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Cover image: Chief Photographer's Mate Robert F. Sargent, *Into the Jaws of Death - U.S. Troops Wading through Water and Nazi Gunfire*. 6 June 1944. 2,963 × 2,385. Stored at the National Archives and Records Administration, Courtesy of Wikimedia Commons.

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FROM THE EDITORS

We are excited to unveil the fifth issue of the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Historical Review and invite you to delve into its pages rich in historical scholarship. The Review began in 2011 with a vision to create a platform for publishing exceptional undergraduate research at Virginia Tech. Last year, we expanded that opportunity to include undergraduate work from other four-year universities in Virginia. This year, we are happy to announce we have expanded further into universities in North Carolina as well. This year's Review includes a submission from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Our hope is that the Review will continue to grow and develop in the years to come.

One of the main objectives of the Review is to offer students the opportunity to gain experiences in the discipline of history outside of the classroom. When students submit to the Review, their papers are peer-reviewed by an editorial board of undergraduates. Our editorial staff takes this review process seriously, working diligently to return cogent and clear ideas for revisions. Undergraduate submitters profit as they work through editing suggestions and acquire knowledge of the peer-review process for publication. The quality of the submissions in this journal reflects the dedication to excellence of both authors and undergraduate editors.

This edition of the Review contains six outstanding articles, beginning with Tyler Abt's On Sands Stained Red. Abt takes a bottom-up approach to examining the successes and failures encountered by the American troops on Omaha beach during the Normandy invasion. In his paper, Abt argues that success was jeopardized due to poor planning from top military officials, and victory was only won through the poise and courage of low ranking troops. Next, Virginia Tech Alumnaus Nancy Fowlkes Mason takes us to China in her cross-cultural look at American home economists' work in the country between the 1920s and 1940s. Fowlkes Mason shows that the home economists she studied prioritized scientific ideas about home economics over the cultural practices of both Chinese and American societies. Ellen Boggs continues our look into history outside of the United States in her article on UNESCO's involvement in

efforts to save the Buddhas at Bamiyan from destruction by the Taliban. Boggs shows that the Taliban's religious agenda, determination to gain international recognition, and influence from Al-Qaeda blocked the international agency's efforts. Elyse Sulkey, from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill provides an historical/literary analysis of the transformation of thought in Benedictine monk Guibert of Nogent from anti-Judaic clerical sentiments in his early work to anti-Semitic rhetoric in his later work. Moving us back to American history, Courtney Howell's Convict Leasing reassesses the convict leasing system in place in the U.S. South in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, arguing that the primary function of the system wassupport and criticism for the system focused on economic, rather than racial, issuescontrol. Last but not least, Rachel Snyder's Bewitched sheds light on an oft-forgotten murder network that spanned the East Coast in the early twentieth century. Snyder finds that this network, steeped in Italian traditions, used murder and insurance fraud as a strategy for economic survival during the Great Depression.

As graduate editors, we hope that you enjoy this issue of the Virginia Tech Undergraduate Review as much as we have enjoyed working both with the editorial board and authors in crafting it for publication. For their support and help in making this issue possible, we would like to thank Dr. Mark Barrow, chair of Virginia Tech's History Department, as well as our faculty editor for this year, Dr. Paul Quigley. Also, we would like to thank Dr. Robert Stephens, founder of the VTUHR, the undergraduate editorial board and all the students who made the brave decision to submit their work for publication. Our design editor, Courtney Howell, deserves our heartfelt thanks and appreciation for all the hours spent designing and formatting the Review. Lastly, we thank you. By picking up and reading this journal you not only expand your knowledge of history but also support undergraduate research. So, we hope you will sit back, relax and enjoy your journey back in time!

FAITH SKILES AND KEVIN CAPRICE
Managing Editors

ON SANDS STAINED RED

Ordinary Men and Extraordinary Courage on Omaha Beach

Tyler Abt

On June 6, 1944, at approximately 7:15 A.M., only 45 minutes after the initial allied landing craft hit the beaches of Normandy, France, to breach Hitler's Atlantic Wall, 1st Lt. Bob Edlin and the men of 1st Platoon, A Company, 2nd Ranger Battalion approached the smoke-shrouded Dog Green Sector of Omaha Beach in their LCA (Landing Craft Assault).[1] Both A and B Companies' landing craft had spent the early hours of the morning trolling in a circling pattern a few miles off the coast of France awaiting orders to land. Those orders had now arrived.

The time aboard the small LCA in rough seas took its toll on the Rangers. Lt. Edlin recalled: "There were many sick people. They were vomiting on each other's feet and on their clothing."[2] They had been told to expect minimal resistance. The massive thirty-minute naval bombardment, accompanied, as historian Stephen E. Ambrose explained, by "480 B-24s carrying 1,285 tons of bombs,"[3] was intended to annihilate German resistance on Omaha Beach and create shell holes to provide the advancing Americans cover. The bombardment, however, accomplished very little.

"When we came in, there was a deep silence," Lt. Edlin recollected. "The only thing that I could hear was the motor of the boat that we were on. It was dawn; the sun was just coming over the French coast. I saw a seagull fly across the front of the boat, just like life was going on as normal. All the gunfire had lifted for a very short time.... I didn't hear anybody pray. I didn't hear anybody say anything. We knew that the time was here." Suddenly, machinegun fire pinged off the front of the LCA.

1. Joseph Balkoski, *Omaha Beach: D-Day June 6, 1944* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 2004), 158.

2. Marcia Moen and Margo Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant: A Personal Account of D-Day and World War II* (Elk River, MN: Meadowlark Publishing, 2000), 27.

3. Stephen E. Ambrose, *D-Day: June 6, 1944, The Climactic Battle of World War II* (New York: Touchstone, 1994), 120.

German artillery fire began landing all around the Rangers' landing craft. "We crouched in the bottom of the boat in the vomit, urine, and seawater."[4]

An LCA beside Lt. Edlin's carrying men of B Company exploded from a direct hit, likely killing everyone aboard before they could even hit the beach. Edlin's LCA struck a sandbar and ground to a halt 75 yards off the beach, but the ramp did not drop because the British seaman tasked with operating it had been decapitated by the intense hail of incoming German fire.[5] Edlin screamed at the British coxswain to get the boat in further so his men would not have to cross such a vast expanse of beach, 75 yards of at least shoulder deep water followed by roughly 200 more yards of sand,[6] under withering fire, but the coxswain refused to go any further. Exasperated, Edlin moved the decapitated sailor aside to operate the ramp on the front of the craft.[7] Lt. Edlin and his fellow Rangers prepared to surge forward into the maelstrom of death and destruction that was Omaha Beach.

A reported 4,720 Americans died on Omaha Beach.[8] A great many of these casualties can be attributed to failures from those at the top entrusted with the planning of the attack. Be it the failure of pre-invasion tactics, an improper understanding of the conditions the men would be entering, or the introduction of inappropriate men and machinery, none of the expected advantages actually materialized on the French beaches. In spite of all of these failures from the top, the men on Omaha Beach accomplished their objective. As the dawn broke then next day, although casualties covered the beach, the sunrise shone brightly on American flags as well. The victory was won not through brilliant military strategy from the top, but on the battlefield — through bravery and poise exhibited by men at the bottom. It was the ability of officers on the ground, officers like Colonel Schneider, Lt. Edlin, Lt. Spaulding, and Capt. Dawson, to adjust to the disadvantages they found on the battlefield and to persevere through the endless challenges they faced on June 6, and through their perseverance they encouraged others who witnessed their resolve. It was their ability, bravery, resolve and self-control that found triumph in the face of defeat.

Though failures made from the top prior to June 6th resulted in a great loss of life on Omaha Beach, the valor and composure of those on the ground proved great enough to persevere and win the day, beginning their road to Berlin.

Setting the Stage

In 1943, the German war machine of the Third Reich ground to a halt on all fronts after their seemingly invincible onslaughts in the first four years

4. Moen and Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant*, 27.
5. Ibid., 98.
6. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 158.
7. Moen and Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant*, 28.
8. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 352.

of World War II. General Omar Bradley recalled: "Expelled from Africa, hard pressed in Italy, hunted in the Atlantic, and now demoralized in Russia, everywhere the German had lost the initiative. To some it looked as though he had lost the war."[9] Allied forces were establishing air superiority as the air offensive into the heart of Germany kicked into full gear, and as Bradley later recounted, some air commanders "believed that it was only a matter of months until Germany's back would be broken by the Allied bombing campaign."[10]

Despite the growing success of the Allies throughout the European Theater, many high-ranking American general officers, including U.S. First Army commander General Omar Bradley, Army Chief of Staff George C. Marshall, and Supreme Allied Commander Dwight D. Eisenhower, believed that the only way to win the war was to totally defeat Germany.[11] And the only way to do this would be to invade Germany itself. The British supported a less aggressive approach with a focus on the Mediterranean.[12] Despite this disagreement, a new position of "Chief of Staff to the Supreme Allied Commander" (COSSAC) was established on March 12, 1943, with British Lieutenant General Fredrick Morgan as the chief planner for the invasion of northwest Europe.[13]

United Kingdom prime minister Sir Winston Churchill expressed in his memoirs his skepticism of the brash American plans: "While I was always willing to join with the United States in a direct assault across the Channel on the German sea front in France, I was not convinced that this was the only way to win the war, and I knew that it would be a very heavy and hazardous adventure."[14] The horrible casualties associated with the frontal assaults of World War I remained fresh in the minds of Englishmen like Churchill.

Two landing areas were considered by COSSAC as sites for the Allied invasion of northwest France. The first was the Pas de Calais, the narrowest point in the channel and the most obvious tactical and logistical place to attack German-occupied France. But the Pas de Calais, because of its position as the prime invasion location, was "the most strongly defended area on the whole French coast,"[15] according to General Morgan and COSSAC. Because of the tremendous defenses put in place at the Pas de Calais by Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, commander of the German Army Group B, and by the German Commander in Chief of Western Operations, Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt,[16] COSSAC suggested that the second invasion site be used. This site was Normandy.

9. Omar N. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story* (Scranton, PA: The Haddon Craftsmen, 1951), 197.
10. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 198.
11. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 201; Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 6; Forrest C. Pogue, *George C. Marshall: Organizer of Victory* (New York: The Viking Press, 1973), 329.
12. Bradley, *A Soldier's Story*, 196.
13. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 6.
14. Ibid., 7.
15. Ibid., 10.
16. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 63.

Normandy was less heavily defended than the Pas de Calais for a reason. The English Channel was much wider at Normandy. Normandy was also further southwest, placing it further from Germany. A third problem with Normandy was that it had only one port, located at Cherbourg, large enough to support Allied logistical needs.[17] Nevertheless, Normandy was chosen by COSSAC on the belief that, despite geographical and logistical issues, it held a much higher chance of success than the Pas de Calais. This decision gained approval by the Allied Supreme Command, and British backing was achieved from Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, the "operational command of [Allied] ground forces for the invasion of Europe," after Montgomery made some significant changes to the invasion plan.[18] He proposed a larger invasion front with more landing zones, the abandonment of the invasion of southern France (codenamed Operation Anvil), and the use of Airborne forces prior to the amphibious assault on Hitler's Atlantic Wall. Eisenhower supported Montgomery's proposal.[19] The plan was named Overlord, and the invasion date, D-Day, set for June 5, 1944, later pushed back to June 6 due to bad weather conditions. H-Hour, the time of the landings, would be 6:30 a.m.

The United States was assigned two beaches on the western end of the invasion site where American forces would, it was anticipated, quickly secure the vital port of Cherbourg. One of them, initially codenamed Beach 313, was not ideal. It was a roughly four-mile, crescent-shaped beach. The high water mark could vary by as much as 600 yards from low to high tide.

The beach proved to be a fantastic natural defensive position for the Germans. German troops fortified the beach, as historian Cornelius Ryan detailed, by installing "eight concrete bunkers with guns of 75 millimeters or larger caliber; 35 pillboxes with artillery pieces of various sizes and/or automatic weapons; 4 batteries of artillery; 18 antitank guns; 6 mortar pits; 35 rocket-launching sites, each with four 38-millimeter rocket tubes; and no less than 85 machine-gun nests."[20] Filling the beach were countless mines and beach obstacles designed to stop landing craft, vehicles, and infantry. Thought to be defended by one battalion of the German 716th Division, poorly-trained and poorly-equipped, unknown to the Allies it was in fact defended by three battalions of the more elite 352nd Division.[21] Despite these drawbacks, Beach 313 was "an obvious landing site, the only sand beach between the mouth of the Douve to the west and the Arromanches to the east, a distance of almost

17. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 10.
18. Adrian R. Lewis, *Omaha Beach: A Flawed Victory* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001), 125.
19. Lewis, *Omaha Beach*, 126–130.
20. Cornelius Ryan, *The Longest Day: June 6, 1944* (New York: Touchstone, 1959), 187.
21. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 323.

forty kilometers."[22] When the beach was finalized as a landing site, it was renamed Omaha.[23]

Initially, because of its necessity as a landing site, the beach assault was assigned to elements of two U.S. Army divisions. The 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division, supported by amphibious tanks, would attack the right flank of the beach in sectors, named (from left to right) Easy Green, Dog Red, Dog White, and Dog Green.[24] The 16th Regiment of the 1st Infantry Division, also supported by amphibious tanks, would assault the left flank of the beach in sectors, called (from left to right) Easy Red, Fox Green, and Fox Red.[25] Their main objectives were to cover demolitions teams as they cleared the beach of obstacles and to secure the five heavily-defended draws along the beach so as to allow vehicles to quickly get off the beach.[26] To facilitate the destruction of obstacles, the men would be landing just after low tide.[27] This would give soldiers a huge exposed area to cross, but the massive aerial and naval bombardment—starting at sunrise, 5:58 A.M., and continuing to five minutes before the landings—was supposed to flatten all opposition and cover the beach with craters to provide the landing soldiers with cover from potential enemy fire.[28]

22. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 320.
23. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 11.
24. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 121.
25. Ibid., 346.
26. Gerald Astor, *June 6, 1944: The Voices of D-Day* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1994), 223.
27. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 119.
28. Ibid., 118.

The plans were in place, but even the best of plans can go awry, and the operation was far from ideal. Nevertheless, in the early morning hours of June 6, young soldiers of the 29th and 1st Infantry Divisions boarded assault craft in rough waters. Predawn light illuminated their approach as a massive—yet, as it turned out, hugely-ineffective—bombardment crashed down on German-occupied France. Fear and uncertainty filled the Allied general staff who had planned the invasion. They had been like gods, assigning the movements and tasks of thousands of Allied forces. But now they were helpless. The fate of the war, and very well the world, was held in the hands of a group of young men who crouched wet, miserable, scared, and uncertain in their landing craft that slowly lumbered through white-capped waves toward a smoke-shrouded beach.

A Morning on Hell's Shores

Widerstansnesten (resistance nest) 62 was one of the main defensive fortifications on Dog Green sector of Omaha Beach. Its job was to protect the vital paved road of the Vierville Draw. After the initial bombardment, German soldiers of the 352nd Division rushed to prepared defensive positions along the bluffs overlooking Omaha Beach.

What they saw shocked them: allied landing craft coming directly for them. "They must be crazy," Sergeant Krone declared. "Are they going to swim ashore?

Right under our muzzles?"[29] The Germans received orders to hold their fire until the Americans reached the waterline. There the slaughter would ensue.

The landing craft approaching the Vierville Draw were filled with the men of A Company, 116th Infantry Regiment, 29thDivision, otherwise known as the Bedford Boys. Because of their ability to use the still-visible Vierville church steeple behind the draw as a reference point, they were one of the few units of the first wave to land on target.[30] Their company would have to face the heavy fortifications of the all-important Vierville draw alone until the second wave arrived. Currents at 2.7 knots going with the rising tide on Omaha Beach, together with wind pushing ten to eighteen knots, created three to six foot waves that pushed landing craft to the left, away from A Company. Most of the LCVPs operated by American sailors were ill-designed to function in the swirling currents of the English Channel, leaving units like A Company, which had British sailors familiar with the Channel, isolated. Their isolation allowed the Germans to concentrate their fire to devastating effect. According to Ambrose, "Half of E Company was more than two kilometers to the east of its assigned sector."[31]

"Where," Captain Robert Walker yelled as he saw the pristine, green terrain of the bluffs, "is the damned Air Corps?"[32]

29. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 322.
30. Ibid., 327.
31. Ibid., 324.
32. Ibid., 323.

Sub-Lieutenant Jimmy Green, an English operator of one of Company A's LCAs, saw the state of the beach and feared for the men he was taking into hell. No B26 bombs had cratered the beach; instead, Omaha was as "'flat as a pancake.'"[33] General Bradley later explained the failure this way: "In bombing through the overcast, air had deliberately delayed its drop to lessen the danger of a spill-over on craft approaching the shore. This margin for safety had undermined the effectiveness of the heavy air mission. To the seasick infantry," he continued, "this failure in air bombing was to mean many more casualties upon Omaha Beach" than there might have been.[34] Even if the bombs had landed on target, many were set to impact fuses so that they would not crater the beach *too* badly.[35] This made the bombs completely ineffective against heavy fortifications like those on Omaha Beach where delay fuses were needed but not used.[36]

33. Alex Kershaw, *The Bedford Boys: One American Town's Ultimate D-Day Sacrifice* (Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press, 2003), 127.
34. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 96.
35. Ibid., 77.
36. Impact fuses were chosen because Allied planners wanted to limit cratering the beaches, which after all would function as artificial ports for landing more forces and supporting the massive logistical needs of the invasion force. Impact fuses do not have the penetrating power to destroy sturdy concrete fortifications such as those on the bluffs overlooking Omaha Beach. Delay fuses will penetrate their target before detonating, causing massive damage to a fortification such as a bunker. Today's "bunker buster" bombs function on the principle of a delayed fuse. For a detailed chart of the bombing plan of Omaha Beach see Joseph Balkoski's *Omaha Beach*, 77.

In addition, nearly half of the sixty-four amphibious Sherman DD tanks that were to land ten minutes before the infantry on the Omaha Beach to help neutralize German positions ended up at the bottom of the channel due to the poor planning and rough waters.[37] The ineffectiveness of DD tanks proved that the untested technology should never have been implemented by planning staff. Instead, the LCTs (Landing Craft Tank, essentially a larger LCA that could carry four Sherman DD tanks) that brought the DD tanks to within 5,500 yards of the beach should have brought the tanks all the way to the shore, dropping them off intact and together on the beach to concentrate their firepower.[38]

An unknown Navy Lieutenant recognized the flaws of the DD tanks and, disobeying orders, commanded his LCTs to take the 743rd Tank Battalion all the way to the beach instead of following the plan. Seven of his eight LCTs made it to the beach, bringing 28 much-needed tanks to the 29th Infantry's aid.[39] These tanks accounted for the vast majority of tanks that made it to the beach at all. The firepower they gave and the lives they saved cannot be measured, although the fact that they came in first without the infantry allowed the Germans to concentrate their fire on them for a time and reduced the tanks' effectiveness.

Having the DD tanks come in ten minutes before the infantry defied the doctrine of combined arms that armies were learning during World War II and the Germans showed mastery of in their *blitzkriegs* at the beginning of the war. The few that made it to the beach were isolated, allowing the Germans to concentrate fire on them. They should have come in on-line with the infantry to provide mutual support. Combat engineers should have either been in the LCTs or in LCAs or LCVPs in formation with the tank-carrying LCTs so they would be in position no matter where the current pushed them to clear a path through obstacles to allow tanks to get up the beach. Instead, engineers were to arrive with the infantry ten minutes after the tanks in LCMs (Landing Craft Mechanized).[40]

This caused engineers to be in one place on the beach and tanks at another. The few DD tanks that made it to the beach could not make it through the obstacle belt because they did not land with combat engineers. In short, planners ignored the ability of the current to cause landing craft and DD tanks to miss landing objectives. If the engineers, infantry, and tanks all landed on the same type craft, they might not have landed

37. Ryan, *The Longest Day*, 205–6.
38. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 102. The historian Adrian R. Lewis makes a similar argument in his book *Omaha Beach: A Flawed Victory*, although he argues that United States forces should have dropped off their DD tanks from their LCTs closer to shore like the British did where pre-invasion studies had shown a much higher success rate for DD tanks getting to the shoreline.
39. Joseph Balkoski, *Beyond the Beachhead: The 29th Infantry Division in Normandy* (Mechanicsburg, PA: Stackpole Books, 1989), 129.
40. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 148.

on target, but they would have landed together, which is the most important consideration.

As A Company landed at 6:30 A.M., exactly on time, the German positions along the bluff remained menacingly quiet. Captain Fellers, the commanding officer of A Company, and his men began to advance up the beach through the rising surf along with the two DD tanks that had made it to Dog Green. As they progressed up the beach, the Germans opened fire with MG-42 machine guns, mortars, rifles, and artillery fire. The men of A Company had never experienced combat, and their baptism of fire was an unfair and swift slaughter. Every single man of the thirty-one in Sub-Lieutenant Green's LCA including Captain Fellers died in the wall of death that rained down on A Company. Of the 155 men of A company, 100 died in those opening minutes. Most of the others fell wounded.[41] If other boats had landed on target with a more effective barrage from the Navy and Air Corps and tanks in a higher concentration with supporting combat engineers in the same place, far fewer casualties would have been sustained.

The survivors froze and just searched for any cover they could find on the beach as bullets whizzed by and shells crashed down around them, sending deadly shrapnel flying indiscriminately through the air. Some retreated to neck deep water or hid behind the various obstacles littering the beach. Others took cover behind the two DD tanks.[42]

Flamethrower operator Dickie Overstreet was one such soldier. He quickly disposed of his flamethrower to get ashore and took a rifle from one of his dead fellow soldiers. He sought cover behind a DD tank sitting along the shore, stuck behind obstacles with no engineers to aid its progress. The tank promptly took a direct hit from a German mortar or artillery round. Overstreet realized that the Germans would target large clusters of troops that were bound to be behind a tank or destroyed landing craft. He immediately ran away from the tank and was wounded by machine gun fire. He eventually made it up the beach and survived the day huddled behind the sea wall.[43]

As historian Joseph Balkoski stated so well, "The men of Bedford had trained for almost three and a half years for this moment, only to be cut down in seconds like stalks of wheat felled by a scythe."[44] Their training failed to prepare them to move forward into enemy fire, something that many combat veterans learned by necessity. Instead, most of the men sought ineffective cover or fell back into deeper water to hide.

All over Omaha Beach, the first wave of the 1st Infantry Division and 29th Infantry Division met stiff resistance and death wherever they went. The green 29th Infantry particularly suffered through their horrible baptism of fire. The battle-

41. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 121.

42. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 121.

43. Kershaw, *The Bedford Boys*, 130–131.

44. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 123.

hardened men of the 1st Infantry knew to quickly advance into and through the incoming hail of fire as they took the left portion of the beach. Instead of taking cover, many of them rushed forward. Allied planners should have landed two regular army, experienced divisions instead of just the 1st Infantry Division. An experienced division such as the 3rd Infantry should have been transferred from the Italian theater to northwest Europe to accompany the 1st Division in the first wave on Omaha instead of the 29th.[45] Captain Edward Wozenski, commanding officer of E Company, 16th Infantry, 1st Division, remembers how his men courageously pushed forward:

> *The boats were hurriedly emptied, the men jumping into water shoulder-high under intense machine gun and antitank fire. No sooner was the last man out than the boat received two direct hits from an antitank gun, and was believed to have burned or blown up. Now all the men in the company could be seen wading ashore into the field of intense fire from machine guns, rifles, antitank guns, and mortars. Due to the heavy sea, the strong cross current, and the loads that the men were carrying, no one could run. It was just a slow, methodical march with absolutely no cover up to the enemy's commanding positions. Men fell, left and right, and the water reddened with their blood. A few men hit underwater mines of some sort and were blown out of the sea. The others staggered on to the obstacle-cover, yet completely exposed beach.... Men were falling on all sides, but the survivors still moved forward and eventually worked to a pile of [shingle] at the high water mark. This offered momentary protection against the murderous fire of close-in enemy guns, but his mortars were still raising hell.*[46]

The recognition, by officers and enlisted alike, that the beach offered no cover—despite the false security of beach obstacles and destroyed tanks or landing craft—saved many of the 1st Infantry Division's soldiers who hit Omaha Beach. Most were experienced combat soldiers who served in North Africa and Sicily before being tapped for the invasion of Normandy. Unlike the 29th Infantry, they were not crippled by the hail of incoming fire, saving many of their lives.

Despite some men, mostly 1st Infantry, making it up the beach and to the sea wall or shingle that provided temporary cover, there seemed to be too few to take the German-held bluffs ahead. The surviving men who stayed on the beach were slowly being wiped out, and those at the shingle or sea wall clung to their bit of cover as German mortars began to attempt to neutralize this cover as well. Here and there, groups of enlisted and noncommissioned officers and maybe a junior officer decided they must push on, for

45. The argument of having two combat-experienced divisions was first proposed in detail by historian Adrian R. Lewis in *Omaha Beach: A Flawed Victory*, though he does not make the same distinction that I do between regular and National Guard units.

46. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 137.

that was their only chance to live.

Lieutenant Spaulding of the E Company, 16th Infantry, 1st Division and his men were one such group who seized the initiative and pushed forward past the false safety of the sea wall. Spaulding and his men blew a hole with a Bangalore through the barbed wire holding them on the beach and pushed forward.[47]

By this time, it was roughly 7:00 A.M., thirty minutes after the first wave landed. The subsequent waves would soon begin to hit the beaches at around 7:15 A.M. In small groups, men of the 1st Infantry on the left flank began to push up the beach and toward the bluffs through murderous fire and horrendous casualties. The situation for the 29th, particularly on Dog Green with the few survivors of A Company, was dire. The only way out of the jaws of death would be to go straight into the monster itself.

"Rangers Lead the Way!"

In an attempt to salvage the quandary on Dog Green, the 5th Rangers and two companies of the 2nd Rangers, the elite of the U.S. Army, were diverted from their original position to Dog Green to aid in the efforts there when they did not receive the code words to land on Point Du Hoc.[48] The two companies of the 2nd Rangers and Lt. Bob Edlin found themselves landing in the killing fields of Dog Green sector. They waded through the shoulder-deep cold water of the English Channel amid enemy fire as the lifeless bodies of their comrades floated by, face down. Somehow, they made it to the water's edge where the dejected soldiers of the 116th Regiment clung to life, utterly defeated. Edlin urged them forward, but to no avail. The Rangers rushed across the beach, hell-bent on completing the objective. Men all around Lt. Edlin were gunned down.

As Edlin made it to the safety of the sea wall, he realized how few men had successfully made the run to the wall. For a reason unknown to him, he went back into the maelstrom to urge his men forward. He ran up and down the beach stirring scared men into action. Edlin was shot in both legs as he returned to the sea wall. Still, he and his comrades moved forward in any way they could. Edlin crawled as he fought the pain of his multiple bullet wounds. One of Edlin's sergeants crawled from the safety of the sea wall through intense fire and dragged Edlin to safety, quite possibly saving his life. As mortar fire came in on Edlin and his comrades, the sergeant and a medic covered Edlin, sheltering him from incoming fire. "They were the heroes," said Lt. Edlin.[49]

With all the officers dead or wounded, Edlin ordered Bill White, his platoon sergeant and now the company commander, to get his Rangers forward and off the beach. Edlin recalled what happened when he ordered Sergeant White and

47. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 350.
48. Moen and Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant*, 27.
49. Moen and Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant*, 28, 90–91.

the remaining men to move forward: "Everybody that could move went. There were only four or five of them and they got up and went. That was all that we had left. They went. No questions asked." That small group of Rangers pushed up the Vierville Draw courageously and neutralized most of the German positions on the bluffs. "There were no generals here, no colonels. Just three sergeants and a couple of pfcs."[50]

To the left of the 2nd Rangers, the 5th Rangers landed on Dog White. They were supposed to land on Dog Green, but their veteran commanding officer Colonel Max Schneider saw the slaughter on Dog Green and the heavy smoke on Dog White caused by a burning LST or LCT and the relatively safe situation on Dog Red.[51] He knew that this smoke screen would provide his men cover as they advanced on the less heavily defended beach. Then they could flank the heavy defenses of the Vierville Draw. The value of a combat-experienced commanding officer was demonstrated, and many lives were saved.

General Norman "Dutch" Cota, commanding officer of the 29th Infantry, was already on Dog White trying to get his men moving when the Rangers surged onto the beach. It is uncertain exactly what General Cota said as he valiantly urged his men forward. He encouraged his men to follow the Rangers' example, and told the Rangers to remember just who they were. The legend that is remembered is the shout, "Rangers lead the way!" Today, that is the motto of the U.S. Army Rangers.[52] Through the efforts of General Cota and the elite 5th Rangers under Colonel Schneider, the German strong points along the 29th Infantry's sector were mostly neutralized by 8:30 A.M., two hours after the initial landings.[53]

Meanwhile, the 1st Infantry, spearheaded by Lt. Spaulding, Capt. Joe Dawson, and Capt. Robert Walker, was pushing its way up the bluff and taking the various strategic draws in the 1st Infantry's area of operations.[54] Slowly but surely, Omaha Beach was being secured. Hitler's Atlantic Wall had been breached.

No Greater Love

By day's end, that Wall had been toppled. U.S. forces secured a vital toehold on Omaha Beach from which they could launch operations to break out of Normandy and start on the long road to Berlin. The Allied victory throughout Normandy spelled the beginning of the end for Germany in World War II.

Despite the eventual success of the operation, the pre-invasion bombardment proved to be completely ineffective. The way in which the tanks, engineers, and infantry arrived on the battleground separately diluted combat effectiveness.

50. Moen and Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant*, 91–93.
51. Moen and Heinen, *The Fool Lieutenant*, 93; Ambrose, *D-Day*, 427.
52. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 430.
53. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 236.
54. Ambrose, *D-Day*, 352.

The planners did not account for strong cross-current conditions. U.S. landing craft operators were poorly trained to get troops to the correct location through swirling currents. Inexperienced National Guardsmen were asked to do a job that should have been assigned to hardened veterans. Amphibious DD tanks were a complete disaster when implemented the way planners intended. When so much went so terribly wrong, how did the battle for Omaha Beach not end with the Germans holding the heights as the sun set over France on the night of June 6, 1944?

The 4,720 casualties on Omaha Beach were staggering, but if it had not been for the ability of officers to adapt to the changing situation on the battlefield and seize the initiative like Colonel Schneider or the unknown Navy Lieutenant and the ability of small groups of young men to never quit like Lt. Edlin's men or Lt. Spaulding and Capt. Dawson, the operation to seize Omaha Beach might have been an utter failure.[55] At the very least, the casualty numbers would have been even higher.

There are surely countless unsung heroes of Omaha Beach whose names and deeds of valor and self-sacrifice are lost to the annals of history. We are forever indebted to them, the named and unnamed, the living and the dead, and we must not forget what they did. Their reasons for fighting so courageously varied. Some fought for the ideal of freedom and nationalism, others for their families back home, but most say they fought for the man next to them. It was simple: they did not want to let their buddies down. Though they varied in preparedness, the courage of each and every man who set foot on the killing fields of Omaha Beach should never be questioned, for so many of them did lay down their lives on that lonely stretch of beach so that others might live.

55. Balkoski, *Omaha Beach*, 352.

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UNESCO TAKES ON THE TALIBAN

The Fight to Save the Buddhas at Bamiyan

Eleanor Boggs

"Their golden color sparkles on every side,"
said a traveler of the two vast standing Buddhas.
For fifteen centuries they had stood here—
towering above the valley, with their battered faces,
broken-off arms and all, undisturbed
in their cusped sandstone niches
hewn out of the sheer cliffs of the Hindu Kush,
spangled with a honeycomb of monasteries
and chanting stupas—as a stairway to heaven.

"We don't understand why everyone is
so worked up; we are only breaking stones,"
chuckled the soldiers as they blew up
the statues, leaving a gap in the world.
The fabled Silk Road hangs in tatters now.
The wind howls in the poplars as it did once
when the valley was trampled underfoot
by the Great Khan and his avenging horde.
Who will stop the Hun from knocking on ***our*** *door?*

R. Parthasarathy

In early March 2001, the Taliban destroyed the two giant Buddha statues in Bamiyan, Afghanistan under direction from Mullah Muhammed Omar. The Buddha statues, constructed fourteen centuries ago, were the largest Buddhist statues in the world.[1] In September of 2000—less than a year before the destruction—Mullah Omar ordered the same statues protected due to their importance as significant artifacts of Afghan

1. Llewelyn Morgan, *The Buddhas of Bamiyan (Wonders of the World)*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2012).

cultural heritage and also because they were a source of income for the country's tourism industry.[2] However, on February 26, 2001 Mullah Omar reversed his declaration of preservation and sentenced the religious statues to destruction "so that no one can worship or respect them in the future."[3] The Taliban's team, along with Pakistani and Arab engineers, drilled holes into the two statues and detonated explosives including dynamite and anti-aircraft weapons.[4]

In his poem "Stones of Bamiyan," Indian poet R. Parthasarathy indicated the Bamiyan Buddhas' cultural importance. Although the statues no longer held significance as religious icons to the entirely Islamic nation of Afghanistan, they had stood in the Bamiyan valley for over a thousand years physically commemorating the lasting impact of Buddhism and the Silk Road economy that transformed Bamiyan into a meeting point of different cultures. Given the cultural significance of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the destruction of the statues was meant to display the Taliban's power in Afghanistan in response to the lack of recognition of the Taliban government by the majority of world powers.[5] Before eradicating the Buddha statues at Bamiyan, the Taliban came into conflict with the international community on a variety of issues including women's rights, providing refuge for terrorists, and international aid to Afghanistan.[6] The Taliban rejected criticism with the proclamation that outsiders had no right to protest Afghanistan's internal affairs and that the government's Islamic system was above secular law.[7]

As the world community learned of the Taliban's plan for the Bamiyan Buddhas, attempts to protect the icons and prevent their destruction emerged from global agencies, including the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). UNESCO worked to prevent the destruction by bringing global attention to the Buddhas and communicating with the Taliban. However, the Taliban's religious agenda, determination to gain international recognition, and influence from Al-Qaeda blocked these efforts, which resulted in the agency's failure and the demolition of the giant Buddha statues.

2. Morgan, *The Buddhas of Bamiyan (Wonders of the World)*.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid. The engineers were brought in at a later point in the destruction process. Locals were forced to place explosives in the drilled holes by dropping down the sides of the Buddha statues by rope. The people of Bamiyan are chiefly Shi'a, whereas the Taliban is an aggressive movement of Pashtun and Sunni peoples—the religious and ethnic differences between the groups is the source of the Taliban's detestation of the locals.
5. Thomas Barfield, "Idol Threats," *Religion in the News* 4 (Summer 2001). The only countries that recognized the Taliban government in Afghanistan were Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.

How UNESCO Functions

UNESCO acts as an agency of the United Nations to protect world heritage. The organization is the first-responder of sorts to threats to cultural heritage such as Mullah Omar's orders to destroy the giant Buddhas.[8] Founded during World War II, UNESCO's mission is to encourage scientific ties between nations on a global scale, to promote the accessibility of education, and to protect cultural heritage in order to strengthen acceptance of different cultures.[9] The agency was founded after the allied governments expressed concern for the educational institutions in Europe that suffered due to World War II.[10] The organization expanded their focus on education to include cultural and scientific international cooperation in 1944 and 1945.[11]

The main body of UNESCO is the General Conference, comprised of representatives from the nations that hold membership in the United Nations, which meets every two years to decide on policies, focused lines of work for the organization, and the budget.[12] The Executive Board, with fifty-eight members elected by the General Conference, carries out the decisions of the General Conference as well as functions assigned by the agency's constitution and agreements with the United Nations and its other specialized organizations.[13]

UNESCO works to form legal policies that protect culture and promote worldwide support for the preservation of global cultural heritage.[14] The agency holds conventions, such as The Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003), that incorporate the shared values of international leaders into treaties that govern the protection of cultural heritage.[15] UNESCO includes "ancient archaeological sites, intangible and underwater heritage, museum collections, oral traditions and other forms of heritage" in the agency's definition of cultural heritage.[16]

UNESCO's Efforts to Save the Bamiyan Buddhas

UNESCO's efforts to communicate with the Taliban and amass global support to preserve the Buddha statues demonstrated the role of UNESCO as an international force protecting world heritage. The agency's efforts failed due to the Taliban's quest for international recognition, an agenda that was shaped by religious ideals and rejection of

8. UNESCO, "Introducing UNESCO," Accessed November 10, 2013. http://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco.
9. Ibid.
10. Gene M. Lyons, "International Study of UNESCO," *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences* 31 (April 1978): 5-16.
11. Ibid.
12. UNESCO, "Governing bodies," Accessed November 10, 2013, http://en.unesco.org/about-us/introducing-unesco.
13. Ibid.
14. UNESCO, "Protecting Our Heritage and Fostering Creativity," Accessed November 10, 2013, http://en.unesco.org/themes/ protecting-our-heritage-and-fostering-creativity.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.

Western influence and influenced by Al-Qaeda. Even though UNESCO did not prevent the demolition of the Buddha statues at Bamiyan, the event acts as a case study of how UNESCO defines world heritage sites and the extent of its authority over these sites.

The Buddhas of Bamiyan met UNESCO's standards of world heritage because the statues physically represented the enduring influence of the Silk Road, a series of trade routes that spanned approximately 7,000 miles connecting the east to the west from 200 B.C. to the 14th century A.D.[17] The Bamiyan valley became a meeting point of clashing cultures and a center of Buddhism by the fourth century A.D. due to its location at the intersection of roads from China, India, and Persia. Its location provided a pathway for Buddhism to travel along the Silk Road and spread into the area that is now Afghanistan.[18] The cliffs of Bamiyan were Afghanistan's most valuable archaeological sites, exhibiting the largest Buddha statues in the world. The Bamiyan caves also claimed cultural and historical value through Buddhist mosaics, lesser statues, and evidence of monks living in the caves.[19]

The larger statue, on the western side of the cliffs, stood at fifty-five meters high in its niche in the cliff; the other statue of the Buddha at thirty-eight meters was shorter on the eastern side.[20] Stupas were built throughout other Buddhist centers in Afghanistan, but not Bamiyan—the giant sculptures represented a break from former Buddhist tradition.[21] The departure from building stupas was evidence of the Silk Road's impact on Bamiyan: large sculptures came from western culture, in Egypt, Greece, and Rome.[22] Without the merger of cultures at Bamiyan through the Silk Road, Buddhism would not have come into contact with such decorative architecture. The appearances of the statues also bore western characteristics seen in classical sculpture. The Buddha statues wore a robe similar to a toga, they had a straight nose and distinct brow, and their hair was wavy.[23] There were Buddhist influences as well, seen through eyes with heavy lids, elongated ears, and a plump face.[24] The giant Buddha statues represented a period of transition for Buddhism and also for Bamiyan as the valley came into contact with the non-materialistic trade of the Silk Road, and experienced an influx of differing cultures.

Once Mullah Omar announced the destruction of the Buddha statues, UNESCO recognized the Taliban threat to Afghan culture and reached out

17. Subhakanta Behera, "India's Encounter with the Silk Road," *Economic and Political Weekly* 37 (Dec. 21-27, 2002): 5077-5080.
18. Behera, "India's Encounter with the Silk Road."
19. Takayasu Higuchi and Gina Barnes, "Bamiyan: Buddhist Cave Temples in Afghanistan." *World Archaeology* 27 (Oct. 1995): 282-302.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
23. Behera, "India's Encounter with the Silk Road."
24. Ibid.

to organizations in Japan and Switzerland to arrange for the protection of Afghan artifacts of cultural significance.[25] The agreement with Switzerland proved to be especially helpful. Three years before the Taliban's actions at Bamiyan, a museum opened in Bubendorf, Switzerland to harbor Afghan artifacts. According to the museum's founder, as stated in an article published by the Archaeological Institute of America, the museum and exhibitions came second to protecting Afghan cultural objects. Artifacts donated and transported to the museum from Afghanistan included 2,300-year-old bronzes from the reign of Alexander the Great and first-century A.D. Begram Ivories.[26]

Architect Paul Bucherer-Dietschi founded the Afghanistan Museum in Bubendorf, Switzerland in 1998 by negotiating an agreement between the Taliban and the Northern Alliance.[27] It was the same year Mullah Omar initially declared the Buddhas at Bamiyan and other items of Afghan heritage would be protected.[28] In 1999 the Swiss government met with the director of UNESCO's World Heritage Center, who approved of the idea for a cultural sanctuary. However, UNESCO was still bound to its 1970 convention and did not officially support the museum until July of 2001, though it was established in 1999.[29]

Although the agency did not directly support the Afghanistan Museum from its beginning, UNESCO managed to create a way for cultural objects to find protection there. UNESCO developed a policy that permitted the removal of cultural objects under serious threat—with the country of origin's permission and under the condition that the items would be returned.[30] The Afghanistan Museum and the methods behind its establishment demonstrated the limitations of UNESCO in a cultural crisis, as well as how UNESCO handled these restrictions.

Following the release of the Taliban's decision to destroy the statues at Bamiyan, UNESCO launched a campaign to garner global support to save the Buddha statues. UNESCO also

25. Christian Manhart, "The Afghan Cultural Heritage Crisis: UNESCO's Response to the Destruction of Statues in Afghanistan."
26. Kristin M. Romey, "The Race to Save Afghan Culture," *Archaeology 55* (May/June 2002): 18-25. These items are not on display for preservation reasons.
27. Ibid.
28. Morgan, *The Buddhas of Bamiyan* (Wonders of the World).
29. Romey, "The Race to Save Afghan Culture." The museum violates UNESCO and the international community's "near-sacred policy of keeping objects of archaeological and cultural importance in their country of origin." The museum's existence and activities are possible because even though Afghanistan and Switzerland are both members of UNESCO, neither countries have signed the 1970 Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property—the convention that forbids the transfer of cultural artifacts out of their country of origin without approval.
30. Romey, "The Race to Save Afghan Culture." This "special" policy allowed UNESCO to support a Japanese program dedicated to saving Afghan cultural artifacts as well. UNESCO ambassador in Tokyo, Ikuo Hirayama, sponsored the program.

attempted to communicate with the Taliban. The agency created an online petition to lobby for the protection of objects of Afghan cultural heritage and started a special funds-in-trust account to finance safeguarding efforts.[31] After Mullah Omar's intention to demolish the Buddha statues became public, UNESCO made initial attempts at communication with the Taliban. The organization intended to sway the Taliban's decision with multiple appeals and press releases. Christian Manhart, Chief of the UNESCO Section of Museums and Cultural Objects, reported that UNESCO issued two appeals to the Taliban, the first of which was distributed to the Pakistani and international press. They also published three other press releases; however, it is unclear where these statements were distributed. The Director-General sent a personal appeal to Mullah Omar through the Taliban ambassador in Islamabad to plead for the Buddhas. A special representative of the Director-General, Pierre Lafrance, also met with the Taliban Foreign Minister in Kandahar and the Taliban Minister of Culture. [32]

After the appeals, the UNESCO Director-General met with ambassadors from a number of Islamic nations including those who acknowledged the Taliban government. Ambassadors from nations such as Pakistan and Egypt gave their support to UNESCO's efforts to stop the destruction. At UNESCO's request, Muslim religious leaders from Egypt, Iraq, and Pakistan took part by issuing fatwas—Islamic religious rulings—against the Taliban's plans for Bamiyan.[33] Despite UNESCO's efforts to save the statues, the Taliban carried through with the demolition of the monumental Buddhas.

After the destruction of the Buddha statues, The Executive Board drew up a draft resolution in June of 2001 that labeled the destruction as a crime against humanity's shared heritage and challenged UNESCO to develop better methods of protection of cultural heritage.[34] The resolution acknowledged the Buddhas of Bamiyan as a world heritage site, therefore solidifying its value to the international community.

The Taliban's Religious Reasoning and Agenda Behind the Destruction

The religious motivation behind the Taliban's decision to destroy the statues at Bamiyan stemmed from abhorrence toward idolatry. Mullah Omar's timing of the destruction reflected one of the most religiously significant periods in the Islamic lunar year, the Hijri calendar and was observed throughout Afghanistan.[35] Called the Hajj

31. Manhart, "The Afghan Cultural Heritage Crisis: UNESCO's Response to the Destruction of Statues in Afghanistan."
32. Ibid.
33. Manhart, "The Afghan Cultural Heritage Crisis: UNESCO's Response to the Destruction of Statues in Afghanistan." Unfortunately, I was unable to find translations of the original fatwas or any reactions from the Taliban to these religious rulings.
34. Ibid.
35. Jamal J. Elias, "(Un) making Idolatry:

pilgrimage, Muslims celebrate Abraham's rift with his ancestors' practices of idolatry as an act of heroism from March third to March sixth by taking the pilgrimage to Mecca or vicariously participating in rituals.[36] The holiest day of the Hijri calendar, Eid al-adha, was the last day of the Hajj pilgrimage; demolition work was suspended to celebrate this day.[37] By demolishing the Buddhas during this religiously sensitive period, the Taliban actively honored the memory of Abraham in the Qur'an. The Taliban's strong Islamic ideals acted as justification for the destruction to Mullah Omar and other members of the Taliban.

Mullah Omar demonstrated these religious values in his reaction to the Metropolitan Museum of Art's offer to pay for the removal of all transportable Afghan artifacts during the Hajj period.[38] Mullah Omar responded by asking his fellow Muslims, "Do you prefer to be a smasher of idols or a seller of idols?" His answer outlined the hypocrisy of a religion profiting from idolatry while simultaneously condemning the practice of idol-worship.[39] Mullah Omar's rhetorical question echoed the words of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazna, an Afghan who sacked the Shiva temple at Somnath, Gujrat in 1025 A.D.[40] The Sultan became a legend for refusing to accept ransom for the temple's main icon by declaring to be a smasher of idols, not a seller of them.[41] Omar's point also reflected another justification used by the Taliban, which claimed that UNESCO was willing to pay for the statues but did not offer any money to help the Afghan people.[42] By attempting to stop the destruction of the Buddha statues, UNESCO unintentionally offended the Taliban. The Taliban interpreted the organization's actions as idolatry—at the very least, they interpreted it as preserving another religion's idols instead of providing aid to Afghanistan.

The source of Islam's distrust of idolatry and iconoclasm arose from the religion's avoidance of shirk, a word that originally meant affiliating other deities with God and later became a term for polytheism.[43] However, in medieval Islam absolute destruction of idols was not common.[44] The head and face of an idol were targets for transformation or physical damage—similar practices occurred in Roman, Byzantine, and early Christianity.[45] Recognizing the similarity between Muslim iconoclasts with

From Mecca to Bamiyan." F*uture Anterior: Journal of Historic Presevation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 4 (Winter 2007): 12-29.
36. Ibid. The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas started March 1st 2001.
37. Ibid.
38. Elias, "(Un) making Idolatry: From Mecca to Bamiyan."
39. Ibid. Mullah Omar's rebuttal came on the eve of Eid al-adha, the holiest day of the Islamic year.
40. Ibid.
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid. The U.S. government dismissed the Taliban's claim on March 20th, 2001.
43. Finbarr Barry Floyd, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum," *The Art Bulletin* 84 (Dec. 2002): 641-659.
44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

iconoclasts of other cultures and religions avoided the stereotype of Muslim hatred towards idols. To further illustrate this point, Arabic and Persian texts from the tenth to thirteenth centuries revealed the Buddhas of Bamiyan as wonders rather than idols that needed to be obliterated.[46] Therefore, assuming that the destruction of the Buddha statues stemmed from a long-term hatred of idols is incorrect. The Taliban's destruction of idols such as the giant Buddhas comes from the group's more modern and extreme Islamic ideals enacted to reject the Western world.

Mullah Omar's declaration of the plans to destroy the statues indicated that the Taliban wanted the world's attention—attention to the Taliban's authority in the face of a Western world that had sanctioned their government for harboring Osama bin Laden.[47] The Taliban's escalation prior to the incident at Bamiyan provides evidence of bin Laden and Al-Qaeda's influence in Afghanistan. Arab fighters from Al-Qaeda were instrumental to the Taliban's capture of Bamiyan and much of northern Afghanistan, which only solidified the relationship between the two groups.[48] According to the director of the Kabul public library, the Taliban removed inappropriate books under the direction of an Arab member of Al-Qaeda.[49] The Al-Qaeda movement started with international goals whereas the Taliban featured more domestic interests until the destruction of the Buddha statues.[50] This difference between the two groups demonstrated how the Taliban's agenda changed to reflect the more aggressive and expansive Al-Qaeda.

Mullah Omar's political agenda became increasingly concerned with international attention due to the influence of Al-Qaeda.[51] After the announcement to destroy the Buddhas went public, the Taliban maintained the spotlight by bringing in Western reporters to Bamiyan to document the results of the destruction.[52] The fact that the Taliban invited foreigners to Bamiyan reinforces the idea that the group's target was not just the statues, but also a global audience. The Taliban's agenda, inspired by religious zeal, manifested in a desire to capture global awareness of its power—a goal that was met with international attention and despair towards the destruction of the giant Buddha statues.

Conclusion

Although the giant Buddhas no longer stand, their significance as symbols of the lasting impact of the Silk Road on regional religions and cultures remains in Bamiyan. The giant sculptures overlooked the Bamiyan valley

46. Floyd, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum."
47. Ibid.
48. Morgan, *The Buddhas of Bamiyan (Wonders of the World)*.
49. Ibid.
50. Ibid.
51. Morgan, *The Buddhas of Bamiyan (Wonders of the World)*. According to a U.S. ambassador to Pakistan, Mullah Omar "became a bin Laden convert, a believer in bin Ladenism."
52. Floyd, "Between Cult and Culture: Bamiyan, Islamic Iconoclasm, and the Museum."

for centuries, and UNESCO did not give up on the Buddhas even as they lay in pieces. A little over a year after the Taliban's destruction of the statues, UNESCO sent an expedition to Bamiyan to assess the damage and determine if the statues could be reconstructed.[53] They discovered enough of the larger Buddha's pieces to make a reconstruction feasible.[54] According to Christian Manhart, who headed a team of scientists and engineers, reassembling the Buddhas would take approximately 3 years and $1.5 million dollars.[55] UNESCO also made a contract with the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) to provide a security guard at the site.[56] However, it is up to the Afghan government, not UNESCO, to decide whether or not to reconstruct the Buddha statues—demonstrating the boundaries of UNESCO's jurisdiction over world cultural heritage sites.

The demolition of the giant Buddha sculptures at Bamiyan in 2001 devastated the international cultural community. The event served as an example of how UNESCO functions to protect cultural heritage, as well as its limited ability to succeed in that goal. Before the destruction, UNESCO attempted communication with the Taliban through multiple appeals and contact with Islamic ambassadors and religious leaders, such as the Taliban ambassador in Islamabad, the Taliban Foreign Minister in Kandahar, and the Taliban Minister of Culture. When direct communication did not work, UNESCO amassed global support online and worked with organizations in Japan and Switzerland, particularly with the Afghanistan Museum in Switzerland. However, the Taliban's political agenda under the influence of Osama bin Laden was concerned with proving that the Western world had no influence in Afghanistan. That ambition, together with a religious condemnation of idolatry, proved to be a disastrous combination when non-Islamic objects of Afghan heritage became a focus for the Taliban government. Even though UNESCO was not able to deter the Taliban from destroying the Buddha statues, its mission to protect Afghan cultural heritage did not end after the events of March 2001. The agency's continued interest and efforts in Bamiyan, post-destruction, not only provide evidence of the value of the monumental Buddhas to the world, but also demonstrated UNESCO's value as an international force in preserving cultural heritage, and in the case of the Bamiyan Buddhas, the physical reminders of humanity's past and progress.

53. Andrew Lawler, "Buddhas May Stretch Out, If Not Rise Again," *Science* 298 (Nov. 8, 2002): 1204.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.

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GUIBERT OF NOGENT

The Development of Rhetoric from Anti-Judaism to Anti-Semitism

Elyse Sulkey

In a famous monastery, the abbot sent a monk, raised in the faith since his childhood, to lodge in a cell attached to the church. While living in this cell, the monk fell sick and was attended by a Jew who knew medicine. As the pair became friends, the monk, curious about black magic, demanded initiation into the practice by the Jew whom he was convinced knew something about it. The Jew agreed to the monk's demands and arranged a meeting between the monk and his master, the Devil. When the day came, the monk stood before the Devil and asked to be initiated into his teaching. The Devil replied that the monk must renege his baptismal vows and offer a sacrifice before he would consider him for initiation. When the monk asked what the Devil wanted as a sacrifice, the Devil replied, "You will make me a libation of your sperm. When you have poured it out to me, you will taste it first, as it behooves the one offering the sacrifice." [1]

Despite what the reader may be inclined to think, this strange story is not a passage from a poorly written erotica novel. Instead, it was taken from the memoirs of one of the most studied clerics of the twelfth century, Guibert of Nogent. Guibert was born in 1060 on the day before Easter at Clermont-en-Beauvais.[2] He was the youngest son of Evard, a warrior of King Henry of France, and his wife, a highly pious woman.[3] They were a noble and influential family in their locality, but they were not wealthy or highly placed.[4] Evard died shortly after

1. This anecdote was taken from: Guibert, Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy. *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, trans. Paul J. Archambault (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 89-90.
2. Jay Rubenstein, *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind.* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 17.
3. Ibid.
4. John Benton, "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent." *Psychoanalytic Review*, 57.4 (1970), 567.

Guibert's birth,[5] leaving Guibert at the fringes of an already small patronage network.[6] His mother never remarried; instead she focused her efforts on providing an education for Guibert and securing a private tutor for him.[7] According to Guibert, his tutor agreed to teach him because of a dream in which an old man led the young Guibert to his bedside.[8] Eventually, Guibert entered the Church of Saint-Germer for monastic training despite his mother's insistence that he was not yet ready. By 1104, Guibert had obtained an appointment as the abbot of Nogent.[9] For a while, Guibert struggled to be accepted as a monk and was determined to prove that he was elected abbot on "merit alone."[10] During his time at Nogent, Guibert began to funnel his intellectual efforts into his writing – writings that occurred during a turbulent time of Christian-Jewish relations, a fact that is reflected in Guibert's attitudes toward Jews throughout his life's work.

Guibert of Nogent wrote *Gesta Dei per Francos*, or *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, between 1106 and 1109. It was a revision of an earlier anonymous chronicle titled *Gesta Francorum*. Though his chronicle of the First Crusade was not well known in his own time, Guibert of Nogent is today one of the best known chroniclers of the crusades, perhaps due to his autobiography *Monodiae*, or *Memoirs*, which is popularly referred to as *A Monk's Confession*. Guibert wrote his memoirs around 1115, which was quickly followed by his treatise against relic cults, *On the Relics of Saints*, in 1119. In these later works, Guibert accused Jews of using black magic; he was one of the first anti-Semitic writers to do so.[11]

In this paper, I argue that the previous anti-Judaic clerical sentiments of Guibert in *The Deeds of God through the Franks* developed into anti-Semitic rhetoric in his later works. This development will be traced chronologically through three prominent works of Guibert of Nogent: *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, and *On the Relics of Saints*.[12]

5. In "Guibert of Nogent and the Subject of History" Heather Blurton argued that Guibert developed a fascination and obsession with sexual mutilation, money, and fear of death due to his father's early death and Guibert's subsequent rearing by a strict and pious mother and tutor. Blurton's argument is similar to that of John Benton's earlier article "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," in which Benton discusses the possibility that Guibert suffered from an Oedipus complex that influenced his views of the world. It is worth noting that both Benton and Blurton postulated that psychological damage from Guibert of Nogent's early years may account for his hatred of the "other" and the fantastical charges he brought against them.

6. Rubenstein, *Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, 17-18.

7. Benton, "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," 567.

8. Rubenstein, *Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, 18.

9. Benton, "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," 574.

10. Blurton, "Guibert of Nogent and the Subject of History," 115.

11. Benton, "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," 566.

12. Another work of importance for this topic is Guibert's 1111 *On Jews and Judaizers*. In *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, Jay Rubenstein describes the arguments of other scholars that Guibert's tract against the Jews was a turning point in Christian-Jewish relations because it was the first tract to belittle and dehumanize Jews rather than treat them as respected theological colleagues. However,

This paper also discusses how the historical background of increasingly poor Christian-Jewish relations and the violence of the First Crusade fueled the development of Guibert's anti-Semitic rhetoric in the twelfth century.

Historiography

Though Guibert of Nogent was not well known to his contemporaries, modern scholarship is fascinated by the abbot who deemed himself important enough to write a memoir before memoirs became a common literary convention. In fact, there have been several attempts to untangle the mind of Guibert of Nogent and discover the reasons behind not only his self-importance but also the fantastical stories he depicts when discussing sinners, heretics, and Jews.

In 1970, John F. Benton wrote "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent." This article, published in *The Psychoanalytic Review,* focused on Guibert's formative years and argued that the death of Guibert's father eight months after his birth and Guibert's subsequent isolated childhood, reared by an extremely pious mother and strict tutor, led to the development of an Oedipus complex. Benton postulated that this complex fueled Guibert's hatred of sin and warped the way in which Guibert perceived sinners.[13]

In 1997, Steven Kruger published an article in the journal *New Literary History* entitled "Medieval Christian (Dis)Identifications: Muslims and Jews in Guibert of Nogent." Though Kruger steered away from the psychoanalytic nature of Benton's previous article, he noted that Guibert translated his fears about Jews into actions that he could depict as "monstrous" and "animal." However, Kruger spent the majority of his article discussing the rich history of biblical exegesis that came before the writings of Guibert and how this tradition influenced Guibert's own depiction of Jews and Muslims.[14] A large part of Kruger's article also focused on the idea that the proximity of Jewish communities to Christian writers like Guibert increased their fears of corruption and conversion, leading Christian writers to treat the Jews more harshly in their works than the Muslims who did not pose the same threat of proximity. Thus Kruger's article sought to explore the religious issues that drove Guibert's works instead of the personal issues that John Benton had focused on nearly thirty years prior.[15]

Despite Steven Kruger's departure from psychoanalytical explanations of Guibert's attitudes, historians did not completely turn a blind eye to the role of the mind in Guibert's

On Jews and Judaizers was not included in this paper because an English translation could not be located.

13. Benton, "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," 563-586.

14. Exegesis refers to the critical interpretation and explanation of a text, typically scripture.

15. Steven F. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis)Identifications: Muslims and Jews in Guibert of Nogent." *New Literary History*, 28.2 (1997), 185-203.

works. In 2002, Jay Rubenstein released his book *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind.* Instead of attributing Guibert's attitudes to early psychological damage, Rubenstein traced the development of Guibert's theological ideas throughout several of his early and later writings. Most notably, Rubenstein traced the development of Guibert's thoughts on morality and how these thoughts impacted his impression of the "other" in comparison to Christianity. A main point of his discussion focused on Guibert's thoughts about Jews and how those thoughts were reflected in medieval Christian-Jewish relations. He argued that in Guibert's earlier works Guibert sensed no rivalry or threat from Jews, but his 1111 tract *On Jews and Judaizers* marked a turning point in Christian-Jewish relations with its portrayal of non-rational Jews.[16]

Shortly after the release of *Guibert of Nogent: Portrait of a Medieval Mind,* Heather Blurton published a 2003 article "Guibert of Nogent and the Subject of History" in *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies.* Blurton's article returned to the psychoanalytic methods employed by Benton's "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," using Benton's article to build her own case that Guibert of Nogent's obsession with sexual mutilation, death, and sex drove many of his ideas about morality and the "other."[17]

Then in 2009, Elizabeth Lapina published an article in *The Journal of Medieval History* entitled "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*." In it, Lapina argued that Guibert of Nogent used the tradition of biblical exegesis to imbue his version of the *Gesta Francorum* with anti-Judaic rhetoric through comparisons of the weaknesses of the Maccabees and the strengths of the Christian crusaders.[18] This paper will expand on Lapina's work by arguing that the previous anti-Judaic clerical sentiments of Guibert in *The Deeds of God through the Franks* developed into anti-Semitic rhetoric in his later works: *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, and *On the Relics of Saints.*

Christian-Jewish Relations: A Background

In the late eleventh century, Christian-Jewish relations took a violent turn that began a fluctuation between two competing anti-Jewish attitudes.[19] Anti-Judaism upheld the stance of the Church and though it considered Judaism evil, it did not find the Jewish people to be innately evil or wish for their destruction. Anti-Judaism also

16. Rubenstein. *Portrait of a Medieval Mind.*

17. Heather F. Blurton, "Guibert of Nogent and the Subject of History," *Exemplaria: A Journal of Theory in Medieval and Renaissance Studies*, 15.1 (2003), 111-131.

18. Elizabeth Lapina, "Anti-Jewish rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*," *Journal of Medieval History,* 35 (2009), 239-253.

19. Bat-Sheva Albert, "Christians and Jews," in *The Cambridge History of Christianity*, ed. Thomas Noble et al. (Cambridge University Press: 2015), 160.

supported the civil Jewry laws of the Middle Ages. The foundation of civil law was the Theodosian Code, which held that Jews were part of a group of heretics, but were free to practice their religion.[20] The Code also opposed forced baptism and protected existing synagogues.[21] In theory, the Theodosian Code proved to be a balancing act between repression and toleration by the state.

While the Theodosian Code set important precedents for the treatment of Jews in Christendom, medieval Church and civil laws regarding Jews pulled heavily on the theory of Augustinian witness. Saint Augustine believed that God allowed the Jews to survive and live amongst Christians because they were "witnesses" to the glory of Christ.[22] To Augustine, the Jew's served to authenticate the scriptures by demonstrating to enemies of the Church that biblical testimonies were not forged.[23] Most importantly, Jews proved the truth of Christian scripture since "in not comprehending the truth they offer additional testimony to the truth, since they do not understand those books by which it was foretold that they would not understand."[24] In Augustine's eyes, the rejection of Christ by the Jews as foretold by scripture proved the truth of Christianity.

In addition, Augustine believed if the Jews had not put Christ to death that independence and Jerusalem would still be theirs.[25] By putting Christ to death, the Jews became a defeated people living amongst the new chosen people of God.[26] Thus, Jews living in Christendom served as "witnesses" to remind Christians of the truth of their faith. In the early Middle Ages, "Augustinian witness" was adapted and reinterpreted but it was still widely held that Jews should be allowed to live and worship within Christendom, albeit with certain restrictions, to continue to serve as witnesses to the truth of Christ.[27]

Despite the protections laid out by the Theodosian Code and the idea of Augustinian Witness in the Middle Ages, Gavin Langmuir summed up the Christian rejection of these protections in his book *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* when he explained the nature of anti-Judaic thought in the First Crusade:

> *If they hated Jews because of doubts about the value of their own identity and killed Jews to stifle those doubts, they were nonetheless correct in thinking that Jews did not believe in Christ and mocked those who believed in "the hanged one." Moreover, [they] did not project on Jews any characteristics Jews did not have, such as*

20. Mark R. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross: The Jews in the Middle Ages* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 32-33.
21. Ibid., 36.
22. Ibid., 37.
23. Jeremy Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law: Ideas of the Jew in Medieval Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 29.
24. Ibid.
25. J. Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 32.
26. Ibid., 32-33.
27. Ibid., 67-71.

horns. They killed Jews because they were Jews, because Jews were people in the midst of Christendom who stubbornly rejected the nonrational beliefs of Christianity and persisted in adhering to their Judaic religion to the point of martyrdom.[28]

Thus, anti-Judaism was dedicated to the repression and persecution of a religion, not the repression or demonization of a people. Ambivalence towards the Jewish faith also partially fueled anti-Judaic beliefs.[29]

In an attempt to protect his Jewish subjects from the growing unrest, the German emperor Henry IV confirmed in 1090 the previously granted rights to the Jewish community in Speyer: the reservation of a walled quarter, a plot to bury their dead, and permission from their provost to arbitrate disputes between or against themselves.[30] Henry also gave the Jews of Speyer freedom of commerce in the city, the right to employ Christian servants, and the right to defend and fortify their quarter. These laws contrasted with the laws of the Church that forbade Jews from having Christian servants.[31]

Though the separation of the Jews in their quarter was for their protection, it made them a more visible target during riots. In addition to this heightened visibility, economic competition, church reforms, and the First Crusade fueled anti-Jewish sentiments among the Christian populace.[32] Crusaders who lacked the funds to make it to the East often turned their attention to the "Christ-killers" at home.[33] The increasing popularity of anti-Semitic sentiments, like the idea of the "Christ-killer," led to the 1096 massacres along the Rhine. During the summer months, Count Emicho of Leiningen led his followers down the Rhine to the cities of Speyer, Worms, Mainz, Trier, and Cologne.[34] Though some bishops tried to protect the Jews, Emicho's men massacred most of the Jewish population before moving on to Hungary where the army was later crushed.[35] There are also varying reports of forced conversion during the attacks. While some crusading armies left the European Jewish populations alone, the varying reactions of the crusading armies to Jewish communities show that the upholding of the Church's policy of toleration depended on who was in command.[36] Such massacres were not repeated after the summer of 1096, but the century that followed saw a rise in violent persecutions and extortions.[37]

In contrast with Anti-Judaism, the development of an Anti-Semitism went beyond

28. Gavin Langmuir, *History, Religion, and Antisemitism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 293.
29. Anna Sapir Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations 1000-1300: Jews in the Service of Medieval Christendom* (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2011), 145.
30. Albert, "Christians and Jews,"168.
31. Ibid.
32. Ibid., 169.
33. Thomas Madden, *The Concise History of the Crusades* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2014), 18.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid., 18-19.
36. Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 140.
37. Albert, "Christians and Jews," 169.

the previous treatment by the Church to include hostile and repressive attitudes towards Jews as an innately evil people.[38] Before the rise in anti-Semitic violence in the eleventh century, literature against the Jews was fairly rare in Latin Christendom.[39] Literature that did exist focused on Old Testament exegesis that involved Jewish opposition to and denial of Jesus and their ultimate responsibility for the Crucifixion.[40] However, after the mid eleventh century a rise in *Contra Judaeos* included development of irrational sentiments about the place of Jews in Christendom.[41] *Contra Judaeos* further tarnished the image of the Jew in the mind of Christians through their repeated exegesis of the Old Testament and the "sins of the Jews," as well as accusations of deicide. The widening circulation of these works increased the antipathy of clerical readers toward the Jewish populations around them and made them more accepting of anti-Jewish measures.[42]

In the aftermath of the First Crusade, Henry IV allowed Jews forcibly converted during the 1096 massacres to return to the religion of their fathers in 1097.[43] Pope Calixtus II (1119-24) also issued a bull of protection, but even canon lawyers had shifted towards harshness against the Jews.[44] Clearly there was an attempt to reverse some of the harm done by the First Crusade to the Jewish populations of Germany, but lasting damage to the image of the Jew existed in the minds of Christendom. Though the attacks against the Jews during the First Crusade did not occur in Southern France, there were recorded instances of anti-Jewish violence in northern cities.[45] This difference would later play a role in Guibert's exposure to the Crusades.

In the twelfth century, previous Christian-Jewish tensions worsened as Renaissance Christians suppressed their rationality in order to make their faith conform to Renaissance ideals. This irrationality worsened attitudes against the Jews as they denied the beliefs in Christ about which the Christians had their doubts.[46] Irrational accusations such as ritual murder became the roots of growing anti-Semitic feelings.[47] These accusations were quickly embellished with fantasies and became tied to the Jewish faith.[48] Images like these, of Jewish hostility toward Christians, were at the center of negative Christian perceptions of Jews.[49] Even theologians began to believe that Jews and Christians had a differing capacity for

38. Ibid., 160.
39. Ibid., 169.
40. Robert Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom, 1000-1500* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 67.
41. Albert, "Christians and Jews," 169-170.
42. Ibid., 170.
43. Abulafia, *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 143.
44. Cohen, *Under Crescent and Cross*, 37-40.
45. Abulafia. *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 140.
46. Anna Sapir Abulafia, "Twelfth-Century Renaissance Theology and the Jews," in *From Witness to Witchcraft: Jews and Judaism in Medieval Christian Thought*, ed. Jeremy Cohen (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1996) 128-129.
47. Ibid., 129.
48. Chazan, *The Jews of Medieval Western Christendom*, 214.
49. Ibid., 67.

reason.[50] It was during this turbulent time of Christian-Jewish relations that Guibert of Nogent lived and wrote, so it is of no surprise that his attitudes toward Jews shifted throughout his life's work.

Guibert of Nogent and His Works

By examining the differences in Guibert's rhetoric about Jews and Judaizers in *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*, and *On the Relics of Saints* chronologically, this section will show that Guibert's language shifted over time from anti-Judaic rhetoric focusing on the shortcomings of Judaism to anti-Semitic rhetoric focusing on the evils of Jews as a people.[51] For the purposes of this paper, anti-Judaism will refer to the point of view that regards the Jewish religion and its doctrine as evil and the Jews as a people who have been conditioned for evil because of their practice of Judaism.[52] Anti-Semitism will refer to the attempt to give justification for Jew hatred outside of theological differences by depicting the Jews as an inherently evil and inferior group whose religion is an ideological expression of their innate evil.[53]

During the twelfth century, authors began to reach back into the Old Testament to find biblical precedents for the crusaders, which eventually led to the use of the Maccabees as "proto-crusaders."[54] The Maccabees were a Jewish rebel force active in the mid-second century BCE who fought to reassert Judaism in Judea against the influence of Hellenism and the Seleucid Empire.[55] The Maccabees made an apt comparison for crusaders because they used forced conversion and conquest to meet their aims, much like the crusaders.[56] In his early works, Guibert followed traditional models of exegetical debate about the Old Testament.[57] From the beginning of *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, Guibert set out to ensure that his audience understood that Jews, even the Maccabees, are lesser than their Christian counterparts. In the introduction he stated that he wrote his chronicle of the First Crusade because "[he] thought, if [he] may dare to say this, that it deserved being told with greater dignity than all the histories of Jewish warfare, if God would

50. Abulafia, "Twelfth-Century Renaissance Theology and the Jews," 131.
51. Hyam Maccoby published an excellent article detailing the differences between anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism in *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe*. It is entitled "Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism" and can be found in volume eighteen issue two of the 1985 journal.
52. Maccoby, Hyam. "Anti-Judaism and Anti-Semitism." *European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe 18.2 (1985), 27-30.*
53. Ibid., 27.
54. Lapina, "Anti-Jewish rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*," 241.
55. Simon Hornblower, Antony Spawforth, and Esther Eidinow, ed., "Maccabees" in *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilzation 2nd edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).
56. Nicholas De Lange, ed., *The Illustrated History of the Jewish People* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997), 28-32.
57. Rubenstein, *Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, 116.

grant someone the ability to do this."[58] Guibert thus makes it clear that despite their accomplishments, one of his goals in writing *The Deeds of God through the Franks* was to elevate Christian crusaders above the well-known Jewish warriors. He does this throughout *The Deeds of God through the Franks* by demonstrating Jewish theological shortcomings, a technique often employed in anti-Judaic writing.

Later, Guibert further emphasized the higher status of the crusaders in comparison to the Maccabees. He retold the sermon of Pope Urban II in Clermont declaring that the pope had said, "If the Maccabees once deserved the highest praise for piety because they fought for their rituals and their temple, then you too, O soldiers of Christ, deserve such praise, for taking up arms to defend the freedom of your country."[59] The pope continued on to tell the crusaders they were fighting the Antichrist. In this instance, a comparison was being drawn that the Maccabees fought for their own sake, while the crusaders fought for God as well as the protection of their country.[60] This comparison elevated the crusaders for their righteous, spiritual cause while putting the Maccabees in a realm of corporeal selfishness.

Guibert continued this critique of the Maccabees when he related the "despicable vanity of the Jewish people."[61] Though Guibert excused Jewish fathers now celebrated by the Church, such as David, Joshua, and Samuel, he accused the Jews of being a "wretched" people who served God only to fill their own bellies.[62] Guibert then declared that these "idolaters" were given their victories, while the Christian crusaders were sacrificing to achieve theirs.[63] While Guibert seemed to emphasize the disadvantages the crusaders faced, he later said "if celestial help appeared long ago to the Maccabees fighting for circumcision and the meat of swine, how much more did those who poured out their blood for Christ, purifying the churches and propagating the faith, deserve such help."[64] Guibert used these passages not only to demonstrate to his readers the weakness of the Maccabees, who needed worldly comforts and divine help in order to succeed, but to assure his readers that the crusaders would be victorious because of their greater sacrifice and true devotion to God. Later in *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, Guibert reminded us of his previous point by stating that neither Ezra nor Judas Maccabeus suffered as much as the crusaders for their victories.[65] This passage also served to illustrate how the

58. Guibert of Nogent, *The Deeds of God through the Franks: a translation of Guibert de Nogent's Gesta Dei per Francos.* Trans. Robert Levine (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 1997), 25.
59. Ibid., 43.
60. Lapina, "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*," 247.
61. Guibert, *The Deeds of God through the Franks,* 107.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid., 110.
65. Ibid., 135.

crusaders did not just possess purer motive and devotion than the Maccabees, but actually surpassed the accomplishments of their greatest warriors.[66]

The differences between the Maccabees and the crusaders were frequently brought to light in Guibert's chronicle. In yet another passage, Guibert claimed that modern men underwent greater suffering than the Jews of old.[67] He elaborated by stating that the Jews had their families for company and full bellies to fight on while angels led their way into battle.[68] He juxtaposed the comforts of the Maccabees with the hardship of the crusaders saying, "today's men are the ones whom he [God] more truly saves, because he truly receives as his children those whose bodies he has allowed to be slain, and whom he punishes in the temporal world."[69] Elizabeth Lapina argued that this juxtaposition was an implication that the crusaders avoided temptations of the flesh due to circumstances and their own conscious decision, while the Maccabees continued to give into these temptations by bringing along their families.[70] More literally, Guibert's claims were another example of the hardships that the crusaders faced. When juxtaposed with the relative comfort of the Maccabees, these hardships were meant to construe the Jewish warriors as weak, unable to put their lives fully in the hands of God, while the crusaders came across as devout Christians willing to sacrifice everything for God and their cause.

The last major instance in which Guibert seeks to raise the crusaders above the memory of the Maccabees occurs a few pages later. Guibert writes:

> *If someone cites the sons of Israel and the miracles of God performed for them, I shall offer something more miraculous: an open sea filled with Gentiles; a cloud of divine fear rising from a column among them; I shall point to the light of divine hope offered to those whom Christ inspired, himself a column of uprightness and strength, those who were comforted by the food of the word of God only, like divine manna, when they had no earthly hope. Those men spurned the heavenly food that they were offered, and looked back in their minds and with their voices to the Egypt they had left behind, but our men never looked back, but instead eagerly embraced whatever poverty and suffering came upon them.*[71]

In this passage, Guibert paralleled the miracles performed for the Jews, like the parting of the Red Sea, with the actions of the crusaders and the conditions they faced, like a sea of soldiers. While the Jews were provided with an abundance of miracles, Guibert claims that they still looked back to the oppression God

66. Lapina, "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*," 247.
67. Guibert, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 143.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Lapina, "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*," 250.
71. Guibert, *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, 145.

had freed them from because of the comforts Egypt offered. In contrast, the crusaders never complained about the conditions they endured, but charged ahead to complete their godly mission. This passage shows that Guibert not only argued that the occurrence of miracles was not an important indication of divine favor to the Maccabees, but also underscored the differences in the carnal devotion of the Maccabees and the spiritual devotion of the Christian crusaders.[72]

Throughout *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, Guibert made frequent parallels between the Jewish warriors, the Maccabees, and the Christian crusaders of the First Crusade. With allusions to the miracles performed for the Maccabees juxtaposed with the hardships and suffering of the crusaders, Guibert attempted to steer the reader away from the idea of the Maccabees as equals of the Crusaders and instead tried to convey a type of Christian superiority by making the Maccabees inferior "proto-Crusaders." The Maccabees were depicted as needy, unable to succeed without God's help yet unable to fully dedicate themselves to God. In contrast, Guibert goes into great detail about the hardships the crusaders faced and pointedly talked about the lack of miracles performed for the crusaders. However, Guibert decried the idea that God favored the Jews through his miracles. Instead these hardships were proof that the Christians crusaders were more devout than their Jewish predecessors as they were willing to fight for God without any reward and with great personal sacrifice.

The presentation of Christians as superior through critical examinations of the Old Testament was typical of exegesis in the twelfth century. Guibert's argument concerning the superiority of Christian crusaders over the Maccabees in *The Deeds of God through the Franks* was largely based on theological differences. The Maccabees were depicted as selfish warriors with weak faith in order to highlight the devoutness of the crusaders. However, Guibert did not suggest that the Maccabees were agents of the Devil, possessors of black magic, or sexual deviants, nor did he depict them as Christ-killers or murderers of Christians. In *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, Guibert's language was anti-Judaic because it focused on what he saw as the theological shortcomings of the Jews. In contrast, in his later works Guibert's language began to focus on the evils of the Jews as a people and not on the shortcomings of Judaism as a faith.

When Guibert wrote his memoirs, or *Monodiae*, in 1115 he was certainly proficient in weaving a tale about Jews engaging in black magic on behalf of the devil. In fact, Guibert's memoirs spoke more about other figures and their sins than himself.[73] After the first book, Guibert spent most of the memoir reflecting on the sins of various clerics, Christians, and Jews.

72. Lapina, "Anti-Jewish Rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*," 251.

73. Blurton, "Guibert of Nogent and the Subject of History," 116-120.

The first mention of a Jew in the second book of *Monodiae* was rather mild. It recounted a great storm that hit a monastery while the monks were walking to the high altar to sing the litanies.[74] Lightning struck the altar, blinding a priest and sending two young boys flying across the room.[75] It is interesting that Guibert chooses this story to describe one of the altar boys as "a converted Jew, but... deeply devout."[76] Though Jews only entered Guibert's social world after they converted,[77] he still felt that he needed to not only mention that they were once Jewish, but that they were devoted to the Christian faith. This suggests that Guibert still did not trust even converted Jews.

Guibert goes on to an anecdote, previously employed in the introduction of this paper, designed to illustrate the corrupting influence of Christian friendships with Jews. Guibert introduced his story by saying: "For demons admit no one to their evil doings except those whom they have first stripped of the honor of their baptism through some terrible sacrilege."[78] He then told the tale of a monk who befriended a Jewish doctor after he fell ill.[79] The monk's fascination with black magic led him to convince the Jew to arrange a meeting between himself and the Devil.[80] In exchange for his teachings, the Devil demanded that the monk renege his baptismal vows and make a libation of his own sperm.[81] At this demand, Guibert exclaimed "What a crime! What a shameful act! And it was being demanded of a priest! This is what your enemy of old does, O Lord, to blaspheme and dishonor your priesthood and your sacred host!"[82]

Loss of bodily integrity, represented here by the monk's drinking of his own sperm, is common amongst Christians who associated with Jews in *Monodiae*.[83] This passage focused on the seduction of the Christian priest by the Devil's agent, the Jew.[84] However, the monk's transgressions were facilitated by intimacy with a Jew, leading him into a compromised spiritual position. Yet ultimately it was the monk who polluted his body in a sexual parody of the Christian mass.[85] This passage illustrated Guibert's fears about Jewish proximity facilitating Christian sin and threatening the integrity of the Christian body.[86]

It is interesting to note that in one of Guibert's earlier works, *Moralia*, he described three stages that led to committing sin.[87]

74. Guibert, Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy. *A Monk's Confession: The Memoirs of Guibert of Nogent*. Trans. Paul J. Archambault (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996), 83.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis) Identifications," 192.
78. Guibert, *A Monk's Confession*, 89.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Ibid., 90.
83. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis) Identifications, 188.
84. Ibid.
85. Ibid., 189.
86. Ibid.
87. Rubenstein, *Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, 44-47.

"Affection" tempted Will before captivating it through beauty and pleasure, leading Will to accept Affection's earlier suggestions of sin.[88] Reason must then agree to follow Will and Affection into sin.[89] In this case, it appeared that Affection was the Jewish doctor whom the monk befriended. However, the monk's own Will and Reason must agree to follow the Jew to sin, so Guibert cannot lay blame for the priest's fall solely on the Jew, but did frame the Jew as a seducer and Devil's agent. This was a common trope in Guibert's memoirs that enabled him to construct a perceived Jewish threat to Christian selfhood.[90] By doing so, Guibert was able to reconcile his previously held views on morality with his anti-Semitic views of Jews as an evil people.

The introduction of this passage also revealed Guibert's views of Jews as inhuman monsters by indirectly comparing Jews to demons;[91] the introduction of the tale attributed the stripping of baptismal vows to the work of demons, while the Jewish doctor facilitated the stripping of the priest's baptismal vows in the anecdote itself. Despite this negative outlook, Guibert did make exceptions to his presentation of Jews as vile corrupters when he remarked on converts in monasteries.

Guibert's passage about one boy's conversion was the only written account of the violence against the Jews in northern France.[92] Guibert described the boy's rescue:

> *At the time when talk of a crusade to Jerusalem began to reverberate throughout the Latin world for the first time he was rescued from his superstition in the following manner. At Rouen one day, some men who had taken the cross with the intention of leaving for the crusade began complaining among themselves. "Here we are," they said, "going off to attack God's enemies in the East, having to travel tremendous distances, when there are Jews right here before our very eyes. No race is more hostile to God than they are. Our project is insane!" Having said this they armed themselves, rounded up some Jews in a church – whether by force or by ruse I don't know – and led them out to put them to the sword regardless of age or sex. Those who agreed to submit to the Christian way of life could, however, escape the impending slaughter. It was during this massacre that a nobleman saw a little boy, took pity on him, whisked him away, and took him to his own mother.*[93]

The inclusion of the violence against the Jews of Rouen in Guibert's memoirs showed that Guibert was not only involved with the theological aspects of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism, but was aware of the physical and violent aspects of anti-Jewish movements in the eleventh

88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis) Identifications", 194.
91. On Guibert's views of Jews as inhuman monsters, see Steven Kruger's "Medieval Christian (Dis)Identifications", 189.
92. Abulafia. *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 141.
93. Guibert, *A Monk's Confession*, 111.

century. Guibert referenced the claims of many crusaders, that asserted they could not go East without first dealing with enemies of Christ in Christendom.[94] He also detailed the forced conversion of the Jews of Rouen. While the boy in this passage remained Christian, records show that the Jews of Rouen later paid William Rufus to obtain his permission to return to Judaism after their forced conversion in 1096.[95]

The boy's 'forced' conversion in this passage was slightly complicated. The noblewoman, whom the boy had been brought to, asked if he would like to be placed under Christian law.[96] He does not say no, but Guibert stated that the boy thought he would be murdered, as he had just seen other Jews being murdered, if he refused.[97] While the boy's protectors did not physically threaten him to convert, nor does it appear that they intended to psychologically threaten or pressure him, asking him about conversion directly after he had been rescued from the slaughter led to his conversion out of fear. Despite the attitudes of the Church against forced conversion, Guibert related that the baptism was blessed, claiming that a drop of candle wax falling into the baptismal font formed a perfect cross.[98]

After the baptism, the boy was renamed Guillaume, after the nobleman who rescued him.[99] Guillaume showed great academic promise, but the elder Guillaume feared that the boy's Jewish relatives would force him to readopt Judaism, so he brought him to the monastery of Fly.[100] Once there, the younger Guillaume became immersed in Christianity and he "[drew] considerable respect from people for mastering his former nature and for resisting all attempts to disrupt his new way of life."[101] Guibert went on to describe how Guillaume's faith grew through his education, at one point relating that he sent Guillaume a copy of his tract against the Jews.[102] Apparently, Guillaume loved the tract and began to write his own, defending the Christian faith through reason.[103] Guibert ends this passage by stating, "The appearance of the cross at his baptism, then, was not a chance event but was divinely willed. It was a sign of the faith that would develop in this man of Jewish stock, a rare event in our time."[104]

Guibert did not approach Guillaume in the same way that he approached most Jews in *Monodiae.* In fact, in the majority of Guibert's works, Jews were depicted as inarticulate, mean spirited, and lacking all reason.[105] However, Guibert did not treat the boy with suspicion, imply the use of dark magic, or associate him with sin and the Devil. It seems Guibert held Guillaume in

94. See earlier discussion of the Crusaders and anti-Semitic pogroms on page 7.
95. Abulafia. *Christian-Jewish Relations*, 141.
96. Guibert, *A Monk's Confession*, 112.
97. Ibid.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Ibid.
101. Ibid.
102. Ibid., 113.
103. Ibid.
104. Ibid.
105. Rubenstein, *Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, 120.

high regard, as a rational scholar, sending him his own writings as an educational tool. It was in this passage that Guibert came closest to the descriptions of other Christian authors of the time – the Jew as an intelligent and sympathetic figure.[106] Guillaume's acceptance and reverence for Guibert's tract against the Jews seemed to seal Guibert's high opinion of Guillaume leading him to exclaim that the wax cross at Guillaume's baptism was divinely willed. Though Guibert accepted Guillaume as a devout Christian, at points even seeming proud of the development of Guillaume's faith, he casually reminded the reader of the typically stubborn and sinful Jew by pointing out the rarity of such a successful conversion.

In contrast to Guibert's respectful treatment of Guillaume was his dedicated attack on Jean, Count of Soissons. Guibert described Jean as a wicked character who inherited such traits from his father and grandfather.[107] He also spent a considerable amount of time detailing the dealings of Jean's mother with a local Jew.[108] Jean's mother poisoned her brother with the help of a Jew in order to obtain his county.[109] The Jew was subsequently burned at the stake, while Jean's mother suffered a stroke during which her tongue was nearly cut off; after she recovered she "lived like a pig" and disdained that dealing with God.[110] She remained that way until her death, at which time Jean supposedly told Guibert that he would not spend a great deal of money on his mother: "Why should I lavish money on her when she was unwilling to do so for the salvation of her own soul?"[111]

Jean's rejection of familial duties was only the beginning of his transgressions. Guibert stated that Jean regarded the beliefs of the Jews so highly that he would utter blasphemies against the Savior, something the Jews themselves never dared to do. Guibert described Jean's words as "evil" and claimed that even the Jews thought he was insane because he approved of Judaism but practiced Christianity. Jean supposedly argued with a cleric about the rise of Christ from the dead; when the cleric asked why he kept a vigil on Easter even if he believed the resurrection was a fable, Jean replied that he enjoyed watching the beautiful women who also kept a vigil.[112]

Perhaps most offensive to Guibert was Jean's affair and the blasphemies that arose from it. Jean's affair with a "wrinkled old hag" often occurred in the house of a Jew; in order to get rid of his wife to stay with his mistress, Jean once attempted to frame his wife for adultery by having another man get in bed with her.[113] Guibert described Jean's inability to control his lust, which eventually led to a deadly disease.[114] Jean asked the cleric, with whom he had previously

106. Ibid.
107. Guibert, *A Monk's Confession*, 193.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid., 194.
112. Ibid.
113. Ibid.
114. Ibid., 195.

argued about the death of Christ, to examine him; the cleric tried to talk to Jean about his sins but the count cried out "Do you think I'm going to hand out my money to some ass-licking priests? No, I tell you, not a penny. I have learned from many people far cleverer than you that all women should be in common and that this is a sin of no consequence."[115] After this point, the count went insane and eventually died, while devils claimed his soul.[116]

Guibert's treatment of Jean, Count of Soissons shows that he found the lapse of Christian faith worse than a Jew's disbelief.[117] Jean received Guibert's fullest treatment on the betrayal of Christianity.[118] Jean's "Judaizing" led him to debase his Christian body through the sexual crime of adultery. At the very least, even if associating with Jews had not disintegrated Jean's morals, a Jew facilitated his affair by allowing Jean to use his house to meet with the "hag." By giving in to Jewish influence, Jean represented Guibert's fears about the potential for Christian wrongdoing due to the proximity to Jews, again returning to the power of the Jew as the Devil's seducer.[119]

The mention of Jean's mother and her dealings with Jews also served to highlight the potential for Jewish contact to debase the Christian body. The countess' deal with a Jew eventually led to a stroke that nearly cost her tongue and sent her into madness. Likewise, Jean's affair facilitated by a Jew, in combination with his approval of Judaism drove him mad before the Devil claimed his soul.

Guibert clearly disdained Count Jean and made every effort to depict Jean as a sinful, shameless, heretic and Judaizer. However, though Guibert does mention that Jean threatened to convert to Judaism, Jean remained a Christian until his death.[120] Guibert's earlier account of the conversion of Guillaume showed that despite the inherently evil nature of Jews, Guibert still felt that some Jews could be saved, yet even the most debased Christians would never convert to Judaism. In Guibert's world, while the conversion of Jews would strengthen Christianity, the conversion of Christians would destabilize Christian identity and disrupt the sense of the Christian as a moral and rational counter to the irrational and immoral Jew.[121]

Across *Monodiae,* Guibert expressed his fears about Christian-Jewish proximity through several anti-Semitic ideas. The most common was the debasement of the Christian body through Jewish proximity. Early in *Monodiae* befriending a Jewish doctor led a monk to debase his body by drinking his own sperm. Later, association with Jews led Jean, Count of Soissons, and his mother into madness that ended in their deaths. There was also an element of the animal and

115. Ibid.
116. Ibid.
117. Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 193.
118. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis) Identifications, 189.
119. Ibid., 192.
120. Rubenstein, *Portrait of a Medieval Mind*, 115.
121. Kruger, "Medieval Christian (Dis) Identifications," 188-193.

inhuman in Guibert's Christian-Jewish relationships. The monk who dealt with the Devil to learn black magic later usee this magic to turn his nun lover into a dog; the introduction to the story of the monk also compared Jews and demons.[122] Jean's mother lived out the rest of her life following her stroke "living like a pig." When Jean's own demise came about, he has to be restrained from kicking and scratching at himself like an animal.[123] These animalistic and inhuman features further added to the sense of degradation that was caused by Jewish proximity. Though less common in *Monodiae*, it was important to note that Guibert does accuse the Jewish doctor of knowing black magic. This was a fanciful claim unfounded in any theological differences between Christianity and Judaism and the monk's sole reason behind his conviction that his doctor knows black magic was that the doctor is a Jew. The claim was not only anti-Semitic, but Guibert was the first known writer to use the accusation of Jewish black magic.[124]

On the Relics of Saints quickly followed Guibert's memoirs in 1119. Though the focus of *On the Relics of Saints* centered on Guibert's thoughts about the popularity of relics and relic cults, there was a brief glimpse of Guibert's developing anti-Semitic attitudes. While discussing the nature of the body of Christ during mass and how the figurative body of Christ differs from the physical relics of saints, Guibert drew this comparison:

> *If a Jew undergoes baptism with a mind bent on financial gain, as so often happens, surely he does not attain remission for his sins? The Holy Spirit, who has the power to sanctify baptism, cannot indulge even the least sin of someone who falsely and malevolently engages with such purity.*[125]

Looking back at *Monodiae* and Guibert's description of the "rarity" of Guillaume's deep faith after conversion, as well as his insistence of the devotion of the young convert struck by lightning, it is not surprising that Guibert believed that it was common for Jews to convert under false pretenses.[126] Due to growing professional restrictions for both Christians and Jews, medieval Jews were pushed into usury professions.[127] This push fueled the anti-Semitic stereotype of the greedy Jew that can be seen in the previous excerpt when Guibert attributed false conversions to a Jew's efforts for financial gain.[128]

Conclusions

Modern scholarship is fascinated with Guibert of Nogent, a fascination that has led to articles and books by scholars

122. Guibert, *A Monk's Confession*, 90.
123. Ibid.,195.
124. Benton, "The Personality of Guibert of Nogent," 566.
125. Guibert, Abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy, *On the Relics of Saints*. Trans. Joseph Mcalhany and Jay Rubenstein (New York: Penguin Books, 2011), 230.
126. For a discussion of Guillaume, see page 20. For a discussion of the young convert, see page 16.
127. Cohen, *Living Letters of the Law*, 224.
128. Ibid., 225.

such as John Benton, Heather Blurton, Steven Kruger, Elizabeth Lapina, and Jay Rubenstein. Many attempts have been made to unravel the mind of Guibert and unearth the roots and extents of his beliefs. A large focus of these attempts centers on Guibert's attitudes regarding Jews. This paper builds off of Elizabeth Lapina's argument in "Anti-Jewish rhetoric in Guibert of Nogent's *Dei gesta per Francos*" by examining rhetoric in *The Deeds of God through the Franks* in combination with Guibert's memoirs, *Monodiae*, and his tract against relic cults, *On the Relics of Saints,* to trace the development of Guibert of Nogent's anti-Semitic attitudes.

In *The Deeds of God through the Franks*, Guibert largely adheres to the tradition of Old Testament biblical exegesis. Focusing on the Maccabees as "proto-crusaders," Guibert describes their spiritual weakness and corporeal selfishness to emphasize the superiority of Christian crusaders over the Jewish warriors of old. Though Guibert actively seeks to promote Christian superiority, his rhetoric focuses on the theological shortcomings of Judaism and the perceived shortcomings of those who practice it. He does not attribute any sins or wrongdoings to an evil inherent among the Jewish people.

Guibert's language in *Monodiae* shows a shift in his perceptions. While Guibert still believes that Judaism is inferior to Christianity, his rhetoric shows that he now attributes Jewish sins to an evil inherent in the Jewish people. He accuses Jews of knowing black magic, of creating parallels between themselves and the animalistic and inhuman, and of frequently connecting the debasement of a Christian body with friendliness with Jews. While Guibert does mention two converted Jews and their devotion to the faith, he emphasizes the rarity of such an event.

A few years after *Monodiae*, Guibert wrote *On the Relics of Saints*. In this tract, one of the few mentions of Jews accuses them of falsely converting in hopes of monetary gain. Guibert gives no evidence for this accusation, seeming to rely on the inherent truth of the statement with his reader. This accusation aligns with wider anti-Semitic stereotypes of the greedy Jew that arose in the Middle Ages.

All of Guibert's charges against Jews in *Monodiae* and *On the Relics of Saints* show a detachment from the earlier anti-Judaic rhetoric of *The Deeds of God through the Franks*. Rather than focusing on theological shortcomings, Guibert turns to fanciful charges of black magic, inhuman characteristics, physical Christian debasement, dealings with the Devil and stereotypes of greed. Any evidence outside of the accused being a Jew does not back these charges. However, Guibert does relate two successful conversion stories.

Guibert's rhetoric clearly shifts from anti-Judaic to anti-Semitic in his later works, but he is not yet as fanatical as anti-Semitic writers in later years, such as Thomas of Monmouth.[129] The

129. Thomas of Monmouth is the author

shift in Guibert's rhetoric from his early anti-Judaic works to his later anti-Semitic works makes sense in the context of Guibert's life; he lived and wrote in the 11th and 12th centuries, a turbulent time for Christian-Jewish relations. Thus, Guibert's shift in rhetoric is not solely a reflection of Guibert's personal beliefs, but a larger reflection of his world.

of *The Life and Miracles of Saint William of Norwich*. Written around 1150, it recounts the 1140 murder of a young boy, William of Norwich, supposedly at the hands of local Jews who traditionally crucified Christian children near Easter in order to mock Christ. It is considered to be the first appearance of the anti-Semitic charge of blood libel.

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CONVICT LEASING

Justifications, Critiques, and the Case for Reparations

Courtney Howell

Оковы тяжкие падут,
Темницы рухнут - и свобода
Вас примет радостно у входа,
И братья меч вам отдадут.

Your heavy shackles will fall,
The prisons will crumble – and freedom
will accept you joyously at the door,
and your brothers will give back your sword.

Aleksandr Pushkin, 1827

The first prisoner received by the State of Florida into the convict leasing system was an African-American man named Cy Williams. He was officially entered into prison records as "No. 1." rather than by his name. Williams did not know his own age upon arrival, but one prison official's memoir states that the boy had been convicted "when he was a mere pickaninny." Though not large enough to mount a horse, Williams nevertheless attempted to steal one and the authorities caught him while he was trying to lead it off by the halter. For his crime, a judge "duly sentenced" Williams to twenty years imprisonment. Malachi Martin, the warden of the work camp at the time, unsure at first how to put such a small prisoner to work, eventually came up with an idea. He placed a pile of two bricks at each of end of the prison yard while giving "the black baby" two more. The warden then ordered Williams to carry his two bricks to one of the piles at either end of the yard, place them on the ground, pick up the other two bricks, and carry them to the pile at the opposite end. He continued this process for the entire day, always carrying two bricks at a time. Martin instructed Williams to keep the piles of bricks neat and warned him not to break any of them. If he failed to keep his stack orderly, or if he damaged the bricks, he would be whipped. He continued this activity throughout his sentence and "grew up at the task" until given other labor assignments years later. Through the abrasion from simply picking the bricks up and setting them down, Williams managed to wear out four sets of bricks while carrying out his sentence. The state never considered commuting Williams' sentence, even after ten years of service as protocol dictated; the proper avenues for commutation were not in place at the camp because of inefficient leadership

and poor organizational structures within the prison system. Eventually, however, Williams received "gain time" and only served seventeen years out of his twenty-year sentence.[1]

The experiences of Cy Williams and of the countless other prisoners who passed through convict labor camps in Florida were documented by retired camp Captain J.C. Powell in his memoir *The American Siberia*. In his book, Powell argues that the convict leasing system was an indispensable part of life in Florida. He maintains that convict leasing was necessary due to a lack of free laborers in the state, while also arguing that the conditions and policies of the camp were needed in order to maintain control within the chaotic natural environment of Florida. Critics of the system challenged these views, however, and Powell repeatedly acknowledges staunch opposition to convict leasing within local populations. Across the country, both supporters and opponents of the convict leasing system engaged in a debate about whether it was morally permissibly, whether it was economically viable, and whether it was effective from a reformative perspective. That debate, and the rhetoric utilized within the conversation, is the focus of this paper. While modern scholarship posits that the convict leasing system functioned as a form of racialized control that created racial inequalities in the period between the abolition of slavery and the adoption of Jim Crow laws, it is my contention that contemporaries of the system—both supporters *and* critics—understood it instead as primarily a system of economic control that created social and labor inequalities.

"Slavery By Another Name"

Areas within the southern United States primarily utilized the practice of convict leasing. Though the ratification of the thirteenth amendment of the Constitution abolished slavery and involuntary servitude within the country, it allowed for one important exception: forced labor as punishment for being duly convicted of a crime.[2] Because of this exception, states subjected convicted persons to forced labor even after the general end of slavery. Though some northern states devised contracts for convicted criminals and required labor within the field of product manufacturing, systems of convict labor were more notorious and more pervasive in the states of the South.[3] In southern states, convicts labored under the supervision of private companies without pay. In turn, these companies or lessees were responsible for providing clothing, food, and living accommodations for their leased prisoners. This

1. All information on Cy Williams pulled from: J. C. Powell, *The American Siberia* (Chicago, IL: H. J. Smith & Co., 1891), 15-16.

2. U.S. Constitution. Amend. XIII, Sec. 1. Passed by Congress on January 31, 1865. Ratified on December 6, 1865.

3. John Roberts, "History of Prisons," *World Encyclopedia of Police Forces and Correctional Systems* (Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Publishing, 2006) 74-86.

arrangement allowed southern states to deal with growing prison populations without making the necessary adjustments to infrastructure in order to support them. Convicts were mainly put to work at privately owned factories, mines, logging camps, and plantations.[4] By the turn of the century, convict leasing had become an increasingly lucrative but significantly abused system of punishment. For example, prisons provided black prisoners to companies for forced labor more often than white inmates, who instead tended to serve their time within penitentiaries or jail cells.[5] Additionally, leasing subjected convicts to hazardous working conditions due to a lack of legal safeguards.[6] As a result of growing opposition from numerous fronts, the practice was officially discontinued in the 1920s.

Purpose of Research

My research will contribute to the existing literature on convict leasing by delving into how certain contemporaries of the system—prison officials, employers, social organizations, and laborers—critiqued or defended its implementation, its place in Southern society, and its final dismantlement. This paper addresses how rhetoric was utilized by different supporters of the convict leasing system to legitimize it as beneficial and necessary, and how detractors of the system rationalized their discontent. My work also illustrates changes in sentiment regarding theories of punishment. The debates over the convict leasing system examined in this paper encapsulate differences in opinion over the scope and ultimate goal of imprisonment. Free laborers and progressive social organizations critiqued the system because it created competition for employment and did not provide an acceptable standard of living. Leaders within the system and within other more conservative spheres of society defended it as an improvement over both former systems and other possible alternatives. My paper also traces divisions in theories of punishment from the perspective that hard labor serves a reformative purpose to the notion that isolation is a better means of punishment. I aim to expand upon these historical and philosophical perspectives pertaining to questions of race, labor, and morality as they relate to convict leasing.

Historical Perspectives

Historians have argued that the changes that occurred within the South's social structure after the Civil War served as catalysts for the implementation of the convict leasing system. Prior to emancipation, slaves occupied the lowest class of society. Reconstruction endowed freedmen with citizenship, which subsequently presented the possibility for African-Americans

4. Ibid.
5. Robert Atkinson, "Prison Labor Benefits Inmates and the Economy." *How Should Prisons Treat Inmates?* Ed. Kristen Bailey, (San Diego, CA: Greenhaven Press, 2005). At Issue. Opposing Viewpoints in Context.
6. Ibid.

to be included within the social structure in terms of both living space and political influence. The creation of Black Codes and the criminalization of black behavior by post-Reconstruction legislatures illuminated white discomfort and indignation toward this development. Legislatures reclassified certain crimes from misdemeanors to felonies when they believed black offenders primarily committed the offenses.[7] These developments that lead up to the adoption of the convict leasing system addressed a cultural need to reinforce white supremacy after emancipation. Because of this, some scholars consider convict leasing a functional replacement of slavery.[8] The structure of the convict leasing system, in other words, mimicked the economic and racialized benefits of slavery within the states of the South.

Emancipation additionally altered the social order of the South by dismantling the traditional structure of punishment. Following the Civil War, the South needed an expanded corrections system. Under the previous system of slavery, offenses committed by African Americans would have been punished by masters. After emancipation, these crimes became the concern and responsibility of the state. White southerners, though, opposed devoting tax dollars to carry out this new state function. They refused to spend money on their former slaves—even in the case of imprisonment. Nonetheless, white communities desired stricter punitive measures that would counter black mobility. Historians argue that a major priority of white southerners was the adoption of a penal system that would be both self-sustaining and a tool for racialized control.[9] Convict leasing became the system implemented to achieve these goals.

Scholars position the convict leasing system's place in Southern history at the intersection of racialized control and economic benefit on behalf of the state. The implementation of convict leasing responded to the desire of white southerners to establish a penal system that would dole out the maximum amount of punishment at a minimal cost to taxpayers. Convict leasing allowed local and state governments both to discipline newly emancipated African-Americans whose behavior did not adhere to white standards and to yet again reap the benefits of black labor as they had prior to the Civil War. The system dually achieved the goals of discouraging African-American misbehavior and of facilitating public works such as road construction. Convict leasing thus targeted black populations in the South. White communities assumed that an innate criminality existed amongst members of the

7. Matthew J. Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another: Convict Leasing in the American South, 1866-1928* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1996), 21.
8. David M. Oshinsky, *Worse than Slavery: Parchman Farm and the Ordeal of Jim Crow Justice* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1996), 57.
9. William Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge: Black Mobility and the Southern White Quest for Racial Control, 1861-1915.* (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State University Press, 1991), 221.

African-American race and also nurtured a sense of entitlement to the appropriation of black labor.[10] During a period when whites strove to maintain racial control in politics and in society, the convict leasing system helped to secure this control by threatening black citizens who could potentially challenge white dominance.

While the convict leasing system addressed the problem of how to punish the freedmen without investing tax money, it exacerbated inequalities between those populations that were targeted for imprisonment and those that were not. By the 1880s convict leasing had raised millions in revenue and had funded public works, ensuring lower tax rates for the white citizenry.[11] Young, illiterate, African-American males were usually the targets of the system, and their innocence or guilt was typically decided by all-white juries. Defendants would often go through trial without a lawyer and faced prejudice from juries who discounted their testimony. Upon sentencing, defendants tended to receive decade-long sentences in the prison system.[12] In addition to the inequalities present within courtroom proceedings, scholars highlight inequalities between the death rates of different groups of prisoners. For example, in labor camps in Mississippi from 1880 to 1885, the death rate for white convicts averaged at 5.3 percent. The death rate for black convicts within that same period averaged at 10.97 percent—over twice the death rate of white convicts. In contrast, the average annual mortality in Midwestern traditional prisons that did *not* lease out convicts during the same five year period ranged from .51 to 1.08 percent.[13] In summary, while the convict leasing system ushered in a new level of economic prosperity for Southern governments, it exacted an extraordinarily heavy toll on imprisoned populations. It was this suffering that raised doubts about the system across the country.

Historians attribute the abandonment of convict leasing to a variety of factors including humanitarian concerns about camp conditions, mounting public pressure as abuses became more frequently publicized, and the general prioritization of social welfare reform that was characteristic of the Progressive Era. Several circumstances, including the consolidation of enough political power in order to counter the interests of those invested in leasing, as well as economic developments that lessened the desire of companies to retain forced labor, made convict leasing more vulnerable to attack.[14] Thus humanitarian motives, coupled with the aforementioned political and economic conditions, worked to dismantle the convict leasing system.

10. Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge*, 227.
11. Oshinsky, *Worse than Slavery*, 56-57.
12. Ibid, 60.
13. Cohen, *At Freedom's Edge*, 226.
14. Mancini, *One Dies, Get Another,* 216, 221.

Justifications for Convict Leasing

Those who supported the implementation of convict leasing justified it as a solution to labor problems. For example, in *The American Siberia*, Captain J.C. Powell argues that convict labor is necessary to cultivate trees in the turpentine woods of Florida.[15] Because of the difficulty of the work, Powell notes the challenge of obtaining sufficient free labor to cultivate a substantial amount of trees. He writes, "The natives follow it more as a make-shift trade than a vocation, and are only too glad to abandon its hardships for any other character of work that comes to hand."[16] Powell also supports hard labor for convicts, as opposed to other types of activities or employment, because of the inadequacies of the imprisoned population. He writes, "We have little material for skilled labor among the criminals of the South. The bulk of our convicts are negroes who could not by any possibility learn a trade, and how to employ them at anything save the simplest manual toil is a problem not yet solved."[17] Throughout his memoir, Powell emphasizes the necessity of the convict leasing system in Florida; the aforementioned labor shortages and other labor concerns play a large role in his argument.

Other supporters of convict leasing also cited economic motives for implementing and maintaining the system. John Gibbons for example, in his book *Tenure and Toil; or, Rights and Wrongs of Property and Labor*, maintains that the leasing system benefits individual convicts by providing them with some sort of employment. Though involuntary, this employment helps to foster a better work ethic within convict populations according to Gibbons. Additionally, Gibbons argues that convict leasing serves to benefit the economy as a whole by creating larger forces of skilled labor.[18] Advocates who supported convict leasing saw it as a viable solution to issues within the economy.

The potential shortcomings of the convict leasing system did not go unaddressed by regulators and advocates. The state legislature of Florida, for example, enacted regulations to ensure a basic level of protection for convicts within the leasing system. Florida law dictated that prisoners could not work prior to sunrise or after sunset. In addition to this, regulations mandated that work days could not be longer than ten hours a day, even on the longest days of the year. The law also set aside Sundays as free days, and it stipulated that convicts receive both a wage and gain time as a reward for good behavior. In addition, convicts were afforded the privilege to write letters, and new regulations called for an acceptable quality of food as well as proper living conditions including bathing and sleeping

15. Powell, *The American Siberia*, 27.
16. Ibid.
17. Ibid., 5.
18. John Gibbons, *Tenure and Toil; or, Rights and Wrongs of Property and Labor* (Philadelphia, PA: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1888).

facilities. The use of cruel and unusual punishment was disallowed and all punishment was to be justly and infrequently applied. While all of these provisions existed within the law, the regulations contained no further provisions to ensure enforcement. As Gene Barber notes in his column on Florida history:

> *All [provisions] depended on (1) the lessee and his sub-lessee being law-abiding and (2) the captains or convict bosses being humane. As a rule, the lessee and sub-lessee would be too far removed, physically and mentally, to be aware of camp conditions, and the captains would often be too calloused and warped to care.*[19]

Captain J.C. Powell does not ignore the inadequacies of Florida's convict leasing system within his memoir. For example, he acknowledges the importance of having guards that would fairly implement the rules and that would not abuse their power or use excessive force. However, he argues that the guard positions are so poorly paid that it is difficult to find competent people to fill them. While he does not ignore the persistent problems within the system, he nonetheless maintains its necessity within his state. Captain Powell describes himself in the introduction of his memoir as "an advocate of the convict-leasing system as one best suited to the present state of affairs in Florida."[20] Consistently throughout the memoir, he posits that the conditions and policies of the camp are necessary to maintain control within Florida's chaotic natural landscape. He writes, "There are many things about it which may seem harsh, stringent and cruel, and would be, in a northern penitentiary, but are stern necessities here. Without them the prisoners could not be kept together for two consecutive days. There is a vast difference, in short, between stone walls and open fields..."[21] Powell and other advocates of convict leasing did not argue that the system was without fault, but rather maintained that the issues plaguing the system were necessary evils.

Advocates of convict leasing also heralded it as an improvement over former systems. For example, Powell repeatedly recounts the ills of Florida prison camp life before convict leasing was implemented. He writes, "The state was poor, largely unsettled, torn with political strife, and as might have been expected, the prison was run in a rather happy- go-lucky fashion, and the history of its early years is a story of experiments, expedients and make-shifts of which little or no record was kept."[22] Powell emphasizes how poor leadership led to disarray within the prison system and how dangerous forms of punishment were used, sometimes with fatal results. One such dangerous punishment,

19. Gene Barber, "The Way it Was: The Convict Lease System." *The Baker County Press* (Macclenny, FL) April 17, 1980.

20. Powell, *The American Siberia*, 3.
21. Ibid., 5-6.
22. Ibid, 8.

referred to as "sweating" in Powell's memoir, was essentially a variation of solitary confinement. A prisoner was shut into a closed cell without ventilation or light. Another dangerous punishment used under the previous prison system in Florida was referred to as "watering." According to Powell, watering was a punishment comparable to the torture practices used during the Spanish Inquisition. He writes:

> *The prisoner was strapped down, a funnel forced into his mouth and water poured in. The effect was to enormously distend the stomach, producing not only great agony but a sense of impending death, due to pressure on the heart, that unnerved the stoutest. When deaths occurred, as they did quite frequently, the remains were wrapped in a blanket and buried in a shallow trench that barely covered the remains from the air.*[23]

The prison system in the state of Florida faced mounting criticism as a result of the atrocities that occurred from the implementation of these aforementioned punishments. Under the pressure of scandal, authorities reached a compromise that combined elements of the original prison system and the future leasing system. However, according to Powell's memoir, this compromise was not lasting. Horrible operating conditions and buildings deemed unsuitable for prison purposes forced a change.

Thus, Powell argues that a full-scale leasing system was turned to as a final resort in Florida, "very much as was the case when Georgia was saddled with that institution."[24] Powell largely advocates for convict leasing because of its improvements over earlier methods of prison management that resulted in chaos and disrepute.

Other sources of support for convict leasing stemmed from popular notions about the nature of punishment. In his book, *Tenure and Toil; or, Rights and Wrongs of Property and Labor*, John Gibbons—while aiming to reconcile issues regarding the right to property, regulation, labor, and social conditions—advocates for convict leasing and the use of hard labor as punishment. He argues that forcing convicts to labor on behalf of the state serves a reformative purpose. Moreover, his argument addresses the desire to ensure that justice is served. Gibbons maintains the traditional prison setting does not improve prisoners in any way. By keeping prisoners locked up without any activities or work to accomplish, Gibbons believed prisoners were in a worse position than slaves. He emphasizes the negative aspects of traditional prison life, writing that it:

> *...would not only burden the taxpayers...for the support of these convicts in idleness, but it would be cruel and inhumane in the extreme to enforce such penalty upon them. Only*

23. Powell, *The American Siberia*, 9.

24. Ibid., 14.

> *those acquainted with prison management, and who have time and again heard the piteous appeal of convicts deprived of work to be restored to the same, can form some idea of the terror of the punishment inflicted by the State upon its convicts in keeping them confined in their cells in idleness, and how the maintenance of discipline and the enforcement of the rules for health and cleanliness are made almost impossible under such a state of affairs.*[25]

Gibbons' argument against the traditional prison structure reflects the notion that condemning prisoners to idleness and isolation in cells not only serves no positive reformative purpose, but is worse than other available methods of punishment. Gibbons maintains that isolation deprives a prisoner of meaning and purpose in life, while hard labor endows the prisoner with temporary distraction and skills for the future. Thus, some of the support for convict leasing resulted from different theories about how to meaningfully and humanely punish criminals. Advocates upheld the system as a viable and effective method of enforcing hard labor as a reformative form of punishment.

Racial Overtones within Commentaries on Convict Leasing

Racial sentiments, while not openly present in the reasons given to continue implementing the convict leasing system, did influence those who advocated for it. For example, while J.C. Powell does not explicitly cite racial motives in his arguments supporting convict leasing, he frequently notes racial divides in his memoir. One way in which he does this is by labeling white prisoners as "crackers." Powell differentiates between different classes of white people, marking those in the convict leasing as a type of "other." He emphasizes commonalities between these "crackers" and black prisoners and makes them seem distinct from the rest of the white South. For example, Powell writes, "...I discovered that we had an exceptionally dangerous and desperate class of men to deal with. Most of them were "Cracker" outlaws and cut-throat negroes, sentenced, as a rule, for crimes of the most atrocious character."[26] In this example, Powell refers to white convicts as a sort of "other" in terms of morality. He shows white "cracker" convicts to be different from law-abiding whites by grouping them with black convicts and focusing on the atrocities they committed. In this sense, white convicts were described as morally distinct from other white populations. In other instances, Powell characterizes white convicts as physically distinct. Upon beginning his position at the camp, for example, Powell notes while looking at the convicts: "The major part of them were negroes, but it was impossible to tell, as they stood, who were white and who were

25. Gibbons, *Tenure and Toil.*

26. Powell, *The American Siberia*, 30.

black, so incrusted were they all with the accumulated filth of months."[27] In this description, Powell groups white and black prisoners together by virtue of their blackened appearance. In both instances, Powell touches upon racial divides in that he refers to white convicts as a sort of "other" and focuses on their similarities to black convicts.

Powell additionally notes racial divides by commenting on the behavior of black convicts. He writes, "The guards were often negro convicts, and the old maxim of slavery days, that a black overseer was the cruelest to his race, was proven time and again."[28] Powell vilifies black convicts by presenting intra-racial relations as contemptuous and often violent. He emphasizes that black convict guards were the most frequent perpetuators of violence against other blacks. This claim attempts to present the black members of the prison community as more aggressive while insinuating that the white members were less cruel.

In addition to shifting focus onto the cruelty of black guards, Powell characterized African American convicts as naïve, childlike, and unintelligent. He uses anecdotal evidence to support his claims. For example, Powell frequently includes stories within his memoir that emphasize childish behavior on the part of black convicts. One anecdote focuses on a black convict that cries, hides, and shouts juvenile prayers when a storm approaches. When paraphrasing the words of black convicts in his stories, Powell writes in broken vernacular and attempts to mimic and mock their patterns of speech. Finally, Powell's memoir highlights these types of stories by including cartoon illustrations and corresponding captions like "The Darkey's Prayer." By presenting African American convicts and their actions in a derisive manner, in addition to using terms like "darkey", Powell comments on racial divisions and perpetuates stereotypes.

Other commentaries on convict leasing similarly make note of racial divisions within the criminal justice system and society in general, but do *not* cite racial motives as a catalyst for the implementation of leasing. The article "Social Conditions in the Southern States: Second Article Giving Result of Frances A. Kellor's Investigations" is one such commentary. The author, Miss Frances A. Kellor from the University of Chicago, presents the findings of her research on criminological conditions within the South. Kellor's study, which was funded by the Federated Women's Clubs of Chicago, makes frequent note of Southern race relations. For example, Kellor states:

> *It is truly said that the negroes' best friend is the Southern white man, because the negro race has not yet ingrained in it racial integrity and loyalty. This is seen in many ways. The negroes prefer white men upon the juries, because they are fairer. Many negroes are sent to prison through the malice of*

27. Powell, *The American Siberia*, 14.
28. Ibid., 9.

their negro associates. If a negro is undesirable in a locality and does not remove when requested it is no uncommon thing for his neighbors to combine, accuse him falsely, and cause his imprisonment. The negro has been trained to be loyal to the white man, and this still takes precedence.[29]

Similar sentiments about Southern race relations are present throughout the rest of the article. On interracial relations, Kellor emphasizes African American dependence on white communities and the historical culture of subservience. Kellor also notes that punishments for African American defendants became more harsh as "...the old generation of slaveholders, who have a warm feeling for the negroes, [were] passing out of the courts of justice and younger men [were] coming in, who do not feel the old ties thus established by slavery."[30] In regards to intra-racial relations, Kellor highlights examples of African Americans treating other African Americans harshly. Much like Powell's emphasis on the cruelty of black convict guards in their treatment of other black convicts, Kellor makes arguments about black members of the justice system using their power unfairly. Kellor argues that African American justices often gave more severe sentences, so much so that "white custodians would take the convicted outside and let them go."[31] Kellor's commentary on the criminal justice system and on convict leasing in the South, as well as other commentaries on the subject, discuss the racial climate of the South as a significant factor on crime rather than a definitive rationale.

Criticisms of the System

Critics of convict leasing consistently took issue with the deplorable conditions of camp life. Newspaper articles about convict leasing almost universally emphasized mistreatment within the system. An article entitled "Brutality to Convicts: Abuses of the Leasing System in Mississippi", for example, asserts that "God will never smile upon a State that treats its convicts as Mississippi does."[32] The article chastises the penal system for allowing beatings, the proliferation of various diseases, starvation, inadequate clothing, and vermin infestation to plague the life of leased convicts. Moreover, the article maintains that a civilized society should not allow people to be treated the way that leased convicts are. The implementation of convict leasing, then, according to some detractors of the system, did not align with the moral structure of American society.

Other critics of the system referenced issues of morality by drawing attention to corruption within state oversight. One

29. "Social Conditions in the Southern States: Second Article Giving Result of Frances A. Kellor's Investigations," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (Chicago, IL), October 21, 1900.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. "Brutality to Convicts: Abuses of the Leasing System in Mississippi," *New York Times* (New York, NY), July 12, 1887.

newspaper article condemning convict leasing's implementation in this respect recounts an impassioned denouncement given by Reverend W.E. Lockter in Alabama against the system. He argued that state officials were conscious of the fact that the system was corrupt and only allowed it to continue because of the financial advantages it afforded them. Furthermore, Lockter maintained that the system perpetuated mistreatment of humans on a level much worse than that of animals. He contended that minor criminal offenses were being used as a means to essentially sell people into bondage as convict laborers. Both his speech and the aforementioned article on Mississippi deem convict leasing a practice that contributes to the moral decay of society. They not only express outrage about the poor quality of camp life, but further chastise the corrupt motives and profit-seeking that underscore the existence of the system. Because convicts within the system were subjected to such awful conditions and cruel treatment, critics with humanitarian motives called for state legislatures to end the practice of leasing.

Pressure to dismantle convict leasing systems across Southern states manifested in public demonstrations by those whose job security was threatened by the availability of cheap convict labor. For example, an article entitled "The Convict Lease Plan: It has resulted in serious trouble in the South" discusses a meeting set to take place to decide the fate of convict leasing within the state of Tennessee. The article mentions credible fears that free laborers would go to the mines and help release the convict laborers working there. The author of the article encourages the state legislature to think seriously about abolishing convict leasing because of problems stemming from competition for employment. The consistent utilization of convict labor by major employers angered free laborers. This was a major issue that critics took up with the implementation of the convict leasing system.

In addition to discontented free laborers, various women's organizations mounted opposition to the system of convict leasing because of its economic implications. The involvement of the Atlanta Women's Club in the abolition of convict leasing in their state, for example, is detailed in an article entitled "Georgia Women Fighting the Convict Lease." The women's club was formed in 1895 and was led by prominent women within the state—namely, wives and widows of elite Georgians. According to the article, the Atlanta Women's Club became politically involved behind the scenes and used their position to influence prominent state officials like Governor Hoke Smith.[33] While the practice of convict leasing had been controversial in the eyes of

33. "Georgia Women Fighting the Convict Lease: Owing to the Peculiar Conditions Surrounding the System the Fight for Its Abolition Is a Difficult One and Is Being Waged Through Secret Channels," *New York Times* (New York, NY), September 06, 1908.

Georgia's population before the club's involvement, no significant reform was made within the system even after conditions and abuses were made known to the public. After successfully championing reformative causes like prohibition and the abolition of child labor, the Atlanta Women's Club directed their efforts toward bringing an end to convict leasing. The women's club dedicated itself to this cause under the principle that it is inhumane and morally corrupt for a state to profit off of what was essentially slave labor. Though the Atlanta Women's Club actively worked to increase the education budget of the state, they did not want schools funded by profits from alcohol or from convict leasing. The women's club took issue with the practice, then, because leasing violated humanitarian principles in the name of economic profit.

Frances Kellor of the Federated Women's Clubs of Chicago, in the aforementioned sponsored study on Southern society, also took issue with the system of convict leasing. Unlike the Atlanta Women's Club, Frances Kellor does not argue for the system's abolition in her report and she was not a vocal opponent of the practice. She does, however, make critical observations on the maintenance of the system and its repercussions on society.[34]

One of Kellor's main concerns is with the sanitary conditions of labor camps. The hospitals were poorly managed, and contagious individuals were not isolated from the rest of the patients. Additionally, the condition of the bathing facilities used by the convicts was deplorable. Kellor also criticizes the working conditions of labor camps. She points out that all prisoners were required to complete a certain amount of labor, regardless of their age or physical wellbeing. The convict laborers worked long hours and suffered whippings if they stop working—even if they fell down as a result of exhaustion. This was especially problematic considering the type of work completed by convicts was largely limited to mining and other physically laborious trades. Finally, Kellor's article expresses concern about the effect of labor camps on children. Children were allowed to work at an early age and labored alongside adult convicts. Kellor argues that labor camp life negatively influenced children; they were exposed to unrestricted behaviors including gambling, cursing, and smoking cigarettes. This exposure, according to Kellor, increased the likelihood of the children turning to crime as adults.

While Kellor's study draws attention to numerous concerns within the leasing systems of the South, she does not consider the abolition of the practice as a solution to issues regarding criminal activity. Rather, Kellor argues that change needed to occur within the economic conditions of the South.

34. "Social Conditions in the Southern States: Second Article Giving Result of Frances A. Kellor's Investigations," *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

She maintains:

> *Financial and economic conditions have an important bearing upon crime. The possession or lack of money is an indirect cause of crime... The negro has not the standing which financial independence gives. He cannot gratify his desires and, once arrested, he is reasonably certain of conviction. In the North there is a greater capacity for using money wisely. The negro's capacity is often limited to securing money. Of its real value and use he knows but little.*[35]

Kellor, though dissatisfied with the implementation of convict leasing, was not morally opposed to its use within the prison system. She took issue with conditions and operating procedures, but did not argue for the abolition of convict leasing programs. Kellor instead purported that real change needed to occur in the economic opportunities available in the South, especially for African American individuals. This change, she argued, was necessary in order for the region to realize significant reform regarding criminal justice. Unlike later critics of the leasing system, Kellor saw economics as playing a key role in the number of African Americans who ended up in the convict leasing system rather than racialized targeting.

Discontinuation of Convict Leasing

Convict leasing persisted at various different lengths within the states of the South, and was abolished only when it became economically or politically unfeasible for states to maintain. Alabama was the last state to ban convict leasing on the state level—while allowing it to continue on a county-by-county basis—in 1928. States across the South disallowed convict leasing for a variety of reasons. While public outrage against the practice factored into its abolition, other factors played a larger role in bringing about the end of convict leasing. Mississippi, for example, stopped the leasing of convicts after the election of Governor James K. Vardaman in 1904. Even though convict leasing had been outlawed in the state's constitution sixteen years prior to the election, the practice was only discontinued after Vardaman—a political adversary of Mississippi's lessees—utilized his new position to strike back against his opponents that benefitted from the system.[36] Convict leasing was halted in Tennessee in 1894, ten years prior to the practice's discontinuation in Mississippi, as a result of conflicts between laborers. Matthew Mancini, in his article "Race, Economics, and The Abandonment of Convict Leasing", writes of the abolition of convict leasing in Tennessee, stating:

35. "Social Conditions in the Southern States: Second Article Giving Result of Frances A. Kellor's Investigations," *Chicago Daily Tribune*.

36. Matthew J. Mancini, "Race, Economics, and the Abandonment of Convict Leasing," *The Journal of Negro History* 63, no. 4 (1978): 340.

> *Tennessee's prudent leaders decided that the demands of fiscal responsibility dictated abolition when the expense of maintaining the militia at convict stockades—a cost incurred by an armed rebellion on the part of free miners who were displaced by convict gangs—proved greater than the income from the leasing contract.*[37]

The end of convict leasing, nonetheless, did not signify the end of convict labor. Many states continued to put convicts to work after convict leasing was banned, using convict labor in chain gangs to complete public works projects instead of leasing to corporations.

There were some attempts, though, to re-implement convict leasing systems in certain states after it had been dismantled. The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), for example, pushed for reform in Georgia in 1929. The organization led protests against proposed measures that would allow the leasing of African American federal prisoners in Atlanta to do road work throughout the state. U.S. Superintendent of Prisons Sanford Bates wrote to the NAACP in reaction to these protests and assured the organization that the leasing contracts would disallow corporal punishment and would provide for sufficient food and housing. Moreover, he emphasized that work days would not exceed eight hours.

Despite these assurances, the NAACP held three objections against the proposed contracts and, unlike earlier critics, highlighted the racial injustices perpetuated by convict leasing. First, the organization voiced concern about the possibility of securing just treatment for African American prisoners because of the history of mistreatment in the South. Second, the NAACP maintained that it would be imprudent for the federal government to attempt to use convict leasing since the practice had already been abandoned in the South by that time. Finally, the organization emphasized that allowing the leasing of *only* African American prisoners would be clearly discriminatory. Their stance against the re-implementation of convict leasing clearly cited concerns about perpetuating racial injustice. While early critics of the leasing system who argued against the practice before the turn of the century referenced concerns about social and economic conditions, later criticisms reflected a more clear concern for racial justice. This highlights the origins of how convict leasing is now positioned by modern scholarship within the history of racial injustice.

Modern Implications

Understanding the motivations behind the implementation of convict leasing, specifically the racialized ones, is important in that it allows for a more accurate discussion of racial injustice in the modern

37. Ibid.

penal system. In her book *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, Michelle Alexander argues that the current American criminal justice system functions like a system of racial caste.[38] Alexander traces the history of racial caste in American society back to the days of slavery preceding the Civil War. After the abolition of slavery, Alexander argues that Jim Crow laws served as a replacement system that would continue to accomplish the goal of keeping African Americans stuck within the lowest part of society. In the modern penal system, Alexander argues that a virtual replacement of Jim Crow era policies has been created through methods of targeting within the "War on Drugs", discrepancies in sentencing laws, civil penalties for felons, and the criminal stigma attached to African American communities and cultural practices. Her arguments are linked to convict leasing in that she identifies the practice as the origin of racial injustice as it relates to American prisons. Research on whether or not Alexander's claim is justified in this respect—that is, whether or not convict leasing *was* put into practice as a tool of racialized control—is important to further analyze claims about modern penal injustice and racial discrimination.

Determining whether convict leasing was implemented in order to perpetuate racial injustice is also significant in that it is a necessary factor in deciding upon possible remedies. In his article entitled "Mainly Black Convicts used as Heavy Laborers a Century ago", Douglas Blackmon presents a case for reparations.[39] He presents the examples of Germany, Japan, and Switzerland in terms of their involvement in making reparations in response to historical racialized abuses. Blackmon, for example, refers to the multi-billion dollar fund created by German corporations that now makes payments to people victimized by Nazi slave labor programs during World War II. This fund was set up after these corporations faced lawsuits and diplomatic pressure from multiple nations around the world, including the United States. Blackmon also mentions that Japanese manufacturing companies have been criticized due to allegations that they too utilized forced labor during the wartime era. Finally, Blackmon cites the agreement made by Swiss banks in 1998 for the creation of a billion dollar settlement addressing claims about seized Jewish assets at the time of the Holocaust.[40] Each example shows potential for the success of reparation claims for victims of racial discrimination throughout history.

In the case of the United States, Blackmon argues that various companies—namely, real estate businesses and agencies that helped to continue

38. Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York, NY: New Press, 2010).

39. Douglas A. Blackmon, "Mainly Black Convicts used as Heavy Laborers Century Ago." *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* (Pittsburg, PA), July 17, 2001.

40. Ibid.

segregation in housing; insurance companies, banks, and other financial institutions that denied loans to minorities according to red-lining; and other businesses that discriminated against potential employees during the hiring process—"helped maintain traditions of segregation for a century after the end of the Civil War."[41] Despite this fact, calls for reparations within the United States on behalf of those who suffered as a result of these types of discrimination have made very little progress. Blackmon is concerned about convict leasing because it fits within the history of racial injustice perpetuated by American businesses. He writes "In the early decades of the 20th century, tens of thousands of convicts—most of them... indigent black men—were snared in a largely forgotten justice system rooted in racism and nurtured by economic expedience."[42] Up until almost 1930, decades after most of the other states in the South had abolished the use of convict leasing systems, Alabama counties continued to lease convicts to businesses to work on farms, in lumber camps, on railroads, and in mines. Government officials in Alabama on both the state and local level allowed the practice to continue as a result of financial motivations. At the time, convict leasing was one of the state's largest sources of funding. The practice was finally abolished in 1928 and its legacy has since, according to Blackmon, "slipped into the murk of history, discussed little outside the circles of sociologists and penal historians."[43] He argues, however, that the story of convict leasing in Alabama has been preserved within government archives, records, and courthouses across the state and that these documents "chronicle another chapter in the history of corporate involvement in racial abuses of the last century."[44] According to Blackmon and other scholars, then, the system of convict leasing served to prolong the abuse of the African American community. Determining whether or not their claims are valid and whether convict leasing did in fact perpetuate racial injustice, as did slavery, is important in order to decide if there is a case to be made for modern American companies to make reparations.

My research illustrates that within the rhetoric used in discussions about convict leasing, both supporters and critics of the system refrained from using explicitly racialized arguments to uphold their positions. That is, supporters of the system did not justify its implementation in order to maintain a racial hierarchy, and critics did not decry the system because of the part it played in perpetuating racial injustice after the Civil War. Later criticisms however, beginning with the stance of the NAACP against the re-implementation of convict leasing in 1929 and continuing on into the work of modern scholarship

41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.

today, clearly demonstrate concerns about the leasing system acting to target black Americans. The distinction between these two lines of rhetoric—the first with racial overtones and the second with explicit concerns about race—is indicative of the shift away from using explicitly racialized narratives after the Civil War and the trend of adopting "color-blind" language within laws and policies during the dawn of Jim Crow and up until the present. Though officially "color-blind" or non-racially explicit, this narrative nonetheless allows for the perpetuation of racial injustice. The case of convict leasing, then, is important in understanding the origins of an implicitly racialized hierarchy that plagues American society to this day.

Conclusion

Arguments given in support of convict leasing mainly focused on economic benefit; leasing was embraced as a way to increase funding for the state while keeping maintenance costs low. In addition, labor was said to serve a reformative purpose and prepared convicts to enter the workforce. Supporters of the system did not explicitly advocate for its use as a tool for racial control, though in many justifications racial sentiments are implicitly present. Critics of the convict leasing system emphasized the unsanitary conditions of camp life, the danger that convict labor posed to free labor, and the inhumaneness of the institution. While some critics, such as Atlanta Women's Club as well as Frances Kellor, noted the detrimental effect of convict leasing on African American communities, their criticisms did not mainly seek a remediation to racial injustice. Overall, focus was placed on economic motives and poor social conditions. These criticisms can be contrasted with the modern focus on convict leasing, which emphasizes racialized motives and injustice. Modern scholars largely research convict leasing in its relation to the system of slavery and in the context of racial injustice. The debate over convict leasing and its implementation, and whether or not the practice perpetuated the exploitation of African American communities, is significant in terms of understanding the modern American penal system as well as making the case for reparations.

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Note: The opening quote for this essay is from the poem "Во глубине сибирских руд" or "'In the depths of the Siberian mines" by Aleksandr Pushkin (1827). Excerpt and translation taken from *Poetry Reader for Russian Learners* by Julia Titus, Mario Moore, and Wayde McIntosh.

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Courtney Howell is a graduating senior at Virginia Tech with degrees in History, Russian, and Political Science with a concentration in National Security Studies. She holds an additional major in Philosophy. Courtney became particularly interested in the subject of convict leasing after encountering both Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow* and Powell's memoir *The American Siberia*. In her research, she was interested in finding out how the convict leasing system paralleled labor prisons in the Soviet Union. Courtney was also interested in how the system of convict leasing fit into the history of racial injustice within the penal system and created the origins of the prison-industrial complex. Courtney's historical interests more generally center on Russia and Eastern Europe, as well as the 20th century as a whole.

FROM THE LAB TO THE LOTUS POND

Interactions between Orientalism and Ideals of Domestic Science

Nancy Mason

"It makes one wonder if perhaps China could get straightened out more quickly if she got rid of her uninvited "guests" (meaning us foreigners!) and was allowed to clean house by herself."

-Camilla Mills, an American home economist, reflecting upon the condition of China in 1925

At a time when America had only just begun its journey away from the discriminatory Chinese Exclusion Acts of the 1880s and toward its eventual alliance with China during World War II, a group of home economists from Oregon began to contemplate sending one of their own to China. Ava B. Milam, head of the Department of Home Economics at the University of Oregon, left for Yenching University in 1922 to design a home economics program uniquely tailored to Chinese culture. In the 1920s, ideas of western superiority flourished, and work in China was largely considered as valuable in reflecting the promise of American society.[1]

1. Jespersen, T. Christopher, *American Images of China: 1931-1949*, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1996), 24.

While Milam, and others like her, showed influences of American orientalism, they veered significantly from the masses by expressing a scientific appreciation for many Chinese customs. As leaders in a progressive and highly scientific field, the home economists emphasized their scientific focus on the domestic sphere. Unlike the majority of Americans at this time, they felt that Chinese culture held scientific value apart from the West, and they considered the West to be far from perfect.

The aim of this paper is to examine the letters and memoirs the home economists left behind against the backdrop of American orientalism. American orientalism was a complex and multi-faceted ideology that remained

wide-spread throughout early American history and into the 1900s. It involved imperialistic and often negative western stereotypes of the East. While scholars have advanced a variety of definitions of American orientalism, there is a general consensus that it resulted from modernity becoming synonymous with the West, meaning that "Asia embodied what historian Jackson Lears calls 'anti- modernism.'"[2] A thorough examination of the divergence of the home economists' ideas from those of American society in general produces an image of the unique form of American orientalism expressed by American home economists who travelled to China. In this paper, I present a historical case-study of a group of women often overlooked, especially in discussions of orientalism. In conducting this research, I find that the unique interaction between American orientalism and the values of the home economists produce a remarkable ideology for its time. This essay shows that home economists who moved back and forth from the United States to China between the 1920s and 1940s maintained elements of orientalism in their ideologies but diverged from the norm by prioritizing scientific ideas about home economics over the cultural practices of both Chinese and American societies. Furthermore, these women sometimes elevated Chinese culture over Western culture based on its level of congruence with scientific principles. In doing so, they countered the popular orientalist attitude in America that Chinese tradition was incapable of producing modernization.

Milam, Mills, Mabel Wood, and Martha Kramer, the four home economists around whom this discussion is centered, all spent significant time in China between the 1920s and the 1940s while involved in the Yenching home economics program. While they spent most of their time in China, the home economists also frequently visited Japan and occasionally other parts of Asia on excursions. After returning home from their time abroad, some even went as far as to advocate the adoption of certain Chinese practices in America, and all four branched from the orientalist norm by finding value in the culture of China beyond mere fascination. Additionally, Wood and Kramer, who travelled to China after Milam and Mills in the mid to late 1930s, showed even more appreciation for Chinese customs. This shift fits with current research trends that show a transition to a more favorable view of an Americanizing China post-1931. That said, even the most negative of the home economists complimented Chinese culture for its scientific value at a time when complimenting the Chinese

2. Yoshihara, Mari, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism*, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2003), 26. For further discussions of American orientalism, see Leong, Karen J., *The China Mystique*, Jespersen, Christopher T., *American Images of China, 1931-1949*, Yoshihara, Mari, *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism*, and Tchen, John Kuo, New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture, 1776-1882.

typically meant praising them for becoming more like Americans.

American Orientalism

Orientalist attitudes held a long tradition in American thought. Although very early Americans thought they might learn from China, these attitudes quickly disappeared, replaced with ideas of eastern ignorance and western superiority.[3] With the influx of missionary letters beginning in the 1840s describing "heathen, uncivilized, barbaric people," and with the emergence of caricaturized Chinatowns, which became havens for "opium smoking, gambling and prostitution," a new, much more negative orientalism emerged in the late 1800s.[4] This exaggerated perception of Asian immigrants led to what came to be known as the "Exclusion Acts." By 1882 the Chinese were almost completely prevented from migrating to the United States and these laws remained in effect until 1943.[5] John Kuo Wei Tchen argued that "the closer Americans got to the real Chinese, dispelling their imagined 'Orient,' the more their respect for and emulation of Chinese civilization diminished."[6]

Despite this negative perception, Americans possessed a clear fascination with the East that stood the tests of time and growing knowledge. "Exoticism," an idea within orientalism, represented this captivation with the "exotic" East.[7] This fascination was not necessarily positive, and even when it was, it did not represent a preference for eastern culture over western culture. For example, common literature advised women decorating with oriental fashions to only use them as accent pieces.[8] After all, the East was exotic and fascinating, but it was not meant to become the new norm.

A few key events situated American attitudes about China during the time the home economists were travelling to China. In 1920, American citizen Pearl Buck published Good Earth. Her book presented a favorable (albeit unavoidably biased) view of a modernizing China. While Buck considered herself an advocate for China, she still identified ideas of modernity with the West and confirmed many orientalist stereotypes in her presentation of Asian characters as simple, primitive, and slow, among other things.[9] The compromise she represented, a favorable view of Americanizing China, "facilitated America's embrace" of the East.[10]

3. Tchen, John Kuo Wei, *New York Before Chinatown: Orientalism and the Shaping of American Culture 1776-1882*, (Balimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 16-17.
4. Yoshihara, *Embracing the East*, 8-9. Warren I. Cohen, *America's Response to China: A History of Sino-American Relations*, (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2000), 30.
5. Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 2.
6. Tchen, *New York Before Chinatown*, 25.
7. Yoshihara, *Embracing the East*, 9-10.
8. Ibid., 42.
9. Leong, Karen J., *The China Mystique: Pearl S. Buck, Anna May Wong, Mayling Soong, and the Transformation of American Orientalism*, (Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 2005), 28-29.
10. Leong, *The China Mystique*, 12.

Around the same time, Chiang Kai-shek, who managed to unify China under his rule much to the delight of those in America, converted to Christianity. Changes such as these solidified China's place in the eyes of Americans as a country capable of demonstrating the promise of American society by westernizing and modernizing in accordance with American virtues and expectations.[11] Leong described American attitudes in the 1930s by arguing that they saw China as "a demonstration of the promise held by American democracy and culture to transform other nations."[12] The decade was characterized by a positive view of an Americanizing China, with the understanding that China remained favored only because it was beginning to look more like America. The home economists, writing during this time, were exceptional for valuing the ways in which Chinese culture was more in line with their scientific values than American culture. In certain realms, they advocated for America to become more like China.

American Women and Orientalism

During the time period the home economists worked, women reacted to China in a variety of ways including sympathy, emulation, exploitation, and even a combination of all of them.[13] Still, any scientific or modern virtues found in China, they believed, necessarily came from the West, and little suggestion seems to have been made by most American women around this time period that China had anything with modern value to offer the West.[14] In Yoshihara's discussion of American women and their relation to orientalism, she presents American Orientalist ideologies as comparisons between the feminized east and the modern west. For example, American actress Geraldine Farrar played the character of Japanese Cio-Cio- San in Madama Butterfly. Yoshihara notes that, "for those who praised Farrar's performance, the very difference between the modern American womanhood the singer embodied...and the quaint Japanese femininity she impersonated on stage served to validate her performance power."[15] References to the West were seen as synonymous with "modernity." Mari Yoshihara illustrated the growing connotation in her discussion of a writer who described Japanese art, "the writer of this passage saw "truth and simplicity, grace and harmony" in Japanese art...the antithesis of the art of the modern, industrial, civilized West."[16] The motivations and views of different American Orientalist discourses were a mixed lot that transformed throughout history, but they primarily rested on ideas of American superiority in which the West was scientifically superior to the East. This attitude

11. Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 25.
12. Leong, *The China Mystique*, 1.
13. Yoshihara, *Embracing the East*,3-197.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid., 98.
16. Ibid., 28

was in contrast, of course, to the perspective brought back to America by the home economists around this time. While the home economists did at times express preferences for western culture, they also saw a great deal of modern value in Chinese domestic practice.

The Four Home Economists

According to Helen Schneider, Ava B. Milam began her career at the University of Chicago where she adopted many ideas from her mentor Marian Talbot, learning to value home economics and its ability to advance women professionally while simultaneously bettering society. Upon graduation, she accepted a teaching position at Oregon State College – now Oregon State University. Six years later, she was promoted to dean of the Home Economics Department and "tried to eliminate much of the older 'domestic arts' classes"[17] in order to focus on more scientific classes. In 1922, she left for China, visiting four times between 1922 and 1948. On her first trip to China, she endeavored to start a home economics program at Yenching University, the first of its kind. In order to do so, she spent her time conducting a survey of the domestic conditions in China before handing the project off to her successor Camilla Mills when she returned home in 1924.[18]

Mills was a student of Milam's at Oregon State College and she travelled to China with Milam in 1922. She spent her first year in China learning Chinese and then took over the development of the home economics program at Yenching University. Mills was in China from 1922 until 1931 and then returned again after her marriage to Knight Biggerstaff as Camilla Biggerstaff from 1934 to 1936 and from 1944 to 1949.[19] Of the letters she left behind, most are from her earlier years. A few years after Mills left Yenching University in 1931, Mabel Wood came to the university in 1936 and stayed for a year to assist the head of the home economics department.

Wood resided in China for only a year, but during that year she spent extensive time with the locals engaging with Chinese culture. She intended to take leadership of the home economics department, but instead felt it was wiser to allow Caroline Chen, one of Milam's former students and a native of China, to lead the department. Wood instead opted to provide her with support and advice. Judging by her actions, Wood elevated the position of the Chinese higher than her predecessors. When Wood left in 1937, Martha Kramer took her place.

Martha Kramer spent around six of her eighty-seven years living in China.[20] In 1937 she left the United States to work at Yenching University and did

17. Schneider, Helen, *Keeping the Nation's House: Domestic Management and the Making of Modern China*, (Vancouver, BC: UBC Press, 2011) 122.
18. Ibid., 121-123.
19. Ibid., 122-123.
20. Kramer, J.T., *Aunt Martha's China*, (Decatur, IL: Abbott & Foran Inc., 1998), Introduction.

not return from China until 1943. As the author of a paper claiming that, "many and many an idea could be brought right over [from China] to food preparation in this country," Kramer was perhaps the strongest advocate for the adoption of Chinese customs in America. While in China during World War II, she was placed under house arrest and was later interned at Weihsien until American soldiers liberated the camp and she was able to return home. Despite her internment, she went on to write many favorable articles about China.

American Orientalism and the Ideologies of the Home Economists

Each woman possessed a clear fascination with China, a fascination admittedly influenced by elements of exoticism in the American orientalist rhetoric. Exoticism had both positive and negative connotations. A broad category, exoticism in American Orientalist ideologies included ideas of "otherness", ideas of the "heathen" East vs. the "civilized" or "modernized" West, and an aura of curiosity and fascination surrounding "exotic" eastern cultures.[21] The representations of exoticism in the writings of the home economists, however, proved to be overwhelmingly positive.

All four women expressed some criticisms of China, but their objections were almost exclusively based in scientific ideals, not cultural preference. In fact, many of the most heavily criticized areas of Chinese domestic life were also the most heavily criticized areas of domestic life in America. Any arbitrary preferences for American culture that could be seen in the letters and memoirs of earlier home economists (Mills-Biggerstaff and Milam) were essentially absent by the time Wood and Kramer were writing in the mid-1930s. This shift was unsurprising, considering that recent scholarship reveals increasingly positive American attitudes about China post-1931.[22]

What was surprising, however, was that, at times, all four home economists believed Chinese culture to be more in line with their own scientific ideals than American culture. Dr. Helen Schneider argues that home economists began to adhere to a kind of "home economics superiority" which explains their distance from widespread ideas of cultural superiority.[23] Therefore, while not altogether exempt from the influences of orientalism, the home economists were exceptional in their acceptance and appreciation of many aspects of Chinese domestic culture for their scientific advantages.

Home Economics in America

American home economists saw their field as a progressive and scientific movement and believed they could advance the role women played in America by

21. Yoshihara, *Embracing the East*, 8.

22. Jespersen, *American Images of China*, 24-26.
23. Working paper by Helen Schneider presented at Virginia Tech in October, 2014.

modernizing the domestic sphere.[24] They took on a variety of roles within society including teaching in universities, advising politicians, and founding programs to educate the rural population on nutrition, sanitation, thrifty living, and childcare. Through their work in the field, they realized authority and influence and used scientific ideals to critique both American and Chinese society.[25]

The nature of their role in American society put them in a unique position relative to their peers. They had less cause to over-idealize America, having found so many flaws within American domestic culture. Additionally, while many other American women exploited the East to gain spheres of influence for themselves, the home economists had already found a niche of power within the American domestic sphere.[26] With an avenue for gaining influence already available in American society, they experienced less need to use their connections to the East as an avenue for power. Many factors set the home economists apart from other American women in relation to orientalism, but the context in which they lived still impacted their ideologies.

Exoticism in the Writings of the Home Economists

The ideology of the home economists branched from traditional orientalism, but their writings still showed expressions of it, especially ideas of exoticism. In order for something to be considered "exotic" it must be compared to a standard. Their writings showed a clear image of China as an "other" to the West. Wang Ning elaborated on the idea of "otherness" in her work "Orientalism versus Occidentalism?" Wang described a notion of "otherness" as a condition for orientalist thought and as the means by which Westerners reflected on their own identity as the "other" of the "other."[27] Therefore, the notion of eastern "otherness" serves as a prerequisite for expressions of exoticism. An internal idea, "otherness" often manifested itself outwardly in the practice of making comparisons between the East and the West and thereby separating them.

The home economists repeatedly compared China to the United States, noting things that appeared both similar and foreign to them. The separation of China and America in the minds of the home economists is evident in their ready acceptance of things that appeared unusual combined with their surprise at things that appeared familiar. Milam, for instance, compared and noted differences between many things

24. Schneider, Helen, "The Professionalization of Chinese Domesticity: Ava B. Milam and Home Economics at Yenching University," in *China's Christian Colleges*, ed. Daniel H. Bays and Ellen Widmer, (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 127.
25. Elias, Megan, *Stir It Up* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 63.
26. Yoshihara, *Embracing the East*, 6.
27. Wang Ning, "Orientalism versus Occidentalism," *New Literary History* 28, no. 1 (1997):58-59.

such as open freight cars, which transported men, and Western cattle cars. She also compared the lengths of time that women nursed their babies in the East and in the West.[28] Similarly, Wood noted many "foreign" things about China such as the camel trains that woke her up, the pigeon whistles, the water carts, and the "funny" rickshaw system.[29] She even declared many things to be surprisingly similar by comparing the Chinese Moon Festival to Thanksgiving and Chinese houses to certain types of Western houses.[30] During the middle of her trip, she investigated the differences between the problems in the East and in the West in supervising dormitory food. Expecting more differences, she marveled at the extent of the similarity. Kramer also made comparisons between the East and West. In one instance she noted how interesting the holidays seemed to her "foreign" eyes. These women used their knowledge of the West as a vantage point to cope with the new experiences found in the East. This line of thinking paved the way for the emergence of exoticism in their ideologies.

One of the most obvious expressions of exoticism in the writings of the home economists proved to be their fascination with the beauty and intricacy of traditional Chinese architecture, sights, art, and culture, especially weddings and funerals. They described many intriguing shops, fascinating cities, and beautiful sights.[31] For instance, Milam described the "lovely" new campus of Yenching by discussing its camelback bridges, its "peaceful" lotus ponds, and its exteriors displaying the "graceful curves and gorgeous coloring of the finest in Chinese architecture."[32] Likewise, Mills admired the temple she toured on her trip from Shanghai to Soochow writing, "I had one of the grandest experiences of my young life."[33] Wood, in particular, delighted in the different temples found in China, although she thought it a bit odd to sleep next to a mummy.[34] She related elaborate descriptions of the Ti'en T'ai Su Temple and the Temple of Ten Thousand Buddhas and described what she called "the temple of the year" as "unbelievingly beautiful."[35] Many other notably "foreign" things also caught her interest, like a "delightful" trip to the Ming tombs, the "lovely" Seventeen Arched and camelback bridges, the Garden of Moonlight

28. Milam, Ava B. & Munford, Kenneth, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, (n.p.: Oregon State University Press, 1969).
29. Wood, Mabel, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, (n.p.: H. J. F. Townsend, 1986), 56, 57, 110.
30. Ibid., 20, 34.
31. Ibid., 48, 13. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 155, 156, 187, 217, 220. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, March 4, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629. Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library. Kramer, Martha, *Aunt Martha's China*, (Decatur, IL: Abbott & Foran Inc., 1998), 5, 6, 7, 13.
32. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 187.
33. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Thelma, February, 3, 1924, box 25, #14-17-629.
34. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 25, 28, 49, 102.
35. Ibid., 15, 25, 107.

Fertility, the "magnificence and beauty" of the Forbidden City, and the Summer Palace.[36] Kramer, like the others, also noticed the "beautiful" lotus ponds and "delightful" restored ancient Chinese buildings. She also appreciated some unique aspects of Chinese culture like the "beautiful" and "wonderful" act of Chinese boxing and sword dancing.[37]

In addition to illustrating exoticism in their descriptions of China, the home economists also demonstrated a penchant for exoticism in their purchases. Indulging the common American interest in exotic oriental goods, they bought a variety of Asian trinkets and clothing. Milam, for instance, bought a ceremonial kimono to send home during an excursion to Japan.[38] Mills purchased a variety of things as well, including many gifts such as embroidery, fabric, and a luncheon set.[39] Wood also bought gifts to bring home and discussed all the "junk" she had bought.[40] In accordance with her fascination with both weddings and funerals, she purchased tiny figurines of Chinese wedding and funeral processions.[41] Wood also bought a fair amount of Asian clothing. She got her mother a silk gown, sent home a kimono, obtained a modern Chinese dress, and bought most of a Chinese man's outfit. She also talked about wanting a traditional Chinese dress and a complete Japanese costume for fun. Wood even considered dying her hair to go with her outfits.[42] On one shopping trip in particular, Kramer described her desire to buy "all kinds of intriguing things" such as rugs, temple objects, porcelains, pewter wine jugs, bronzes, and glass snuff bottles. She ended up restraining herself and purchased only one "set of red lacquer wine cups, lined with silver."[43] The home economists clearly saw China as an "other" and were influenced by the exotic orientalist discourse. However, they tended to view exotic things in a positive light, and, as we will see later, found scientific merit beyond mere fascination in many other aspects of Chinese culture.

Arbitrary Cultural Preferences in the Writings of the Home Economists

For the most part, the home economists did not appear to favor American culture over Eastern culture arbitrarily. Occasionally, however, they did make some statements that seemed to show they still believed the West to be generally superior, although not absolutely so. Milam and Mills, both writing mostly during the 1920s, expressed this

36. Ibid., 14-15, 23, 49, 50.
37. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 10.
38. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 157.
39. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, January 14, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629.; March 2, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629.
40. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 87.
41. Ibid., 63.
42. Ibid., 13, 42, 84, 99. Wood's suggestions of emulating eastern women is reminiscent of some orientalist expressions as discussed by Mari Yoshihara. Mari Yoshihara, *Embracing the East*, 10, 99, 195.
43. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 12.

type of favoritism more frequently than Wood and Kramer who wrote a decade or two later. For example, Helen Schneider noted a sarcastic note from Milam in one of her letters: "That nice habit [of smoking] our Western civilization has given China too. Don't think I'm cynical, please. I still prefer Western civilization."[44] This quote indicated that even though Milam knew that the West did not always have the best cultural habits, she still did not want to appear to prefer the East. Similarly, Mills wrote to her friend about a political advisor and repeated his assertions that it was a bad thing for the Chinese to drift away from American and French without objecting.[45] Her comments certainly do not prove that she agreed, but it does seem likely that she would have mentioned any disagreements she may have had. In addition, Mills also compared Chinese trains to American trains, much preferring American trains.[46] Milam and Mills seem to have shared a similar outlook, the West was generally preferable, but, as we will see later, not always.

Wood and Kramer, writing about 10-20 years after Milam and Mills, expressed even fewer arbitrary preferences for the United States over China. Travelling post-1931, an even more favorable view toward China was not unexpected given the increasing negative American opinion of China. Kramer was almost entirely complimentary of Chinese culture. Wood, even when she did express a preference, did so in a way that showed a good deal of cultural awareness. For instance, on one occasion she planned to go with some of her friends to a concert of real Chinese music. She suspected she would not like it because it was monotonous "to one that doesn't know what it is all about."[47] Still, she defended the Chinese against someone who declared that they were not musical saying, "I don't see how you can say that just because it doesn't sound good to us. Bach and Beethoven wrote some pretty awful things to my way of thinking. So we'll go and be educated."[48] She even used the word "educated," which implied that she found value in the Chinese perspective. Then, after the concert, she wrote that she found it much more interesting than she had anticipated and complimented a traditional Chinese instrument for its beautiful tone.[49] At one point, she also seemed to look down on Taoism, calling it a "queer belief."[50] Just a few days earlier, however, she described how impressed she was by the martyr-like faith of those who meditated.[51] Even if she found the belief odd, she maintained a

44. Schneider, "The Professionalization of Chinese Domesticity," p. 137.
45. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, January 14, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629.
46. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, April 2, 1929, box 25, #14-17-629.
47. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 25.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid., 26.
50. Ibid., 100.
51. Ibid., 95.

respect for it. Kramer made a few critical comments in her letters, but they were few and far between and were backed by a scientific reasoning. Besides these few comments, the home economists tended to look to their own ideals, rather than to American ideals, as the standard, especially in domestic realms. This line of thinking likely related to the relatively small amount of pure cultural preference found in their writings as compared to the standard American orientalist rhetoric.

Criticisms of American Culture in the Writings of the Home Economists and Others

Generally, the home economists' criticisms of China tied directly into the nature of home economics itself. According to Fleishmann, the home economics movement "aimed to modernize, professionalize, and make scientific female domesticity."[52] Isabel Bevier, a home economist, defended the professional nature of her field by implying that home economists studied bread, they did not merely bake it.[53] The courses she taught, which were scientific in nature and "not watered down," also say a great deal about the goals of the movement, pointing toward a progressive and scientific focus.[54] In a description of a home economists' ideal modern woman, Fleischmann listed qualities such as scientific, efficient, clean, a shrewd consumer, and a resourceful manager.[55] Home economists were not only tasked with teaching the optimal methods of household management, but also with opposing old traditions that hampered progress.[56]

Home economists were certainly critical of American culture, and they saw many flaws in the West that hindered scientific progress in the home. For instance, home economist Martha Van Rensselaer desired to know bacteriology to teach the farmwomen why they needed to keep their dishcloths sanitary.[57] Home economists complained that Americans were not economical, but instead produced a great deal of waste.[58] They also tried to reeducate women to decorate in ways primarily concerned with function.[59] Another school of thought that emerged from American society was the idea of scientific motherhood, a movement that became deeply intertwined with

52. Fleischmann, Ellen, "At Home in the World: Globalizing Domesticity Through Home Economics in the Interwar Years," in *Transnational and Historical Perspectives on Global Health, Welfare and Humanitarianism*, ed. Ellen Fleischmann, Sonya Grypma, Michael Marten Kristiansand, and Inger Marie Okkenhaug, (Kristiansand, Norway: Portal Books, 2013), 161.
53. Elias, *Stir It Up,* 18.
54. Ibid., 21.
55. Fleischmann, "At Home in the World," 176.
56. Ibid., 179. Additionally, while home economists generally tried to eliminate tradition in favor of more modern methods, the home economists who went to China endeavored to preserve many Chinese traditions, claiming that they were scientifically beneficial in the modern world.
57. Elias, *Stir It Up*, 20.
58. Ibid., 32-33.
59. Ibid., 40.

home economics. The goal of this movement was to help educate women on how to care for their children, assuming that they would not know how on their own.[60]

The home economists who traveled to China also criticized Western culture. For instance, Kramer criticized English eating habits, and Milam admired a leader in the movement of scientific motherhood, likely prescribing to some of the same ideas in relation to American childcare.[61] No matter what culture they were researching, the home economists wanted to find scientific solutions to domestic problems.

Scientific Criticisms of American Culture in the Writings of the Home Economists

During Milam's time at Yenching, she conducted a survey to determine the specific needs of China for domestic science. What she found to be the four strongest categories of need coincided with the four most frustrating aspects of Chinese culture for the home economists as reflected in their letters. In a statement reflecting the results of her survey, Milam wrote, "Camilla and I felt that we could give the greatest help by teaching the fundamentals of nutrition, child care and development, household sanitation, and home management. In our teaching we emphasized proper diet for resistance to disease and for general good health."[62] The agreement between Milam's study and the problems with China that the home economists noticed first hand served to support the notion that the grievances expressed by the home economists came more from violations of scientific principles and less from notions of cultural superiority. In fact, home economists had complained about and criticized the same four types of problems in America as discussed above in the examples of sugar in American diets, scientific motherhood, the sanitation of the farmwoman's dishcloth, and the wastefulness of Americans.

One of the most important causes for the home economists proved to be health and nutrition. The home economists criticized American diets in a variety of ways, urging Americans to eat more vegetables and less sugar, but they also complained about many aspects of Chinese diets and health habits. Milam particularly was concerned with the ways in which the Chinese took care of their bodies physically. She commented on how the Chinese custom of flat chest binding made it difficult to breathe and contributed to tuberculosis.[63] She also made several mentions of how she was "particularly distressed" by

60. Apple, Rima, "Constructing Mothers: Scientific Motherhood in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries," *Social History of Medicine* 8, no. 9 (1995): 161-162,177.
61. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 2-3. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 159.
62. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 159.
63. Ibid., 154.

foot binding.[64] While in China, Milam gave a poster presentation on foot binding. She wrote about the experience saying, "It was gratifying to see obviously wealthy women with stylishly tiny feet eagerly studying the health charts showing why feet should not be bound."[65] This statement showed both her distaste for foot binding as well as the scientific nature of her objection to it. Like Milam, Wood also commented a few times on foot binding.[66] Presumably, Wood protested based upon the same logic as Milam: foot binding was scientifically bad. Far from being repulsed, when Wood mentioned women with bound feet, she seemed impressed at how well they were able to get around. Wood also noted and worried about the condition of animals in China, sending a letter to her father, who presumably treated animals, saying, "This is no place for Papa, for the Chinese are no better to their animals than they are to themselves and that isn't very good. And I'm sure that Papa couldn't take care of all the horses and pigs and dogs that need care."[67] She said the Chinese were not very good to their animals, or to themselves, indicating that she was concerned for the health of animals as well as people. Mills also commented on both the health of animals and the health system, noting her concern for a skinny pony and stating that a conversation with a man named Dr. Yao made her feel hopeful for the future of public health in China, indicating that she had a low opinion of the present condition.[68] Milam also subtly commented on the health care system when she described the high mortality rates of children in China.[69]

In Kramer's discussions of health, she focused more on the nutritional aspect. On her boat ride over to China, she claimed that the Japanese "cooked all of the vitamins out of the vegetables" and also claimed to have eaten some duckling that had been mistreated in its preparation.[70] She also repeatedly emphasized her frustrations that the Chinese used white flour and rice because it was a symbol of wealth, harping on the fact that whole grains contained much better nutrition. Even her students used white grains, much to her dismay.[71]

The home economists also felt that China needed improvement in the area of childcare. However, the idea of scientific motherhood that circulated in the United States at the time showed that not only the Chinese, but also the Americans, were being criticized for their childrearing. Milam made one comment that was not terribly critical about the differences between Japan and America: "They thought we were robbing our children

64. Ibid., 152.
65. Ibid., 150.
66. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood,* 24, 123.
67. Ibid., 33.
68. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, June 17, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629; June 17, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629.
69. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 152.
70. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 1.
71. Ibid., 25-26, 124-126.

by putting them to bed early; we thought them unkind to rob their children of sleep."[72] Mills proved far more critical, complaining about the "ignorance" of the Chinese who fed a baby both cake and a meat dumpling.[73] Wood also complained about how the Chinese fed their babies, describing how they chewed their food up and took it out of their mouths, with no spoon, and fed it to their babies.[74]

Another area in need of improvement, according to the home economists, was sanitation. They wrote about a variety of complaints concerning unsanitary practices in China, some similar to complaints about America and all based strictly on scientific principles. For instance, Milam said, "while some homes were clean and attractive, many needed the application of sanitary science."[75] Wood, frustrated by the lack of sanitation on an enclosed train of all places, described her experience quite bluntly: "The Chinese have no idea of sanitation and so spitting, blowing noses, and wee-weeing may be done anywhere."[76] She claimed that others told her it could be worse, but she found it very hard to believe. The train was not the only place Wood felt the Chinese lacked proper sanitation. One area of contamination was the water supply. When traveling through China at the very end of her time there, Mills took note of the only clear stream that she had seen in China.[77] Later she mentioned it as one of the few pure springs in China.[78] She also discussed the dirt of the country-side claiming that it was comprised of dust and the invisible variety that exists when there is no proper sanitation.[79] She talked about tempting traditional Chinese fair foods saying, "but in spite of the fascination appearance and tempting odor, it is easy to forego the pleasure for the same reason that you think twice before buying a good American hamburger in the middle of a hot dusty fairground."[80] This quote showed two things; first that sanitation was a problem in China, but also that there were some comparable problems in America, as Elias alluded to in her statement about the bacteriology of the dishcloth. Kramer also expressed displeasure at some unsanitary practices she observed. She criticized unsanitary apple candy and the unsanitary process of drying noodles in the backyard or on the sidewalks where dust could blow on them.[81]

Poor home management and a lack of thrift and efficiency were other re-occurring themes in the frustrations expressed by the home economists. For the classroom at Yenching,

72. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 187.
73. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Thelma, February 3, 1924, box 25, #14-17-629.
74. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood,* 113.
75. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 156.
76. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood,* 116.
77. Ibid., 123.
78. Ibid., 128.
79. Ibid., 117.
80. Ibid., 95.
81. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China,* 12, 22-23.

Milam designed classes in home management. Kramer advocated for an educational effort to convince families to keep some of their homegrown goods, another attempt to improve home management in China.[82] The home economists also noted the lack of the same skills such as efficiency and thrift among Asians in other areas of daily life as well. During her time in Korea, for instance, Milam commented on the custom of ripping apart skirts to clean them and then sewing them back together writing, "What a time-consuming activity!"[83] Just as Milam found Korean laundry habits to be a waste of time, Mills found Chinese funeral costs, which could be upwards of ten thousand dollars for the rich, to be "rather a waste of good money."[84] Kramer discussed a few grievances that dealt particularly with matters of the home. She told one story proudly of a student who taught country dwellers to buy dried skim milk cheaply in bulk to supplement their diets, indicating a need for thrifty nutrition.[85] While the home economists expressed a variety of criticisms of China, they did so on a scientific basis. Not only were their complaints scientifically minded, but also they were similar in nature to other complaints of home economists about American culture, indicating that their biases were largely not cultural.

82. Ibid., 133-134.
83. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 157.
84. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, April 17, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629.
85. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 123.

Scientific Praise of Chinese Culture in the Writings of the Home Economists

Despite some criticisms, the home economists wrote positively about many aspects of Chinese culture. During her year in China, Wood encountered a peasant taken with the idea of living in America. To the best of her ability, Mills replied in Chinese, "America is nice, but China is nice too."[86] They appreciated many aspects of Chinese culture, both ancient and modern. Milam stated that she was impressed with the amount of empirical knowledge the Chinese had accumulated and suggested that they could share a lot with them, indicating that she found value in what the Chinese had to share with the West.[87] Kramer also felt that the Chinese had things to share with the West, praising the unique college schedule of China.[88] She even saw "much to commend" in the celebration of the Chinese New Year.[89]

Not only did the home economists respect Chinese culture, they also had great respect for the Chinese people. For instance, Milam complimented the Chinese on a plethora of characteristics, such as service, courtesy, humor, thoughtfulness, energy, thrift, modesty, respect, graciousness, and more. Milam suggested that Americans should be more like

86. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 121.
87. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 154.
88. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 13.
89. Ibid., 15.

China in a variety of ways.[90] She then went on to compare the Chinese to Americans and concluded that she was concerned about the well-being of America, not China.[91] Mills also made a profound statement in a letter defending the Chinese against orientalist ideas and highlighting their intelligence: "They are no longer content to be considered 'heathens, lost in the darkness' for they aren't! It surely makes one sit up and take notice when a man like Hu Shih talks for he is a thinker and a scholar and you have to take his conclusion into consideration whether you want to or not for there are so many thinking as he does."[92]

In addition to the people, the home economists had great things to say about Chinese food. Not only did they compliment Chinese meals, they also gave "scientific" compliments about things like utility, thrift, nutrition, and presentation. The home economists all praised meals in a variety of ways including calling them "delicious" or "simple but good-tasting" or by describing all of the new foods that they tried and ended up loving.[93] They also intentionally illustrated their appreciation of Chinese cooking by discussing their weight gain.[94]

More importantly, the home economists praised aspects of Chinese food culture that they considered modern and progressive, at times elevating China above the West. For example, Milam praised multiple aspects of Chinese cooking, claiming no other country could surpass them. Among the praised attributes included the ability to prepare food for the table, the art of seasoning, the skill of preparing a variety of dishes with a minimum of utensils, and getting food to the table piping hot. She also complimented a Chinese vegetable cooking method that was able to preserve the color, minerals, and vitamins in the vegetables. Furthermore, she claimed that the Chinese used less sugar than the Japanese and Americans, and therefore had better teeth. Milam gave another example of progressive ideas tucked away in ancient culture, noting the superstitious stigmas: "Some health practices, although surrounded by superstitions, had a valid scientific basis. For example, they would not drink unboiled water[95], believing it had evil spirits in it." Kramer echoed some of the same ideas as Milam, praising Chinese diets for being low on sugar and, therefore,

90. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 149, 163.
91. Ibid., 163-164.
92. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Thelma, November 23, 1924, box 25, #14-17-629. This quote was copied from Helen Schneider's notes taken in March of 2008. Note: Hu Shih was a Chinese leader who was largely influential in the establishment of the vernacular as the official written language of China.
93. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 156, 214. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, Letter, Camilla Mills to Family, January 14, 1923, box 25, #14-17-629. *Knight Biggerstaff papers*, 1949 Journal of Camilla Mills, box 35, #14-17-629. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 13, 20, 25, 51, 65, 118, 132. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 20, 22, 35, 53, 72, 66, 88, 91,122.
94. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China*, 1. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 47.
95. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 153.

better for one's health.[96] In an article she published on China, Kramer complimented the same cooking method that Milam did for vitamin preservation in vegetables.[97] Kramer also praised China for traditionally balancing fruit and vegetables in their diets.[98]

Besides food, one of the key focuses of home economics centered on the idea of thrifty, simple living. Home economists saw simplicity and thrift as the way of the future and believed that just by living simply, one could increase one's station in life. Therefore, the fact that the home economists were repeatedly impressed by Chinese thrift says a great deal. The home economists were at times critical of large extravagances, funerals for example, but over-archingly complimentary about the way the Chinese lived their lives on a daily basis. Milam, on her way home from her first trip to China, began to lament the fate of America in comparison to the Chinese. She saw the Chinese as a great example of how people should act in using leftovers, preventing waste, and living with less instead of more.[99] She discussed how the Chinese used every tiny piece of cloth. They did so in one method of shoe-making that, according to Milam, produced beautiful shoes.[100] Wood was similarly impressed by traditional methods of heat conservation employed by the Chinese. When applied to train travel, heat conservation meant that they heated their trains with engine heat so as not to waste any heat. Wood found Chinese heated trains very economical. She also praised the Chinese practices concerning farming saying, "no place is too tiny to cultivate and every blade of dry grass is used for something."[101]

Kramer expressed a similar feeling stating that the U.S. soil conservation "folk" could learn some things from the Chinese farmers.[102] She also commended the Chinese for their ability to find many good uses for things such as soy bean and lotus plants. In an article written about Chinese diets, Kramer wrote, "Americans could learn much from the Chinese about preparation of tasty and nutritious bean products."[103] In a discussion of lotus plants, she listed the various uses for the plant in Chinese culture including using the leaves for wrapping meat and covering jugs, making food from the roots and seeds, and even making sweets out of it.[104] She even praised the use of peanuts in Shanghai as a "thrifty, nutritious, and pleasing addition."[105] All of her praises were high compliments coming from a home economist who prioritized those values above most others.

96. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China,* Prologue.
97. Ibid., 133.
98. Ibid.
99. Milam & Munford, *Adventures of a Home Economist*, 163.
100. Ibid., 153.
101. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood,* 117.
102. Kramer, *Aunt Martha's China, 28.*
103. Ibid., 132.
104. Ibid., 8, 21.
105. Ibid., 132.

Conclusion

American orientalism contained within it many different facets of thought and types of attitudes. Throughout all of them, however, ran the idea that modernity was a Western concept that the East had to learn from the West. Even though the home economists subscribed to some elements of orientalism and had their fair share of criticisms of China, they veered from the predominant strain of orientalism by promoting aspects of Chinese tradition as progressive, even praising Chinese culture over American culture. Kramer and Milam in particular urged America to be more open to adopting foreign ways to further its own progress. The home economists were an early example of a group of women who challenged the orientalist norm of their time by looking toward ideals of domestic science, not ideals of American society, for direction. Wood, almost as if writing to cause others to question notions they had simply taken for granted, wrote to assure her parents that she was safe saying, "Maybe China is a safer place than Oregon."[106]

106. Wood, *The China Letters of Mabel Wood*, 59.

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BEWITCHED

Witchcraft, Life Insurance and the Business of Murder

Rachel Snyder

Ferdinando Alfonsi of 2515 East Ann Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, died October 27, 1938, at National Stomach Hospital, his life reduced to a piece of paper in the Pennsylvania Department of Health and Bureau of Vital Statistic's office. The death certificate captured a snapshot of a thirty-eight-year-old, white, married, male of Italian parentage and origin, who made his living as a construction worker. By all accounts, this is an ordinary death certificate of an ordinary death, with all the official signs, stamps, and registration numbers that came along with death in the twentieth century. Except, in the middle of the right-hand column, under principle cause of death, stamped in smeared, bold letters read "INQUEST PENDING."[1] This is no ordinary death certificate. This is the death certificate of a murdered man, a man whose murder led to the discovery of an expansive insurance murder ring operating in 1930s Philadelphia.

Alfonsi's murder set off a complex investigation that revealed the existence of an expansive murder network operating in Philadelphia, New Jersey, New York, and Delaware. The murder insurance ring either targeted vulnerable Italian immigrants, insuring their lives and then killing them to collect the insurance, or preyed upon dissatisfied spouses whose partners were worth more dead than alive. If victims did not have insurance or had too little insurance, extra life insurance would be purchased without the victim's knowledge. Drowning, hit-and-runs, and poison by arsenic were the ring's stock and trade, and clients usually paid $300 plus 10% of all insurance money over $1,000.[2] The premise of the conspiracy was insurance fraud, run and organized under a sophisticated business model. However, at the heart of the conspiracy was the Italian belief in witchcraft, the "evil eye," and magic potions. With immigrant communities facing mounting poverty, the insurance murder

1. Philadelphia, PA., Death Certificate no. 112635 (1938), Ferdinando Alfonsi; Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Harrisburg, PA.

2. Lawrence E. Davies, "Poison Death Plot Amazing to Police," *New York Times,* May 14, 1939.

ring was in effect an economic survival strategy for Italian immigrants during the Great Depression that translated Old World beliefs in witchcraft into a system of enterprising insurance fraud. In investigating the ring's activities, I will first explore the ring's business model and the economic conditions that led Italian immigrants to resort to murder for economic survival. I will follow with a discussion of how Old World Italian beliefs in witchcraft made insurance fraud a viable business.

"Merchandised in Death"[3]

The insurance murder ring came to investigators' attention when Alfonsi's murder became a business transaction. George Newmyer, a recently released convict with an upholstery cleaning business in New Jersey, needed money for his business. A friend referred him to Herman Petrillo in Philadelphia. When Newmyer came to Petrillo, a forty-year-old spaghetti and olive oil salesman, Petrillo told Newmyer, "Why bother me with $25 when you can get $500."[4] Petrillo offered to pay Newmyer to kill Alfonsi, thus commercializing Alfonsi's death. However, Newmyer turned government informant, and, together with secret service agent Stanley B. Philips, Newmyer stalled, pretending to discuss means of committing the murder. Then on October 27, 1938, Alfonsi died of arsenic poisoning. With Alfonsi's death, the Philadelphia police had enough evidence to arrest Petrillo and Alfonsi's widow, Stella, for murder, initiating the end of the conspiracy's business.

Though Alfonsi was the ring's last known victim, he epitomized the ring's ideal victim and the economic pressures behind the ring's activities. Originally from Senigallia, Italy, Alfonsi was twenty-three, and a single laborer when he came to the U.S. on board the "Conte Rosso."[5] Like most Italian immigrants in Philadelphia before the Depression, Alfonsi probably relied on political patronage jobs from the Republican political machine. According to historian Stefano Lucani, immigrants' working class neighborhoods were strongholds for the Republican party as "destitute ethnics could more easily be lured into bartering their votes for the jobs and the other political favors and personal services through which Republican chieftains rewarded their loyal supporters."[6] By promising their votes to the Republican machine, Italian Americans were able to find employment in municipal

3. There is limited scholarship on the 1939 Philadelphia murder insurance ring. The scholarship that there is focuses on the criminal justice side of the case rather than the immigrant experience. This paper seeks to fill this void in the scholarship by examining the case from the perspective of the immigrants involved rather than the police and investigators.

4. "Says Poison Plots Cost 10 to 12 Lives," *New York Times,* Feb. 2, 1939.

5. New York, New York, Passenger Lists, 1820-1957 (1923), Alfonsi, Ferdinande; National Archives, Washington D.C.

6. Stefano Lucani, "Machine Politics and the Consolidations of the Roosevelt Majority: The Case of Italian Americans in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia," *Journal of American Ethnic History* 15 (Winter 1996): 34.

patronage jobs, such as street cleaning projects and the city's Department of Public Works.

When the Depression hit, the economic situation for immigrants like Alfonsi in Philadelphia deteriorated. South Philadelphia, the city's largest Italian neighborhood, had the highest unemployment rate in town. Additionally, in his uncompromising quest to alleviate Philadelphia's indebtedness, Mayor J. Hampton Moore ruled out special appropriations to allow direct assistance from the municipal administration.[7] Furthermore, Moore delayed the impact of the New Deal in Philadelphia politics by refusing to contribute funds to direct relief and preventing Philadelphia from qualifying for federal relief programs. Moore also delayed ratifying appropriations for the Civil Works Administration until only two months before its scheduled termination.[8] Even once the new mayor started cooperating with the Works Progress Administration in 1936, "the Republican city council had become more and more reluctant to appropriate funds for the city's share of the costs of WPA projects which, in councilmen's opinion, were to benefit the Democratic party."[9] Due to Italian Americans' Republican loyalties and demand far outstripping the supply of WPA jobs, there was a thin chance of Italian Americans receiving WPA jobs and, thus, finding employment during the Depression.

In June 1937, the situation for immigrants, including Italian Americans, became dire with the passage of the Federal Deficiency Appropriations Bill. The bill cut WPA funds and included an alien rider that disqualified immigrants who had not taken out first papers from WPA jobs and gave suspected aliens sixty days to prove citizenship. After the grace period, the bill dismissed all aliens without first papers. Then, "less than a month later even aliens holding first papers lost their jobs."[10] On March 10th of that same year, Alfonsi became a naturalized U.S. citizen.[11] Whether Alfonsi became a U.S. citizen in response to the Federal Deficiency Appropriations Bill in order to qualify for a WPA job is unknown. Nevertheless, limited options existed for Italian Americans to secure gainful employment during the Great Depression in Philadelphia, leading members and clients of the murder insurance ring to commodify the lives of their fellow immigrants in order to survive during economically hard times.

After the arrest of Petrillo and Stella, the police rounded up others who used the "murder-for-profit" ring as a source of income during those economically desperate times.

7. Lucani, "Machine Politics and the Consolidations of the Roosevelt Majority," 39.
8. Ibid., 40.
9. Ibid., 47.
10. Suzanne Wasserman, "'Our Alien Neighbors': Coping with the Depression on the Lower East Side," *American Jewish History* 88 (June 2000): 212.
11. Philadelphia, PA., U.S. Naturalization Records no. 4200703 (1937), Alfonsi, Ferdinando; National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, D.C.

Among those arrested included Herman's cousin, Paul Petrillo. Paul Petrillo did not come across as a murderer. Born January 26, 1892, in Moscone, Italy, Petrillo immigrated to the United States in 1910. He and his wife, Angelina, both could read, write and speak English and became naturalized citizens. In the 1930 census, he worked as a tailor in his own shop and owned his house on East Passyunk Avenue in Philadelphia's 26th Ward.[12] Petrillo's oldest son, Vincent, even went to college.[13] By all appearances, Petrillo was a successful, Americanized businessman. However, when the Great Depression hit, few could still afford custom made clothes, and the rise of department stores and inexpensive, mass-produced clothing decreased the demand for tailors. Thus, rather than making clothes, Petrillo lent his business skills to murder for economical subsistence.

His role in this homicidal business scheme came out during the inquest on February 11, 1939. Petrillo's nephew, John Cacopardo, testified against his uncle, and quoted Petrillo as saying, "How do you think I make my money? What do you think happened to Mary Gresso in Jersey City?"[14] Petrillo made it clear to Cacopardo that the murder ring was his source of income. Furthermore, Detective Sergeant Samuel Riccardi claimed, "We know the home and workshop of Paul Petrillo has been the leading place through which different unfortunates have been insured. We know Petrillo and others have induced people to insure their lives and have even called up insurance agents to tip them off to new business."[15] Thus, Petrillo and other ringleaders used the United States insurance system to prey on vulnerable immigrants as their source of income during the Depression. The stark reality of the Depression led Italian Americans to use each other for economic survival.

At its basic level, the insurance murder ring was an extensive case of insurance fraud. Life insurance was not a completely new concept, nor murder for insurance. In sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe, the popularity of speculative insurance led to secretly acquired policies where payment was contingent on an event occurring in a person's life. Events ranged from loss of virginity to when and how a person died.[16] Obviously, this created a moral hazard, and thus there were casualties and faked deaths. When Americans set up their life insurance system in the 1810s and 1820s, they wanted to avoid the facilitation of crime, but that proved to be impossible.

12. 1930 U.S. Census, Philadelphia, PA., population schedule, p. 189 (stamped), dwelling 200, family 237, Paul Petrillo; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed Sept. 12, 2015, http://ancestry.com.
13. 1940 U.S. Census, Philadelphia, PA., population schedule, sheet no. 1B, house no. 1822, Vincent Petrillo, Lena Petriilo, Anthony Petrillo, and Paul Petrillo; digital image, Ancestry.com, accessed Sept. 12, 2015, http://ancestry.com.
14. "Tailor Called 'Super" Bluebeard," *New York Times*, Feb. 12, 1939.
15. Ibid.
16. Shanon Murphy, "How to Make a Dead Man: Murder and Life Insurance in 19th-Century America," *Financial History* (Spring 2010): 29.

By March, with over seventy speculated victims, investigators realized the magnitude with which the insurance murder ring took the association of insurance and crime. On March 22nd, Herman Petrillo erupted into curses and swung at a foreman as a jury found him guilty of the murder of Ferdinand Alfonsi by poison and sentenced him to death by electric chair. With Petrillo's conviction, Judge Harry S. McDevitt promised "relentless prosecution of 'this group of assassins' he said committed numerous murders in a 'mad quest for money.'"[17] Investigators knew "this group of assassins" organized and ran their conspiracy like a business. Investigators found that the arsenic ring "'merchandised in death' on a commercial basis, with a staff of contact men to drum up business."[18] In fact, the police believed that "at least seventy-five persons were associated with the 'poison syndicate' either as directors, 'branch managers,' 'agents' or 'customers.'"[19] The ring had two branches: the North Philadelphia branch directed by Herman Petrillo and Morris Bolber, and the South Philadelphia Branch directed by Paul Petrillo and Corinia Favato. Ring members' relationships to one another were purely business-related, functioning as cogs in the conspiracy's machine. Thus, ring members turned states' evidence on each other, revealing to the police the inner workings of the syndicate with its network of agents, branches, and clients. For most members, protecting this economic scheme was not worth jail time or, worse, the electric chair.

Additionally, the ring had suppliers and contacts for everything from poison and other lethal weapons to the vital insurance policies that made the ring profitable. For example, investigators arrested Gaetano Cicnato, an insurance agent, as an accessory after several statements by ring members and other insurance agents accused Cicnato of paving the way for the ring to easily obtain insurance policies on intended victims.[20] Additionally, in May, police set a watch on the man they believed to be the ring's banker and suspected he held as much as $100,000 in insurance spoils.[21] The ring also had contacts with doctors and pharmacists to supply them with poison. For instance, in the Jennie Peno murder, a physician connected with the ring gave Jennie poison under the guise of medicine.[22] The multiple suppliers and contact men made the murder for insurance operation an efficient and effective economic enterprise.

Furthermore, when investigators arrested Millie Giacobbe, a proprietor of a small dry goods store, they gained

17. "Poison Killing of 70 Laid to Plotters," *Los Angeles Times*, Mar. 23, 1939.
18. "'Poisoning Ring' Chief Found in Cell Here," *New York Times*, Apr. 27, 1939.
19. Ibid.
20. "Poison Ring Squad Arrests a Widow," *New York Times*, May 5, 1939.
21. "Banker Holding Insurance Murder Ring Cash Hunted," *Los Angeles Times*, May 10, 1939.
22. "14 Held by Courts on Poison Charges," *New York Times*, May 12, 1939.

confirmation of the existence of a "matrimonial agency" run as a side business by the ring. The matrimonial agency lined up husbands for "arsenic widows" to ensure a steady supply of victims and insurance payouts. After being questioned as an "arsenic widow" for her participation in the matrimonial agency, Giacobbe attempted suicide with a revolver in the bedroom of her South Philadelphia home.[23] The most infamous of the arsenic widows was ringleader Morris Bolber's secretary, Rose Carina. When police finally seized her on May 18th in New York City for the murder of one of her five or more husbands, she came to court wearing all black and thick-rimmed glasses. As the *New York Times* observed, "To spectators, [Carina] bore little resemblance to a woman classed in the public imagination as a 'rose-of-death' bride of the alleged murder ring."[24] As a separate, but interconnected, business, the matrimonial agency gave Italian immigrant women a means of economic subsistence and kept the ring's economic activities going by ensuring a ready supply of victims.

"Love Potions and Ground-up Dead Man's Bones"

However, it was not the cold, business-like way in which the ring operated that caught the public's imagination. At the heart of the insurance murder ring was the incorporation of Old World Italian beliefs in the "evil eye" and witchcraft into the system of insurance fraud. Historian Owen Davies claims, "While the idea that witches could cast a spell through sight was widespread in different cultures...the evil eye as a concept is best understood as a distinct tradition found in Mediterranean cultures."[25] Known as *Malocchio* in Italian, a 1940s New York City folklore survey on the belief in the evil eye found it still thriving among the Italian and Jewish populations.[26] Thus, invoking Old World beliefs of witchcraft and the "evil eye" gave the ringleaders, Herman and Paul Petrillo, Corina Favato, and Morris Bolber, power over their extensive network of crime due to Italian immigrants' penchant to hold on to their Old World beliefs. The ringleaders' success in persuading spouses to kill their husbands or wives stemmed from their reputations as powerful witches or as possessing the "evil eye."

Each of the ringleaders' powers of supernatural persuasion came out during the investigation, in often-dramatic fashion. At the arraignment of the bespectacled tailor, Paul Petrillo, witnesses testified that for a number of years Petrillo took witchcraft lessons at fifty cents a lesson from an African American "seeress." Fifty cents seemed a small price to pay to be able to talk to spirits and "Old Nick himself."[27] Referred to as

23. "Poison Ring Widow Attempts Suicide," *New York Times*, May 9, 1939.
24. "Twelve Indicted in Poison Death," *New York Times,* May 20, 1939.
25. Owen Davies, *American Bewitched: The Story of Witchcraft After Salem* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 74.
26. Ibid.
27. "Tailor Called 'Super' Bluebeard."

"a dealer in magic powders,"[28] a "professor of witchcraft,"[29] and a "witch doctor" in the press and by witnesses, Petrillo's reputation as a witch was well known among the Italian community.

Petrillo's co-director in the South Philadelphia branch, Carina Favato, also had a reputation as a witch. After confessing to her involvement in the conspiracy, the diminutive and grey-haired Susie di Martino, widow of one of the victims, turned state's witness and testified against Favato, who "nursed" her late husband, Giuseppe di Martino, during his last illness. As a result, on April 21st, Favato "a middle-aged housewife who subscrib[ed] to a belief in witchcraft," shocked the court at her own murder trial by calmly pleading guilty to the murder of her common-law husband, Charles Ingrao, her stepson, Philip Ingrao, and Giuseppe di Martino.[30] Additionally, arsenic widow Josphine Romaldo told reporters she "sought supernatural help to win her husband's affections back" from Favato, who offered her a charm that "would bring [her] husband back," for $300.[31] Neighbors knew of Favato's supernatural abilities, and, thus, they sought her spiritual guidance. This put Favato in an advantageous position to know which of her neighbors were vulnerable and could be exploited to economically advance ring members during the Depression.

Favato's confession split the case wide open. However, there was still a ringleader free, whose reputation was infamous and whose eventual confession led to the arrests and prosecution of numerous ring members. Even after Herman Petrillo received the death penalty and Favato's dramatic courtroom confession, investigators only knew Morris Bolber as "the rabbi," a veteran "witch doctor," who dealt in "love potions and ground-up dead man's bones."[32] It was not until April 27th that police knew Bolber to be the "veteran witch doctor and compounder of charms."[33] When Bolber turned himself in to police, he pled guilty to the murder of arsenic victim Romain Manduik, but he maintained that he was really innocent and had turned state evidence "for the benefit of the people of Philadelphia."[34] Bolber tried to frame himself as a "faith healer" instead of a "witch doctor" to police. Self-described as "a sort of psychiatrist," Bolber used his relationship with the Sherman family as a testament to being a healer instead of a murderer. Police arrested Dora Sherman, a sixty-two-year-old widow and mother of three who ran a chicken store in West Philadelphia, for the death of her late husband, Abraham, an antique dealer, who died July 1, 1936. Bolber claimed his relationship with the Shermans

28. "Poison Killing of 70 Laid to Plotters."
29. "Woman Poisoner Confesses at Trial," *New York Times*, Apr. 22, 1939.
30. Ibid.
31. "14 Held by Courts on Poison Charges."
32. "'Poisoning Ring' Chief Found in Cell Here."
33. "3 Widows are Held in 'Ring Murders,'" *New York Times*, Apr. 28, 1939.
34. "Six Slayings Told By 'Faith Healer,'" *New York Times,* Sept. 23, 1939.

was one of "faith healer" when they came to him to cure their crippled grandson.[35] Despite Bolber's insistence that he was innocent, his reputation, as well as the statements against him by other members, undermined his innocence.

For instance, Bolber coordinated the murder of Jennie Cassetti. Jennie's husband, Dominick Cassetti, a presser in a clothing factory, frequently quarreled with his wife over her accusations of his associating with other women. He obtained a powder, thought to be arsenic, from Josephine Sadetti, one of the conspiracy's agents. He agreed to pay $160 in weekly installments, but, when he fell behind on payments, Bolber sent Cassetti to the South Philadelphia fortuneteller Providenzi Micicihi. According to Cassetti, "he was threatened with the 'evil eye' spell of Mrs. Providenzi Micicihi if he did not sprinkle 'witch powder' in his wife's spaghetti."[36] Jennie died June 1938 of arsenic poisoning. Bolber coordinated his agents and used their reputations as witches possessing the evil eye to persuade uncooperative clients into submission to advance the ring's economic interests.

However, by turning state witness, a rift formed between the ringleaders of the conspiracy. Soon after Bolber turned himself in, the chief of the county detectives, William Connelly, decided to periodically question members of the conspiracy together. On one occasion he questioned Herman Petrillo, Morris Bolber, and David Brandt. Brandt, a typewriter salesman and former veterinary student, was not a ringleader but still a prominent agent in the conspiracy. During the questioning, the three displayed fright over the others' evil eye, frequently interrupting questioning with, "Don't you look at me that way; don't you give me the eye."[37] The animosity and fright shown by the ring members towards the use of the evil eye was not just a charade for clients. Those within the ring truly believed they possessed the "evil eye" or feared those who did possess it. This belief was crucial in the effectiveness of the ring's economic activities.

The public got to witness this belief in action during Paul Petrillo's trial. The prosecution put Bolber on the stand to testify against his co-conspirator, but it turned into a standoff between Bolber, the "faith healer," and Petrillo, the "witch doctor." Reportedly, Bolber and Petrillo were partners in witchcraft, but now, instead of using the evil eye to threaten clients into cooperation, they directed the evil eye at each other. Bolber "electrified the courtroom crowd with a detailed account of six slayings," linking Petrillo to three of them. Then he "threw the room into an uproar with an attempt to 'put the evil eye' on the defendant [Petrillo]."

35. "Poison Ring Squad Arrests a Widow."

36. "Says 'Evil Eye' Made Him Kill Wife," *New York Times*, Sept. 8, 1939.

37. Ibid.

According to the press:

> *Petrillo appeared unnerved when the "faith healer" took the chair. Bolber for awhile ignored him, then, with eyes wide open, seemed to be trying to "work on" Petrillo, who returned the stare for a moment and then glanced widely around the room. When he turned again to look at Bolber the witness was still staring at him. Petrillo opened the first and fourth fingers of his hand, with the three fingers closed, and pointed the hand at Bolber, trying to ward off the "evil eye."*[38]

The incident ended with the entrance of the judge and opposing lawyers, but the rest of the trial remained charged. While unexpected and entertaining for the courtroom, it was not unbelievable. The nonimmigrant community viewed Italians as primitive and uncivilized. A guide to Philadelphia, published in 1937 by the Federal Writers' Project, claimed the Italian community held onto their "European peasant customs and folkways."[39] The guide made a point of distinguishing Italians from U.S. citizens: "Apparently preferring the foods and customs of their homeland, these people do not assimilate easily as some of the other groups, and are inclined to settle in sharply defined districts—notably South Philadelphia."[40] Thus, to U.S. citizens, the trial of the insurance murder ring with its link to Old World witchcraft served as a confirmation of the uncivilized nature of Italians.

However, to immigrants, holding on to their Old World beliefs was one of their only survival strategies during the Great Depression. In her study of the Italian and Jewish community in New York's Lower East Side during the Depression, historian Suzanne Wasserman argues East Siders "coped with the economic crisis by utilizing traditional strategies for survival," including mutual aid societies, doubling up, taking in boarders, and "homework."[41] Ultimately the Depression proved too much for these strategies. In effect, the murder insurance ring, with its use of traditional beliefs in witchcraft and the evil eye, was an alternative economic survival strategy for Italian immigrants during the Depression.

Alfonsi's murder set off a series of prosecutions that lasted over a year. Alfonsi was just one of the many flies caught in the complicated web spun by the conspiracy's spiders. Ultimately, of the spiders in this web, Bolber and Favato received life imprisonment, while both Paul and Herman Petrillo met their fate in the electric chair. The immigrant experience during the Great Depression is an often forgotten aspect of U.S. history. However, the vulnerability of immigrants like Alfonsi and the

38. "Six Slayings Told By 'Faith Healer.'"
39. Federal Writers' Project Works Progress Administration for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, *Philadelphia: A Guide to the Nation's Birthplace* (Harrisburg, PA.: Pennsylvania Historical Commission, 1937), 98.
40. Ibid., 100.
41. Wasserman, "'Our Alien Neighbors,'" 209-221.

desperation of conspiracy members created by the economic stagnation of the Depression shaped the conditions for the ring to take root. The story of the insurance murder ring demonstrates the immigrant's ability to exploit institutions, such as life insurance, and root them in the traditional customs they were most familiar with. By translating Old World beliefs into an American system, the insurance murder ring was able to survive the economic crisis and preserve their Old World values as well.

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