . . . And so that he might be respected and acquire the favor of the people for himself, . . . [he] gave away many things to the poor—Oh, cunning man and hypocrite!! But he kept many things for himself and his accomplices. . . . At length, . . . he named himself as Baldwin of Ardres . . . . When I heard that my father was alive . . . I did not believe it with any certainty, but nevertheless, I took with me some of my older friends who had once known my father well

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<sup>31</sup> Bird, "Crusaders' Rights Revisited," 134.

<sup>32</sup> Bird, "Crusaders' Rights Revisited," 148.

and went to him . . . . And when I had spoken extensively with him, . . . I could perceive nothing in him, nor could the companions who came with me, whereby we could be more certain of his identity. Nevertheless, I was thought badly of and rebuked by many people, because he and I greeted each other and because he gave me many presents, so that I would declare I was his son. But in the end, after we left him, . . . we heard and knew for certain that he had left Planques and carried off a great treasure and that he truly was a tramp.<sup>33</sup>

For such reported cases as this one, neither the Church nor the government could be held responsible for the trickery and thievery that occurred. Cases like this are such that can cause untrue assumptions about Church or secular authorities.

In the end, the privileges of protection of property, possessions, and the repayment of debts backfired in certain circles. Florentine bankers became reluctant to loan crusaders or would-be crusaders needed funds unless they first renounced their privileged status. As James Brundage observed, "Practically speaking, the risks involved were so great and the difficulties of securing repayment were so common that moneylenders of all kinds were inevitably chary of making loans to crusaders at all. . . . After the mid-thirteenth century, a clause renouncing the crusade privilege became a common feature of contracts and agreements of many kinds."<sup>34</sup>

In sum, the Roman Catholic Church did intend to fulfill their promise of protection and did in most cases. Nevertheless, there are cases in which extenuating circumstances caused the Crusader to lose some or all of his worldly possessions. In some of these cases, the fault originated from the secular authority in the respective region, with both the secular authority and the Roman Catholic Church, or neither the church nor the secular authority. Despite these unfortunate cases, the available facts show that the Roman Catholic Church did intend to fulfill these promises and was not simply trying to take advantage of the faithful. Even with the available evidence, this is a challenging statement due to the limited amount of evidence on this topic. In fact, some prevalent scholars have complained that there is a lack of scholarly sources on this subject, "Yet apart from Henry C. Lea's admirable work on the indulgence, very little has been written about them [the privileges]."<sup>35</sup> Studying about the crusades and the privileges that were offered to crusaders is a difficult task because many of the available documents are biased in favor of the Church. Due to lay illiteracy, it is impossible to know, from the perspective of the Crusader, if the Church fulfilled its promises to the majority of ordinary Crusaders. Despite the limitation of sources, the sources that are available support the perception that the Church intended to fulfill and, in the majority of cases, fulfilled, its promises to the Crusaders.

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<sup>33</sup> Lambert of Ardes, *The History of the Counts of Guines and Lords of Ardes*, trans. Leah Shopkow (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2001), 178-180.

<sup>34</sup> Brundage, *Medieval Canon Law and the Crusader*, 182.

<sup>35</sup> Bramhall, "The Origin of the Temporal Privileges of Crusaders," 280-281.

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## **Outstanding Senior History *Theses* (Abridged)**



**A Baroque Drama:**  
**Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's *Crisis* in Seventeenth-Century New Spain**  
Elizabeth Donaway

Co-Winner, 2019 Philip R. Taylor Award for the  
Outstanding Senior Thesis at Hanover College

Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz was a Hieronymite nun who lived in the latter half of the seventeenth-century in colonial New Spain. She is one of the most well-known nuns from the colonial era because she was a prolific Baroque poet and playwright. Renowned in her own lifetime, Sor Juana published two volumes of her works in Spain during her lifetime. It would seem then that Sor Juana's life should have been filled with accolades and prestige, and, to an extent, it was so. Sor Juana's parlor in the Convent of St. Jerome in Mexico City teemed with aristocratic visitors, including the viceroy and vicereine. However, the attention that Sor Juana received for her intelligence and erudition also had negative consequences.

To some of Sor Juana's male ecclesiastical superiors, the number of visitors that Sor Juana entertained in her parlor indicated that Sor Juana was more interested in worldly affairs than in her sacred duty as a nun. In the seventeenth century, the amount of time that nuns spent receiving guests became a source of distress amongst prelates. To remove this source of distraction, the prelates "engaged in a reforming drive in the last quarter of the seventeenth century."<sup>1</sup> Their agenda included "reducing visitors to relatives only, prohibiting conversations with men, and even reporting visits of small boys inside the cloister."<sup>2</sup> Despite the desire of some men to control life in the convent, the nuns operated the convent according to their own communal interests. In the case of the Convent of St. Jerome, it was in the interest of the sisters to permit Sor Juana to host aristocrats and secular scholars in her parlor, for such visits bestowed prestige on the whole convent. The disregard that some nuns demonstrated for the reforms that male Church leaders wanted to enforce made these male authorities more determined to reform the convents of New Spain. Since regulation by males of an all-female convent was not perfect, the male leaders would need to find a different, more subtle way to reform the convents. An opportunity to do just that occurred in 1691 when Sor Juana was hosting some guests, whose identities are unknown, in her parlor.

In that year, Sor Juana was asked about her opinion on Father Antonio Vieira's Maundy Thursday sermon from 1650. Although Sor Juana answered the question in person, the guest asked her to write her opinion. Although there is no way to know what the guest's intention was when he asked for the letter, it raises the question whether asking Sor Juana to write down her opinion was a premeditated step in planning her downfall. Whatever the motive may have been, Sor Juana must not have realized how precarious her situation was. Within three months, she sent her written opinion to the guest who had requested it. This missive was meant to be a private correspondence,

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<sup>1</sup> Asunción Lavrin, *Brides of Christ: Conventual Life in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 146.

<sup>2</sup> Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 146.

but when the content of the letter became public knowledge, Sor Juana and her way of life were under attack.

In her letter, which would come to be known by the name *The Letter Worthy of Athena*, Sor Juana refuted Father Vieira's opinion about God's greatest gift. This letter was published in 1691 without her consent by the Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz. Another letter, ostensibly written by another nun, Sister Philotea de la Cruz, accompanied the *Letter Worthy of Athena*. Sister Philotea offered a criticism of Sor Juana's original letter.<sup>3</sup> Yet, the *Letter from Sister Philotea*, was not written by a nun at all but by the Bishop of Puebla himself.<sup>4</sup> The bishop's public criticism of the famous poet precipitated the writing of a series of letters in defense of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz's theological commentary, most notably Sor Juana's *Answer to Sister Philotea* and the *Letter from Sister Seraphina*, the author of which is unknown. However, the *Letter Worthy of Athena* did not provoke only praise. A letter from "the Soldier," now lost, and a letter from a Sister Margarida are two examples of criticism that Sor Juana confronted.

There are numerous reasons as to why Sor Juana's *Letter Worthy of Athena* was so sensationalized. Many forces converged to transform an "act of arrogance" into a religious crisis. By 1691, Sor Juana's great protectors, the Viceroy of Mexico, Tomás de la Cerda and the Vicereine, the Countess of Paredes, had returned to Spain. The Archbishop of Mexico Francisco Aguiar y Seijas, who felt a strong antipathy for Sor Juana's secular works, believed that Sor Juana had overstepped her boundaries and required strict discipline if she was to become a virtuous nun. Sor Juana had also made another powerful enemy, her ex-confessor the Jesuit priest, Antonio de Núñez. In 1680 Sor Juana decided to relieve Father Núñez of his role as her confessor because there were reports that Núñez denigrated Sor Juana publicly, rather than discuss his concerns with her privately. These factors, in addition to the fact that Sor Juana's spiritual sisters did not explicitly condemn the attacks against Sor Juana, caused the onslaught against Sor Juana to be unendurable.

With Sor Juana in a vulnerable position, the male ecclesiastical leaders, who wanted nuns to change their ill behavior, decided that the first nun in need of reformation was Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. The attack against Sor Juana, then, was initiated under pseudonyms because the male ecclesiastical leaders were attempting to find a way to infiltrate the convent in order to implement their discipline without overt interference, which would be resisted by the nunnery. Ironically, this attempt by the male prelates of New Spain to reform the Convent of St. Jerome would stand as an example in the final decades of the eighteenth century for the nuns who would find themselves besieged with the demands to institute *vida común* (living in common).

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<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth Teresa Howe, *Autobiographical Writing by Early Modern Hispanic Women* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 177.

<sup>4</sup> The pseudonym Philotea was used in St. Francis de Sale's *Introduction to the Devout Life*. This book, published in 1609, was an instructional guide on how to live piously for women who chose to marry rather than live a chaste life. Each letter was addressed to Philotea (lover of God) so that the guide would be used widely.

### Father Antonio Vieira's Sermon in the Royal Chapel (1650)

In 1650, Father Antonio Vieira (1608-1697), a well-known Jesuit priest, Portuguese statesman, and confessor to Queen Christina of Sweden, preached a sermon about God's greatest gift to humanity in the Royal Chapel in Portugal on Maundy Thursday. In his sermon, he refuted three Church Fathers, St. Augustine, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. John Chrysostom, who each understood God's greatest gift to humankind to be something different. Vieira then offered his own opinion about God's greatest gift.

Father Vieira began his sermon by asserting that "Christ's love for man, from the first instant, of his Incarnation until the last instant of his life, was always the same."<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding the fact that God's love for humanity never wavered, Vieira argued that there was still an important question to answer: "Of all God's great gifts at the end of his life, which was the greatest?"<sup>6</sup>

In answer to this question, Vieira refuted St. Augustine's opinion that "God's greatest gift for humanity was to die for us."<sup>7</sup> Though Augustine's opinion may have seemed compelling to many Christians who understood that Jesus sacrificed his life to wash away the sins of the world, Vieira believed that they were confused as to what Jesus's real sacrifice had been. Vieira postulated, "Our Lord Christ loved humanity more than He loved His life"; therefore, it could not be said that to die was God's greatest gift, for the greatest gift must entail the greatest sacrifice.<sup>8</sup> Vieira argued that "to die was to leave life, to absent himself was to leave humanity."<sup>9</sup> To Christ, losing His life was not so painful as abandoning mankind. Nevertheless, Vieira argued that Christ's absenting Himself from mankind was not God's greatest gift because the "Eucharist was the remedy for absence."<sup>10</sup>

Second, Vieira rejected Saint Thomas Aquinas's opinion that God's greatest gift was to stay with us even when He absented Himself from us by enclosing Himself in the Sacrament."<sup>11</sup> However, Vieira points out that this could not be God's greatest gift because the "mystery of the Eucharist should be remembrance and a recapitulation of Passion of Christ."<sup>12</sup> If Christ, as he exists in the Eucharist, has no use of his senses, then the Sacrament of the Eucharist only mirrors Christ's Passion when, "with his eyes covered. . . He was deprived of the sight of man, whom He

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<sup>5</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, in *Obras Completas de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Comedias, Sainetes y Prosa*, ed. Alberto G. Salceda (Toluca, México: Instituto Mexiquense de Cultura, 1957), 673-694 at 673, trans. author.

<sup>6</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 673, trans. author.

<sup>7</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 674, trans. author.

<sup>8</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 675, trans. author.

<sup>9</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 675, trans. author.

<sup>10</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 677, trans. author.

<sup>11</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 678, trans. author.

<sup>12</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 678, trans. author.

loved so much.”<sup>13</sup> Because Christ is “impassive” in the Eucharist, He does not suffer so much as a human who is deprived of his senses. Therefore, if this gift can be outdone by imperfect humans, then His greatest gift must lie elsewhere.

Third, Vieira discredited Saint John Chrysostom’s opinion that “God’s greatest gift was to wash the disciples’ feet.”<sup>14</sup> If washing the disciples’ feet had been God’s greatest expression of love, then the action would have to be narrowed down to Christ’s washing the feet of Judas. The act of washing Judas’s feet demonstrated Christ’s humility, but more importantly, it demonstrated that Christ “gave His gifts equally to those who were unequal in their worthiness by treating the unworthy as if they were worthy.”<sup>15</sup> Judas clearly was in no way worthy of Christ’s attention, yet since, Jesus loved all men equally even those who would treat Him poorly, and so Judas was not excluded from Christ’s display of love.

Finally, Vieira revealed his own views as to what constitutes God’s greatest gift: Christ’s mandate that “the love with which He loved us be transformed into love for each other.”<sup>16</sup> Christ did not want the love that He showed us to be returned to Him, but rather to be shown to one another. In short, we could repay God’s love for us by loving our fellow man. To support his argument, Vieira reminded his congregation that, “as a farewell God gave us a new mandate, and that was to love one another.”<sup>17</sup> Christ’s last commandment constituted Christ’s final and most important gift. To please God, humans must love each other unconditionally.

Even though Vieira refuted Saint Augustine, Saint Thomas Aquinas, and Saint John Chrysostom’s beliefs about God’s greatest expression of His love, Vieira’s own assessment of God’s greatest gift was not so different from those of the three saints. All four men acknowledged that Christ loved His children infinitely; therefore, they each chose a sacrifice that compelled Jesus to abandon His life or His people as God’s greatest gift. The similarity of each choice should not be surprising when one considers that they were all men who had been steeped in ecclesiastical tradition. It is hardly surprising, then, that this sermon, although it explicitly refutes the opinions of venerated Church Fathers, was itself not a source of controversy because Father Vieira, as a part of the Catholic status quo, was allowed to have a voice. He could freely express his views, within certain bounds, without fearing backlash. Sor Juana, on the other hand, held no such privileged position.

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<sup>13</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 680, trans. author.

<sup>14</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 684, trans. author.

<sup>15</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 681, trans. author.

<sup>16</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 681, trans. author.

<sup>17</sup> Padre Antonio Vieira, *Sermón del Padre Vieira en la Capilla Real*, 681, trans. author.

***Crisis de un Sermón (La Carta Atenagórica or The Letter Worthy of Athena [1691])***

In 1691, Sor Juana wrote a critique of Father Vieira's sermon which she entitled, *Crisis de un Sermón*, at the request of an unnamed superior. Most likely she wrote this work without intending that it would be published. Nonetheless, the Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz y Sahagún, did publish the document, renaming it *The Letter Worthy of Athena* in the process. Although the reasons for renaming the document are unknown, one can speculate that he did so because he respected Sor Juana's intelligence. Athena was the goddess of wisdom and war, and thus, a formidable opponent.

On the face of it, Sor Juana's argument should not have attracted so much criticism, since, in this document, Sor Juana defended the Church Fathers' interpretations of God's greatest gifts. Nevertheless, the very act of interpreting Biblical passages and speaking about it publicly (or publishing it) was believed by some male Church leaders to be prohibited to a woman by 1 Corinthians 14:34, which stated that "women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak but must be in submission." 1 Timothy 2:11-12 reiterated this prohibition on female speech: "Let a woman learn in silence with all submission. . . And I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, but to be in silence." Although Paul's dictum did not really forbid women from speaking in Church, some men manipulated the quote to keep women in a subservient position. In addition, the fact that the quote from the Book of Timothy was likely a forgery did not stop men from using it when it served their purposes. The leaders of the New Spanish Church used these passages to support their stance that Sor Juana had no right to write about theological questions. They maintained that some men were permitted to debate theology, but women were meant to accept uncritically the conclusions that men drew. Sor Juana demonstrated that she did not accept this explanation in her *Answer to Sister Philotea* when she wrote,

Women are not allowed to lecture publicly in the universities or to preach from the pulpits, but studying, writing, and teaching privately is not only permitted but most beneficial and useful. Clearly, of course, this does not mean that all women should do so, but only those whom God may have seen fit to endow with special virtue and prudence, and who are very mature and erudite and possess the necessary talents and requirements for such a sacred occupation. And so just is this distinction that not only women, who are held to be incompetent, but also men, who simply because they are men think themselves wise, are to be prohibited from the interpretation of the Sacred Word, save when they are most learned, virtuous, of amenable intellect and inclined to do good.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Respuesta de la poetisa a la muy ilustre Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, in *The Answer/ La Respuesta*, ed. and trans. Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2009), 51-105 at 81.

Sor Juana did not believe that speaking publicly was barred to women only when so few men were knowledgeable enough to speak intelligently. Instead, she interpreted the passage to mean that anyone who was not knowledgeable was not permitted to teach in public. This left a space for exceptional women, such as Sor Juana, to interpret Scripture.

It is clear, then, that without reading even one line of Sor Juana's treatise that her decision to write the *Letter* would be disapproved of by the Church authorities. However, the arguments that appear in the *Letter* only made the disapproval for Sor Juana increase. After Sor Juana conveyed the expected pleasantries and formulaic expressions of modesty, Sor Juana stated that "her purpose was to defend herself [her opinion about God's greatest gift] with the reasons that the Saintly Fathers had given."<sup>19</sup>

First, Sor Juana defended Saint Augustine's assertion that God's greatest gift was to die for humanity by arguing that "the most esteemed things to man are his life and his honor and Christ gave both in his ignominious death."<sup>20</sup> Unlike Vieira's argument that Christ loved humanity more than his own life, Sor Juana emphasized Christ's own humanity when she points out that all *men* value their lives and honor more than any other worldly thing. Just as "man does not have more than he can give than his life," so too was Christ's greatest gift to sacrifice His life for all mankind.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, Christ's death, not His absence, amounted to the greatest sacrifice. Sor Juana stated simply that "absence is only absence; death is death and absence."<sup>22</sup> In His death, Christ lost the things He loved most: His life, His honor, and His presence amongst His children.

Second, Sor Juana defended Saint Thomas's opinion that God's greatest expression of love was to remain with us in the Eucharist. In this section, Sor Juana accuses Vieira of having made a fallacious genus-to-species argument in defending his view that the greater gift was Christ remaining in the Eucharist without the use of His senses.<sup>23</sup> Sor Juana believed that the saint's assertion included the assertion that Vieira made. Aquinas had not characterized Christ in the Eucharist; therefore, it is plausible that the Saint may have thought that Christ was bereft of the use of His senses in the Eucharist. However, Sor Juana, not content to concede any point to Vieira, pointed out that, in the event that Christ had the use of His senses while in the Eucharist, this would amount to the greater gift.<sup>24</sup> If Christ was cognizant of what was happening while in the Eucharist form, then He could be conscious of the presence of His children, but also He would be aware of the ill treatment that He received from some people. The continued use of His senses in the Eucharist, therefore, was God's greater sacrifice.

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<sup>19</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 413, trans. author.

<sup>20</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 414, trans. author.

<sup>21</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 413, trans. author.

<sup>22</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 420, trans. author.

<sup>23</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 421, trans. author.

<sup>24</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 421, trans. author.



Third, Sor Juana defends the view of Saint John Chrysostom, who believed that God's greatest gift was to wash the feet of His disciples. Once again, Sor Juana argues that Vieira's refutation of Chrysostom's argument was faulty: "Again we have, not very different than the past species-to-genus argument: this, of cause to effect."<sup>25</sup> That is, Saint John Chrysostom had merely pointed to Christ's washing the feet of His disciples as His greatest gift; he had not explicitly addressed what the cause of Christ's actions was. However, Sor Juana defended Chrysostom by arguing that, when he chose Christ's washing of the disciples' feet as the greatest gift, Chrysostom recognized that "not only one cause but many causes manifest themselves in such an extraordinary effect of humiliating that Immense Majesty at the feet of men."<sup>26</sup> While Vieira narrowly assigned only one cause to Jesus's decision to wash His disciples' feet, Chrysostom was wise enough to recognize that Christ never has simply one cause: He is infinite and so are His works.

With her defense of the Church Fathers finished, Sor Juana confronted Vieira's chosen gift from God: "Christ does not want His love to be reciprocated to Himself but to one's fellow man."<sup>27</sup> Sor Juana, finding fault with Vieira's lack of Biblical examples to support his thesis, asserts the opposite of Christ. Sor Juana asked, "From whence do you infer that Christ does not want us to reciprocate His love to Him but that He desires us to love one another?"<sup>28</sup> The God that Sor Juana studied in the Bible was jealous. To illustrate this point, Sor Juana recites the story of Abraham and Isaac. God demanded that Abraham sacrifice his most beloved son, Isaac, in order to prove "which love mattered more to Abraham, his love of God or his love for his son."<sup>29</sup> This demand indicated that Christ was not content with second place in the hearts of his chosen people. "God is so jealous that He not only wants to be loved and preferred to all other things, but He wants that love to be evident and the whole world to know it."<sup>30</sup> God never renounced His right to be loved by His people. This decision to not give up mankind's love, Sor Juana argues, actually makes His gift greater.

Men want their love to be reciprocated because it is a benefit to themselves. Christ wants the same reciprocation for someone else's benefit, for the benefit of the men who give Him love. To me it seems that the author came close to this point, but went wrong and said the opposite; because, seeing Christ disinterested, he was persuaded that He did not want His love to be reciprocated. And the problem is that the author does not distinguish between reciprocation and the satisfaction of reciprocation. And this final concept is that which Christ renounced, not the reciprocation. And like that, the author's [Vieira's] proposition

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<sup>25</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 421, trans. author.

<sup>26</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 421, trans. author.

<sup>27</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 424, trans. author.

<sup>28</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 424, trans. author.

<sup>29</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 424, trans. author.

<sup>30</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 424, trans. author.

is that Christ did not want reciprocation for Himself but for men. My proposition is that Christ wanted the reciprocation for Himself, but He wanted the satisfaction that results from that reciprocation for man.<sup>31</sup>

Christ still commanded that mankind love Him above all else, but now the good that resulted from one's love of God should be gifted to other human beings rather than to God Himself. To prove her point, Sor Juana focuses on the Old Testament God rather than confront the fact that the God of the New Testament did command his followers to love one another.

Although it would seem that Sor Juana had already defended three too many interpretations of God's greatest gift, she concluded her *Letter* by giving her own opinion on the matter. "I [Sor Juana] said that God's greatest gift, in my opinion, was the negative benefits: that is, the benefits that God does not give us because He knows that we have to repay them."<sup>32</sup> The gifts that God withholds from His children are the greatest gifts that He can give to humanity.

God is all powerful and can create benefits for mankind, without difficulty for Him, and His desire is to do so. Therefore, God, when He gives gifts to man, goes with the natural current of His goodness, of His love, and of His power without costing Him anything. Therefore, when God does not provide benefits to mankind, because they are bound to become harmful to them, He suppresses the torrents of His immense liberality, He detains the sea of His infinite love, and He holds back the course of His absolute power.<sup>33</sup>

Sor Juana proposes that God shows His immense love to humanity by not giving them all the gifts that they would like, for God knows that these gifts, if granted, would be damaging to the recipient. From this, the reader can infer that Sor Juana believed that free will was one of God's greatest gifts to humankind. By restricting the use of His 'absolute power,' God allows humankind to make the best use of the gifts that He has given them. To ask for and to receive limitless gifts would create 'ungrateful' human beings.<sup>34</sup> As Sor Juana pointed out, God's love for His children is limitless; therefore, to love them cannot be His greatest gift. The greatest gift must be the most profound expression of love: to allow a person to live without interference. God, in His infinite power, could make all humans perfect. This surely would please Him, but it would transform His children into slaves. Without free will, no person could demonstrate his or her love for God.

God gave humankind free will so that they would have the ability to show their love for Him through their actions. By following God's commandments (including the mandate to love one another as God loves His children) and following the example of Christ, humans can demonstrate their love to Christ. If God made these actions easy by granting infinite gifts, then they would hold

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<sup>31</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 421, trans. author.

<sup>32</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 435, trans. author.

<sup>33</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 436, trans. author.

<sup>34</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta Atenagórica*, 437, trans. author.

no meaning If God must curb His natural propensity to give His children many gifts in order to demonstrate His love, then His children should reciprocate by fighting against their naturally sinful natures and show their love towards Him.

### ***Sister Philotea's Letter (1691)***

As previously mentioned, *Sister Philotea's Letter* was published with the *Letter Worthy of Athena* in 1691. Using the pseudonym Philotea, the Bishop of Puebla, Manuel Fernández de Santa Cruz y Sahagún, entered into the fray, masquerading as a fellow nun.

That he [the Bishop of Puebla] does so [writes the letter] disguised as a woman is problematic. On the one hand, he 'places himself on a horizontal plane with Juana, desires to win her back to religion, to persuade her to abandon what is unsuitable to religion.' On the other, he exercises male authority over her (she knows his/her true identity) but at a remove (other readers may assume that Sor Filotea is actually a woman). Thus [here quoting Alfred Arteaga, "Chiasmus of the Woman Writer," 95] 'while the Bishop's letter vehemently asserts its femininity . . . Sor Filotea writes like a man. Her words . . . articulate those of the Bishop, for 'she' espouses the very precepts of the Spanish-Catholic patriarchy that codify the hierarchy (literally, the sacred rule) which locates the bishop and man above nun and woman.'<sup>35</sup>

Choosing the name Philotea was not simply due to the meaning of the name, lover of God, but it also carried with it an allusion to St. Francis de Sales's work, *Introduction to the Devout Life*. This book, published in France in 1609, was an instruction manual on how to live a virtuous life for women who had chosen marriage rather than chastity.

However, using his own name would have provided greater spiritual authority as a man of the Church. One must wonder why the Bishop believed that the use of a pseudonym would be more effective in confronting Sor Juana. It seems likely that he wrote the *Letter* as Sister Philotea because the male ecclesiastical leaders wanted the nuns to reform their behavior. The Archbishop of Mexico, Francisco Aguiar y Seijas, "wished to reform New Spanish convents according to his vision, forcing nuns to follow strict discipline."<sup>36</sup> However, male ecclesiastical authorities were well aware that enforcement of new protocols and stricter discipline was imperfect if carried out by males. Therefore, they would have to depend upon nuns to institute and enforce the changes that the prelates sought to impose. The Bishop of Puebla sought to do this by textually infiltrating the convent as a nun. Notwithstanding the fact that Sister Philotea did not exist, the Bishop of

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<sup>35</sup> Howe, *Autobiographical Writing by Early Modern Hispanic Women*, quoting Alfred Arteaga, "Chiasmus of the Woman Writer: Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz," in *Literature and Quest*, ed. Christine Arkininstall (Atlanta: Rodopi, 1993), 89-104 at 95.

<sup>36</sup> Grady Wray, "Sacred Allusions: Theology in Sor Juana's Works," in *Approaches to Teaching the Works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, ed. Emilie L. Bergmann and Stacey Schlau (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 2007), 65-76 at 67.

Puebla may have thought that Philotea's criticism would change Sor Juana's behavior and, to some degree, the lenient atmosphere of the convent.

However, it should be noted that the Bishop himself seems to forget that the role that he has chosen for himself. Unused to playing the woman, the Bishop sometimes loses sight of his thinly veiled identity: at one point s/he writes that Sor Juana "is an honor to *her* sex"<sup>37</sup> as though s/he has forgotten that Sister Philotea would also belong to this sex if she is a woman. Later, remembering the implications of her pseudonym, the author refers to womankind as "our sex."<sup>38</sup> More telling than Philotea's use of two different possessive pronouns is her lack of feminine modesty at the beginning of the letter. Although it could be argued that a nun who is addressing another nun may dispense with many pleasantries, Sister Philotea published her letter; therefore, the recipient was not merely Sor Juana, but also a powerful, male audience. With these considerations in mind, a real nun would not have begun the letter as Sister Philotea did: "I have seen the letter in which you refute Christ's gifts of love as defined by the Reverend Father Antonio de Vieira . . . ."<sup>39</sup> The straightforwardness of the prose indicates that the author was a person who wrote with authority. Assured of his/her position, the author did not waste time with pleasantries, but instead immediately addressed the issue at hand.

After praising Vieira's sermon as having been written with "such sagacity" by a "singular talent," the Bishop of Puebla concedes that Sor Juana's letter is indeed worthy of Athena: "But to my judgement, no one who reads your treatise can deny that you trimmed your quill even more deftly than either Bishop Menses or Father Vieira, and they could take great pride in being refuted by a woman who is an honor to her sex."<sup>40</sup> This adulation of Sor Juana was not made in jest. Sister Philotea seems genuinely to believe that Sor Juana's *Letter Worthy of Athena* was a valuable work. The Bishop goes on to write, "I, at least, have admired the lively wit of your conceits, the intelligence of your proofs, and the vigorous clarity with which you take on the subject. . . . This is one of the many benefits you owe to God, for clarity cannot be acquired by labor or effort; it is a gift infused in the soul."<sup>41</sup> Sor Juana's gift, being a talented and lucid writer, is from God. It has been with her since she was created by God: "If as you say in your letter [the *Letter Worthy of Athena*], those who have received the most from God are under the greatest obligation to respond in kind, then I fear you may find yourself overtaken by your debt, for few of His creatures owe His Majesty greater natural talents for which gratitude is demanded so that if until now you have

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<sup>37</sup> Sor Filotea de la Cruz, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, in *The Answer/ La Respuesta*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., trans. Electa Arenal and Amanda Powell (New York: Feminist Press at the City University of New York, 2009), 222-231 at 222.

<sup>38</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 224.

<sup>39</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 223.

<sup>40</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 222.

<sup>41</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 223.

employed your talents well, in the future you may do so even better.”<sup>42</sup> With all of her gifts from God, Sor Juana should repay her debt to God by using her talents in a way that would please Him.

Sister Philotea suggested that Sor Juana “imitate . . . [Saint Teresa and Gregory Nazianzus] not only in meter but in your choice of subject matter also.”<sup>43</sup> It would please God if Sor Juana would follow the example of other deeply religious writers and restrict her poetry to the subject of spirituality. “The Apostle Paul does not reprove learning as long as it does not take women from their position of obedience. It is known to all that your studies and learning have kept you in the state of a servant and helped to polish your excellence in the state of obedience. For where other nuns sacrifice their wills for the vow of obedience, you hold your mind captive, and this burnt offering is the most arduous and pleasing that can be made at the altar of religious life.”<sup>44</sup> The critical point of *Sister Philotea’s Letter* arrives when Philotea tells Sor Juana that “it is now high time for your pastimes to be perfected and your books to be improved.”<sup>45</sup> Sister Philotea makes the point that Sor Juana’s religious profession requires that she give up the outside world. Philosophers, mathematicians, playwrights, and scientists belong to that world. In the convent, she could have the comfort of studying the lives of the Messiah and the saints; however, those were the only acceptable subjects.

Philotea believed that Sor Juana had already spent enough time studying the secular disciplines, and, though these disciplines may be helpful in creating a scholarly foundation, the purpose of reading any of them was to better understand the Bible. When Sor Juana wrote secular love poetry or visited with laypeople in her parlor, she was valuing the secular more highly than the spiritual. Sister Philotea argued further that, beginning on this path, it was a slippery slope for Sor Juana to think about the lowliest of matters: “It is a pity when a person of great understanding stoops to lowly, swindling matters on earth, without longing to decipher what happens in Heaven; but once it rests down on the ground, may it still not sink further, considering what happens in Hell.”<sup>46</sup> Philotea’s message to Sor Juana was direct: change your behavior and look to the Holy Book for your inspiration.

If this message was not threatening and humiliating enough, Sister Philotea further took Sor Juana to task by refuting Sor Juana’s opinion about God’s greatest gift. Sister Philotea advised Sor Juana, if you contemplated the

. . . idea of divine perfection more. . .you would at once find your soul enlightened . . .and in this way the Lord, who has so abundantly showered you with positive gifts in the natural world, would not be obliged to grant you only negative ones in the hereafter. For no matter

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<sup>42</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 224.

<sup>43</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 224.

<sup>44</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 224.

<sup>45</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 226.

<sup>46</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 228.

how often your intelligence may call these benefits the favors of love, I myself hold them to be punishments.<sup>47</sup>

Philotea denies Sor Juana's idea that God's withholding of benefits might be considered a gift, for a lack of a gift is to be regarded as a punishment. If Sor Juana did not recognize the gifts that God has given her here on earth and praise Him for it, then Philotea feared that Sor Juana would go to hell.

### **The Soldier**

Since the 1990s some new documents relating to Sor Juana's life and the controversy of 1691 have been discovered. However, many documents that are known to have existed from "*La fineza mayor* (The greatest favor of love), a sermon that Francisco Javier Palavicino Villarasa preached on January 26, 1691 at Sor Juana's convent and published in Mexico the same year," would elucidate the breadth and nature of the controversy if found.<sup>48</sup> Villarasa's sermon "reveals that the most important and implacable enemy of Sor Juana was 'el Soldado' (the Soldier). We still do not know the context of this text or the author's identity. Sor Juana called him 'Su Paternidad' [His Paternity]; that is, she knew him and knew that the crudeness of the document did not suit its author's high position in the clergy."<sup>49</sup> The little information that is known of his letter provides another example of the virulence that Sor Juana must have withstood.

From what can be gleaned about the letter from the scant sources available, the letter must have been offensive and demeaning to Sor Juana. It seems as though the letter from the Soldier was different than the *Letter from Sister Philotea* because the Soldier did not show respect for Sor Juana's intellect or erudition. The personal nature of the Soldier's letter led to a very different response than that which Sister Philotea received from Sor Juana. The response to the Soldier was a biting and sarcastic letter written in defense of Sor Juana by another pseudonymous author, Sister Serafina.

### ***The Letter from Serafina de Cristo***

Serafina's *Letter* was lost for almost three-hundred years before it was discovered in a bookstore in Madrid. The document had been found originally in 1960 by a Jesuit historian, Manuel Pérez Alonso.<sup>50</sup> He thought the document was the first version of Sor Juana's *Answer to Sister Philotea*,

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<sup>47</sup> Sor Filotea, *Carta de Sor Filotea de la Cruz*, 228.

<sup>48</sup> Marie-Cecile Benassy-Berling, "The Afterlife of a Polemic: Conflicts and Discoveries Regarding Sor Juana's Letters," in *The Routledge Research Companion to the Works of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz*, ed. Emilie L. Bergmann and Stacey Schlau (London: Routledge, 2017), 122-132 at 123.

<sup>49</sup> Benassy-Berling, "The Afterlife of a Polemic," 123.

<sup>50</sup> Antonio Alatorre and Martha Lilia Tenorio, *Serafina y Sor Juana* (México, D.F.: Colegio de México, 1998), 62.

but it was not until 1982 that the document was available to the public.<sup>51</sup> Elías Trabulse, an historian from the Colegio de México, began to study the document. In 1996, he published the document and presented his findings at the International Colloquium on Sor Juana in Toluca, Mexico.

The *Letter from Serafina de Cristo* is a defense of Sor Juana's theology. The power and sarcastic tone of its language have brought the letter much attention. However, another fact about the letter has drawn even more attention: the true identity of Sister Serafina. In the title of the letter, Sister Seraphina de Cristo claims to be from the Hieronymite convent, the same convent in which Sor Juana lived. There is, however, no Serafina in the *Book of Religious Professions* from the Hieronymite convent.<sup>52</sup> This fact, along with the author's stalwart defense of Sor Juana and the similarity of the Sor Juana's signature with that of Sister Seraphina led Elías Trabulse to claim that the letter was written by Sor Juana herself.<sup>53</sup> This claim has been refuted by some other major researchers in the field. Antonio Alatorre, Trabulse's colleague at the Colegio de México, disputes the claim because Sister Seraphina's signature, writing style, and style of argumentation do not match those of Sor Juana. Instead, Alatorre and Tenorio speculate that the author could be Juan Ignacio de Castorena y Ursúa, who wrote praise for Sor Juana in the preface to her *Fame and Posthumous Works*.<sup>54</sup>

Regardless of the true identity of Sister Seraphina, the important point to note is that the author wanted to hide behind the façade of a nun. This indicates that the author believed it was a woman's place to defend her fellow spiritual sister. If the sanctity and privacy of the all-female world of the convent was to be invaded by men masquerading as women, then it was up to women to oust the male presence. While the male ecclesiastical authorities demanded ever greater access and control of conventual life, Sister Seraphina advised these men to focus instead on their own affairs. When addressing the aforementioned soldier, Sor Seraphina suggested that "the good soldier should stay in peace, or go to war. . . and see God's judgement against his own."<sup>55</sup> That is, the soldier should either maintain silence himself or go to war with the erudite Sor Juana and be judged accordingly.

Sister Seraphina maintained that Sor Juana's *Letter Worthy of Athena*, far from being an affront to the Church or the work of a woman overstepping her bounds, was a defense of the foundational teachings of the Church. Sor Juana's *Letter* defended the teachings of the three great

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<sup>51</sup> Alatorre and Tenorio, *Serafina y Sor Juana*, 62.

<sup>52</sup> Serafina de Cristo, *Carta de Serafina de Cristo, 1691*, ed. Elías Trabulse (Toluca: Gobierno del Estado de México, 1996), 25.

<sup>53</sup> Serafina de Cristo/Trabulse, *Carta de Serafina de Cristo, 1691*, 25.

<sup>54</sup> Alatorre and Tenorio, *Serafina y Sor Juana*, 140.

<sup>55</sup> Serafina de Cristo, *Carta de Serafina de Cristo, 1691*, facsímile ed. and transcription by Elías Trabulse, translation by Alfonso Montielongo, in *Sor Juana & Vieira, Trescientos Años Después*, ed. K. Josu Bijuesca and Pablo A. J. Brescia (Santa Barbara: Center for Portuguese Studies, Department of Spanish and Portuguese, 1998), 183-193 at 186.

Church Fathers on God's greatest gift from Vieira's arguments. Therefore, if the charge of stepping out of bounds could be applied aptly to anyone it would be to Father Vieira not to the nun who saw it as her solemn duty to defend her religion.

Sister Seraphina was opposed to the idea that gender should determine an individual's ability to achieve. Though Sor Juana as a woman had no university education, this did not mean that her opinion should be worth any less than that of the soldier. Since Sor Juana's erudition outstripped that of many highly educated men, it was hardly prudent to judge the worth of her views based simply upon the fact that she was a woman and, in accord with Church doctrine, should not teach or interpret theology.

Sor Seraphina continued her attack on the Soldier by firmly rebutting the idea that women should not be permitted to study, interpret, and teach theology. She believed that "what was a legitimate birth of wit's fecundity in writing could never tarnish but greatly honor the Fathers in print."<sup>56</sup> Because Sor Juana's high level of knowledge was never disputed, Seraphina emphasized the fact that, as long as the author was knowledgeable about the subject, then the work could never be an affront to the Church Fathers. Nevertheless, Sister Seraphina hints at gender's role in producing notable works. By stressing the fact that writing was like the act of childbirth, she placed writing firmly in the woman's domain. This was a reversal of the prevailing thoughts about women's intellectual capabilities. Seraphina then applied the birth metaphor to Vieira's own sermon from 1650 by stating that every part of his sermon was mistaken. "The PARTUM [birth] was mistaken because it was not a legitimate birth, or child of such a great Father. But the main error was in the PATRUM [father]. It was a great mistake to correct the Fathers. . .Whoever's child that sermon may be, if its baptism certificate is missing, it is neither a nobleman nor is it a legitimate child of such a father, or an illegitimate, or an adopted, or even a spiritual one."<sup>57</sup> Vieira's sermon then was not the product of boundless knowledge like the *Letter Worthy of Athena*; instead, it was an abomination to the foundational teachings of the Church.

At the end of the letter, Sister Seraphina reminded the soldier that he had been put to shame by Sor Juana. Seraphina further emasculated the soldier by pointing out that his intellectual weakness has made him an object of pity. However, this pity was constrained by the fact that "he seems to have *athenagorized* himself."<sup>58</sup> Here, Sister Seraphina plays with the title that had been given to Sor Juana's *Letter Worthy of Athena*. The Soldier has been destroyed by Athena herself because he attempted to take on a power that was too great for him. One poor soldier was no match for the goddess of wisdom and war, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz.

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<sup>56</sup> Serafina de Cristo/Trabulse and Montelongo, *Carta de Serafina de Cristo*, 188.

<sup>57</sup> Serafina de Cristo/Trabulse and Montelongo, *Carta de Serafina de Cristo*, 190.

<sup>58</sup> Serafina de Cristo/Trabulse and Montelongo, *Carta de Serafina de Cristo*, 190.



***Vieira Refuted by the Mother Sister Juana Inés de la Cruz and Defended by the  
Mother Sister Margarida Ignacia (1731)***

After the publication of her *Fame and Posthumous Works* in 1700, “the last reprinting of the three volumes of her work appeared in 1725, and it was not until 1940 that the first modern edition was published.”<sup>59</sup> Regardless of the fact that Sor Juana’s works were fading out of print and popularity in the early eighteenth century, the last refutation of Sor Juana’s *Letter Worthy of Athena* ostensibly was written by Sister Margarida Ignacia and published in 1731, forty years after the crisis originally erupted and more than eighty years since Vieira’s original Maundy Thursday sermon had been delivered. In doing so, Sister Margarida appears to have the last word on the controversy.

Her treatise, known as *Vieira Refuted*, was a two-hundred-page defense of Vieira written in Portuguese. It has been recently discovered that the author was not Sor Margarida, but Gonçalves Pinheiro, “author of other theological and religious texts”<sup>60</sup> It is somewhat surprising that, as the Baroque style faded out of fashion, Gonçalves Pinheiro used the same method that his predecessors had used to infiltrate the convent. However, his piece represents a transition of power techniques used by the male ecclesiastical authorities from the indirect shaming of the seventeenth century to direct orders that would be issued by the last quarter of the eighteenth century in the fight over “living in common.”

Like his predecessors, Gonçalves Pinheiro forgot that he had chosen to use a female voice almost as soon as he begins his defense. As Stephanie Kirk has observed, “In ‘her’ prefatory material she alludes to female incapacity for theological debate.”<sup>61</sup> The fact that a nun who was entering a theological debate wrote that it was inappropriate for a nun to write about theology seems unreasonable. Notwithstanding the obvious incongruities, Gonçalves Pinheiro recognized that using a spiritual sister’s name to refute Sor Juana would be more effective than using his male name, for the women who lived in the convent formed a tight-knit community. Censure amongst sisters, then, could be much more searing than the disapproval of a male superior.

Ostensibly, Gonçalves Pinheiro made use of his sister’s name because he wanted readers to believe that a fellow nun had written it; however, he makes a limited effort at playing his role. “Once Gonçalves Pinheiro embarks on this central theological part of the *Apologia*, he will make only the most fleeting of implicit references to his previously employed female pseudonym. He all but abandons the writing persona of Sor Margarida in order to focus on the important scholarly matter at hand . . . .”<sup>62</sup> Though the name, Sor Margarida, was a good entrance into the convent, it

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<sup>59</sup> Octavio Paz, *Sor Juana, or, The Traps of Faith* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1988), 63.

<sup>60</sup> Stephanie Kirk, “Sor Margarida Ignacia’s *Apologia a favor do Reverendo P. Antonio Vieyra*: An Eighteenth-Century Reply to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz’s *Atenagorica*,” *Colonial Latin America Review* 21, no. 2 (2012): 267-291 at 269.

<sup>61</sup> Kirk, “Sor Margarida Ignacia’s *Apologia a favor do Reverendo P. Antonio Vieyra*,” 270.

<sup>62</sup> Kirk, “Sor Margarida Ignacia’s *Apologia a favor do Reverendo P. Antonio Vieyra*,” 274.

was a liability when it comes to debating the issue at hand. The issue at hand proved to be as great a problem for the author as his chosen pseudonym:

Gonçalves Pinheiro's technique in dealing with Vieira's treatment of these patristic texts reveals his cognizance of the damage Sor Juana inflicted on the Portuguese Jesuit with her [Sor Juana's] critique of his hubris, and he tries hard to mitigate Vieira's challenges. His tactic is to represent Vieira as a respectful reader of each Church Father whose exegesis never contravened their opinions, but always simply expanded upon a theory they first proposed or presented their argument from a different but always complementary and complimentary angle.<sup>63</sup>

Gonçalves Pinheiro, like Sor Juana, realized that it was unwise to dispute the Church Fathers; therefore, he tried to balance the tasks of defending Vieira and explaining what Vieira actually meant so as not to offend other Church officials. Instead of addressing the problems that Vieira's sermon presented, Gonçalves Pinheiro spent the bulk of his document refuting Sor Juana's own argument in the *Letter Worthy of Athena*.

Gonçalves Pinheiro's defense of Vieira was so fervent, at least in part, because both he and Vieira were Jesuits. Stephanie Kirk asserts that Gonçalves Pinheiro felt this defense to be necessary because the Jesuits were under attack. "Although the Society's power was not yet directly under attack in Portugal, threats to their dominance in the Iberian-Atlantic world's religious and intellectual ambit were beginning to make themselves heard and Gonçalves Pinheiro's eighteenth-century defense of a seventeenth-century text can be understood in part as a show of solidarity with the Society of Jesus."<sup>64</sup> Unfortunately, if this was the author's purpose, then his defense of the Jesuit Vieira did not do the trick. The Jesuits had been expelled from Portugal, Spain, France, and Austria by the end of the eighteenth century.

### **Conclusion**

If the expulsion of the Society of Jesus from Spain in 1767 represented a failure on the part of male ecclesiastical leaders to assert their own will, the fight in New Spain over living in common (*vida común*) in the convents in New Spain was one more such failing. In the late 1760s, male authorities, tired of the way that nuns had been disregarding the Rule, decided to impose living in common on all nuns so that they could return to the way that early church members lived.

The prelates remained adamant in stating that convents allowing nuns to maintain a personal style in daily life lacked austerity and were contravening the vows of profession and the spirit of true Christianity. Ecclesiastic critics began to point to the large number of servants, the constant appeals to the families of nuns for money

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<sup>63</sup> Kirk, "Sor Margarida Ignacia's *Apologia a favor do Reverendo P. Antonio Vieyra*," 274.

<sup>64</sup> Kirk, "Sor Margarida Ignacia's *Apologia a favor do Reverendo P. Antonio Vieyra*," 270.

to be spent on the needs of convents, the loss of convent funds, and the quarrels among members of the communities and their superiors leading to appeals to civic authorities.<sup>65</sup>

The decision to impose stricter observance of the Rule of St Augustine against the wishes of the nuns was a stark change when compared to the methods used during Sor Juana's crisis. However, in the eighty years that had elapsed between Sor Juana's crisis and the fight over living in common, it was not just the male ecclesiastical authorities who had changed their tactics. While Sor Juana had only one (presumably) female defender who came to her aid in the crisis before she renounced her studies, the nuns who were to be affected by living in common banded together to prevent any change. On May 19, 1758, Archbishop Francisco Antonio Lorenzana wrote a letter to the abbess of the convent of La Concepción. He asked La Concepción's nuns to deliberate on the reform [living in common] in secret and advise him on the results of the communal vote."<sup>66</sup> Yet despite of the Archbishop's call to secrecy, the nuns did not keep silent. "They sought solidarity and advice from their sisters in other convents . . . For the first time, we hear the voice of the nuns and we learn that the conventual grapevine was activated for mutual support as they felt themselves under attack" from Church canon and lawyers.<sup>67</sup> All of the nuns feared that their way of life in the convents would be destroyed if they did not unite with one another.

However, the Archbishop demonstrated that the nuns' approval of the reform was unnecessary for the reform to be instituted. On December 6, 1769, he mandated that all convents would live in common. Practically, this meant that convents could no longer sell private cells to newly-professed nuns. In fact, some private cells would be demolished to make room for the construction of communal areas.

Following in the footsteps of their foremother, Sor Juana, the nuns living in nondiscalced convents wrote against what they perceived as ecclesiastic overreach. "*Vida común* was first fought on legal grounds by Jesús María of Mexico City, a convent with resources to pay for its defense and determination to preserve a lifestyle that had little affinity with the proposed *vida común*. This convent had been under royal patronage since its foundation and it was appropriate that it appealed directly to the king."<sup>68</sup> The king agreed that the convent's case should be heard in the Fourth Provincial Council in 1771. Though the result of this case was, ultimately, the institution of the living in common reforms, the sisters won a victory, albeit small. As a sign of recognition of the inconvenience of instituting *vida común*, the Church leadership agreed that the reforms would be instituted piecemeal. This bought the nuns time.

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<sup>65</sup> Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 278.

<sup>66</sup> Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 283.

<sup>67</sup> Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 283.

<sup>68</sup> Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 283.

The sisters maintained that “nothing in the Rules and Constitutions of their orders forbade their style of life, which had been examined and approved or corrected by previous prelates throughout time.”<sup>69</sup> In the same way, Sor Juana had defended herself from her confessor’s attacks on her writing, “But who has forbidden women from private and individual study? Does learning threaten rather than promote salvation?”<sup>70</sup> Both Sor Juana and her predecessors claimed that these questions had been answered in the long historical trajectory of the Church itself. If Saint Catherine and Saint Ambrose had found salvation even as they were educated, then so, too, could Sor Juana, regardless of the opinion of Father Núñez. In the same way, the nuns recognized that if their lifestyle had been approved since its foundation, then any attempt to force a change that they did not want was arbitrary.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, the nuns had won the struggle through the continued resistance against implementing the prescribed changes. Though the changes were required by Pastoral Letter and by direction from the king (1774), the implementation never occurred. The rolls of the convents still showed large numbers of slaves, servants, and girls who were supposed to have been expelled. The convents that had been designed with the daughters of the upper class in mind did not change their lifestyle or ‘wasteful’ spending.

The resistance to living in common in the eighteenth century mirrored Sor Juana’s own crisis in the seventeenth century. But whereas the struggle against living in common ultimately ended in success for the sisters, it would be difficult to describe Sor Juana’s end in the same manner. Ultimately, Sor Juana had to give in to the calls to end her studies and writing because she did not have a network of other nuns to shield her from the onslaught. Sor Juana’s struggle for the right to self-determination for herself and for women more generally may have provided the nuns of the eighteenth century with a muse to emulate when planning how they would resist the male encroachment on their sacred female space. And that would be a successful conclusion to Sor Juana’s own crisis.

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<sup>69</sup> Lavrin, *Brides of Christ*, 283.

<sup>70</sup> Juana Inés de la Cruz, *Carta de Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz a Su Confesor: Autodefensa Espiritual*, in *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz: Selected Works*, ed. and trans. Edith Grossman (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2106), 144-152 at 148.

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## **Battle of Hue: The Turning Point of America's Involvement in Vietnam**

Reid Mosson

The American war in Vietnam led to repercussions that are still being felt today in both countries. It may be the practice of deficit spending that was heavily favored during the Johnson Administration, or possibly that buildings are still damaged and explosives are still being found in the soil in Vietnam. It does not matter whether it is financially or structurally, or even for health reasons, the repercussions of the war are still felt. The consequences of horrific battles, like the Siege of Khe Sanh or the constant bombing endured by the North Vietnamese, left permanent physical and mental scars in almost all soldiers and citizens. One event that trumps both however is the Tet Offensive, a series of simultaneous attacks on more than a hundred cities, towns, and military bases in South Vietnam conducted by the North Vietnamese Army and the National Liberation Front, or Viet Cong. The offensive would go down in history as the most memorable and horrific event during the war. However, within the Tet Offensive there was one battle that was the most stressful and tactically challenging in all of the Vietnam War, the Battle of Hue. As the Tet Offensive would change the course of the war, the horrific and stressful Battle of Hue would be the turning point in America's involvement in Vietnam.

To understand the Battle of Hue and its impact, it is necessary to understand how we reached the pivotal year of 1968. Vietnam has had a long history of being colonized, dating back into the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but in the 20<sup>th</sup> century the colonization began in 1940, when the Japanese conquered Vietnam during a war with China. Once Japan lost World War II, they cleared out of Vietnam, allowing the French to take over in 1946, which began the first Indochina War.<sup>1</sup> The war would last until 1954 when the French were defeated at the Battle of Dien Bien Phu and the Geneva Accords were signed. The accords called for a divided Vietnam, split at the 17<sup>th</sup> parallel, until an election was held within the next two years to reunify the country. The election never took place and Vietnam was divided into two separate states, one being communist, the North, and the South, a non-communist state. The United States began sending military advisors to South Vietnam to fortify the South Vietnamese military for the war lurking in the future. The number of advisors would exponentially grow once President Kennedy took office. In 1963, less than a month before President Kennedy was assassinated, South Vietnam would lose their president, Ngo Dinh Diem, to murder during a military coup. Unlike like their foe to the north, which had a stable leader in Ho Chi Minh, from that day forth the government of South Vietnam would essentially be a rolodex of military dictators until the end of the war. The first United States Marines would land in Vietnam in March of 1965, at the city of Da Nang. The Marines would see various types of fighting leading up to the 1968 offensive, including counter-insurgency and guerrilla warfare, but nothing would prepare them for the Tet Offensive, or the Battle of Hue.

The Tet Offensive consisted of concurrent attacks on over a hundred cities in South Vietnam, including the capital of Saigon. The North Vietnamese had two goals in mind when

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<sup>1</sup> The Second Indochina War is known as the Vietnam War in America.

launching the offensive. First, they hoped to create an uprising in South Vietnam against the unstable Saigon regime. Secondly, they hoped for the United States to scale back the number of troops they had present in Vietnam. Considering that the communists, mainly the Viet Cong, had chosen to use guerilla tactics for most of the war up until the offensive, why did the North Vietnamese chose to attack a city like Hue? “Considering [Hue’s] cultural and intellectual importance to the Vietnamese people, it was only a matter of time before the communists tried to make it their prize.”<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, what reward would the Viet Cong and NVA<sup>3</sup> receive for the capturing of Hue? To answer this thought-provoking question, it is essential to understand what made the city of Hue so important.

Foremost, Hue was vital for the South Vietnamese cause. Both a main rail-line and highway passed through Hue, which brought supplies from Da Nang to the demilitarized zone. To put this in the viewpoint of the Viet Cong, Hue was a key check point within the United States’ “Ho Chi Minh Trail”; it was essential for the United States to maintain hold of Hue in order to get supplies to the DMZ. Furthermore, Hue was a strategic point for Navy supply boats moving from the Perfume River to the ocean. If the NVA were to take control of Hue, they would cut off the line of US Navy boats from the river to the sea, which would hamper the strength of the naval blockade placed on the North. By understanding the military importance of Hue, the North Vietnamese gained a major advantage during the offensive, as the capturing of Hue would have multiple negative military effects on the Southern cause.

Other than being a critical military checkpoint for the Southern cause, the city of Hue was, and still is to this day, a cultural hub. With Hue being the old imperial capital of Vietnam, it was sacred to Vietnam as a whole, and had a rich political history as well. In fact, the Imperial City of Hue was built in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century and was occupied by the emperor of Vietnam, including the last emperor of Vietnam Bao Dai, until 1945, when the Japanese left Vietnam at the end of World War II. As a result of Hue’s rich Vietnamese history, the North wanted Hue to be their own, as Hue was a trophy to be had, such a trophy, that throughout Vietnams bloody history, it had only been attacked twice before the Tet Offensive. No argument can be made against the cultural importance of Hue. “It was the cultural center of Vietnam, a place of learning, a remembrance of the traditions and values of the past.”<sup>4</sup> The North Vietnamese knew the shock that would be dealt to the Southern cause if Hue was attacked or captured. As a result, Hanoi was not afraid to act, even if it meant attacking the most important cultural and historical city in Vietnam.

Going into the battle, it is also important to understand the layout of Hue. As previously noted, Hue was the old imperial capital of Vietnam, meaning that it had an older section of the city, along with a newer section. The Perfume River divides the city into two parts, an old and a new part. The Imperial City part of Hue is to the northeast side of the river, which is connected to

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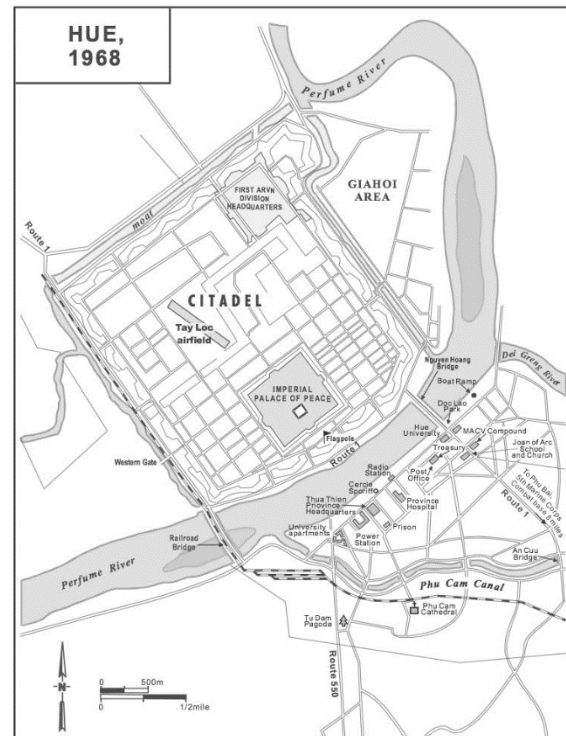
<sup>2</sup> Richard D. Camp, *Death in the Imperial City: U.S. Marines in the Battle for Hue, 31 January to 2 March 1968* (Quantico, VA: History Division, Marine Corps University, 2018), 2.

<sup>3</sup> North Vietnam Army, it is also sometimes referred to as PAVN, or the People’s Army of Vietnam.

<sup>4</sup> Keith William Nolan, *Battle for Hue: Tet, 1968* (Novato, CA: Presidio Press, 1996), 4.

the new through two bridges. One is on the north side of the city and the other is on the southern tip of the city, this one containing the rail bridge. Furthermore, the southern edge of the city is confined by a crucial railroad. The imperial city includes the Citadel, a three-square mile complex of palaces, parks, and residences, as well as a massive fortress to protect it all.<sup>5</sup> In the northernmost corner of the Imperial City was the First Army of the Republic of Vietnam Division Headquarters. The newer part of Hue contained Hue University, a prison, and a MACV<sup>6</sup> compound, which was conveniently located at the end of the northern bridge. The city's layout is crucial to understanding the battle, as the layout would bring challenges to both South Vietnamese and NVA forces.

The Battle of Hue began on January 31, 1968, but the Tet Offensive was in motion well before then. The leaders of North Vietnam knew that the war had reached a point of stalemate and that they needed to make a drastic change to the way they were conducting the war. As a result of the stalemate, as well as American firepower taking a major toll on the Viet Cong, Hanoi chose to shift strategy from taking a protective, war of attrition stance to an aggressive, offensive stance. This new offensive strategy was the Tet offensive. Through Tet, the North Vietnamese planned to attack American and South Vietnamese military and government installations and hoped the attacks would cause an uprising among the South Vietnamese population against the fragile South Vietnamese Government.<sup>7</sup> They hoped to achieve their goal by simultaneously attacking over a hundred cities and towns in South Vietnam, their main target being the capital of Saigon. Hanoi knew that the capital would be heavily fortified with a lot of troops and weaponry, far greater than their offensive capabilities. Because of this, another objective of the Tet Offensive was to draw enemy forces away from Saigon and to do so by occupying Hue for 5-7 days.<sup>8</sup> For the North to achieve this goal they would need to commit a massive amount of troops to Hue.



*The 1968 Tet Offensive in Vietnam and the Seizure of Hue, Raymond Lau, page 4.*

<sup>5</sup> James H. Willbanks, *The Tet Offensive: A concise History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 43.

<sup>6</sup> United States Military Assistance Command, Vietnam.

<sup>7</sup> "The Tet Offensive," The Vietnam Center and Archive, Texas Tech University, <https://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/exhibits/Tet68/> (accessed November/December 2018).

<sup>8</sup> Marc Jason Gilbert and William P. Head, *The Tet Offensive* (Westport (Conn.): Praeger, 1996), 100-101; Gilbert and Head, *The Tet Offensive*, 100-101.

It was not only the shifting of strategy that made the Tet Offensive such a surprise, but the fact that Hanoi chose to go on the offensive during the holiday of Tet. In Vietnam, the holiday of Tet signifies the lunar new year and is a weeklong celebration that is the most important holiday in Vietnam, as it is essentially July 4<sup>th</sup>, Christmas, and New Year all in one holiday. In years past, Tet had been an informal cease fire during the war; that changed in the year 1968. The NVA and Viet Cong would use the Tet celebrations taking place in Hue as cover for infiltrating Hue and the surrounding countryside. The North Vietnamese had other advantages other than the holiday celebrations, as they could easily disguise themselves as South Vietnamese citizens who lived in Hue. The combatants would travel from various points in the north to the south via the Ho Chi Minh trail, a system of ever changing paths that the North Vietnamese used to move supplies and manpower to the South, through the countries of Laos and Cambodia. This was a key component to a successful offensive for Hanoi, as it allowed the communists to move massive amounts of men and supplies throughout South Vietnam to execute a simultaneous offensive.

The people of Hue were going about their usual Tet business while the communists prepped for their massive offensive. The military scene in Hue leading up to that January 31<sup>st</sup> day was as routine as ever, with a few exceptions. “The 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division was redistributing its forces in the corridor between Phu Bai and Da Nang.”<sup>9</sup> Phu Bai was a United State Marine base roughly 10 miles south of the newer part of Hue, while Da Nang sat 50 miles south of Phu Bai. “The principal command at the Phu Bai Combat Base was Task Force X-RAY, more formally called the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division Forward Headquarters.”<sup>10</sup> This redistribution played into Hanoi’s hands, as the NVA and Viet Cong were prepping for their offensive. However, the shuffling of Marines did not end there, because the 3<sup>rd</sup> Marine Division was in the middle of moving north to Quang Tri Province, the area just south of the DMZ. The newly shuffled Marines barely had any time to learn the difficult landscape of Vietnam, giving the North Vietnamese yet another advantage going into the offensive.

While some of the United State Marines were new to the area, the Viet Cong and NVA were utilizing all resources available to prep for the attack. “Communist agents used patient and discreet observations, as well as human informants, to obtain up-to-date tactical intelligence about the military facilities in [and around] Hue.”<sup>11</sup> By doing so, Hanoi knew the situation of troop shuffling around Hue. In fact, the commander of Task Force X-RAY, Brigadier General Foster LaHue, had only assumed responsibility of the area on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January, while the North Vietnamese had spent much of late December 1967 and early January 1968 mastering the areas in and around Hue. Viet Cong preparations for the offensive were extensive to say the least. “Guerrillas made regular night excursions through the villages around Hue to make the local dogs

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<sup>9</sup> Camp, *Death*, 2.

<sup>10</sup> Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 9.

<sup>11</sup> Camp, *Death*, 7.

bark, thus desensitizing the inhabitants to their canine alarms.”<sup>12</sup> This tactic only gives us a glimpse of what the North Vietnamese were willing to endure for their cause. At the end of their preparations, the communists concluded that Hue could be quickly captured due to both the lack of soldiers protecting the city, but also because those soldiers were poor combatants.<sup>13</sup> As a result, the North Vietnamese and Viet Cong went through with their preparations and would attack Hue in the early morning of January 31<sup>st</sup>, 1968.

Before the fateful morning on January 31<sup>st</sup> the North Vietnamese had a miscue. On the morning of January 30<sup>th</sup> some NVA and Viet Cong forces prematurely attacked a handful of towns in South Vietnam which were going to be attacked at the launch of the offensive on the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup>. These premature attacks alerted all other southern cities about possible attacks, but no one could tell what was going on. That is not to say that the United States only gained knowledge of the offensive from the January 30<sup>th</sup> attacks. General Westmoreland, the commander of United States forces during the war, claimed to have predicted the offensive in his memoir. “A major enemy offensive obviously was coming, to be launched, I believed, shortly before Tet, so that the enemy could take advantage of the Tet cease-fire.”<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, Westmoreland even included the Tet holiday as a possibility for the start of the offensive.<sup>15</sup> On the 22<sup>nd</sup> Westmoreland had an interview with NBC Television’s Howard Tuckner and said that the enemy might use the eve of the Tet Festival to win a spectacular battlefield success.<sup>16</sup> Clearly the signs pointed to an attack, as Westmoreland brought up on multiple occasions. With the offensive beginning on the 30<sup>th</sup> troops were placed on alert throughout South Vietnam. “Orders canceling leaves either came too late or were simplify disregarded.”<sup>17</sup> This just gave the North Vietnamese one more advantage, even after their mishap, because soldiers had already been put on leave because of the Tet holiday.

Despite the warning signs that both the ARVN<sup>18</sup> and the United States had, the offensive came as a shock to South Vietnam. “At 3:40am, on Wednesday, January 31, 1968, the North Vietnamese Army and the Viet Cong brought the war to Hue.”<sup>19</sup> The attack on Hue began like the other coordinated attacks throughout South Vietnam, both on the 30<sup>th</sup> and the concurrent attacks on the morning of the 31<sup>st</sup>. “A signal flare lit up the night sky above Hue and a rocket barrage fell

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<sup>12</sup> Camp, *Death*, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Camp, *Death*, 7.

<sup>14</sup> William Childs Westmoreland, *A Soldier Reports* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1976), 318.

<sup>15</sup> Westmoreland, *Soldier Reports*, 318.

<sup>16</sup> Westmoreland, *Soldier Reports*, 318.

<sup>17</sup> Shelby L. Stanton, *The Rise and Fall of an American Army: U.S. Ground Forces in Vietnam, 1965-1973* (New York: Ballantine, 2003), 220.

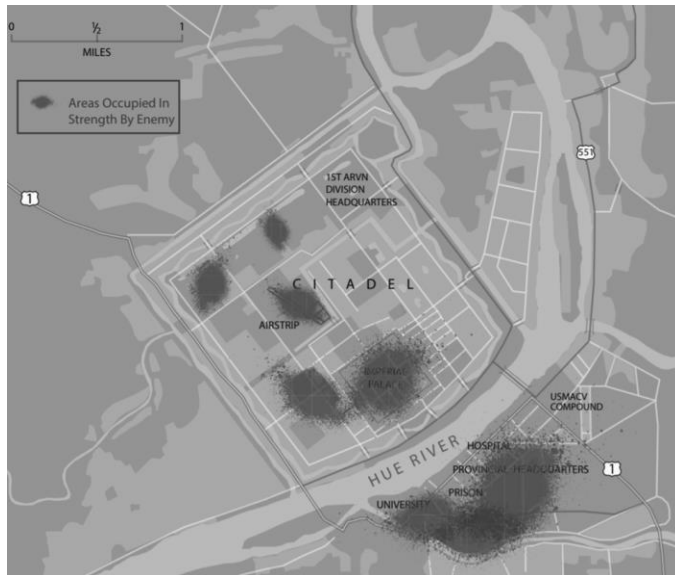
<sup>18</sup> Army of the Republic of Vietnam.

<sup>19</sup> Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 6.

on the city from the mountains to the west.”<sup>20</sup> Just as in any other major offensive begun in previous wars, the artillery bombardment was followed by a massive ground assault. Although some NVA and Viet Cong were already inside the city perimeter, there was a delay before the ground troops attacked. Once the ground attack began, Task Force X-Ray was notified that Hue was under attack.<sup>21</sup> The attack came as such a surprise that the South Vietnamese forces were overwhelmed in no time by the North Vietnamese.

Although overwhelmed at first, as some North Vietnamese troops were even disguised as South Vietnamese army members, they were eventually met by resistance from both ARVN and American forces. “The enemy battle account stated that the South Vietnamese ‘offered no strong resistance,’ while the NVA report acknowledged that ‘the heavy enemy (ARVN) fire enveloped the entire airfield. By dawn, our troops were still unable to advance’.”<sup>22</sup> The offensive was in full swing, Hue was stunned, and the battle was in every street.

Almost every major part of the city of Hue contained North Vietnamese within minutes of the offensive beginning. These included the strategic airfield of Tay Loc, the 1<sup>st</sup> ARVN Division



*Death in the Imperial City*, Richard Camp, page 10.

Headquarters was near but had not yet been researched by the enemy, the Imperial Palace, and all parts of the newer Hue City, aside from the USMACV compound. General Truong, Commander of the 1<sup>st</sup> ARVN Division, ordered his Black Panther Company to return to the base to bolster the headquarters defense.<sup>23</sup> Just as the other parts of the city had been hit, it was only a matter of time before the ARVN HQ<sup>24</sup> was attacked, and then they were. “Army Captain Ralph O. Bray Jr., who was in the headquarters (ARVN) at the time, recalled that ‘with all the B-40s and mortars we were taking I knew the enemy was close.

When we had to stop them at our wall I knew they had the whole city’.”<sup>25</sup> Later that morning more than 60 percent of the Imperial City was under the control of North Vietnamese forces and at that point a North Vietnamese flag was raised from a giant flag pole in front of the imperial palace.

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<sup>20</sup> Camp, *Death*, 9.

<sup>21</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 8.

<sup>22</sup> Camp, *Death*, 9.

<sup>23</sup> Camp, *Death*, 9.

<sup>24</sup> Headquarters.

<sup>25</sup> Camp, *Death*, 10.



However, the scene was the same in the new part of the city, as the North Vietnamese controlled most of the city, besides the USMACV compound and a watercraft landing ramp on the river.<sup>26</sup> Within a short 5 hours of the offensive, Hue had been overtaken by war for only the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in hundreds of years at the hands of the North Vietnamese.

The fighting did not change at day break, as both the ARVN Headquarters and USMACV Compound were being attacked. General Troung at the ARVN HQ and the troops at the USMACV Compound were requesting reinforcements to fend off the attackers. "Troops in the compound began requesting immediate aid. They were isolated and their cable to the ARVN HQ had been cut, so they did not know what was happening in the Citadel."<sup>27</sup> Being isolated during the attack required the Marines to fend for themselves, so battalions began to establish defensive positions near the compound. Across the Perfume River in the Imperial City ARVN requested aid. "An armored column rolled out from the PK-17 outpost onto route 1 and headed for the city."<sup>28</sup> The convoy reached the city as a reinforcement, but at a costly price. "ARVN suffered 131 casualties, including 40 dead, and losing 4 of the 12 armored personnel carriers in the convoy."<sup>29</sup> The casualties suffered by the reinforcement would only be a glimpse of what was to come. However, things would slightly change heading into the next day.

Although the fighting was harsh during the first day, as it would be for the coming weeks, United States forces were able to stave off the invasion. The ability to set up defensive positions meant that the enemy had weakened in strength, but there was no question that they were still lurking in buildings throughout Hue. While the enemy was pinched into a stalemate at the beginning of the battle, it also gave them an opportunity to recover in both numbers and supplies. "Enemy preparations were sufficiently complete to insure adequate supplies of all types of ammunition and supply."<sup>30</sup> The number of enemies left in Hue after the first day was estimated by the South Vietnamese. "Westmoreland cabled Army General Earle G Wheeler, chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, that the 'enemy has approximately three companies in Hue Citadel and Marines have sent battalion into the area to clear them out'."<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately for the Saigon forces, Westmoreland's estimation was far too low, as it was later believed that there were at least five battalions of communist troops in and around Hue. As the battle became prolonged, so would the carnage.

On February 1<sup>st</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of the battle, the fight for the city was officially designated Operation Hue City. Outlined by General LaHue, the operation consisted of a four-step process to

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<sup>26</sup> Camp, *Death*, 12.

<sup>27</sup> Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 8.

<sup>28</sup> Camp, *Death*, 14.

<sup>29</sup> Camp, *Death*, 14.

<sup>30</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report, Operation Hue City, 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division, June, 1968*, Washington, D.C., 24.

<sup>31</sup> Camp, *Death* 20.

win back to city. Phase one called for an initial commitment of reaction forces, phase two was to buildup forces South of the river, as well as the clearing out of enemies in the new city, phase three dealt with operations within the Imperial City, and the final phase of Operation Hue dealt with ridding the areas around Hue of enemy forces.<sup>32</sup> Although difficult, the four-step process outlined a realistic goal; all that was missing was a timetable to achieve the goal. A timetable would allow the South Vietnamese forces, including the Americans operating in southern Hue, to inform the citizens of Hue how their fight against the North Vietnamese was going. Unfortunately, the battle would take a turn against the citizens, as the battle would begin to take the shape of urban warfare.

As the fighting went on in both parts of Hue it was important for the South Vietnamese and Americans to work concurrently to drive the enemy back; as a result, South Vietnamese forces were responsible for the Citadel while United States Marines were responsible for the Southern City. This strategy was dictated by how the city was laid out, as there was an ARVN compound in the Imperial City and a MACV compound in the new part of Hue. "Operations in Hue indicated that the 4<sup>th</sup> NVA regiment, local force companies, and the Hue City Sapper Battalion were involved in enemy occupation south of the Perfume River."<sup>33</sup> The effort in the newer part of Hue consisted of several small offensives against the 4<sup>th</sup> NVA regiment in hopes to retake the city. One attempt consisted of a few companies of men supported by tanks with their mission being to liberate the jail and other buildings in the areas around the jail. Marines from the 5<sup>th</sup> company remembered that they didn't get very far from the USMACV compound before they started getting sniper fire.<sup>34</sup> Taking on fire from only a block outside of their starting point stopped the company in their tracks. The liberation of the jail and other provincial buildings on the south side of Hue would have to wait, as they returned to the compound.

The troubles for the US military in southern Hue would begin to turn on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. They would continue to fight block-to-block but would begin to take key checkpoints by which they could measure their successes. This assault was supported by a convoy of 2 tanks and armored trucks. However, before the convoy was even able to reach city limits, it met resistance. "The convoy exchanged fire with a Marine unit already in the city... everyone began shooting... out of pure fright and frenzy."<sup>35</sup> No one would be killed by the interaction. Once the reinforcements reached the city, with the aid of already present Marines, they were able to successfully take control of a USMACV radio facility, as well as Hue University. February 2<sup>nd</sup> would be one of the most successful days of Operation Hue, as two Marine lives were lost, as well as 34 wounded, while the enemy is claimed to have suffered nearly 140 deaths.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Camp, *Death*, 22-23.

<sup>33</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 24.

<sup>34</sup> Camp, *Death*, 23.

<sup>35</sup> Camp, *Death*, 27.

<sup>36</sup> Camp, *Death*, 26.

Over in the imperial city ARVN forces were slowly making progress. The northwest corner of the Citadel, where the First ARVN Headquarters was located, had been cleared of NVA and Viet Cong forces. The same could not be said about the Tay Loc airbase located in the center of the Citadel. Working their way toward the western wall of old Hue, the 1<sup>st</sup> ARVN airborne Task Forces attempted to clear North Vietnamese out of the airfield. Just as during the rest of the Vietnam War, success was measured by body count. For example, if X number of Viet Cong were killed in a certain day and this was much higher than Y number of Marines killed the same day, then it was a successful day. “By 4 February 1<sup>st</sup> ARVN Division reported that nearly 700 NVA troops had been killed in the Citadel.”<sup>37</sup> The number given is an accurate representation of both the size of the Citadel, as the North Vietnamese still controlled over half of the Citadel, but also the sheer volume of men and supplies that the North Vietnamese invested into the Battle of Hue and the Tet Offensive. Unfortunately for the Saigon forces, 700 KIA suffered by the North Vietnamese was a low number, as they still controlled parts of new Hue.

Although February 2<sup>nd</sup> was a decent day for the casualty rate suffered by the Americans and South Vietnamese, the same cannot be said about February 5<sup>th</sup>, as 19 casualties (both KIA and injured) were suffered for an advance of only 75 yards.<sup>38</sup> However, for the 2d Battalion of the 5<sup>th</sup> Marines, the movement was much faster. During a 90-minute fight, the Marines were able to kill 55 NVA.<sup>39</sup> The trophy would be the hospital that was only a block around the corner from the radio building. The fight for the radio building was tough, as it is noted that the Marines received 3,000 rounds of small arm ammunition, as well as 12 60mm mortars rounds, but the Americans were able to liberate the radio station.<sup>40</sup> The fighting in the new city was near an end, with the Marines clearing block by block at a slow pace. The next day would see a major shift in Operation Hue.

The success being seen by the US military was not as easy as it may seem. It is necessary to remember the type of fighting that they were experiencing, which was house-to-house and wall-to-wall combat. “Moving sporadically room by room, U.S. and allied forces could only advance in spurts given the nature of urban warfare in Hue.”<sup>41</sup> Although difficult, there were some advantages to urban warfare, at least to one Marine who preferred it over fighting in the mud. The unnamed Marine said that it is tougher in the streets, but he didn’t seem to get as tired when running, because he could visually see the damage he was inflicting.<sup>42</sup>

The North Vietnamese obtained intelligence of certain battle tactics that US forces were using. “Each time [a] platoon popped smoke grenades to conceal its movement, the enemy opened

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<sup>37</sup> Camp, *Death*, 43.

<sup>38</sup> Camp, *Death*, 40.

<sup>39</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 29.

<sup>40</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 29.

<sup>41</sup> Camp, *Death*, 36.

<sup>42</sup> Camp, *Death*, 36.

up with automatic weapons.”<sup>43</sup> This was a result of the NVA reading the manual of the Marines. They learned that the Marines used smoke to conceal their movement. Warfare was difficult enough. When you added that the enemy knew how you chose to move, it became even more challenging.

While ARVN battled in the older part of the city, on the 6<sup>th</sup> of February Marines would find themselves in yet another long fight, this time for the crucial provincial headquarters. As opposed to the fight for the hospital that lasted around 90 minutes, the fight for the headquarters raged on for five hours without any headway being made. The longer a US company was forced to fight, the more supplies were needed. “As a result, an untold amount of 90mm, 106mm, 81mm, and 3.5-inch rocket ammunition was expended in support of the attacking units.”<sup>44</sup> While a struggle, the Marines understood the task ahead of them, i.e. they understood that the building complex was strongly defended by enemies. Yet the Marines were able to break the stalemate and take control of the provincial headquarters that afternoon. The conquest would follow the same theme as the rest of the Battle of Hue, as the Marines killed 25 North Vietnamese while they sustained 1 dead and 14 wounded, a staggering difference.<sup>45</sup>

After the liberation of the headquarters, most of the fighting in new Hue was finished. US Marines had recaptured most of the city by the 6<sup>th</sup> of February, seven days after the beginning of the Tet Offensive. “The provincial headquarters had served as a motivating symbol for both the NVA and the Marines in the modern city.”<sup>46</sup> In other words, it was the key in liberating the southern part of Hue. When the headquarters was liberated, so too was the southern part of the city. The provincial headquarters once served as the command post for an NVA regiment. As a result of the provincial HQ being liberated from North Vietnamese control, much of the organized resistance in Southern Hue collapsed. The cohesion of the enemy was almost nonexistent according to Lieutenant Colonel Gravel. He felt that after the loss of their provincial headquarters most North Vietnamese soldiers lost their stomach for the fight, which resulted in the main forces evaporating, leaving only local forces to fight for their cause.<sup>47</sup> This idea was only further reinforced when battalions in modern Hue found abandoned food, weapons, and ammunition left behind by the NVA. Finding this evidence of enemy demoralization was a great step forward in the battle for Hue.

The struggle for the Imperial City was still raging on. Around February 4<sup>th</sup> ARVN forces only held about 40% of the entire old city and that situation would continue as it was difficult for ARVN forces to gain traction. The lack of ground gained in the Citadel can be attributed to two different factors. First, NVA forces had dug-in and would not budge, but the North Vietnamese

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<sup>43</sup> Camp, *Death*, 32.

<sup>44</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 38.

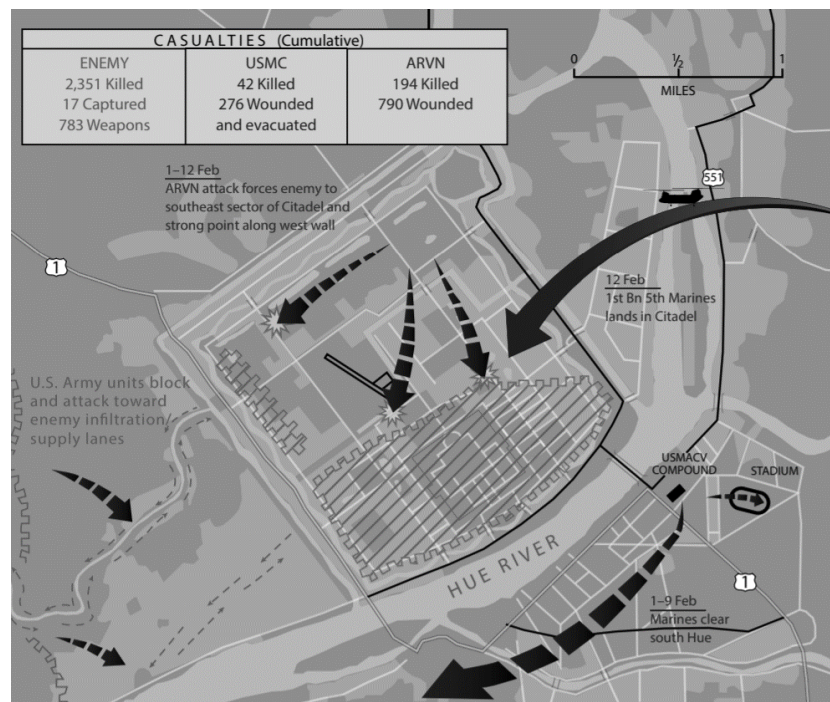
<sup>45</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 37.

<sup>46</sup> Camp, *Death*, 41.

<sup>47</sup> Camp, *Death*, 42.

were also sending in replacements into the old city after dark. One decisive advantage that the North Vietnamese had over the Saigon forces, mainly US forces, is that they could replenish their men as much as they wished. It seemed as if they had a limitless supply of men to throw at the battle. “The enemy apparently reinforced his forces in the Citadel and maintained his own support area outside the western wall... capitalizing on the failure of friendly forces to isolate the Hue battlefield.”<sup>48</sup> This strategy of having unlimited men would continue into the early morning of February 7<sup>th</sup>, as several hundred North Vietnamese reinforcements scaled the southwestern wall with grappling hooks, which required ARVN forces to retreat back to the Tay Loc airfield while suffering heavy losses.<sup>49</sup> As a result of the heavy casualty rate sustained by ARVN, as well as the reinforced North Vietnamese, and the successful liberation of the new city, American forces would shift across the bridge into the old city. American troops joined the fight for the old imperial capital of Hue.

The newly arrived American forces would have to fight an NVA force that was not willing to cede any ground to them. Not only were their spirits strong in the Imperial City, but they continued to utilize the element of surprise. These surprise raids came at night and negatively affected the South Vietnamese forces. First, the raids would continue to hammer away at the morale of ARVN troops, but secondly ARVN battalions found themselves cut off and had to fight for days to get back to their headquarters. This is just a further example of how taxing the fighting in the Imperial City was.



*Death in the Imperial City, Richard Camp, page 52.*

Unfortunately, it would continue to get worse, as the North Vietnamese would not yield even after the South Vietnamese Air Force began to bomb the Imperial City. The determination that the North Vietnamese showed was not a shared attribute in their South Vietnamese counterpart. “The South Vietnamese soldiers began to lose their fighting spirit, and within the first week, they had, in effect,

<sup>48</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 26.

<sup>49</sup> Camp, *Death*, 44.

circled their wagons and sat back to wait.”<sup>50</sup> This would compel the United States Marines to take over the fighting in the Imperial City, a city whose historical significance they could not fully understand.

The fighting in the Imperial City was hectic. Not only was it difficult because of the close quarter nature of the fighting, but also because of the difficulty of fighting in a cultural hub. From the beginning of the Battle of Hue, US forces were responsible for the southern portion of the city, to avoid destroying any important structures. However, once Marines’ responsibility shifted to the Imperial City, the strategy of only destroying a building if it was even suspected it house enemy troops had changed.<sup>51</sup> The new strategy, whether by the use of air support or ground troops, was to avoid destroying the culturally valuable structures inside the old city.<sup>52</sup> This made it difficult for the Marines to defeat an entrenched and hunkered down enemy.

While the North Vietnamese had been in the Imperial City for days, the Marines were fresh combatants within the walls. On February 12<sup>th</sup> the newly arrived 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 5<sup>th</sup> Marines (1/5 for short), under the command of Major Robert Thompson, departed from the MACVHQ and entered the Citadel from the north via the river, in hopes to begin retaking the city the following day. Not only would this be 1/5’s first experience within the city, but this was Major Thompson’s tenth day as the commander of the battalion; his predecessor was WIA.<sup>53</sup> The Marines were forced to enter the city further south than they had hoped due to the overwhelming enemy presence. Major Thompson would converse with ARVN General Truong about their plan of attack for the February 13<sup>th</sup> offensive. After failing to locate two South Vietnamese Airborne Battalions, it was decided that 1/5 would begin the offensive against the enemy at 8:00am the next day.

Once the offensive began, the US Marines quickly ran into an overpowering enemy force. They came under fire by AK-47 automatic rifles, B-40 rockets, and mortars under the control of NVA forces which had a commanding view of their placement from an archway tower at the Dong Ba Gate.<sup>54</sup> General Truong told Major Thompson that a South Vietnamese Airborne Battalion had supposedly gone through to secure the area; it was later revealed that this was not the case. The division had been relocated to Saigon at the orders of the Vietnamese Joint General Staff, because they were under the impression that because the Marines had arrived the Airborne division could be relieved of the fighting.<sup>55</sup> The incident, which cost the lives of Marines, was only a glimpse at the lack of communication between ARVN forces and the US military. Major Thompson made sure to express his frustrations with General Truong. During a call to Truong, Thompson revealed

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<sup>50</sup> Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 119.

<sup>51</sup> Camp, *Death*, 39.

<sup>52</sup> Mark Bowden, *Hue 1968: A Turning Point of the American War in Vietnam* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2018), 406.

<sup>53</sup> Camp, *Death*, 50.

<sup>54</sup> Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 123.

<sup>55</sup> Nolan, *Battle for Hue*, 123.

that if he had known the Vietnamese division was gone, he would have planned differently<sup>56</sup> Despite the problems with communication, 1/5 had to continue to fight against a well-fortified, dug in enemy.

South Vietnamese Marines then arrived to aid in the retaking of the Citadel. With so many interconnected parts working for a specific goal, as well as so many different commanders attempting to work together, General Truong divided the Imperial City into six different zones, each of which were to be moved on by a different battalion. During the battle for the Citadel, ARVN troops were able to intercept a radio transmission ordering reinforcements to go into the Citadel and attack. The communist counter offensive was defeated with the aid of a Navy destroyer continuously firing for 10 minutes, resulting in a high-ranking NVA officer being killed.<sup>57</sup> The loss of the commanding officer was a blow to the NVA.

With the fighting in the Imperial City being so difficult, against an entrenched enemy with machine guns, in building to building fighting, it was necessary for Marines in the city to be supported. “We were in such close quarters with the enemy, often just meters away. We had no room to fire and maneuver. In essence, the fighting was an exercise of reducing fortified positions.”<sup>58</sup> On February 14<sup>th</sup> the hunkered down Marines used “5- and 8-inch Naval gunfire and 155mm and 8-inch howitzers to pave the way,” as well as received air support for the first time in multiple days.<sup>59</sup> The lack of air support was a common theme during the battle, as the weather throughout the operations was either rainy or foggy, and thus made it difficult to use air support.<sup>60</sup> Even with the air support, the offensive against the entrenched enemy at the east wall had made no progress. Thompson supported both the use of Naval guns and air support, but felt that the Naval guns were not helpful because of their inaccuracy due to their flat trajectory.<sup>61</sup> With such heavy artillery firing toward the enemy, which was also close to friendlies, the Marine companies retreated slightly. As a result, the NVA pushed toward Thompson’s men, requiring his men to reconquer more ground. By the end of the day, the communists still held the Dong Ba gate tower.

Captain Myron Harrington, a relatively new member of Company D, saw the carnage caused by the battle for the east wall. “There were burnt-out tanks and trucks, and upturned automobiles still (from the previous day) smoldering. Bodies laid everywhere, most of them civilians. The smoke and stench blended, like some kind of horror movie.”<sup>62</sup> Fortunately, the tower would fall on the 15<sup>th</sup> as a result of more artillery and Naval guns fired upon it, the same used the

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<sup>56</sup> Camp, *Death*, 52.

<sup>57</sup> Camp, *Death*, 59.

<sup>58</sup> George W. Smith, *The Siege at Hue* (New York: Ballantine, 2001), 141.

<sup>59</sup> Camp, *Death*, 53. A howitzer is defined by Dictionary.com as “a cannon having a comparatively short barrel, used especially for firing shells at a high angle of elevation, as for reaching a target behind cover or in a trench.”

<sup>60</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 26.

<sup>61</sup> Camp, *Death*, 53.

<sup>62</sup> Camp, *Death*, 54.

previous day, as well as air support dropping large bombs on the tower. After the bombing, Marines moved on the East Wall to clear out the remaining NVA. The enemy fought as determinedly as they had before the bombing. However, after a six hour fight, which included hand to hand combat, the East Wall was conquered by the Marines. That night the NVA would launch yet another surprise attack which resulted in them retaking the tower, only to lose it once more with a Marine counterattack. Reports on the number of casualties from this fight are all over the place, but one thing is certain, the communists suffered more KIA than the Saigon forces.<sup>63</sup> The tower had fallen but the battle for Hue was *still* not over.

The death and destruction seen at the East Wall was the same throughout the Imperial City. Captain Harrington captured the battle for the city with a sensory overload statement:

After a while, survival was the name of the game as you sat there in the semidarkness, with the firing going on constantly... and the horrible smell. You tasted it as you ate your rations, as if you were eating death. It permeated your clothes, which you couldn't wash because water was very scarce. You couldn't bathe or shave either. My strategy was to keep as many of my Marines alive as possible, and yet accomplish the mission. You went through the full range of emotions, seeing your buddies being hit, but you couldn't feel sorry for them because you had others to think about... It was dreary, and still we weren't depressed. We were doing our job – successfully.<sup>64</sup>

Not only was this clearly the case in the Imperial City, but it was the sights, sounds, and smells felt throughout South Vietnam as a result of the Tet Offensive. Unfortunately, the Battle of Hue would continue for two more weeks in the Imperial City.

The next few weeks would be much different than the fighting that the Marines had experienced earlier in southern Hue. "NVA units in the Citadel employed better urban fighting tactics, had improved already formidable defenses, dug trenches, built roadblocks, and conducted counterattacks."<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, the nature of the old city allowed the NVA to have access to buildings with thick walls, which also gave them cover from Marine gunfire. Because the Marines were not necessarily allowed to fire artillery like mortars, the fighting in the Imperial City seemed increasingly more difficult.

With such a formidable opponent still holding parts of the old city of Hue, Major Thompson had to shift his tactics. "In his mind, 'the enemy had everything going for him'."<sup>66</sup> In other words, with permission from a superior, American forces would begin to use heavy artillery, Naval gunfire, tear gas, and air support to support their ground attack against the entrenched NVA. Also aiding Saigon forces were tanks, as they would push in front of the front line, clear a path for

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<sup>63</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 61-64.

<sup>64</sup> Camp, *Death*, 56.

<sup>65</sup> Camp, *Death*, 56.

<sup>66</sup> Camp, *Death*, 57.



infantry to fire within, and then retreat back to friendly lines. Discovering this tactic was a trial and error process, as the shells the tanks originally used were 90mm, which were relatively ineffective against concrete. The tank crews would then shift to concrete-piercing fused shells, which would breach walls housing NVA after 2 to 4 rounds. The battalion and tank advance would halt due to lack of supplies; Thompson planed on resuming the offensive once the proper provision reached their lines.<sup>67</sup>

As the battle raged on in the Imperial City, the Saigon forces were eager to end it as quickly as possible. In a meeting with top ranking military officials, including the South Vietnamese Vice President, it was concluded that the NVA were planning yet another major offensive against the city of Hue. Even after all the casualties suffered by the enemy, they were still willing to throw in more men to hold onto the city as long as possible. The South Vietnamese Vice President Nguyen Cao Ky believed that the North Vietnamese were willing to sacrifice thousands of men to hold onto the city. As a result of the enemy's willingness to sustain casualties, Ky gave U.S. forces permission to destroy any and all buildings, including religious buildings, in order to defeat the enemy, as Ky would take full responsibility for their efforts. The willingness to sacrifice touched both sides as a result of the Battle of Hue.<sup>68</sup>

The need to end the battle was becoming more obvious, as news articles and videos were appearing throughout the United States, showing the battle's bloodshed. To change the course of the battle, Major Thompson drafted a plan for a night offensive. The plan called for Company A of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion to liberate three key facilities at night, which included a two-story administrative building. In the morning, the rest of the battalion would launch an offensive like normal. The offensive began at night as planned, with minimal resistance. Company A was able to take their objectives successfully, this being a result of the NVA retreating to another location to sleep during the night. The lasting memories of the Battle of Hue linger with Marines to this day. "The first thing in the morning we saw six NVA... just standing on the wall. We dusted them all off."<sup>69</sup> The rest of February 21<sup>st</sup> had more resistance than the early morning. "By the end of the day, the battalion had killed 16 North Vietnamese, taken 1 prisoner, and captured five individual's weapons at a cost of 3 dead and 14 wounded."<sup>70</sup> The battalion was short of their original destination by 100 yards but would reach it the following day. With little resistance, Company A had the honor of attaching an American flag onto a telegraph pole.

Upon reaching the wall Thompson ordered a recently acquired company to move on the southern gate and secure it as well as the bridge. Just as on the previous day, this checkpoint would be reached with little to no resistance, besides the occasional sniper fire. The only miscue during

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<sup>67</sup> Edward J. O'Neil, *Street Fighting: Lessons Learned from the Battle of Hue for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Urban Warfare* (M.A. thesis, 2002), 47.

<sup>68</sup> Camp, *Death*, 60-61.

<sup>69</sup> Camp, *Death*, 64.

<sup>70</sup> Camp, *Death*, 64.

the offensive was the dropping of napalm within 800 meters of the troops attempting to conquer the bridge.<sup>71</sup> However, there was still fighting on the west side of the Imperial City.

Between the 22 and 23<sup>rd</sup> of February the Vietnamese Marines, the same Marines who aided in the liberation of the Citadel, were bogged down with a hard fighting NVA force. As a result, the task force moved half a block in 3 days. However, on February 24<sup>th</sup> at 5:00am local time ARVN forces pulled down the National Liberation Front flag that flew over the old Imperial City in Hue for 25 days. There was a small section of the Imperial City still under control by NVA going into the night of the 24<sup>th</sup>. This last pocket would be eliminated the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> by a Vietnamese Marines surprise attack.<sup>72</sup> The only fighting that was left would be either small skirmishes or small search and destroy missions conducted in and around Hue. Besides resistance from a NVA stronghold outside the city, the operations were rather uneventful. Once it was concluded that the city of Hue was cleared, two Marine battalions went east in hopes to cut off any enemy forces attempting to reach the coast. The attempt was futile, as no enemies were found. On March 2, 1968, Operation Hue City was completed.

In the end, the Battle of Hue was one of the bloodiest and longest in the whole Vietnam War, not just the Tet Offensive. The Vietnamese Marines suffered 88 killed and 350 wounded while the United States Marines suffered 142 dead and almost 1,100 wounded. The casualties would increase from there, as ARVN sustained 333 dead and 1,773 wounded and 30 missing from their fighting in the Imperial City. In total, the Saigon forces lost roughly 600 dead and had nearly 3,800 wounded and missing. On the other hand, NVA and Viet Cong numbers exceed that greatly. While the battle of Hue had involved roughly 11,000 NVA and Viet Cong participants, between 2,500 to 5,000 of those communist troops were killed. It would take years for the Viet Cong to be influential again after the Tet Offensive, but they would never again reach their pre-offensive strength. Furthermore, it is unfortunate that these numbers only list the military casualties, as citizens also died because of the battle.<sup>73</sup>

One of the most shocking discoveries of the Battle of Hue was the number of civilian casualties. During their occupation of Hue, the North Vietnamese communists collected government officials, sympathizers, and foreigners, which including American civilians, in sections of the city they controlled. This was a result of them wanting to rid the city of any opponents to communist rule. Despite, or perhaps because of this, it was reported that no civilians offered to help the Marines throughout the battle for Hue.<sup>74</sup> Once the Saigon forces reconquered the city, mass graves were found which contained the rounded up Hue civilians. Roughly 3,000 bodies were found in quickly dug mass graves.<sup>75</sup> The wrath of the North Vietnamese did not end

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<sup>71</sup> Camp, *Death*, 64-65.

<sup>72</sup> Camp, *Death*, 65.

<sup>73</sup> Camp, *Death*, 67.

<sup>74</sup> Marine Corps Historical Center, *Combat After Action Report*, 25.

<sup>75</sup> Camp, *Death*, 68.

there, as Marines said that they saw civilian bodies lying on the street the first few nights of the battle. Lance Corporal Ronald DeFore observed:

They (the North Vietnamese) seemed to have just slaughtered a lot of the families... you'd see whole families – which would be mother, father, and children – that were just killed, and they raped quite a few of the young women.... A mother said the NVA raped and killed her two daughters, 15 and 13.<sup>76</sup>

Considering the countless residents of Hue that were missing, as well as the hunt for mass graves not yet being finished, it is estimated that as many as 6,000 civilians were killed during the North Vietnamese occupation.<sup>77</sup>

Considering the casualties suffered by both sides during the Battle of Hue, it would seem as if the Saigon forces launched a successful counteroffensive to retake Hue. Although difficult, the urban fighting that the NVA took to during the Battle of Hue benefited American forces more than it did their own. The columnist Roscoe Drummond believed that the Tet offensive played into America's military strategy, because the communists abandoned their guerilla tactics and switched to conventional combat.<sup>78</sup> The results in terms of the military body count were clear; the Saigon forces won the Battle of Hue and the Tet Offensive. However, Hanoi's two goals when launching the offensive did not consider casualties sustained, as one of their goals was to encourage the US to scale back its military presence. The NVA was able to achieve this goal, as the number of US military personnel would peak in 1968 and dwindle until the end of the war.

The Battle of Hue showed top US military officials what the NVA were capable of and showed weak spots in the strategy that the US was using when conducting the war. "Tet revealed the enemy's courage and great skill in planning and coordination," but also "the speed and degrees of the enemy offensive in Hue caught the South Vietnamese and American commands off guard."<sup>79</sup> Furthermore, a guerilla force was able to infiltrate previously secure areas, fend off American and South Vietnamese counteroffensives and occupy a major city in Southern Vietnam for 25 days where they were able to commit one of the worst atrocities in Southeast Asian history.

Studies were conducted after the conclusion of the battle about how things could have been done differently. "If the enemy had blown the An Cuu Bridge across Route 1 on the first day, the Marines would not have been able to bring their initial battalions and supplies into the city."<sup>80</sup> If the bridge had been destroyed, the battle would have raged on longer and more lives would have been lost. When dealing with the Perfume River, which US forces used to bring in supplies during

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<sup>76</sup> Camp, *Death*, 68.

<sup>77</sup> David Anderson, *The Columbia Guide to the Vietnam War* (Columbia University Press, 2002), 98-99.

<sup>78</sup> Gilbert and Head, *The Tet Offensive*, 139.

<sup>79</sup> Gilbert and Head, *The Tet Offensive*, 25; Camp, *Death*, 75.

<sup>80</sup> Camp, *Death*, 68.

the battle via boat, it was concluded that the North Vietnamese did not do as much as they could have to hinder American supply lines. The NVA made no serious attempts to blockade the river, resulting in more than 400 tons of supplies being delivered via water and 500 more tons of supplies being brought into the city by helicopter.<sup>81</sup> Just as the North Vietnamese poured in countless amounts of supplies into the battle, so too did American forces.

The strategies used when conducting Operation Hue City were clearly capable of recapturing the city, but what more could have been done to win the city back more quickly? A lack of an overall commander meant that there was no umbrella strategy to the battle. Even with General Truong controlling operations in the Citadel, the lack of an overlord caused a great deal of clashing between commanders within the city of Hue. These included different ideas on how to retake the new city, what to do about the Perfume River, and how to go about cutting supply lines coming into the city. To say that the battle would have been quicker with a commanding overlord is dubious, however that is not to say that the Saigon forces would not have benefited.

Further results of the Battle of Hue and the Tet offensive include two major events which go hand in hand. First, prominent CBS news anchor Walter Cronkite traveled to Vietnam, including Hue and Saigon, during the Tet offensive to experience the fighting first hand. Once his visit was finished, he broadcast his findings to the nation. Cronkite shocked the country when he announced that the United States was not closer to victory, nor further from defeat, but stuck in a stalemate. "The only rational way out then will be to negotiate, not as victors, but as an honorable people who lived up to their pledge to defend democracy and did the best they could."<sup>82</sup> As a result of the broadcast, President Lyndon Johnson famously said that, "if I've lost Cronkite, I've lost middle America." Not only because of Cronkite's report, but without a doubt aided by the Tet Offensive, President Johnson announced at the end of March that he would not seek reelection.

In conclusion, the Battle of Hue and the Tet Offensive changed modern American history. It shocked Americans to see the type of war that their boys were going through half way around the world. The offensive completely changed the way that the war would be fought for the rest of 1968 until the conclusion of the war in 1975. Leading up to the launching of the offensive, the Americans had an approach that they thought could win the war. However, because of the Battle of Hue and the Tet Offensive, that strategy changed. The new strategy was to find a way to leave Vietnam as quickly as possible. "The urban battle for Hue, South Vietnam, although only one of hundreds of different attacks on the Tet Offensive, affected the will of both the American people and their political leadership."<sup>83</sup> Rather than winning the war, the United States goal now was to withdraw from Vietnam and not lose the war. This strategy would include President Richard Nixon's Vietnamization Policy. In the end, the Vietnam War would last almost a decade, cost billions of dollars, and cost the lives of thousands of Americans.

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<sup>81</sup> Camp, *Death*, 69.

<sup>82</sup> Walter Cronkite, "Report from Vietnam," *CBS News*, February 27, 1968.

<sup>83</sup> *Urban Operations* (Washington D.C.: Department of the Army, 2006).

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